



# New Zealand Gaelic Games Championships Wellington 2026



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## Competition Rules

Document Version **1.1** Document Date **05/03/2026**

The 2026 New Zealand Championships in Gaelic Games take place over the weekend of 21/22 March 2026.

Teams from all over New Zealand will converge on Hutt Park, Lower Hutt to battle it out for the title of New Zealand Champions 2026.

This guide will explain the competition rules across the codes that will be enforced over the weekend. Please read through them in detail.

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### Playing Codes & Grades

The following codes will be competed in over the weekend

**Women's Gaelic Football:** Senior, Intermediate, Junior

**Men's Gaelic Football:** Senior, Intermediate, Junior

**Hurling**

**Camogie**

#### Intermediate Grade:

Teams have been entered in either Junior or senior grade in Football. Following on from last year's introduction of the Intermediate grade, it is planned to hold an Intermediate final this year.

Following the round-robin games on Saturday, the TOP 2 teams in both Men's and Women's Junior codes will graduate to the Intermediate Final. The remaining teams in the Junior Grade will compete for the Junior Title.

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### Team and Squad sizes

The Squad Size for each code and grade is capped at **21 players**.

**Junior & Intermediate Football, and Hurling** will be **11-aside games with rolling subs**

**Senior Football, and Camogie** will be **13-aside with rolling subs**

**Exception:** A limited number of players (3) may be listed on a Junior and Senior Squad in Gaelic Football. This is at the discretion of the organising committee and must only be used where squad sizes are limited



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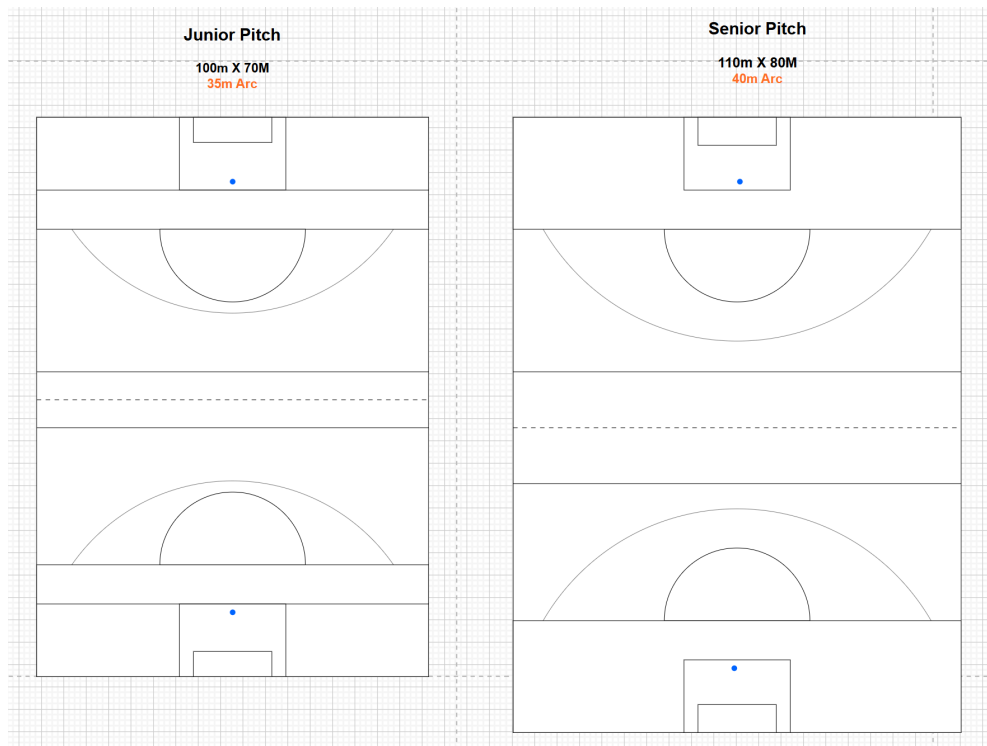
## Playing Pitches

There will be 3 pitches available for the duration of the games. Based on the teams submitted, the pitches available will be as follows

2 “Junior” Pitches measuring 100m X 70m

1 “Senior” Pitch measuring 110m X 80m

We will aim to have Senior Football, Hurling, Camogie games on the larger pitch and Junior & Intermediate grades on the smaller pitch but there may be the need to mix this up to suit the schedule and any time pressures that come up.



## Referee Tables

Each pitch will have a referee/admin table where refs can pick up a whistle, jersey, and ref cards prior to each game.

