

Canadian Premier League trials coming to Southern Ontario

By Jake Courtepatte

Future football stars, take notice.

The budding Canadian Premier League, including the York 9 FC team, is on the lookout this fall to fill their opening night rosters for the inaugural 2019 season.

There's a lot of good players (in Canada) that very often have not been given the opportunity," said James Easton, vice-president of soccer operations for the CPL in a statement.

"We want to make sure that we're looking far and wide, in all the nooks and crannies, and giving opportunities to players who think they can be professionals. So, we don't want to leave any stone unturned."

The league will host two-day trials across seven Canadian cities, including Toronto and Hamilton. Registration for the tryouts comes at a cost of \$200, though cuts will be made after day one.

"This is a league for Canadians, by Canadians, and we 100-percent believe there are professional level players across this country who have yet to be unearthed," said CPL commissioner David Clanachan in the statement. "As we look to create a pathway for our homegrown players to develop and showcase their skills, the open trials will be a great opportunity to see first-hand the talent that both exists in this country and needs real opportunities to prosper."

As for York Region's home squad, the York 9 FC representing the nine different municipalities in the region, head coach Jim Brennan said he and his staff are looking for that "diamond in the rough."

"The coaches have all been talking about it," said the Canada Soccer Hall of Fame member. "We're all looking for that diamond in the rough, that guy who can get to the next level."

All eight teams will have representatives present at each of the seven coast-to-coast trial locations, beginning on September 20 in Halifax. Though each will have their own set of characteristics written on their clipboards they are looking for in their players, Brennan admitted there are some defining traits all teams will be looking for.

"What's their personality like? Do they have that drive, that good work ethic? Are they willing to push the limits and not be afraid to make mistakes?"

However, don't look past Brennan's thirst for hometown flavour: the Newmarket native is expecting to find a lot of talent among the two Southern Ontario stops to fill out his roster card.

"There are a few hotbeds (for Canadian talent) and I'm not going to tell you which ones they are," Brennan said.

"We're trying to protect our own area. But there is some fantastic talent across the country. It's going to be a great opportunity across the board to see these kids, from all different ages, come out. This is the opportunity that everyone has been waiting for. Their time is coming."

Fees for the trials will cover a "detailed performance evaluation summary" including fitness test results, as well as access and exposure to CPL coaches and scouts, a CPL training shirt, bag, and armband.

On day one, each player will be evaluated through a series of fitness exercises and testing, soccer specific drills and assessments. At the end of day one, a limited number of players will be selected and invited back for day two, which will focus on small-sided and 11 vs. 11 games.

The Hamilton trials take place October 1 - 2, before Toronto plays host October 11 - 12. More information can be found at www.york9fc.canpl.ca.