

**CANADA SOCCER**

**PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PDP) MANUAL**

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## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

The Canada Soccer Player Development Program (PDP) Manual is designed to provide guidance to Provincial/Territorial Member Associations (MAs) in implementing, organizing and managing the Player Development Program in their region. These programs form an integral component of the Canada Soccer Player Pathway as they provide the optimal local environment to prepare players for selection to the programs in the Excellence Stream.

Canada Soccer will work together with the MAs and National Youth Club Licence organizations to create the best environment possible for player and coach development in the Development/Performance Stream. This will include ongoing coach education opportunities, as well as providing players and coaches with appropriate exposure to Provincial Team, National Team, professional club academy as well as University and College scouting opportunities.

The philosophy of the PDP is based on improving the quality and volume of training, on providing more meaningful competition for players, and on increasing the calibre, access to and frequency of coach education opportunities. By improving the environment at the club level, the PDP aims to produce a consistent stream of talented players who can go on to achieve success in the game at higher levels of competition.

The standards in this document are the minimum standards required for a MA to operate a PDP league and for a clubs to participate. Final approval and recognition of a league as a PDP will be made by Canada Soccer. MAs may choose to include additional standards for Licence Holders in their respective regions. For an organization to participate in the PDP, it must meet the criteria of its local PDP league as well as those outlined in the Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence.

National Youth Club Licences are awarded for a two-year term and are bound by the terms of the Licence. This Licence

permits Licence Holders to field teams in eligible age groups for this term and commits them to abide by the terms, conditions, policies and guidelines of the PDP.

It is the responsibility of the Licence Holder to continually strive to improve its programs, as Licence Holders will be subject to ongoing assessment, including several technical and operational visits and evaluations, as well as a year-end appraisal. This work will be carried out by the respective MA staff, in conjunction with Canada Soccer.

As the aim is to improve the day-to-day environment of the player and coach at the club and academy level, standards must be adhered to in order to maintain a National Youth Club Licence and continue PDP participation. Failure to address areas that are identified as being below the standards in a timely manner may lead to the non-renewal of an organization's National Youth Club Licence and/or removal from the PDP.

The MA will be responsible for the development, oversight and operation of the PDP in their jurisdiction. The MA will also be responsible for the development of the following documents:

- ▶ Operations Manual
- ▶ Game Day Regulations Manual
- ▶ Licence Holder Performance Management Guide
- ▶ Physical Development Guide
- ▶ Physical Testing Protocol Guide
- ▶ Trial Guideline Manual
- ▶ Player Movement Application Form
- ▶ Parent Handbook
- ▶ Brand and Sponsorship Guide

These documents are to be submitted to Canada Soccer for final approval.

## SECTION II: WHY DO WE NEED TO IMPLEMENT STANDARDS?

In order for players to develop their potential to the fullest extent, they need to be in an environment that caters to their individual developmental needs. We know that young players do not develop at the same rate, yet until the recent introduction of standards-based leagues, our development system has taken a 'one-size-fits-all' approach where all players are expected to develop at the same time.

Canada's youth development system has traditionally placed an overemphasis on competition, where the result or outcome of games is put ahead of the learning needs of the players.

In this type of system, how the game is played does not matter; the only thing deemed important is the result of the immediate game at hand. This short-term thinking has held back our ability to develop better players over the long-term.

By introducing standards at the club level — all of which are informed by best practices in player development from leading nations around the world — Canada Soccer aims to help and support clubs to better focus their efforts on creating the best environment possible for player and coach development.