## Pitch fencing

Each Pitch sideline will have a temporary boundary line erected, **ALL Substitutes and spectators must be outside the line**. This will allow line officials to have a good view of the pitch and avoid unnecessary altercations between players and subs/spectators.



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## Game Schedule and Times

The schedule will be published on the Wellington GAA website on the NZ Champs 2026 page  
<https://wellingtongaa.com/nz-champs-2026>

Please refer to the version on the website as there will likely be updates leading up to and during the competition.

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### Saturday Games - Round Robin

- Games are **13** mins a half with 3 mins half time break
- Teams play 2 games on the Saturday in a single code. (this is for player welfare, especially as there are a large number of players playing both Hurling/Camogie and Football.
- It is expected that teams will not play all other teams in their code on Saturday. Depending on the numbers of teams in each code, the group format per code may differ to others. Check out the Individual Codes section in the Schedule and also later in this document.

### Placings

- Teams are awarded **2 points** for a Win, **1 for a draw**, and none for a loss
  - Table Positions will be decided by Points earned
  - Should teams finish level on points then Score Difference will be used, should teams still be level then "Scores for" will be used.
  
  - **Camogie** will be the **exception** with just 2 teams entered. It is expected that the teams will play a best of 2 games with one on Saturday and the second on Sunday
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### Sunday Games - Finals

Sunday is reserved for the knockout games and finals.

Games are **15** mins a half with 3 mins half time break

Should a game end in a draw the following will be played until a deadlock is broken

- 2 periods of 5 minutes extra time with 1 minute break
- Penalty Shoot-out with a best of 5 penalties
- Sudden Death Penalties should teams be level after initial 5.




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## Referee Information

Referees, Umpires, and Line officials are the backbone of ensuring that the games can go ahead.

 **Referee Meeting at 8:15** in the Stop Out Clubrooms on Saturday. Please ensure that your nominated referees are in attendance.

REMEMBER that all match officials are there in a volunteer capacity and no abuse or harassment of referees will be tolerated.

## Referee Information

Referees must report to the **spectators/admin table** that will be allocated at each pitch where they will receive

- whistles
- stopwatch
- scorecards
- pens
- referee tops
- and x1 football/sliothar for throw in.

We ask that refs arrive on time to keep the games to schedule as much as possible.

ALL ITEMS must be returned to the spectators table once your game has finished and submit the teams score to the pitchside admins.

All referees must provide x2 umpires for their game.

We ask that all teams goal keepers bring a spare ball with them to their goals ready for the game starting.

**Your Club's referees attention should be brought to the dissent and playing rules outlined in this document**



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## Dissent Rule (Applied across all codes)

The new dissent rules in Gaelic football tighten how referees deal with backchat, intimidation, and time-wasting behaviours from both players and team officials. They were introduced as part of the Football Review Committee's 2025 rule package, which aimed to improve match flow, discipline, and respect for officials. The changes are described in recent analyses of the 2025 rule reforms, including a legal review of dissent sanctions and coverage of the FRC's updated rule set.

**Note: The Dissent Rule will be applied across all codes (Ladies & Men's Football, Hurling & Camogie) and grades over the weekend.**

### What counts as dissent

Dissent is now defined more broadly and includes several behaviours that previously resulted only in warnings. Referees are instructed to penalise:

- **Verbal disagreement** with decisions, including arguing, shouting, or sarcastic remarks.
- **Gesturing or demonstrative behaviour**, such as waving arms, clapping at the referee, or exaggerated reactions.
- **Crowding the referee**, whether by a single player or a group.
- **Approaching the referee aggressively** or from a distance to challenge a decision.
- **Bench dissent**, where team officials or substitutes shout at or undermine the referee.

### Sanctions for dissent

- **Free moved forward 30 metres** for any dissent by a player.
- **Gaelic Football:**  
**Black card/Sin Bin** if dissent is considered *cynical, aggressive, or intended to influence the referee*.
- **All Codes: Yellow card** for persistent or moderate dissent.
- **Red card** for abusive, threatening, or insulting language or behaviour.
- **Team officials** can now be **yellow - or red-carded**, and their actions can result in a **30-metre advancement**.



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## Playing Rules

The following rules will be in play over the weekend. Due to the competition format (11, and 13-aside) together with smaller than regulation playing pitches (normal 15-aside is 130m X 90m) then not all 'rules from home' will be in play.

To support our referees who may have to referee across codes, certain rules will be consistent across the codes (e.g. dissent) while individual codes will retain their core playing rules.

### Men's Gaelic Football Playing Rules

#### Solo & Go

The Solo & Go will be used across all grades in Men's Football.

