



Player Development Academy Program

TECHNICAL OPERATIONS MANUAL

Prepared by:
Soccer NS LTPD Committee
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Long-Term Player Development (LTPD)

LTPD is designed to give players an optimal soccer experience at every stage by putting their needs front and centre: player development, training, competition, and recovery. It is player centered, coach driven, and administration, sport science, and sponsor supported.

LTPD:

- *Eliminates gaps in the player development system.*
- *Guides planning for optimal athlete performance at all stages.*
- *Provides a framework for program alignment and integration, from volunteer club coaches to national and professional teams.*
- *Follows scientific principles and practical coaching experiences.*

Benefits for players & parents:

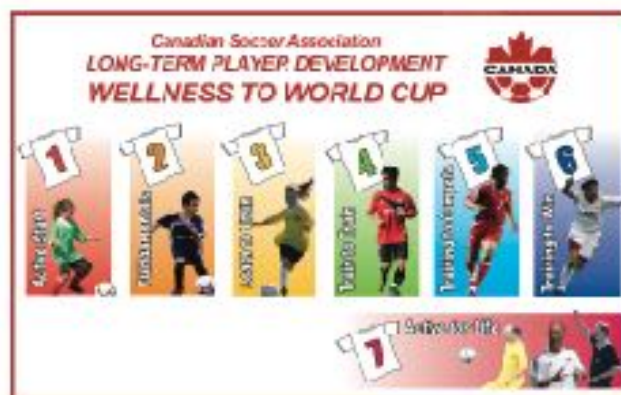
- *Better understanding of what makes a good soccer program.*
- *More players learning at their level and having fun.*
- *Appropriate game and league structures (e.g. size of balls, goals, field etc.).*
- *More opportunity for players to realize their athletic potential.*
- *More coaches who are knowledgeable in leading safe, effective practices.*

Benefits for coaches & clubs:

- *Information and education on effective coaching and practice methods.*
- *Guidelines for appropriate game structures.*
- *Guidelines on appropriate competition levels.*
- *Established pathways for player development for all levels of ability and ambition.*
- *Affirmation of best practices for coaches and club administrators*

Benefits for all:

- *Competitive behavior is fostered in players, while over-competitive behavior is discouraged in adults (E.g. coaches and parents).*
- *Players, parents, coaches, and administrators understand that players are unique and therefore different in interest and aptitude.*
- *Players stay involved in the sport throughout their lives (as players, coaches, referees or club administrators).*
- *Soccer grows, and lifelong wellness is promoted for players of all ages, genders, and levels of ability and disability.*



