

Fancy a game?



Let's Discuss!

1. Can you **take a stab at** how it's played?
2. Have a guess! - do men or women play it?
3. How important is sport in a child's **upbringing**?
4. Is it **key** to a country's culture to have a national sport?
5. What role does sport play in your life?

Irish Sport

GAA: the social network for emigrants.



At the GAA Annual Congress earlier this month, incoming president Liam O’Neill **pledged to tackle** the issue of player emigration, which is **decimating** rural teams and causing a crisis in the GAA in Ireland.

But while the Irish clubs **lament** the departure of their players at both local and county level, the game is **flourishing** overseas, with GAA clubs across Europe, North America, Asia, Australia and New Zealand **enriched by the influx of** young and talented Irish players who are eager to maintain their connection with Ireland by playing their national sport.

Teams in Australia and New Zealand are seeing record numbers **turning up to** training sessions. Jamie Fitzsimons, club PRO for Michael Cusack’s club in Sydney, says the GAA scene there has grown fast in recent years.

“More and more are moving here long-term, obtaining sponsorship and permanent residency rather than backpacking through. At times there have been over 80 men’s footballers and hurlers attending training sessions, and growing numbers for ladies’ football and camogie too.”

The **pastoral** nature of the GAA network is just as **prevalent** in the clubs overseas as it is in Ireland. It can provide invaluable connections for Irish emigrants seeking work and friends when they arrive in an unfamiliar place.

Philip O’Connor, player with the Stockholm Gaels says *‘When we started, I wanted our club and our sports to be the gathering point for the Irish community in Stockholm. Together with our sister clubs in Scandinavia, we have become hubs for the Irish community here.’*

Article adapted from The Irish Times Newspaper

<http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/generationemigration/2012/04/27/gaa-the-social-network-for-emigrants/>



Vocabulary Match:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <i>Pledged to tackle</i> | common, widespread |
| <i>decimating</i> | giving help or support on personal matters |
| <i>lament</i> | to make a determined promise to deal with a problem |
| <i>Flourishing</i> | to severely damage something or make it weaker |
| <i>Influx of</i> | to feel or express great sadness over something |
| <i>Enriched by</i> | the quality of something has improved |
| <i>Pastoral</i> | a lot of people, money or things arriving somewhere |
| <i>Prevalent</i> | developing, growing quickly |
| <i>Turning up to</i> | arriving |

Questions:

1. What kind of crisis do you think Liam O'Neill is referring to when he says player emigration is ***decimating*** rural teams?
2. How do you think he is going ***to tackle*** emigration?
3. What impact do you think the rise of Irish sports being played overseas has on Ireland?
4. How important is '***the pastoral nature***' of these sports clubs, in your opinion?



Watch the YouTube clip:

1. What is the 'new breed' of immigrant?
2. These sports are 'far more than just a game'. What does this mean?



www.Irishtimes.com

Home from Home

Complete the text with the missing words and explain the meaning of each one to your partner.

There was a time in the not too distant past when it seemed like emigration from Ireland was largely _____ the history books.

The economic woes of recent years have seen a new and very different breed of immigrant emerge. Better educated, better travelled and better paid. This generation has taken a new version of Irishness with them on their travels.

Win every game with style, win every game with class. The gameplan; _____ the gameplan.

But running _____ the rapid growth of the GAA on foreign soil is the increasingly important role played by second and third generation Irish. The sons and daughters of immigrants from decades past have _____ the battle. For this generation, Gaelic football, Camogie and hurling are far more than just a game; they are a form of identity and a strong connection to what many see as their spiritual home.

If you emigrated, in what way would you ensure you felt a form of identity and spiritually connection to your own country's culture and heritage?