



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE ONTARIO SOCCER ASSOCIATION'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS ENDORSES IMPLEMENTATION  
OF LONG-TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

**VAUGHAN, Ontario**, September 20, 2011- The Board of Directors of The Ontario Soccer Association (OSA) has unanimously approved the implementation of the Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) model across the province.

The Board, comprised of District Presidents and representatives from the 21 Districts that make up the OSA, strongly supported the plan at a meeting on September 17, 2011.

The LTPD initiative was developed and launched as a soccer-specific player development model by the Canadian Soccer Association in 2009 on the heels of a directive from Sport Canada. LTPD emphasizes a greater emphasis on player-focused coaching, developing appropriate training environments and individual skill development at all ages, and far less emphasis on "winning" and scores in the early years.

Ron Smale, the President of the OSA, says the Board recognizes that LTPD is a much better approach to development for all players, whether they are playing at the recreational level or competing at the elite level. "We just can't fall further behind what is going on in the rest of the soccer-playing world. LTPD is not a radical approach, but it does represent a cultural shift in our thinking. We understand that it will mean an attitude change for many Clubs and coaches in the province. That said, LTPD will help create a learning environment for our coaches, referees and athletes that is aligned with what top soccer countries have already long been doing."

The OSA has endorsed a phased-in approach that will see LTPD gradually implemented between 2012 and 2018, beginning with the youngest ages (4-8). Some Clubs are already moving in this direction, and pilot projects will be introduced throughout 2012 to pave the way for broader implementation in 2013.

New "Learning Facilitator" workshops will begin in November, with coaching programs being introduced in January that will reflect the greater emphasis on player development.

Like Smale, OSA Chief Technical Officer Alex Chiet has been travelling to different parts of the province to meet with local soccer officials and to discuss the LTPD initiative. Chiet said that he knows there will continue to be questions and concerns raised. "That's to be expected. Parents and coaches, for example, will want to fully understand these changes. We are talking about something very important. It's not just words. We are re-shaping the soccer culture in the province to make sure that, years down the road, we are keeping players in the sport because they continue to enjoy soccer. And for the elite players at the very competitive level, this approach will allow us to provide a more appropriate training environment and also identify more talented youngsters in their own districts who can progress to play at the highest levels possible."

Chiet re-iterated that it will be crucial to provide regular communication updates to respond to the misconceptions that have been apparent in his discussions with soccer providers across Ontario. “Some people think we are completely getting rid of “competition”, which simply isn’t the case. Yes, we will be re-shaping our League structures, and, at the early ages, there will be far less emphasis on scores, standings and things like promotion and relegation. But we know that focusing so much on “winning” in the early years inhibits creativity, skill development and proper coaching. Players will still compete, but in a healthier environment. Importantly, for the first time here, everyone will see and experience a clear, unified pathway for all our players across Ontario. “

Added Chiet, “As people see this rollout, I am convinced even those who are concerned now will see this is not just some passing fad—this is being done successfully in so many soccer countries around the world. It’s about making the game fun for kids again and for the talented players, providing them the environment and opportunity to reach their potential, whether that is our national team, scholarship opportunities or a professional career.”

### **About The Ontario Soccer Association**

The Ontario Soccer Association was founded in 1901 and is one of the oldest and largest sport organizations in Canada. The OSA provides leadership and support for the advancement of soccer in collaboration and cooperation with our membership, partners and other stakeholders by providing exceptional and sustainable programs and services. The Association is made up of 21 District Branch Offices and several Associate Members, namely regional and provincial leagues. The Districts’ membership consists of more than 700 clubs across Ontario.

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