



## **Discussion Paper**

# **AN ELITE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE**

**An alternative approach to Elite Player  
Development in Ontario and in Canada**

**The Ontario Soccer Association**

May, 2009

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## Revision Sheet

Release No.	Date	Revision Description
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## 1.0 Introduction

Discussion about whether, and how, the Pyramid for Play – the structure of leagues in Ontario – should contribute to Player Development has been on-going for several years now. The question has been raised several times by the OSA's League Management Committee – the committee responsible for the Pyramid for Play – most recently during their recent review of the entire Pyramid structure.

It was quickly realised that this subject of **Elite** Player Development needed considerably more review and discussion with other interested parties. Accordingly, the Pyramid for Play Review left aside any possible changes to the top level of the Youth Pyramid until further discussion and consultation could take place.

Since the November 2007 League Management Workshop, a working group from the LMC has been reviewing the current structure in Ontario – seeing how Elite Player Development is organized in other countries - and studying ways in which the league structure could enhance Elite Player Development in this country. The working group consisted of Bill Spiers, Jean Gandubert, David Gee\* and Bert Lobo from the LMC. Possible interest in, and involvement with, such a league by Toronto FC led to Earl Cochrane, currently TFC Academy Director, being added to the working group.

(\*resigned from the working group – May 2009)

The working group is now ready to present some of their conclusions and suggestions for moving forward and open up the discussion to the wider soccer community. Feedback and comment on the ideas expressed in this paper are strongly encouraged.

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## 2.0 Executive Summary

The LMC working group came to the following conclusions and related recommendations:

- recent results for all our National Teams indicate that we are not producing enough players who can successfully compete on the international stage; i.e. the present system of elite player development is not producing the desired results
- even if our present programmes were producing results, we should always be reviewing ways in which we can improve
- the best environment for player development is one in which players train with, and compete against, players of equal skill and ability
- the best environment for elite player development must include the top players from across the province
- while our youth clubs play an important role in player development, it is unrealistic to expect them to be responsible for elite player development
- the lack of professional clubs in Canada on the scale seen in Europe and South America is a definite impediment to elite player development
- while provincial and national programmes were developed to counter the lack of professional clubs, the player pool in these programmes is too small
- due to centralization in Vaughan, the current provincial programme is not readily accessible to all and, thus, does not include the best players in the province
- the present league structure based on a system of promotion and relegation where winning is all important is not ideal for promoting player development
- a new elite development league based on player movement rather than team movement – i.e. permanent clubs or franchises - would benefit our player development objectives
- clubs or franchises located across Ontario from London to Ottawa would make the programme more accessible to players from outside the GTA
- such a new league should have strict requirements on coaching qualifications, training to game ratio, staffing, facilities, etc.
- the soccer community must support – and, ideally, be involved in the development and operation of – their local club or franchise
- a partnership with Toronto FC in developing such an elite league should prove to be mutually beneficial
- cost considerations and the funding for an elite league will be one of the biggest challenges we face

More details and supporting documentation can be found in the body of this report

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### 3.0 November 2007 League Management Workshop

While there have been a number of reviews of the Pyramid for Play, the most recent review started following the League Management Workshop held in conjunction with the November 2007 OSA Annual Meeting.

At that workshop, three concepts were presented for discussion.

- continue to use clubs as the basis for developing players but try to change the focus of clubs away from winning trophies and more towards the development of players
- amend the current Pyramid for Play structure at Levels 1 and 2 to remove promotion and relegation and populate these two levels with district or regional teams
- develop a new league level above the current Provincial Youth League designed specifically for elite player development

After consideration and discussion of these three concepts, the workshop participants were asked to rank them. The district/regional team concept was ranked first; a new elite league was ranked second; and the existing club system was ranked third. It was noted that the first two – taken together – showed a clear preference for a system where permanent teams or franchises populated the top levels of the Pyramid with promotion and relegation removed.

These two options are reviewed in more detail later in this report.

### 4.0 What is Elite Player Development?

Before we go any further, this is an important question that we need to deal with and it drives many of the other assumptions. It is based on the understanding that the best development environment for young players is to train with – and compete against – players of equal talent and ability. So for elite player development, that means the very best players in the province – players with the potential to become professional players and national team players down the road. But how large a group should we be looking at?

A few years ago we had a discussion with both Holger Osieck and Even Pellerud – at that time, National Team Coaches for our Men's and Women's programmes - and one of the questions we asked them was how many players – in any one age group - should we be looking at (in Ontario) from an elite player development point-of-view. Their 'off the cuff' response was about 80 players!

How does this compare with other countries?

The US Soccer Development Academy when it started featured 64 elite clubs across the country at U-16 and U-18 age divisions (i.e. multi-year age groups). With a roster of 20 players per team, this will provide elite player development opportunities for about 640 players per (single year) age group. With a US population of just over 300 million and Ontario's population over 12 million, this would equate to 26 players per age group for us. The number of clubs in the programme has now been increased to 79 for the 2009-2010 season which would bring the number of players per age group up to around 32 players per age group.

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One of the concerns expressed about this system is that the newly created league is based on a “pay-to-play” structure that is a necessary requirement for most teams. There are some teams which are operated by Major League Soccer clubs, who do not charge players to participate in the Development Academy, but the majority of the players are required to pay thousands of dollars each year in order to participate.

The FA Academy programme in England is a requirement for the 20 clubs in the English Premier League and also runs at U-16 and U-18 age divisions (although they actually start the programme as young as U-8 or U-9). At the U-16 age division, only about 9 players per year are accepted into each club’s Academy team. With the population of England at just over 50 million, the equivalent for Ontario would be perhaps 43 players per year. However, keep in mind that in addition to the EPL, there are 21 Football League clubs that also operate Academies with the remaining Football League clubs running Centres of Excellence so that would increase the numbers in some form of elite player development programme.

This system – being run by the professional clubs – has the advantage that there is no cost to participate. The best players in the country – and overseas – are eagerly sought out. The financial return is seen in producing that one star player who will make it to the first team or be sold for a profit.

So to provide a programme in Ontario for a sufficient numbers of players – but not by diluting the available talent too much – it is suggested that we should be looking at an elite player development programme for between 80 and 120 players per single year age group.