Recognized Pathway for Player Development

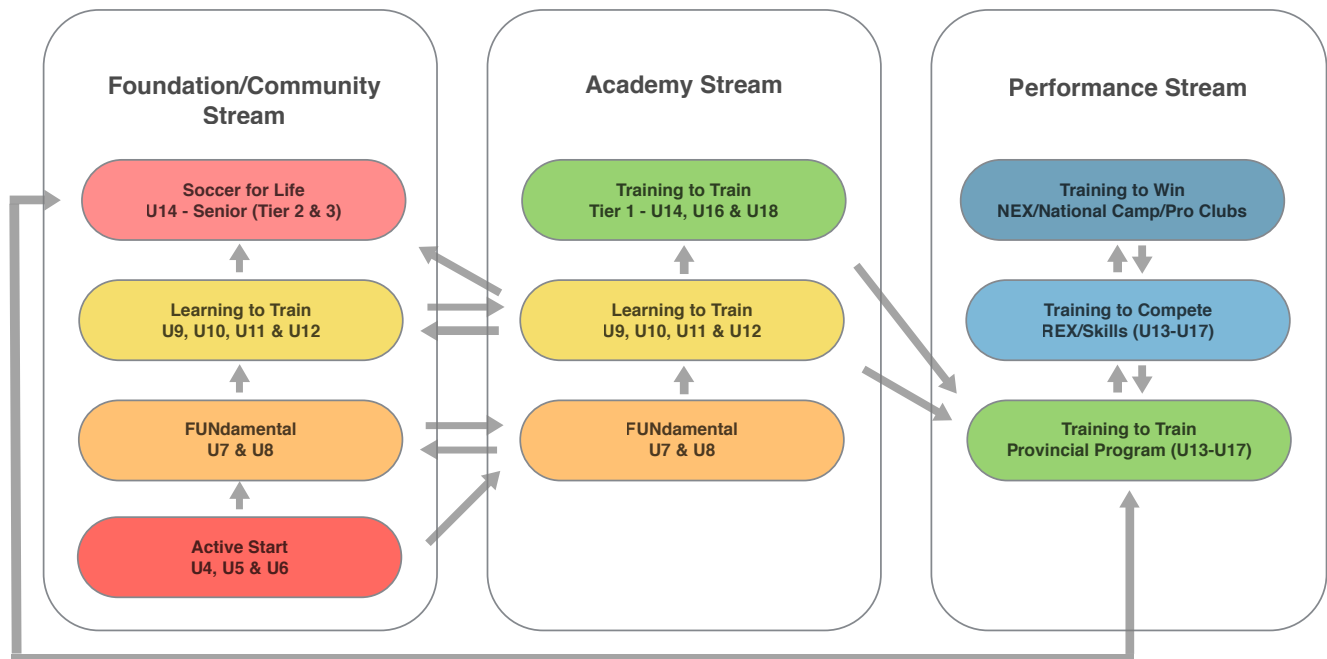
The game within Nova Scotia provides a number of unique challenges to the overall delivery of player development programming.

These challenges include the addressing of the geographical make up of our Province and the harmonization of player and coaching development.

The establishment of a recognized U12A structure for the development of the game and it's participants within Nova Scotia is a key component to the delivery of the Soccer Nova Scotia's strategy for a "*Player First*" mentality to development. The creation of such a structure will assist the Soccer Development Department in becoming more efficient and progressive in implementing a Province wide Development programming.

It has become essential to the long-term success of Player Development within Nova Scotia that Soccer NS and its Long Term Player Development Committee take the lead in establishing, guiding and monitoring a recognized path for development within the Province for Nova Scotia's players.

This initiative includes the partnering of our member Clubs, Districts into our overall Pathway of Development.



Mission Statement

Under the Direction of Soccer Nova Scotia's Technical Department, U12 academies have been established across the province. The aim of these programs is to develop both players and coaches at the regional level. The U12 Academy Program also provides consistent programming for selected U12 players, with an aim of improving clubs, districts and provincial teams. The program also aids in the player identification and selection process of players for the Under 13 Soccer Nova Scotia Provincial Team.

The Soccer Nova Scotia U12 Academy program will deliver on the following key development initiatives;

- ✓ *Support CSA's "Player First" mentality and it's Long Term Player Development strategy*
- ✓ *Harmonize all high performance level of programming*
- ✓ *Eliminates congestion and provides greater clarity for all stakeholders*
- ✓ *Works within existing and supporting structures*
- ✓ *Drives improvements to all aspects of high performance soccer*

In addition the U12 Academy is built on the following guiding core principles of development;

Core Principles

1. *To allow players to further develop their skills in an appropriate environment, this includes other technically advanced players playing within a competitive and demanding atmosphere.*
2. *To enhance the technical and tactical components of the players game through extensive on and off field training and education.*
3. *To provide the players with access to certified, experienced and professional levels of coaching.*
4. *To provide the players specific guidance in the areas of diet and nutrition, mental preparation and physical fitness.*
5. *To provide leadership and information on life skills and promote the importance of commitment to excellence and citizenship.*
6. *To provide a healthy and safe training environment to ensure responsible and sustainable development of the player.*

Development Objectives

- *Provide an elevated level of competition for high performance players within NS*
- *Provide a strong contribution to player development for the Canadian National Team level of play*
- *Provide a recognized pathway for players to be identified for Nova Scotia Provincial Teams Program, Canadian University, US Colleges and Universities and ultimately the Professional level of play.*

Coaching Development

Coaching Standards

All coaches should share and work towards Soccer NS`'s vision, values and competencies. Our shared aim is to use the power of soccer to build a better future.

