



U15 and U17AAA
Youth Performance League Handbook
2023



VISION

A community driven, nationally recognized leader in the development and the growth of soccer.

MISSION

Our mission is to provide leadership to our members by building vibrant communities through a player-centred approach embracing the values of fair play, respect and a passion for the game of soccer.

VALUES

Respect
Player-Centred
Innovation
Integrity
Quality
Inclusion

INTRODUCTION

The Soccer Nova Scotia Youth Performance League (YPL) is the first step in moving towards a Canada Soccer Player Development Program (PDP) Division. A PDP is a 'Youth Performance Division' that is designed to form an important component of the Canada Soccer Player Pathway. The standards outlined for the PDP serve to create the optimal environment to prepare players for selection for High Performance programs and/or entry into the Excellence Stream.

The PDP makes up Stage 4 of the Long-Term Player Development pathway and, under the leadership of Canada Soccer, will join together with other YPL's creating a nationwide network of organizations striving to provide the best environments for player and coach development in Canada. The Canada Soccer Youth Performance Division National Competitions (start date TBC) will be held annually for the U15 and U17 age groups, providing players with exposure to National Team coaches, professional club academies as well as to University and College coaches.

The philosophy of the SNS YPL is based on improving the quality and volume of training and providing more meaningful competition for players in the 11-aside environment. By improving the environment at the organizational level, the YPL aims to produce a consistent stream of talented players who can then go on to achieve success in the game at higher levels of competition.

Canada Soccer has outlined the official standards required to be considered a fully operational PDP and will issue licenses to Provincial/Territorial divisions where standards are being met. This document serves to highlight the realities of youth soccer in Nova Scotia and show the incremental steps, increased standards, and key performance indicators that will see eventually the SNS YPL become a Canada Soccer sanctioned Youth Performance Division.

In the long term, the SNS YPL will see the removal of winter 7-aside soccer from the U15/17AAA divisions. Instead the teams that would typically compete in these divisions will compete in an annual season that runs from March-October with all games being 11-aside. It is foreseeable that this could become an Atlantic Division, with regular participants from New Brunswick and PEI, and, on an event basis, teams from Newfoundland.

Until the Canada Soccer Performance Division Competition has been established, the NS Cup competition will be used to determine the Provincial Representative at Club Nationals.

SEASON FORMAT

CALENDAR

2023

- **Jan 2:** Pre-season 11aside exhibition schedule begins (East Hants)
- **April 14-16:** Regular season games start
- **May 20/21:** No games - Victoria Day weekend
- **July 1/2:** No games - Canada Day long weekend
- **July 10-16:** Mandatory blackout week
- **August 5-6:** No games - Natal Day long weekend
- **Sept 2/3:** No games - Labour Day weekend
- **Sept TBD:** League Play-offs
- **Dec TBD-Jan TBD:** Mandated rest period for players who will participate in the 2024 annual season

All league games will be 11-aside. Games that take place indoor count towards the overall standings of the division. In cases where a team undergoes significant travel for a game, the travelling team may play on consecutive days. Teams in this situation may also meet half way at a neutral venue for a one-game weekend.

In total there will be approximately 18-22 regular season games. The exact number of games, and the rounds of games played between teams will be decided based upon the number of teams that enter the division.

2023 STANDARDS

League Admission

- Any existing AAA Club is eligible to enter the League
- Any existing AAA Club is eligible to the League provided they are a hold the Canada Soccer Quality Soccer Provider license (minimum) by September 2022

Coaching (minimum):

- Head Coach: C License Certified
- Assistant Coach: C License Trained
- Goalkeeper Coach: C License Trained **or** recognized a Goalkeeping certification

*All Head Coaches are required to attend 2 annual Professional Development events. Soccer Nova Scotia will provide these at no cost. If a coach cannot attend these sessions, they will be required fulfill their PD requirements at the expense of themselves/their Club. Any independent PD must be approved by the SNS Director of Performance at to its validity.

All team personnel (including managers) must be appropriately screened, including:

- Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Checks,
- NCCP Safe Sport Training or Respect in Sport Activity Leader

Training Volume: (minimum)

- Jan: Club dictates
- Feb, March & April: 2 x 60min sessions (any surface)
- May - Aug: 3 x 90min sessions per week (any surface)
- Sept: 1 x 60min per week (any surface)
- Oct/Nov: Optional

Try-outs:

- Teams cannot hold 'open' try-outs to select their rosters for the upcoming season
- Players can be invited to attend team formation sessions and all players must be given a minimum of 3hrs of training time before being released

Standards associated with participating in the division will increase annually. Any standards for the following year of competition will be announced no later than September 1 for the following season (Eg. Division standards for 2024 will be announced by Sept 1, 2023)

CLUB NATIONALS REPRESENTATIVES

The Nova Scotia Cup competition will continue to run alongside the Division to determine the representative for Club Nationals.

A separate roster must be submitted for the NS Cup upon declaration to the cup competition.

CENTRALIZED LOCATION EVENTS

Throughout the season the division will look to host at least one 'centralized location' event. During this event all teams will play at the same location and will be used as a means to help identify players for additional programs such as the Provincial Program, EXCEL and Canada Games.