## **5.0 Do we need to change our approach to Player Development in Canada?**

Canada’s recent performance in international competitions has again raised the question of whether we are properly preparing our players for international competition:

- the FIFA U-20 World Cup hosted by Canada in 2007 where we failed to even score a goal
- the failure of the Men’s World Cup team in CONCACAF Qualifying for the World Cup in 2008 – while countries like Honduras, Trinidad, Costa Rica and El Salvador make it to the “hex” (along with the US and Mexico)
- U-20 CONCACAF Qualifying in 2009 – beating Mexico but losing to Trinidad and Costa Rica who qualify for the Finals along with the US and Honduras
- U-17 CONCACAF Qualifying in 2009 – losing to Cuba in a must-win game that could have seen us through to the Finals (US, Mexico, Honduras and Costa Rica qualify)

While we will probably always struggle against the US, we should aim to be on a par with Mexico and superior to all other countries in CONCACAF.

Our Women’s programme has had more success in recent years but much of that is due to the big lead we had over other countries in developing programmes for women’s soccer and, to

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some extent, superior athleticism. However, we now seem to be falling back. Countries that put an emphasis on footballing skills are over-taking us.

In the Beijing Olympics in 2008, despite a close 2-1 loss to the US in the Quarter-Finals, our only win in four games was a 2-1 victory over Argentina (ranked 28<sup>th</sup>. in the world against Canada's 10<sup>th</sup>. place ranking).

In the Women's U-20 World Cup, a competition we have done very well at in the past, while we qualified for the finals, we didn't get out of the group stage, losing to Japan and Germany. Our only win was against Congo by a 4-0 score.

In the inaugural Women's U-17 World Cup, we made it to the Quarter-Finals thanks to a narrow 1-0 win over New Zealand and ties against Colombia and Denmark. But we lost 3-1 to Germany in the first knock-out stage.

So ... the conclusion of most observers is "Yes ... we need to change the current system!".

Even if Canada was having some success internationally, we should always be looking at ways in which we can improve. The present system has been in place for twenty years or more and soccer in Canada – particularly the growth in participation - has changed tremendously over those years. We have also seen the entrance of Toronto FC as an important player on the soccer scene in Ontario. What was necessary 20 years ago may not be the best approach today.

## **6.0 Current Systems of Player Development and Options Moving Forward**

In reviewing the current system, we need to look at player development in an overall sense as well as elite player development.

### **6.1 Youth Clubs**

In Canada, our youth clubs play an important role in player development. First, they provide an introduction to soccer for large numbers of young boys and girls from whom our elite players will eventually emerge. In fact, other than in the US, we probably have one of the highest participation rates in the world for organized youth soccer. Secondly, they provide an opportunity for the better players to train together and play at increasingly higher levels of competition.

And it has been suggested that up to age of 14 or 15, Canadian kids are comparable to those in traditional soccer countries. There are numerous examples of our club and provincial teams doing very well in European tournaments. However, beyond those ages, we seem to lose something. This suggests that the 14 to 18 age range is where we should be looking in our efforts to improve elite player development.

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However, do we do well at the younger ages because of superior athleticism rather than because of our football skills? The latter area is one where we need to see some improvement – and this has to come at the 6 to 11 year age groups. It is interesting to note that the English FA have expressed concerns about skill development and have highlighted this age group (6 to 11) as one where improvements are necessary. While important, and an issue that needs to be addressed, this is really a separate subject that the OSA and CSA should be pursuing.

Some people have suggested that we should leave ALL player development to the clubs ... “as it is done in Europe”. As already noted, we don’t have the same professional club set-up as in Europe, South America and other mature soccer nations where most **elite player development** takes place. Now if we had a number of fully professional clubs like Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester United here in Ontario, perhaps that statement would be true ... but we don’t!

In England, development starts with school teams and/or the local youth club. However, the most promising players quickly graduate to one of the Football Academies or Centres of Excellence run by EPL and Football League clubs. For example, Stephen Gerrard started his football with a local Liverpool youth club, Whiston Juniors. However, Whiston Juniors could only take him so far. He then needed to train with, and compete against, players of similar skills and ability – and under the direction of highly qualified coaches. He found this at the Liverpool Youth Academy where he subsequently developed into one of England’s top players.

Similarly, it is unrealistic to expect our youth clubs to be responsible for **elite player development**. This is not meant to be a criticism of our youth clubs – but simply a statement of fact. Elite player development should involve only the top 80 to 120 players per year across the province. They need to train with – and compete against – the other top players.

Within our present youth club structure, it is unlikely that the top 80 to 120 players in the province would be found in just six clubs. In fact, when we do get a large number of top players in one or two teams (usually due to recruitment rather than development), it leads to an unbalanced league which is not conducive to player development.

Conceivably, an existing youth club could assume the mantle of being the Elite Club for a given geographic area with the support of the Districts and Clubs in that area. However, given the natural rivalries and jealousies that exist between youth clubs, I would suggest that it would be much better for an Elite Club to be a separate and distinct entity that can be supported by all youth clubs in its area.

Supporting the above view, Jason de Vos – former captain of our National Men’s Team - makes the following points in his recent blog on cbc.ca:

*“Another obstacle that any player development reform faces is at the club level. The emphasis on club football in Canada is not helping us develop elite level players. Clubs are hoarding the best players in order to win leagues and tournaments, which does nothing to help those players develop their abilities. Clubs complain of regional and provincial teams “stealing” their players, who in turn are being punished for attending those elite programs. Shouldn’t the goal of the clubs be to help their players reach the elite programs, not hinder them?”*

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## **6.2 Provincial and National Programmes**

As far as the Men's game is concerned, the lack of professional clubs in Canada on the scale seen in most 'soccer-friendly' countries around the world is a definite impediment to elite player development. It means we have had to look at other ways to handle elite player development and to date that burden has been placed on the National and Provincial Associations with National Training Centres and Provincial Player Development Programmes. This process has been in place for perhaps 20 years and has also been followed as the Women's game developed at international levels.

This is not unusual as both the US and Australia have followed a similar practice in the past. However, both these countries are looking at other ways to improve their elite youth player development programmes. The US introduced their US Soccer Development Academy in 2007 while Australia has recently (September 2008) kicked-off their National Youth League.

In Ontario, our Provincial and NTC programmes are based out of Vaughan. While the OSA also runs a regional programme, this is primarily for the U-13 age group as a lead-in to our U-14 provincial programme.

Can the present system do the job we want? The numbers would suggest that a centrally-run player development programme could provide elite player development opportunities for players in Ontario. The two difficulties with this are:

- does everyone in the province have an opportunity to participate?
- who would the team(s) play against?

While the current system may serve residents of the GTA well, it is not the answer for residents of Windsor, London, Kingston and Ottawa and clearly not for residents of Northern Ontario.

