

# ORNCA Program – A Review of Relationship

## A Discussion Paper

The OSA Recognized Non-Club Academies (ORNCA) are annually recognized by The Ontario Soccer Association (OSA). ORNCA organizations are requirement to comply with minimum standards which are subject to assessment by the *OSA's Academy Assessors* and to review by the *OSA Academy Assessment Group*.

Once ORNCA status has been approved by the OSA's Board of Directors, the Non-Club Academy is eligible for the following entitlements:

1. ORNCA Teams may play exhibition game against an OSA affiliated Club team
2. ORNCA may host, and play in, an exhibition game against an Out-Of-Province Team
3. ORNCA may host, and play in, a Selected Showcase Tournament
4. ORNCA can obtain OSA approval for a team to travel Out-Of-Province
5. ORNCA teams can have their games officiated by OSA-Registered Referees
6. ORNCA athletes are eligible for selection to Provincial & Regional All-Star Teams

*RFD 2013-009* was submitted to the September 20-22, 2013 OSA Board meeting for the consideration of the OSA's Board of Directors. The RFD would provide a 7<sup>th</sup> entitlement: make an ORNCA team eligible for selection to play in the Ontario Player Development League. That RFD was not approved. However, *RFD 2013-010* is being submitted to the December 6-8 OSA Board meeting and will seek approval for the same entitlement requested in *RFD 2013-009*.

Over the last two and a half years of meetings of the OSA Academy Working Group, several times the following comments were raised:

1. Why are the Non-Club Academies only recognized and not given membership status?
2. Why do the Non-Club Academies only report their players and not register them?

Is it time to review the relationship between the OSA and the OSA-Recognized Non-Club Academies?

### Academy Membership in OSA

The OSA policies (rules) which were approved in February 2011 only give the Non-Club Academies 'OSA Recognition' status. It has been suggested that the OSA may want to consider expanding its Membership Types to include Non-Club Academies which meet the OSA's Level 3 - Academy standards.

It may be time to re-consider '*Academy Membership in OSA*'. Part of the discussion should include whether:

1. a Non-Club Academy should have direct 'Membership Affiliation' with the OSA; or
2. a governing organization for Non-Club Academies should be created:
  - a) to which the Non-Club Academies would affiliate; and
  - b) which would operate on a similar basis or level as District Associations; or
3. a Non-Club Academy should affiliate as a Member of a District Association.

In various countries (such as Australia) the Non-Club Academy exists alongside the regular Clubs as Members of National Associations. The Australia model, in fact, treats these two different operational models (ie., Clubs and Non-Club Academies) on an equal basis.

The current OSA Academy policies are based on the OSA's direct governance of the Non-Club Academies. This was a decision taken by the OSA Board in 2010 because the District Associations did not want to be involved in the governance of the Non-Club Academies. As a result, the OSA is responsible for:

1. "OSA Recognized Non-Club Academy" designation process
2. Assessing/auditing Non-Club Academies to ensure compliance with OSA's standards
3. appointing referees to games involving ORNCA Academy Teams, except for exhibition games or 'Selected Showcase Tournaments' approved by a District Association
4. approving 'Selected Showcase Tournament' hosted by an "OSA Recognized Non-Club Academy"
5. approving exhibition game hosted by an "OSA Recognized Non-Club Academy" and involving a team from outside Ontario
6. approving 'Team Travel Permits' for "OSA Recognized Non-Club Academy teams" travelling to competitions outside of Ontario
7. administering discipline for misconduct occurring at exhibition games and 'Selected Showcase Tournaments' approved by the OSA
8. the "OSA Recognized Non-Club Academy" reporting its players, team officials and administrators; and maintaining a database to capture the reporting data and to produce 'Non-Club Academy Team Rosters' for competitions

Is it time for the OSA Academy Working Group to consider re-visiting the OSA's direct governance of Non-Club Academies?

### ***Register Academy Players Rather than Reporting Them***

In line with the previous topic, if the OSA was going to consider Non-Club Academy membership in the OSA structure and was going to consider treating Clubs and Non-Club Academies on an equal basis, the OSA should re-consider its decision to have Non-Club Academies "report their players" and instead have them "register their players". This would be a natural follow-up discussion if Non-Club Academy membership was seriously considered.

### ***Do the OSA Rules apply equally to Non-Club Academies and OSA-affiliated Clubs?***

Many of the OSA Rules apply equally to Non-Club Academies and OSA-affiliated Clubs. However, there are some differences. The OSA's Registration Policy 5.11 (also known as the 'Residency Rule') does not apply to Non-Club Academies although the competition rules will ensure that the teams will all be 'playing under the same rules'. For example, the OPDL rules are being designed to require all teams to 'play under the same rules'. In many ways, the OSA rules for Non-Club Academies are much more stringent than the OSA rules for Clubs. For example, the Non-Club Academies are subject to considerably higher standards than OSA-affiliated Clubs and must undergo an extensive audit by OSA. Also, the OSA-affiliated Clubs receive many more entitlements than the Non-Club Academies and for a significantly lesser fee paid to the OSA.

Should the OSA rules be revised to provide more entitlements to the Non-Club Academies such as permitting them to play in all tournaments and in all leagues?