**Note** the following guides around the use of Solo & Go.

- Player taking a Solo & Go must play in a forward or lateral play (no backward play)
- Solo & Go doesn't apply inside the 20m attacking line. A free from the 20 is taken.
- A player must use their Solo & Go within 4 seconds of the foul. Waiting longer indicates that the player is taking a free only
- A second player may take the Solo & Go IF the fouled player is on the ground and the ball is available for the 2nd player to play
- A player MUST NOT grab the ball from a player fouling the ball in order to initiate a Solo & Go play.

#### 2 Point Scoring

This year sees the introduction of the 2 point scoring arc in Men's football.

Note the following in relation to the 2 point arc rule

- Frees cannot be moved back to the arc line in order to gain an advantage in scoring should the original free have been awarded inside the arc.
- Should a defender make a play on a shot from outside the arc that is on its way over the bar (e.g. Goalie touching the shot) then 2 points will still be awarded.
- The arc on the "Junior" Pitch will be 35m from the centre of the Goal Line
- The arc on the "Senior" Pitch will be 40m from the centre of the Goal Line

#### Kickouts

From both scores and wides, the kickout is taken from the 20m line in front of the goals. Must be taken from the ground and travel 13m.

#### Marks

No Kick Out or Advanced Mark awarded



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## Black card offences

Penalty: A sin binning will result in the player being removed from the game for a period of 5 minutes. The player may resume playing after the 5 minutes have elapsed. No player replacement is allowed while the player is off.

These offences are consistently identified across official rule explanations and recent summaries of the black-card system in football :

- **Deliberate pull-down** — Intentionally dragging an opponent to the ground to stop an attack.
- **Deliberate trip** — Using hand, arm, leg, or foot to trip an opponent in a non-accidental way.
- **Deliberate body-check** — A forceful, intentional block on an opponent who is not in possession of the ball and is making a run.
- **Cynical foul preventing a clear goal-scoring opportunity** — Any intentional action inside the 20-metre line or semi-circular arc that denies a goal chance **(also results in a penalty kick)**.
- **Feigning injury / simulation** — Pretending to be fouled or injured to deceive the referee.
- **Verbally or physically interfering with a quick free or restart** — Actions that deliberately delay or prevent an opponent from taking a quick free. **(This may also be actioned under the dissent rule which results in a 30m more advantageous free)**
- **Aggressive remonstrations with an official** (in specific cases) — When the behaviour is deemed cynical rather than just dissent.



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## Women's Gaelic Football Playing Rules

The playing rules of Women's Gaelic Football are outlined on the LGFA website (Page 8 onwards)

<https://ladiesgaelic.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/LGFA-Playing-Rules-2025.pdf>

### Key Rules

**Kickouts** : On or before the 20m line in front of the goals

May be taken from the hand or from the ground using the tee

Must cross the 20m line and travel 13m

**Sin Bin**: Yellow Card will be used to indicate a Sin Bin offence

Penalty: A sin binning will result in the player being removed from the game for a period of 5 minutes. The player may resume playing after the 5 minutes have elapsed. No player replacement is allowed while the player is off.

- (a) Deliberate pulling down or tripping by the hand or foot
- (b) High tackle
- (c) Charging of an opponent with moderate impact, including charging with the shoulder to the upper body
- (d) Threatening or using abusive language or gestures towards an opponent or colleague
- (e) Blocking or attempting to block an opponent with the boot as that player is about to kick the ball from her hands
- (f) A sliding tackle
- (g) Kicking the ball with intent as an opposing player is about to pick it up
- (h) Bringing the fist into contact with the body of an opponent for the purpose of dispossessing her of the ball
- (i) Dissenting with or challenging the authority of a match official
- (j) Persistent fouling
- (k) Feigning injury or diving to gain a free kick/penalty or to get an opponent cautioned or sent off.
- (l) Deliberate body collide to take a player out of the movement of play

### Scoring

The 2 point arc will **not** be in play for Women's Football



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## Hurling Playing Rules

### Scoring

Scores can only be taken while in the opposition half, i.e. you cannot score while in your own half of the pitch from open play. The exceptions are when a free is awarded for a team in their own half.

### Puck Outs

Puck outs must be taken from within the small square.

**After a score or a wide**, the goal keeper must wait for the referee's whistle before taking a puck out.

### 65's

On both pitches, a 65 metre free is taken from the half way line. This is to make it consistent for referees and players.

**Black Card:** A BlackCard will be used to indicate a Sin Bin offence.

In hurling, a black card is issued for cynical fouls intended to stop an opponent's attack where a goal chance is likely.

offences include

- (a) deliberately pulling down an opponent
- (b) tripping
- (c) body colliding
- (d) obstructing a player with a goalscoring opportunity

Penalty: A sin binning will result in the player being removed from the game for a period of 5 minutes. The player may resume playing after the 5 minutes have elapsed. No player replacement is allowed while the player is off.