One observation from traveling with Provincial Teams to the National All-Stars and other competitions – and from OSA Representatives at the National Club Championships – and talking to parents and coaches, has been the difficulty experienced by those outside the GTA in trying to participate in the Provincial Player Development Programme. London is a two-hour drive away from the Soccer Centre in Vaughan. Windsor, Ottawa and Sudbury are good four-hour drives away – longer in the winter.

For the age groups we are talking about, the player's education is still an important part of their life. If we increase the amount of training to perhaps four times a week and year-round – as most people suggest would be beneficial - this becomes even more of a concern. We need to minimize the traveling time as much as possible – particularly during the week. One way to do this is to regionalize rather than centralize.

As to the second question, there are always teams to play against – e.g. higher age division teams – and for girls, playing against boys teams. However, they would not be playing against similar teams (from an age or gender point-of-view) and because these other teams are playing in their own leagues and competitions, this would be an ad hoc arrangement and not part of a regular league schedule. As such, it would not be the ideal set-up.

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In any event, there has always had a concern that in trying to identify just the top 20 or 30 players at age 14, we end up missing a number of potential national team players who mature later physically or develop their soccer skills later. This is one of the challenges with the present system and it would be preferable to widen the base. Out of 100 players we are much more likely to capture 90% of future national team players (we'll always miss some) than with a squad of only 20 players.

This is a view supported by Stephen Hart, CSA Technical Director and Interim National Team Coach who was quoted as saying that the present pool of players at our Provincial and National Training Centres is too small.

It is also interesting to note in one of the articles about the US Soccer Development Academy that while lauding the U-17 Residency Programme at Bradenton, they recognize that this only provides opportunities for 40 players and is considered too narrowly focused. This is one of the reasons they settled on a 64-club Development Academy programme across the US.

### **6.3 Soccer Academies**

Soccer academies – a new player on the scene in recent years – provide another option for players/parents who are not happy with the amount and level of development they are seeing at their local youth club. Emphasis is on training rather than on competition although some academies in Ontario have introduced an inter-academy schedule of matches to complement their training programmes.

While soccer academies do provide programmes with a heavy emphasis on training, they do have a number of disadvantages:

- they are run primarily as a business
- they are limited in availability across the province
- they are concentrated in the GTA

As such, they have not been considered as the solution for moving forward but may have a part to play in improving the present system.

### **6.4 Professional Clubs**

Another new player on the local scene is Toronto FC. Just last year they established a TFC Academy which featured two teams – U-16 and U-18 – playing in the semi-pro CSL. Initially, these two teams drew heavily from the OSA's programme.

Similar concerns apply to the Toronto FC Academy programme as applies to the Provincial and National programmes. The regular training part of an Academy programme can easily be accomplished – but regular competition against similar teams would be missing. Also, being based in the GTA, they are not necessarily accessible to people across the province.

However, as noted, TFC and their Academy programme are new on the scene and it is probably too soon to evaluate their effectiveness.

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## **6.5 Can Existing Leagues Provide the Right Environment for Elite Player Development?**

In terms of numbers, it has been suggested that the current OYSL is not too far from what we are looking for in elite player development. However, they do not meet the other conditions we are looking for to provide an ideal environment for elite player development.

The difficulty with the current OYSL is that it is based on team movement with promotion and relegation. The teams in a particular age division change each year.

This leads to another problem with the present OYSL in that the participating teams are heavily concentrated in the GTA. In the ten OYSL divisions for 2007 (Boys and Girls – U-14 to U-18), there are only five teams from Ottawa, one from Kingston and three from Windsor. The Eastern Ontario situation improved in 2008 with eight teams from Ottawa but there were no teams from Kingston and only one from Windsor.

As a result, there are a number of age/gender divisions where there are no real opportunities for a player in these areas to participate at the highest level.

One of the key requirements for an Elite Youth Development League is that it be based on player movement and permanent “franchises”. This is consistent with the majority opinion coming out of the LMC Workshop on November 11, 2007. While there was no clear favourite amongst the three options being considered, the ‘player movement’ options were preferred over the current ‘team movement’ system.

One option for the future is to simply re-structure the OYSL so that it is based on player movement. This, in fact, was one of the options considered by the LMC in 2004. The full report on ‘Permanent District/Regional Teams in Provincial Youth League’ is re-produced as Appendix “B”.

Another option is to establish a new Elite Youth Development League above the current OYSL.

## **6.6 Requirements For An Elite Youth Development League**

Whether a re-structured OYSL or a new Elite Youth Development League, the basic requirements for such a league are very similar. The remainder of this report looks at how this league could be structured and the requirements that the league itself and its individual clubs would have to meet.

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## 7.0 An Elite Youth Development League

### 7.1 League Structure

Possible options for a re-structured OYSL involving Permanent District/Regional Teams are outlined in Appendix "B".

For a new Elite Youth Development League, based on the numbers discussed earlier as to the number of elite players we should try and accommodate, it is proposed that the league should have between six and eight clubs across Ontario.

One of the requirements of the English FA Academy Programme is that a player cannot live more than 1.5 hours from the Academy he attends. At U-13 and younger age divisions, the rule is 1.0 hour! Recognising our geographic challenges, if we stretch this time limit to 2.0 hours and position Elite Development Clubs in **London, Kitchener, GTA West, Toronto, GTA North, GTA East, Kingston and Ottawa**, we will have the most populous parts of the province covered. The four clubs in the GTA also recognizes the higher player populations in the GTA.

The exact numbers and locations will depend on the applications received.

The league will initially operate divisions at U-14, U-16 and U-18 age divisions for both boys and girls. However, even these divisions could be phased in over several years.

Two models have been suggested for the administrative structure of the league. Both would involve a centrally-run league. However, one model would have just administrative functions run centrally while the other model would involve both administrative and technical functions. The working group prefers the former model to allow for more independence at the club level. However, they are recommending that a Technical Advisory Committee be formed with representatives from the CSA, OSA and Toronto FC. This group would meet periodically with the club or franchise Technical Director/Head Coach.

### 7.2 League Responsibilities

One of the key responsibilities for the League is to arrange a schedule that also takes into account the requirements of Ontario Provincial Teams and Canadian National Teams.

It is proposed that initially only a Summer Programme would be run - from May to September. However, try-outs would be scheduled for the previous October and a winter training programme would be run from November to April. July would include a camp to select a Provincial Team for the National All-Stars. September would be followed by another camp to select a Provincial Team for another overseas tour.

