



**ONTARIO
SOCCER**

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Version 1.0 +

2025-2036

Technical Development Plan

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Introduction

Can you imagine...

A future for soccer in Ontario where every child has access to safe, quality experiences locally?
Where leaders are consistently developed through cutting edge education?
Where our talented players systematically progress to Post-Secondary, Professional & National teams?

The time to make this a reality is now!"



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Welcome **Opening Statement.**

Ontario has been the engine room for soccer in Canada for the past two decades! With this success that has driven our National programs to new heights we must collectively seek new mountain peaks to ascend. Our new technical plan through to 2036 aims to take soccer forward in Ontario with ambitious targets to build on the progress of the past.

Our vision seeks to inspire the entire community as we approach hosting the Men's FIFA World Cup 2026™ which will capture the imagination of the next generation. This presents an opportunity, after just witnessing our Women's team achieve an Olympic Gold medal, to ensure ALL of young Ontarians have barrier-free access to play soccer in quality environments local to them. To do this, we cannot do it alone. Every level of the game sees our people passionately dedicate their time and efforts to making soccer better everyday and a unified direction will have even greater impacts.

With a stronger culture that drives a collaborative approach, we can better support all five core pillars – the player, the coach, the match official, the club and the competition – as we seek to substantially change the fabric of the game.

Furthermore, administering the game with the latest technology to simplify day-to-day operations will support our wonderful stakeholders and volunteers as they work tirelessly for our participants. These tools can be sourced through strategic partnerships with industry-leaders and propel Ontario to the forefront of innovation. All of these initiatives will be connected to the launch of the Ontario Soccer Institute of Learning (OSIL). A program that will develop every person with global best



Matt Ferreira
Director, Development

practices and specialized training so we improve the game locally through more competent professionals.

This investment in human resource development will support us as we take steps to dominate soccer in Canada at all levels of the game – locally to internationally – with Ontario-based players, coaches, referees and administrators! Nothing would unite the our province more than propelling our club & national teams to consistent international success and we must have evidence-based, world class support and a seamless player pathway to achieve this. Just like the beautiful game where each minute of the 90 are vital, every stakeholder, program, and detail of this plan share that critical importance as we strive to score and meet our goal!

Welcome Where We Are.



“Considering the program is almost exclusively operated by **amateur** clubs, this is a uniquely ambitious approach.

The key **principles** being adopted are consistent with what we have seen in the **very best** elite professional club academies across the world.

This is a testament to the **vision** and ambition of Ontario Soccer that they have positioned their **development** system in this way”

Ged Roddy

FIFA

Stakeholder Consultation.

To ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach to shaping Ontario Soccer's future, an extensive stakeholder consultation process was undertaken. This process engaged a wide spectrum of voices from across the soccer ecosystem, including technical leaders, non-technical contributors, independent experts from academia and sport governance, representatives from Canada Soccer, and Ontario Soccer's own board and staff. In total, over 100 individuals representing diverse roles and regions contributed their insights—demonstrating a collective commitment to building a stronger, more unified soccer system for all.

OPDL Technical Group

Chris Grierson, Chris Reilly, Mirco Schroff, Pavel Cancura, Paul O'Rourke, Rob Pereira, Sergio De Luca, Shane Lammie, Slobodan Pavlovic

Open Technical Group

Chris Loucks, Dayna Corelli, Frank Ljubanovic, Jon Mondino, Justin Springer, Martin Harvey, Paul Burke, Ryan Mendonca, Tony Collistro

Non-Technical Group

Dr. Joseph Baker, John Hyland, Kent Green, Kevin Small, Paul Varian, Petra Fera, Sam Di Santo

Independents

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Costa Smyrniotis, CPL
Diana Matheson, NSL
Dino Rossi, League1 Canada
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Jeff Hughes, Chair of the VMC
Jose Maria Celestino da Costa, NSL
Matt Young, FSQ Consulting
Paul Carson, Consultant

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Technical Advisory Committee

Anthony Capotosto, Bobby Lennox, Filipe Bento, Nicole Pagliaro, Tracy Vaillancourt, Tony Fonseca

Match Officials Development Committee

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District Referee Coordinator

Andy Murty, Beth Pelow, Cory Burke, David Smith, Eddie Gonsalves, Greg Cregan, Greg Schoenbeck, Jason Thomas, Leslie Wong, Marguerite Heer, Mark Fonovic, Michael Smith, Mike Kolich, Tony Maddalena

DG Sports

Analia Sordi, Anthony Gallo, David Gee, Halley Green, Melissa McKinnon

Contributors & Statements.

"The new Ontario Soccer Technical Plan (2025 – 2036) represents a significant, ambitious and forward-thinking commitment to elevating the game across the province. This comprehensive long-term vision is set to further positively impact player engagement and development at all levels. Beyond this, it will bolster coach and match official education with contemporary methodologies, strengthen the evolution of the soccer ecosystem, and ultimately cultivate a better experience for all participants in Ontario."

- **Mirco Schroff, Richmond Hill SC**

"In sport, we often overlook the natural disruption and innovation inherent to the ecosystem so I am a strong advocate for the 4-year delivery cycles proposed over the 12 year plan. I also valued how each development pillar was thoughtfully conceptualized alongside a clear action plan to bring it to life."

- **Matt Young, FSQ Consulting**

"This milestone target driven plan while bold and ambitious provides the stakeholders the opportunity to have a guide to follow to reach their potential as we all strive to improve the game."

- **Kevin Small, Newmarket SC**

"As the game continues to evolve the need for innovative programming linked to clear strategic goals is critical to our long term success. The role of the referee is crucial to the overall success and integrity of the game of soccer. Referees are not just enforcers of the rules; they are essential to maintaining order, ensuring player safety, and upholding the spirit of fair play."

- **Richard Bowden, Oakville SC**

"Being invited to review the technical plan and offer feedback reflects a forward-thinking approach by the technical leaders at Ontario Soccer. Progress demands momentum—standing still means falling behind."

- **Bobby Lennox,
Ontario Soccer Coach Developer**

"The Ontario Soccer Development Plan presents a visionary strategy to elevate soccer in Ontario through collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity. Building on the province's decade-long legacy of foundational advancements, the methodical approach adopted will propel Ontario into a new era of development. As the soccer landscape in Canada continues to evolve, it is imperative that we adopt a holistic view to development, recognizing players, coaches, officials, clubs, and competitions as integral components of the ecosystem. We cannot wait to witness the lasting impact to our sport."

- **Gabriel Assis, BC Soccer**

"The vision of the Technical Development Plan for Ontario Soccer is broad and innovative. It reflects changes to the game that will impact players, coaches, clubs and communities. Having this unified approach adopted across the province will help grow our game and make a difference to how soccer can play a role in shaping a healthy, active, and better future."

- **Paul O'Rourke, Niagara Falls SC**

"Providing pathways is an important component for young aspiring players, and we are excited to continue to work together with Ontario Soccer to propel the game forward in all aspects. With this new strategic direction, a foundation will be laid that will enhance the sport of soccer in the Province for years to come."

- **Anthony Capotosto, Toronto FC**

"Complex problems require complex solutions. Ontario Soccer brought in stakeholders from a range of areas to create a 21st century approach to player development and their new strategy is based on the latest scientific evidence from researchers and high-performance systems from around the world. Most importantly, the strategy is bold and attempts to integrate all elements of soccer engagement in the province, reflecting the unique constraints of Ontario's developmental environment."

- **Dr. Joe Baker, University of Toronto**

"It was inspiring to collaborate with such passionate individuals, and I'm excited to see the plan come to life and positively impact players, match officials, coaches, and the game we all love."

- **John Hyland, Rugby Ontario**

"Ontario Soccer's Technical Development Plan is a bold and inclusive vision for the future of the game in our province. By focusing on accessible pathways for players and robust coach education, it lays the foundation for a more equitable and sustainable soccer ecosystem. This initiative reflects a deep commitment to developing talent at every level and ensuring that everyone—regardless of background or ability—has the opportunity to thrive in the sport."

- **Dr. Tracy Vaillancourt, University of Ottawa**

"League1 Ontario is proud to partner with Ontario Soccer in developing a robust Talented Player Pathway and we applaud the bold technical vision Ontario Soccer has for our sport in order to create better opportunities for players, coaches, officials, administrators and league operators."

- **Dino Rossi, League1 Ontario**

Grassroots Standards

Where We Began.

In 2005, Federal, Provincial and Territorial Sport Ministers accepted “Long-Term Athlete Development” as Canada’s development framework and committed to full provincial and territorial implementation in 2007. Since then, these concepts have been embedded in major national, provincial and territorial agencies for over a decade.

As a leading organization, Ontario Soccer is committed to remove barriers to participation and performance, and help make our systems more effective for players. This was first captured in the Player Development Matrices in 2012 for mandatory implementation starting in 2014.

Those players, regardless of streaming from recreation through to development, needed to have a solid grounding and developmental base to play and enjoy soccer for life or progress through the talented pathways and beyond.

What is critical as parents, coaches, administrators, and match officials is that we understood the philosophical shift of what a quality soccer program is and why it was important to the culture shift necessary to improve the game in Ontario and Canada.

DEVELOPMENT Outdoor		MANDATORY for 2014 and beyond, unless implemented prior	
Stage	FUNDAMENTALS	Learning to Train	
** NO SCORES, NO STANDINGS, NO PROMOTION OR RELEGATION **			
Age Group	U8	U9 and U10	U11 and U12
Playing Format	4v4 (no GK) 5v5 (with GK)	7v7 (including GK)	9v9 (including GK)
Coaching Requirement	Fundamentals + MED and R/S	Learning to Train + MED and R/S	Learning to Train + MED and R/S**
Game Day Roster (Game day only)	Max 10 (5v5)	Ideal 9 / Max 12	Ideal 12 / Max 16
Substitutions	Unlimited (on the fly)	Unlimited (any stoppage)	Unlimited (any stoppage)
Practice to playing ratio	2:1 or 3:1	2:1 or 3:1	2:1 or 3:1
Max competition days per outdoor season	20 festivals	20 (including other competitions)	20 (including other competitions)
Number of competition days per week	1	1	1
Memorable Events*	1 (Ontario only)	2 (Ontario only)	4 (2 in Ontario + 2 in Canada or USA) *per calendar year and includes Indoor Memorable Events
Recommended Practice Duration	30 - 45 minutes	45 - 70 minutes	45 - 70 minutes
Recommended Playing time	Fair time in all positions	Fair time in all positions	Fair time in all positions
Maximum Game Duration	40 minutes	50 minutes	70 minutes
Playing time per player per festival	Max 60 minutes playing time	Max 80 minutes playing time	Max 80 minutes playing time
Minimum/maximum rest between matches	20 min/ 120 min	30 min/ 120 min	30 min/ 120min
Season Length	20 weeks	20 weeks	20 weeks
Team Travel Time	within district	60 minutes each way	60 minutes each way
Referee/Game Leader	Game Leader**	Referee	Referee
Throw ins	No (pass in/dribble in)	No (pass in/dribble in)	Yes
Retreat Line	Yes - ½ way	Yes - 1/3 rd	Yes - 1/3 rd
Offside	No	No	Yes
Field width	25 to 30m	30 to 36m	42 to 55m
Field length	30 to 36m	40 to 55m	60 to 75m
Goal Size (no larger than)	5f / 1.52m x 8f / 2.44m	6f / 1.83m x 16f / 4.88m	6f / 1.83m x 18f / 5.49m
Ball size	3 or 4 (or 4 super light*)	4 (or 5 light*)	4 (or 5 light*)

Grassroots Standards

Where We Are.

After systemic implementation across Ontario since that time, Canada Soccer developed the Grassroots Standards, after extensive nationwide consultation with its Member Association Technical Leads, to enhance the quality and delivery of soccer programming for all participants at the grassroots level (Under-13 and younger). These standards represent a significant milestone in Canada Soccer's and its member's continued commitment to fostering an inclusive, fun, and developmentally appropriate environment for young players.

This cohesive framework, as seen over the next pages, is being implemented coast-to-coast for 2026 and ensures all soccer participants will have a consistent and supportive environment. Much of the work now is centered in Ontario Soccer's commitment to implementing the standards, supporting their core values and promoting the growth of soccer across the province.



