



A Brief Timeline of the Important Dates During the GAA's Lifetime

Foundation

When Michael Cusack moved to Dublin, in 1877, to open his academy preparing Irish students for the Civil Service examinations, sport throughout Ireland was the preserve of the middle and ascended classes.

Within Cusack's academy sport was central with students who were encouraged to participate in rugby, cricket, rowing and weight-throwing.

In the early 1880's Cusack turned his attentions to indigenous Irish sports. In 1882 he attended the first meeting of the Dublin Hurling Club, formed '*for the purpose of taking steps to re-establish the national game of hurling*'.

The weekly games of hurling, in the Phoenix Park, became so popular that, in 1883, Cusack had sufficient numbers to found 'Cusack's Academy Hurling Club' which, in turn, led to the establishment of the Metropolitan Hurling Club.

On Easter Monday 1884 the Metropolitans played Killiomor, in Galway. The game had to be stopped on numerous occasions as the two teams were playing to different rules.

It was this clash of styles that convinced Cusack that not only did the rules of the games need to be standardised but that a body must be established to govern Irish sports.

Cusack was also a journalist and he used the nationalist press of the day to further his cause for the creation of a body to organise and govern athletics in Ireland.

On October 11 1884 an article, written by Cusack, called 'A word about Irish Athletics' appeared in the *United Ireland* and *The Irishman*. These articles were supported a week later by a letter from Maurice Davin, one of three Tipperary brothers, who had dominated athletics for over a decade and who gave his full support to the October 11 articles.

A week later Cusack submitted a signed letter to both papers announcing that a meeting would take place in Hayes's Commercial Hotel, Thurles on November 1 1884.

On this historic date Cusack convened the first meeting of the 'Gaelic Athletic Association for the Preservation and Cultivation of national Pastimes'. Maurice Davin was elected President, Cusack, Wyse-Power and McKay were elected Secretaries and it was agreed that Archbishop Croke, Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt would be asked to become Patrons.

From that initial, subdued first meeting grew the Association we know today.

TIMELINE 1884-2009

1884 Foundation of the GAA

At the behest of Michael Cusack seven men met in Hayes Hotel, Thurles on November 1 1884 and founded the Gaelic Athletic Association for the Preservation and Cultivation of our National Pastimes. Maurice Davin was elected President, Michael Cusack, John Wyse Power and John McKay elected Secretaries and Archbishop Thomas William Croke, Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt were asked to become patrons.

1887 Split and Reconstruction

The GAA split along political lines with one faction supporting the physical force IRB and the other the Irish Parliamentary Party. Matters came to a head at the 1887 Annual Congress when the IRB candidate, Edward Bennett, defeated Maurice Davin for the Presidency. Scanlon, (who favoured the Home Rule faction), left the Annual Congress and announced his intention to form a rival athletic association-one that would pledge allegiance to the National League. Archbishop Croke brought both sides together and at a Special Congress, in January 1888, Maurice Davin was re-elected as President of the GAA.



1888 American Invasion Tour

One of the main ideas considered by the founders of the GAA was the revival of the ancient Tailteann Games, An Aonach Tailteann. The GAA decided to host the games in Dublin in 1889 and estimated that £5,000 would be required for such a venture. To raise the capital a group of 50 Irish athletes embarked on a fundraising tour of Irish centres in America staging displays of hurling and athletics and international contests between Ireland and America. However terrible weather and infighting between the two athletic organisations in America resulted in low attendances and gate receipts. The GAA had to borrow £450 from Michael Davitt to bring the party home and up to 17 members remained in America. While the tour was a financial failure it did arouse interest in Gaelic Games amongst the Irish and Irish-Americans.

1913 Purchase of Croke Park

At the G.A.A.'s 1905 Annual Convention the decision was taken to erect a memorial in honour of Archbishop Thomas William Croke, First Patron of the GAA, who died in 1902. Between 1905 and 1913 fund-raising for this memorial was sporadic at best but in 1913 a 'Croke Memorial Tournament' (Hurling and Football) was held which resulted in a profit of £1,872, to be used for the memorial. Using these funds, the GAA decided to purchase Jones Road Sports Ground from Frank Dineen for £3,500. They re-named the grounds 'Croke Park' in honour of Archbishop Croke.

1916 GAA Involvement

Although not officially involved, many members of the GAA took part in the Rising. GAA activities throughout the country came to a halt as many of the association's members were imprisoned. In 1916 the GAA entered the 'political arena' when it agreed to send a delegation to a Dublin Corporation conference for the purpose of forming a Political Prisoners Amnesty Association. After the 1916 Rising the British Authorities severely curtailed the movement of traffic throughout Ireland and this included trains taking people to Croke Park. The finances of the GAA suffered severely as a result.

1918 Gaelic Sunday

In 1918 the British Authorities informed Luke O'Toole that no hurling or football games would be allowed unless a permit was obtained from Dublin Castle. The GAA, at their meeting of July 20 1918, unanimously agreed that no such permit be applied for under any conditions and that any person applying for a permit, or any player playing in a match in which a permit had been obtained, would be automatically suspended from the Association. In a further act of defiance, the Council organised a series of matches throughout the country for Sunday August 4 1918. Matches were openly played throughout the country with an estimated 54,000 members taking part. This became known as Gaelic Sunday.