## SECTION III: PDP LEAGUE GUIDELINES

PDP LEAGUE GUIDELINES	
<b>Season Duration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The PDP League must operate for a minimum of forty (40) weeks and a maximum of forty-four (44) weeks, including rest periods and a pre-season period.</li> </ul>
<b>Competition Season Duration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The PDP competition season shall run for a minimum of twenty (20) weeks in length with a maximum of thirty (30) weeks in length. There must be a minimum of twenty (20) matches played during the competition season.</li> <li>▶ Competition matches are restricted to an average of one (1) per week.</li> </ul>
<b>Competition Rest Periods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The PDP may schedule rest periods on public holiday long weekends, as well as a two-week mid-season rest period, the dates of which are determined by the respective MA(s).</li> </ul>
<b>Competition Venues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Matches may be played on approved artificial surface fields, when required. When possible, games should be played on approved natural grass fields.</li> </ul>
<b>Regionalization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Where necessary, the MA may divide their PDP league into two (or more) conferences in order to minimize the amount of travel for Licence Holders.</li> <li>▶ Conference placements will be reviewed at the end of each competitive season.</li> <li>▶ Any changes to conference placement or alignment must be communicated to Licence Holders no later than February 15 of the upcoming competition season.</li> <li>▶ The MA may allow Licence Holders to compete in the PDP league in the neighbouring province to reduce travel for players. The Leagues involved must agree and make a joint application to Canada Soccer for approval.</li> <li>▶ MAs may collaborate to develop a regional PDP league that includes multiple Provinces and/or Territories to reduce travel for players. The MAs involved must agree and make a joint application to Canada Soccer for approval.</li> </ul>
<b>Competition Schedule</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The competition schedule will be given to all PDP Licence Holders and to Canada Soccer no later than six (6) weeks prior to the League's first competition match.</li> </ul>
<b>Centralized Competition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ PDP leagues must host a minimum of four (4) centralized competition events per age group per competition season for the purpose of player identification.</li> <li>▶ Centralized competition events must be organized and hosted by the respective MA event staff.</li> <li>▶ PDP leagues must submit the dates of their centralized competition events to Canada Soccer no later than six (6) weeks prior to the commencement of the League's first competition match.</li> </ul>
<b>Matches Hosted by Licence Holders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Home games must be hosted at approved competition venues.</li> <li>▶ Home games must be hosted on approved competition dates.</li> <li>▶ The host Licence Holder is responsible for securing the necessary venue permits or permissions for venue use on hosted competition dates.</li> <li>▶ The host Licence Holder is responsible for all costs related to hosted competition matches.</li> </ul>
<b>Competition Format</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A minimum of six (6) organizations are required to be an approved PDP league.</li> <li>▶ No scores or standings will be recorded at the U13 age group.</li> <li>▶ For the U14 age group and above, scores and standings will be recorded.</li> <li>▶ Teams will receive three points for a win, one point for a draw, and zero points for a loss.</li> <li>▶ At the end of the PDP league season, the team with the most points in the league across all conferences will be declared the "(MA) PDP League Champion" in their respective age group and gender.</li> </ul>

## PDP LEAGUE GUIDELINES (continued)

<b>Competition Format (continued)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ If two or more teams are equal on points after the last competition round, standings will be determined as follows:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Greatest goal difference</li> <li>▷ Greatest number of goals scored</li> <li>▷ Greatest number of points obtained in the matches between the teams concerned</li> <li>▷ Goal difference resulting from the matches between the teams concerned</li> <li>▷ Greater number of goals scored in all matches between the teams concerned</li> <li>▷ Disciplinary record of all teams concerned</li> <li>▷ Drawing of lots by the PDP</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ MAs may create a cup competition for its respective PDP, the format and structure of which must be approved by Canada Soccer.</li> <li>▶ The game format for U13 is 9v9 or 11v11 as outlined in the Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards. The game format for U14 and above is 11v11.</li> <li>▶ At the U13 and U14 age groups, matches will be three periods of 25 minutes, with two (2) 8-minute intermissions or four periods of 20 minutes with three (3) 5-minute intermissions. The intermission period commences when the referee blows for the end of the previous period.</li> <li>▶ At the U15 and U16 age groups, matches will be two halves of 40 minutes, with one 10-minute intermission. The intermission period commences when the referee blows the half-time whistle.</li> <li>▶ For age groups U17 and above, matches will be two halves of 45 minutes, with one 15-minute intermission. The intermission period commences when the referee blows the half-time whistle.</li> <li>▶ At the U15 and U17 Age Groups, the PDP League or Cup Champion in each gender will have the opportunity to participate in the Canada Soccer PDP National Showcase (start date TBC)</li> </ul>
<b>Game Day Regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Organizations must follow the guidelines as outlined in their respective PDP Game Day Regulations Manual</li> </ul>

## SECTION IV: PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND TEAM ROSTERS

### PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND TEAM ROSTERS

<b>Player Registration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Any player registered with a PDP organization is permitted to participate for that organization in a PDP match.</li> <li>▶ Players may be registered with only one PDP organization at a time.</li> </ul>
<b>Player Movement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Players are not permitted to move between PDP organizations during the season (training or competition) without the written agreement of the two organizations involved as well as the PDP.</li> <li>▶ Movement between organizations during the season will only be authorized in circumstances where it can be clearly demonstrated that it is in the best interest of the player's continuing development.</li> <li>▶ In instances where a mid-season transfer of a player is approved:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Fees paid by the player to the original club will be reimbursed to the player on a pro-rated basis, based on the number of weeks completed in the full calendar year. No fee or financial penalty may be levied to the departing player.</li> <li>▷ Fees due from the player to the new club shall be pro-rated based on the number of weeks remaining in the full calendar year.</li> <li>▷ Players with outstanding debt to their original club will not be permitted to participate in competition for their new organization until the debt has been paid in full.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Players are free to move between organizations following the conclusion of the PDP season until one (1) month prior to the commencement of the following season's first competition match.</li> </ul>

## PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND TEAM ROSTERS (continued)

<b>Player Residency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ There are no residency rules that apply to players participating in a PDP program, unless explicitly outlined in the respective PDP Operations Manual.</li><li>▶ In principle, players should participate in the PDP program that is closest to them. This reduces the amount of travel time that the player will spend travelling to and from training and games.</li></ul>
<b>Player Recruitment and Solicitation</b>	<p>Recruitment or solicitation refers to the deliberate proactive persuasion of a player, coach or staff member registered to or employed by another Licence Holder, with the intention of enticing them to leave their current Licence Holder organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Active recruitment or solicitation is not permitted by any individual (player, coach, staff member, parent or relative) associated with a Licence Holder organization at any time.</li><li>▶ All Licence Holder organizations shall be accountable for the conduct of their staff, players, parents and relatives in this regard.</li><li>▶ Any attempt to contact, recruit or solicit a member of another Licence Holder organization is not permitted and is subject to discipline.</li><li>▶ Licence Holders are not permitted to offer fee discounting or other financial incentives to recruit or solicit a member of another Licence Holder organization.</li></ul>
<b>Player Scouting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Existing Licence Holder players:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▷ No attempt to recruit, persuade or entice players from another Licence Holder shall be permitted at any time.</li><li>▷ Contact with players registered at other Licence Holder organizations may be initiated by the player's parents or guardians during the period between the end of the competition season and one (1) month prior to the start of the following season.</li></ul></li><li>▶ Non-Licence Holder players:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▷ Players outside of the PDP may be scouted and observed in their current organization at any time. Contact is permitted if made through the player's current club Technical Director. If the player's current club Technical Director does not comply with the request, the PDP organization may contact their respective MA for permission to approach the player's parent or guardian, or coach/official on their current team.</li><li>▷ If a player is invited to attend a PDP trial period (minimum of two (2) weeks), the player's current club Technical Director must be informed that the player has been invited to attend a trial period.</li></ul></li></ul>

## SECTION V: TEAM AND MATCH OFFICIALS

### TEAM AND MATCH OFFICIALS

<b>Team Officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ There shall be no less than three (3) and no more than six (6) team officials on the bench during a match as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▷ Head Coach</li><li>▷ Assistant Coach</li><li>▷ Apprentice Coach</li><li>▷ Goalkeeper Coach</li><li>▷ Athletic Therapist</li><li>▷ Team Manager</li></ul></li><li>▶ For a girls team, the Head Coach or Assistant Coach must be a woman and be present on the bench during a match. The Apprentice Coach, if one is appointed, must also be a woman.</li></ul>
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## TEAM AND MATCH OFFICIALS (continued)

<b>Team Officials (continued)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ The requirements for women coaches will be phased in over time beginning with the Under 13 age group in 2022 as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▷ 2022 — U13 girls teams must have a woman as a Head Coach and/or Assistant Coach present on the bench during all matches.</li><li>▷ 2023 — U13 and U14 girls teams must have a woman Head Coach and/or Assistant Coach present on the bench during all matches.</li><li>▷ 2024 — U13, U14, and U15 girls teams must have a woman Head Coach and/or Assistant Coach present on the bench during all matches.</li><li>▷ 2025 — U13, U14, U15, and U16 girls teams must have a woman Head Coach and/or Assistant Coach present on the bench during all matches.</li><li>▷ 2026 — U13, U14, U15, U16, and U17 girls teams must have a woman Head Coach and/or Assistant Coach present on the bench during all matches.</li><li>▷ 2027 — All girls teams must have a woman Head Coach and/or Assistant Coach present on the bench during all matches.</li></ul></li><li>▶ Teams must have a minimum of one team official of the same gender identity as the players on the bench at all times.</li><li>▶ All team officials must have clear Criminal Record Check (CRC) including Vulnerable Sector (VS) check that is no more than three (3) years old as of January 1st of the competition year.</li><li>▶ All team officials must hold a valid Respect in Sport Activity Leader certificate.</li><li>▶ Athletic Therapist must be a licensed healthcare provider in their respective province.</li></ul>
<b>Coaching Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ The Licence Holder must have a paid (either full-time or part-time) Head Coach for each team it enters in the PDP.</li><li>▶ Head Coaches must have the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▷ 2022:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• U13 — Canada Soccer Youth Licence (2022 — in training; 2023 — certified)</li><li>• U14+ — Canada Soccer National B Licence or Canada Soccer Youth Licence (2022— in training; 2023 — certified)</li></ul></li><li>▷ 2023:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• U13 — Canada Soccer Youth Licence (certified)</li><li>• U14 — Canada Soccer Youth Licence (2023 — in training; 2024 — certified)</li><li>• U15+ — Canada Soccer National B Licence or Canada Soccer Youth Licence (2023 — in training; 2024 — certified)</li></ul></li><li>▷ 2024:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• U13-U15 — Canada Soccer Youth Licence</li><li>• U16+ — Canada Soccer National B Licence or Canada Soccer Youth Licence</li></ul></li><li>▷ 2025:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• U13-U16 — Canada Soccer Youth Licence</li><li>• U17+ — Canada Soccer National B Licence or Canada Soccer Youth Licence</li></ul></li><li>▷ 2026:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• U13-U17 — Canada Soccer Youth Licence</li><li>• U18+ — Canada Soccer National B Licence or Canada Soccer Youth Licence</li></ul></li><li>▷ 2027:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Canada Soccer Youth Licence</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>▶ Assistant Coaches must have the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▷ Canada Soccer C Licence (certified)</li></ul></li><li>▶ Apprentice Coaches must have the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▷ Canada Soccer 'Soccer for Life' workshop and Personal Development Plan focused on completion of Canada Soccer C Licence training and certification.</li></ul></li><li>▶ A Head Coach and an Assistant Coach with the minimum qualifications must be present at all training sessions and games</li></ul>

