



ELITE CLUBS NATIONAL LEAGUE

Club Programming and Structure Policy

PURPOSE

The Elite Clubs National League (ECNL) was founded to improve the daily environment for elite youth soccer players through supporting the establishment, development, operation and growth of innovative and professionally operated youth soccer clubs. The ECNL Club Programming and Structure Policy (the "Policy:") establishes expectations and standards for club programming and structure to improve the daily training environment, and then through and beyond this, the players' competition environment.

This Policy outlines the factors used by the ECNL to evaluate club programming and structure to ensure that clubs are structured and operated in a manner that allows regular and consistent implementation of club vision, values, philosophy, methodology, culture and other player development factors across all teams and ages, particularly within the ECNL and ECNL Regional League programs.

CLUB PROGRAMMING AND STRUCTURAL FACTORS

Clubs can be structured and operated in a variety of different ways consistent with this Policy. The following factors will be assessed in determining whether clubs are structured and operating in the manner consistent with ECNL rules, policies, and expectations. A club is not required to meet all factors to satisfy this Policy, and no single factor is decisive in determining whether a club satisfies this Policy. The factors used to evaluate whether a club satisfies this Policy are listed below. These factors apply across the entire club programming, with particular emphasis on teams in the ECNL and ECNL RL programs:

1) Legal and Finance:

- a. Are all teams operated by the same legal entity?
- b. Are all staff paid directly by this entity?
- c. Are all player fees, except for Discovery Players, paid to the club operating the ECNL and ECNL RL program?
- d. Do players, except for Discovery Players, pay additional fees to another club?
- e. If multiple clubs or entities are involved in player programming, is the relationship structure consistent with the ECNL Club Merger and Affiliation Policy?

2) Staff Structure:

- a. Does the club have an organizational chart with specific responsibilities and reporting structures for coaches and directors within the ECNL and ECNL RL programs, with specific directors for each gender and level of program?
- b. Does each program have a designated staff group that collaborates in coaching the teams within the program?
- c. Are the majority of ECNL and ECNL RL staff full-time employees of the club?

3) Training Organization:

- a. Do all teams train at the same facility, or jointly train at multiple facilities?
- b. Does each team train together with another age group at least one time per week?
- c. Are top players moved from age group to age group in training or games for development purposes?
- d. Do all ECNL and ECNL RL Players train 3 times per week on average during the season?
- e. Are all ECNL and ECNL RL players, with the exception of Discovery Players or limited players from exceptional distances, expected to attend all trainings each week?
- f. Are the ECNL and ECNL RL Directors present at the majority of trainings for their program?

4) Player Pool:

- a. Does the club have a Pre-ECNL program that regularly develops players into the ECNL and ECNL RL programs?
- b. Does the club have a high player retention rate year over year?

5) Philosophy and Methodology:

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- a. Is there a clear club vision statement with clear club values?
 - b. Are all teams within trained using the same philosophy and methodology, overseen by a club director?

6) **Marketing and Branding:**

- a. Do all teams wear the same uniform and use the same logo?
- b. Does the club have a clear visual identity, consistent across channels?

NOTE: Clubs with a pattern of recruiting entire teams, or large pools of players from other clubs, for purposes of competing in the ECNL or ECNL RL program will be highly scrutinized under this Policy. This practice, by its nature, undermines the club-based development philosophy supported by the ECNL.

The ECNL will review all of the above factors to determine whether a club is structured and operating in compliance with this Policy. Clubs that do not satisfy the Policy may have their ECNL membership immediately revoked, or not be renewed for prior years, at the discretion of the ECNL.