



7601 Martin Grove Road
Vaughan, Ontario
L4L 9E4

Tel: 905-264-9390
Fax: 905-264-9445
E-mail: theosa@soccer.on.ca

To: OSA District Administrators, OSA Clubs, OSA Technical Advisory Committee, OSA Board Members, OSA Staff.

From: Alex Chiet – OSA Chief Technical Officer

Date: Thursday 18th August

Re: OSA Long Term Player Development Update

It's likely that just about everyone in the Ontario soccer world has heard the term "Long-Term Player Development" (LTPD). What some may not be aware of is exactly what it means and how it will affect soccer across the province.

Some brief background: The Canadian Soccer Association, following on the heels of a mandate from Sport Canada, has introduced the need for a new and better approach to developing the sport—and individual players—across the country.

The question now is not "if" but "how" we will implement this critically important program to making the game better for all.

We're past the point of simply talking. We need action. And we have the opportunity to create our own "made in Ontario" solution and we intend to do just that. While we recognize that LTPD has been indeed been talked about for years, actual planning and implementation has been, we well recognize, somewhat delayed. But sometimes, important changes are worth waiting for.

The good news is that the OSA has established a team of experts to map out the best way to plan and implement LTPD, as part of our new Technical Advisory Council (TAC). The Council is made up of representatives from Clubs, Districts, Academies, referees and other experts throughout the province. The TAC is already in the midst of identifying and working on three key priorities: coaching development and certification, developing a 'best practices' player-centered pathway and ensuring that we communicate often and clearly about our progress to everyone affected by these changes.

Please be aware that we are working diligently to bring forward changes that will make the game better for everyone, in every corner of the province.



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In the meantime, I wanted to share some brief points about what LTPD really is (as opposed to what you might have heard, in the absence of accurate information) and how we plan to introduce the mandated changes over time relating to the delivery of soccer in Ontario.

1. In short, LTPD at the recreational level aims to ensure that coaches will be better trained and players will receive more actual skill instruction and most importantly, have more fun.
2. The various components of LTPD (Active Start, FUNdamentals, Learning to Train, Training to Train, Training to Compete, Training to Win and Active for Life) provide a logical, thoughtful and well-supported approach to the many stages in a young soccer player's development, whether at the competitive or recreational level.
3. Players need the right messages and the right activities at the right time at all stages in their development. LTPD principles are designed to deliver precisely that. This approach, properly administered, will aim to ensure that every player can reach their potential while still maintaining their love for the sport.
4. Everyone from coaches and administrators to parents and those who sit on Boards should know that LTPD has already long been in practice in the best "soccer countries" around the world. The science and research behind this model is clear. This is a superior way to bring people to the game, keep them in the game, and ensure they enjoy it whether they are playing at the recreational level or at far more competitive levels.
5. At the recreational and younger elite/competitive stages, there will be far less emphasis on scores and winning and losing.
6. League structure will be re-shaped to create a better pathway for young, talented players. We are looking at competition structure models where teams and Clubs will not have to worry about promotion and relegation, for example. Instead, the focus at the elite level will be on developing excellent coaches and developing—and identifying for higher levels of play—as many talented players as we possibly can.
7. The new program will require, we recognize, a shift in attitude on the part of many coaches and parents who have long focused on "winning". There will still be competitions and games at the younger levels, of course, but the emphasis will be on touches, skills, and developing practices that engage and make our young talented players even better.



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8. Some individual Districts and Clubs in Ontario are already moving ahead with some elements of LTPD, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.
9. Our intent is not to make a sudden change. We want to plan thoroughly and seek input as we go. We will be phasing in the different stages of LTPD, with some planned-for pilot programs in 2012 and a broader implementation starting in earnest in 2013.
10. We project that phasing in all of the various elements of LTPD over an 8-year period, to ensure that every region of the province and Clubs in every District will be able to make these adjustments as seamlessly as possible.
11. We want players for life! When a young person comes to soccer—because they like the sport or because their parents are simply looking for an activity for them—we aim to provide such a great experience that the vast majority of youngster will stay in the game for the rest of their life, either as participants, coaches, referees, administrators, and volunteers.
12. Every young player is unique and develops, matures and grows in sport at a different pace and rate of development. LTPD makes sure we don't "miss" kids with talent, just because they are smaller, are born later in the year, or don't "show well" in a particular game or "try-out".

We will continue to communicate with you as we move along this path. Our objective is to do this "right". We need and appreciate your support!

Kind Regards

Alex Chiet
OSA Chief Technical Officer