

# OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



US Youth Soccer Regions

National State Soccer Associations

# Olympic Development Program



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- Program Overview
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- Player Evaluations
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- Development of Coaches, Referees and Administrators
- State Select Team
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# Olympic Development



## Program



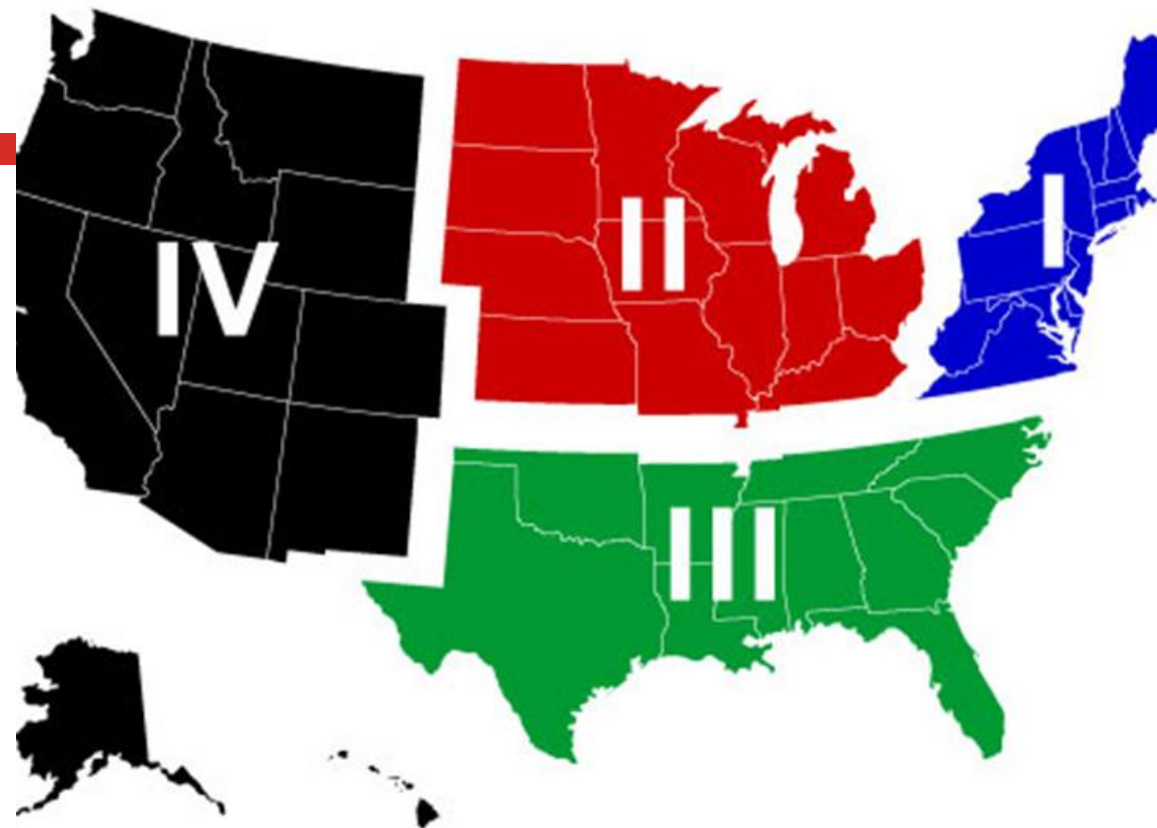
- The beginning of a soccer journey that will take you farther up the American soccer pyramid than ever before!
- Top level players!
- Top level coaches!
- Top level administrators!
- First rate domestic competition!
- Professional training!
- International experiences!
- Exposure to college and professional scouts!

*“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.”*

**~Helen Keller**



**US YOUTH  
SOCCER**



## **State & Region Level Identification & Competition Process for Elite Players**

There is also US Youth Soccer ODP in Europe for American players.

This Program spans half the globe!



**O**lympic

**D**evelopment

**P**rogram

### **The US 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.





# US Youth Soccer ODP

## Purpose

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.



# State Select Team



To develop each player in the program to their full potential to enhance the enjoyment of playing the game.

