

## **ODP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

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

The ODP was created by US Soccer over 30 years ago for two purposes:

1. To identify national team players early, at the youth level.
2. To provide development opportunities for these potential national team players.

To this day, these two core purposes, namely, IDENTIFY and DEVELOP for the national team, have not changed. However, many players have also come to associate ODP with improved opportunities for playing college soccer and getting college scholarships. This is because many college coaches work on ODP staff at the state, regional, and national levels and also most college coaches scout players at ODP events. College coaches consider a player's participation in ODP as an indicator of talent and soccer ambition.

### **Age Group Categories**

The ODP is a feeder system into the National Youth Teams. Hence, it has to be in line with the international age classification. National Teams must abide with FIFA's (The international governing body for soccer) age classification, which follows the calendar year. An ODP age group therefore goes from January 1st to December 31st

### **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, 2000 to December 31, 2000 are classified as 00's. For the 2016/2017 seasonal year, the following age groups are eligible: 2000's, 2001's, 2002's, 2003's, 2004's & 2005's. Players born in 2006 are will participated in the program but not attend any regional events.

## **ODP Staff**

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

College, Club and High School coaches apply each year to Kentucky Youth Soccer Association to work in the program. Kentucky Youth Soccer Association State Technical Director 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.

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 the duties with the program.

### **Do you do background checks on staff?**

Background checks are ran on all ODP Coaches, Chaperones and Try-Out Evaluators

### **How are chaperones selected?**

Chaperones are only selected to take teams to US Youth Soccer Region III Camp. The person selected is usually a parent of a player and is picked by the ODP Age Group Head Coach and Kentucky Youth Soccer Technical Director.

## **State Pool Training**

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

In Kentucky, the main vehicle for player selection is the preliminary open tryouts. The preliminary open tryouts are held in the fall and 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. The State Pools also attend 1 inter-state events, usually in the winter and/or spring.

In March, State Squads are selected from the pools. State Squads consist of approximately 22 players and go to Pre Region Play-Date Training Session in June. The 2005 & 2006 age groups remain as a state pool, however a team in the 2005 age group will be selected.

In the 2004 age groups, the State Squad may be split into an 'Older' team and a 'Younger' team and both teams go to Region Camp.

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

In all the age groups, once a player is selected in to the State Pool, he/she is eligible to participate in all the training and events until March of the following year. After March, the process depends on the age group. The two youngest age groups keep the entire pool in the system and players can attend the through to the instate summer camps. The five oldest groups cut the pool down to a State Team of 16-18 players plus alternates in June and only 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 State Director of Coaching. If the State DOC is satisfied that the club DOC is familiar with the ODP level and has a legitimate case, the player in question might be invited to an ODP practice for a second evaluation or a staff coach might be sent to watch the player play a club game. If the player is good enough, he/she might be added to the pool. Club DOC's are encouraged to contact the State DOC immediately after the tryouts. The longer they wait, the less likelihood of player being added. Once the fall season is over and the pool has settled down, it is much harder to add more players and it happens only on rare occasions. Other typical scenarios that might warrant a player added to the pool are:

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

Players identified after the preliminary tryouts are added to the State Pool only if they are in the top half of the pool and only with approval by the State Director of Coaching. The ODP at the state level has an obligation to identify the best players and put them in front of the regional staff. This is the most important mission of the program.

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

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

Throughout the try-outs and all of the outdoor pool training events 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. In turn the ODP players bring honor to their coaches and clubs. 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.

We respect that the 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. The player is 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 of the scheduled events has a better opportunity of being selected for the final team; an attendance record will be kept.

If your child is not attending the ODP event you must contact the State ODP Administrator.

