

CANADA SOCCER

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PDP) MANUAL

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PREFACE

The Canada Soccer Player Development Program (PDP) is a network of standards-based programs that represents the highest level of amateur youth soccer in Canada. The PDP Manual is designed to provide guidance to Provincial/Territorial Member Associations (MAs) in implementing, organizing, and managing the PDP in their region. The standards in this document are the minimum standards required for a MA to operate a recognized PDP and for clubs to participate. MAs may include additional standards for participating organizations in their respective

regions. For an organization to participate in the PDP, it must meet the criteria of the PDP in its region and hold the Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence. The PDP standards apply only to the PDP and age classifications offered by the MA and do not apply to programs or leagues operating outside of the PDP network or feeding into the PDP from younger age classifications or lower categories of play. Final approval and recognition of a program as a PDP will be made by Canada Soccer.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

The Canada Soccer Player Development Program (PDP) forms an integral component of the Canada Soccer ecosystem as it provides the optimal local environment to prepare players for selection to the programs in the Excellence Stream. 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.

Canada Soccer will work together with the MAs and National Youth Club Licence organizations to create the best environment possible for player, coach, and match officials development in the Development/Performance Stream. This will include ongoing coach development 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.

Participating organizations must hold the Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence, unless approved by Canada Soccer, and are bound by the terms and standards of the Licence. Participating organizations must also meet the criteria and/or hold the licence or agree to the terms, conditions, policies, and guidelines of participation of the PDP in its region.

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 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 is responsible for the development, governance and oversight, and operation of the PDP in its jurisdiction, including authority over the standards, rules and regulations, and all other guiding documents. 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: RECOGNITION AS A PDP

To be recognized as a part of the Canada Soccer PDP network, an MA must make an application to Canada Soccer that includes the following:

- ▶ Confirmation and supporting proof that the PDP in application meets all of the required standards in Section IV.
- ▶ PDP Guiding Documents, including, at minimum those outlined in Section I above.

SECTION IV: PDP STANDARDS

PDP STANDARDS	
Program Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The PDP 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.
Competition Season Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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. ▶ Competition matches should average of one (1) per week. ▶ Good practice: 72 hours between matches.
Competition Rest Periods and End of Season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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). ▶ The PDP must have a minimum of 8 weeks between the end of one season and the beginning of the next season.
Competition Venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Matches may be played on approved artificial surface fields, when required. When possible, games should be played on approved natural grass fields.
Regionalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where necessary, the MA may divide their PDP into two (or more) conferences in order to minimize the amount of travel for Licence Holders. ▶ Conference placements will be reviewed at the end of each competitive season. ▶ Any changes to conference placement or alignment must be communicated to Licence Holders no later than 8 weeks prior to the upcoming competition season. ▶ The MA may allow Licence Holders to compete in the PDP in the neighbouring province to reduce travel for players. The PDPs involved must agree and make a joint application to Canada Soccer for approval. ▶ MAs may collaborate to develop a regional PDP 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.
Competition Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The competition schedule will be given to all PDP Licence Holders at minimum four (4) weeks prior to the first competition match and provided to Canada Soccer upon request.
Centralized Competition (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ PDPs may host centralized competition events for the purpose of player identification. ▶ A centralized competition event is defined as including multiple teams and games from the same age group and gender identity in the same place. ▶ Centralized competition events must be organized and hosted by the respective MA event staff.
Matches Hosted by Licence Holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All matches must meet the requirements outlined in the Game Day Regulations Manual. ▶ Home games must be hosted at approved competition venues. Home games must be hosted on approved competition dates. ▶ The host Licence Holder is responsible for securing the necessary venue permits or permissions for venue use on hosted competition dates. ▶ The host Licence Holder is responsible for all costs related to hosted competition matches.

PDP STANDARDS (continued)

Competition Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ A minimum of six (6) organizations are required to be an approved PDP.▶ No scores or standings will be recorded at the U13 age group, if it is offered as a part of a PDP.▶ For the U14 age group and above, scores and standings will be recorded.▶ Teams will receive three points for a win, one point for a draw, and zero points for a loss.▶ 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">▷ Greatest goal difference▷ Greatest number of goals scored▷ Greatest number of points obtained in the matches between the teams concerned▷ Goal difference resulting from the matches between the teams concerned▷ Greater number of goals scored in all matches between the teams concerned▷ Disciplinary record of all teams concerned▷ Drawing of lots by the PDP▶ MAs may create a cup competition for its respective PDP.▶ The game format for U13 is 9v9 as outlined in the Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards. The game format for U14 and above is 11v11.▶ At the U13 and U14 age groups, matches may be three periods of 25 minutes, with two (2) 8-minute intermissions, four periods of 20 minutes with three (3) 5-minute intermissions, or two halves of 35 minutes with one 10-minute intermission. The intermission period commences when the referee blows for the end of the previous period.▶ 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.▶ For age groups U17 and above, matches will be two halves of 45 minutes, with one 10-15 minutes intermission. The intermission period commences when the referee blows the half-time whistle.▶ At the U15 and U17 Age Groups, the PDP will have two representatives in each gender participate in the Canada Soccer PDP Championship. Individual PDPs will determine the mechanism by which teams qualify for the PDP Championship.
Game Day Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Organizations must follow the guidelines as outlined in their respective PDP Game Day Regulations Manual.