Eventually, the Winter Programme would expand to include games – perhaps bi-weekly – from November to April with mid-December to mid-January being an 'off month'. Most games would be scheduled at the Ontario Soccer Centre in Vaughan although other full-size, indoor fields could be used as they are developed. Games in March and April could be on outdoor fields

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although only on Field Turf fields. This way, the entire programme would become an 11-month programme of training and games.

March would include a camp to select a Provincial Team for an overseas tour. Players not selected for the Provincial Team would remain with their clubs and the clubs encouraged to enter a US tournament. Guest players could be used to replace players 'lost' to the Provincial Team.

A six team league would have a 15-game schedule; a ten team league would have an 18-game schedule. For the Winter Programme, a 10-week schedule would be established.

The League would also be responsible for ensuring that standards are complied with.

The League would maintain a web site with league fixtures and results BUT NO LEAGUE STANDINGS. The web site would include player profiles and other league news.

## **8.0 Elite Clubs**

### **8.1 Club Structure**

The type of club structure will depend on the type of Elite Youth Development League decided on. For a league based on district/regional teams, the district(s) involved will run the elite club. For a new elite league, various ownership structures are possible.

Either way, it is important for the Elite Club to have the support of their local district or districts as well as the youth clubs in their area. Everyone should have a sense of ownership in their Elite Club. They should be striving to get players from their district and their club onto the Elite Club.

Could that 'sense of ownership' be more than just a feeling? Could the Elite Club be set up as an incorporated club with the local district(s) and clubs having an actual ownership? How would this 'jive' with a local business or businessman willing to purchase a franchise? Could something similar to PPP (or P3) – public-private partnerships - be set up (where 'public' = the local soccer community and 'private' = a local investor)?

A totally privatized structure was also considered but is not the preferred option.

However, these are all issues that need to be addressed and the answer may well differ from club to club.

### **8.2 Requirements for Coaching and Player Development**

Must have a full-time Club Head Coach or Senior Technical Director to oversee all teams:

- minimum of National B Licence or equivalent (perhaps National A Licence)
- not affiliated with any specific team other than in a supervisory capacity\*
- not affiliated with any other club

\* this requirement may be waived initially

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Each team must have a full-time Team Head Coach with a minimum of Provincial B Licence or equivalent (perhaps National B Licence)

Assistant Coaches must have a minimum of Pre B Assessment and successfully obtain a minimum of Provincial B Licence or equivalent within two years

Either the Team Head Coach or the Assistant Coach must be of the same gender as the team

Student to staff ratio no greater than 10 to 1

All coaches must also have attended an Emergency First Aid course (valid for three years)

Must have a qualified athletic therapist present for all practices and games

Year-round (minimum 10 months) programme for all players

- three or four training sessions per week (suggested – Mon, Tues, Weds, Thurs)
- minimum of 6 hours training per week up to age 16; 12 hours per week above age 16
- one game per week (suggested for Saturday), against other Elite Clubs (perhaps less frequent for the Winter Programme)
- no other games permitted except by permission (some tournaments will be allowed)

Open try-outs for a place on an Elite Club would be in October each year

Winter Programme would run from November to April (with a mid-winter break)

Summer Programme would run from May to September

Residency rule? With perhaps up to three exceptions, all players must reside within the Club's catchment area (to be defined). An allowance has to be made for players – who for whatever reason – do not get on with the coaching staff for their local team.

### **8.3 Facilities**

An Elite Club must provide top class facilities.

For the Winter Programme:

- for training sessions, an indoor facility equal to 2/3 of a full-size field
- for games, an indoor full-size field although an outdoor field-turf field may be utilized in November, March and April
- adequate changing rooms (players and game officials) at all facilities
- fitness equipment
- medical centre

It is recognized that the requirement for a full-size indoor field may not be feasible at the present time. For January and February games – perhaps into March – it may be necessary to play only once or twice a month at the Soccer Centre in Vaughan.

For the Summer Programme:

- for training sessions, an indoor or outdoor facility equal to 2/3 of a full-size field
- for games, an outdoor full-size grass field although an outdoor field-turf field may be utilized in May and September

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- adequate changing rooms (players and game officials) at all facilities
  - medical centre

## **8.4 Requirements for Administrative Support**

Must have the financial capacity to operate perhaps six teams (three of each gender) on a year-round basis.

In addition to the requirements for coaches and an athletic therapist, a club must meet additional minimum staff requirements (TBD)

With the player's education being an important part of their life at this age, we should probably follow the lead of the English FA and their Academy programme and insist that each Elite Club appoint an Education and Welfare Officer.

## **9.0 How would the current OSA Player Development Programme be affected?**

An Elite Youth Development League – providing an emphasis on training four times a week, year round (or at least 11 months of the year) – could dramatically affect our present programmes. Arguably, it could replace our present Provincial programme. What we currently have centralized at the Soccer Centre in Vaughan for a squad of 20 to 30 players from October to April could be duplicated at each of 6 to 10 Elite Clubs across the province on a year-round basis.

The duties of the Provincial Teams staff will change from directly coaching teams to reviewing the work done at the Elite Clubs – and identification and on-going monitoring of potential National Team Players.

Now there will still be a need to put a Provincial Team together for some events – e.g. a Spring Break International Trip – the National All-Stars at the end of July – perhaps another International Trip late in the year. However, the selection process will be quite different from what we currently have.

Provincial staff will already have a good idea – through on-going monitoring – of the players they would select for a Provincial Team. This can be supplemented by a camp prior to a specific event to finalise the selection process.

The Elite Clubs could also have an important tie-in with the existing Regional and District programmes. These programmes – currently at ages 12 and 13 – will, of course, provide the future elite players for Ontario Elite Youth Player Development League teams. Extending the age down to ages 10 and 11 is an option. However, training is the key activity at ages up to 13 with players continuing to play for their local youth club.

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## 10.0 Funding for an Elite Youth Development League

As noted earlier, the groups at the November 2007 LMC workshop correctly picked up on this issue as a problem that would need to be resolved. It has been suggested that if funding were not an issue, people would favour moving to this concept immediately.

We were lucky to have the services of Fabian Abele – a student at Brock University who is currently working with the OSA – to research some of the cost factors for the league and for the individual clubs. These are presented in Appendix “A” and are intended as guidelines. Costs are based on the minimum number of full-time personnel – technical and administrative – that the working group believes are most appropriate. However, variations on this are possible. Rather than full-time staff, some positions may only need to be part-time. Where districts are involved in club/franchise ownership, sharing of some job duties between the club/franchise and the district may be possible.

