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Re: ODP Foreign Travel Policy

I. Introduction

The US Youth Soccer ODP philosophy is to identify players of the highest caliber on a continuing and consistent basis, which will lead to increased success for the US National Teams in the international arena. The purpose of the program is to identify a pool of players in each age group from which a National Team will be selected for international competition, to provide high-level training to benefit and enhance the development of the players at all levels, and through the use of carefully selected and licensed coaches, develop a mechanism for the exchange of ideas and curriculum to improve all levels of coaching.

State Associations are encouraged to develop programs that work in tandem with Regional and National Programs. The Regional and National programs include international competition. The Region I program specifically encourages its state associations to include international competition as a component of the state program. The value of this experience for Virginia's young players cannot be overstated. Coaches and players are only as good as the level to which they have been exposed. International competition at the State Program level prepares Virginia players for the demands of Regional and National programs.

It is the goal of the Virginia Youth Soccer Association to provide a high quality developmental experience for all the players participating in the Olympic Development Program. The purpose of the ODP Foreign Travel Policy is to ensure the highest quality experience for the players, coaches, and volunteers participating in the program. It is the opinion of the VYSA Technical Staff that the international experience is extremely important in atop competitive player's development. It allows our players to test themselves against some of the best youth players and clubs in the world. It is important for the players to realize that they are competing against players from all over the world not just our own country. Lastly, it is tremendous preparation for participation on regional and national teams as well as college and or professional soccer. The experiences these players bring home also benefit their club teammates as well. Each player participating on a team brings to the team their combined soccer experiences. Experiences that increase the level of a player helps to develop the players participating with them.

It is also recognized by the staff that the cultural benefits associated with international travel is extremely important to the personal growth and development of the child. To observe and participate in a foreign culture and experience first-hand, the customs, languages, food, and ways of a different people can only enhance the child's future education and leave a lasting impression.

II. Program Administration

A. Selection of Venue and Competition

The objective of international competition is to prepare and develop players and coaches. The VYSA Technical Director is responsible to oversee the development of players and coaches of the Virginia Youth

Soccer Association. The design of the trip to include venues and level of competition is the responsibility of the VYSA Technical Director.

- B. Age Groups – The two age groups that will travel internationally each year will be the second youngest and the fourth youngest for the girls and the second youngest and third youngest for the boys. The staff feels that the youngest age group is just entering the program and need to get accustomed to training and expectations before going overseas. The second and fourth age groups gives the players the opportunity to experience foreign travel and then apply those lessons in their game for a year before going to a different destination. Also, the lessons learned internationally can be applied to the preparation for ODP National Championships that takes place year three and year five respectively.
- C. Player Eligibility – players in the State ODP pool who fall within the correct age parameters. The Head Age Group Coach will select his squad based on player availability, quality and form.
- D. Adult Participation – There will be the minimum of four adults, who represent VYSA assigned to each ODP team traveling internationally. At any time players are in the hotel/housing, an adult must be present in the hotel.

Head of Delegation (HOD) – Official representative from the VYSA Board of Directors.

The HOD will be appointed by the VYSA President.

Team Administrator – manages the administrative issues of the team in accordance with the Head Coach.

Head Coach – handles the preparation, training, game day coaching of the team as well as oversees the planning of off field activities. Handles all decisions regarding the players.

Assistant Coach – assists the head coach with all of the above.

Additional parents may not travel or be housed with the team.

- E. Coaches and Administrators cannot bring spouses/family members along on ODP trips, unless the spouse/family member is a regular part of the ODP staff or a team player. In the event of a spouse being a regular part of the ODP staff, participation of such staff member should not be assumed. Approval must be obtained from the program chair.