SECTION V: PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND TEAM ROSTERS

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND TEAM ROSTERS	
Player Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Any player registered with a PDP organization is permitted to participate for that organization in a PDP match unless otherwise stated in the competition rules and regulations. ▶ Players may be registered with only one PDP organization at a time.
Player Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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. ▶ 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. ▶ Players are free to move between PDP organizations between playing seasons as outlined in the MA/PDP Policies and Procedures, Rules and Regulations, or other guiding documents.
Player Residency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There are no residency rules that apply to players participating in a PDP program, unless explicitly outlined in the respective PDP Operations Manual. ▶ 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.
Player Recruitment and Solicitation	<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"> ▶ 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. ▶ All Licence Holder organizations shall be accountable for the conduct of their staff, players, parents and relatives in this regard. ▶ Any attempt to contact, recruit or solicit a member of another Licence Holder organization is not permitted and is subject to discipline. ▶ Licence Holders are not permitted to offer fee discounting or other financial incentives to recruit or solicit a member of another Licence Holder organization.
Player Scouting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Players from other PDP organizations (clubs and academies): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ No attempt to recruit, persuade or entice players from another PDP club or academy shall be permitted at any time. ▷ Contact with players registered at other PDP organizations may be initiated by the player's parents or guardians between seasons as guided by the MA trial guidelines and/or rules and regulations. ▶ Players from organizations outside of the PDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ 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. ▷ 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.

SECTION VI: TEAM AND MATCH OFFICIALS

TEAM AND MATCH OFFICIALS	
<p>Team Officials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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"> ▷ Head Coach ▷ Assistant Coach ▷ Apprentice Coach ▷ Goalkeeper Coach ▷ Athletic Therapist ▷ Team Manager ▷ Technical Director or club technical representative ▶ The Head Coach or Assistant Coach must be the same gender identity as the players and be present on the bench during a match. ▶ The Apprentice Coach, if one is appointed, must be the same gender identity as the players. ▶ Technical Directors cannot coach a PDP team. In extenuating circumstances, a Technical Director may apply for special dispensation to coach a PDP team for the short term with an action plan to appoint another qualified coach. All requests for a Technical Director to coach a PDP team must be submitted, in writing, to the MA, who will have full authority to approve or reject the request.
<p>Coaching Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Licence Holder must have a paid (either full-time or part-time) Head Coach for each team it enters in the PDP. ▶ Head Coaches must have the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ U13: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada Soccer C Licence (certified) • Canada Soccer Safe Sport Roster: • Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screen • NCCP Make Ethical Decisions Module and/or Online Evaluation • Respect in Sport Activity Leader Program • NCCP Making Headway Module • NCCP Emergency Action Planning Module • NCCP Rule of Two Module ▷ U14 and older: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada Soccer B Licence (certified) or National B Licence* (certified) or Youth Licence* (certified) • Canada Soccer Safe Sport Roster: • Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screen • NCCP Make Ethical Decisions Module and/or Online Evaluation • Respect in Sport Activity Leader Program • NCCP Making Headway Module • NCCP Emergency Action Planning Module • NCCP Rule of Two Module ▶ Assistant Coaches must have the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ U13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to Train (trained) • Canada Soccer Safe Sport Roster: • Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screen • NCCP Make Ethical Decisions Module and/or Online Evaluation • Respect in Sport Activity Leader Program • NCCP Making Headway Module • NCCP Emergency Action Planning Module • NCCP Rule of Two Module

TEAM AND MATCH OFFICIALS (continued)

Coaching Requirements (continued)

- ▶ U14 and older
 - Canada Soccer C Licence (certified)
 - Canada Soccer Safe Sport Roster:
 - Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screen
 - NCCP Make Ethical Decisions Module and/or Online Evaluation
 - Respect in Sport Activity Leader Program
 - NCCP Making Headway Module
 - NCCP Emergency Action Planning Module
 - NCCP Rule of Two Module