On the other side of the balance sheet, possible sources of revenue still need to be researched. If an Elite Youth Development League does replace the current OSA Player Development Programme, it is hoped that some of the money presently supporting that programme could be re-directed to support the new league. However, even a re-allocation of \$1 million would only reduce per player costs by about \$1,000.

The involvement of Toronto FC – see next section – could be an important factor on the revenue-generating side.

## 11.0 Involvement of Toronto FC

As noted earlier, TFC have been represented on the working group through Earl Cochrane, TFC Academy Director. While the initial focus was on how we can better develop our young players to represent Canada on the international stage, it was recognized that TFC also has an interest in development of young players who may one day play for the TFC first team.

TFC could be very important in assisting the league in generating revenue. With their name attached to the league – perhaps as the TFC Youth Development League (or TFC Academy League) – the league itself would gain instant credibility and assist the league and its clubs in getting sponsors. Of course, if TFC could itself provide some cash to support the league, that would be an added bonus.

There are other possible benefits for TFC. By supporting the league, they will gain greater visibility throughout Ontario. While ticket sales to games are not likely to be a concern in the near future, greater visibility should help with merchandising of TFC products. Arguably, a TFC Academy League could have more benefits than simply a TFC Academy. The number of players involved would be greater and – for the reasons already stated – more chance that a player in the Academy League would make it to the TFC senior team.

However, if Academy Teams are an MLS requirement, then a TFC Academy League provides a ready source of players for TFC Academy Teams.

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## 12.0 Involvement with Quebec

Although this document has been about an Ontario Elite Youth Development League, it has been suggested that an arrangement with the Quebec Soccer Federation could expand the benefits of this concept even further. While this would not embrace the whole of Canada, it would benefit a significant portion of the country.

From a pure population point-of-view, Quebec is about 60% the size of Ontario. However, from a player population point-of-view (registered players, that is) Quebec is about 45% of the size of Ontario. If we split the difference at about 50%, this suggests that a six-team Ontario League could add perhaps three teams from Quebec to form an Ontario-Quebec Elite Youth Development League. A ten-team Ontario League could add five teams from Quebec.

An advantage of such an arrangement with Quebec would be to increase the number of different teams – and, perhaps, different styles of play - that would be faced. A disadvantage would be the increased costs – primarily travel and hotel costs – if Quebec teams participated in a regular league schedule. In any event, an Ontario-Quebec League could probably only be run as a Summer Programme.

An alternative to participating in a joint Ontario-Quebec League would be for each province to run their own programmes but arrange for games between Ontario and Quebec teams on some other basis such as a cup competition or tournament.

## 13.0 Expected Results

The development program will be created with a player-focused mentality. As such, the main criterion for assessing the efficacy of the program will be its ability to develop elite athletes. However, since assessing individual players is often a very subjective process, it will take time for an overall evaluation of the program to take place. For instance, real assessments cannot be made until the program has been allowed to operate for at least three years, at which point the U16 players that began participating in the program in year one have had a chance to develop in the system for a full three years. That being said, players should still be assessed on a perpetual basis to ensure that incremental increases in ability can be recognized. One way to accomplish this goal is to introduce a system similar to the Nike Sparq training that is used in the US Development Academy. This evaluation system uses quantifiable athletic rating variables, such as speed and vertical jumping ability, to measure athletic performance. In the Sparq program, athletes are tested each year to assess whether or not they have progressed in their physical abilities.

Another way to evaluate the program's development ability will be by comparing the national and international results of the athletes who have gone through the program to those of the generation before the development program. For instance, if it is shown that the relative quality of Ontario's Development Program athletes has increased over those coming from other provinces, then this could be seen as an early indicator of the development program's efficacy. The number of Development Program players representing Canada in international competition relative to other provinces will be another indicator of the league's development capacity. Along

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these same lines, the number of Development Program athletes who are offered scholarships at US colleges and Universities is another factor that could be used to measure development.

Beyond the performance assessments of Ontario athletes, the program will be evaluated on its ability to consolidate the haphazard system of athlete identification that currently exists in the province. Under the current system, an athlete can be seen by interested scouts in a number of different ways. For instance, athletes are identified from provincial team tryouts, in showcase tournaments with club or private academy teams, or simply on the recommendation of district coaches. The Development Program, on the other hand, should serve as a single environment where the best Ontario youth players are brought together and can be assessed by interested parties in a select few settings, making the entire process much more parsimonious for all involved parties. This idea should also lead to the creation of a province-wide database for evaluating players, which would allow coaches and scouts the opportunity to read about an athlete's scouting history as reported by scouts at all levels of the game. This consideration would again allow for a much easier identification system, and would help to ensure that athletes who are born at inopportune times of the year are given a chance to be seen when they have had a chance to mature more fully.

Coaching is another area in which the program should be evaluated. Elite leagues such as the Development Program offer a perfect environment for elite coaches to not only use their skills to develop skilled athletes, but also to continually improve upon their own skill sets. At full capacity, the program will require a total of 106 coaching professionals. The program will allow all of these people to discuss best practices, which should have the effect of bettering the coaching ability of each and every coach within the system, creating a "whole is greater than the sum of its parts" scenario. Additionally, since the program will create an entirely new market for highly certified coaches, it will provide incentive for coaches with certification below the pre B to improve their skills in hopes of breaking into the new program. The cumulative effect of these increases should make for an Ontario soccer community that not only contains a great many more skilled coaches, but will also foster an environment where coaches are able to develop to their highest levels.

The same idea holds true for referee development as well. Since the program will use mostly district level referees, these individuals will be given more opportunities to refine their abilities in hopes of progressing to the regional referee level. This is an important feature because the province does not have a large number of regionally certified referees. Since the program would provide a great number of additional competitive games for referees, it would create incentive for more referees to become certified at higher levels. The program would therefore have the effect of increasing both the number and quality of referees in the province of Ontario.

The final result that the new Development Program will offer is to continue to solidify the state of the OSA as a leading provincial sport organization in Canada. If the OSA can foster the creation of an effective development system in the province, then the model can be expedited to other provinces, which will allow the organization to take a leading role in national player development. The OSA's presence as the leader of this initiative will help it to gain additional legitimacy and enhance its image and reach across the country.

