

18.00 Olympic Development Program

18.01 The U.S. Youth Soccer ODP Philosophy

To identify players of the highest caliber on a continuing and consistent basis, which will lead to increased success for the U.S. National Teams in the international arena.

18.02 Purpose

The U.S. Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program was formed in 1977 to identify a pool of players in each age group from which a National Team will be selected for international competition; to provide high-level training to benefit and enhance the development of players at all levels; and, through the use of carefully selected and licensed coaches, develop a mechanism for the exchange of ideas and curriculum to improve all levels of coaching.

18.03 How to Participate

Contact the Oklahoma Soccer Association's Director of Player Development and Coach Education, Matt Fansher: matt@oksoccer.com or by phone (405) 409-6288 to find out more about getting involved with the Olympic Development Program.

18.04 Program History to Present

In 1979, the program expanded, the organization became more efficient and multi-year plans were developed. State Associations were encouraged to develop programs which supported and worked in tandem with National and Regional programs. At the beginning of 1982 a formalized program for girls was created, with the addition of a full committee (one member from each Region.) From 1982 until the present, international events for youth national teams have increased substantially and the U.S. Youth Soccer ODP has kept pace by instituting trials and player pools for five age groups in the boys' program and five age groups in the girls' program.

18.05 The U.S. Youth Soccer ODP Selection Process

Each State Association holds ODP try-outs on an annual basis. For Age group try out dates check the Oklahoma Soccer Association web site: <http://www.oksoccer.com> under "Programs" and "Olympic Development Program," or contact Matt Fansher, matt@oksoccer.com or 405-409-6288.

18.05.1 How are Players Selected?

Players are selected on the basis of open tryouts. These tryouts are conducted by OSA coaches who are recognized for their ability to identify and train players with superior skills. Also note that some state associations combine scouting techniques and invitations to certain players with the open tryouts. Selection of these players is not an easy task. The OSA Director of Coaching, Matt Fansher, will be assisted in the selection process by several other highly qualified coaches from throughout the state. Players are evaluated on the four components that make up a soccer player:

18.05.1 How are Players Selected? Continued:

1. Technique
2. Tactics
3. Fitness and Athletic Ability
4. Psychological Component (attitude)

18.06 Regional Camps

U.S. Youth Soccer is divided into four regions, each which offers a regional camp for state association ODP teams in each eligible age group. The camps are designed to provide a high level of competition and training for participating players. During this training and competition, players who are capable of performing at a higher level of play are identified for possible national team camp, pool, or team participation. Each region varies somewhat as to the specifics and the cost of their camps. Contact Matt Fansher, the OSA Director of Coaching or the Region III administrator for more information.

18.07 National Camp

National Camps and Interregional events are held throughout the year at various locations in the United States. The National Team Coach or a National Staff Coach is present at these events to observe, train, and identify players for placement in the national pool or on a national team.

18.08 Benefits of Participating in the Olympic Development Program

There are several benefits to participating in the U.S. Youth Soccer ODP Program. Most notably is the development a player can experience given the opportunity to train and play with the best players in any given age group. Another benefit is the quality of instruction the player will receive from a nationally licensed coaching staff. Quality of competition will be greatly increased for the player by competing against other state association ODP teams. Players will also have the honor of representing their state, region and even country in competition. Lastly, the player will gain exposure to regional and national team coaches as well as college coaches.