- Fair Play & Limited Travel
- Delayed Talent Selection
- De-emphasize Results

- Age-Appropriate & Balanced
- Developmental Match Format
- Qualified Coaches

KEY HIGHLIGHTS



Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards

	ACTIVE START	FUNDAMENTALS		LEARN TO TRAIN	
CRITERIA	U4-U6	U6-U7	U8-U9	U10-U11	U12-U13
Principle: Grassroots Programs should be appropriately structured for the age and stage of the participating players and allow for the opportunity for multi-sport participation, activity sampling, and life balance.					
Season or Block Length	6-16 weeks	6-16 weeks	6-22 weeks	10-22 weeks	10-22 weeks
Practice-to-Match Ratio	N/A	1:1 or 2:1	2:1 or 3:1	2:1 or 3:1	2:1 or 3:1
Structured Practice Duration	30-60 minutes	30-60 minutes	45-75 minutes	60-75 minutes	60-90 minutes
Number of Match Days per Week	N/A	1 Respecting the practice-to-match ratio			
Number of Memorable Events (Tournaments)	N/A	N/A	2 per season	2 per season	3 per season
Principle: Grassroots Matches should be played on fields, with goals and balls, and following a match day format that is developmentally appropriate for the participating players.					
Match Format (maximum)	Informal Games	3v3	4v4 (No GK) or 5v5 (With GK)	7v7	9v9
Maximum Goal Size	N/A	Pop-up Goals 3ft (0.91m) x 5ft (1.52m)	5ft (1.52m) x 8ft (2.44m)	6ft (1.83m) x 16ft (4.88m)	6ft (1.83m) x 18ft (5.49m)
Field Size	N/A	Width: 18-22m Length: 25-30m	Width: 25-30m Length: 30-36m	Width: 30-36m Length: 40-55m	Width: 45-55m Length: 65-75m
Ball Size	3	3	3 or 4	4	U12: 4 U13: 5
Match Duration (maximum)	N/A	30 minutes (2x15 min, or 4x7.5 min)	40 minutes (2x20 min or 4x10 min)	50 minutes (2x25 min or 4x12.5 min)	70 minutes (U12) (2x35 min or 4x17.5 min) 80 minutes (U13) (2x40 min or 4x20 min)
Maximum Match Time Per Player Per Day	N/A	60 minutes	80 minutes	100 minutes	120 minutes
Minimum Rest Time Between Matches	N/A		Duration of one match		
Match Day Roster	N/A	Ideal: 6 players Maximum: 9 players	Ideal: 8-10 players (depending on game format) Maximum: 12 players	Ideal: 10-12 players Maximum: 14 players	Ideal: 14 players Maximum: 18 players
Match Day Format	N/A	Festival Format		Festival or League Format	
Referee or Game Leader	N/A	Game Leader	Game Leader or Referee		Referee
Restarts from Sidelines	N/A	Dribble-in and Pass-in			Throw-in
Offside	N/A	No			Yes
Substitutions	N/A	Unlimited (on the fly or at designated stoppages)		Unlimited (any stoppage)	
Retreat Line	N/A	Yes (halfway line)		Yes (one third)	No

	ACTIVE START	FUNDAMENTALS		LEARN TO TRAIN	
CRITERIA	U4-U6	U6-U7	U8-U9	U10-U11	U12-U13
Principle: Coaches have the greatest impact on the experience of players and every child deserves a properly qualified coach.					
Coaching Qualifications	As outlined in the Canada Soccer Coach Education Minimum Standards, Canada Soccer Safe Sport Roster and presented below				
	Grassroots Stream* <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screen 2. NCCP Make Ethical Decisions Module and/or Online Evaluation 3. Respect in Sport Activity Leader Program 4. NCCP Making Headway Module 5. NCCP Emergency Action Planning Module 6. NCCP Rule of Two Module 				
	Active Start – Online Theory Module and Practical Workshop	Fundamentals – Online Theory Module and Practical Workshop		Learn to Train – Online Theory Module and Practical Workshop	
	Grassroots – Community Stream* <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screen 2. Canada Soccer Coaching Soccer in Canada Online Module 3. Respect in Sport Activity Leader Program 				
	* these coach qualifications represent the minimum standard for the Grassroots Streams. Member Association may increase the requirements within their jurisdiction.				
Player-to-Coach Ratio	U4: One-with-one (child-with-adult informal play) U6: Ideal: 4:1; Maximum 8:1	Ideal: 6:1 Maximum 9:1	Ideal: 8:1 Maximum 10:1	Ideal: 8:1 Maximum 12:1	Ideal: 8:1 Maximum 14:1
Principle: Children register to play soccer, not to watch others play or spend time traveling. Teams should strive for fair playing time and limit travel time as much as possible.					
Playing Time and Positions	N/A	Fair Playing Time for All Players (Coaches should target a minimum of 50% playing time for each player) Players Try All Positions			
Team Travel Time	Within organization	Under 60 minutes each way			
Principle: Talent Identification and selection should be delayed as long as possible to provide as many players as possible with the best training environment available.					
Grouping Players for Match Play	Must support "Open Rosters" that allow the movement players between teams on a regular and ongoing basis				
	Teams cannot be formed using try-outs or other similar evaluation methods				
	Tiering of players is not permitted before U11				
Select Teams	No provincial/territorial or regional select teams before U14.				
Principle: Match results should not be the focus of grassroots soccer as this restricts player development and negatively impacts the player experience.					
Scores and Standings	N/A	No scores or standings			
Scores and Standings in Tournaments	N/A		No		Permitted but not preferred

Player Pathway

Where We Began.

Historically, before the official establishment of the Provincial Program, Ontario Soccer development was relatively fragmented, with district and regional leagues providing opportunities for youth players but without a clear, centralized pathway for top talent to progress.

As the need for more specialized player development became evident, Ontario Soccer recognized that a more focused and comprehensive system was required to develop talented athletes capable of representing the province and, eventually, Canada on the international stage.

The Provincial Program was officially launched in 2006 as a critical step in the identification of players for Ontario's provincial teams as part of its broader efforts to enhance youth player development. The program was designed to help identify, nurture, and develop talented players in the province, ensuring they received the right coaching, competition, and resources to succeed at higher levels of play, including national and international competition.

Initially, the program focused on U14 and U15 age groups and was aimed at providing additional resources and training for players who demonstrated potential beyond what was available through regular club or league play. This was done from identifying players from District and Regional Identification programs who were actively detecting talent in the club environments.



In the early stages, the Provincial Program was where top youth players trained in a centralized program, outside of the outdoor summer season where players stayed with their clubs, and competed in various regional (like the Inter-Provincial Competition with the Quebec Soccer Federation) and national competitions (such as National All-Stars or Canada Summer Games).

This new approach aligned with Canada Soccer's Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) model, emphasizing age-appropriate development, technical skills, and comprehensive training for young athletes but eventually reached the maximum of its capacity with only several hundred players having access to the higher training and competition standards annually.

Player Pathway Where We Are.

Recognizing the need to grow the talented player pool and access to quality training and competition, in 2014, the launch of the Ontario Player Development League (OPDL) brought a significant shift to the Provincial Xcel Program, as it became a key outcome, and bridge program, of the Talent Player Pathway for youth players aged 13-17. The OPDL serves as the pinnacle of youth soccer programming and competition in Ontario, providing access to similar standards of the past Provincial Program, to over 4000 players on a daily basis.



This program’s priorities are provide a development-first environment without promotion-relegation, to elevate the club’s training environment in alignment with global best practices, set higher coaching qualifications for dedicated staff, provide access to quality infrastructure, and offer a best-in-class game day experience. Players are primarily scouted through the OPDL at targeted, in-season events to participate in Provincial Xcel programming.

This de-centralized approach creates a more streamlined and clear high-performance pathway for young athletes as they strive to represent their

province before pursuing opportunities with League1 Ontario (L1ON), Post-Secondary Institutions, Professional Academies, the National Development Centre, and Canadian National Teams.

While this clarity has been very important, it is also designed to support the non-linear development of players who can migrate in or out of the Talented Pathway at different stages. Players having access to the right environment, based on their needs in each moment of their personal growth journey, is what is most critical.

Proposed Recommendations.



The eight-year program assessment was an important step in evaluating the OPDL impact on our soccer ecosystem and identifying where improvements can be made with our youth player development pathway. While the report affirms the OPDL is achieving its main objectives, it also outlines the following recommendations for areas of continued improvement:



Retention

Retain the OPDL as the core channel to advanced youth player development in Ontario.



Player Data

Continue to track OPDL player progression accurately and more broadly.



League Re-Brand

Consider a rename and re-brand of the program to remove referral to a “League”.



Expansion

Be judicious with respect to further expansion of Licence Holder volume.



Partnership

Maintain strong partnerships with Canada Soccer in advanced player development.



Education

Invest in collective, in-house OPDL coach education and development.



Match Officiating

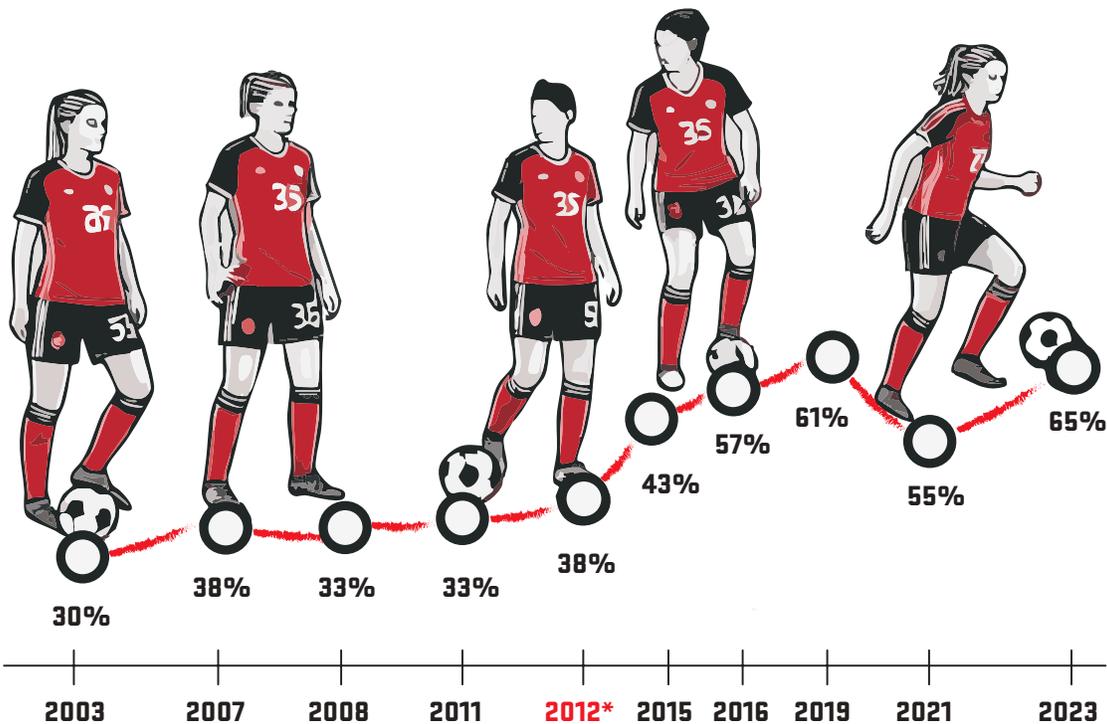
Improve the competitiveness of the OPDL vis-à-vis other leagues with respect to Match Officiating.

Player Distribution.

Since the advent of Grassroots and OPDL programming, Ontario has continued to grow its representation on the senior national teams. Our growing role with the Women’s National Team peaked with the gold medal win at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics with 67% of players coming from Ontario. This chart illustrates the number of female players represented from Ontario in relation to the Major Events held between 2003-2023 including the Olympics and the World Cup.

ONTARIO PLAYER REPRESENTATION

THE CANADIAN WOMEN’S NATIONAL TEAM



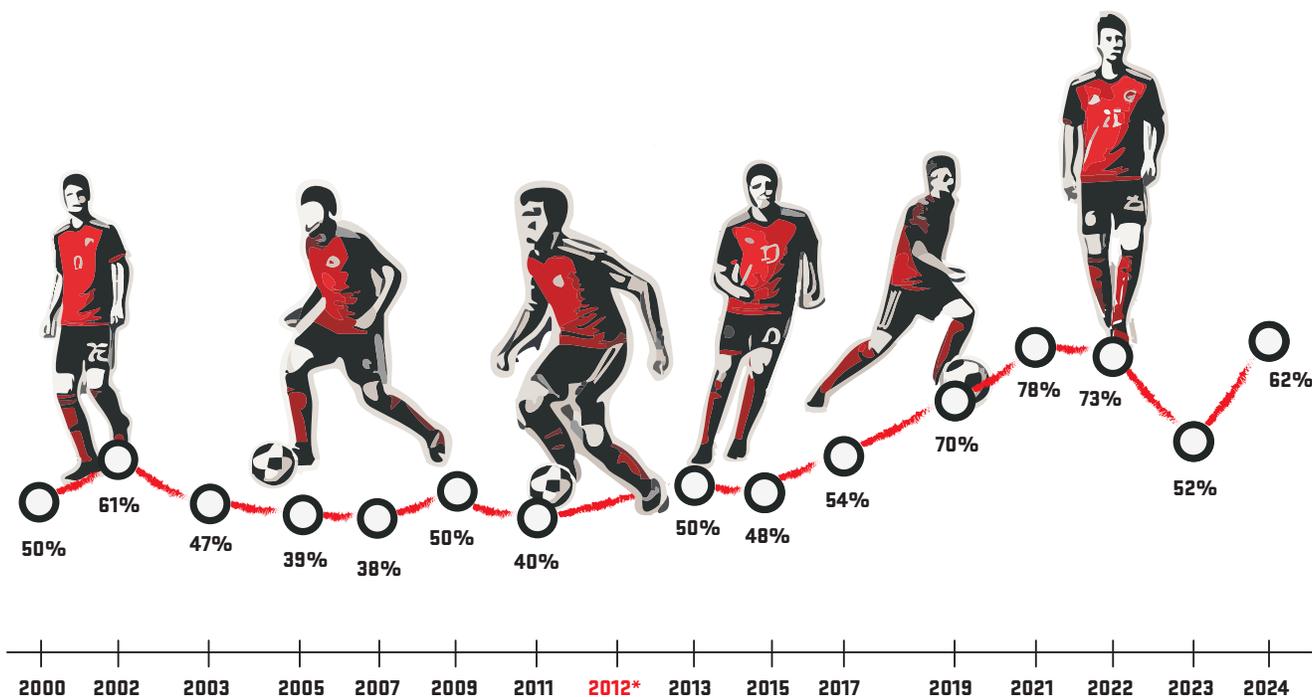
OVERVIEW

*The Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) framework began in Ontario in 2012, introducing all Grassroots (U12 and under) initiatives and launching standards-based programming through the Ontario Player Development League (OPDL) and League1 Ontario (L10).

Player Distribution.

Similarly, Ontario had 20 players contribute to the qualification of the men's national team to the 2022 FIFA World Cup - its first since 1986! This chart illustrates the number of male players represented from Ontario in relation to the Major International Events held between 2000-2024 including the Gold Cup, Copa America, and the World Cup.

ONTARIO PLAYER REPRESENTATION THE CANADIAN MEN'S NATIONAL TEAM



OVERVIEW

*The Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) framework began in Ontario in 2012, introducing all Grassroots (U12 and under) initiatives and launching standards-based programming through the Ontario Player Development League (OPDL) and League1 Ontario (L10).

