

## **Changing Landscapes: OYSAN Expands Fall ODP Training Program and Announces Additional ODP Program Changes.**

Tom Turner, Director of Coaching and Player Development

Nobel Laureate Herbert Simon noted that it takes about ten years or roughly 10,000 hours of training to become competent at anything. With the typical youth soccer player participating in far more games than training sessions; rarely training more than twice a week; generally participating in training activities that are less than well focused towards long-term development; and seldom resting for any significant period of time, the odds are stacked against our most promising youngsters from ever maximizing their athletic potential.

“After completing an extensive review and discussion across the country, we feel that it is the right time for U.S. Soccer to lead a change in the sport at the youth level. We need to shift the focus of our young elite players from an ‘overburdened, game emphasis’ model to a ‘meaningful training and competition’ model. This will ultimately lead to more success and will allow players to develop to their full potential.”

**Sunil Gulati – U.S. Soccer President**

Thankfully, the youth soccer landscape is changing, and changing fast! Two bold new national initiatives will emerge in 2007. The first presents an alternative development model for progressive elite clubs; the second, an American facsimile of the professional youth academy.

### **A Changing Landscape**

In Chicago, frustrated by the exploitation of youth soccer by calculating entrepreneurs, US Soccer is initiating their own academy program for elite clubs starting later this fall, with specific rules on everything from the coaching curriculum, to coaching education requirements, to cost, to the minimum number of training sessions per week, to the maximum number of games played in a year. Clubs that cannot meet the demands of academy membership will be sent packing!

[\[http://www.ussoccer.com/articles/viewArticle.jsp\\_557057.html\]](http://www.ussoccer.com/articles/viewArticle.jsp_557057.html)

In Lorain, Brad Friedel’s Premier Soccer Academy will open the doors to welcome its first class of full-time, scholarship residents this August. The \$10 million, state of the art facility will be the first of its kind in America and the



day-to-day operations will closely approximate the living and training conditions of the top professional youth academies worldwide.

[<http://www.premiersocceracademies.com/index2.html>]

In both initiatives, the common threads are appropriate player development and limited or eliminated cost: two seemingly contradictory concepts in today's pay-to-play world of youth sport.

### **Why More Training versus Games?**

The two reasons why more training is so vital for young players are increased ball contact and more frequent exposure to common tactical situations.



In a typical youth soccer match, the 70-80 minutes playing time is somewhat equitably shared between two teams of 18 players. Since the ball is out of play for about 33% of any match, up to 36 players share possession during 47 (2x35) or 53 (2x40) minutes of active playing time, meaning that each player is in contact with the ball for less than 2 minutes per game! This average also holds true at the professional level where substitutions are limited to three per team.

In reality, playing 100 games per year, as many teams do, only provides for a maximum of about 200 minutes with the ball. In contrast, a well structured training environment can exceed that number in one week!

A similar story can be seen in training players to read and react to the game in order to naturally apply the basic principles of attacking and defending.

*Right now, many of our youth players outside of the 40 guys in (US Soccer U-17 MNT) residency don't have a lot of choices about how many games they play, when they train, or what their schedule is like. They don't have those choices because, in our current business-minded set-up, the best players have to play too many matches in too many competitions. Clubs feel they have to compete and be successful, so their schedules are just not suited to making players better. It's all become a vicious cycle".*

**John Hackworth, U-17 Men's National Team Coach.**

Good coaches create training activities that repeatedly expose players to the demands of the game in microcosm in order to maximize learning. Individual play is complemented by activities that develop play around the ball; which, in turn, are complemented by activities that train group awareness. As playing numbers increase, spacing and positional insight become complementary elements to individual expression, ball circulation, combination play, and controlling the rhythm of play.

The following article underscores the necessity for a different training mindset in Ohio North. [<http://www.oysan.org/CoachingArticles/2006StateCupObservationsFinal.pdf>]



### **Expanded ODP Training Opportunities**

This fall, OYSAN will join the movement towards improving the soccer landscape for talented and motivated players by offering up to twelve ODP training sessions at five local sites: Youngstown (Site TBD), Akron (Copley Rd), Cleveland East (Mentor and Mayfield), Cleveland West (Oberlin), and Toledo (Site TBD).

Historically, the ODP program for U-12's, U-13's and U-14's in Ohio North has consisted of five training sessions on Sunday mornings in September and October, with the state team selection process taking place over the winter months between November and March.

The core training program will continue on Sunday mornings, but will now expand to add a sixth session. The Sunday training dates for this fall are 9/9, 9/16, 9/23, 9/30, 10/7 and 10/14. All training times are 9am - 11am.