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## 14.0 Possible Implementation

A phased-in implementation is preferred for two reasons:

- financial start-up costs are spread over several years
- less disruption to players already playing at the Provincial League level

Two proposals for a phased-in implementation were considered. Both assume a start-up for the league in 2011 with U-13 (1998s) and U-14 (1997s) ages for both Boys and Girls.

2011	U-14 Division	1997s and 1998s
2012	U-14 and U-15 Divisions	1997s, 1998s and 1999s
2013	U-14 and U-16 Divisions	1997s, 1998s, 1999s and 2000s
2014	U-14, U-16 and U-17 Divisions	1997s, 1998s, 1999s, 2000s and 2001s
2015	U-14, U-16 and U-18 Divisions	1997s, 1998s, 1999s, 2000s, 2001s, 2002s

Teams in the U-15 divisions in 2012 and the U-17 divisions in 2014 would be supplemented by additional call-ups.

An alternate proposal to implement over three years would be:

2011	U-14 Division	1997s and 1998s
2012	U-14 and U-16 Divisions	1997s, 1998s and 1999s
2013	U-14, U-16 and U-18 Divisions	1997s, 1998s, 1999s and 2000s

For the U-16 divisions in 2012 and the U-18 divisions in 2013, additional players (1996s in 2012 and 1995s in 2013) would have to be identified and selected. This could cause some disruption to existing OYSL teams in those age divisions.

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## Appendix “A” – Financial Considerations

One of the key factors in determining costs is the number of staff required – both coaching and administrative. Required staffing positions and related costs are shown below for the league and for each club.

If a phased-in approach to implementation of a new league is adopted, costs will increase annually over the implementation period. For ease of display, we are assuming an implementation over three years.

League costs below are shown on a fixed basis. Club or franchise costs are shown over a three year implementation period.

### League Costs

#### Personnel

One proposal considered was to have the technical aspects of the league under the direction of a highly experienced league technical director. This person would have directed the training expectations for all of the franchises and would have been a very mobile individual so that routine inspections of each franchise could be done throughout the program season. A league assistant technical director would have aided in the technical implementation beginning in year two in response to the increased capacity of the program.

#### Original proposal

Position	Base Salary	Benefits (16% of salary)	Total Salary	Number Required	Total Cost by position
League Technical Director	\$80,000	\$12,800	\$92,800	1	\$92,800
Assistant Technical Director	\$60,000	\$9,600	\$69,600	1	\$69,600
Technical Administration Assistant	\$35,000	\$5,600	\$40,600	2	\$81,200
General Manager	\$70,000	\$11,200	\$81,200	1	\$81,200
Management Administration Assistant	\$35,000	\$5,600	\$40,600	1	\$40,600
Total League Administration Costs					\$365,400
<b>Cost Per Franchise</b>					<b>\$45,675</b>

In view of the costs involved, the working group is instead recommending a Technical Advisory Committee with representatives from the CSA, the OSA and TFC and a reduced number of league technical personnel.

The program general manager or commissioner will oversee all aspects of league administration such as scheduling, discipline, referee appointments, web site updates, publicity and promotion. An administration assistant at the league level will assist with any ancillary duties as required by the day-to-day program operation.

Office rental and other office expenses have not been included in the following revised proposal as it is hoped space can be allocated by the OSA at the Soccer Centre.

### **Revised proposal**

Position	Base Salary	Benefits (16% of salary)	Total Salary	Number Required	Total Cost by position
General Manager	\$70,000	\$11,200	\$81,200	1	\$81,200
Administration Assistant	\$35,000	\$5,600	\$40,600	1	\$40,600
Total League Administration Costs					\$121,800
<b>Cost Per Franchise</b>					<b>\$15,225</b>

### **Club/Franchise Costs**

Staffing requirements and associated costs are given in the tables below. Essentially, the program would provide a club head coach for each franchise, who would also act as one of the franchise's team head coaches. Every other team in the franchise would have a dedicated head coach and a part-time assistant coach to provide a 10 to 1 athlete to staff ratio.

Coaches would have different certification levels depending on their position. In addition, each franchise would have a full time athletic therapist and a part-time goalkeeper coach to ensure that a full range of field level staff are available for players.

Team administration – travel arrangements, media relations, player records, etc. - would be handled by administration assistants at the franchise level.

Other costs would include facilities, transportation, uniforms, office rental and associated office expenses, etc.

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## Year One

### Personnel

Position	Base Salary	Benefits (16% of salary)	Total Salary	Number Required	Total Cost by position
Club Head Coach	\$70,000	\$11,200	\$81,200	1	\$81,200
Team Head Coach	\$50,000	\$8,000	\$58,000	1	\$58,000
Team Assistant Coach	\$8,000	N/A	\$8,000	2	\$16,000
Goalkeeper Coach	\$15,000	N/A	\$15,000	1	\$15,000
Athletic Therapist	\$45,000	\$7,200	\$52,200	1	\$52,200
Administration Assistant	\$35,000	\$5,600	\$40,600	2	\$81,200
<b>Total</b>				<b>8</b>	<b>\$303,600</b>

### Facility Rental Fees

	Season –Field Type			
	Winter-Indoor	Spring-Turf	Summer-Grass	Fall-Turf
Rate Per Hour	\$255	\$75	\$50	\$75
Hours Required (Per Team)	216	100	190	108
Total cost Per Team	\$55,080	\$7,500	\$9,500	\$8,100
Total Per Franchise	\$110,160	\$15,000	\$19,000	\$16,200
<b>Total Franchise Cost</b>				<b>\$160,360</b>

### Transportation Costs

Buses Required Per Franchise Trip	1
Cost Per Bus	\$1,000
Cost Per Trip	\$1,000
Trips Required	7
<b>Total Transportation Cost</b>	<b>\$7,000</b>

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### Miscellaneous Costs

Office Rental	\$10,000
Office Equipment	\$5,000
Office Supplies	\$5,000
Uniforms	\$6,000
Insurance	\$500
Referee fees	\$1,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$28,250</b>

### Total Costs for Year One

The cost of an annual tournament or trip is based on a \$2,000 per player estimate.

