



Mouthguards and the GAA

Following the GAA's Annual Congress in April 2012 a new rule was enacted that made it mandatory to use a Mouthguard in all Gaelic football matches and training sessions from January 1st 2013 (for all age grades up to and including minor) and at U21 and Adult level from January 1st 2014.

Ballinrobe GAA Club is supplying all under age players with a Mouthguard. These **MUST** be worn to every training session, match or blitz. Failure to do so will result in the player being excluded from said training session match or blitz.

The GAA recognise that Clubs may be worried about compliance with the new rules and specifically what will happen if a player forgets or does not have a mouthguard on the day of a game.

The suggestion in this context is that each Club should purchase a supply of the Stock or Boil and Bite mouthguards for use in such situations.

If a player refuses to comply with a Referee's instruction to wear a mouthguard, he will incur the penalty as outlined in (Rule 6.2, Rules of Foul Play, The Playing Rules of Football, Official Guide, Part II, 2012) 'Caution the offender; order off if he persists'.

The "boil and bite" mouthguard is made from thermoplastic material. It is placed in hot water to soften, then placed in the mouth and shaped around the teeth using finger and tongue pressure. Dentists do not recommend their use in general.

Custom-fitted mouthguards are individually designed and made in a dental office or a professional laboratory based on your dentist's instructions. These will not just offer the best protection against dental and oral injury but they should not affect performance i.e. breathing and speech should be relatively unaffected particularly if these have been worn regularly.

Due to the use of the special material and because of the extra time and work involved with a Dentist, this custom-made mouth guard is more expensive than the other types, but it provides the most comfort and protection.

Prices can vary significantly and it is worth seeking and comparing prices from a number of practitioners before deciding to purchase.

SOME QUESTIONS

1. When does the new rule come into effect?

From January 1st 2013, all players playing in grades up to and including Minor will be required to wear a mouthguard in all football games and at practice sessions.

2. What will happen if I am not wearing a mouthguard in a game?

If a player refuses to comply with a Referee's instruction to wear a mouthguard, he will initially be cautioned by the Referee and if the player continues to refuse, the Referee can send him off.

3. Who is responsible for ensuring mouthguards are worn at training or practice sessions?

It is a matter for each Club to ensure the rule is adhered to at training or practice sessions. Clubs and players should note that Players will not be covered under the player injury scheme if they are not wearing a mouthguard.

4. I am a Minor playing on an adult team in 2013. Do I have to wear a mouthguard?

Not in 2013. The wearing of mouthguards in 2013 is compulsory at all age grades up to minor. However, a player playing at U-21 or adult level in 2013 is not required to wear a mouthguard under rule. From January 1st 2014 all players at all grades must wear a mouthguard.

5. Our Club has an Academy, are children in these juvenile age groups exempt from wearing a mouthguard?

No. The Medical, Scientific & Welfare Committee advise that children should begin wearing a mouthguard at whatever age they start playing. Young mouths need protecting too and if players start wearing mouthguards at a young age this will add greatly to the development of a culture of wearing mouthguards in Gaelic Football.

6. Does the new rule regarding the wearing of Gum Shields apply to Cumann na mBunscol games?

Yes.

7. Do I have to wear a mouthguard whilst playing Second Level games?

Yes. From January 1st 2013, all Second Level players will be required to wear a mouthguard in all football games and at practice sessions.

Referee's will not be expected to individually check players before a game; however, if a Referee notices that a player is not wearing a mouthguard, he should caution the player and if the player still refuses to wear one, he should be sent off.

8. Which type of mouthguard can I purchase?

The decision on which type of mouthguard a player should use is a matter of personal preference. There is no doubt that custom fitted mouthguards offer the best fit and protection but they are the most expensive option also.

The Stock and Boil & Bite options will suffice for compliance with the new rules, but only if the product carries the CE mark.

PLAYERS MUST WEAR MOUTHGUARDS AND ANY PLAYER NOT HAVING A MOUTHGUARD WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PARTICIPATE AT ANY TIME. I UNDERSTAND THE MOUTHGUARD POLICY, HAVE BEEN ISSUED WITH A MOUTHGUARD AND WILL ENSURE 100% COMPLIANCE.

PARENT:

SIGN _____ **PRINT** _____ **DATE** _____

PLAYER:

SIGN _____ **PRINT** _____ **DATE** _____