

OPDL Trial Guidelines

Ontario Player Development League (OPDL)

2026-2027 Trial Guidelines for OPDL Licence Holders

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Guiding Principles

- It is required that all OPDL Licence Holders commit to supporting and promoting a responsible and progressive evaluation and assessment process for players.
- This would include the removal of the reference to and promotion of the “tryout process” and mentality in favor of a “trial approach.”
- The OPDL does not support 'walk up' evaluation of players which means the player has not previously contacted the organization and made them aware of their intent to attend a trial.
- All interested players should contact the member club Technical Director/Club Head Coach to gain further information on the recognized process for that particular club.
- All OPDL Licence Holders should have online procedures for players to sign up for all trials so that a list of names can be generated to cross reference against the players that show up for the trial.
- Player commitment letters can be completed and signed between a player and an OPDL Licence Holder at any time before the registration deadline for the upcoming year.
- At the discretion of the Licence Holder's Technical Director, players presently registered with an OPDL Licence Holder may be offered an OPDL Commitment Letter without participating in an OPDL Trial.
- OPDL Player commitments can be renewed between an existing OPDL player and an OPDL Licence Holder, **no earlier than September 23rd** of the current year and before the registration deadline.
- For the purpose of this guide, the OPDL Player is defined as a player that has been assigned to an OPDL team in the current year, on the roster as a Full-Time or Player Pool (U13) Player.
- OPDL Player Commitments are valid until the end date stated in the OPDL Player Commitment Letter.
- Any OPDL player, with an active Player Commitment Letter, trialing with another Licence Holder **must** be in possession of a completed OPDL Trial Permission Form (found in Appendix A), in order to be eligible to attend trials with another organization.
 - Upon receiving a request to complete the OPDL Trial Permission Form, Technical Directors shall respond within 72 hours.
 - Failing to respond, will result in the player having implied permission to attend trials with another Licence Holder.
 - OPDL Licence Holders shall not accept participation of a current OPDL player at their trials without an OPDL Trial Permission Form or proof of request submitted without response.
- Without a signed OPDL Licensing Agreement valid for the upcoming season, an OPDL Licence Holder is **not** permitted to hold OPDL trials. The trial stage may only commence once a signed Licensing Agreement is received and firmed by Ontario Soccer.
- Due to the designated rest period, OPDL players are not eligible to participate in Trials between December 6th and January 3rd.



OPDL Trials & Sessions – The Phases

OPDL Licence Holders are required to host, conduct and advertise trials & sessions following the four phases as specifically outlined below:

New Incoming U13 Age Group (Born 2014)

- Objective: Identify incoming players born in 2014 outside of OPDL environments
- Activity: Open Sessions
- Period: August 26th – April 3rd, 2027

Phase I – Players outside the Talented Player Pathway only

- Objective: Identify players outside OPDL environments
- Activity: Open Trials and Invitation Only Trials
- Period: September 1st to October 19th, 2026

Phase II – Players within the Talented Player Pathway

- Objective: Select Full-Time Players – Finalize minimum 14 rosters February 22nd
- Activity: Open Trials and Invitation Only Trials
- Period: October 20th to February 21st, 2027

Phase III – Any Player

- Objective: Identify players inside & outside OPDL environments for remaining spots
- Activity: Open Trials and Invitation Only Trials
- Period: February 22nd to April 3rd, 2027

Open Trials

- An **open trial** is open to players who desire an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to participate within an OPDL Licence Holder and is of the appropriate age for registration and gender for the team's designation.
- OPDL Players are eligible to participate in Trials during Phase II and III
- In order to provide a more responsible evaluation process, no more than **35** players are allowed at each open trial.
- A player must have the opportunity to attend a **minimum of three** Open Trials before a final decision is made on that player.
- Licence Holders are permitted to, although not recommended, charge a reasonable fee for a player to participate in an open trial. Fee should be designated to cover operational costs to run trials.
- Players may attend **more than one open trial** simultaneously with different OPDL Licence Holders.



