FAQ

New Pilot Ontario Academy Soccer League

April 2017

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On March 27, 2017, Ontario Soccer announced a new strategic initiative, the Ontario Academy Soccer League (OASL). The following frequently asked questions (FAQ) and responses are provided to clarify this new initiative.

1. **What is the OASL?**
   The OASL is an experimental two-year pilot project of Ontario Soccer for Ontario Recognized Academies (ORA). This strategic initiative will develop and implement a separate Academy Soccer Stream that runs independent and parallel to the traditional Club Soccer Stream under the governance of Ontario Soccer. Private Academies in the OASL compete for their own Ontario "Academy League Championship Cup". They cannot enter or compete in Ontario Soccer's Club "Ontario Cup" competition.

2. **Why is the OASL being implemented?**
   The OASL pilot project is a Board approved strategic initiative from Ontario Soccer's 2016-2018 strategic plan under the strategic focus area of "Membership Engagement". Private (for profit) academies are not new to the amateur sport community in Canada. In Ontario, private academies in soccer have been organized, structured and evolving since the late 1990's. In 2012 Ontario Soccer developed private academy standard's and launched the Ontario Recognized Non-Club Academy (ORNCA now known as ORA) accreditation program. In 2013, 14 ORNCA academies were approved and operated with limited entitlements. Today, there are over 50 private academies operating in Ontario, of which 33 are Ontario Soccer Recognized Academies.

   In order to align ORA members within the Ontario Soccer's overall player development pathway, the new OASL was developed as a pilot project to better understand private academies within the overall provincial soccer system. The pilot project will include a thorough assessment and report complete with recommendations and be presented to the Ontario Soccer Board of Directors for future consideration.

3. **Who is eligible to play in the OASL?**
   The OASL two year pilot project is designed for:
   - ORA approved private academies that meet the minimum standards. In 2017, 13 academies will participate in the OASL.
   - Male and Female players – Youth U13-U17, Grassroots U8-U12.
   - All youth players are registered with Ontario Soccer through their private academies as "competitive level" players. All grassroots players are registered as "development players".

4. **What is the vision for Private Academies in Ontario?**
   The vision for the OASL is to serve as Ontario Soccer's provincial academy soccer league for youth and grassroots aged male and female players registered and playing within a Private Academy Soccer Stream under the governance of Ontario Soccer. While the Private Academy Soccer Stream is separate and independent, operating in parallel to the traditional Club Soccer Stream, both streams will operate with the same core operational rules and procedures to better balance and align the player development pathway. The vision includes Club and Private Academy outdoor league integration only at the talented pathway competition levels of the Ontario Player Development League (OPDL) and League1 Ontario. These are Ontario Soccer's two standards based, high performance youth and senior elite leagues. Clubs and Private Academies can also integrate via sanctioned competition, such as Tournaments, Festivals, and Exhibition Games.

5. **When does the OASL operate?**
   The pilot OASL for 2017 will run as an outdoor league only from May to October.

6. **Who is the OASL managed by?**
   League management is being provided by DG Sports, Ontario Soccer's league management service partner. DG Sports also manages League1 Ontario and the OSL.

7. **Who is overseeing the OASL?**
   As this is a strategic initiative of Ontario Soccer, ultimately it is the Board of Directors of Ontario Soccer. Technical oversight is provided by Ontario Soccer's Technical Advisory Committee led by the organization's Technical Director. Pilot project design, assessment and reporting is provided by Ontario Soccer's Academy Advisory Committee chaired by the organization's Executive Director.

8. **What are the standards and entitlements of the OASL?**
   To be accepted into the pilot OASL, Private Academies must receive ORA approved status which comes through Board approval. The requirements and standards are listed in the RFP document.

   During the two-year pilot project OASL private academies will receive full entitlements that currently Club Soccer Stream organizations and participants receive and enjoy. However, OASL private academies cannot participate in the Club Soccer Stream's Ontario Cup competition as they will have their own Ontario Academy League Championship Cup. The only omitted entitlement during the pilot is private academies do not possess voting rights at Ontario Soccer's General Meetings. With full entitlements also comes full compliance to Ontario Soccer governance rules and procedures.

9. **Where does the OASL fit into Ontario Soccer's player development pathway and where does this league fit in compared to the OPDL?**
   The OASL fits into the player development structure similar to where Regional Leagues fit into the Club Soccer Stream. Just as Club regional leagues, the OASL is a level below the OPDL. When comparing to the OPDL, OPDL standards are much higher. The primary differences are in the areas of standards, oversight, objectives and placement within the Talented Pathway. OPDL is the pinnacle of youth player development.

10. **Do the OASL Academies have to adhere to the same rules and principals of Long Term Player Development (LTPD) as do Club teams such as travel restrictions for various age groups?**
    Yes. OASL Private Academies must adhere to all LTPD principals and rules as traditional Clubs do in our current system. This is a requirement that did not exist with most private academies in the past, hence why the pilot project and vision moving forward. Failure to non-compliance can lead to removal of ORA status or non-renewal in the subsequent year.

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