III. Preparation for Travel

- A. There will be a mandatory Team meeting prior to departing to introduce all participants on the trip. The agenda of the meeting will include covering the logistics of the trip, information on the culture of the country, expectations of protocol and manners of that particular country, language, standards of dress, the monetary system of the country, customs requirements, expectations of the players and adults, cover the code of conduct and the ramifications of violation. A copy of the VYSA Code of Conduct signed by the player upon acceptance into the ODP Program will be distributed to the parents as a reminder. The Player Foreign Travel Information Form including parent and emergency contact information and credit card number is to be completed and on file prior to end of the meeting. The Foreign Travel Policy will be distributed to the parents and available on the VYSA website. A parent and the player are required to attend. This meeting is to be scheduled two weeks prior to leaving. The meeting is mandatory.
- B. Codes of conduct and foreign travel form are to be signed and on file with the VYSA State office as well as a copy kept with the Team Administrator. Players will automatically be sent home for the following: Use of a substance (drugs, alcohol, or, if under 18 tobacco) or possession of a substance, or both use and possession, breaking curfew outside of the housing, violation of any laws of the host country or the

established laws of the United States. The cost for return trip is to be born by the parents as stated on the signed code of conduct form.

IV. Disciplinary Information

- A. All players will have a signed VYSA Olympic Development Program Player's Code of Conduct on file with the VYSA State office and or each age group Team Administrator before being permitted to travel.
- B. Use of a substance (drugs, alcohol, or, if under 18, tobacco) or possession of a substance, or both use and possession, is cause for immediate dismissal from the ODP Program.
- C. Persistent irresponsible and disrespectful behavior is cause for dismissal from the Program.
- D. Destruction of property or violation of State, Federal, or other law is cause for dismissal from the Program.
- E. Failure to comply with any and all camp, game or other ODP event, and team rules (curfew attendance, dress code, schedules, etc.) may be cause for disciplinary action. Persistent failure will be cause for dismissal from the Program for the remainder of the current season of the Program and could affect a player's participation.
- F. Disciplinary actions such as early curfew, trash pickup, boot polishing, laundry duty, room cleaning, running, benching a player for a game are team discipline actions imposed by the coach. VYSA retains the right to impose additional penalties.
- G. VYSA retains the right to impose additional penalties for any violation of the Code of Conduct.
- H. If a player is sent home, it will be done at the earliest possible time at the parent's cost by whatever means is most convenient for the Program Administrators or HOD. No reimbursement of program fees will be made to the dismissed player or the player's family. (As per the ODP Player's Code of Conduct).
- I. The disciplinary hearing may take place on site or upon return to Virginia as determined by the Program Chair.

V. Position Descriptions

Head of Delegation
Team Administrator

Head of Delegation

Every Virginia State team competing abroad is expected to present a positive image for both this Association and for the United States. The State team party is an ambassador for the United States, and the party should leave a positive image of the United States and Virginia by the conduct, both on and off the field of play.

The Head of Delegation will be primarily responsible for the overall image left by the team on its travels abroad, in accordance with the following details.

Head of Delegation Responsibilities:

In preparation prior to departure the Head of Delegation will attend the scheduled team meeting for the purposes of introduction and communication of information required by the VYSA Foreign Travel Policy.

(a) Travel Arrangements:

- The Team Administrator is responsible for arrangements for air tickets, passports and visas, hotel reservations, vaccination requirements, medical, travel and player service insurance, traveler's cheques and credit cards, team equipment and all other logistics.
- The HOD reviews with the Team Administrator, well ahead of the Teams' departure, that all the above requirements and details are in order to ensure that nothing is overlooked. Review of the logistics with the Head of Delegation to avoid possible embarrassment and problems during the tour.
- The HOD is responsible for making arrangements and handling the return of any players or participant home early due to illness, serious injury or violations of the Code of Conduct.

(b) Team Meeting Information:

- Is responsible for obtaining and communicating information on the etiquette and protocol of the host country, monetary system, and language.
- Is responsible for reviewing the VYSA established requirements for all individuals to both players and parents including information on Codes of Conduct and disciplinary actions.

(c) Protocol:

- Speaks on behalf of the State Association at all meetings concerning the organization of the competition, receptions, press conferences, etc.
- Speaks on all matters related to State Association policy.
- Should defer questions related to the team (player selection, performance, tactics, etc.) to the State Team Coach.
- Is sensitive to the cultural and economic advantages of the United States when speaking with foreign dignitaries or media.
- Is discreet in expressing and exchanging political, economic and religious views while traveling abroad.
- Checks with the State Team Coach/Administrator to ensure that all members of the team have been briefed on delicate and sensitive matters, e.g. respect for National Anthems.
- Ensures that all members of the state team party:
 - Conduct themselves at all times as good will ambassadors;
 - Wear the official team uniform at all competitions and official functions;
 - Attend receptions, meetings, banquets, opening and closing ceremonies, and other functions whenever possible, as negotiated with the State Team Coach.
- When a limited number of US Delegates are invited to meetings, receptions and functions, the Head of Delegation will attend as the spokesperson.
- Other persons will be selected to attend in consultation with the State Team Coach / Team Administrator.
- Responsible for ensuring that the Match Report is completed immediately following the match and ensuring that the report is faxed back to the Virginia State office or at least to ensure it is being done by a member of staff immediately after the match.