As coaches:

- ✓ *We should be passionate for the game and pass on this passion, encouraging others to develop a life-long love of the game. Our values should be responsive to the needs of our players and soccer in general.*
- ✓ *Everyone must be accountable to those they work with and the soccer community at large.*
- ✓ *We should be challenging in our work and sessions to bring out the best in our players.*
- ✓ *Our shared competencies are those of leadership, taking responsibility and showing direction.*
- ✓ *We should be able to communicate and influence those around us, taking ownership of the game.*
- ✓ *We should be actively involved in ongoing coach education opportunities*

Code of Conduct - Coach

1. *The Coach agrees to dress and wear appropriate attire whenever he/she is representing their U12 Academy program on and off the field of play and must conduct themselves at all times in an appropriate manner.*
2. *Respect and consideration must be shown towards all SNS Soccer staff, U12 Academy staff, officials, opponents, public and all volunteers who are involved in hosting a game or event.*
3. *Coaches must adhere to any rules set out by Soccer NS, its Soccer Development Department and the U12 Academy Operations Manual - Technical.*
4. *All coaching and technical staff must demonstrate responsible behaviour within all training and match environments.*
5. *All coaches and technical staff must respect and adhere to rules and regulations pertaining to conduct within the official technical and dressing room areas of all U12 Academy matches.*
6. *All U12 Academy Coaches must agree to sign U12 Academy Code of Conduct agreement.*
7. *The use of tobacco, consumption or possession of alcohol and illegal substances is not supported and may not be consumed before or whilst performing U12 Academy official club duties in the presence of minors.*

Violation of Coaching Standards, Code of Conduct and Guidelines

Any technical director or member of an U12 Academy coaching staff who is deemed to have contravened the above standards, code of conduct and guidelines may be subject to discipline action. This discipline action may take the form of and not limited to the following;

- ✓ *U12 Academy member internal action*
- ✓ *U12 Academy suspension or fine*

** U12 Academy Discipline Procedure TBD*

Head Coach, Assistant Coach & Team Manager

The U12 Academy members are responsible for the appointment of Head and Assistant Coaches. The selection of these coaches should be made on an annual basis for the recognized program years.

It is recommended that all U12 Academy members will include the following coaches and support staff within recognized program years;

1. *Head Coach and Assistant Coach*
2. *Manager*
3. *Like gender coaching requirement*
4. *Trainer or Recognized support staff with standard first aid and CPR*
5. *Access to Goalkeeping Program and Coach*
6. *Coaching Development Initiatives that are gender specific in their objectives*

Qualifications

As the U12 Academy's foundation is built upon a "PLAYER FIRST" mentality regarding overall Player, Team and Coaching Development, there is an essential requirement to identify appropriate coaching standards in the league which is supported by Long Term Player Development Plan (LTPD). This development program (U12 Male and Female) hosts two of the stages within LTPD:

- ***STAGE 3: Learning to Train (U10-U12)***
"GOLDEN AGE OF LEARNING"

LTPD's recommendations for appropriate coaching certification standards are imperative in these stages of development. Understandably, due to the nature and realities of new beginnings within this league, there is a grace period to allow coaches to pursue their qualifications obtaining a successful pass on all formal examinable courses. To achieve the required coaching standard as measured through certification, the following table outlines the path of the coach whereby all coaching positions will have reached the entry level criteria by the start of the 2015 calendar year and moving forwards.