U13 Open Sessions

- An **open session** is open to U13 players who desire an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to participate within an OPDL Licence Holder and is of the appropriate age for registration and gender for the team's designation.
- Previous seasons OPDL Players that played up into U13 are eligible to participate in Open Sessions from August 27th to April 4th.
- A player must have the opportunity to attend a **minimum of three** Sessions
- While not recommended, Licence Holders are permitted to charge a reasonable fee for a player to participate in an Open Session. Any fee assigned must be designated to cover operational costs associated with delivering the Open Session/s.
- Players may attend **more than one open session** simultaneously with different OPDL Licence Holders.

Note: A player that has signed a 2027 OPDL Player Commitment Letter is not eligible to trial or attend Open Sessions with another OPDL Licence Holder.

Invitation Only Trials

- After conducting open trials, invitation only trials can occur at any time in accordance with the stipulated timelines.
- An **invitation only trial** involves the interested OPDL Licence Holder contacting and asking for only specific players to return for further trials.
- No player shall undertake more than one invitation-only trial at a time.
- A player may attend a new invitation-only trial once an existing invitation-only trial has been completed.

A player may attend a different invitation-only trial once the Licence Holder of the existing trial have been informed in writing that the player wishes to terminate that trial or the trial has been concluded, in writing, by the Licence Holder.

Assessment Focus during a Trial

- During a trial, a player should be evaluated using a holistic and player-centered approach (e.g., four-corner model) as per Long-Term Player Development principles which could include:
 - a) Technically & Tactically, with exercises involving decision making and small-sided games.
 - b) Physically, with small-sided games and/or 11-a-side play.
 - c) Mentally, socially and emotionally with player conduct, interaction with other players, work ethic, commitment and ability to meet the challenges within the game environment.

Under-Age/ Over-Ager Player Guidelines

- Ontario Soccer supports the philosophy of continually challenging its member players.



- Players potentially moving up, or down, an age group within OPDL must have the ability to blend in (technically, physically, mentally and socially/emotionally) with players of the intended age group, without undue risk of suffering injury.
- Ontario Soccer will support the selection of an underage/overage player to OPDL if the player meets these guidelines. Players will be subject to approval by Ontario Soccer Technical staff.
- The Licence Holder selecting the individual shall initiate the [Player Movement Evaluation process](#) and must obtain Ontario Soccer approval prior to the individual being eligible to participate in any OPDL activity.
 - a. Player movement for 2 years up require Special Consideration Request Approval.
- For players playing down, they must also complete the Medical Playing Down forms. Player eligibility for playing down in 2027 will be as follows:
 - a. U15 (2012) to U14 (2013)
 - b. U14 (2013) to U13 (2014)
- The final selection of an underage player will be at the discretion of the OPDL Licence Holder.
 - a. In the event of more than 3 players being evaluated to play up/down on any given team, Ontario Soccer and the OPDL reserves the right to audit and further review the evaluation prior to granting approval

Notification of Players Not Selected

- It is **not** required for OPDL Licence Holders to provide verbal one-on-one feedback to players released from an open trial.
- Players released from an invitation only trial must be given verbal feedback (minimum 15 minutes with player and player's parents) as to why they were released.
- Once the season has started, the release of players shall not take place except in exceptional circumstances as outlined in the Player Commitment Letter and OPDL Operational Rules



Appendix A

OPDL Club Trial Logging

When a club is performing open trials it is imperative that all players attending are eligible. It is the responsibility of the club to ensure that all players in the trial process have been vetted for eligibility. To help lighten the workload on clubs, we have created a tool for clubs to check if players were registered in the OPDL for the previous season. All clubs must follow the steps in this section to ensure all players registered for trials are logged properly to the end of the 2026 player commitment letters (October 31st 2026).

Step 1 – Entering Players

Once a player has registered for trials, input their first name, last name, and Date of birth of each player into the appropriate columns. Once a player's information is entered in the sheet, column D will either state "Verified" meaning the player can attend trials without a Trials Permission Form, or "Needs TPF" meaning that the player will need a Trials Permission Form completed and submitted to the club.

