



# **MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH SOCCER**

## **OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

**Player / Parent Handbook**

**2021 ODP Season**

*Pride in the Program*

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We are in the process of selecting the team administrators. Once they are identified, they will be in contact with you.

**If you do not receive an email from a team administrator 1 week prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> winter training session, please email [LynnG@mayouthsoccer.org](mailto:LynnG@mayouthsoccer.org)**

**For 1<sup>st</sup> training session:**

- 1. Email player medical release form and front & back copy of the player's insurance card to team administrator. This can be accessed in your Sports Connect Account. You can also access the USYS medical release form on the ODP homepage on the right-hand side under documents.**

**Do *not* send them to the Massachusetts Youth Soccer office.**

**\*\*All plans and policies for the 2021 season are contingent on COVID-19 guidelines. They are subject to change at any time. The ODP website will be updated accordingly.**

## **Welcome to ODP**

The Massachusetts Youth Olympic Development Program, or ODP, is the start of the identification process for the National and Olympic teams. Massachusetts Youth Soccer conducts the program for US Soccer under the jurisdiction of the US Olympic Committee. The ODP is protected by the Amateur Sports Act, a federal law enacted by congress in 1978. The purpose of this prestigious program is to identify players on the basis of open tryouts and scouted players. Players then have the opportunity to be selected to represent their state, region, and the United States in soccer competition.

### **The ODP Player**

ODP is for the serious soccer player looking to play in college, who have hopes of making the US National, Olympic Team or a professional player. Players should be committed to the process of developing their soccer skills and fitness on a daily basis. In ODP, successful players are versatile on the field, have good coping skills, are coachable, and can adapt to the different styles of play.

There are many ways to achieve these ultimate goals, and it is entirely possible to make it to the highest level without going through all, or, indeed, any of the preceding levels of participation. However, the current system is the one most recognized throughout the United States as the best way to identify top-quality players who can perform in any environment and still cope with everyday demands.

From year to year and event to event, players evolve in many different ways. This is why after each full year of an ODP season, there is a clean slate and players have to go through the entire tryout process all over again. The only exception to this is if a player has made the regional or national pool within the past year, he/she will be given a pass onto the state team and will not need to attend tryouts. Although we are looking for the best players on each team, we do not select players exclusively from winning (successful) teams and programs. The Olympic Development Program tryout process is open to all players regardless of team affiliation or current level of play.

### **Purpose**

The United States Olympic Development Program (ODP) is a national process of identifying, training and developing youth soccer players who have the potential to represent the United States in soccer competitions. This process promotes players to the US National Teams that represent the United States in international competition. The ODP is not an individual entity. In regards to soccer, it is a program licensed to organizations by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) through the governing body of soccer, US Soccer. Massachusetts Youth Soccer has a long tradition of providing many of the players that comprise the regional and national teams including the World Cup and Olympic Teams. A large number of other players are currently on several professional teams both in the US and abroad. Some of these players include Diego Fagundez, Keith Caldwell, Geoff Cameron, Samantha Mewis, Kristie Mewis, and Morgan Andrews.

### **Mission Statement**

The function of Massachusetts Youth ODP is the identification, selection, and opportunity for development of the state's elite players. The ODP provides the means by which these players are prepared to compete for selection to regional, national, collegiate, and professional opportunities through high level training and competition.

## Philosophy

The primary responsibility for the development of players belongs to the clubs; thus, ODP should not interfere with regular club play. It is the responsibility and function of Massachusetts Youth ODP to supplement that development by identifying and selecting the players who are ready and able to compete with and against each other in preparation for regional, national, collegiate, or professional opportunities.

## ODP Overview

Massachusetts Youth Soccer, a member of the US Youth Soccer, sponsors youth soccer programs in a geographical area of the state, stretching from Boston to the Berkshires. There are over 200,000 players registered through Massachusetts Youth Soccer the most talented and committed 1 percent of these players participate in the state Olympic Development Program.

As part of the National effort, the Massachusetts Youth Soccer program is committed to providing players access to the highest levels of youth soccer. Our main goal is to identify and prepare outstanding Massachusetts Youth Soccer players for Regional and National competitions. We must achieve this goal in a fair and objective environment. Individuals with integrity, experience, and impartiality must render judgment of ability.