- ▶ Apprentice Coaches must have the following:

- ▶ U13
 - Learn to Train (trained)
 - Canada Soccer Safe Sport Roster:
 - Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screen
 - NCCP Make Ethical Decisions Module and/or Online Evaluation
 - Respect in Sport Activity Leader Program
 - NCCP Making Headway Module
 - NCCP Emergency Action Planning Module
 - NCCP Rule of Two Module

- ▶ U14 and older
 - Soccer for Life (trained) with a Personal Development Plan focused on completion of the Canada Soccer C Licence training and certification
 - Canada Soccer Safe Sport Roster:
 - Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screen
 - NCCP Make Ethical Decisions Module and/or Online Evaluation
 - Respect in Sport Activity Leader Program
 - NCCP Making Headway Module
 - NCCP Emergency Action Planning Module
 - NCCP Rule of Two Module

A Head Coach and an Assistant Coach with the minimum qualifications must be present at all training sessions and games.

A participating organization may apply to its Provincial/Territorial Member Association for special dispensation if a coach does not meet the required standard for training and certification. All requests must be accompanied by an action plan to meet the requirements as quickly as possible.

* The Canada Soccer National B Licence and Youth Licence are no longer being offered. Current Licences will be accepted for the duration of their validity after which they must be upgraded to the Concacaf-recognized Canada Soccer B Licence.

Match Officials

- ▶ Match officials for each match will be assigned by the respective MA in accordance with their match officials policy.
- ▶ PDP matches should be used as a match official development opportunity.
- ▶ A minimum of one match official and two assistant match officials will be assigned to each match.

SECTION VII: TECHNICAL PROGRAM STRUCTURE

TECHNICAL PROGRAM STRUCTURE	
Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Each Licence Holder will be responsible for the conduct of its players, team officials, members and spectators attending any PDP event.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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"> ▷ 180 hours (4.5 hours/week), based on a 40-week season. ▶ 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. ▶ 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"> ▷ 330 hours (7.5 hours/week) for U15+ age groups, based on a 44-week season. ▷ 264 hours (6 hours/week) for U13 and U14 age groups, based on a 44-week season. ▶ The Licence Holder must agree to provide a periodized training plan and training curriculum, to be reviewed by Canada Soccer and its Provincial/Territorial Member Association. ▶ The Licence Holder must agree to provide the following with respect to training fields: <p>Outdoor Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ 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. ▷ Portable goals must be available for use at all outdoor training sessions. <p>Indoor Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ Leniency on the training standards above is provided for indoor training due to facility limitations ▷ 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; ▷ The minimum field size for indoor training must be equivalent to a mini field (25-30m x 30-36m); ▷ Acceptable indoor facilities can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covered artificial turf (fixed or seasonal structure) • Indoor gymnasium
Matches Outside of PDP Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clubs and teams must honour the PDP games program and schedule and cannot prioritize other competitions over the PDP. ▶ Clubs and teams must respect the yearly training plan, including rest and break periods and any additional requirements of its Provincial/Territorial Member Association.
Player Identification and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The PDP intake process is governed by the MA and PDP rules and regulations, policies and procedures. ▶ Good Practice: Any player invited to attend a trial for a PDP program should be given at least two (2) weeks of training and/or six (6) training sessions in which to be assessed.

Special Dispensation

A Member Association may apply for special dispensation to deviate from the standards above. All applications for dispensation must include an action plan to meet the standard with an associated timeline. Canada Soccer may approve or reject applications for special dispensation at its sole discretion.

SECTION VIII: SANCTIONS

Canada Soccer, at its sole discretion, has the authority to sanction MAs, PDPs, and participating organizations (clubs and academies) for failure to meet and/or maintain the PDP standards. Sanctions may be applied for any of the following or any additional circumstance as determined by Canada Soccer:

1. Failure to meet the minimum standards of the PDP
2. Failure to achieve a standard in advance of the deadline outlined in an Action Plan
3. Failure to achieve a standard to the satisfaction of Canada Soccer in advance of the deadline outlined in an Action Plan
4. Failure to maintain a standard during the licensing period

Sanctions may include the following or any others as deemed appropriate by Canada Soccer.

1. Development or revision of Action Plan
2. Meeting with Canada Soccer Representative(s)
3. Written warning
4. Monetary Sanction (Fine)
5. Organization placed under review
6. Removal from participation in the PDP or Recognition as a PDP

Repeated sanctionable offenses may result in increased sanctions. The sanctions above are in addition to those available to MAs and PDPs through their policies, procedures, rules, and regulations.