Franchise Level Personnel	\$303,600
Share of League Level Personnel	\$15,225
Facility Rental	\$160,360
Transportation	\$7,000
Miscellaneous	\$28,250
Tournament	\$80,000
<b>Total Per Franchise</b>	<b>\$594,435</b>
<b>Cost Per Player (40)</b>	<b>\$14,860</b>

## Year Two

### Personnel

Position	Base Salary	Benefits (16% of salary)	Total Salary	Number Required	Total Cost by position
Club Head Coach	\$70,000	\$11,200	\$81,200	1	\$81,200
Team Head Coach	\$50,000	\$8,000	\$58,000	3	\$174,000
Team Assistant Coach	\$8,000	N/A	\$8,000	4	\$32,000
Goalkeeper Coach	\$25,000	N/A	\$25,000	1	\$25,000
Athletic Therapist	\$45,000	\$7,200	\$52,200	1	\$52,200
Administration Assistant	\$35,000	\$5,600	\$40,600	2	\$81,200
<b>Total</b>				12	<b>\$445,600</b>

### Facility Rental Fees

	Season –Field Type			
	Winter-Indoor	Spring-Turf	Summer-Grass	Fall-Turf
Rate Per Hour	\$255	\$75	\$50	\$75
Hours Required (Per Team)	216	100	190	108
Total cost Per Team	\$55,080	\$7,500	\$9,500	\$8,100
Total Per Franchise	\$220,320	\$30,000	\$38,000	\$32,400
<b>Total Franchise Cost</b>				<b>\$320,720</b>

### Transportation Costs

Buses Required Per Franchise Trip	2
Cost Per Bus	\$1,000
Cost Per Trip	\$2,000
Trips Required	7
<b>Total Transportation Cost</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>

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### Miscellaneous Costs

Office Rental	\$10,000
Office Equipment	\$5,000
Office Supplies	\$5,000
Uniforms	\$12,000
Insurance	\$1,000
Referee fees	\$3,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$36,500</b>

### Total Costs for Year Two

The cost of an annual tournament or trip is based on a \$2,000 per player estimate.

Franchise Level Personnel	\$445,600
Share of League Level Personnel	\$15,225
Facility Rental	\$320,720
Transportation	\$14,000
Miscellaneous	\$36,500
Tournament	\$160,000
<b>Total Per Franchise</b>	<b>\$992,045</b>
<b>Cost Per Player (80)</b>	<b>\$12,400</b>

## Year Three

### Personnel

Position	Base Salary	Benefits (16% of salary)	Total Salary	Number Required	Total Cost by position
Club Head Coach	\$70,000	\$11,200	\$81,200	1	\$81,200
Team Head Coach	\$50,000	\$8,000	\$58,000	5	\$290,000
Team Assistant Coach	\$8,000	N/A	\$8,000	6	\$48,000
Goalkeeper Coach	\$3000	N/A	\$35,000	1	\$35,000
Athletic Therapist	\$45,000	\$7,200	\$52,200	2	\$104,400
Administration Assistant	\$35,000	\$5,600	\$40,600	2	\$81,200
<b>Total</b>				17	<b>\$639,800</b>

### Facility Rental Fees

	Season –Field Type			
	Winter-Indoor	Spring-Turf	Summer-Grass	Fall-Turf
Rate Per Hour	\$255	\$75	\$50	\$75
Hours Required (Per Team)	216	100	190	108
Total cost Per Team	\$55,080	\$7,500	\$9,500	\$8,100
Total Per Franchise	\$330,480	\$45,000	\$57,000	\$48,600
<b>Total Franchise Cost</b>				<b>\$481,080</b>

### Transportation Costs

Buses Required Per Franchise Trip	3
Cost Per Bus	\$1,000
Cost Per Trip	\$3,000
Trips Required	7
<b>Total Transportation Cost</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>

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### Miscellaneous Costs

Office Rental	\$10,000
Office Equipment	\$5,000
Office Supplies	\$5,000
Uniforms	\$18,000
Insurance	\$1,500
Referee fees	\$5,250
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$44,750</b>

### Total Costs for Year Three

The cost of an annual tournament or trip is based on a \$2,000 per player estimate.

Franchise Level Personnel	\$639,800
Share of League Level Personnel	\$15,225
Facility Rental	\$481,080
Transportation	\$21,000
Miscellaneous	\$44,750
Tournament	\$240,000
<b>Total Per Franchise</b>	<b>\$1,441,855</b>
<b>Cost Per Player (120)</b>	<b>\$12,015</b>

The approximate cost of \$12,000 per player makes it imperative that revenue be generated in order to reduce this cost to the player. However, it should be noted that costs in the range of \$7,000 to \$10,000 per season are not unlike those paid by athletes in the US Development Academy (for those teams who are not partnered with a North American or European professional team) or across various elite sports such as hockey (AAA) or gymnastics. As such, they should be regarded simply as a factor that exists within the North American soccer environment.

On the same note, if the following for the professional game can increase in the years to come, then there may be a chance for more professional clubs to fund Development Program teams in the future. Until that time, pay-to-play will remain an inherent part of elite soccer in the province.

### Possible Revenue Sources

Firstly, it should be stated that an Elite Youth Development League is unlikely to generate any significant amount of revenue from ticket sales. As a result, the program will be forced to find funds primarily from other sources.

These external funding opportunities are, at this point, very difficult to define in quantifiable terms. This is due to the fact that while many funding options exist, each of these would have to be pursued individually either at the league level or at the club level. In order for that to be done the Elite Youth Development League must be at a point where its existence is more certain.

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Once these decisions are made, four potential funding streams become available. The first is the inclusion of private enterprise into the Development League. For instance, during the creation of this report, there have been ongoing discussions with members of Toronto FC. During these discussions, the club has mentioned interest in the Development League and recognizes the possible benefits to its own organization in developing home grown players who may one day play for TFC as well as for Canada. In addition, it may be possible to align the league with existing Toronto FC sponsors in order to create additional revenue sources.

Another option might be to align with clubs operating in international leagues, such as the English Premier League. A similar agreement has been made between Chelsea FC of the EPL and the Capital Area Soccer League who operates team in the US Development Academy. Under this agreement, Chelsea offers resources and coaching expertise to CASL, in return for the opportunity to scout players within the CASL system. An obvious first candidate for this type of arrangement would be Everton FC, since a relationship has already been established between the club and the OSA.

Private enterprise could also be involved in the form of program or franchise sponsorship. To assess the market for such opportunities, a sponsorship plan would have to be created and presented to possible sponsors. The feedback received from these presentations should allow the program to identify its value adding potential for sponsors. Again, these can only be implemented once the program has progressed to a later stage of development.

Another possible option for funding is from grants from government agencies at the provincial and federal level. For instance, the OSA has been able to establish funding for a number of initiatives from the Trillium Foundation, a granting organization created by the Government of Ontario. However, this type of funding might be difficult to come by since a stipulation for a large majority of grants is that it the program service a large number of people or communities as a whole. Since the Development Program services less than a thousand people and creates just over 100 jobs, it may be difficult to convince the granting organizations that the program can bring benefits to enough people to warrant their investment.