## **ODP Region Camp**

### **What is a Region?**

US Soccer split the country into 4 regions for administrative and logistical purposes. The four regions are known as Region I (Northeast), Region II (Midwest), Region III (Southeast) and Region IV (West). Each region comprises 12-14 states. Even though Kentucky is in Region II, we send our teams to Region III camp together with GA, FL, SC, NC, TN, AL, MS, LA, STx, NTx, OK, and AR. We do recommend some players to the Region II ID camp if we are unable to create an age group to participate in the Region III camps

### **What is the purpose of Region Camp?**

The main purpose of Region Camp is to evaluate the players from all the states within Region III and select a region pool of players in each age group for further evaluation and competition. All the states send their state teams to camp and play each other in front of the regional staff coaches.

The other purpose of region camp is to expose the players to a higher level of competition and contribute towards their personal development through challenging games and training with high level region staff coaches.

### **When is Region Camp usually held?**

Region Camp is usually held in early July each year. The two genders have their own separate camps, 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 each day and are evaluated for selection into the Region Pool in each age group. At the end of camp, a Region Pool of 40-50 players is selected. The Region Pool in most age groups is held over at camp for another 2-3 days to train under the Region Coaches. 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 Keeper 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 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 his own assigned teams impressed him 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 does not assign himself to any state teams. The Head Coach is free to move from game to game which allows him to focus on the players recommended by the staff at the nightly meetings.

### **What is the role of the State Coach?**

The State ODP Coach prepares his/her team for region camp and runs the first practice session on day 1. The state coach is also in charge of coaching the state team during the games at region camp. Contrary to popular perception, the state coach has no impact or influence on player selection to the region pool. State Team Coaches are not allowed into the daily region staff meetings where the region pool list is developed. State Team Coaches are not allowed to promote or 'go to bat' on behalf a player. The player selection process does not depend on the ability of each state coach to 'sell' his players. It is based strictly on the players' abilities and what the region coaches are looking for in each position.

### **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. In order for players to survive at the higher level's speed of play, they have to 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 down 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 we call '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. All of these problem solving abilities separate the state level player from the region level player.

### **What is the Region Camp format?**

Boys and girls camp vary slightly, but players typically arrive and check in the afternoon of the first day. The state coaches run their own practice on the first evening, after which everyone attends the Opening Ceremonies and dinner. The second, third, and fourth days are similar in format, with one practice session and one game per day. The practices are run by the region staff coach. The fifth and final day typically has a game in the morning, after which the region pools are announced and the state teams depart around lunch time.

On some of the evenings, 'region pool' games are used, where players who excelled in the previous state vs state games are pulled from their states and organized into teams and play a game watched by all the region staff. These pool games are important for the selection process as they pit the best players in camp against each other to see who can handle the speed of play and belong at the next level.

### **How many games and practices take place at Region Camp?**

The key objective in region camp is to maintain a good balance between work and rest, to make sure the players can show their best when it matters. For that reason, players have one game and one practice per day on full days (day 2 to day 4) and one practice or one game on half days (days 1 and 5).

Whenever possible, players who are selected to play in pool games sit out their state team game so they don't play two full games on the same day. It's not fair on the players to make selections based on fatigue-induced performance since there is so much at stake.

The summer heat and humidity combined with the higher intensity and speed of play at region camp require significant rest periods between activities. Region camp is not like a standard college summer camp or a club tournament, where players are on the field for long periods playing or working on technique. Region camp is a test of ability, not a marathon of games. It's about quality rather than quantity.

A fact often ignored is that games at region camp require a higher expenditure of energy than regular club games or scrimmages. The higher the skill level, the longer the ball is in play, the less time for recovery, the more intense the sprints and more wear and tear on the body. Games at the elite level require more rest and recovery. In lower level play, the ball takes longer to get from one area of the field to another and the ball is out of bounds more often due to inferior skill. This allows players to rest more and catch their breath while the ball is away from their area. Games against weaker opponents are also less physically demanding since the ball stays in the same half for long periods.

In the past, Region camp used to last six days and involved more games. Camp duration and number of games were recently reduced because mental and physical fatigue became an issue. The camp has evolved into a format that features less field sessions and more lectures and presentations to reduce down time and educate the players on the needs and requirements of elite athletes.