To increase the skill level of the players to raise the level of play in their local environment.

# State Select Team



To develop all players to achieve their highest possible level.

To identify players of the highest caliber on a consistent basis to lead to increased success for the US National teams in the international arena.



# Region Trials



- US Youth Soccer Regions offer regional trials for State Select Teams in each eligible age group. The trials are designed to provide high level 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.

# Region Teams



- The US Youth Soccer Region ODP teams participate in the National Camps and Interregional events that are held throughout the year at various locations in the United States. National and Regional Staff Coaches are present at these events to observe, train and identify players for placement in the national pool or on a national team. The Region ODP pools also participate in international competitions with teams from other countries.

# Climb the Soccer Pyramid



U. S. National  
Teams

Professional  
Team

1223 Men's Programs

1383 Women's  
Programs

College Team

30,000 players go on to  
play men's & women's  
college soccer

Olympic Development  
Program

Youth Soccer – Club Soccer –  
Scholastic Soccer

# If at first you don't succeed..



- *"Courage does not always roar. Sometimes, courage is that quiet voice that says...I will try again tomorrow."*  
~Mary Anne Radmacher

One of the biggest gripes some people have when they don't make a team is that it has to do with some political process. They blame lack of success on favoritism or prejudice. So, rather than discussing or evaluating failure through lack of ability or performance, the issue is politics. ... So if you don't want to leave it to chance, don't let it be close. Make a clear statement in the trial about who you are and what you can do.



Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.

Winston Churchill

# PERSERVERANCE

This attitude requires "we-opic" vision ("What's in it for **we**?"), a challenging step up from the common "me-opic" mindset.



Player evaluation criteria – the ability to consistently execute the **Principles of Play** at speed while under pressure.

# US YOUTH SOCCER OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



# Player Evaluation

## Roles of Play

- Recognize when to be 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> attacker or defender.
- Ability to effectively execute those roles.



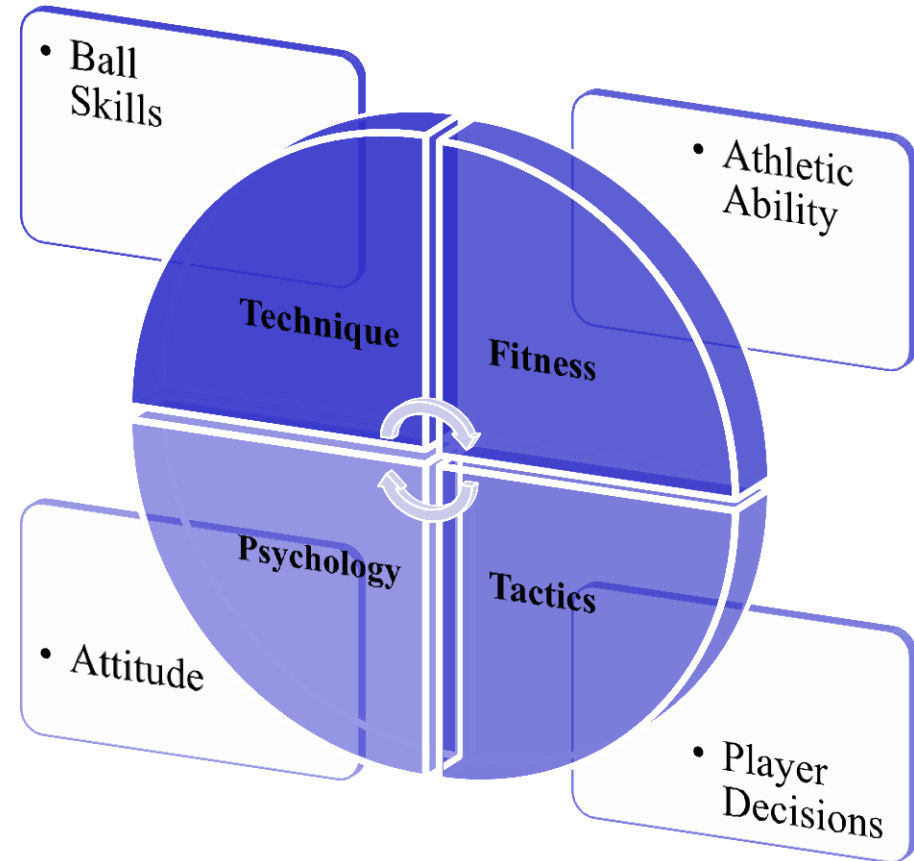
*"Winners display competitiveness and composure at the right moment."*