The "***minimum coaching certification standards for the 2015 season launch***" are as follows:

- ✓ ***Director of Program - Regional Technical Director - B License National + MED***
- ✓ ***Head Coach - B License Provincial (Certified) + MED***
- ✓ ***Support Staff (Minimum 2) - C License (Certified) + MED***

**A list of Head and Assistant coaches and their current qualifications and contacts must be submitted to Soccer NS and the Soccer Development Department on an annual basis.*

Head Coach Appointments

It is recommended that all Head Coaches meet the following pre-requisites prior to appointment:

1. *Experience coaching and/or playing at a high performance level of competition is an asset.*
2. *Working knowledge of the English language*
3. *Must be willing to submit to a criminal record check. (CPIC)*

4. *Head Coach must hold a valid passport.*
5. *It is not recommended that the Head Coach have a son or daughter participating within the age level which they are applying to coach.*
6. *Must be willing to work in conjunction with the Canadian Soccer Association. Soccer NS for player development and each organization's technical staff. This would include a commitment to CSA LTPD standards and philosophies as it relates to responsible youth development and coaching certification and ongoing education.*

Support Staff Appointments

It is recommended that all Assistant Coaches meet the following pre-requisites prior to appointment:

1. *Experience coaching and / or playing at a high performance level of competition would be an asset.*
2. *Working knowledge of the English language*
3. *Must be willing to submit to a criminal record check.*
4. *Assistant Coach must hold a valid passport.*
5. *It is not recommended that the Assistant Coach have a son or daughter participating within the age level which they are applying to coach*
6. *Must be willing to work in conjunction with the Canadian Soccer Association. Soccer NS for player development and each organization's technical staff. This would include a commitment to CSA LTPD standards and philosophies as it relates to responsible youth development and coaching certification and ongoing education.*

**Teams will be required to have a like gender coaching appointment on staff with every team.*

Soccer Nova Scotia Coach Mentorship Program

It is recommended that all Assistant Coaches complete U12 Academy Coach Mentorship Program set out by Soccer NS and its LTPD Committee and implemented through U12 Academy member clubs and their technical department.

This Program will be applied through the established conduit of the U12 Academy which provides a high performance level of youth development in Nova Scotia. In this type of environment, Coaches have the ability to develop through relevant experiences, Head Coach Mentorship and receive guidance from the LTPD Committee of Soccer NS and high performance service plan.

Program Objectives

1. *Outcome-Focused - All coaching activities must make a positive contribution to achieving our coach development goal.*
2. *Player-Centred - Based on the needs of the player in the Academy program and aligned to the stage of development of that player.*
3. *Inclusive - Acknowledges the needs of all players regardless of current ability level. Applicable/Practical - So that players may immediately use what they have learned.*
4. *Integrated - Soccer-specific knowledge and general principles of coaching will be combined in a practical coaching environment.*

5. *Flexible - To meet the range of needs of the players.*
6. *Holistic - Focus on the whole person, not just the soccer components.*
7. *Ownership - To create a highly skilled coach requires individuals to accept responsibility for owning, creating, maintaining and improving the environment in which they work and learn.*
8. *Continuous Improvement - Highly skilled coaches must have an inherent thirst for knowledge. They look beyond the results and the outcome of the game to ensure that tomorrow's performance is better than today's. Every coaching situation is an opportunity to learn. Learning, therefore, never ends.*
9. *An Academy member coach must combine the most effective traditional methods of instruction with the most modern advances in learning. Therefore an Academy coach should:*
 - a. *Use the traditional passive method of direct instruction but couple it with*
 - b. *Modern active methods like guided discovery and questioning*

Active methods make the learner more accountable for his/her own learning and are shown to produce higher levels of understanding and retention of information.

Female Coach Development Initiatives

It is recommended that all U12 Academy member clubs provide opportunities for a selected group of female coaches to work closely with coaches within the U12 Academy and gender specific program years.

The goal of this initiative is to create an atmosphere where by these coaches may learn in a high performance, exciting, educational and safe environment. It is the hope this experience will encourage them to continue their path of development as a coach and make a commitment to a lifelong involvement in the coaching of players at all levels of play within Nova Scotia.

Goalkeeping Coach Development Program

It is expected that all U12 Academy member clubs provide established goalkeeping development programming within their club. Goalkeeper coaches will be expected to attend certification and workshops to establish common principles in positional development.