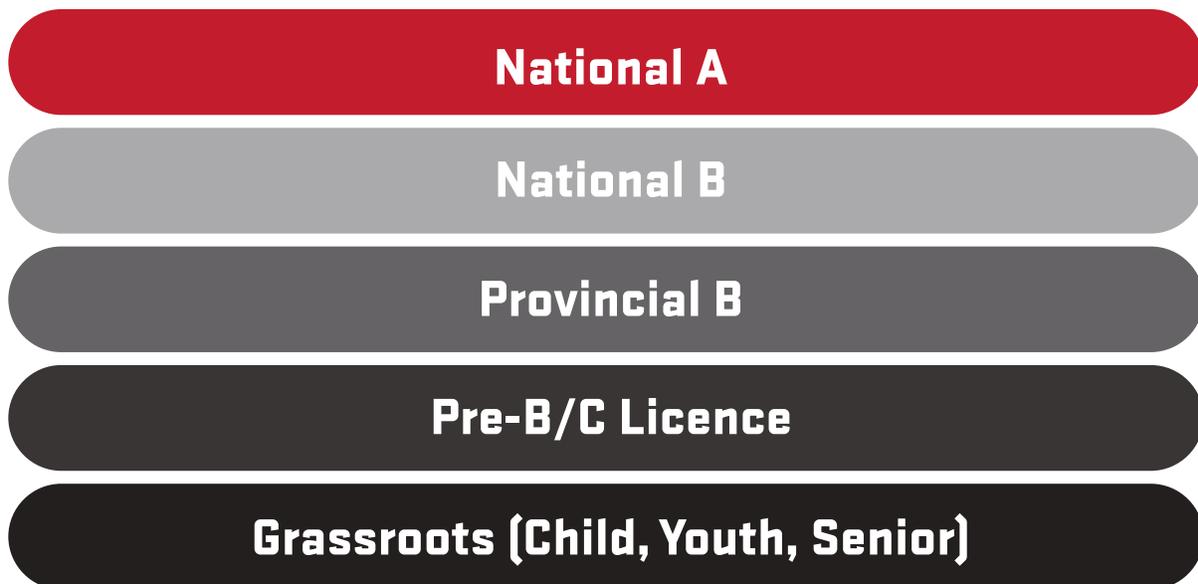


Coaching Pathway

Where We Began.

Coinciding with the launch of LTPD, coaching courses were modified to support age, stage, and competition level relevant learning. There was a focus on shifting training methodologies from the progressive approach to whole-part-whole approach which provides more time to players in game-based environments.

There was also a greater emphasis on technical-tactical learnings to address gaps identified by FIFA in the Canadian player as well as recognizing soccer as the emerging sport in the country. The entry-level courses provided coaches with important information on how to coach individuals based on their age and stage of development in alignment with the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP).



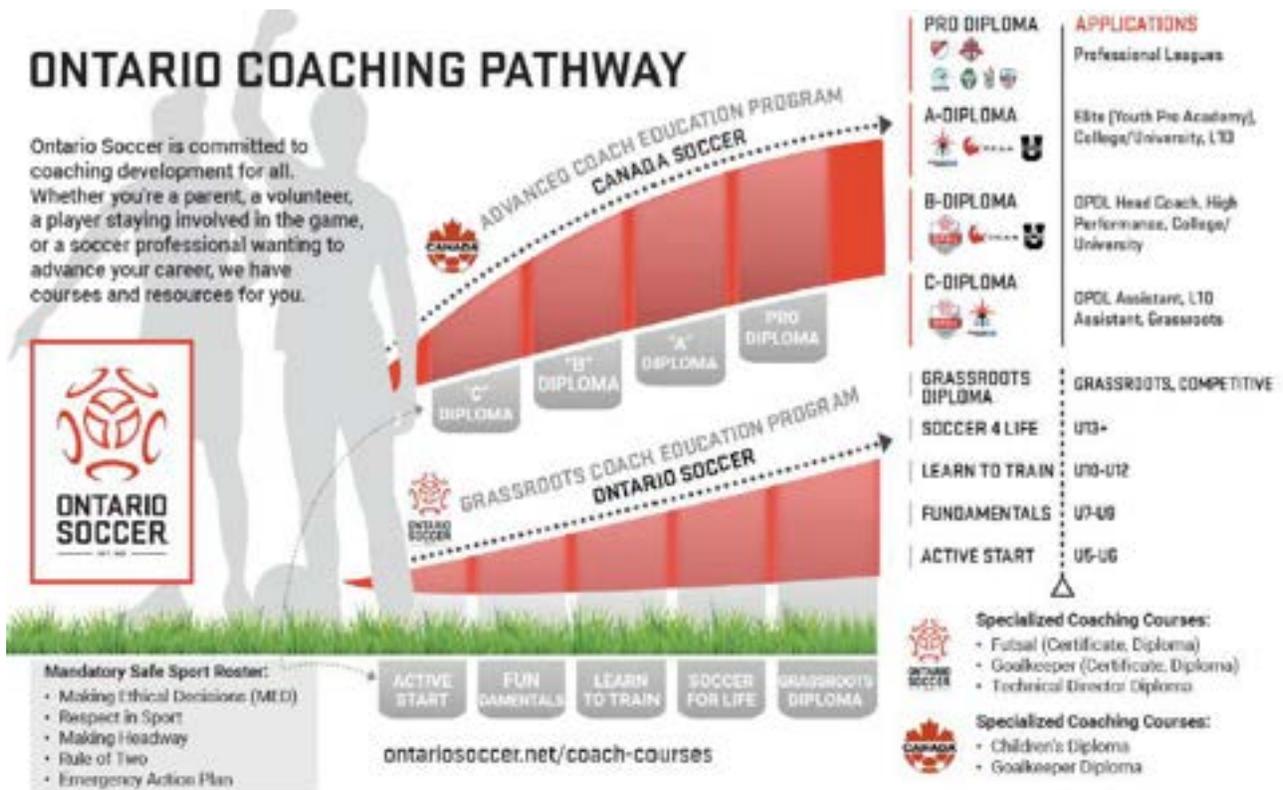
Child, youth, and senior workshops were single and two-day courses which provided coaches theoretical and practical opportunities to design and deliver practices for specific groups of players as well as Making Ethical Decisions as an embedded component of the course. Coaches were also provided manuals to explain key factor coaching and session samples by topic.

At this stage, there were several changes made to the Coach Pathway. The C Licence was a multi-day course which expanded on the theoretical and practical foundations set at the Grassroot level. In the mid-2000's, the C Licence was replaced by a 2-day evaluation workshop called 'The Pre-B' until 2015. These served as the first contact points where coaches were formally evaluated at the conclusion of the course.

Successful coaches would then progress into performance-based programming with Ontario Soccer at a Provincial B level and Canada Soccer for the National B and A, which focused on in-game strategies, advanced techniques, tactical training methods, sport science, and psychology. This structure represented a linear approach to coach development which centered on formal education as the main driver of ongoing improvement of the competencies of coaches.

Coaching Pathway Where We Are.

With the rise of OPDL, League1 Ontario, and professional soccer, coach licensing plays a critical role in preparing individuals for each level of competition and a hiring framework for Clubs. This evolving competition structure also highlights the importance of training Technical Leads which began in Ontario in 2016 and has evolved from a 32-hour to a 150-hour course. As we move beyond simply training coaches in soccer, it's important to continue to address the response in evolving player pathways and competition structures in Ontario, along with the rise of new soccer modalities such as Futsal.



While Nationally, the launch of the Concacaf Coaching Convention, with Canada Soccer as a founding member, provides a framework of minimum standards and regulations intended to harmonize the quality of coach education programs across the confederation. This offers a platform for coaches to learn about best practices, apply cutting-edge methodologies, and collaborate through active mentorship while also seeing certifications recognized by all members across the region.

This agreement reflects the growing focus on professionalizing coaching and staying ahead in an ever-evolving sport with consistent standards from country to country. While course scopes and duration increased (such as the C Licence which increased from 32 to over 60 hours), Ontario Soccer recognized a need to better support its coaches with an entry-level certification and launched the Grassroots Diploma. This proactive approach to building education for the membership was a first step in a broader movement for the future.

Match Officials Pathway

Where We Began.

Match Officials across Ontario followed a structured development pathway that aligned with Canada Soccer and FIFA's development frameworks. This pathway spanned multiple levels, starting from the district level, progressing to regional, provincial, and national levels, and ultimately reaching international recognition.

At each level, Match Officials underwent specific training, assessments, and evaluations designed to enhance skills, knowledge, and decision-making abilities. This progression allowed Match Officials to gain valuable experience in different game scenarios, from local matches to high-stakes international tournaments, while adhering to the standards set by Canada Soccer and FIFA.

The formal grading protocol in Ontario was established in 2013 which was meant to clarify the process by which Match Officials could be identified and progressed. Challenges emerged as many

noted the pathway was unclear, they continued to experienced abuse, lack of support, and hesitancy of leaders to promote Match Officials to higher levels.

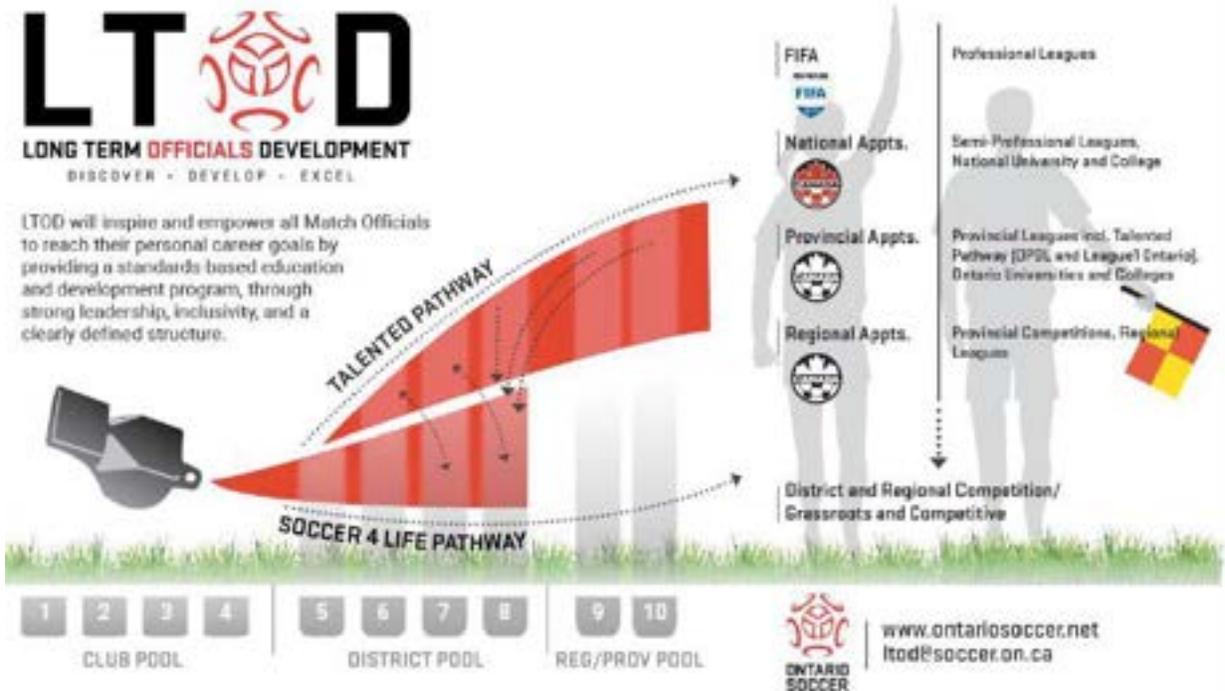
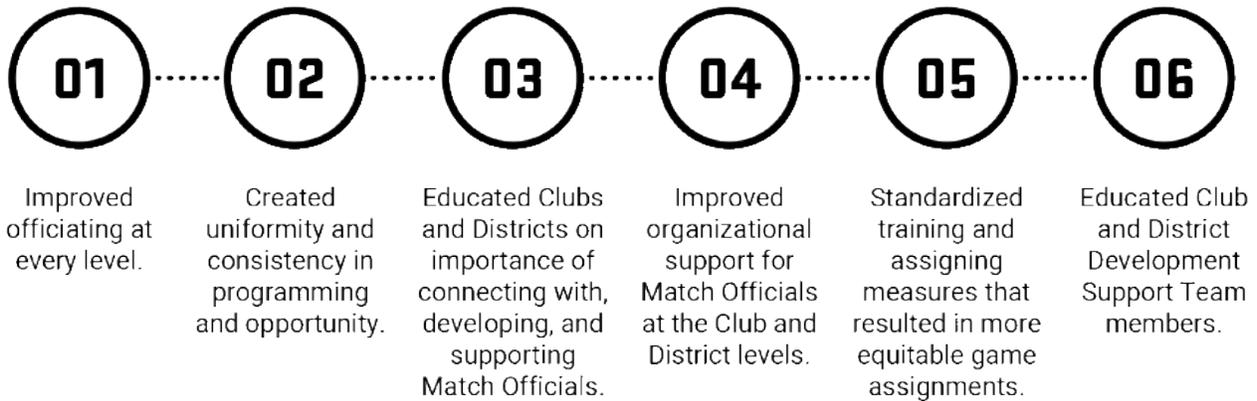
From 2017-2022, Ontario Soccer launched and implemented the Long-Term Officials Development (LTOD) program with the support of the Ontario Trillium Fund (OTF) to address those gaps. The LTOD pathway was introduced to help guide the development of Match Officials' over time, ensuring that they reach their full potential in a systematic and supported manner.

LTOD emphasizes the importance of developing officials at every age and stage of their careers, from grassroots to elite levels, with a focus on age-appropriate learning and ongoing mentorship. It's crucial because it acknowledges that Match Officials, like Players, require continuous development and support to refine their skills, adapt to new challenges, and stay current with the evolving nature of the game.



Match Officials Pathway Where We Are.

Ontario Soccer is advancing Phase Two of its LTOD support, focusing on reality-based learning, soft skill development, and stronger networking among Match Officials and stakeholders to build a cross-functional community. These objectives guide how Match Officials are trained, evaluated, and supported—reinforcing consistent values that uphold game integrity, enhance match control, and promote fairness.

