



## **Oklahoma Soccer Association**

### **Under 9 & Under 10 Academy Program – Guidelines**

Clubs must be empowered to provide a variety of programming options for their players. The Academy Program empowers clubs to provide a non-stress, age appropriate learning environment while demanding a greater level of responsibility and professionalism from these organizations.

Through the Academy Program clubs will be able to educate out the ‘win at all costs mentality’ and put a greater focus on teaching technical skills and inspiring a life long passion for the game.

The Academy Program allows clubs to focus on the long-term development of individual players without having to focus on short-term results of a team while bridging the gap between Recreational soccer and Competitive soccer.

Below are the general guidelines for the Oklahoma Soccer Association - Academy Program to aid clubs in the implementation and development of academy programs.

**1). Notification**

- Clubs must notify Oklahoma Soccer Association in writing of their intention to develop and implement an Academy Program and will meet all registration requirements of their country association, OSA and USYS.
- This is not an approval or application process.
- These notifications will be used to facilitate communication between Oklahoma Soccer and clubs regarding the evolution and growth of Academy Programs.

**2). Eligibility/Registration**

- Players can play either Academy or Recreational soccer – THEY MAY NOT PARTICIPATE IN BOTH!
- If a club chooses to have an Academy program, they MUST still maintain a Recreational program to offer to players.
- All players participating in the Academy Program must be registered with US Youth Soccer through their member clubs, country association and OSA. There is no “direct” or “special event” registration for Academy players.
- In order to be age eligible, a player must have already turned 8 years old to participate in a club’s Academy Program by July 31st for Fall season.
- ALL players within the Academy Program will be registered directly with their club and will not be assigned to a specific team.
- The Academy Program is a division of recreational soccer, and try-outs are not allowed.

**3). Format**

- Each individual club will be responsible for formatting and organizing their Academy Program to best fit the developmental needs of their club and players.
- It is recommended, that players within the Academy Program be moved between ‘playing groups’ or squads based on developmental needs.

**4). Supervision/Leadership**

- Club’s must appoint a DOC or Coordinator to lead their Academy Program and that person will act as the primary contact person.

- The club's appointed DOC or Coordinator must be in charge of all aspects of the program, including but not limited to setting training priorities, placing players, assigning and hiring coaches.
- The DOC or Coordinator should act as the liaison between the club and Oklahoma Soccer Association regarding the Academy Program.
- It is required that the club's appointed DOC or Coordinator hold a National Youth License. This educational experience and background will ensure that the players are experiencing a developmentally appropriate program.
- Academy programs must meet and follow the Risk Management guidelines set forth by OSA.
- The Club's appointed DOC or Coordinator will have 12 months to obtain the National Youth License.
- Academy staff coaches must hold the National Youth license OR a D license (State or National). They will have 12 months to obtain this license.

#### **5). Training/Practice Sessions**

- Clubs will be directly responsible for establishing and formatting their training/practice environment. Academy trainings are limited to two (2) trainings per week that should last no longer than 90 minutes.
- Clubs may/should move players between 'playing groups' or squads during training/practice sessions when developmental needs or parity dictates.
- It is recommended that the club's appointed DOC or Coordinator attend all the training/practice sessions.
- Academy coaches must hold either a National Youth License OR a D license (State or National). They will have 12 months to obtain this license.

#### **6). Games**

- OSA will be responsible for scheduling the Academy league.
- NO scores or standings will be kept for any games during league.
- OSA will NOT schedule any cross-state games. East teams will be scheduled against East teams and West teams will be scheduled against West teams.
- It is strongly recommended that the club's appointed DOC or Coordinator be present during game or competition activities.
- Each player must play a minimum of 50% of every game.
- Clubs may/should move players between 'playing groups' or squads during games when developmental needs or parity dictates.
- Format: U9 & U10 will play 8v8. 2 x 25 minute halves. Substitutions will be unlimited and can occur at any stoppage.

As long as both coaches are in agreement, format of game can be modified to facilitate a developmental situation. Example: If coaches decide that they would like to play with offside for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half or game, they have that flexibility. (Only one referee will be assigned per game)

#### **7). Tournaments**

- OSA will begin sanctioning Academy Divisions in tournaments as long as all the correct applications, information, etc. has been submitted and approved by OSA

- Oklahoma Academy teams will be limited to two (2) tournaments in the Fall and two (2) tournaments in the Spring. The Fall is defined as August 1st – December 31st and the Spring will be defined as January 1st – May 31st.
- Oklahoma Academy teams can receive permission to travel to one (1) out of State tournament in the Fall and one (1) in the Spring. This will be included in one of the four tournaments in a year. Teams can play in four in-state tournaments if that is what they choose (2 Fall / 2 Spring).  
There will be no State tournament for Academy divisions.

**8). Referee**

- Home club will assign referees.
- Each Academy league game must be assigned one referee.

**9). Additional Recommendations**

- Recommended that clubs provide the players periodic evaluation charting their progress and participation.
- Recommended that clubs administer a mandatory Parent Education Program to ALL parents who have children participating in their Academy Program.

**10). Long-Range Planning and Development**

A long-range planning and development committee of Club Directors of Coaching and the Oklahoma Soccer Association Director of Coaching and Player Development along with the Oklahoma Soccer Association Youth Board will oversee the growth and evolution of the Academy Program.

**11). Sanctions/Discipline**

Clubs or coaches, participating in the Academy Program, that violate either the spirit or the letter of these rules will be subject to sanction and discipline directly from the Oklahoma Soccer Association Youth Board.