The screenshot displays a Google Sheet titled "Player Input Sheet" with the following structure:

1	After inputting all players, please export this sheet as a CSV, and submit here				
2	First Name	Last Name	DOB (MM/DD/YYYY)	Result	Players needing TPF
3				Needs TPF	1
4				Verified	
5				Input Player	
6				Input Player	
7				Input Player	
8				Input Player	
9				Input Player	
10				Input Player	
11				Input Player	
12				Input Player	
13				Input Player	
14				Input Player	
15				Input Player	
16				Input Player	
17				Input Player	
18				Input Player	
19				Input Player	
20				Input Player	
21				Input Player	

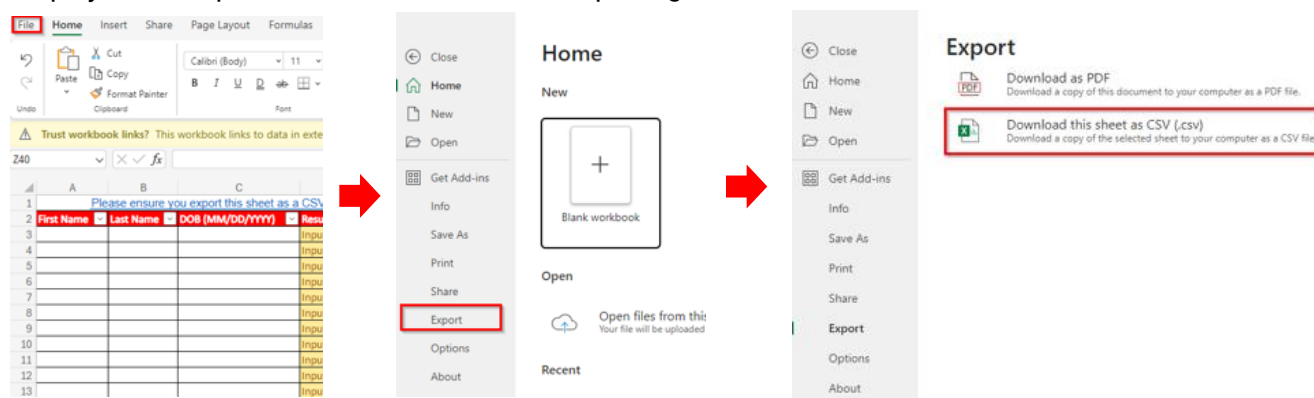
Annotations in the image include:

- Player Information Input:** Points to the First Name, Last Name, and DOB columns.
- Player Status:** Points to the Result column.
- Total Amount of TPFs Needed:** Points to the "Players needing TPF" column, which shows a value of 1.



Step 2 – Saving Your Document

In order to upload the players from your trials to Ontario Soccer, you will need to save the document as a CSV File. To do this you will click File > Export > Download this sheet as CSV. Please ensure all players are inputted into the sheet before exporting.



Step 3 – Completing The Jotform

Once you have all players inputted in your sheet and the file downloaded as a CSV file, please make your way to the JotForm link found [HERE](#). Once you get to the form, please fill out all fields and ensure you upload all TPFs needed. Once you submit this form you will receive an email receipt of your submission.



Appendix B

OPDL Trial Permission Form

OPDL Players shall use this form when requesting permission from their current OPDL License Holder to attend trials with a new Licence Holder during "Phase II".

The form shall be submitted in writing to the Licence Holder Technical Director and response shall be received within 72 hours.

If no response is received, the player is eligible to attend trials with a new organization, provided proof of communication is submitted.

Date	/ /
Player's Full Name	
Player ID	
Current Licence Holder	

The above listed player has received permission to attend trials with a new OPDL License Holder while still under commitment with our organization until October 31st of the current year.

Our organization is committed to ongoing development of all players and will not sanction players requesting an OPDL Trial Permission Form.

Name Technical Director

Signature

Date



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