## TEAM AND MATCH OFFICIALS (continued)

<b>Match Officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Match officials for each match will be assigned by the respective MA in accordance with their match officials policy.</li><li>▶ A minimum of one match official and two assistant match officials will be assigned to each match.</li></ul>
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## SECTION VI: TECHNICAL PROGRAM STRUCTURE

### TECHNICAL PROGRAM STRUCTURE

<b>Conduct</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Each Licence Holder will be responsible for the conduct of its players, team officials, members and spectators attending any PDP event.</li></ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ The minimum volume of training for players (excluding games and sport science related training) during the calendar year is as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▷ 180 hours (4.5 hours/week), based on a 40-week season.</li></ul></li><li>▶ Each team will be expected to hold at least three (3) soccer training sessions per week, with at least one (1) day of rest per week during the PDP season.</li><li>▶ The maximum volume of training for players (excluding games and sport science related training) during the calendar year is as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▷ 330 hours (7.5 hours/week) for U15+ age groups, based on a 44-week season.</li><li>▷ 264 hours (6 hours/week) for U13 and U14 age groups, based on a 44-week season.</li></ul></li><li>▶ The Licence Holder must agree to provide a periodized training plan and training curriculum, to be reviewed by Canada Soccer.</li><li>▶ The Licence Holder must agree to provide the following with respect to training fields:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▷ Outdoor Training<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality fields of FIFA-approved dimensions for every training session. The minimum space permitted for training is one half of a field of FIFA-approved dimensions. At least one (1) training session per week must be conducted on a full field of FIFA-approved dimensions; this session can be shared with another of the club's PDP teams for the purpose of intrasquad training.</li></ul></li><li>▷ Portable goals must be available for use at all outdoor training sessions.</li><li>▷ Indoor Training<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indoor facilities must be available for training during winter months (January – March/April) in regions of the country where climate limits the use of outdoor fields in these months;</li><li>• The minimum field size for indoor training must be equivalent to a mini-field (dimensions in LTPD guidelines);</li><li>• Facilities must provide climate control (heating/cooling) as required;</li></ul></li><li>▷ Acceptable indoor facilities can include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Covered artificial turf (fixed or seasonal structure)</li><li>• Indoor gymnasium (minimum 16m x 32m)</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Matches Outside of PDP Competition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Licence Holders wishing to participate in competitions outside of their PDP league schedule require written permission from their respective MA</li></ul>
<b>Exhibition Matches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Licence Holders may schedule exhibition matches at their discretion, during the following periods:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▷ From January 1st until seven (7) days prior to the first competition match.</li><li>▷ Midweek (Wednesday or Thursday) before a long weekend break.</li><li>▷ From four (4) weeks after the last competition match until December 31st.</li></ul></li><li>▶ No exhibition matches shall be scheduled during the mid-season break.</li><li>▶ All exhibition matches require the approval of the respective PDP.</li></ul>



**TECHNICAL PROGRAM STRUCTURE (continued)**

<b>Player Trials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Any player invited to attend a trial for a PDP program must be given at least two (2) weeks of training and/or six (6) training sessions in which to be assessed.</li></ul>
<b>Skill Centre Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ In addition to their PDP obligations, Licence Holders are required to operate a Canada Soccer Skill Centre Program for players in the Learn to Train (U8 – U12) stage.</li><li>▶ The standards required to operate a Skill Centre can be found in the Skill Centre Program Manual.</li></ul>