



T.J. Cyrus Former 1989 Virginia Youth soccer ODP and current UVA and National team player.

When I started ODP I was about 12 or 13 years of age. Making the 89 State Pool my first year was an incredible feeling, and making the team even more than I had hoped for. Growing up, I was one of the shorter kids but I had decent speed. In terms of soccer ability, I was actually behind most of the kids in the pool. Throughout the following five years, I rose from being one of the last guys to make the actual state team, to becoming the State Captain, a Region I player, and eventually someone who represented the United States Under 18 national team in Mexico and Brazil as well as invitations to both Japan and Portugal that I had to decline because of school conflicts. The ODP program helped make the transformation from an athletic kid who played soccer to an athletic soccer player who was a student of the game. I currently play soccer at the University of Virginia and ODP was one of the main factors in helping me achieve the successes that I have had. Coaches like Dave Dengerink, Matt Badiee, Jay Hoffman, Gordon Miller, John Pascarella, Darren Worham, and the other coaches of the program provided me the knowledge and guidance I needed to progress to the next level as a player. In addition, I also gained some lifelong friends who play in college as well. I cannot put into words how much this program helped improve my game and gave me a huge amount of exposure and I recommend to anyone who is serious about playing at a higher level.