#### **How many players from Kentucky typically make the hold-over Region Pools?**

2016 was the first year Kentucky Youth Soccer ODP attend the US Youth Soccer Region III camp. Three age groups attend, which was approximately 96 players. 12 players from Kentucky were selected to the Region Pool. This equals out to about 12% of our players made the pool.

Historically in Region III, the strong states such as Georgia, Florida, South Texas and North Carolina see 30% of their players selected. As 2016 was our first year we expect to keep adding more players to the Region Pool as they offer a better product for our players.

#### **What benefits do players who are not selected to Region Pools get from Region Camp?**

Region camp has many other benefits for all the players. It is a chance for players to challenge themselves and gauge themselves against the best in the region. Good players thrive on playing against quality opponents and region camp provides a competition level that is rare. Experts tell us that for elite athletes to reach their potential, they need to play around 30-40 quality games per year where they are pushed by equal or superior opponents. The typical ODP player doesn't get a sufficient doze of such games at the club level because many of these club games are against inferior players. Other than a few top-of-the-table clashes or top club tournaments, club games lack quality on a consistent level. ODP activities and region camp provide additional quality competition to supplement the club competitions.

Region camp can be an inspiring experience. Many players, who are used to being the best in their club team, get a rude awakening at region camp. They get exposed to the very best and become motivated to work harder and make the region pool the next time. For some players, region camp is a humbling experience. They come home highly motivated and with a new perspective. Player development is a

long process, a journey affected by many factors and experiences, some positive and some negative. It's hard to measure the impact each experience has on a player and hard to account for the intangibles. But many top American players look back on their experience at an ODP region camp as one of the turning points in their growth.

Region camp exposes all the players to the top college and national staff coaches. College coaches regard ODP participation and attendance in region camp as an indication of the players' ability and ambition.

The opportunity to represent your state is another benefit. Pride in accomplishment, meeting players and coaches from other states, and learning a little about oneself and coping with adversity are some of the intangibles as well. If the players who 'lift a trophy' are considered the only beneficiaries of an event, everyone else would be missing the point.

## **US Soccer Involvement in ODP**

### **Is US Soccer involved in ODP?**

US Soccer & MLS teams send scouts to the Region III camp and Inter Regional events where all four regions compete against each other. They use these events to scout players in the program for US Soccer Youth National teams and Development Academies. If a player resides and plays for a state that does not have a DA such as Kentucky the players are invited to attend US Training Centers.

### **What are US Training Centers?**

Players are scouted from ODP events either at the State or Regional level to attend monthly training sessions conducted by US Soccer Region Coaches. In 2016, Kentucky has had approximately 8-10 players of both genders attend the US Training Centers after being recommended by Kentucky Youth Soccer Technical Director.

## **Costs Associated with ODP**

### **What are the costs associated with ODP?**

The following is the list of events that the Kentucky Soccer ODP program will participate in for the 2016 – 2017 season, and the costs associated with each. The costs of the ODP program can vary slightly year over year but this provides a good baseline of what costs to expect.

Preliminary Tryout Fees:	Online Registration: \$65 Onsite Registration: \$80
Pool Training Fees:	\$325 includes training, uniforms and player manuals
February Play Date:	\$100 to \$175 may include entry fee, accommodation, transportation
June Play/Practice:	No Fee
Region Camp:	\$800 approx will include transportation, accommodation, coaching fees

**Are there scholarships to assist with the cost of ODP?**

The Kentucky Soccer Olympic Development Program offers a scholarship program for youth soccer participants who are in need of financial assistance in order to play soccer on a Kentucky Soccer ODP team. Each scholarship request is considered on a per event basis and covers a portion of the various fees associated with the ODP program.

The scholarship program exists to provide financial assistance to talented players with financial need. Once a player qualifies for the scholarship program financially, the amount of a scholarship is awarded based on player's achievements.

Individual scholarships may vary from up to 100% to 15% of the total event fee. The difference between the scholarship amount and the event fee will be the responsibility of the player.

To apply for a scholarship players must contact Kentucky Youth Soccer Association Technical Director.