Arsène Wenger



## Identification – Selection Criteria

- ✓ Technique – quality of first touch, comfort level on the ball, can you play inside a phone booth?
- ✓ Fitness – natural physical talents, current physical fitness level
- ✓ Tactics – 80% of tactical movement (decisions) occur off-the-ball...what are you doing at those moments in the match?  
Quality of decisions made when on the ball.
- ✓ Psychology – composure, determination, mental toughness, awareness, ability to stay focused for a full match



# Player Evaluation



- Technical Skills
  - Technical speed
  - Consistent skills
  - Range of skills
  - Quality of skills

*"Being optimistic, not arrogant – I believe I will win. To be afraid of losing removes the willingness to win."*

**Vanderlei Luxemburgo**

# Player Evaluation



- Athletic Ability
  - Speed ... especially acceleration
  - Vertical Jump
  - Power ... explosiveness
  - Agility ... balance
  - Endurance ... stamina
  - Range of Motion ... flexibility



# Player Evaluation



## ⚽ Tactics

- Positioning (off-the-ball movement) will show to the greatest extent what a player sees in the game
- 1 vs. 1 decisions (defense & offense)
- Can play more than one position (versatility)
- Understands more than one formation and system of play
- Anticipation or reaction player (RTG)



# Mental



Can handle adversity | Can control emotions ... thinking tactically | Strength of character | Positive impact on teammates | Fair Play | Competitor – will to win | Willingness to PREPARE to win! | Creative | Adaptable | Versatile | Composure | Enjoys the game – spirit of the game – FUN

*"If you want to have a winning attitude, you have to win every match – even in training."*

**Ottmar Hitzfeld**



# Try-Out Process



- Open Trials are required by U. S. O. C., U.S. Soccer and US Youth Soccer at least once per year.
- Invitation only trials are also allowed.
- Scouting to identify and invite players to trials may be part of the state level process.
- State Trials
- Regional Trials
- National Camp

# Player Evaluation



- The scouting aspect of US Youth Soccer ODP identifies players under match conditions at league matches, tournaments and state cup competitions.

# Player Evaluation



Scouting or evaluation questions to ask:

- ⚽ Are they playing up?
- ⚽ In what division are they playing?
- ⚽ What is the strength of their team and what level of success has it achieved?
- ⚽ What is the quality of coaching and training they are receiving?



# Player Selection



## **Motivation without money**

- Selection (power)
- Coach (passion)
- Cause (dreams)
- Environment (stimulating)
- Recognition (attention)
- Rewards (psychological)

## **Pick the best – The self-motivated**

- Success (confidence)
- Team (dynamics)
- Fans (atmosphere)
- Humor (well-being)
- Standards (challenge)
- Events (matches)





## Player Selection

*"Success in football management depends on selection, decision making, ability to handle players, and luck."*

**Sir Alex Ferguson – Manchester United**

# Player Selection



## PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF TOP PLAYERS

### – Key Stages

- **Childlike**
- **Dedicated**
- **Ambitious**
- **Successful**

**(Talented/Professional/Tough/Balanced)**



# Coach Development at Region Level



- Evaluation with professional feedback to the US Youth Soccer Region ODP Staff Coaches by the US Youth Soccer Technical Staff
- Rotation of coaches within the Staff
- International competition
- Continuing education
- Ensure communication between staff
- Be objective but have an open mind
- Support group decision

# Administrator & Referee Development



- Referee education during regional trials
- Daily assessment at regional trials
- Quality matches to work each day at regional trials
- Practical experience for administrators with event management and large group functions
- Networking for administrators & referees



How does participation in the Olympic Development Program help soccer to mature in the state?

