



Maryland State Youth Soccer Association
221 5th Ave SE, Glen Burnie, MD 21061
(410) 768-5401



Maryland ODP International Trip Guidelines

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 Maryland'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 Maryland players for the demands of Regional and National programs.

It is the goal of the Maryland State 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 MSYSA 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.

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.



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II. Program Administration

- A. All trips are managed by WorldStrides Excel Sports. Contact odp.excelsports@worldstrides.org, call 410 489 2287 or visit www.excelsoccertours.com
- B. Package – Family members are welcome to participate in all tours. Family members are roomed in twin or double rooms. Single rooms, if required, are available at USD \$50 per person, per night.
- C. Participants have the option to purchase a GROUND ONLY package (arrange own flights). The GROUND ONLY package reduces the total cost by \$700. However, to utilize the group airport transfers GROUND ONLY participants MUST arrive before the group and depart after the group departs.
- D. Rooming requests should be emailed to odp.excelsports@worldstrides.org upon registration. Specific roommates cannot be guaranteed.
- E. It is the policy of MSYSA that if you have not paid for a space on any international trip with WorldStrides Excel Sports, you will be considered a non–group member and you will not be able to:
 - 1) Book into the same hotel as the group at any time during their trip. (Your own choice of hotel should also be no less than 15 miles away from the team hotel)
 - 2) Ride any transportation provided to the group. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Bus transfer to and from airport to hotel.
 - b. Transportation to and from friendly games.
 - c. Transportation to and from sightseeing and pro-games.
 - 3) Non-group members cannot participate in ANY group activities.
 - 4) Utilize the services of the Group Tour Director.
- F. Schedule and Roster –
 - a. MSYSA will attempt to schedule State Cup around international trips. However, if there is a conflict it is the policy of MSYSA that if international trips conflict with any State Cup games, teams will be offered two alternative game dates.
 - b. It is the policy of MSYSA that teams may travel on an international trip with less than a full roster and WS Excel Sports and MSYSA reserve the right to utilize guest players to complete the roster.
 - c. Scheduled games are subject to change at any time during the trip.
- G. Selection of Venue and Competition - The objective of international competition is to prepare and develop players and coaches. The design of the trip including venues and level of competition is a collaborative effort of MSYSA Staff and WorldStrides Excel Sports.
- H. Age Groups – The boys and girls U13, U15, and U17 will travel internationally each year. Destinations are chosen based on age and gender. Players of the U14 and U16 age groups can also travel with the year above and should attend any informational meetings if they would like to travel.
- I. Player Eligibility – Players in the MD State ODP program who fall within the correct age parameters. Players from U12, U14 and U16 may also travel with the year above.



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J. Adult Participation – There will be a minimum of two adults, who represent MSYSA assigned to each ODP team traveling internationally. This will typically be one board member plus one coach. At any time, players are in the hotel/housing, an adult must be present in the hotel.

K. Hotels – all hotels and meals used are of 3* European standard and participants should be understanding of this. Two meals per day are served and this, sometimes, may mean breakfast and lunch depending on schedule and kick off times, or breakfast and evening dinner.

L. Insurance – MSYSA strongly recommends the purchase of trip cancellation/travel insurance.

M. Permission to Photograph or Videotape: It is assumed that parents and guardians consent to their child being photographed or videotaped, no matter by whom taken, unless such notification is received on the date of sign up, and agree that no fee would be paid for this.

Board Member (BM) – Official representative from the MSYSA Board of Directors. The BM will be appointed by Maryland State Youth Soccer President. 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.

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. The Foreign Travel Policy will be distributed to the parents and will also be available on the MSYSA website. A parent and the player are required to attend. This meeting is to be scheduled within one month prior to leaving. The meeting is mandatory.

B. It is the responsibility of participants and their parents to ensure they have all documentation including valid passport, visas, etc. necessary for travel. Passports must be valid for a minimum of 3 months past the return date. Some countries it must be valid for 6 months after return date. Please make sure you are aware of rules for the country you are traveling to.

C. Foreign travel forms are to be signed and on file with the MSYSA State office. Players will automatically be sent home for reasons listed below.

IV. Disciplinary Information

A. All players will have a signed MSYSA Olympic Development Program Player's Code of Conduct on file with the MSYSA State office.

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.



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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, laundry duty, room cleaning, running, benching a player for a game are team discipline actions imposed by the coach. MSYSA retains the right to impose additional penalties.

G. MSYSA 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 MSYSA and WorldStrides Excel Sports staff. 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 Maryland as determined by MSYSA Staff.

V. Participant Responsibilities (BM/Head Coach, Player, and Travel Agency)

Board Member - Every Maryland 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 Maryland by the conduct, both on and off the field of play.

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

Board Member Responsibilities:

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

(a) Travel Arrangements: WorldStrides Excel Sports is responsible for arrangements for air tickets and hotel reservations. The BM reviews with WorldStrides Excel Sports, 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 BM to avoid possible issues during the tour. The BM 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.



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(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 MSYSA 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 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 BM will attend as the spokesperson. Other persons will be selected to attend in consultation with the State Team Coach.

(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 WorldStrides. Gifts to be presented to host associations and others helpful individuals of the country are to be purchased by WorldStrides.

(e) American Embassies - The Board Member 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.

(f) Player Administration – The Board Member will assist in filling out team sheets for matches. Distribute and collect the uniforms before and after each match. Also, appoint a parent chaperone to make 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. The Head Coach will arrange for the balls, cones and bibs to be well prepared and present at each practice and match.



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Player Responsibilities:

As a matter of course, players are responsible for conducting themselves in a positive and respectful manner during the trip including the following:

1. Never leave the radius of the hotel without permission of the Coach or BM.
2. Do not leave the hotel without informing the Coach or BM and travel with a buddy.
3. The Curfew will be set by the Coach and players expected to abide by the time assigned.
4. During Free time when there are no games and players may want to explore some of the cultural areas of the city, they **MUST** be accompanied by an adult. If no adults are available, then players must stay with the BM or Coach to tour the city.

Travel Agency - In preparation prior to departure WorldStrides Excel Sports will host the scheduled team meeting for the purposes of communicating final travel information.

Travel Agency Responsibilities - Arrangements for air tickets and hotel reservations. Ensures all players and parents have completed all required MSYSA documents and has possession of copies of the documents during the trip. Review with the Board Member, 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 Board Member to avoid possible issues during the tour. Arrangements for the group's daily activities with the Board Member.

X

Player
Date

X

Parent/Legal Guardian
Date