Louisiana Soccer Academy Program Handbook

2022/23

LSAP Mission

The Louisiana Soccer Academy Program ***is not*** simply another level of results-oriented play. It is the precursor to changing the youth soccer culture across Louisiana. By becoming a member of the LSAP, a club is becoming a missionary for the game of soccer. They are truly putting the development of each individual player and the growth of the game ahead of team or club. The Academy model has been tried and tested around the world and across the country. It is universally accepted as the best and most effective model to teach and retain young players, to motivate coaches and to excite parents about their child’s performance not the insignificant score of a game.

The LSAP is a voluntary and inclusive club-based program offer to 9U and 10U players. Starting our players in an environment that focuses on player development and performance rather than on team achievements and results is a formula for long term player development applauded worldwide. It allows clubs to gradually introduce recreational players into the world of results-oriented soccer. Only clubs that fervently share this philosophy will be invited to join the LSAP.

The LSAP is designed specifically to…

* Make learning the game enjoyable for youth players.
* Help retain players through their years of cognitive and physical growth.
* Focus on the technical development of each player.
* De-emphasize team achievements and the use of results as a measure of success
* Introduce the pool concept to reduce pressure on players and coaches to earn results and to allow players to learn and grow at their own rate.
* To help clubs focus on coaching education, to educate parents and players on the importance of defining long term success in terms of player performance rather than team outcomes.
* Brings clubs together in a cooperative environment to focus on player development.

Becoming an LSAP Club

Every club that commits to participating in the LSAP must understand, agree, and implement the LSAP Mission of long-term player development for the Louisiana soccer player. They must submit an LSAP Application to LSA each year.

Academy players' registration is $18.75 ($5 more than a recreational player). There is no fee to the clubs for entering the LSAP. LSAP sets a minimum criterion for Academy Programs, whereby clubs are encouraged to design original programming. Players are placed in pools and can be moved freely in, out and between pools. Beginning in 2022-23, LSA shall assume a slightly more involved administrative role in the LSAP.

**The Application Process and Club Criteria**

A Club must file an LSAP application with LSA each seasonal year. Policy 300.3 outlines the criteria for becoming an LSAP Club.

* LSAP Clubs must commit to the entire seasonal year in the LSAP.
* Each club must attend at least one LSAP Jamboree in the fall and one in the spring.
* Clubs must name an Academy Director and coaches all of whom must meet minimum coaching license requirements as well as satisfying all LSA Risk Management requirements.
* Clubs must have an age-appropriate written training curriculum for each of their LSAP pools.
* Each LSAP Club must host at least one coaching education course from either US Soccer or United Soccer Coaches every 2 years. LSA will work to qualify a coach in each LSAP Club as a United Soccer Coaches Instructor.
* Each LSAP Club must agree to host an LSA Parent Engagement presentation each year. The presentation is designed to educate parents on the Academy philosophy and to encourage a de-emphasis on results.
* At the minimum a 3:1 training to game ratio.
* Players must receive two evaluations each year one of which must be in writing.
* Players are registered with LSA as Academy players.
* Rosters shall be LSAP Pool Rosters and shall not be limited in size.
* LSAP Clubs schedule their own games/jamborees. LSA shall schedule academy playdates each fall and spring.
* No scores, rankings or standings will be kept or published in any manner.
* Academy divisions will be part of the Bob Abbott Cup.

Academy Advisory Board

The most critical element of the LSAP is the Academy Advisory Board (AAB). The Academy Director of each participating club will be on the AAB along with the LSA Executive Director. The AAB will be responsible for:

* **Strategic Planning**. To facilitate the direction of the program and to develop standards of all participating Academy programs. LSA shall codify these expectations and standards so all LSA clubs will be aware of the expectations and standards expected of an Academy program.
* **Core Competencies**. The AAB shall, on an ongoing basis, help develop core competencies expected in a Louisiana youth soccer player. These core competencies shall serve to focus LSAP Best Practices and the development of Academy curricula across the state.
* **Logistics**. The AAB shall meet to schedule play dates and LSA Jamborees.
* **Mission Oversight**. The AAP and LSA will work together to ensure the principles and criteria of the LSAP are observed and to assist discipline or sanction any coach or club who fails to meet the requirements and expectations of the LSAP. A Club or coach who focuses on results, who seeks competitive advantages or who fails to exhibit the core LSAP values at all times shall be subject to discipline and perhaps removal from the LSAP.



Registration of LSAP Players

All LSAP players must be registered as “Academy” players in the LSA registration platform. Players may be added to a Club Academy (from a recreational program) during the course of the year by changing the player’s registration status and paying the difference in registration fees. Players dropped from a Club Academy shall not receive a refund.

