



North Carolina Olympic Development Program Monthly Newsletter

Each month this newsletter aims to inform our members through valuable content about the Olympic Development Program (ODP), soccer in the state, and soccer around the country!

Upcoming ODP Training / Events

The 2017-18 Olympic Development Program season is in full swing with upcoming ODP Training and Events listed below:

BOYS

Training - June 9th & 10th - 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, & 2005
(Only Players Selected for Region Camp are invited to June Training)

GIRLS

Training - June 9th & 10th - 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, & 2005
(Only Players Selected for Region Camp are invited to June Training)

Please check the ODP Calendars at www.ncsoccer.org/boysodp & www.ncsoccer.org/girlsodp as dates & times are subject to change.

Region III ODP Camp Approaching in July

Each July North Carolina ODP sends teams to the Region III ODP Camp in Alabama where they compete against other ODP state teams from around the region and potentially international & MLS youth teams. More information is available at the Region Camp tabs at www.ncsoccer.org/boysodp and www.ncsoccer.org/girlsodp



PDP and WPSL Soccer is Back this Summer!

Did you know that North Carolina is home to Four Professional Development League (PDL) teams and Five Women's Premier Soccer League (WPSL)



teams! PDL and WPSL offer college and amateur players a great opportunity to train & compete throughout the summer! Check out more about PDL and WPSL at the links below!

[Professional Development League](#) [Women's Premier Soccer League](#)

International Champions Cup Returns to Charlotte!



The International Champions Cup returns to Charlotte this summer as Liverpool FC takes on Borussia Dortmund at Bank of America Stadium on July 22nd at 4pm.

Use the Code ICCVIP to buy tickets!

[Liverpool FC vs Borussia Dortmund Ticket Link](#)

ODP Health Tip Corner

Breaking the Silence!

Mental Health has been a topic at the forefront of Professional Sports. Learn more in this month's ODP Health Tip Corner!

Breaking the Silence: Giving a Voice to the Mental Health Side of Sports
By: Keri Jones, MS, LAT, ATC
NC ODP Administrator/Sports Medicine Services Coordinator



Physical, Tactical, Technical. Three key components that make up a soccer player and three areas that are comfortable for players to be evaluated on, taught and discussed with coaches, parents, athletic trainers and teammates. The fourth component - the psychological aspect - is the area most people in and out of athletics shy away from addressing as much as possible. The reason behind this is nothing more than the negative social stigma attached to mental health. We aren't supposed to talk about mental health issues, right? Wrong! Though it can make for some very awkward and uncomfortable conversation, creating an environment where those suffering from mental health issues feel like they are supported, cared for and not alone, can make a world of difference in their lives. But wait, our soccer athletes are young, they don't have these problems, right?

WRONG again. Here are a few statistics that might surprise you:

- Approximately 1 in every 4-6 youths in America meets the criteria for a mental health disorder (NATA)
- Unlike most physical diseases, mental illness begins very early in life (BRCHRU)
- 50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by the age of 16, 75% begin by the age of 24 (BRCHRU)

Mental health disorders include the following: mood disorders, depression, suicide intervention, panic attacks, stress, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, eating disorders and disordered eating, gender and identity issues and substance-abuse related disorders. Mental health issues can be completely unrelated to sports, can be directly related to the pressures of performing in one's sport, can be exacerbated by career or season ending injuries or can be relieved some by using sport as an outlet. The NCAA brings awareness to the fact that "a student-athlete's mental health might be viewed as secondary to physical health, however, it is every bit as important for healthy performance."

I can't imagine being a teenager in 2018 to begin with how that social media is so prevalent in our everyday life. How odd is that the stress of performing in school and sports and then add on top of all of that, the feelings of being alone, scared, not good enough or just down, right different. What about the kids who are grieving because they just suffered a significant loss in their life (think death or divorce) or who just got the results back from an MRI scan and found out they are facing a reason or career ending injury? Many parents are naive enough to think that this won't happen to their kid but the reality is, it can and it does. Sadly, even in cases when the child has a supportive family, access to resources and the means to get help, the child has become a pro at hiding their feelings. They find ways to muster through the motions of everyday life so that even those closest to them wouldn't have a clue that something is off. How think about the kids who don't have the structure of a stable home life, the means or resources to seek help or who are masked by social stigmas attached to their race and/or gender? Will someone finally notice and reach out to help them? As people, let alone parents, coaches, teammates and athletic trainers, we should have a responsibility to look out for and care for those around us, especially our youth. We have all been guilty at one time or another of thinking it's just easier to mind our business than meddle in someone else's but what could happen if one of our players was in need and everyone in that child's life just ignored them? I don't know about you but I would rather not find out.

So how can we help? I'm guessing most of us are not mental health professionals but that doesn't mean we can't use our own individual strengths in the ways that we do play to help identify red flags and be the advocate that some young student-athletes may need in their life. If we all just dig a little deeper and stepped out of our comfort zone, we too can help shed light on the importance of mental fitness.

I reached out to friends and colleagues to gather some insight to share with our players, coaches, athletic trainers and parents on how we can begin to educate ourselves on how we can step out of our comfort zone (but not overlap our boundaries) to help players around us struggling with their mental health whether it be related to their sport or non-sport life.

STAY CONNECTED