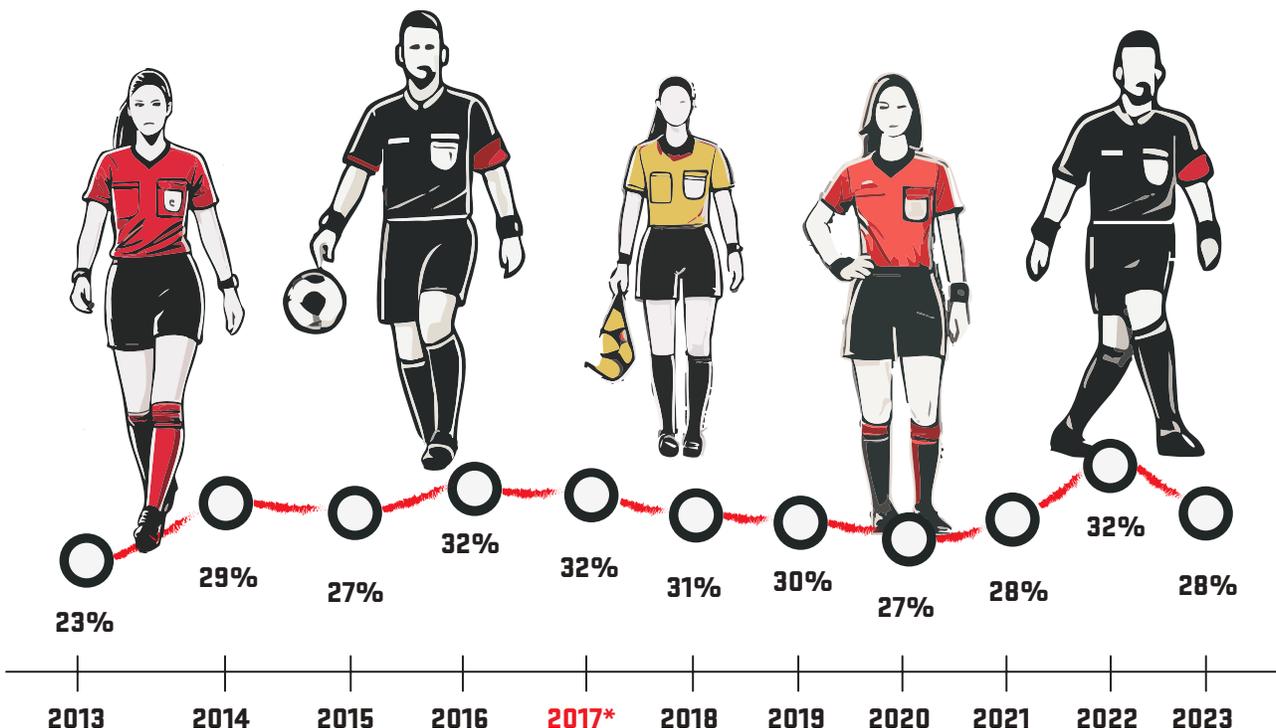


Match Official Distribution.

The LTOD model's impact has been significant, offering a clear and structured approach to referee development, improving the overall quality of officiating across Ontario and beyond, while also supporting the growth of Match Officials who can eventually officiate at the international level. This chart illustrates the number of Match Officials represented from Ontario on a National stage between 2013-2023.

ONTARIO MATCH OFFICIAL REPRESENTATION

THE CANADIAN NATIONAL OFFICIALS



OVERVIEW

*The Long-Term Officials Development (LTOD) framework began in Ontario in 2017, introducing a standards-based development framework for Match Officials to be effectively support from local to provincial levels of competition.



Club

Where We Began.

The governance model of soccer in Ontario sees District Associations as members of Ontario Soccer and clubs, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, register as members of the District's. Therefore, Clubs are the "store-fronts" of soccer in the province and have been responsible for direct delivery of programs and services to members of their community.

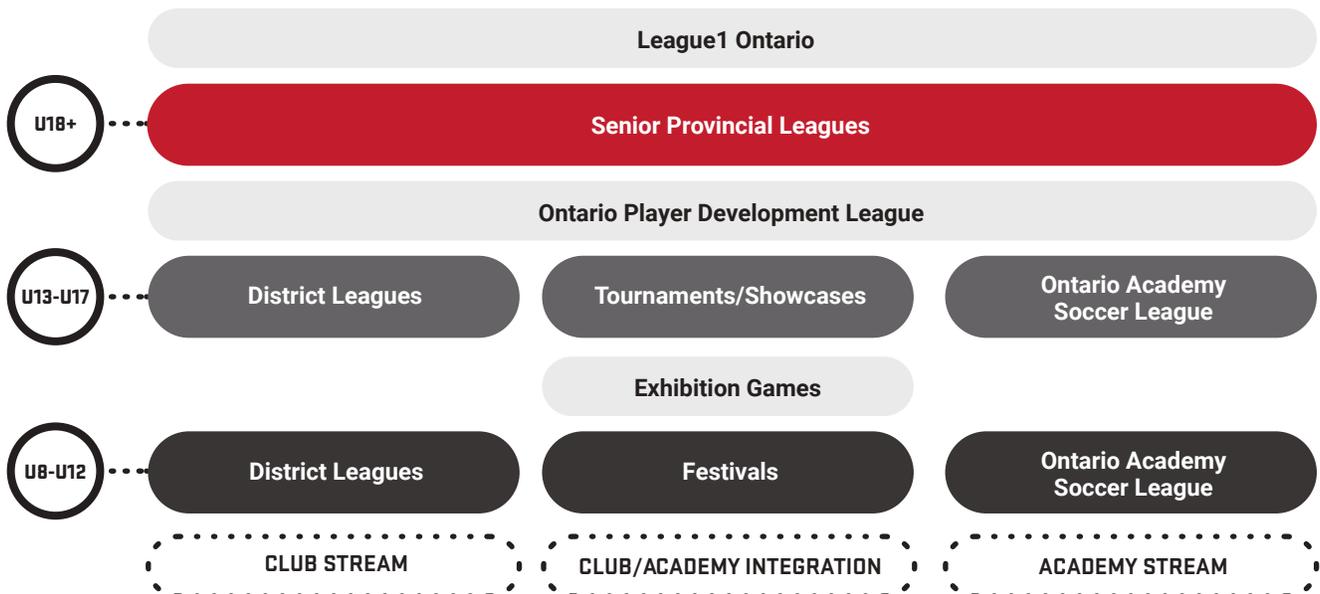
Common place programming seen across the province was recreational soccer (aka. House League) and competitive (or "rep") opportunities for players and coaches who sought to train more often and were comfortable travelling in pursuit of like-with-like competition. The variance in how each club operated though was quite vast from rural to urban communities but even saw stark differences within those same communities.

To provide a framework to recognize Clubs and support individuals to understand how their club operated against global best practices and standards, Ontario Soccer launched the Club Excellence Program in 2007. This program had a three-tiered framework of recognition with criteria on club policies, coaching qualifications, and player development programs.

The program also provided resources like the Club Excellence Template Booklet, which offered policies, guidelines, and job descriptions.

In 2014, in alignment with the implementation of the player development matrices for grassroots soccer, both the Ontario Player Development League (OPDL) and League1 Ontario were launched. These programs required that interested organizations be assessed, both on-field and through documentation, across the areas of administration, finance, governance, infrastructure, and technical development.

During that period, unsanctioned Academies (now "for-profit" Clubs) pushed coaching standards to higher levels before not-for-profit and in general, Clubs followed. To support the integration of these organizations, the Ontario Recognized Academies (ORA) and Ontario Academy Soccer League (OASL) was launched in 2017 and concluded with for-profit Clubs finally entering the membership of their local District association.



Club Where We Are.

Almost 100 of Ontario Soccer's 500 Clubs were recognized through Club Excellence before adopting the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program that launched in 2018 to meet the same needs and objectives for youth Clubs only. This national framework sees 4 unique tiers of recognition with graduating demands and standards now being implemented as a requirement of membership since 2023. Working with our District Associations, Ontario Soccer strives to amalgamate quality soccer provider level criteria with District membership requirements to eliminate redundancies.

<p>National Youth Club Licence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest achieving organizations from across Canada • MLS Home Grown Player benefits • Participate in the "Player Development Program" 	
<p>MA Level 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well structured Grassroots, Community, and Competitive streams • Alignment to provincial and National Player Pathway 	
<p>MA Level 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well structured Grassroots, Community, and Competitive streams • Alignment to provincial and National Player Pathway 	
<p>Quality Soccer Provider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum expectations of member organizations in Canada • Expectation of all Member Organizations 	

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2024, there were 514 clubs in Ontario, including 343 Youth Clubs, 175 licensed Clubs, 121 with a Quality Soccer Provider (QSP) designation, 19 MA1 Clubs, 8 MA2 Clubs, and 27 new Youth Club Licence (NYCL) holders.

Competition

Where We Began.

Mirroring adult competition structures, Ontario Soccer had established a multi-tiered pyramid of play based on expanding geographic access to opponents as well as promotion-relegation. The competition structure was designed to provide a clear and linear pathway for all participants. These tiers include grassroots levels, district leagues, regional leagues, and provincial leagues, with each tier offering tailored opportunities for players to develop their skills and gain valuable match experience.

At the top of the provincial competition structure was the Ontario Youth Soccer League (OYSL), established in 1993, with a full promotion-relegation system connected to the Regional Leagues - Western Region Soccer League (WRSL), Eastern Region Soccer League (ERSL), Central Soccer League (CSL) and Golden Horseshoe Soccer League (GHSL). These entities were Associate Members of Ontario Soccer and also functioned through promotion-relegation from their local District Leagues.

With the implementation of LTPD in 2014, the Ontario Youth Soccer League (OYSL) was eventually replaced by the OPDL to provide a more focused, development-oriented league system for youth players.

The transition from the OYSL to the OPDL marked a shift towards a closed system with more structured and competitive framework that emphasized both player development and the identification of talent for higher levels of play. This decision was made to ensure a more stable and predictable environment for high-level competition, focusing on development rather than on the fluctuation of teams moving between divisions based on performance.

Regional leagues continued to serve as a vital part of the competition structure, offering competitive opportunities for players not yet involved in the higher tiers of the OPDL. These leagues acted as important feeder systems, nurturing players who aspire to reach the more elite levels of Ontario Soccer's competition structure and also provide those leaving the Talented Player Pathway with a lower, yet meaningful, level of play.

For Adults, a similar competition structure existed with the Ontario Soccer League (OSL) - from 1988 - and Ontario Women's Soccer League (OWSL) - from 1973 until 2024 - with regional divisions and local district leagues feeding the higher levels. Similar to the youth competitions, League1 Ontario (L1ON) was launched in 2014 as a standards-based, pro-amateur adult program to provide a more consistent experience from the OPDL as players aged out and a platform to aspire to even higher levels of the game.

While the membership could host tournaments, to provide more opportunities beyond league play, such as the Robbie or Umbro Showcase locally, the pinnacle of provincial competition, in the now Soccer for Life stream, was the Ontario Cup. One of the oldest competitions in North America, dating back over a century, it has been a cornerstone of provincial soccer, bringing together teams from various levels across the province to compete for a prestigious title and access to National Championships.



Competition

Where We Are.

The OPDL and L10 continue to be focal points of both youth and adult competition respectively as these programs are enhanced year-over-year to deliver better experiences to their participants. The Ontario Cup, despite the introduction of newer competition formats, remains a celebrated event, showcasing the depth and diversity of soccer talent across the province.

The most significant change currently underway, is the restructuring of the regional level of play with the launch of the integrated model (I-Model) leagues. The I-Model competition structure is designed to foster a more player-centered environment, with the introduction of coaching credential requirements, that includes the entire Soccer for Life community.

The competition structure also has achievement incentives at all levels, culminating in a Championship phase that rewards teams and players for their efforts and success while eliminating relegation scenarios for players and teams. This inclusive approach ensures that players, coaches, and clubs at all levels are supported in their development and progress through the two stages of competition within a playing season before resetting for the following year.

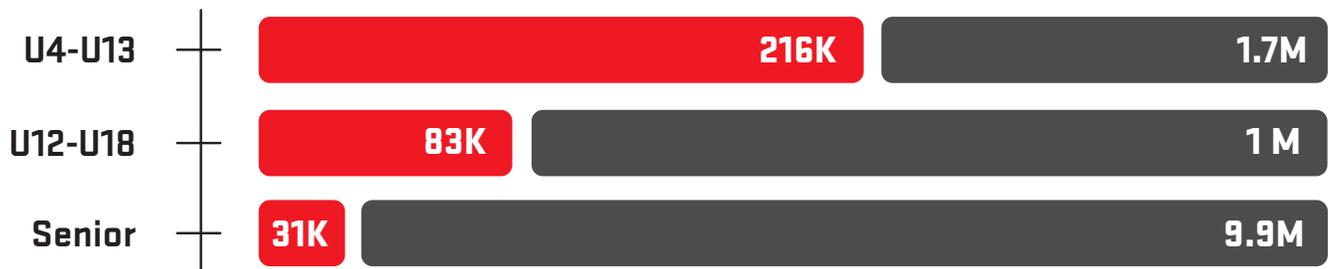


Player Population Analysis.

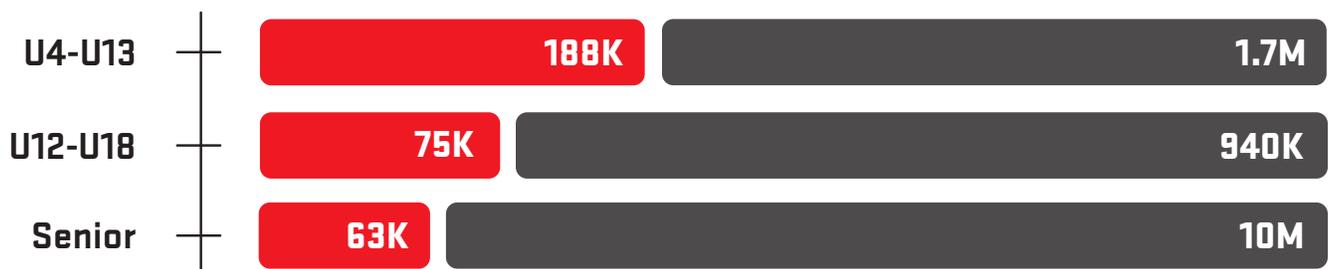
While continuous growth is a wonderful aspirational target, players are drawn from the available children, youth and adults of our society. To understand how registrations are truly reflective of the value that soccer proposes to our communities, we must also reflect on what potential participants are available.

In looking at available children and youth, we see a clear decline. The reasons are complex and this analysis will not explore the mechanism behind this shift in society, however, we must be aware that the available registrant pool does not support continuous growth which means soccer must invest more in retention versus recruitment.

2011: Total Player vs. Population



2016: Total Player vs. Population



2021: Total Player vs. Population



Coach & Match Official Population Analysis.

While we know children and youth populations are down, the adult population - through aging and immigration - has increased. Unfortunately, this has not translated to increased participants relative to coach and match official registration over the years.