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## Camogie Playing Rules

### Scoring

Scores can only be taken while in the opposition half, i.e. you cannot score while in your own half of the pitch from open play. The exceptions are when a free is awarded for a team in their own half.

### Puck Outs

Puck outs must be taken from within the small square.

**After a score or a wide**, the goal keeper must wait for the referee's whistle before taking a puck out.

### 45's

On both pitches, a 45 metre free is taken from the 45 metre line, in-line where the ball went out of play.

**Black Card:** There is **NO black card in Camogie**, however red and yellow cards are used ..

**Yellow card:** Warning for persistent or reckless fouling.

**Second yellow = red:** Player dismissed.

**Straight red:** Striking, dangerous play, abusive language, or denying a clear goal chance.



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## Individual Code Formats

The following teams have been entered in each code.

Teams		Senior Football				Junior Football	
Hurling	Camogie	Men	Women	Men	Women		
Auckland	Auckland	Queenstown Gaels	Wellington	Queenstown Gaels	Queenstown Gaels		
Wellington	Wellington	Marists Rangers	Queenstown Gaels	Harps		Naomh Críostóir	
CHC/QTN/NC		Wellington	Marists Rangers	Naomh Críostóir Red	Harps		
		St Pats, Auckland	St Pats, Auckland	Naomh Críostóir Black	Wellington	Canterbury	
				Wellington	Canterbury		
				Canterbury			

The number of teams entered in each code will mean that a different format will need to be used for individual codes.

### Camogie

2 teams have been entered in this grade. The format will see Auckland and Wellington play off in a best of 2 final with aggregate scores counting in the event of a win apiece. The first game will be played on Saturday with the 2nd one taking place on the Sunday

### Hurling

3 teams have been entered in the Hurling grade. A large number of Hurlers are also dual players. The format will see the 3 teams play as follows

**Saturday:** Each team plays the other 2 in a round robin format

**Sunday:** Top team from Sat progresses to the Final while Teams ranked 2 and 3 play off in a Semi-final



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## Senior Football (Men & Women)

4 Teams have been entered in the Men's and Women's Senior Football grades. To facilitate the aim of teams only playing 2 games on the Saturday, the four teams will be placed in 1 group at random and teams will play 2 of the other 3 teams in the group. at the end of the round robin phase, teams will be ranked #1 to #4 based on wins, and scoring difference in the event of a tie.

### Saturday Round Robin

Group A
Team 1 v Team 2
Team 2 v Team 3
Team 3 v Team 4
Team 4 v Team 1

### Sunday Finals Day

Based on the placings after the round robin phase, teams will be labeled #1, #2, #3, and #4.

### Senior

Semi Finals : Team #1 v Team #4

Team #2 v Team #3

Final: Winner Semi Final 1 v Winner Semi Final 2



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## Junior Men's Football (Including Intermediate)

6 Teams have been entered in the Junior Men's grade. To fit the schedule, there will be 2 groups on Saturday (Group A and B), each with 3 teams. Teams will play the other 2 teams in their group. With the introduction of the Intermediate grade, the top 2 teams will automatically qualify for the Intermediate Final.

### Saturday Round Robin

Group A	Group B
Team 1 v Team 2	Team 1 v Team 2
Team 2 v Team 3	Team 2 v Team 3
Team 1 v Team 3	Team 1 v Team 3

### Sunday Finals Day

Both Intermediate and Junior Winners will be decided on the Sunday as follows

#### Intermediate:

Winner Group A v Winner Group B

#### Junior

Semi Finals : Group A #2 v Group B #3

Group A #3 v Group B #2

Final: Winner Semi Final 1 v Winner Semi Final 2



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## Junior Women's Football (Including Intermediate)

5 Teams have been entered in the Women's Junior Football grade. This will require a different option to Mens Junior which has an additional team. The 5 Teams will be placed in the same group at random. Each team will play 2 games at random in the group

### Saturday Round Robin

Group A
Team 1 v Team 2
Team 2 v Team 3
Team 3 v Team 4
Team 4 v Team 5
Team 5 v Team 1

### Sunday Finals Day

Both Intermediate and Junior Winners will be decided on the Sunday as follows

#### Intermediate:

Final: Team #1 v Team #2 from Saturday's Round Robin

#### Junior

Semi Finals : Team #4 v Team #5

Final: Team #3 v Semi Final Winner