## Benefits of ODP

- Opportunity to play and train with the best players in one's age group across Massachusetts.
- Quality of instruction from nationally licensed coaches.
- The opportunity to represent one's state, region, or country in competition.
- Competition against other state associations.
- Exposure to Regional and National staff coaches.
- Introduction to injury prevention through the use of [FIFA 11+](#)
- Exposure to college coaches.

## ODP SCHEDULES (To be posted on Mass Youth Soccer Website)

- Throughout the Indoor training sessions, Goalkeepers must ONLY attend the 5 Goalkeeper specific training sessions. They are not to attend the team training sessions.
- Once the spring season begins, every other week, the top two GK's from the previous week's goalkeeper training session will be selected to join the team training session (based on player availability). The remainder of the GK's will work with the goalkeeping staff.

## PAYMENT SCHEDULE

**Note that no player will attend any event unless previous event payment has been received in full.**

	<b>12U</b>	<b>13U &amp; 14U</b>	<b>15U &amp; 16/17U</b>	<b>GK's</b>	
<b>Winter Fee</b>	\$335	\$335	N/A	\$335	Due by: 12/14/2020
<b>Spring Fee</b>	\$500				Due by: 3/15/2021
<b>East Region Tournament*</b>	N/A	\$170			Due by: 5/15/2021
<b>ID Camp*</b>	Payment is directly to the East Region				Due by: TBA

\* Not all players will be selected to attend these events. Cost may increase based on location of event

\*\*Prices are subject to change

# The ODP Step Ladder



## ODP TRAINING

- **Players will be required to purchase a training kit (New Balance: Red Jersey, White Jersey, 1 pair of Black Shorts, 1 pair of White Socks) from soccer.com. Goalkeepers will be required to purchase a training kit (New Balance: GK Jersey, 1 pair of Black Shorts, 1 pair of White Socks) from soccer.com.** Once players are invited into the program, they will be sent a separate link to purchase their kit via a soccer.com email with a *designated* uniform number.
- Bring a properly inflated ball, shin guards, socks, and both training shirts to every ODP event.
- Bring hand sanitizer, face mask, ample water supply, cleats/turf shoes, GK gloves (if needed), a plastic bag for players to take care of their own trash.
- **Conflict Statement:** ODP requires a high level of commitment from players. When scheduling conflicts arise, players must ultimately make their own decision whether or not to attend an ODP practice or event. Before making that decision, however, they should consider the following:
  - ODP coaches are responsible for selecting the players who are, in the coaches' opinions, the best in the program. The only method available to them to make these decisions is the evaluation of the player's performance on the field. If players decide to forego an ODP practice or event in favor of a personal, club, or East Region activity, they diminish their opportunities to be identified by their coach. This does not mean the player will not progress in the ODP, but players who do prioritize the ODP tend to earn more roster spots for events. Players who want to advance in the ODP should regard ODP attendance as mandatory. Each ODP event or practice missed reduces the likelihood of being selected for a position on an ODP roster.

- If you cannot attend a training session please contact your team administrator ASAP.
- Parents are reminded to allow the staff to coach and encourage their children instead of direct.
- As a parent, we ask you not to actively recruit players for your club. If you are found guilty of this offense it can result in the removal of your child from the program.
- As a parent, if you wish to discuss a recent in-game concern, please wait 48 hours, and then email the coach. If it needs immediate attention, contact the ODP Director.
- When major storms are predicted on or prior ODP training or games, which could make travel to or playing hazardous, those events may be cancelled. Any cancellation notification will be posted on the “Weather Announcements” portion of the “ODP” tab on the Massachusetts Youth Soccer website. Please check the website before leaving for practice and check your email.
- Training sessions that are cancelled due to inclement weather will **NOT** be rescheduled.
- If your child was not able to attend the scheduled tryout due to injury or other conflict, he/she may still be considered for the team. Please reach out to the ODP director for information and to make arrangements for your child to be evaluated.

### **EAST REGION TOURNAMENT SELECTIONS**

- For **13U, 14U, 15U, 16/17U** age groups the top 16-18 players will be selected and asked to attend the East Region Tournament. This is one of the events that serve as a Player Identifier event for the East Region ID Camp. Players not initially selected should be informed they will be considered alternates.