Player Selection Policies and Procedures

Player Eligibility

A player who is in good standing and registered within Soccer NS and is within the age categories as defined by Soccer NS and the U12 Academy constitution rules and regulations is eligible to participate within the U12 Academy.

Player Prioritization

- *Following the selection to U12 Academy age group, all players must be aware that the U12 Academy takes priority over any additional soccer programming.*
- *Participating within supportive soccer development programming and additional sport development programming during the duration of that year's U12 Academy is permitted if it meets LTPD standards as it relates to appropriate maturation of players. (See LTPD Stages of Development)*

- *If additional soccer and sport activities interferes with recognized programming and scheduling, participation is not recommended so to prevent and avoid the following;*
 - *Increase of Injury and Over Training*
 - *Annual Schedule Congestion*
 - *Adherence to the recognized periodization plan*
- *The exemption to this policy is the selection of a player to Soccer NS Provincial Teams Programming, CSA sponsored high performance initiatives, National Team Programming and invitation for an official trail or development opportunity at a recognized professional club as defined within the FIFA club membership. This will be recognized and supported by Soccer NS and all U12 Academy Clubs.*

Entry & Exit Points

- *As it is recommended that players should be involved with additional sporting activities, SNS in conjunction with the outlined periodized plan will have entry and exit points to accommodate athletes.*

Trial Process for New Players

- *The club/region must offer players at least two (2) training sessions to try-out for their SNS U12 Academy program with both the head coach and technical director present.*

Player Assessments

- *The club/region must provide a minimum of two (2) written and one (1) verbal player assessment per calendar year for each player involved in the SNS U12 Academy Program by both the head coach and Technical Director.*

Under Age Player Policy

Soccer NS and its Pathway for Player Development support the philosophy of continually challenging its member players. Players potentially moving up an age group within the U12 Academy will need to meet the following guidelines;

Technical Ability

A player must demonstrate a high degree of individual skill which must be transferable to competitive match situations. In addition, a player's individual skill must meet or excel the technical abilities of other participating players within the age group the player wishes to participate with.

Physical Ability

A player must surpass other players within their age group in physical strength, technical skill and speed, and have the ability to blend in with players of the intended age group.

Mental Ability

Player must surpass other players within their age group in game awareness and general knowledge of the game. Including the mental strength that will be necessary when dealing with older and physically superior opponents.

Social Ability

Player must be able to interact with players within the intended age group on and off the field (games, dressing room, training and social gatherings).

The selection of an underage player to the U12 Academy will be supported by the LTPD Committee if the player meets these guidelines. The final selection of an underage player will be at the discretion of the U12 Academy member clubs and their technical department and in conjunction with the LTPD Committee.

Team Management

Playing Time Policy

- *It is the policy of the Soccer Development Department and the U12 Academy not to enforce a rule as it pertains to the equal playing time for players participating within the U12 Academy. However, it is the policy of the LTPD Committee of the U12 Academy to implement a minimum playing time policy for participating players within the U12 Academy as outlined in the Soccer Nova Scotia Best Practice Resource (2015).*
- *This policy is subject to the discretion of the age groups coaching staff as it pertains to the health, safety and eligibility (code of conduct) of the individual player and tactical requirements of the team.*
- *This policy is set at 40% per game.*
- *No player's participate in match play should exceed the following;*
 - *U12 One hundred (90-100) Minutes per day on field with the exceptions of the goalkeeper.*

Player Pool Policy

- *It is the responsibility of the Soccer NS to recommend a policy on an annual basis as it pertains to the number of players who will be participating within the U12 Academy at each of its age groups. The following are the recommendations for squad sizes and match rosters for the U12 Academy:*

Squad Sizes for Games

We have identified the recommended squad size that U12 Academy member clubs should dress for games in order to realistically meet the playing time requirements. Note - The focus is for U12 Academy member clubs to build capacity for 11-aside soccer, therefore should have larger training squads for the indoor season but manage them appropriately for match days.