(d) Gifts

The exchange of inexpensive presents between Heads of visiting and host Associations and between individual players and staff has become common practice. Gifts to be exchanged by individual players and staff are purchased or arranged by the Team Administrator. Gifts to be presented to host associations and others helpful individuals of the country are to be purchased by the Head of Delegation.

- Individual player and staff gifts should be in the possession of the Team Administrator or Equipment Manager, as appropriate prior to departure.
- Ties, lapel pins and pennants are appropriate articles of exchange among players and staff.
- A more elaborate or expensive gift should be purchased for presentation to the Host Association at the end of the visit or social function. Gifts for the Host Association and for individuals helpful during the tour should be in the possession of the Head of Delegation prior to departure.
- The Head of Delegation should use discretion with respect to presentation of this gift.
- The Head of Delegation is to ensure that all commemorative plaques or pennants (not of personal nature) are delivered to the Association's Virginia office immediately following the team's return to the United States.

(e) Hotels/Food

- Decides whether or not to relocate the team if the hotel and food are so poor that it threatens the performance potential of the team. It should be noted that at times accommodations provided are not of a first class nature and should not be expected. Any decision to move the team should be made in consultation with the State Head Coach.
- The Head of Delegation must consider the impact on the budget, should a move to alternate accommodations be deemed necessary.

(f) American Embassies

- The Head of Delegation will carry a list of addresses and telephone numbers of American Embassies located or serving the countries to be visited.
- The traveling party should be made aware that American citizens are subjected to the laws of the host country.

(g) Transportation, Meals, Social Functions

- Unless transportation is provided by the Host Association, the Head of Delegation will travel on the Team Bus.
- The Head of Delegation will normally take meals with the team.

Team Administrator

In preparation prior to departure the Team Administrator will attend the scheduled team meeting for the purposes of communicating final travel information.

(a) Travel Arrangements

- Arrangements for air tickets, passports and visas, hotel reservations, vaccination requirements, medical, travel and player service insurance, traveler's cheques and credit cards, team equipment and all other logistics.
- Ensures all players and parents have completed all required VYSA documents and has possession of copies of the documents during the trip.
- Review with the Head of Delegation, well ahead of the Teams' departure, that all the above requirements and details are in order to ensure that nothing overlooked. Review of the logistics with the Head of Delegation to avoid possible embarrassment and problems during the tour.
- Arrangements for the group's daily activities with the Head of Delegation.

(b) Player Administration

- The Team Administrator will assist in filling out team sheets for matches.

- Distribute and collect the uniforms before and after each match. Also, for making arrangements for the cleaning of the uniforms when needed.
- Arrange for and monitor medical care if needed. Keep the 1st aid kit stocked and made available at each practice and game.
- Arrange for the balls, cones and bibs to be well prepared and present at each practice and match.
- Arrange for the lock-up and opening of locker rooms during practices and matches.
- Arrange for the check-in of the players at hotels (or other sleeping facilities) and eating establishments.
- Support the discipline of the team in accordance with instructions from the State Team Coach.

(c) Gifts

The exchange of inexpensive presents between Heads of visiting and host Associations and between individual players and staff has become common practice. Gifts to be exchanged by individual players and staff are purchased or arranged by the Team Administrator. Gifts to be presented to host associations and others helpful individuals of the country are to be purchased by the Head of Delegation.

- Individual player and staff gifts should be in the possession of the Team Administrator or Equipment Manager, as appropriate prior to departure.
- Ties, lapel pins and pennants are appropriate articles of exchange among players and staff.
- Assists the Head of Delegation is to ensure that all commemorative plaques or pennants (not of personal nature) are delivered to the Association's Virginia office immediately following the team's return to the United States.