2011: Total Registration vs. Population



2016: Total Registration vs. Population



2021: Total Registration vs. Population



While these changes in population represent a new challenge, as our communities evolve, so too must our game. Soccer has the power to unite generations, cultures, and neighborhoods. By embracing these demographic shifts and investing in inclusive, accessible pathways, we can grow the beautiful game from the grassroots up—ensuring every child, coach, and official finds their place on the pitch and stays there! The future of soccer is not just about numbers—it’s about belonging.

ONTARIO: THE ENGINE ROOM

PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATION

IN

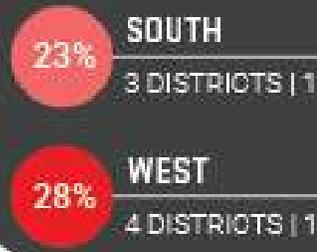


38%
OF CON REGISTERED
PLAYERS ARE
IN ONTARIO



OUR MEMBERSHIP

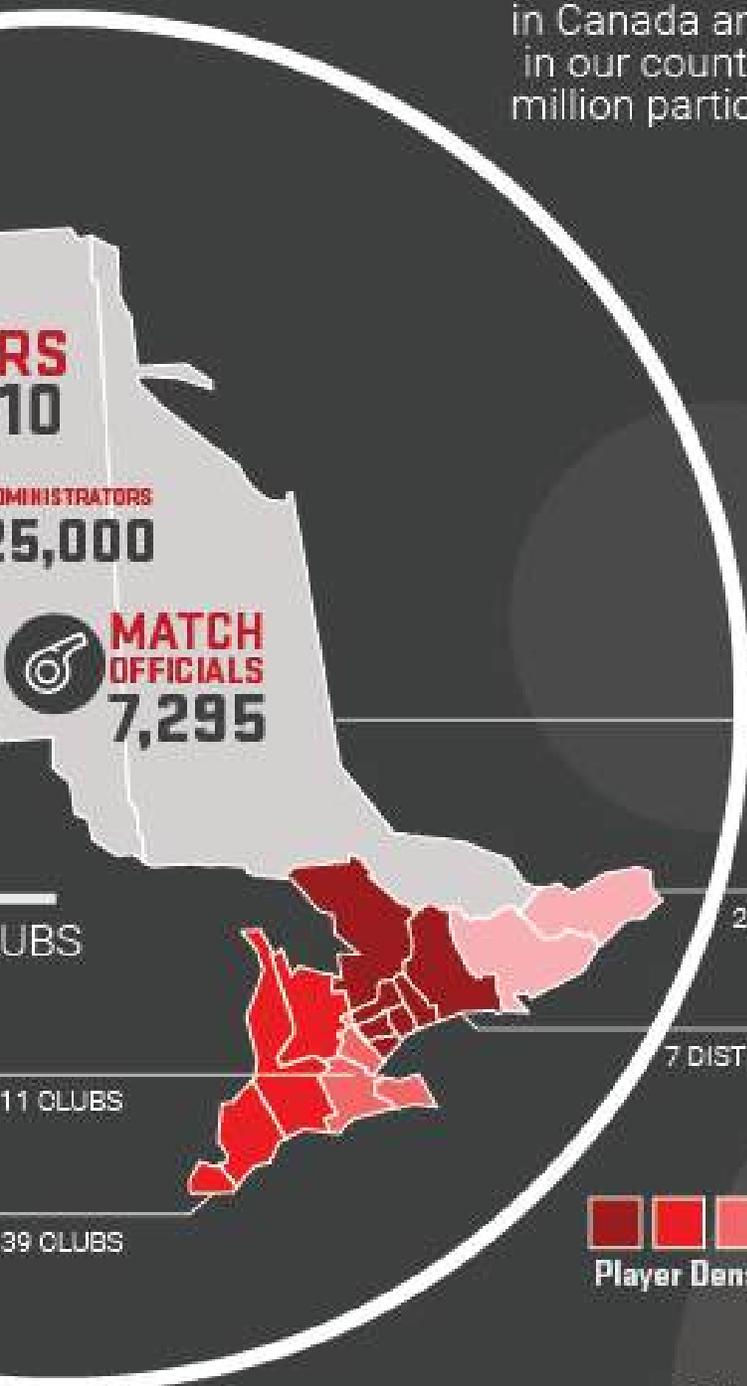
18 DISTRICTS | 488 CLUBS



STATEMENT OF SOCCER IN CANADA

THE DEMOGRAPHICS

Ontario Soccer is the largest Provincial Sport Organization in Canada and the third largest youth sport organization in our country. We are very proud to serve almost half a million participants and directly impact a million Ontario households.



65%
MALE



35%
FEMALE

NORTH

5%

2 DISTRICTS | 25 CLUBS

EAST

14%

2 DISTRICTS | 67 CLUBS

CENTRAL

30%

7 DISTRICTS | 146 CLUBS



ONTARIO
SOCCER

EST. 1901



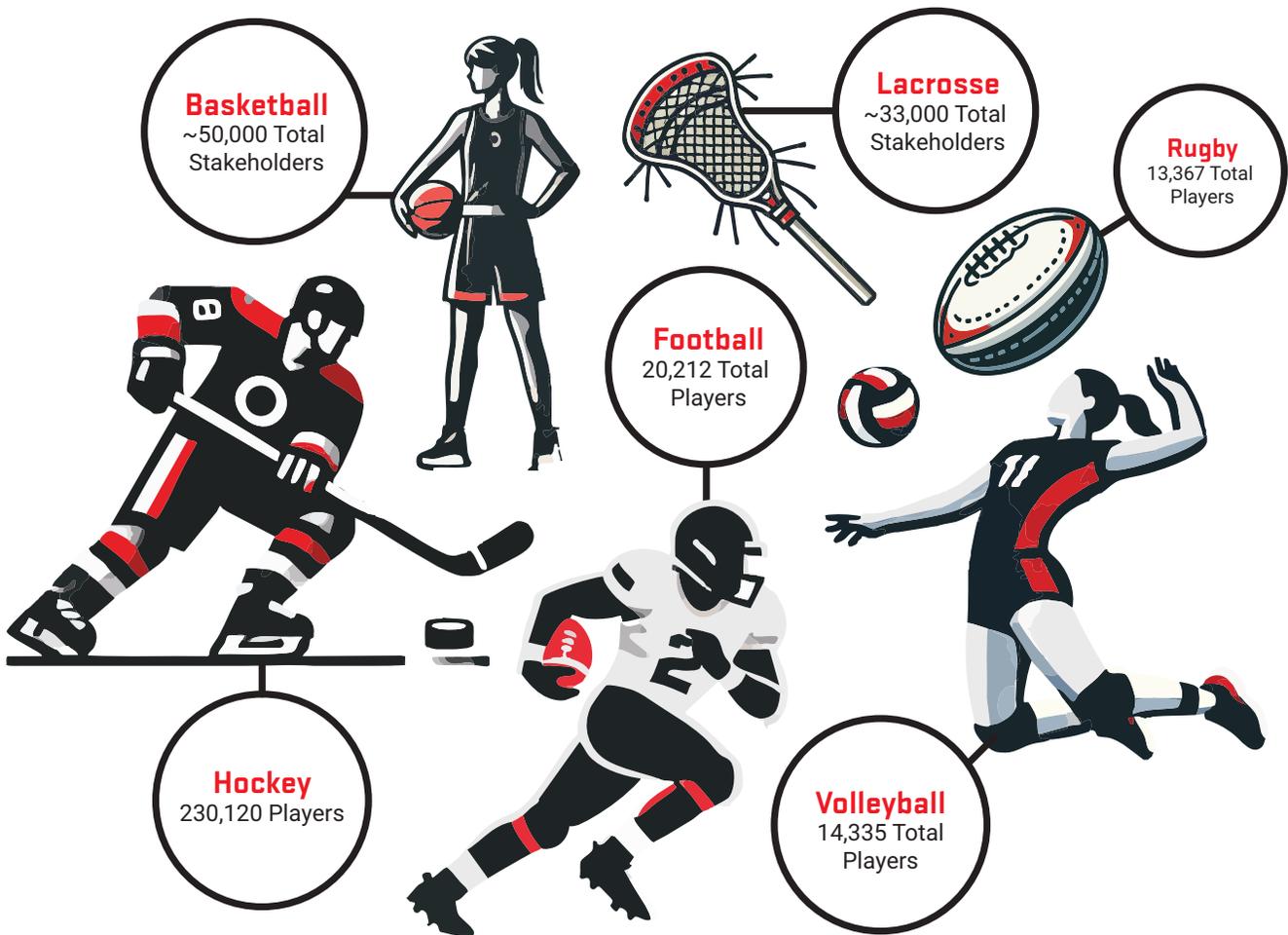
Player Density

Data reflects Indoor 2024-2025 and Outdoor 2024 Seasons.

Comparing Other Sports.

The Ontario Sports Participation (2022/23) analysis compares player and stakeholder numbers across various sports in the province. Hockey leads second to Soccer (398,410) with 230,120 registered players, reflecting a 75/25 gender split. Basketball follows with approximately 50,000 total stakeholders, while Lacrosse has 33,000. Football reports 20,212 players

with a 91/9 gender split, highlighting a significant gender disparity. Volleyball and Rugby show similar participation levels, with 14,335 and 13,367 players, respectively. This comparison provides insight into sport popularity and gender representation in Ontario's athletic landscape as well as how soccer leads the way as the #1 sport in the province.





Known Challenges.

When analyzing our environment, there are a number of strengths, already highlighted, but also challenges. Some of them are within our sphere of influence or control but others are inherent to our environment. The list below looks to summarize the reality of our ecosystem:



Geography & Climate

With an area of 1,076,395 km² and the outdoor game only playable consistently, our communities are faced significant travel requirements at all levels of the game. To compound matters, the outdoor game is only playable for a few brief months which forces our stakeholders indoors, dependent on facility availability & cost, for at least 7 months of the year.



Inconsistent Application of Grassroots Standards

Players are having varied experiences across the province, whether through different formats or even scores/standings at a recreational level leading to erratic development, negative impacts to long-term participation and increased parental confusion.



Player Selection & Dropout

With scores & standings beginning at Under -13, tryouts are held which leads to children being told they are not good enough to continue in non-recreational soccer; many dropout never to return. In some areas this continues under the guise of program capacity limits and has been a consistent trend whenever the 11-a-side game is introduced.



Lack of Opportunities

The grassroots game is supporting the development of more and more talented players but there are limited opportunities for them to continue pursuing excellence & outcomes of the Talented Player Pathway, leading to their changing of priorities and even dropout.



Incomplete Education Pathways

Formal courses for our professionals and volunteers are solely focused on coaches through licensing. As the game continues to expand & evolve, more roles will exist without minimum standards of competency which can lead to broader systemic issues and inconsistencies.

Stagnated Growth & Changing Demographics

Despite overall population growth in the province, birth rates (141,000 in 2011 to 136,000 in 2021*) have slowed and, similarly, children & youth player registrations have stagnated.



The Global Pandemic also compounded this with a significant dropout of youth players (-37% from 2016 to 2022). Similarly, is the change in country of origin for immigrants to Canada since 2016 which sees the top 10 having soccer in their sports but where English is not a primary language. With only 3 hailing from the “Western World”, this may pose a new challenge for clubs to engage these new Canadians without shifting of communication strategies and messaging.

Limited, Inconsistent Programs & Competition Disparities

Soccer programs at a local level still look similar to how they did 20 years ago. Focused entirely on house leagues in a business model that has not evolved to keep up with the desires and needs of a new generation.



Furthermore, while we develop more players than ever before, with many continuing to play into adulthood, these players leave our system in pursuit of opportunities to continue in the game. Adult-competition models, are either absent from our system or have limited to no standards, which continues to plague the system by hindering ongoing system development and sophistication.

Referee Shortage & Retention

One of the greatest recruitment machines in sport, seeing over 3000 referees on-boarded annually, fails to retain as we lost more than 50% within the first year. Technical enhancement and developmental continuity is impacted which negatively effects competitions and the experiences of other participants.



Loss of Community Sense (Transactional)

As a result of many years in the pay-to-play structure, clubs have created a service-industry based culture that sees players and their families solely as customers rather than all being active contributors to a broader community for collective societal benefit.



Indoor Facilities & Volunteerism

With the proliferation of privately controlled indoor artificial turf facilities and professionalization of the sport industry – with a rise in part-time and full-time roles in the game – so too have costs increased to a point where accessibility is being negatively affected.



While it has led to better staffing throughout the system with a shift away from potentially untrained or inexperienced volunteers and year-round programming, volunteer groups continue to be important contributors to the game which he fail to recruit and retain with outdated value propositions.

The Plan Reflection.

While Strategic Plans are normally kept to a structure of between 3-5 years, for soccer, when we know development is measured in at least a decade, the question is why? The number one answer: "environmental volatility". But what if the way to address that was not duration but structure? For example, when faced with natural disasters, humans adjust the construction of buildings to better resist the impacts of those climatic events; they do not make everything smaller or shorter.

Similarly, Strategic Plans are kept very generic or at a high-level due to the unknown or the environmental hazards. But what if the specificity of our goals actually created greater stability for all involved? For example, the flags marking the holes on a golf course are critical to provide direction. While we may take different routes to achieve the goal, the flag ultimately provides a reference point to strive to.



Technical Plan Living Document.

The technical strategy is broken down into 3 phases over the duration of 12 years.



The development and execution of this plan will involve continual consultation with key stakeholders across various sectors of soccer in Canada. These stakeholders include, but not limited to, Canada Soccer, Ontario Soccer (including its staff, board, committees, and working groups), Professional Soccer organizations (Toronto FC, CPL, NSL), Regional Technical Forums, and the School System (OUA, OCAA, OFSAA, CISAA).

The implementation timeline for each four-year phase follows a structured approach:



This living document ensures an adaptive approach, incorporating ongoing input from key soccer organizations and stakeholders to enhance the sport's growth and development.

Values of the Plan.

The guiding principles of the Technical Development Plan are rooted in continual consultation, evidence-based decision-making, diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI), education, and technology. These principles shape our approach to fostering a culture that is built on the foundation of play, inspiring individuals to reach their full potential, and uniting communities through shared experiences and opportunities.

