



## ODP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### FAQs

#### **What is the purpose of ODP?**

The US 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.

#### **Which age groups are eligible for ODP?**

The ODP age group refers to the year in which a player was born. For example, players born between January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007 are classified as 07's. For the 2019-2020 seasonal year, the following age groups are eligible: 2005's, 2006's, 2007's, 2008's, 2009's, and 2010's. Players born in 2010 will participate in the program but not attend any regional events. However, friendly matches are a possibility for the 2010 age group.

### ODP Staff

#### **How are coaches selected to work in ODP?**

College, club and high school coaches apply each year to work in the program. Kentucky Youth Soccer Association reviews the applications and places the coaches with the appropriate age groups/genders. It is preferred that all ODP Head Age Group coaches possess a USSF A License or USSF B License.

Club coaches are permitted to work in the same ODP age group that they coach club soccer. Any coach found using ODP for club recruiting purposes will be released from their duties with the program.

#### **Do ODP coaches go through the background check process?**

Background checks are run on all ODP Coaches, chaperones, and try-out evaluators

### State Pool Training

#### **What is the player selection process for the State Pool in Kentucky?**

In Kentucky, the main vehicle for player selection is the preliminary open tryouts. The preliminary open tryouts are held each fall. From tryouts, state pools of 30-40 players are selected (numbers may vary on age group and quality of players). The State Pool in each age group trains between 5-6 times during the winter. Players in the state pools also attend one inter-state event, usually in the winter and/or spring.

Scouting is the other vehicle for player selection. The ODP staff will use KPL matches and state tournament events to scout players for the state pool.



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### **Can players be cut from the State Pool after tryouts are complete?**

In all the age groups, players selected to the state pool are eligible to participate in all training and events until the sub regional event in June. In the five oldest age groups, the state pools will be cut down to state teams of 16- 18 players (plus alternates) in June to take one team to camp.

### **Can players be added to the State Pool after tryouts are over?**

Players can be added under the following circumstances:

- immediately after the state tryouts,
- once the state pools are announced,
- Club Directors of Coaching who feel very strongly that the Evaluators missed a quality player can contact the Director of Player Development.

The player(s) in question may be invited to an ODP training session for an additional evaluation or a staff coach may be sent to watch the player in a club game. If the staff deems the player should be in the state pool, the player may be added. Club DOC's are encouraged to contact the Director of Player Development immediately after tryouts. The longer they wait, the less likely the player being added. Other scenarios that may warrant a player being added to the pool are:

- Player moving into KY after the tryouts.
- Player missing the tryouts due to injury or requested an alternate try-out
- Player identified by State, Regional, or National staff coach after the tryouts through the scouting network.

Players identified after the preliminary tryouts are only added to the state pool if they are in the top half of the pool and only with approval by the Director of Player Development. ODP at the state level has an obligation to identify the best players and put them in front of the regional staff. This is a key component of the program.

Kentucky Youth Soccer Association Director of Player Development reserves the right to add a player at any time to the state pool, squad or team.

### **Will there be specific training for Goalkeepers?**

During try-outs and the outdoor pool training sessions, players who specialize in playing as a Goalkeeper will receive specific training for this position. There may be some sessions where they will be integrated with the team from the beginning.

### **What happens if your child has a conflict with their club and an ODP event?**

Special thanks are extended to the club coaches who encourage their players to participate in the ODP process. Through their efforts, these coaches are participants in the ODP process and the development of their players. These coaches have the best interest of their players in mind and have enough confidence in their own ability to allow their players to be trained by other coaches to reach their potential. Although ODP takes precedence by law, the program tries not to conflict with regularly scheduled outdoor league play; high school soccer season, State Cup games, US Youth Soccer National Championship Series Midwest Regional Championships and National Championship games, US Youth Soccer and US Soccer regional and national ODP events.



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We respect that clubs may have to schedule tournaments during our events. Due to the short amount of time that the state coaches are allocated to work with these players, it is preferred that they attend the ODP event. Player are expected to make the decision on whether they attend the event with their club or with ODP. The decision will be respected and in return we expect every final decision made by the Kentucky Youth Soccer Association state staff to be respected as well. The child that attends all the scheduled events has a better opportunity of being selected for the final team as they will have the opportunity to be evaluated by staff more than those players missing sessions. An attendance record will be kept.