### **EAST REGION TOURNAMENT**

- This tournament typically takes place the 1st weekend in June at Rider University, NJ and Kirkwood Soccer Complex, DE. Players must be available Friday through Sunday for the games. Maximum of 18 players can be selected to go to the East Region Tournament. Teams will be competing for a Regional Championship which then leads to an opportunity to compete for a National ODP Championship.
- There is a second weekend for semifinals and finals, taking place two weekends later in DE.
- **Parents/Players are responsible for their own transportation as well as room and board. Massachusetts Youth Soccer will provide a link to book rooms should parents want to utilize this service.**
- Check the East Region website frequently for information <https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/east/> Print out all directions, rules format, and schedule before leaving.
- **In order to be eligible for any ODP event, you must be current with your payment in accordance with the payment schedule.**
- If a player is asked to attend the East Region Tournament, that player and that player’s parents must keep in mind, even though we understand the time and expense involved in traveling to an event, playing time is guaranteed. Our coaches try their best to maximize playing time for all players in attendance.

### **EAST REGION ID CAMP**

ID Camp is so named because during the event, state players are identified to play on their age group’s regional team. **ID camp is an invite only event. Players are identified through the sub-regional events such as friendly matches and the East Region Tournament. Regional coaches attend these sub-regional events in order to scout players and make recommendations for camp invitations.** You can always go to the East Region site <https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/east/> to check schedules, packing lists, rules, and documents needed.

July 2021 Boys: Rider University, NJ

July 2021 Girls: Rider University, NJ

- All players that attend Regional camp must stay in the dorms. This is an East Region policy.
- Players must attend the full camp and **may not come late or leave early.**

- Parents should not contact regional coaches prior to, during or after any event. Your questions and concerns should be directed to your state coach or state's ODP director.
- Players who are not part of the State Olympic Development Program, are not eligible to attend East Region Camp.
- The East Region Camp is an intense 4-5 day camp with multiple field sessions, games, and classroom meetings daily. Players are placed in groups of up to 18 with whom they will train, play, and attend meetings with throughout the event. There may or may not be other players from Massachusetts in your son/daughter's training group.
- Throughout the day, regional coaches meet to select players to compete in what is often called a "pool game." Even though it is an honor to play in one of these games, an invitation to play is a layer in the identification process and not the final selection. If you have been invited to play a pool game, your training schedule may change for that day in order to train and meet the other players you will compete with on that day. The pool games, group games, training, participation in meetings and your actions both on and off the field are all taken into consideration when the final team is selected.
- The players are typically given a journal to keep notes and thoughts in throughout the event. It is important for the player to make a habit of reflecting on each training session and game.
- At the end of the camp, the regional staff will identify the final pool. The final pool is a list of the players who are invited to East Region training and games throughout the fall, winter and spring in various locations in the US. Anyone who makes the pool gets invited to at least one East Region training event. Making the final pool also exempts you from tryouts for Massachusetts ODP the following year; you will be selected to the following year's state roster if you choose to accept the invitation.
- Meals and lodging are included in the ID camp fee. Transportation, drinks and snacks are not.

### **REFUND POLICY**

- **Fees for ALL ODP events are non-refundable.** Any player who is selected as a member of the state team will be expected to attend the regional event in his/her respective age group. Any player, who decides not to attend their regional event after they are selected to the final state team, and does not have official documentation of a medical hardship, may not be entitled to a full refund. Please note that refunds for medical reasons are reviewed individually and there is no guarantee of approval.
- Refund requests due to a medical situation or injury must be accompanied by a letter from a doctor explaining the injury and prohibiting the player from participating in soccer or soccer-like activities. The decision to issue a refund is done on a case-by-case basis; the refund is not guaranteed.
- Any refunds issued will be less credit card and processing fees.
- Prorated refunds will be considered in the event of cancellation due to COVID-19 Safety Policy.

### **INJURY POLICY**

If a player is injured during an ODP event, they must be seen by the medical professional on site. The medical professional will complete an incident report. A head or assistant coach may be asked to sign the report.

