



# **WEST VIRGINIA**

## **SOCCER ASSOCIATION**

**Olympic Development Program  
Program Director's Report  
Respectfully submitted  
Dr. Peter McGahey**

**Annual General Meeting  
March 23, 2024**

## **Vision**

To positively transform the lives of aspiring West Virginian soccer players and coaches through their experience in the Olympic Development Program.

## **Virtues**

- Tell the truth even if it's hard
- The struggle is non-negotiable
- Better players and people tomorrow
- Belonging to 'something special'
- Care

## **Overall Update – 2024/2023 Current Cycle**

- Peter McGahey continues to serve as Program Director and Amanda Eller continues to serve as Program Administrator. A positive and collaborative partnership that benefits our players, coaches, and state.
- Program is developing in a positive direction with 201 players registered to date.
- Continue with year 2 of program initiatives including expanding training calendar (beginning late fall for non-high school teams and adding training dates between winter events), combining age groups into two birth years (i.e. – 10/11 and 12/13) to enhance and expand player pools and reducing the new of out of state events for our youngest age group.
- New program initiatives include combining high school age groups into a High Age team for events.
- Continue to hold training sessions at Bridgeport facility. Bridgeport facility location with indoor and outdoor fields is a tremendous benefit to our program.
- Teams attended two friendly weekends. January 2024 – North Carolina (1 – girls' teams / 3 – boys' teams). February 2024 – Virginia (2 – girls' teams & 3 – boys' teams).
- Planning and preparing - upcoming events. May 10th and 11th, 2024 – Mini-Camp/ Shawnee Soccer Complex & June 7th, 8th, and 9th, 2024 – Regional Tournament / NJ & PA.
- 10/11 Age Group Head Coach Andy Harrison completed the US Soccer Coach Educator License Pathway. Andy is a D License Coach Educator. Already hosted one D course as part of this process. Planning for another D course in late summer / early fall is underway.
- Peter McGahey, ODP Director, has been selected to serve as an Assistant Coach for the U.S. Soccer Power Soccer National Team.

### **Final Update - 2023/2022 Cycle**

- **Regional Camp Selections**
  - 25 players were selected.
    - 8 girls (2006 - 2011)
    - 17 boys (2006 - 2011)
- **East Region call-back camp**
  - 8 players selected.
    - 2 girls
    - 6 boys
- **East Region Interregional event in Nov (Regional Team)**
  - 4 players were selected.
  - Opportunity for select to ODP National Team in February 2023
    - 2 girls
      - Mya Wooton (2006) & Janiya Thomas-Stevens (2011)
    - 3 boys
      - Bodie Jordan (2008), Elijah Esteves (2009), and Evan Riviera (2010)
- **East Region 2009 National Team**
  - 1 player selected.
    - 1 Boy
      - Elijah Esteves - He will be heading to Costa Rica at the end of March.

### **Areas of Strength**

- Support and trust from Dave Laraba.
- Amanda's leadership and experience with operations and administration. Execution of our administration operations is second to none. A real strength of the program.
- Dedicated, diverse, and committed coaching staff. Coaches' knowledge, commitment, and passion for WV ODP players are real positives. Coaches have been instrumental in continued and ongoing identification of players and enhancing our player pools.
- Committed and passionate players. Players play with joy and passion with a real commitment to improvement. Represent WV Soccer Association with pride.
- A work in process. ODP is not a competitor with the clubs. Players are our focus.

### **Areas of Focus/Growth**

- Need to increase the overall number and quality of players within our player pools. Girls' side continues as a concern for the second year in a row. High school age groups are a new concern. Low numbers have resulted in not taking all age groups to events

due to the low numbers of players available. Other states are having a similar experience regardless of their size. Not a unique challenge for WV.

- ODP is not a competitor with the clubs. Players are our focus. Some club leadership is more receptive than others. Relationships and dialogue are building with clubs. This includes both technical and volunteer leadership, where applicable. A slow process. Need to collaborate - examples to avoid scheduling conflicts, aid with player identification, etc.
- Examination of programming and calendars moving forward. What's going to work best for each age group - Example. U12 & U14 (non-high school) & high school age groups may need different programming and calendars. Changing January event to a training weekend. Expanded collaboration with surrounding states, etc.
- Continuing to grow and expand Coaching Staff. Identification of the right people will be key to our continued growth. Finding the best mechanisms for this process. One mechanism that is needed for staff identification is offering the D License yearly and a bi-annual C License.
- Continued consistent communication and messaging about ODP's mission and purpose, where and how it fits for our top WV players and their development pathway. Improved organization and messaging help with player retention, player and staff recruitment, and overall execution of programs.

### **Assistance Needed**

- Positive Ambassadors of the Program.
- Sponsorship. Additional revenues available for program enhancements. Player training costs have remained the same this year. Event fees have been adjusted upwards slightly to reflect increases in costs (fuel, hotels, event fees, etc.). Player training fee costs need to remain 'low' to remove a barrier to entry into our ODP program.
- Lack of clear communication and leadership from US Youth Soccer at both the National and Regional Level. Regional Level is of particular concern. To date there has been zero communication from Regional Coaches regarding regional programming and identification processes. Directors have been in this position for two years. What's the summer plan – we don't know.
- Lack of clarity and leadership around the Regional Summer tournament. Unclear that the best interest of the ODP program, our players and their development are the focus. Appears to be an afterthought with main details being railroaded by a few loud voices. Example this year trying to a process of individual identified players to attend signed up through the region, tiering of teams, etc. Unclear that either initiative serves the players.