If your child is not attending the ODP event you must contact the Director of Player Development.

### ODP Region Camp

#### What is a Region?

US Soccer split the country into 4 regions for administrative and logistical purposes. The four regions are the East Region, Midwest Region, South Region, and The West Region. Each region comprises 12-14 states. Kentucky is in the Midwest Region.

#### When is Regional ID Camp usually held?

Region Camp is usually held in early July. There are separate camps for males and females, each at a different location. Since there are 4-5 age groups to evaluate, the camp is organized into 5 day-long sessions, with each session accommodating one or two age groups. At the end of the 5-day camp, a region pool is selected.

At the Region III Fall (October) Meeting, the dates for region camp for the following summer are set and, shortly after, are posted on our web site.

#### What is the player selection process at the Region Level?

At region camp, players play against other states and are evaluated for selection into the region pool. At the end of camp, a region pool of 40-50 players is selected. In the months after camp, region teams of 16-18 players will be selected in each age group to participate in national camps, inter-regional events, and/or international trips. The national staff coaches attend these events and evaluate players for inclusion into national pools. Please refer to the section on region camp below for more details on camp format and regional selection process.

To provide some perspective here, since each region selects a similarly sized pool, when a player is selected for the region pool, he/she is considered in the top 120-160 players in the country in his/her age group. Once a player is selected for a region team, he/she is now considered in the top 60-70 players in the country.

#### What is the role of the Region Staff?

The region head coach appoints age group coaches and support staff. Each age group has a head coach, a couple of assistant coaches, a goalkeeper coach and additional staff coaches. At region camp, each staff coach is assigned to work with one or two state teams for the duration of the 5-day session. The region



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staff coach trains the assigned state teams, observes them in games and gets to know all the players by the end of the session. Each night, after the games are played, the region staff meets to discuss the players. Each staff coach announces which players from their own assigned team were impressive and from this, a preliminary list of potential pool players is created. This process is repeated each night and the list evolves based on players' performances with their states and in the nightly pool games. As the week rolls, some players are dropped and some are added, based on performance. The region staff holds one last meeting after the last game to finalize the pool.

The age group head coach is not assigned to any state teams. They are free to move from game to game which allows them to focus on the players recommended by the staff at the nightly meetings.

### **What player qualities are the Region Staff Looking for?**

Just as at the state tryouts, quality first touch is the most important technical indicator of skill. Can the player control the ball with one touch, or does he/she need multiple touches to bring the ball under control? Does the player get away from pressure with first touch or does he/she get into trouble because of a poor touch? This is closely related to the 'speed of play' at the elite level. The better the players, the higher the speed of play. For players to survive at the higher levels speed of play, they must have a good first touch.

The speed of play at the region pool level is much higher than at the state level and requires players to think quicker and control the ball quicker. Since players at this level are physically and mentally sharper, they anticipate and close on the ball quickly, which means players have to execute their moves in tight areas, often surrounded by multiple opponents who pounce on every poor touch.

Another important attribute is what is referred to as 'quick feet', i.e. the ability to change direction on a dime and shift weight from one foot to the other and evade challenges with quick foot movements. This is, in the long run, an indicator of soccer specific athleticism which is more important than sheer size. As players mature at varying rates, size eventually evens out. But someone with 'quick feet' will always have an advantage and is more likely to develop into an 'explosive' player, which is so vital at the elite level.

Athleticism becomes very important at the highest-level once players mature physically. It is no longer possible to just rely on superior skill without speed, strength and power, since all the players are highly skilled. The better athletes ally their physical attributes to their skill to rise to the top.

Lastly, 'soccer smarts' is also evaluated at the region level. Decisions on the ball and off the ball are scrutinized. Being able to 'read the game' and understand what kind of pass is needed, how to keep the ball under pressure, where to position oneself, how to help the team maintain a good team shape in attack and in defense, when to support the ball from behind and when to make runs ahead of the ball. These problem-solving abilities separate the state level player from the region level player.

### **How many players from Kentucky typically are selected to attend the Region ID Camp?**

Typically, anywhere from 3-6 players per age group are selected to attend the ID Camp.

