Because of Northern Ireland’s rich, rural heritage and magnificent countryside, sport and physical activity have played an important role in the region’s culture. Popular sports and physical activities include the following:

Gaelic (or indigenous Irish) games, including hurling and camogie, Gaelic football, handball, road bowls, and skittles. (Gaelic games also have a devoted following in the United States, and we are honored to welcome several American teams to the Festival for exhibition matches.)

FOOTBALL (SOCCER)—amateur and professional

RUGBY, an amateur and professional team sport similar to American football

GOLF played on world-class golf courses, such as the Royal Portrush, the Royal County Down, and other beautifully maintained courses throughout the region

WATER SPORTS, such as rowing, sailing, and fishing along Northern Ireland’s long, unspoiled coastline and in its many miles of navigable rivers

MOTORSPORTS, including rally racing and motorcycle “Road Racing,” which culminate annually in the North West 200, an on-road race that attracts over 100,000 spectators

HIKING, hill walking, and mountain climbing throughout the region and within Northern Ireland’s many parks and wilderness areas