It is possible that other teams from Atlantic Canada may be invited in for this event. In the event that 2 Performance Division teams play each other, the game will count towards the overall division standings. If a Performance Division team plays against a non-Performance Division team, that game will be an exhibition game. The centralized location event will run over the course of a weekend with teams playing 1 or 2 games depending on the schedule.

RULES & REGULATIONS

1. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All matters not included in these rules and regulations shall be dealt with in accordance with Soccer Nova Scotia Policies and Operational Procedures, or any other Soccer Nova Scotia documents that govern the sport of soccer.

2. PERFORMANCE DIVISION COMMITTEE

The YPL Committee will consist of one representative from each Club in the YPL, preferably the Technical Director.

The committee will oversee, and provide input when required, on issues such as (but not restricted to): competition format, 'return to play exemptions' (see section 5), call up process, abuse of division rules, transfer rules etc.

Any Club seeking an exemption from division rules must apply for an exemption for the given rule. Exemptions can be submitted to the SNS Director of Performance. When exemption requests are received the SNS Director of Performance will have the final decision on the request.

3. TEAM REGISTRATION

Teams must apply to be in the Performance Division using the official Application Form hosted online. The application Form will request the following information of the team that is applying:

- i. Coaches name, qualification and contact information
- ii. Assistant coaches name, qualification and contact information
- iii. Preferred home field location
- iv. Primary and alternate kit colours (jersey, shorts and socks)

4. PLAYER REGISTRATION

Teams shall register players in accordance with rules set forth by Soccer Nova Scotia. The deadlines for player registration shall be designated by Soccer Nova Scotia.

Additional rule:

In order to ensure that Clubs have the ability to field teams, allow for movement of players coming from AA/A programs, as well as, late registrations from multi-sport athletes, there has been an amendment to the requirements for player registration as well as deadlines:

- Teams must have a minimum of 14 players registered by March 15th
- Team must have a minimum of 17 players registered by June 1

- The maximum roster size for a AAA team is 22 players

If a team does not have meet any of these requirement they must request an exemption from the Director of Performance

5. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

In addition to Soccer Nova Scotia policies regarding player eligibility, all players must observe a mandatory 28 day rest period from organized soccer prior to participating in any team activities for the Performance Division.

- i. Any player who plays winter soccer (at AA, A or Senior Level) must observe the 28 day period.
- ii. Any player who does not observe the blackout period is subject to disciplinary action
 - i. The player is subject to a 28 day suspension from organized soccer.
- iii. Any coach who allows a player to participate during their mandated break is subject to disciplinary action
 - i. The coach is subject to a 3 game sideline suspension without appeal
- iv. Any Club whereby players are playing/training during rest periods are subject to disciplinary action
 - i. Clubs are subject to a \$500 fine per player
- vi. If the Director of Performance deems that a club is bringing the division, or other divisions, into disrepute (Eg. 25% of AAA roster playing AA winter soccer) sanctions will be imposed

Any Club seeking an exemption from the mandatory rest period for a player must apply for a 'return to play' exemption for the said player.

Note : the mandatory 1 month break rule still applies here. Example: if a player from A or AA is added to the roster and their last game was March 8th, they can appear on the roster but they cannot train or play with the for another 28 days.

Call ups:

Call-up players may be used by any team as set out in section 12 of the Soccer Nova Scotia Policies and Procedures

While call-ups are are permitted and may be in the best interest of the individual, there is also the potential that it may be abused in order to strengthen a team at a lower level. In order to maintain the integrity at all levels, if there is a suspected abuse of the call up rule (eg. Registering a player down a level to strengthen that team, but calling the player up for every AAA game) the Director of Performance will be called to hear the details and make a ruling.

7. PLAYER MOVEMENT

Within the Performance Division District Boundaries do not apply, meaning that players are not bound to play for a Club within the district in which they reside. However teams are only permitted to name a

maximum of 2 'transfer players' on their roster. Of these 2 players, only 1 player may have participated in the Soccer NS Excel program for the previous year.

Players may only change Club during the designated 'Transfer Window' of Oct-December without an official transfer.

If a club has multiple teams in the same division the Club will be restricted to a maximum of 2 'transfer players' per Club per division.

A 'transfer player' is a player who was last registered in Nova Scotia with a club different to that of which they are registering with for the given season.

