



SAAC SETS OBJECTIVES FOR 2014

The Directors of the Ontario-based Soccer Academy Alliance Canada (SAAC) organizations met recently to share thoughts on recent developments in the soccer landscape and to chart a course for the organization that has been leading the player development evolution in this province since 2005. An open and frank discussion amongst some of the most experienced soccer professionals in the province solidified the following beliefs across the membership.

- **The OSA's OPDL concept still has merit, and while Academies are not currently eligible, they will continue to provide independent high performance programs at all age groups.** The SAAC organizations, some of which have been operating in a standards-based model for over eight years, have no doubt that they will continue to provide top quality standards-based programming to their players, regardless of whether or not they are part of the OPDL.
- **If anything, the SAAC model has been further validated by recent events.** The OPDL setup borrowed heavily from SAAC in areas of technical standards and program calendar to name a few. The one important area they did not follow our lead was in putting full decision making powers in the hands of soccer professionals. The public relations nightmare that followed the 11th hour political maneuvering prior to the announcement of licenses showed the soccer community that they still haven't got it 100% right and that SAAC is still leading the way.
- **SAAC and its members will continue to raise the bar for standards-based programming while maintaining its affiliation with the OSA, CSA and FIFA.** Upon its inception in 2005 SAAC established FIFA affiliation as a prime objective. The rationale being was that an organization created to change the way the game is managed across the country must operate from within the system in order to achieve its goals. The recent OPDL decision does not change this fact. Affiliation was an objective before OPDL was even a concept, **so SAAC will continue to work from within the system** to not only maximize benefits for players currently in the SAAC system, but also to push for change at all levels of the game.
- **SAAC remains the best *proven* environment in the province for promoting the development of players and coaches in the game.** The SAAC Academies continue to work together to elevate coaches and players to a new standard. All of our members take pride in the growing number of coaches that are choosing to expand their knowledge both locally and abroad. SAAC Academies have proven on the field that they can sustain these high level programs over many years and provide a professional environment that produces results:
 - Over 30 Nationally licensed coaches (**UEFA, USSF, CSA**) across our membership
 - Over 40 players sent to **NCAA Division I** programs in the past 5 years
 - Over 70 players sent to **Canadian University** and other post-secondary institutions in the past 5 years
 - Over 20 players sent on **International pro trials** in the past 5 years
 - Over 10 players placed on **National youth and senior teams**
 - Over 10 players signed to **Pro clubs**, including 2 players taken in the 1st round of the 2013 MLS Draft by Toronto FC