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## Appendix “B” – Permanent District/Regional Teams

### Permanent District/Regional Teams in Provincial Youth League (as developed by the LMC and presented to the OSA Board of Directors in August 2004)

It was agreed in the first round of discussions that when considering any changes to the present structure we should always keep in mind whether the changes will contribute to an improvement in player development. One of the models (#13) that generated considerable interest and was felt could lead to improved player development opportunities was a Provincial Youth League based on Player Movement rather than Team Movement. This would mean allocating 'permanent' positions in such a league.

This paper takes this general concept and presents in more detail how this could work. Model "A" is the base model with a couple of variations - Models "B" and "C" - shown for discussion purposes.

Among the first questions that have to be answered are "How many teams?" and "Where will the teams be located?". We looked at a number of scenarios including 10-team divisions (as is presently the case with the OYSL), 16-team divisions and 20-team divisions. A 20-team divisional format seemed to offer the best chance of an equitable allocation of teams covering most of the province so the models described below are based on this format.

The allocation and number of teams by District or Region has been based on the number of Competitive Youth Player Registrations for the 2003 Outdoor Season. As this is based on the current structure of Districts in the province, it is recognised that this will have to be amended if there is any change in the current structure. In any event, it may have to be re-balanced periodically - perhaps, every five years.

### Model "A"

Permanent Teams in Each Division:

West Division	East Division
Essex County/Lambton Kent	Northern Ontario
Elgin Middlesex	Scarborough
South West Regional	York Region Team #1
Niagara	York Region Team #2
Hamilton	Huron/York Region
Peel Halton Team #1	Durham Region
Peel Halton Team #2	East Central Ontario/Durham Region
Peel Halton Team #3	Eastern Ontario District Team #1
Toronto	Eastern Ontario District Team #2
North York/Toronto	Eastern Ontario District/Southeast Ontario

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Teams would play home and away within their division for an 18-game schedule. The winners of each division would play-off in a two-game, home and away series to determine the Provincial Champions.

A league cup competition (various formats are possible) would allow for cross-divisional play.

The decision on which teams - and type of teams - would represent each District or group of Districts would be up to the Districts themselves. OSA Published Rules presently allow for the following 'Team Types' to participate in a Provincial League:

1. District Club Team - financed and administered by the District
2. District Club Team - set up and administered as a separate entity from the District and responsible for their own financing but subject to an annual review by its District
3. Designated Club Team - for one or more age/gender divisions

A Club Team could be designated by their District(s) for all or just one age division and for one or both genders. Where designation is for just one age division, that team should 'play their way through' the Provincial Youth League in future seasons at succeeding age divisions.

## **Model "B"**

This variation on the base model would have a geographic split only at the entry level - U-14. The top five teams in each division at U-14 would then make up the Provincial Premier Division for U-15. The bottom five teams would make up the Provincial First Division for U-15. Promotion and relegation between the Premier and First Divisions in future years would be on a 2-up, 2-down basis. However, there would be no relegation out of the First Division.

A possible disadvantage is that additional travel would be required with this format (as opposed to the permanent East/West divisions). It is also possible that with the stronger teams based in the GTA, the First Division would be faced with more travelling than the Premier Division.

(NOTE: This incorporates some aspects of Model #12).

## **Model "C"**

One concern with a 20-team Provincial Youth League, is that we will have 'watered down' the talent. At previous meetings with National and Provincial coaches, it was agreed that for player development purposes we need the best players competing against the best players on a regular basis. It was suggested that a player pool of 80 players at any one age would be the ideal situation. This would suggest a 6-team league at most - far from the 20-team league we are looking at.

One way of reconciling these two extremes would be to go with two-year increments - U-14, U-16 and U-18. (Possibly add U-21 as well?). This would require rules stipulating a minimum number of 'under-age' players on each team. e.g. U-14 teams to include at least eight U-13 players; U-16 teams to include at least eight U-15 players; and U-18 teams to include at least eight U-17 players.

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This particular model would not work well with Designated Club Teams for different age divisions (but would work with Designated Club Teams for all age divisions).

## Residency Rule

As all three of the above models are based on District or Regional teams, a strengthening of the Residency Rule may be in order for this type of Provincial Youth League. For multi-District teams, 'residency' will need to be re-defined to include both Districts. Where a District has more than one team, those teams may draw their players from the entire District or the District may want to define residency within their District as well.

However, there must also be some flexibility to allow good players who perhaps do not get on with their District/Region coach to switch to an adjoining team. As a starting point in this discussion, it is proposed that no more than three non-residents will be allowed on a team.

## Other Considerations

- all players would be able to 'try out' for the team or teams in their area. To avoid conflict with club teams playing at the Regional League level, try-outs and selection of the team would take place in the fall of the previous season.
- standards would be established for the operation of Provincial Youth League teams in terms of facilities, coaching and administration
- for Models "A" and "B", this could be implemented for the U-14 Division in 2006, U-15 Division in 2007, etc., with existing Provincial League teams allowed to play their way through the system
- for Model "C" (two-year age increments), this could be implemented for the U-14 Division in 2006, U-16 Division in 2007 and U-18 Division in 2008
- if implemented successfully at the Provincial League level, consideration could then be given to a similar structure at the Regional League level

## Issues

The above models address a number of the issues raised by participants in the initial meetings.

Specifically:

#1 - Effectiveness and viability of Regional Youth Leagues

With the Regional Youth Leagues no longer providing the entry into the Provincial Youth League, the concern about equity between the Regional Youth Leagues and the need for play-offs is removed

#2 - Linkage between Provincial Youth League and Regional Youth Leagues

No longer an issue.

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#5 - Effects of Team Movement

As there will be no team movement between Regional Youth Leagues and the Provincial Youth League, no longer an issue in this particular area.

#6 - Club concerns regarding the level of competition and travel difficulties

District or Regular Club Teams will know well in advance what is expected of them and can prepare for the administrative and financial challenges they will face.

#7 - Team Movement v. Player Movement

These models clearly embrace the Player Movement concept.

#11 - Residency Rule

Strengthening of the Residency Rule is proposed for these models.

#14 - Teams playing in Regional League in Adjacent Region

With the Regional Youth Leagues no longer providing the entry into the Provincial Youth League, this is no longer a major issue.

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