



WELCOME TO NFSC - NIAGARA FC OPDL!

What is OPDL?

Launched in 2014 with the 2001 age group, the [Ontario Player Development League \(OPDL\)](#) is **one of the Province's first standards-based, youth high performance league that combines top level competition with strict high-performance training standards.** This innovative exciting youth high performance program is part of the Ontario Soccer/Canada Soccer Talented Player Pathway and is an important component of the overall movement to adopt the core principles of Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) across soccer at large in Ontario and Canada.

When did OPDL come to Niagara District?

OPDL was announced in the Niagara District at the [Niagara Falls Soccer Club](#) on Tuesday, September 22nd, 2020. NFSC worked for over 5 years to obtain the OPDL Franchise in Niagara and branded their OPDL teams as Niagara FC to invoke unity and strength within the Niagara Region with the hopes that it would bring Niagara's talented Players in the area together to be able to showcase the true talent that is present within our area.

Who can participate or attend Open Trials?

Anyone can participate who is looking for a more competitive atmosphere and are passionate about Soccer.

Can my child participate if they are Underage?

Ontario Soccer supports the philosophy of continually challenging its member players. Players potentially moving up an age group within OPDL must have the ability to blend in (technically, physically, mentally and socially/emotionally) with players of the intended age group, without undue risk of suffering injury. Ontario Soccer will support the selection of an underage player to OPDL if the player meets all these guidelines once an assessment has been completed. Players will be subject to approval prior to the individual being eligible to participate in any OPDL activity. The final selection of an underage player will be at the discretion of the OPDL Licence Holder and Technical Lead.

What type of player is an OPDL Team looking for?

OPDL Player must have a positive attitude, wants to be coached, shows development potential, strong work ethic, good sportsmanship, athleticism, creativity, technical ability, and intelligence. Niagara FC will work towards fielding the best teams possible through teamwork and team improvement.

How do OPDL Trials work?

NFSC - Niagara FC will hold trials as mandated by OPDL that aligns with all OPDL Licence Holders, which is usually done in 3 Phases.

The first of the Phases begins in early September and goes until the middle to end of October to identify players outside of the OPDL environments. This is usually U12s going into U13 and those players who are currently playing in a Regional or District league. This can be done via Open Trials and Invitation Only Trials.

The second Phase is for Players within the Talented Player Pathway. This will usually start at the end of the OPDL season, which is the end of October following the Gary Miller Charity Shield, and run into the new year. This is where the selection of Full-Time players is done. This process is also done via Open Trials and Invitation Only Trials.

The third Phase is for any Player. This is to identify players inside and outside the OPDL environments for remaining spots that may be open. This can be done via Open Trials and Invitation Only Trials. This usually can run from the beginning of the new year to Spring time.

Any final roster adjustments must be made by a date mandated by OPDL in early August.

Please visit our website at nfsc.ca for when trial dates are released.

What's the Info on Open Trials?

All players must register for Open Trials and "Walk-On" Trials (players that have not previously contacted the organization and made them aware of their intent to attend a trial) are not supported.

There are no geographical boundaries to OPDL Teams. An Open Trial is open to players who desire an opportunity to display their level ability to participate at the level of an OPDL Franchise.

Any player with an active Player Commitment Letter, wishing to trial with another Licence Holder must be in possession of a completed OPDL Trial Permission Form in order to be eligible to attend trials with another organization.

A player must have the opportunity to attend a minimum of 3 Trials before a final decision is made. Following the trials, the most skilled and dedicated players will be selected regardless of the residency or the club affiliation.

What are Full Time Positions and Development Positions?

A Full-Time player is one who are considered committed to the OPDL Licence Holder and team until the conclusion of the OPDL season as defined in the Player Commitment Letter.

A Development Player is registered with the Licence Holder (NFSC) and is covered by a "OPDL Player Movement Agreement". The Developmental Player trains regularly with the OPDL team, but plays regularly with a regional team or Competitive team with the Licence Holder or another Club who has signed the "OPDL Player Movement Agreement". Their priority will be to their Home team training and games. A Development Player demonstrates high potential for the future but is not quite ready to fully commit to the requirements of the OPDL. A Development player is not guaranteed to play games, but may be called upon to participate in a maximum of six (6) OPDL games per season.