By integrating these values into our work, we create an environment that is innovative, inclusive, and driven by a commitment to excellence.

01

Future First

Taking action to drive change that meet current needs while priming the system to meet the demands of the future. Decisions today cannot compromise tomorrow.

02

Clarity

A system that is understood and supports all stakeholders to reach their fullest potential no matter how small or lofty their aspirations or goals.

03

Innovative

Willing to take risks and blaze trails with creative approaches and solutions to the systemic problems and challenges faced across all levels.

04

Cohesion

Moving away from a fragmented and individualistic approach by uniting all stakeholders of the game to make a collective effort towards common goals.

05

Inclusivity

Build a system that provides opportunities for every person to engage in soccer, no matter their background or current situation.

06

True North

Programs that will honor the essence of what it is to be Canadian, doing more with less, with *Glowing Hearts, Strong and Free*.

Supporting Principles.



Continual Consultation

Formal and informal connections with the membership to provide input on current and future initiatives

Technology

Source program tools, from leading organizations, to simplify processes and increase efficiencies for all users

Education

Provide contextually relevant opportunities & recognition for all to improve & grow into even better volunteers and professionals

Evidence-Based

Source global best practices and execute local testing to benchmark programs and inform decision-making

Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

Ensure programs are welcoming, accessible and promote soccer to be representative of our society

Underpinning the Vision

Culture.

Our purpose is driven by Play, Inspire, Unite. By making the beautiful game accessible, fun and meaningful for all who participate, we aim to encourage everyone to purely play - as an athlete, coach, match official, or volunteer - and never stop playing. We also seek to build environments where all aspire for more, and make themselves part of the advancement of soccer in Ontario because the game of soccer is our common thread that links and strengthens us as one.



PLAY

All decisions made with the participant at its centre; providing quality opportunities to grow in our game.



INSPIRE

We strive to build a better future for those that come after us by modeling that way, today.



UNITE

Open & consistent communication that builds trust and a sense of community

Strategy of the Pillars.

While the Technical Development Plan could cover a multitude of areas and groups, determining the areas of focus, with specificity, was important. The core of our game's participants, from a technical perspective, is the Player. Immediately supporting them, are the Coaches and Match Officials who facilitate the training and match environments. While other individuals exist (ex. Administrators, Board members, etc.), most interact and operate within the club, the core of our organizations. And lastly, the mortar that binds and brings each and everyone of these groups together: the Competition.



The Player

The core of all sport! Ensuring more people play for life and that their success is facilitated by the system and not in spite of it. Reshape grassroots soccer to instill a love of the game, broaden developmental experiences, and provide the platforms to propel players to their goals; no matter the dream!



The Coach

The game is sophisticating and the training of our volunteers and aspiring professionals is critical. By leveraging technology to centralize learning, connect all communities by formalizing the informal and creating content to proactively meet the needs of a growing system across all levels.



The Match Official

The facilitators of competition must be better equipped to engage with people & exceed technical demands of the role. The culture will be reshaped by expanding mentorship & support networks, modernizing approaches to learning, and improving stakeholder connectivity & alignment.



The Club

The hubs of the community! Rekindling the connection of people to our organizations to build transformational relationships. Training staff to meet the needs of a sophisticating market place, providing resources from rural to urban centres, and integrating new organization types across the ecosystem.



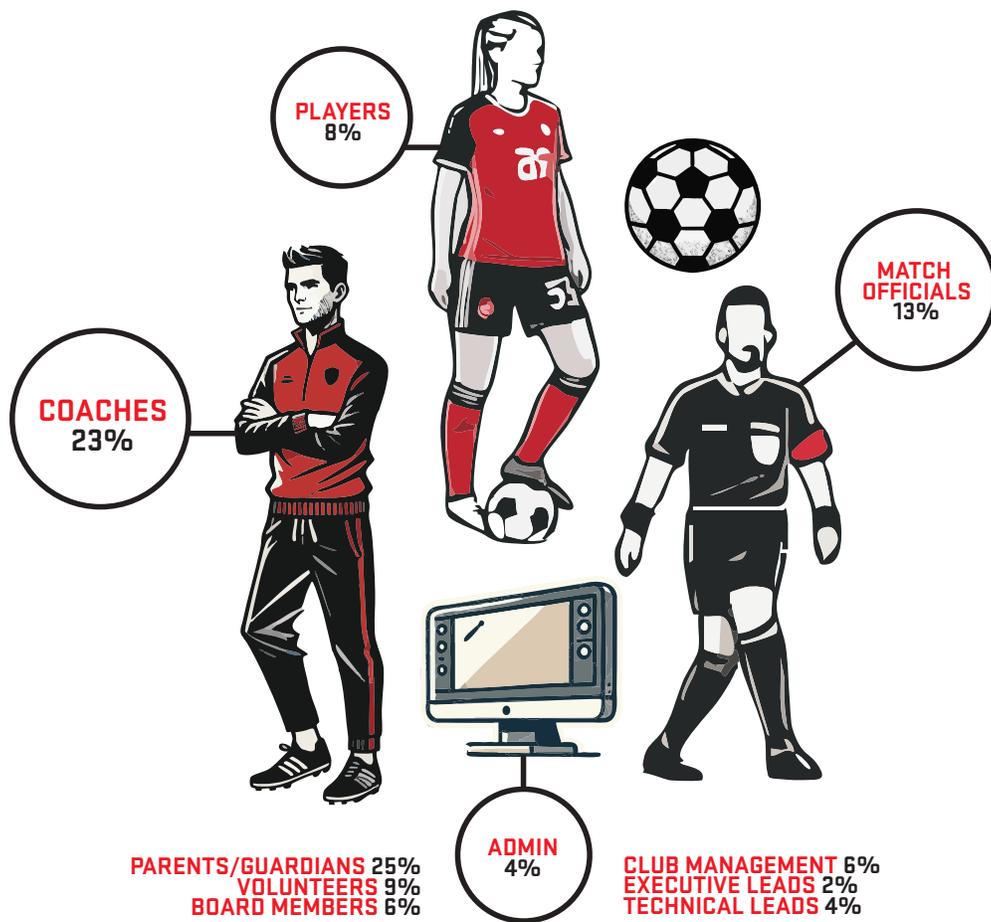
The Competition

Where everyone is connected and participant experiences must be aligned. Develop best practices to support the delivery of diversified, high-quality events, appropriately align standards at youth & senior age bands, and provide value through recreational to professional levels of play.

Survey, Data & Structure Explained.

The Technical Development Plan Survey received an overwhelming response, with 1,030 participants providing their input over a brief three-week period. This extensive feedback ensured that all key areas and projects within the development plan were evaluated and that every critical pillar was assessed for its potential effectiveness.

To capture a broad range of perspectives, the survey reached individuals in various roles within the soccer community. The largest groups of respondents, which could identify also across multiple roles, were Administrators (25%) and Coaches (23%), followed by Match Officials (13%) and Parents/Guardians (9%). Volunteers (8%), Board Members (6%), and Club Management (6%) also contributed, alongside Executive Leads (4%), Players (4%), and Technical Leads (2%).



This diverse participation highlights the collaborative approach taken to gather insights from those directly involved in different aspects of the game. By canvassing major areas and projects for support, the survey ensures that the decisions around the goals of the in the Technical Development Plan reflect the needs and priorities of the entire soccer community.

Scoring the Pillars.

Before we begin to implement change, we must first establish a baseline to work against. Through the survey, each pillar and how it is currently being serviced by Ontario Soccer was scored out of 6. This even numbered scale was selected to try and avoid individuals from making an indeterminate evaluation and to provide an accurate rating of programming. The quadrennial assessments and final evaluation of the impact of the Technical Development Plan will be measured against the scores shown below:



6-Excellent | 5-Good | 4-Above Average | 3-Average | 2-Below Average | 1-Poor

The Actions Support.

.....

100%

 Beyond the Pillars and each of their 3 main goals, it was important to understand where our members, across the various roles they may hold, on what projects, or actions, they felt would be most impactful. Where respondents felt they could contribute in a given Pillar, action descriptors were provided to be scored against a Likert Scale. The percentages shown throughout the Technical Development Plan reflect an aggregated score of all those who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" on a specific statement related to a pillar action.



5-Strongly Agree | 4-Agree | 3-Neither | 2-Disagree | 1-Strongly Disagree | N/A-Not Applicable

The Player

3.30

PHASE
01

PHASE
02

PHASE
03

Overview

Players are the heartbeat of soccer—the reason the game exists and the force that brings it all to life. They embody the passion, creativity, and resilience that define the sport, turning every match into a story of determination and teamwork.

From the youngest grassroots participant to the elite professional, players inspire communities, unite fans, and drive the evolution of the game.

Their growth fuels the success of clubs, leagues, and national programs, and their love of soccer is what keeps it thriving across generations. In every dribble, pass, goal, and celebration, players remind us why soccer is the world's game.

The Player Strategies & Goals.



Executive Summary

The LTPD 2.0 project aims to innovate and enhance Ontario's soccer development through several key initiatives since LTPD's initial implementation in 2012. This includes reviewing and refining future Grassroots Standards, introducing new playing formats, and launching the "Ontario DNA" with integrated player profiles and associated development curriculum.

The development pathway and learning outcomes will highlight progressive, competency-based themes, from "Me & My Ball" through to "Us & The Ball," and emphasizes the 5 C's across Professional, Personal, and Interpersonal skills that are transferable beyond sport.

The program further integrates soccer modalities like futsal, beach soccer, para-soccer, and e-soccer to expand year-round participation and players' technical abilities. The Provincial Xcel Program is also expanding with international travel and the establishment of increased training windows to further nurture elite talent.

In addition, targeted recruitment and retention strategies aim to increase participation from under-represented and new Canadian groups as well as those group who currently operate outside the sanctioned family.

Strategies & Goals

Phase 01 Actions.

Soccer coaches are visionary mentors who shape the game’s future by guiding and inspiring players. With LTPD 2.0, they’re modernizing grassroots development, introducing an Ontario-specific DNA and curriculum aligned with national standards. By

promoting futsal, fostering community integration, and strengthening talent pathways, coaches expand the sport’s reach and connect athletes to new opportunities. They are not just teachers—they are champions of player potential and progress.



76%

Ideate & Implement LTPD 2.0

“More players in better environments for longer”

Phase 01.1 - Actions

Working with Canada Soccer, in alignment with the Grassroots Standards and Sport for Life principles, support the ideation and implementation of LTPD 2.0 to modernize grassroots resources, launch the new ON DNA model and player development curriculum. This initiative is designed to enhance foundational skills and ensure consistent development programs and pathways for young players in Ontario.



52%

Launch Diverse Soccer Programs

“Access to soccer, in all forms, for everyone, year-round”

Phase 01.2 - Actions

The launch of diverse soccer programs focuses on expanding futsal development, integrating new community groups, and creating membership resources and education. This initiative aims to broaden participation and foster inclusivity within Ontario’s soccer community.



70%

Enhance Talent Development & Player Pathways

“Ontario players at the highest levels more often”

Phase 01.3 - Actions

Enhancing talent development focuses on expanding the Provincial Xcel Program, centralizing post-secondary showcases, and partnering with pathway organizations to provide clear advancement routes for aspiring players.



Phase 01.1 Ideate & Implement LTPD 2.0

01

Resource Modernization

64%

Descriptor

Update all existing and develop new resources (e.g. session plans, guides, podcast, video sessions, etc.) to support membership to deliver quality participant experiences.

Outcomes

The initiative aims to update all existing resources to align with best practices and branding while launching at least 10 new resources.

02

Launch new ON DNA & Curriculum

64%

Descriptor

Develop the "Ontario Way" to provide direction to the membership on the development of talent with age-stage appropriate content & priorities in alignment with Canada Soccer.

Outcomes

Achieve 80% satisfaction with the app-based system for resource deployment and a 60% adoption rate of the curriculum at MA 1 and below. Level 1 clubs and identify app-based system to deploy resources.

03

Align to Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards

69%

Descriptor

Support the membership through education, stakeholder engagement and key partnerships to reduce barriers to implementing all standards.

Outcomes

The initiative seeks 100% alignment of membership to set criteria and a 10% improvement in player retention during key dropout periods.



Phase 01.2 Launch Diverse Soccer Programs

01 Futsal Development

53%

Descriptor

To improve accessibility and technical development of players, the official “indoor” game for Grassroots players must shift to Futsal and resources must be created to support the membership to make these programs available for all.

Outcomes

The goal is to increase futsal-specific player registrations by 50% across Ontario and launch at least three new grassroots futsal programs.

02 Integrate New Community Groups

79%

Descriptor

To better support existing marginalized groups and new Canadians, build resources for member clubs to leverage locally by way of supporting the integration of these groups in a tailored manner.

Outcomes

Integrate a minimum of two new community groups supporting an overall impact of a 10% increase in player registrations.

03 Develop Member Resources & Education

87%

Descriptor

Clubs have continued to offer the same recreational programs year-over-year, so resources and guides must be provided to stimulate a shift in offerings to meet the desires and needs of the modern player and families.

Outcomes

Launch a minimum of four resources to provide a club’s a program framework to enhance internal player development.



Phase 01.3 Enhance Development & Player Pathways

01

Expansion of Provincial Xcel Program

71%

Descriptor

With Ontario’s growing player pool from quality grassroots programs and limited professional youth spaces, the Provincial Xcel program must expand to provide enhanced training and competition opportunities.

Outcomes

Provide a minimum of two training weekends for U15-17’s as well as an International travel events through the OPDL annually for at least one age group.

02

Centralization of Post-Secondary Showcasing

76%

Descriptor

With rising costs around securing post-secondary playing opportunities, Ontario Soccer will provide clear mechanism for players to achieve these outcomes

Outcomes

Host at least two centralized showcase events annually with 80% satisfaction and ensure 100% of U17 events are accessed by post-secondary scouts and coaches.

03

Collaborate with Talented Pathway Outcome Organizations

77%

Descriptor

Establish MOUs with MLS Academies, CPL, NSL, League1 Ontario, OUA, and OCAA to ensure consistent standards and seamless connections with OPDL and Provincial Xcel programs.

Outcomes

Achieve 100% alignment of standards across all organizations in the talented pathway and a 10% increase in player transitions from OPDL and Provincial Xcel to Talented Pathway Outcome Organizations.

The Player Strategies & Long Term Actions.