- *Indoor Minimum of ten players (10) maximum of fourteen (14) players.*
- *Outdoor Minimum of fourteen players (14) maximum of eighteen (18) players.*
- *U12 Academy Members may affiliate players for unlimited use within their academy programming.*

It is recommended that all age groups within the U12 Academy select two (2) goalkeepers within the pre-determined squad size to be available for each match day roster.

Substitution Policy

- *Unlimited.*

Player Guidelines

Successfully selected players for the U12 Academy must be aware they are representing their club and Nova Scotia within the league. Players will be judged based on their performances on and off

the field of play, as an individual and as a member of a team. Their personal conduct, both in and out of competition, reflects upon the program and their Club Teams image and is the responsibility of the player to safeguard the reputation and pride of those who they represent.

1. *The Player agrees to dress and wear identified attire whenever he/she are representing their respective U12 Academy club and Province of Nova Scotia. He/she is to conduct in an appropriate manner at all times.*
2. *Respect and consideration must be shown towards all Soccer NS staff, U12 Academy member club staff, officials, opponents, public and all volunteers who are involved in hosting a game or event.*
3. *Players must adhere to any rules set out by Soccer NS, the Soccer Development Department and the coaching staff of any U12 Academy member governing their participation*
4. *The use of tobacco, consumption or possession of alcohol and illegal substances is not supported and is prohibited while participating within officially sanctioned U12 Academy matches and events. A **Zero tolerance as it relates to discipline is in effect.***

** IT IS THE GOAL OF SOCCER NS, THE SOCCER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AND THE U12 Academy TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH PROMOTES FAIR PLAY, HONESTY AND PERSONAL INTEGRITY.*

Travel Policy

U12 Academy members must follow travel time/distance aligned with LTPD SNS Best Practice Resource (2015). Soccer Nova Scotia sanctioned events are the only exceptions and will be considered in conjunction with LTPD standards.

Program Development

Building Capacity

U12 Academy members clubs will be responsible for managing and sustaining capacity for programs at U7, U8, U9, U10 & U11 and participate fully in Soccer NS LTPD Committee events and objectives.

All programs both recreational and competitive must be in compliance with the implementation of LTPD & SNS Best Practice resource

U12 Academy members clubs will be measured on the following criteria in order to meet the appropriate standards:

- Year 1 - 50% of licensed clubs/regions implementing single digit age groups.
- Year 2 - 75% of licensed clubs/regions implementing single digit age groups.
- Year 3 - 100% of licensed clubs/regions implementing single digit age groups.

Note - U12 Academy members clubs will not be able to continue in the program if they do not have U11 & U12 teams after their third year of being a licensed Soccer Nova Scotia Academy member club.

U12 Academy Program - League Structure

Game Format

- SNS Academy teams shall play 9-a-side during the outdoor season

- SNS Academy teams shall play 7-a-side during the indoor season.
- Matches shall employ a size 4 ball.
- Field dimensions shall be per FIFA regulations.
- Goals shall be per FIFA regulations.
- Rules employed shall be those of FIFA except in the instances noted in the SNS Academy Operations Manual.

Playing Season

The season shall run from November through September.

League Schedule

- The development of the Academy's League Schedule, including match dates, times, referee assignment and match venues, shall be the responsibility of SNS.
- The League Schedule for the forthcoming season shall be issued by SNS no later than October 15th of the year of the season.
- Changes to the League Schedule, including postponement, may be done with the full agreement of both parties involved and informed to SNS no later than 48 hours of the game time.

Incomplete Games

In the event that a game cannot continue through full regulation play, the game shall count provided seventy-five percent (75%) of the game was completed.

The referee shall have the final decision on suspension of matches due to weather or field conditions.

Forfeits

Should any team fail to appear for a scheduled match or not attend the four scheduled ID events, the Licence Holder shall incur a forfeit fee as to be decided by the SNS Academy Disciplinary Committee.