## **CONCUSSION POLICY**

During a session if a player is suspected of having a concussion, the coaching staff will remove the player from the session and will not allow the player to return to play for the remainder of the session. If there is an EMT on site, they are the only individual that can approve the player to return to play. More information can be found here: <http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coaches/concussions/>

The coaching or medical staff will inform the player's parent or guardian of the player's symptoms as soon as possible. They will also inform the Team Manager, ODP Director, and Technical Director.

The player will not be able to return to activity in the Olympic Development Program until he/she has been cleared by their physician. A clearance to play letter must be given to the Coaching Staff.

If a player receives a concussion outside of training with the Olympic Development Program, the player will need to be evaluated and cleared, in writing, by their physician. Coaches will inform the Team Manager, ODP Director, and Technical Director once the player has been approved to return to play.

## **PLAYER EVALUATIONS**

- Each player will get an evaluation completed by your state's coaching staff at the end of the season. It will be sent via email.
- In order to receive an evaluation, the player must attend at least 50% of the sessions. If you cannot attend at least half of all sessions, an evaluation will not be provided for the player.
- Goalkeeper coaches are responsible for filling out evaluations for goalkeepers.
- Based on 3.5 - 4 = made a Regional Team, 3 - 3.5 = invited into 1 or more pool games at camp, 2 - 2.5 = was invited to camp, 2 and below = did not perform well enough to be invited to camp.
- Players who quit the program do not receive an evaluation.



## **Massachusetts ODP Anti-Harassment, Anti-Bullying and Anti-Hazing Policies**

### **Anti-Harassment Policy**

Massachusetts ODP is committed to providing an environment that respects diversity and is free from discrimination and harassment based upon any legally protected status including race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, disability and veteran status. All decisions affecting employment and participation at ODP shall be made without discrimination against any person on the basis of any such legally protected status. The program believes all individuals must be treated with dignity and respect. Consistent with this commitment and consistent with federal and MA law, ODP does not condone discriminatory or harassing conduct of any individual. In particular, coaches and staff are prohibited from engaging in harassing or discriminatory conduct based on gender or race directed against any other person engaged to provide services to or perform work for ODP. In addition, coaches and staff are advised that physically, emotionally or sexually abusive conduct by coaches or staff directed toward players under the age of 18 must be reported to the Massachusetts Technical Director and ODP Director and in certain instances, to law enforcement agencies and may result in criminal sanctions.

#### *Behaviors that Violate this Policy*

Discrimination against or harassment of an individual when based upon a legally protected status (see above) violates this policy when such conduct is pervasive or severe. Discrimination and harassment can take many forms. The following are examples of conduct that could violate this policy:

1. limiting opportunities on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, disability, veteran status, or any other legally protected status;
2. slurs, jokes, statements, remarks, questions, gestures, pictures or cartoons regarding race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, disability veteran status, or any other legally protected status that are derogatory or demeaning to an individual's or group's characteristics or that promote stereotypes;
3. demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment or continued employment;
4. offensive or unwelcome sexual flirtation, advances or touching;
5. obscene, demeaning or abusive commentary about an individual's body;
6. responding to refusals to provide sexual favors with verbal, emotional or physical abuse.

This policy applies to discrimination and harassment occurring in MA Youth Soccer and in other settings where ODP personnel may be exposed to discrimination or harassment, including but not limited to activities away from Progin Park locations, such as co-sponsored activities that are off-site. This policy protects and applies to all ODP coaches, staff and players.

It is not the intent of this policy to prohibit consensual relationships between adults employed by the program. However, romantic and sexual relationships between ODP players and ODP coaches and staff are prohibited and will lead to immediate termination and dismissal. In addition, coaches and staff are advised that engaging in sexual relations with a player under the age of 16 constitutes statutory rape and is a criminal offense, while abuse of a child under the age of 18, including sexual abuse or physical or emotional abuse involving sexual relations or sexual overtones, are offenses which must be reported to the appropriate authorities. Coach and staff behavior with respect to players must be above suspicion. Coach and staff should avoid even the appearance of an improper relationship with players.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Bullying is when one or more people exclude, tease, taunt, gossip, hit, kick, or put down another person with the intent to hurt another. Bullying happens when a person or group of people want to have power over another and use their power to get their way, at the expense of someone else. Bullying can also happen through cyberspace and social media: through the use of e-mails, text messaging, instant messaging, and other less direct methods. This type of bullying can also lead to persons being hurt during or between the seasons and be especially hurtful when persons are targeted with meanness and exclusion.