01 Ideate & Implement LTPD 2.0

- Create new, flexible age, and stage appropriate playing formats
- Develop Soccer in Schools Program
- Establish Soccer for Life technical standards

02 Launch Diverse Soccer Programs

- Develop Women & Girls Sub-Strategy
- Build technical resources and standards for each modality of soccer (para, beach, e-soccer, etc.)
- Deploy gamified content for players through app-based system

03 Enhance Talent Development & Player Pathways

- Launch Provincial Xcel programming for Futsal
- Integrate wearable technology to inform identification & development
- Embed ON DNA into School System



The Coach

002

3.30

PHASE
01

PHASE
02

PHASE
03

Overview

Coaches are the cornerstone of soccer development, shaping not only how the game is played but who the players become. They inspire passion, instill discipline, and cultivate teamwork—guiding players through every challenge and triumph on and off the field.

A great coach sees potential before it's realized, nurturing talent with patience, strategy, and care. Through their leadership, they create environments where players grow in skill, confidence, and character. In every training session and match, coaches are building the future of the soccer—one player, one lesson, one moment at a time.

The Coach Strategies & Goals.



Executive Summary

The Ontario Soccer Institute of Learning (OSIL) is spearheading a series of innovative initiatives aimed at elevating the standards of soccer education and technical expertise in the province.

Through its advanced Learning Management System, OSIL is transforming professional development by integrating both self-guided and blended approaches to learning with standardized renewal protocols. Meeting the demands of an evolving industry by offering specialized certificates and diplomas for roles such

as Goalkeeper Coaches, Scouts, Performance Analysts, and Fitness Trainers. Building local Communities of Practice for all technical stakeholders will be integral to ensure learning continues outside formal courses.

Lastly, through collaboration with the Research Advisory Committee and post-secondary institutions, the creation of Ontario Soccer Technical Reports and local academic pursuits will be enabled, which provides valuable insights into past approaches, current trends, and future developments of the game.

Strategies & Goals

Phase 01 Actions.

Coaches are the foundation of player development and the heart of the soccer experience. The Ontario Soccer Institute of Learning provides them with a modern platform, professional development, and renewal pathways for lifelong growth. With a diverse education catalog—including futsal and goalkeeping

diplomas—and a strong support network, we’re empowering coaches to lead with expertise and fostering a culture of mentorship and collaboration. Together, we’re not just developing coaches—we’re shaping leaders who will elevate the game’s future.

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70%

Launch Ontario Soccer Institute of Learning

“Where the leaders of tomorrow are grown today”

Phase 01.1 - Actions

Advancing soccer education by identifying and launching a cutting-edge learning management platform, modernizing the Continuing Professional Development program, and establishing standardized renewal protocols and cycles for all courses. These aim to streamline learning, enhance accessibility, and ensure sustained professional growth for participants.



79%

Build Robust Education Catalog

“Clear & comprehensive pathways for ALL”

Phase 01.2 - Actions

The Ontario Football School is piloting a Grassroots Coach Diploma, refining the Goalkeeper Diploma to align with Canada Soccer standards, and developing a Futsal Coaches pathway with new certification options.



86%

Create a Coach Support Network

“Formalizing the informal through community”

Phase 01.3 - Actions

Provide a dedicated platform for coaching resources and networking, establishing structured mentorship programs to support professional growth, and fostering Communities of Practice to connect stakeholders and share expertise.



Phase 01.1 Launch Ontario Soccer Institute of Learning

01

Launch Learning Management System

83%

Descriptor

Build a single, central hub for the membership to access education offerings and connect with the broader community. This will create an improved user experience and streamlined administration of all programs.

Outcomes

The initiative aims to achieve 100% connectivity with key platforms to streamline the user experience and ensure host all Ontario Soccer-specific courses

02

Modernize 'Continuing Professional Development'

63%

Descriptor

The professionalization of sport has increased the need for stakeholders to embrace lifelong learning. To meet this demand and adapt to trends in micro-learning and gamification, a new re-certification process for community leaders is essential.

Outcomes

Foster continuous learning by offering at least one informal learning opportunity per stream annually. Additionally, the OISL aims to engage 10% of LMS users in a Pilot of gamified community, enhancing their learning experience and fostering meaningful interactions.

03

Create Renewal Protocols & Cycles Courses

73%

Descriptor

To meet Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements and rapid knowledge growth, Ontario Soccer's course catalog must remain agile, with a standardized process for regular updates and incentives for ongoing formal learning.

Outcomes

All courses will have a set 5-year timeline for content update and mandatory renewals through CPD or Upgrade Modules.



Phase 01.2 Build Robust Education Catalog

01

Pilot Grassroots Coach Diploma

64%

Descriptor

As Concacaf upgrades the coaching pathway, addressing the needs of entry-level coaches is essential to building foundational knowledge of the game and player development.

Outcomes

Aims to achieve a 20% improvement in perceived competence among players, as measured by pre- and post-course surveys, and a 90% preparedness rating for those who also complete the C Diploma.

02

Refine Goalkeeper Diploma

66%

Descriptor

With the goalkeeper's role evolving into an integral 11th player, education for their development must adapt and anticipate future changes.

Outcomes

The refined diploma targets 80% satisfaction from new cohorts and Subject Matter Experts, alongside a 90% preparedness rating for those who complete the Canada Soccer Goalkeeper Coach Diploma.

03

Build New Futsal Coaches Pathway

41%

Descriptor

To grow futsal, coaches must receive specialized education to support players and programs effectively.

Outcomes

This initiative ensures full alignment with Canada Soccer's online entry module and aims to certify 200 new Futsal Coaches.



Phase 01.3 Create a Coach Support Network

01

Launch Ontario Soccer Coaches Club

53%

Descriptor

As one of the few sports lacking a formal registration process for coaches, the Ontario Soccer Coaches Club will introduce an incentives-based program to connect stakeholders and enhance their experience.

Outcomes

The program will provide a minimum of three benefits linked to Ontario Soccer partners and aim for an 80% satisfaction rate among registrants.

02

Establish Formal Mentorship Programs

77%

Descriptor

Mentorship, a powerful tool for individual progression, requires intentional development. Initiatives will up-skill mentors, offer guidance opportunities, and create a dedicated platform for these interactions.

Outcomes

Create a framework and guide for club's to deploy a mentorship program internally with at least 20 clubs adopting the program.

03

Connect Stakeholders Into Communities of Practice

60%

Descriptor

To align with global best practices, soccer must diversify its learning modes and foster greater connectivity among stakeholders. Communities of Practice will enable idea-sharing, collaboration on challenges, and ownership of personal and systemic development.

Outcomes

Launch a Provincial Community of Practice for Technical Leads to establish a framework for regionalized delivery in two areas of the province.



The Coach Strategies & Long Term Actions.

01 Launch Ontario Soccer Institute of Learning

- Integrate the Research Advisory Committee to test & generate football knowledge locally
- Generate publications for consumption in local & global markets
- Connect and partner with post-secondary institutions to deliver enhanced education

02 Build Robust Education Catalog

- Align to modern education best practices through Training Modulization
- Develop courses to better support each technical staff role in the game
- Launch courses for each soccer modality

03 Create a Coach Support Network

- Regionalization of Communities of Practice
- Build a recognized peer-to-peer mentor system for various technical stakeholders
- Promote connectivity and certification opportunities through the Ontario Soccer Summit and other localized workshops



The Match Official

03

3.30

PHASE
01

PHASE
02

PHASE
03

Overview

Referees have for too long been in a silo; seen exclusively as enforcers of rules. They are guardians of the game — upholding fairness, integrity, and respect with every whistle blown. They are essential to creating a safe and structured environment where players and coaches can compete at their best and strive to live up to our Provincial Identity.

Beyond enforcing the laws of the game, referees model leadership, resilience, and composure under pressure—qualities that elevate the spirit of competition and inspire everyone on the field. Their presence ensures that soccer remains not just a contest of skill, but a celebration of discipline, sportsmanship, and unity.

The Match Official Strategies & Goals.



Executive Summary

The Ontario Soccer Match Officials Program is undertaking major projects to enhance referee management and development across the province. A Referee Management System will be introduced to automate assignments and improve operational efficiencies, allowing for staff to provide better and more consistent support for referees.

The New Referee Developer Program aims to reduce role fragmentation, consolidate responsibilities, and upskill contractor staff to deliver against adult learning principles and a competency based framework of evaluation.

The Referee Pathway will be restructured to simplify grading protocols, accelerating and improving referee progression. Recruitment and retention initiatives will include mentorship programs and reality-based learning opportunities to foster a stronger sense of community, alongside an annual platform for stakeholders to connect and establish shared goals.

All initiatives will be critical to achieve a total of 12,000 Match Official registrations, in order to meet the growing player base and competitions available across the province.

Strategies & Goals

Phase 01 Actions.

Referees are essential to the game, upholding fairness, integrity, and the spirit of soccer at every level. By restructuring the Match Officials pathway, we're streamlining progression, integrating PEAK development, and modernizing assessments to

support lifelong learning. With reality-based training, stronger mentorship, and a unified support system, referees are empowered to lead with confidence, collaborate effectively, and inspire the next generation of officials.



81%

Restructure the Match Officials Pathway

“Clear & transparent journey for referee growth & advancement”

Phase 01.1 - Actions

Streamline the grading protocol to align with education levels and competition models, ensuring a clearer and more efficient progression system. Advanced development programs will be enhanced with integrated PEAK support, and updated assessment tools and protocols will foster a culture of ongoing professional development for referees.



82%

Build an Integrated Soccer Community

“United to benefit the player and the game”

Phase 01.2 - Actions

Provide competition platforms for referees to engage with technical leaders, generate reports to guide the application of the Laws of the Game aligned with Ontario DNA, and develop programs that emphasize reality-based learning and practical training opportunities.



91%

Create New Match Officials Support System

“Better leaders to facilitate great experiences through the game”

Phase 01.3 - Actions

Consolidate developer staff roles with enhanced training requirements, implement a Referee Management System to streamline administration and support development, and deliver effective mentorship for entry-level and youth referees.



Phase 01.1 Restructure the Match Officials Pathway

01

Simplify the Grading Protocol

73%

Descriptor

A system that is currently designed to navigate the limitations of technology, restructure the referee pathway, through specific programming and education, to enhance learning & performance at each respective level.

Outcomes

A transparent pathway that improves retention by 10% as well as graduation rates to higher levels of officiating by at least 15%.

02

Enhance Advanced Development Programs

74%

Descriptor

Referees need access to modern tools to continue their journey of improvement at higher levels of the game. Providing access to sports science expertise, video analysis and wearable technology will provide an evidence-based approach to their ongoing growth.

Outcomes

Provide at least one formal learning opportunity annually for upgrading officials on self-guided PEAK support and ensure access to a minimum of three matches per year for professional development.

03

Create Course Renewal Protocols & Cycles

78%

Descriptor

Current tools and protocols are not aligned to andragogical best practices. Through targeted feedback, adjust assessments to engage & support referee development journeys.

Outcomes

Create and deploy a competency-based framework of self-assessment and formal evaluation for all referees at each level of the pathway.



Phase 01.2 Build an Integrated Soccer Community

01

Facilitate Referee Engagement with Technical Leaders

70%

Descriptor

The culture of antagonism between stakeholders is not conducive to the growth of the game. To promote a stronger sense of unity, integrate referees with other stakeholders to reduce and later eliminate the prevalence of abuse.

Outcomes

All Ontario Soccer competitions will host pre-season meetings for coaches and referees, to improve mutual perceptions by 20% through enhanced connection.

02

Generate reports Aligning Laws of the Game with Ontario DNA

65%

Descriptor

Referees are essential to the game's growth. Annual evidence-based reports will analyze trends in the Laws of the Game and support Ontario DNA implementation through consistent law application.

Outcomes

Deliver at least two events with technical leaders to identify areas for improvement to support player & coach development as well as enhance the quality of competitions.

03

Create Programs for Practical & Reality-Based Learning

90%

Descriptor

LTOD had a significant impact on the growth of refereeing pre-pandemic. To further enhance the program and connectivity with clubs, shift training processes to involve players & coaches in their environments so referees can experience learning in game-like settings.

Outcomes

Train at least 100 match officials per year through LTOD events to support improvement of retention rates.



Phase 01.3 Create New Match Officials Support System

01

Consolidate Developer Staff Roles

72%

Descriptor

Contract staff throughout the system are hyper-fragmented with limited connectivity to the overall experience and development of referees and the broader system. Implementing adult-learning principles, expand training requirements and restructure roles to consolidate duties.

Outcomes

Train at least 60 staff through a new process to address provincial needs, and deliver new education courses with improved graduation rates and reported candidate experiences.

02

Identify Referee Management System

79%

Descriptor

Resources and time are greatly spent on the manual assigning of referees to thousands of matches throughout the year. Leverage technology to increase efficiencies and shift attention of assignors to development tasks field-side will better support our referees in their roles.

Outcomes

Pilot a new system with full, automated integration into other platforms, targeting a 100% increase in the total time spent directly educating, support and assessing referees.in time spent assigning referees.

03

Provide Effective Mentorship

87%

Descriptor

Despite effective recruitment, many referees leave within two years of entry-level training. To improve retention, the program will offer match opportunities and mentorship from experienced officials and support from fellow peers.

Outcomes

Improve retention rates by 15% in year one and 10% in year 2 from the point of initial training.

The Match Official Strategies & Long Term Actions.

01 Restructure the Match Officials Pathway

- Deploy wearable technology to enhance in-game learning & long-term development
- Implement continuing professional development for referees to maintain their certification level
- Launch 'Exchange Program' with external competitions & federations to enhance development meeting the demands of competitions and their goals

02 Build an Integrated Soccer Community

- Provide platforms for referees to engage with other technical leaders
- Improve accessibility through centralized kit offering and other resources
- Design and deliver cross-functional education opportunities relevant to coaches and match officials.

03 Create New Match Official Support System

- Create formal certification for Club Head Referees
- Evolve League Assignors into a new, dedicated League Development Lead role
- Establish formal, targeted mentorship program across all certification levels



04

The Club

3.30

PHASE 01

PHASE 02

PHASE 03

Overview

A soccer club is more than a place to play—it must be a powerful catalyst for transformation, growth, and community. It nurtures the potential of every individual, shaping not just skilled players but confident, compassionate leaders of tomorrow.