Not all new players are considered transfer players

Examples of who is a transfer player:

- A player moving from one NS Club to another NS Club **is** considered a transfer player (regardless of level of play the player is moving from and to)
- A player returning from a year off but was last registered with a different club than they are now registering with **is** considered a transfer player
- A player returning from out of province but was last registered with a different club than they are now registering with **is** considered a transfer player
- Any player released from SNS Excel programs and returns to a Club different to that of which they were previously registered with **is** considered a transfer player (redundant for 2023 as all players are registered Club players)

Examples of who is not a transfer player:

- A player moving 'up' a level within Club (eg. U15AA to U15AAA) **is not** considered a transfer player
- A player moving 'up' a level within their region in which there is only 1 AAA Club **is not** considered a transfer player (eg. Moving from West Hants SC to Valley United).
- A player returning from a year off but was last registered with the club that they are now registering with **is not** considered a transfer player
- A player returning from out of province but was last registered with the club that they are now registering with **is not** considered a transfer player
- A player that has never played in Nova Scotia **is not** considered a transfer player
- Any player released from SNS Excel programs and returns to the Club that they were previously registered with **is not** considered a transfer player (redundant for 2023 as all players are registered Club players)

Additional information (call ups):

- All levels other than the Performance Divisions (U15AAA and U17AAA) are subject to SNS district boundaries

- A team may only field 2 'transfer players' for the duration of the annual season. Therefore if a AAA team has 3 transfer players on their roster they **may not** call up a player who would be deemed a transfer player within the Performance Division
- If a AAA team has 1 transfer players on their roster **may** call up a maximum of 1 player who would be deemed a transfer player within the Performance Division
- If a AAA team has 0 transfer players on their roster **may** call up a maximum of 2 player who would be deemed a transfer player within the Performance Division

*If a Club has 2 teams within a division, the above rules apply per division.

A player will no longer be considered a transfer player if they once they have been registered with the Club for a season within the Performance Divisions **or** registered for the Club for the summer season at any other level of play.

No players are eligible to play using a 'Temporary Registration Permit' in the Performance Divisions.

8. COMPETITION RULES

8.1. GAME DURATIONS

- U15: 2 x 40mins
- U17: 2 x 45mins
- Half time will be no longer then ten (10) minutes.

8.2. BALL SIZE

- All games will use a size 5

8.3. SUBSTITUTIONS

- Each team is permitted 7 (seven) substitutions during the game, plus an unlimited amount at half-time.
- Re-entry of players is permitted
- Sub-slips must be used for the 7 during the game. Subs at half time do not require slips.

8.4.DELAYED KICK-OFF

All games musty kick-off within 15 minutes of designated kick-off time. If this is not possible due to one team not being present, it will result in a forfeit. If it is not possible due to unforeseen circumstances (weather, medical emergency etc) the referee, along with the 2 head coaches will agree upon a solution.

8.5.FORFEITS/DEFAULTS

- Any team forfeiting or defaulting any game for any reason will be termed the losing team; the score will be recorded as 3-0; and three (3) points will be awarded to the winning team. The forfeiting club will be subject to a \$500 fine.

- Any team forfeiting 2 games in a season will be expelled from the division for the remainder of the season.
 - In the event a team is expelled, any points from games involving that team shall be removed for all teams
- Forfeiting the Battle of Nova Scotia will result in a \$2000 fine for the Club(s) and the Club(s) will not be eligible to compete in the Nova Scotia Cup for that age group for the following season

8.6. STANDINGS

- Standings will be calculated points, awarded as follows: 3 points awarded for a win, 1 point awarded for a tie and 0 points awarded for a loss.
- Ties in points in the standings will be broken as follows:
 - 8.6.1.1. Points gained in matches between teams tied on points
 - 8.6.1.2. Goal difference in matches between affected teams.
 - 8.6.1.3. Goals scored in matches between affected teams
 - 8.6.1.4. Overall goal-difference for entire league season
 - 8.6.1.5. In cases where more than 2 teams are tied on points, once a team is eliminated from the tie, the remaining teams shall restart the tie breaking process beginning with 8.6.1.1

8.7. RESCHEDULES & BLACKOUTS

- Each team is permitted one blackout period totalling a maximum of 7 days. This period must be submitted to the Division no later than March 1 (annually)
 - No games will be scheduled during a requested black-out date
- Black-outs cannot happen during pre-determined Cup dates.
- Any reschedules must be requested a minimum of 7 days prior to the scheduled game date
- Teams are permitted a total of 2 reschedules during the season.
 - Any rescheduled game counts as 1 reschedule for both teams
 - If the same fixture is rescheduled twice, it constitutes the 2 reschedules
- Reschedules must be agreed by both teams and must include an alternative time, date and location for the game and must be reported to the division
- Any fees associated with the reschedule of a game will be the responsibility of both teams (including field fees, referee fees etc.)

8.8. GAME REPORTING

- Will be completed using the RAMP GameSheet App.
- All teams are responsible to have the app downloaded and players checked off for each game.
- Game Officials are responsible to enter all game results following the game, this includes; final score, goal scorers, all discipline cards.
- All teams are responsible to ensure their players and coaches present on the bench are checked off and the correct jersey numbers are showing. Officials will remind teams who have not completed this prior to the start of the game, teams who have not completed this by half time, the referee has been instructed to start their watch for the second half, however will delay the second half kickoff until this has been completed. Should this scenario occur there will be no added time for the make-up of lost time while teams complete this.

8.9.UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Each team participating in the division must declare their primary and alternate colours when submitting their team registration

- When the colours of competing teams are similar, Away teams shall use alternate colours.
- Goalkeepers shall wear colours which plainly distinguish them from all other players and game officials
- All jerseys must be clearly numbered.
- The number of the player's jersey must corresponded to the number listed with the player's name on the game sheet
- Shin guards must be worn at all games