**At ODP bullying is inexcusable, and we have a firm policy against all types of bullying.** We work together as a team to ensure that players gain self- confidence, make new friends, improve their skills and knowledge and go home with great memories.

Unfortunately, persons who are bullied may not have the same potential to get the most out of their experience. Our leadership addresses all incidents of bullying seriously and trains staff to promote communication with their staff and their players so both staff and players will be comfortable alerting us to any problems during their ODP experience and between ODP seasons. Every person has the right to expect to have the best possible experience at ODP, and by working together as a team to identify and manage bullying, we can help ensure that all players and staff have a great time.

## **Anti-Hazing Policy**

ODP is proud to uphold a distinctive set of values and qualities in support of our player's growth and development. We understand that players in attendance come from different team environments and have valuable traditions, rituals, and rites of passage designed to create strong team connections to each other. ODP team initiations or traditions, however, which attempt to build these bonds between members, must do so in an affirming way without coercion of any kind. In a community such as ours, we value lasting relationships grounded in mutual respect, not artificial connections created through shared humiliation.

## **ODP Policy and MA Law**

Hazing is strictly prohibited by ODP policy and by MA law. Violation of the hazing policy may subject an individual or team to disciplinary action, by ODP Technical Director, ODP Director and ODP Coaches with penalties up to and including dismissal for individuals and suspension or termination in the team's future privilege of attending ODP. In addition to incurring serious ODP-imposed consequences for violations of the policy, players may be subject to criminal prosecution by legal authorities for violation of the MA law. "The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person." (Hazing Law, 269:17)

ODP has adopted a broader definition similar to many MA based schools and colleges defining hazing as: Any activity that is part of an initiation, participation, or affiliation in a group that 1) physically or psychologically humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers--regardless of a person's willingness to participate; 2) results in the disruption of the educational process or the impairment of academic performance; or 3) violates ODP policy or state law. This applies to behavior on or off the field. Examples of hazing include but are not limited to the following: physical threats or abuse of any kind; encouraging or requiring a person to consume alcohol, drugs, or foreign or unusual substances; forcing a player into a violation of the law or ODP policy such as indecent exposure, theft, or trespassing; confining a person or taking a person to an outlying area and dropping him/her off; servitude such as encouraging or requiring a person to run personal errands; requiring a shaved head or the wearing of conspicuous apparel in public; and depriving a person of sleep.

Hazing has dangerous potential to harm individuals, to damage organizations and teams, and to undermine the mission of ODP and the fundamental values of our community. As such, no player, ODP employee, ODP volunteer, or other ODP-recognized individuals or groups shall conduct or condone hazing activities, consensual or not.

## **Taking Action**

When in doubt about an activity, ask the Massachusetts Technical Director and ODP Director. They can provide additional examples of behaviors that might constitute hazing, examples of positive group bonding activities and rites of passage for new members, assistance with organizing legitimate events to foster teamwork and cohesiveness, and other relevant information and support.

At ODP, where members of our community look out and care for one another, players and employees are expected to intervene personally or by contacting Massachusetts Technical Director and ODP Director if they encounter activities that put others in physical or psychological harm or discomfort as long as they can do so without jeopardizing their own safety or the safety of others. By stepping up and taking action, bystanders are frequently able to put an end to inappropriate behavior before things get out of hand. ODP players and employees should notify appropriate ODP personnel of any perceived instance of hazing as defined by ODP policy and/or law and do so as soon as possible so the activity can be stopped or the allegations can be investigated. Reports may be made directly or anonymously by submitting an anonymous letter to an appropriate ODP officials or asking an ODP official that the report remain anonymous. You have the option to submit a report anonymously. Please note that although Mass Youth Soccer endeavors to investigate all reports, including anonymous reports, the nature of anonymous reports makes investigation, determination, and remediation more difficult and, at times, impossible. As a result, you are encouraged to provide your name and contact information.