Through inclusive, high-quality programs, the club opens doors for all to participate, learn, and thrive—regardless of background or ability. The club is a home where values are lived, dreams are pursued, and the future of the game—and its people—is built, one person at a time.

The Club Strategies & Goals.



Executive Summary

Ontario Soccer is advancing the club system through key initiatives, including the full implementation of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program and support for clubs to achieve MA Level 1 and 2 certification.

The launch of specific Operational and Executive Education will provide tailored training for team managers, administrators, and board members to establish a baseline of knowledge and enhance their understanding of the soccer landscape.

Customized memberships will integrate soccer businesses and alternative service providers to ensure clarity on organizational roles in the ecosystem.

Efforts to build a transformational culture include creating a festival atmosphere at matches, connecting clubs with their communities, and centralizing resources - human & infrastructure - by transitioning soccer clubs into multi-sport organizations.

Strategies & Goals

Phase 01 Actions.

Clubs are the foundation of our soccer ecosystem, vital to building stronger, more inclusive communities. By developing accessible, nationally aligned programs, we're driving sustainable growth and excellence. As community hubs supported by partnerships,

volunteers, and multi-sport collaboration, clubs foster a culture where soccer thrives beyond the field. Through leadership training and youth empowerment, we're nurturing the next generation of changemakers to lead the sport forward.



84%

Grow Stronger & Accessible Program Structures

“Excelling where everyone is welcome”

Phase 01.1 - Actions

Align with the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program to establish a club pathway that supports systemic differentiation. This includes providing tools and resources to professionalize club operations and developing registration classifications to inform tailored soccer programming.



76%

Build Vibrant Hubs of the Community

“Connecting and transforming people and local organizations”

Phase 01.2 - Actions

Ontario Soccer will create a “Community Business Guide” to foster partnerships and establish local roots, enhance volunteer support initiatives, and the multi-sport club through protocols of collaboration or innovative, new programming.



88%

Empower Individuals to Drive Organizational Growth

“Developing leaders from the pitch to the Board Room”

Phase 01.3 - Actions

Launch a Team Manager Training Module, pilot a new Executive Director Diploma, and expand youth opportunities through a tailored leadership program.



Phase 01.1 Grow Stronger & Accessible Program Structures

01

Aligning to the Canada Soccer Club Licensing

77%

Descriptor

Since 2019, Ontario has yet to licence approximately 40% of the membership. To address this, Ontario Soccer will support clubs in obtaining licenses at all levels and launch an initiative to enhance families' understanding of the program.

Outcomes

The initiative aims to license 100% of member clubs, support at least 50 new clubs in achieving MA Level 1 and 2 certification, and launch an awareness campaign to educate families on the levels and distinctions of club licensing.

02

Offer Tools & Resources to Enhance Club Operations

87%

Descriptor

With growing operational complexity due to ever-increasing government demands and a more sophisticated consumer base, clubs need greater support. Providing "plug & play" resources is essential to help smaller organizations sustain soccer as a vital part of their communities.

Outcomes

Host a Club Best Practice Webinar Series and launch a step-by-step toolbox with templates for streamlining club operations with industry leading standards..

03

Develop Registration Classifications

71%

Descriptor

With soccer modalities and year-round programming evolving, the registration data collected and classifications of stakeholders must also adapt to meet the changing reality.

Outcomes

Collect demographic data from a minimum of 25% of stakeholders and ensure 100% tracking of soccer modality participants through registration.



Phase 01.2 Build Vibrant Hubs of the Community

01

Create “Community Business Guide”

68%

Descriptor

The transformational nature of sport must be captured through community connection. Provide a guide to clubs to follow and engage more proactively with their members and local business to support inclusiveness and reducing barriers to access.

Outcomes

Target a 10% increase in alternative revenue for clubs implementing the guide and requires MA Level 2 and National Youth Club Licence holders to host at least one Club Community Day annually.

02

Enhance Volunteer Support Initiatives

77%

Descriptor

The role of unpaid staff is still critical for the delivery of recreational programs despite the decrease in the pool of interested individuals. Barriers must be minimized while simultaneously changing the value proposition and providing resources through technology to support them.

Outcomes

Enhance implementing club’s volunteer recruitment and retention by a minimum 10%.

03

Establish Protocols for Multi-Sport Club Collaboration

63%

Descriptor

Sports continually compete over participants. Establishing partnership to align program calendars will allow for athletes to vary their engagement with soccer & other sports; enhancing their physical literacy. This will also align organizational goals when engaging government institutions for resources.

Outcomes

At least 10 clubs to establish partnerships with one or more other sport clubs.



Phase 01.3 Empower Individuals to Drive Organizational Growth

01

Launch Team Manager Training Module

79%

Descriptor

Parent volunteers continue to be important in the management of teams on gameday and a key connection to club operations. Rather than individual clubs recycling training for this role, a brief, self-guided module will be created to support the understanding of programs, rules, policies and where to find them.

Outcomes

Reduce incidence of discipline and non-compliance relative to untrained Managers by a targeted 20%.

02

Pilot New Executive Director Diploma

55%

Descriptor

As Technical Director training has sophisticated over the past decade, so too must operational leadership! Provide relevant education to sports management professionals specific to soccer in Ontario and commensurate with the role they hold.

Outcomes

Certify at least 24 active Executive Directors and establish club assessment protocol to validate course impact.

03

Expand Youth Opportunities with a Tailored Leadership Program

80%

Descriptor

The future of the game rests in our current youth! Creating a program to develop skills relevant to leading as well as stakeholder specific training will support individuals taking up different roles sooner than ever before.

Outcomes)

The program aims to have 20 clubs to adopt program with 70% post-program placement rate

The Club Strategies & Long Term Actions.

01 Grow Stronger & Accessible Program Structures

- Increase availability and access to required facilities
- Create “Soccer Business Charter” program to integrate service providers into membership
- Redefine success through published club ranking system based on stakeholder recruitment, retention and advancement metrics

02 Build Vibrant Hubs of the Community

- Connect clubs with local schools to enhance quality of soccer in the scholastic system
- Pilot club’s offering multi-sport programming
- Collaborate with municipalities to align community programming

03 Empower Individuals to Drive Organizational Growth

- Create & pilot Board of Director education modules
- Develop Club Administrator Certification stream
- Identify and offer a central club management system for systemic rollout



05

The Competition

3.30

PHASE 01

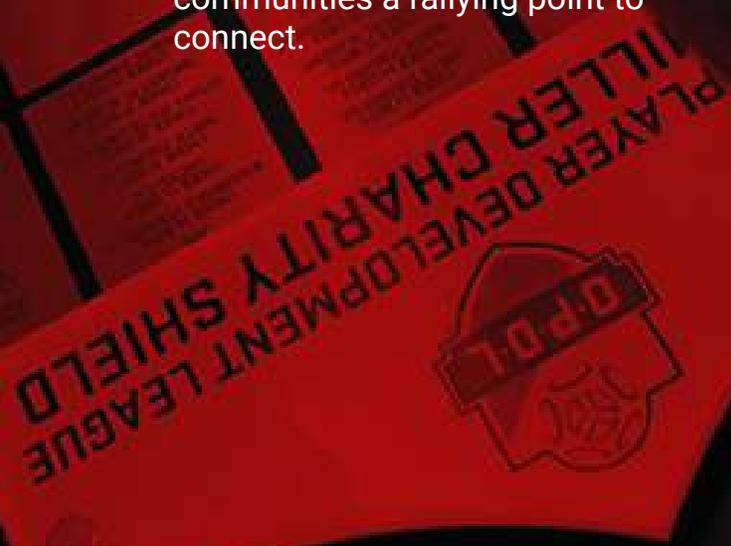
PHASE 02

PHASE 03

Overview

Competition is the heartbeat of all sport and soccer is no different. It challenges us to rise above, to push our limits, and to grow through each and every situation.

It unites passion with purpose, inspiring all individuals involved - such as players, coaches and match officials - to strive for excellence and provide communities a rallying point to connect.



The Competition Strategies & Goals.



Executive Summary

Ontario Soccer continuously delivers competitions to a high standard across its various programs but how can it download this expertise across the membership so that participant needs are met and even exceeded? Driving key initiatives to enhance competition standards and player development systematically will be critical.

The new "League Excellence Program" will offer tools to deliver these competitions but also categorize those leagues based on the quality of the program made available for all participants across various ages & stages.

As Professional Academies grow in the system - from the MLS, CPL, and NSL - providing a place to play locally through the OPDL will be a natural evolution but requires the elevation of standards without impacting costs. Similarly, Futsal will be established as the "Official Indoor Game" for Grassroots ages to improve accessibility, physical literacy, and technical skills of players.

Leveraging technology, to eliminate paper-waste and reduce manual processes will streamline operations and open leadership bandwidth for tasks centered on improving experiences.

Strategies & Goals

Phase 01 Actions.

We are transforming the competitive landscape through innovation, inclusivity, and excellence. By providing clear frameworks, tools, and partnerships, we're enabling vibrant festivals, leagues, and tournaments. Our diverse competition offerings

ensure every player—youth, senior, or differently-abled—has a place in the game. With a focus on quality and international standards, from the Ontario Cup to OPDL, we're building a dynamic, accessible, and high-performing soccer ecosystem for all.



90%

Establish Clear Competition Frameworks & Tools

“Offer guides & technology to facilitate competition delivery & administration”

Phase 01.1 - Actions

Ontario Soccer will review and catalog all competition offerings, develop resource manuals and partnerships to support the delivery of festivals, leagues, and tournaments, and pilot a new League Management System to enhance member operations.



82%

Diversify Competition Offerings

“Provide a variety of opportunities to play for everyone”

Phase 01.2 - Actions

Launch new futsal festivals and leagues, pilot initiatives for senior populations, and introduce an Accessible Soccer competition to promote inclusivity and engagement.



89%

Implement Quality, Standards-Based Competitions

“Ensure quality experiences for all in the Community, Competitive & Development Streams”

Phase 01.3 - Actions

Assess and refine the Ontario Cup structure, enhance OPDL competitions, and develop a League Excellence Program aligned with Canada Soccer Club Licensing.



Phase 01.1 Establish Clear Competition Frameworks & Tools

01

Review & Catalog All Available Competition Offerings

88%

Descriptor

Collaborate with clubs & the districts to determine all competitive offerings across the province.

Outcomes

All competitions offered at an inter-club level are cataloged to determine areas of future support and resource development.

02

Support the Members' Events

89%

Descriptor

To support the membership to align to best practices, appropriate tools & equipment must be readily available. These will outline processes and programs, with associated evidence, to aid clubs & districts to provide quality events including festivals, leagues and tournaments.

Outcomes

Create a "Guide to Competitions" for delivering Festivals, Tournaments, Grassroots & Soccer for Life competitions.

03

Launch New League Management System

84%

Descriptor

The evolution of technology and introduction of Artificial Intelligence allows organizations to generate efficiencies and transition from isolated, manual processes. Explore an integrated solution to support all stakeholders involved in providing competitions to the membership.

Outcomes

Deliver a digital platform that increases staff efficiencies and reduces administrative tasks associated with competition operations.



Phase 01.2

Diversify Competition Offerings

01

Launch New Futsal Festivals & Leagues

60%

Descriptor

Realities of the Ontario climate and growing costs associated with the indoor game support a pivot in technical programming to improve accessibility. As futsal also has significant technical and physical literacy benefits, a transition towards it as the official indoor game for grassroots aged players is critical.

Outcomes

Launch a Provincial-level Futsal League for Youth aged players and have at least 3 grassroots futsal competitions hosted across different district associations.

02

Pilot Initiatives Targeting Senior Populations

62%

Descriptor

With the growing aging population in Ontario, the necessity to provide relevant and meaningful activities is important. To support the community, pilot both Walking Soccer and Over-50 competitions for broader implementation.

Outcomes

Successfully deliver an annual Walking Soccer competition as well as launch the Over-50 division of the Masters Championships.

03

Offer Accessible Soccer Competition

68%

Descriptor

To increase awareness and accessibility for Ontario's diverse populations, offer a competition to para-athletes in alignment with global best practices while also training other stakeholders on-site.

Outcomes

Offer a Para-Soccer competition pilot initiative and, simultaneously, offer reality-based education opportunities to develop a guide to delivering Accessible inter/intra-club competitions.



Phase 01.3 Implement Quality, Standards-Based Competitions

01

Refine the Ontario Cup Structure

72%

Descriptor

The Ontario Cup is a cornerstone of the Soccer for Life stream, offering a vital service to members. Ontario Soccer will review its competition format and standards to support clubs in delivering engaging, meaningful competitions outside the Talented Pathway.

Outcomes

Ontario Soccer will identify and implement at least three enhancements to the Ontario Cup across the competition structure to the operational delivery of the program.

02

Enhance OPDL Competitions

66%

Descriptor

The OPDL is Ontario's premier player development platform and building on an independent review, the league will enhance its competition to ensure developmentally appropriate experiences for all stakeholders.

Outcomes

Implement 75% of independent recommendations and, with 80% stakeholder support, identify and integrate two additional areas into the competition.

03

Create League Excellence Program

67%

Descriptor

To promote alignment to appropriately scaled standards at all levels of competition by introducing a program a program to designate leagues as Gold, Silver, Bronze.

Outcomes

Complete assessment of all available competitions in the province to propose a criteria for a League designation in alignment with Canada Soccer's Club Licensing program.



The Competition Strategies & Long Term Actions.

01 Establish Clear Competition Frameworks & Tools

- Support clubs to redefine recreational programs
- Establish an Ontario Soccer hosted International competition
- Offer a centralized League Management Solution to all members

02 Diversify Competition Offerings

- Pilot Beach Soccer competitions
- Explore varied soccer formats & modalities
- Invite Senior Soccer programs into the membership

03 Implement Quality, Standards-Based Competitions

- Integrate Professional Academies into OPDL programming
- Establish quality competitions in the 9v9 playing format
- Align all competition timelines to ensure synchronized beginning/end dates as well as clear trial windows



“

“Mountain tops are small and the air is thin for a reason because you are not supposed to dwell there. It’s rented space. You get up there, enjoy the view briefly, and must climb again.”

**Jill Ellis, Ex-US WNT Coach
& World Cup Winner**



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