## **POSITIONS REGARDING VARIOUS ISSUES SUBMITTED BY VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS:**

### 1. ORNCA Membership in OSA rather than just OSA Recognized

#### **Jake Doodnath, Academy Director, Toronto Skillz Soccer School**

I believe that the Academies should all be affiliate directly with the OSA, another organization to manage academies will only create more confusion. Also Club Academies should also be allowed to operate just as OPDL organizations, without any in district restrictions on their rosters. Maybe it is time that the limitations on rosters are removed for all club teams.

#### **Ron Smale, President, Ontario Soccer Association**

Membership in OSA is required. Not recognized.

#### **Neil Brown, PDL Club Owner**

My answer to all 3 would be yes. I truly believe the ORNCA entities should be fully integrated into the system.

#### **Gary Miller, President, Bryst Football Academy**

My thoughts on the future of ORNCA revolve around standards:

1. OSA has laid out the highest set of standards for OPDL. I do not agree with putting Professional Club Academies above the OPDL Standards. They must also meet these standards as they do in the US Soccer Academy League.
2. The second highest set of standards is for ORNCA.
3. There are no standards for Regional Leagues or District Leagues as of yet.
4. Therefore, leagues with Standards (OPDL and ORNCA) must be monitored/conducted by the OSA.
5. District Associations do not have the manpower or training to monitor Standards Based Leagues.
6. In the future, I feel that Regional Leagues must have standards and be monitored by the OSA.

#### **Dino Rossi, Director-at-Large, Ontario Soccer Association**

Yes, the OSA should create a proper membership status for the Academies that meeting the ORNCA standards. There is no logical argument for keeping them separate. If the US and Australia have a model to follow, let's study it.

In my opinion, Ontario Academies are simply clubs that don't operate house league programs. They are specialists, who operate in a different way than typical clubs but they are no less clubs. In some ways, they have more of a club feel than many community clubs, who are so big and diversified.

We have other clubs across this province who operate in a similar way, but without the high standards imposed (willingly) on ORNCA groups. Oshawa Turul is just one example. So why discriminate against academies who are trying to push a more professional, systematic approach to player development.

#### **Marco Reda, Director of Coaching, Power Soccer Academy**

We are happy to continue our relationship with regards to being recognized by the OSA, provided that the OSA approves the following entitlements:

- RFD 2013-010 Approved
- A provision to allow our teams to play in 2-3 OSA Sanctioned Youth Tournaments & Festivals per year
- A provision to allow Academy Senior teams to enter into OSA Sanctioned Senior Leagues (e.g. OSL)

2. Registering ORNCA players & team officials rather than just reporting

**Jake Doodnath, Academy Director, Toronto Skillz Soccer School**

Register.

**Ron Smale, President, Ontario Soccer Association**

All players and team officials should be registered with the OSA.

**Neil Brown, PDL Club Owner**

My answer to all 3 would be yes. I truly believe the ORNCA entities should be fully integrated into the system.

**Dino Rossi, Director-at-Large, Ontario Soccer Association**

Yes, let's register their players. This reporting process is unnecessary. If we ever get around to reforming the registration process, whereby players register directly with the Association rather than with a club, this argument will be moot anyways as athletes will register with the CSA/OSA directly and decide where they want to play their soccer. This is the future. We might as well get a head start on it.

**Marco Reda, Director of Coaching, Power Soccer Academy**

We are happy to continue our relationship with regards to reporting players, provided that the OSA approves the following entitlements:

- RFD 2013-010 Approved
- A provision to allow our teams to play in 2-3 OSA Sanctioned Youth Tournaments & Festivals per year
- A provision to allow Academy Senior teams to enter into OSA Sanctioned Senior Leagues (e.g. OSL)

3. Addressing OSA rules for Clubs and ORNCA organizations to provide more integration

**Jake Doodnath, Academy Director, Toronto Skillz Soccer School**

Once an organization has achieved OSA Academy Status, then they should have the choice to field their teams in whatever affiliated league is available to them. I think this inclusive approach will be beneficial to everyone; Club Academies should also be allowed to play in SAAC leagues if they choose.

**Ron Smale, President, Ontario Soccer Association**

More integration and removal of barriers to the game are required.

**Neil Brown, PDL Club Owner**

My answer to all 3 would be yes. I truly believe the ORNCA entities should be fully integrated into the system.

**Dino Rossi, Director-at-Large, Ontario Soccer Association**

Yes....let's work together and create more options for everyone, club and academy, to organize themselves as they see fit. If a club wishes to play in a standards based academy league, let them as long as they meet the standards. If academies want to play in tournaments, let them....what's the harm? we should be pushing the envelope constantly, trying to improve the sport, not holding players, coaches and organizations back.

**Marco Reda, Director of Coaching, Power Soccer Academy**

We would be open to the possibility of registering our players and staff provided that the "Residency Rule" reflects the changes that are being made regarding that rule in the OPDL. Furthermore, we would only consider registering our players with the OSA if clubs are required to go through the same stringent, auditing process that ORNCA organizations have had to go through. Can clubs meet those standards?