



**ONTARIO
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Ontario Soccer and OPDL Specific Criteria

National Youth Club Licence / Ontario Player Development League

The **National Youth Club Licence (NYCL)** is the national designation within the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program for amateur youth soccer organizations. It recognizes clubs that demonstrate leadership across governance, administration, finance, infrastructure, and technical programming while supporting provincial and national player development pathways.

In Ontario, the NYCL is closely connected to the **Ontario Player Development League (OPDL)**, the province's highest standards-based youth development environment. Clubs pursuing the NYCL are assessed against Canada Soccer's National Youth Club Licence standards and Ontario Soccer's technical requirements to ensure they can provide high-quality player development experiences and support long-term athlete development.

Organizations achieving the NYCL demonstrate a commitment to high-quality programming, continuous improvement, organizational sustainability, and the delivery of high-performance soccer environments.

The **NYCL** and **OPDL** assessment process includes requirements across Governance, Administration & Finance, Infrastructure, Technical Operations, Safe Sport, and Accessibility & Inclusion. Organizations must demonstrate compliance with the applicable standards and provide the required supporting documentation as part of the assessment process. The specific Ontario Soccer and OPDL technical criteria are outlined below.

Please note that the following information is intended as an overview of the Ontario Soccer assessment criteria and its components. Detailed criteria will be provided to clubs upon the successful completion of the initial stages of the application process.

Club Development	
1	Club DNA: Clear club philosophy, values, playing identity and player development approach
2	Game Models & Curriculum: Age-appropriate game models and learning outcomes aligned across all programs
3	Periodized Planning: Structured annual plans linked to curriculum, sport science and team objectives
4	Performance Analysis: Regular video analysis and individual feedback for OPDL players
5	Programming & Registration: Open, accessible recreational, development, futsal and pathway programs
6	Player Pathways: Transparent trial, movement, promotion and retention processes
7	Match Officials: Long-term referee recruitment, development and tracking systems
8	Safe & Inclusive Programming: Policies addressing safety, inclusion, anti-discrimination and financial barriers
9	Grassroots Standards: Age-appropriate training duration, game formats, rosters, playing time and competition
10	Player Development Outcomes: Evidence of retention, progression and home-grown player success



Coach Development	
11	Long-Term Coach Development: 3-5 year strategy with measurable coach development objectives
12	Recruitment & Hiring: Documented coach recruitment, selection, hiring and assignment processes
13	Assessment & Mentorship: Formal evaluation, feedback, support and mentorship systems
14	Performance Management: Processes for coach improvement, reassignment or removal when required
15	Leadership Pathway: Programs that transition players into coaching and leadership roles
16	Coach Support Systems: Communication platforms, meetings, handbooks and resources
17	Qualifications & Retention: Appropriate certification, low turnover and clear assignments
18	Parent Engagement: Regular parent education and communication sessions
Grassroots	
19	Program Structure & Delivery: Age-appropriate programming aligned with Ontario Soccer and Canada Soccer standards
20	Curriculum & Session Planning: Training sessions are aligned with club curriculum, learning outcomes, and developmental objectives
21	Physical Literacy: Physical literacy and fundamental movement skills are integrated throughout all age groups
22	Player Development: Programs promote enjoyment, learning, and holistic player development
23	Coaching Excellence: Qualified coaches deliver player-centred, age-appropriate learning experiences
24	Training Environment: Safe, organized, and engaging environments with appropriate staffing, facilities, and equipment
25	Decision-Making & Learning: Players are encouraged to solve problems, make decisions, and develop creativity through game-based activities
26	Game & Competition Standards: Programs follow prescribed standards for formats, field sizes, rosters, and playing time
27	Game Management: Sideline restarts, retreat lines, offside rules, and game leadership are applied appropriately by age group
28	Player Welfare & Safety: Player welfare is supported through safe practices, injury prevention, and appropriate recovery procedures
High-Performance: Sports Science	
29	Integrated Support Team: Qualified sport science, medical and fitness professionals
30	Fitness & Strength Programs: Periodized fitness and strength plans linked to curriculum
31	Performance Psychology: Mental performance support such as goal-setting and self-regulation
32	Nutrition & Lifestyle: Nutrition education and athlete wellness initiatives
33	Injury Prevention & Management: Structured prevention, rehabilitation and return-to-play plans
34	Concussion Management: Rowan's Law compliant concussion protocols



OPDL Training Environment	
35	Session Planning: Training plans aligned with curriculum and learning outcomes
36	Player-Centred Development: Priority on technical growth and decision-making
37	Goalkeeper Integration: Goalkeepers fully included through coordinated GK training
38	Staffing & Preparation: Qualified staff present, engaged and well prepared
39	Coaching Methodology: Use of guided discovery, questioning and varied interventions
40	Safe Learning Environment: Appropriate facilities, first aid support and player welfare
41	Training Standards: Adequate duration, attendance, equipment and recovery practices
Data Reporting & Compliance	
42	Player Profiles: Maintain complete player records and TD rankings
43	Fitness Testing: Conduct and upload required fitness assessments
44	Player & GK Assessments: Complete seasonal evaluations within system deadlines
45	Coach Evaluation: Game day assessments and action plans recorded
46	Provincial Pathways: Participate in screening processes and player recommendations
47	Performance Management System: Ensure accurate and timely data entry and compliance
48	Club Development Reviews: Complete self-assessments and participate in review meetings



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