Game Sheets

- The official game sheet (GoalLine) shall be presented to the referee prior to the match and shall include team officials.
- Academy teams shall verify the accuracy of game sheets and obtain a signed copy from the match officials after the match.
- Academy teams shall supply and SNS shall maintain information related to player suspensions, additions or drops, or other eligibility issues.

Playing Season

- Games played in the months of November, December, January and February shall be indoors.
- Games played in the months of April to September shall be outdoors.
- The following annual game schedule based on location inc. showcase events are:
 - o Cape Breton - 32 games approx.
 - o Highlands - 48 games approx.

- o HRM - 55 games approx.
- o Valley - 49 games approx.
- o South Shore - 49 games approx.

Events

The U12 Academy members will be required to participate in all events on the periodized calendar.

- U12 Academy Annual Schedule
- U12 Academy Showcase Events - March (Indoor), May (Outdoor), June (Outdoor) & October (Outdoor)

** TWO OF THESE EVENTS MUST BE HOSTED BY RURAL REGIONS AND NO MEMBER CAN HOST TWICE IN A PERIODIZED CALENDAR.*

All U12 Academy members clubs must attend all four events outlined in the season schedule.

Practice to Game Ratio

All U12 Academy members will have to adhere to the SNS Best Practice resource for the development stream and meet a minimum of 2:1 practice to game. It is the recommendation of Soccer Nova Scotia that clubs attempt to offer a 3:1 ratio in order to raise the standards of the program.

Training sessions that do not incorporate technical work with a ball (i.e. strength and conditioning work, classroom tactical work) do not count towards the total number of training sessions used in this ratio. The three training sessions used to calculate the training-to-game ratio must involve ball work.

Periodized Curriculum

The U12 Academy program requires any member to follow the periodized plan for running their program. The periodized plan will outline a detailed framework of the player competencies that are associated to a player's DNA participating in the Soccer Nova Scotia Provincial program and stage specific measurable outlined in the Soccer Nova Scotia Best Practice Resource (2015). Each coach has a different philosophy and method of delivering sessions to their players and will be responsible with planning the session to meet the competencies as outlined in the periodized plan.

Facilities

The U12 Academy program requires that all member clubs allow players the opportunity to practice and play games on either turf or grass. It is recommended if available, that all games are played on turf but not necessary based on facility availability. In addition, if member clubs want to offer additional training sessions after the recommended minimum, they can be conducted inside gyms where necessary.

Program Review

U12 Academy Member Club Performance Assessment

Soccer NS staff will be responsible for conducting U12 Academy member technical & program standards assessments. The U12 Academy Standards Assessments will be based on the U12 Academy member club meeting technical & program compliance criteria. The U12 Academy club staff execution of technical on field training and weekly periodization calendar will also be assessed.

Summary

The Soccer Nova Scotia U12 Academy initiative addresses three major areas of developmental focus for improving the standard of soccer in Nova Scotia. It provides a pathway for coaching education and development both through formal certification and mentoring ; it provides a framework for appropriate competition where the best players can receive training and match experience in the best environment possible ; and it regulates and periodizes the soccer calendar to allow for maximum benefit to the players and the game of soccer. The LTPD Committee of Soccer Nova Scotia endorses the U12 Academy as the best pathway for the development of soccer in the Province of Nova Scotia.

*Special thanks to: BC Soccer - Soccer Development Department
In conjunction with EA Sports BC SPL - Technical Sub-Committee*

Check List

Approval Stage

- ✓ *Completed Application*
 - Club/Region Mission Statement/Values (Strategic Plan if one exists)*
 - Player Development Strategic Plan*
 - Coach Mentorship Strategic Plan*
 - Female in Coaching Strategic Plan*
 - Detail how your organisation plans to develop capacity whilst meeting LTPD Best Practice at U7, U8, U9, U10 & U11.*
 - Personnel Information - Staff information including Certification & CPIC*

2 Weeks Before

- ✓ *Squad Roster*
- ✓ *Details of Training Schedule*

Midseason Review

- ✓ *Player Evaluations*
- ✓ *Program Evaluations*