What are key OPDL Timelines?

Training officially starts in early January in conjunction with OPDL Guidelines however, some teams continue to train following trials up until December.

OPDL mandates 2 mandatory breaks for all OPDL teams as a designated rest period. The first being the month of December, and the second is a two-week break at the end of July into August.

The OPDL League operates from the beginning of May to the end of October.

There are usually 6 or 7 ID Weekends where all teams will have their games at a “Central Venue” and scouts and other representatives will have the opportunity to view all teams/players in one spot.

What teams play in OPDL?

Please see [OPDL website](http://opdl.ca) at opdl.ca for a full list of teams.

When are games played?

Games are primarily played on weekends, with teams playing a mix of home and away games. Some games are arranged by OPDL and central venues. Central venue games expose players from scouts from our Provincial and National Programs.

What is the time commitment?

OPDL teams train/play between January to October. The teams will train 3 days per week. There will be intensive indoor training between January and April with a few exhibition games when possible. The season begins in May and runs to October. There are no games scheduled on Long Weekends and the League establishes a two-week summer break. Summer weekend travel will be extensive with a few Friday nights away as well. There will be a break from beginning of December to mid-January.

How will OPDL affect multi-sports athletes? Can my Child play other sports?

OPDL and Niagara FC supports multi-sport athletes as a way of developing an all-around athlete. However, if a player is selected for Niagara FC and play at the OPDL Level, the time commitment mandates their OPDL team must be their first priority. An OPDL player shall not participate in any other soccer programs with the exception of Ontario Soccer Talent Development Centers, Provincial Projects/Programs, National Programs or official trial opportunities deemed appropriate by OPDL.

What if I am not ready to play OPDL at U13?

Niagara FC will host Open Trials every year. Niagara FC Technical staff will continue to evaluate interested players and players can have the opportunity to develop with the team. There are also NIAGARA FC Development programs to help improve your player’s skills

What happens if I am not selected?

Players that are not selected are invited to trials with the Regional Teams. There are always opportunities for call ups and to participate in training sessions with the OPDL team at times under our Development Program.

What are the estimated Player Fees?

Niagara FC’s registration fee is \$3600.00 for a Full-Time player and \$1200.00 for a Development Player (based on the 2023 season and may be subject to change) for the 11-month program. This includes full

training and game day uniforms and complete NIAGARA FC gear. This registration fee is usually broken down into 5 installments with the first one being the largest and the subsequent payments smaller ones. If these payments need to be broken down further, we are always open to these discussions and will be more than happy to work with our families to make things easier. Average OPDL fees for other OPDL Licence Holders across Ontario can be anywhere between the range of \$4000.00, and up to \$7000.00. Niagara is one of the least expensive OPDL franchises to date.

We have on our team at Niagara FC paid National and Provincial certified Coaching staff, certified goal keeping training, strength and conditioning coaching, player wellness guidance, sports medicine personnel, and a National Level Head Technical Director. Niagara FC also uses the highest level of Indoor and Outdoor training facilities and supplies a fulltime admin and support staff.

What if I can not afford to pay for the fees for OPDL?

If your child has been selected to play for NIAGARA FC OPDL then they should play at this level. NFSC – NIAGARA FC with our families, will work together to come up with a financial solution whether it be through [the OPDL Athletic Scholarship](#) which is there to assist families and Clubs support players financially, or through sponsorship, or even payment plans. We ask that you come talk to our Lead Administrator to discuss your options and go from there! The bottom line is that, if your child is talented enough to play at the OPDL level, then let's get them out on that field!

Why Choose Niagara FC?

Niagara FC is the OPDL Division of Niagara Falls Soccer Club (NFSC). NFSC was established in 1959 and has been serving Niagara Falls and the entire District for almost 65 years. We are dedicated to quality training experiences from our Grassroots of House League, to our High-Performance Levels of OPDL. We have moved forward with hiring well-qualified and highly experienced coaches and support personnel.

NFSC – NIAGARA FC will continue to grow with the Ontario Soccer and Canada Soccer programs and support the Talented Player Pathways to provide an unparalleled level of League play and competition in Niagara.

For more information, please feel free to reach out:

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