

Hurling Rules*

1. The ground shall, when convenient, be at least 200 yards long by 150 yards broad, or as near to that size as can be got.
2. There shall be boundary lines all around the ground, at distance of least five yards from the fence.
3. The goal shall be two upright posts, twenty feet apart, with a cross-bar ten feet from the ground. A goal is won when the ball is driven between the posts and under the bar.
4. The ball shall not be lifted off the ground with the hand, when in play.
5. There shall not be less than fourteen or more than twenty-one players aside in regular matches.
6. There shall be an umpire for each side and a referee who will decide in cases where the umpires disagree. The referee keeps the time and throws up the ball at the commencement of each half.
7. The time of play shall be one hour and twenty minutes. Sides to be changed at half-time.
8. Before commencing play hurlers shall draw up the two lines in the centre of the field opposite to each other and catch hands or hurleys across, then separate. The referee then throws the ball along the ground between the players or up high over their heads.
9. No player to catch, trip or push from behind. Penalty, disqualification of the offender and free puck to the opposite side.
10. No player to bring his hurley intentionally in contact with the person of another player. Penalty as in Rule 9.
11. If the ball is driven over the end-lines and not through the goals, the player who is defending the goal shall have a free puck from the goal. No player of the opposite side to approach nearer than twenty yards until the ball is struck. The other players to stand on the goal line. But if the ball is driven over the goal line by a player whose goal it is, the opposite side shall have a free puck on the ground twenty yards out from the goal posts. Players whose goal it is to stand on the goal line until the ball is struck. N.B. Hitting both right and left is allowable.

The hurley may be of any pattern fancied by the player.

* The first playing rules of football and hurling adopted by the GAA at its second convention, December 1884 (*The Gaelic Athletic Association for the Preservation and Cultivation of National Pastimes*, Dublin, [?1885]).

Michael Cusack was known to refer to hurling as a form of 'miniature warfare' and as the 'manliest game every played by any branch of humankind.'

A notable landmark in the GAA's attempts to revitalise traditional Irish sports came with the publication of official rules. The founder members of the Association were aware that many of the features of Gaelic games were excessively violent. These rules were an attempt to improve both standards of play and fairness on the field. Their main aim was to standardise the rules of both hurling and football and remove many of the aggressive tendencies associated with the sports. The rules were widely circulated and were printed in several nationalist newspapers. Later, a pamphlet containing the rules was published at the relatively inexpensive cost of sixpence.

The first hurling game to be played under GAA rules occurred in Kilkenny in early 1885. The inter-county competition, which later evolved into the All-Ireland series, commenced in 1887.