

# Irish Traditions – Sports

Open cloze. Write only one word per blank.

Sports is a big thing in Ireland. \_\_\_\_\_ we play the popular sports of soccer and rugby, Ireland has its own sports that are unique to the country. \_\_\_\_\_ sporting Irish traditions have been around for centuries and are still an important part of life today in Ireland.

These sports that are unique to the Irish include Gaelic games that comprise Gaelic Football, Hurling and Camogie. It \_\_\_\_\_ thought that every time the Irish go to a sporting event, one out of \_\_\_\_\_ two will attend a Gaelic game or hurling match, which is pretty amazing considering both sports only have amateur status.

The national stadium, Croke Park, will attract over 60,000 people to either a hurling \_\_\_\_\_ Gaelic game. This shows just how proud the Irish are \_\_\_\_\_ their own sports and watching their fellow Irish men and women play. The games are organised by the GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) – \_\_\_\_\_ of the strongest communities in Ireland.

## Gaelic football



Gaelic football in Ireland is often just referred to \_\_\_\_\_ 'Gaelic' and consists of 15 men playing against 15 men on a grass \_\_\_\_\_. The unique thing about this Irish sport is that you can use your hands just as much as your feet.

The ball can \_\_\_\_\_ kicked, caught in your hands, hand-passed and punched. The only thing the players \_\_\_\_\_ do is run with the ball in their hands for more than three steps.

However, they can move the ball up the pitch by 'soloing'. This is the skill of running and repeatedly hitting the ball with your hands and then dropping it to your feet. It sounds more complicated \_\_\_\_\_ it actually is.

## Hurling

Another GAA game is hurling, which is considered a very skillful traditional Irish sport. The game of hurling goes back thousands of years and has often \_\_\_\_\_ featured heavily in Irish legends.



How you play the sport, including the number of players, scoring and rules, is very similar \_\_\_\_\_ Gaelic football. The biggest difference is that it's played with sticks known as a 'hurley', and a small leather ball – similar to a tennis ball.

Camogie is considered the female version of hurling. Just \_\_\_\_\_ Gaelic, the aim is to \_\_\_\_\_ more than your opponent's team. Many hurling players \_\_\_\_\_ a helmet, as there can be very a lot of physical contact \_\_\_\_\_ times.

Other traditional Irish sports \_\_\_\_\_ horse-racing, handball, fishing and golf. Rugby and soccer would be considered as the most popular sports. Soccer in Ireland is played up to a semi-professional level, whereas rugby is known as a professional sport, with players playing at national and international levels.

## Irish Traditions – The History of GAA

GAA is celebrated as one of the greatest amateur sporting associations in the world that plays a huge \_\_\_\_\_ in Irish society. This sports association was first founded in 1884 in County Tipperary \_\_\_\_\_ a group of Irishmen who saw the importance \_\_\_\_\_ creating a national organisation to revive and nurture traditional sports. Also, it is a way for Irish athletics to become better seen by the masses.

Six months after the first GAA meeting, GAA clubs started \_\_\_\_\_ formed around Ireland and saw the beginning of people playing hurling and Gaelic Football. With pride, Irish people started \_\_\_\_\_ part in GAA events around the country.

From its beginning, all the sports under GAA \_\_\_\_\_ remained as amateur sports. Even players at the highest level don't \_\_\_\_\_ paid for playing. One of the most important aspects of GAA is its volunteer ethos.

The GAA organisation is usually based around the traditional parish and county structures of Ireland.

It has a strong emphasis \_\_\_\_\_ community and there are over 2,000 clubs around the 32 counties of Ireland. Every summer in Ireland there are inter-county All-Ireland Championships in hurling, Gaelic and camogie that draw the Irish public.

With Irish Diaspora, the GAA sports continued to develop around the world, as they took their Irish sports to their new homes in the USA, Australia, Europe and many other places. There is believed to be over 400 GAA clubs around the world, \_\_\_\_\_ is very impressive for an amateur sport.