

# GAA HANDBALL WEXFORD PLAYER PROFILE

## *Brian Gilhooly, Castlebridge*

<b>Major honours:</b>	<b>All Ireland softball championships:</b> intermediate singles 1995, under 21 singles 1992, minor singles 1991, under 17 singles 1989  <b>United States Nationals:</b> B singles 1994  <b>County softball championships:</b> senior champion on a number of occasions
<b>Started playing at:</b>	Aged 13 in St. Peters College, Wexford
<b>Greatest influence on career:</b>	A great many people including, my father, Ned Buggy, Seamus Buggy, Ducksy Walsh, Tommy Hynes, Pat Cleary, John Fleming, Jim Doyle, Pierce O’Keeffe, Michael Lambert, Paul Carty, Pat Mullett, Tony Breen....the list goes on and on
<b>Favourite code (softball, 4-wall or 1-wall):</b>	Softball (I never played 4-wall except on that trip to America and there was no 1 wall back then)
<b>Favourite court:</b>	The centre alley in St. Peters College, it was literally my front room and bedroom – I owned it!
<b>Favourite shot:</b>	Half volley overhead shot with open hand, sending the ball into the back corners – I used to murder lads with that shot!
<b>Favourite player:</b>	Changed over the years but included Tommy O’Rourke, Ducksy Walsh, David Chapman and Fred Lewis
<b>Toughest match:</b>	From memory it was probably against Ned Buggy in the county senior singles semi final at Ballymitty in 1992

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<b>Toughest opponent:</b>	Ned Buggy and Tommy Hynes. I only ever played Ducksy Walsh one game to 21 and I got 17, but I knew all about it after that!
<b>Most enjoyable victory:</b>	That USHA victory in 1994. I went out for a holiday, not expecting to perform at all, let alone win anything.
<b>Pre-game meal:</b>	Nothing at all as I was a bag of nerves before matches and couldn't eat. For some reason I always played my best handball on an empty stomach.
<b>Tips you would give to young players seeking to improve? :</b>	Live in the alley. Eat sleep and drink it while you are young and able, once you enjoy it. My weakness was in the back left corner, and I started living down in that corner, with overhead left hand and the low back wall, on my own in the alley hour after hour. Then it was my strong point. Around that time I tried to have little weakness that anyone could exploit. Mainly serve and return of serve win most games I used to find.
<b>Suggestions for making handball better (if any):</b>	I think Handball is flying here to be honest. When I was young, I never saw any girls play for instance, and my opposition was not as strong as it would be today. If was about today, I would win nothing with the talent that is available. All this is down to county boards, officials, referees, of which I am ashamed to say I never did any of that. I just focused on the alley, and with everything else, the volume was turned down, unfortunately.
<b>Other sports played:</b>	I didn't play any other sports, not really into sport, if I'm honest.
<b>Greatest sporting hero (all sports):</b>	Eoin Kennedy Dublin (60X30). To consistently come back year after year with the same intensity and defeat after defeat against Robbie McCarthy and eventually gain victory at 40 years of age. Amazing achievement.