Education and Expectations of Academy Coaches

Creating a positive and fun learning environment in the Academy setting rests firmly on the shoulders of its coaches and their club. Each coach must embody the Academy philosophy and must cooperate at all times with Academy coaches from across the state in implementing Academy programs and events. Scheduled education forums will provide resources for learning and sharing Academy Philosophy. Attendance will be required by participating in LSAP clubs.

Any coach who places results or team achievement above the collective development of all players is not an acceptable participant in any Academy setting. Coaches must serve as an example to his players and their parents. Coaches are subject to removal or other disciplinary measures.

Should an LSAP coach fail to exemplify the LSAP Mission or conduct him or herself in a manner contrary to the LSAP Mission and philosophy, LSA must be notified. LSA will attempt to resolve the issues with the Club LSAP Director and the Coach. If the issues cannot be resolved, LSA reserves the right to reconsider the coach’s role in the LSAP and the participation of the Club Academy in the LSAP. The goal is to teach and learn the Academy philosophy.

Jamborees and Play Dates

LSA shall schedule Academy Jamborees regionally across the state in the fall and in the spring. In addition, LSAP academies will be invited to enter teams in the Bob Abbott Cup as a year-ending event. These LSAP Jamborees and the Bob Abbott Cup will be designed by LSA with advice by the AAB. The cost of the Jamborees shall be kept to a minimum with the intent to cover expenses only. See below dates and locations for LSA hosted LSAP events.

**Fall 2022**

East – Date: TBD. Location: TBD

West – Date: TBD. Location: TBD

**Spring 2023**

East – Date: TBD. Location: TBD

West – Date: TBD Location: TBD

Bob Abbott – April 2023

LSA LSAP events will consist of the following:

* 3 Games – 20 minute halves
* Game 1 – Balanced ability teams
* Game 2 – Tiered teams
* Game 3 – Scramble teams
* 1 referee per game

LSAP academies will also be encouraged to host their own LSAP Play Dates. All Play Dates should be held regionally so as to limit travel for LSAP families. All of these LSAP Play Dates shall be US Youth Soccer-sanctioned events and must strictly observe the no scores/no standings criteria. Any Play Date that shall include a club other than an LSAP-approved club must be specifically approved by LSA and the AAB.

While adherence to US Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDI) is paramount in all LSA programming and events, coaches and clubs are encouraged to be innovative as well. The PDI is the default for all activities. Participating LSAP clubs can alter activities upon agreement. Examples of such innovations are playing smaller sided games (4 v. 4), scrambling player pools, or playing with kick-ins.

* **Referees.** Clubs shall use only US Soccer certified in LSAP Jamborees (center only).

* **Hosting Jamborees and Play Dates.** Clubs hosting a Jamboree or a Play Date carry the responsibility of scheduling and fields. The respective participating clubs share incurred costs.
* **Play Date Formats.** Participating clubs must agree in advance to the specific format to be used at any Jamboree or Play Date. Failure to prescribe to the appropriate format warrants disciplinary action. Sample formats include

Balance Teams

Tiered Teams

Scrambled Teams

Skill Games/ Activities

Rules of Play

* **Build-out line:** The purpose of the build-out line is to allow goalkeepers and defenders more time to control the ball before being pressured from opposing players; to play the ball without pressure and confidently play out of the back. After the 2019-2020 Law changes, defenders can receive the ball *inside* the Penalty Area.
* **Rules from goal kicks and goalkeeper possession**: Only once the kicking team’s player receives the ball (inside or outside the Penalty Area) from the goal kick may the opposing players advance beyond the build-out line. At all goal kicks, opposing players must move out of the build-out area. Opposing players must remain on the other side of the build-out line until the ball has been touched by a second player on the kicking team. The sanction is to retake the goal kick. The ball is not required to clear the build-out area to be in play.
* **Rules for punting:** Goalkeepers are no longer permitted to punt or drop kick the ball.
* **Offside Rules:** Offside from the halfway line.
* **Field** **Markings**: The build-out line is drawn on the field parallel to the goal line approximately half-way between top of the penalty area and midfield line.
* **Field Size:** Up to 55-65 yards (length), 35-45 yards (width)
* **Goal Sizes:** No larger than 6.5 feet (height) x 18.5 feet (width)

**Important Links:**

[Academy Philosophy](https://www.playlouisianasoccer.org/academy/philosophy/)

[Become an LSAP Club - Academy](https://www.playlouisianasoccer.org/academy/become-an-lsap-club/)

[Academy Clubs](https://www.playlouisianasoccer.org/academy/clubs/)

[Academy Events](https://www.playlouisianasoccer.org/academy/events/)