1920 Bloody Sunday

The Dublin football team was scheduled to play Tipperary, in Croke Park, on November 21 1920 and the proceeds of this 'great challenge match' were to be donated to the Irish Republican Prisoners' Fund. The night before Michael Collins sent his 'Squad' out to assassinate the 'Cairo Gang', a team of undercover British agents working and living in Dublin. A series of shootings took place throughout the night which left 14 members of the British Forces dead. In reprisal the British Military entered Croke Park and opened fire killing 14 people.

1924 Tailteann Games

With the end of the Civil War the Irish Provisional Government decided to stage the Tailteann Games (due to take place in 1922 but postponed due to the outbreak of the Civil War) with Croke Park as the main centre of activity. The GAA was given a grant of £10,000 to refurbish Croke Park for the event, out of which they purchased a new stand, The Hogan Stand. Although the Tailteann Games were staged again in 1928 and 1932, the 1924 games are considered the most successful.

1929 Death of Luke O'Toole

Luke O'Toole, General Secretary, died of influenza on the 17th of July 1929. In November he was succeeded by Pádraig Ó Caoimh.

1938 Removal of Dr Hyde as President of Ireland

In December 1938 the GAA removed Douglas Hyde, President of Ireland, as a Patron of the Association. Hyde had broken the GAA's "exclusion/foreign games rule" by attending (in an official capacity) the Ireland v Poland International soccer match in Dalymount Park, Dublin.



1939-1945 The GAA and World War II

Travel and fuel restrictions during World War II severely curtailed the playing of Gaelic games. The GAA in Britain continued to play their championships against all the odds.

1947 Polo Grounds Final

The 1947 All-Ireland Senior Football Final, between Cavan and Kerry, was played in the Polo Grounds, New York, to stimulate interest in Gaelic Games amongst the Irish-American population there. The final, with Cavan victorious, was a resounding success with new clubs formed throughout America and a profit of close to £10,000 recorded.

1958 Wembley at Whit

The British GAA rent Wembley Stadium for the hosting of an exhibition of Gaelic Games. This venture was so successful that 'Wembley at Whit' became an annual date on the British GAA's calendar until 1975; in 1962 over 40,000 spectators attended the challenge game.

1961 GAA and the advent of Telefís Éireann

With the establishment of Telefís Éireann television became a reality for a large section of the Irish population. Gaelic Games were televised live for the first time and initial worries that the televising of games would result in a serious drop in attendances proved unfounded.

1964 Seán Ó Síocháin succeeds Pádraig Ó Caoimh as Secretary General

In May 1964 Pádraig Ó Caoimh, General Secretary of the Association, passed away; he was succeeded by Seán Ó Síocháin.

1966 - "1916" 50 Years On

The GAA marks the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Rising by staging a pageant 'Seachtar Fear: Seachtar Lá' in Croke Park. The GAA also commissioned an extended essay on the GAA's role in 1916. Veterans of the 1916 Rising were guests of honour at the 1966 All-Ireland Hurling Final.

1971 Rule 27 is rescinded

At a landmark Annual Congress, held in Ulster for the first time, the GAA deleted 'Rule 27' from its Official Guide. Members of the GAA were now permitted to play and attend previously banned sports.

1972 The Report of the Commission on the GAA is published

In 1972 the Commission on the Affairs of the Association, which was established in 1969 to 'investigate all aspects of the affairs of the Association', published its report. This report was far reaching and upon its adoption radically changed the administrative structures of the Association.

1979 Appointment of Liam Mulvihill

1981 The H-Block Hunger-Strikes

In 1981 Republican prisoners in the H Blocks embarked upon a hunger strike in an effort to get political status re-instated in the prisons. The issue of hunger strikers caused serious friction within the GAA with some members hoping that the GAA would actively support the prisoners while others believed the GAA should remain completely neutral. Once the prisoners entered the political arena (with some standing for election) the GAA took the decision to remove itself completely from the issue, in accordance with Rule 7 of the Official Guide.

1983 Dublin's 12 man All-Ireland final success

The 1983 All-Ireland Football Final, between Dublin and Galway, is best remembered for ill-temper on the pitch with Dublin ending the game with 12 players. An incident at the Hill 16 End of the stadium played a part in convincing Liam Mulvihill of the need for a complete revamp of Croke Park.

1984: GAA Centenary Year – All Ireland hurling final played in Thurles



1991: Jersey Sponsorship is introduced

The Leinster Championship First Round game between Dublin and Meath involves a marathon series of four games, which attracts 237,000 supporters.

1993: The Redevelopment of Croke Park commences

2001: The GAA's Rule 21

Rule 21 prevents members of the British Security forces from becoming members of the Association is abolished.

2003: The New Croke Park

The New Croke Park opened with a capacity of 82,300. The world Special Olympics are staged at the venue

2005: The GAA's Rule 42

Rule 42 which prevents sports other than Gaelic Games from being played at GAA venues, is temporarily set aside to allow the Ireland Rugby team and the Republic of Ireland soccer team to play games at Croke Park while Lansdowne Road rugby grounds are being redeveloped.

Over 80,000 people attend the All Ireland Hurling finals for the first time since 1956.

2007: The first Rugby game

The first Rugby game is staged at Croke Park is between Ireland and France in the Six Nations championship. The first soccer game at the venue is played between Ireland and Wales.

2009: 125th Anniversary

The GAA celebrated its 125th year in existence with an array of events to mark the year.



125 Year Celebrations



Founder: Michael Cusack



Football's Sam Maguire Cup



Hurling's Liam McCarthy Cup