# **STATE SELECT TEAM**

# State Youth Soccer ODP



## Positives

- Chance for driven players to grow in the game
- Playing with and against very good players
- Exposure to out-of-state college coaches and professional scouts
- Professional growth for coaches and administrators
- Broaden the soccer horizons for all participants ... including parents

## Negatives

- Time commitment
- Travel distances
- Cost
- Fear of failure
- It's political
  - They only pick players from the big clubs / states

## Court of Public Opinion



- US Youth Soccer ODP is continually one of the most visible state and regional programs. Determining who the best players are in the state and making appropriate selections through evaluation/try-outs and scouting is very difficult. Parents often perceive the program as an opportunity for a college scholarship; however, the program's number one priority is the identification of players with the ability to move to the next level of competition.



# State ODP Team Selection



What are the challenges?

- Increase the participation of club coaches to recommend quality players to the program
- Reach out to rural areas, inner-city areas and small clubs more effectively
- Reduce the subjectivity in the identification process
- Improve communication between state coaches
- Have all of the state coaches attend training
- Getting state coaches to remain open minded during the selection process
- Increasing the level of competition



# State ODP Team Selection



Once a player is in the state pool coaches should ask themselves these questions to further evaluate the players:

- Are they comfortable outside their club environment?
- Can they adjust to a different system?
- How do they react when they are asked to play a different position?
- What are their playing tendencies when playing alongside equal or better players?
- Are they committed and willing to make the sacrifice?
- Can they handle the level of competition?
- Can they perform well under the pressure of:
  - Matches versus other state select teams?
  - A championship match?
  - The observation of college coaches, national scouts and regional staff?
  - Coming off the bench?

# ODP National Championships



Beginning with competition at the US Youth Soccer Region level State Select Teams vie for the chance to play for a national championship.

State teams that win a regional championship in two age groups (U16 & U17) go onto the national finals. The finals are great competition and they are well scouted by coaches from the next level of play.



## CHAMPIONSHIPS

# Olympic Development Program



## What are the Benefits of Participating in US Youth Soccer ODP?

1. Development as a player. The opportunity to train and play with the best player's in one's age group.
2. Quality instruction from nationally licensed coaches.
3. Quality competition. Games against other state select teams.
4. Exposure to regional and national team coaches.
5. The opportunity to represent one's state, region or country in competition.
6. Exposure to college and professional coaches.

# State Youth Soccer O.D.P.



U.S. National Teams

No Pain – No Gain!

Pro Soccer

College – Semi-Pro Soccer  
– Regional ODP Team

State Select Team – Club Soccer – High  
School Soccer

As long as you strive for  
the top of the pyramid you  
will end up at a higher  
level than where you  
began.



Domestic and International Competition

Pathway to the U.S.A. National Teams

Scouting opportunities with College and Professional Teams

Interchange of Staff Coaches

Develop a mechanism for the exchange of ideas and curriculum

# US YOUTH SOCCER REGIONS

# US YOUTH SOCCER ODP DEVELOPMENT SCHEME



## GENERAL PLANNING FOR CHRONOLOGICAL AGE GROUPS

13 year olds: regional training camp with maximum participation

14 year olds: regional trials/inter-regional (national) events in November (competition) and February (training)/international event

15 year olds: regional trials/inter-regional (national) events in November (competition) and February (training)/international event

16 year olds: regional trials/inter-regional (national) event in November (competition)/international event

17 year olds: regional trials/inter-regional (national) event in December (competition)/international event

18/19 year olds: regional trials/inter-regional (national) event in December

## US Youth Soccer ODP - Foreign Travel



14 year olds: CONCACAF

15 year olds: CONCACAF + UEFA

16 year olds: CONCACAF + UEFA  
+ CONMEBOL

17 year olds: CONCACAF + UEFA  
+ CONMEBOL + AFC

18/19 year olds: CONCACAF +  
UEFA + CONMEBOL + AFC +  
OFC + CAF

Of key importance in travel is a  
growing variety of soccer  
experiences for the players.





# Olympic Development Program



Together  
Everyone  
Achieves  
More



*"There is no defeat, except in not trying."*

**Aristotle**