In addition, players will now have the opportunity to participate in a second ODP training session scheduled on the following dates:

Youngstown Area (Tuesdays): 9/11, 9/18, 9/25, 10/2, 10/9 and 10/16

Akron (Wednesdays): 9/12, 9/19, 9/26, 10/3, 10/10 and 10/17

Cleve-East (Thursdays): 9/13, 9/20, 9/27, 10/4, 10/11 and 10/18

Cleve-West (Wednesdays): 9/12, 9/19, 9/26, 10/3, 10/10 and 10/17

Toledo Area (Monday's): 9/10, 9/17, 9/24, 10/1, 10/8 and 10/15

All weeknight training times are 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm.

### **Complementary Training**

Assuming that players who take advantage of the ODP training program are also involved with their respective club or community teams, the training load for the fall season can begin to approximate the eight to ten hours demanded of elite athletes in other sports such as swimming and gymnastics; and, ironically, by many youth level community baseball and football programs!

It is hoped that talented and motivated players are encouraged by their club and community coaches to participate in ODP training as a complement to other soccer training and not as an alternative.

*"The Academy is a comprehensive approach to help develop some of the top players across the nation, but it is also designed to be a working model for the grassroots level. All the clubs involved will be moving in the same direction giving us a similar approach to player development, and then these clubs will act almost like satellites out in the country helping to spread the message out to the clubs around them."*

**Bob Jenkins – U.S. Soccer Director of Coaching Education & Youth Development**

## **Coaching Staff**

The staff coaches for the midweek training will be led by state Director of Coaching Tom Turner (A License) and includes Paul Fabry (A license), Neil Fowler (A license), Tavi Muresan (A license), Pat Sweeney (A license), Neil Baltes (B license), Jerry Shutway (B license), and Les Szabo (B license). Gary Gilmour (Scottish FA license), Zjelko Kalic (D license), Lori Williams (D license) and Candice Choquette (D license) will serve as assistants.

## **Cost**

The cost for the six traditional Sunday morning training sessions is \$100. For those who enroll in just the six weeknight sessions, the cost is also \$100. Finally, for those who wish the opportunity to participate in all 12 ODP training sessions, the cost is \$175.

## **Additional ODP Program Changes**

### **Fall State Pool Selection for U-13 Boys and U-14 Boys and Girls**

The state pool selection process for the U-13 boys and U-14 boys and girls will now take place during the fall season, which is a significant change from past practice. Players will be evaluated at every training session and the respective pools will be named at the conclusion of the fall season in October. During the winter months, the state pools will train together and compete in more events with neighboring state ODP programs.



### **U-13 Girls**

The U-13 girls utilize a scramble format at regional camp and therefore do not form state teams. The fall and winter sessions will continue to be training based, with the current practice of advancing the most talented U-13 girls into the U-14 age group retained.

### **Overseas Travel: U-13 Boys and Girls Pool Selection Process**

Besides technical training, a key psychological element of developing into an elite athlete is learning how to function out of a comfort zone. With “representative” teams, such as state, regional and national teams, this includes the constant pressure of playing and training up to ability, the adjustment to unfamiliar teammates, the adjustment to possibly playing out of position, the adjusting to unfamiliar coaches, the adjustment to more precise technical, tactical, and physical standards, and the adjustment to the difficulties associated with travel.



At the highest levels, this also includes adjusting to the various stresses associated with competing in foreign countries, which include the food, the language, the climate, the currency, the local customs, the style of play, homesickness, the response of local spectators, the balance between soccer preparation and matches, and even the disappointment of very limited sightseeing opportunities.

It is for these reasons that OYSAN established the practice of scheduling an overseas event each March for the U-13 age groups; an age group that is most likely to benefit from this early experience.



The initial pools for the U-13 boys and girls overseas trip will be announced at the end of the fall season in October, with the final 18-player selections made following separate indoor training sessions in November and December.

### **On-Line Player Evaluations**

A new on-line evaluation process will debut this fall, with player assessments delivered via e-mail. Players who attend a minimum of three training sessions will be provided with a formal and comprehensive evaluation. Players who do not attend three sessions will not be assessed.

### **Finally, a note on the ODP Selection Philosophy**

The Olympic Development Program was established in 1977 to provide each state association with a mechanism to advance their best players to the regional and national teams as ability dictated.



Fundamentally, ODP is concerned with immediate soccer ability and long-term potential, which is achieved, in part, by forming larger pools and second teams at the youngest ages.

While the formation of state pools is necessary to help compare players from different parts of the state, ODP is not a club program and players do not earn the right to be selected on the basis of payment or regular attendance.

As is the case with regional and national teams, very talented players can and will be added to the ODP program at any time until a state team is named for an event.

### **Registration Information**

To register for 2007-08 US Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program, visit the Ohio North web site ([oysan.org](http://oysan.org)) and locate “ODP” in the menu bar; or simply click on the following link: <https://ssl.hammerhead.net/ohionorthodp/odpreregistration.asp>