



# Éire Óg Club Stories



*Éire Óg stories is a new series where we will be chatting to members of the club and getting to know what makes Éire Óg special for them. Next up is Ladies Footballer– Wendela Zegers*

## **Why did you start playing Ladies football?**

A few years ago, a good friend of mine contacted me to say that Éire Óg Greystones were setting up a new ladies team (having not had one for the past number of years). They were looking for beginners and experienced players, young and old (I definitely belonged in the latter category at this stage!!). She reminded me that I always wanted to play, and given the fact that the gym simply wasn't for me, it seemed like a great way to get fit – which was my primary reason for joining at the time.

## **Why didn't you play during your secondary school days?**

Born in The Netherlands and moving to Ireland at the age of 11, the world of GAA was alien to me for many of my younger years. I always wanted to join a team in secondary school, but having seen the talent and skill in Éire Óg at the time, I simply didn't have the courage to do so. I was afraid that I wouldn't be good enough and that I wouldn't be able to play!

## **Who supported you on your sporting journey?**

Ollie Leonard had started the initiative to get the team back up in running and taught us beginners the basic rules of football, hand passing and to soloing. I bought my first pair of boots and haven't looked back since – never did I think that I would love it as much as I now do!

## **What are your stand-out GAA memories to date?**



The team was made up of a fantastic skill mix and different ages. As word spread of the success of the team, some old faces returned and joined. The commitment was outstanding and in our first competitive year, we won Junior B! The following year we stepped up and went on to win the Junior A championship against Roundwood. I don't think I have ever been as nervous as in the end we won by 1 point! It was such an achievement and a very proud moment; to think we were only playing together 3 years (2 years competitively). The win led us to be promoted to Intermediate, a definite step up with regards to the standard and our competition. We continued to fight hard and although unfortunately we didn't bring any silver back to the club last year, we managed to retain our place at Intermediate League and Championship for 2020.

## **What do you love about the club?**

I never thought in a million years that I would love being part of a team as much as I do. To be honest, I didn't think I would go back after the first week. I really enjoy the training aspect and the camaraderie – they are a fantastic bunch of girls and the coaches are nothing but encouraging. It makes training and exercise fun! Off the pitch I have become very involved with the committee and organising some of the events behind the scenes – it is my way of giving back to the club and community.

## **What would be your advice to any young girls thinking about playing?**

My advice to any young girls out there who might be nervous of joining a team or afraid that they won't be able to play or be as good as their team mates – it really is all about taking part and playing together. My biggest regret is definitely joining so late in life, but I am so glad I took the chance when I did. Every single player adds something to the team and that is what makes it work and what brings success!

*Ní neart go cur le chéile - There is no strength without unity.*

*If you would like to nominate someone to tell their club story, please contact Olive Farrell ([farrell.olive@gmail.com](mailto:farrell.olive@gmail.com)) or Daniel English ([englishdaniel@hotmail.com](mailto:englishdaniel@hotmail.com)).*