



**BC SOCCER**

# BC Soccer Premier League (BCSPL) Parent Handbook 2024

June 2024



# Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>1. Introduction .....</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| a. Document Purpose.....   | 3         |
| b. Guiding Principles.....   | 3         |
| c. BC Soccer Premier League Overview and Purpose .....   | 3         |
| d. Background .....  | 4         |
| <b>2. BC Soccer Premier League (BCSPL).....</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| a. Organizational Roles and Responsibilities .....   | 5         |
| b. BCSPL Participating Clubs.....  | 6         |
| <i>*Starting September 2024 .....</i>  | <i>6</i>  |
| c. Competition Outlet (League Play) Format* .....  | 7         |
| <b>3. Frequently Asked Questions .....</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| Why should my child join the BCSPL?.....   | 8         |
| What are the minimum standards of technical programming that the players receive? .....                      | 8         |
| How much does one season of play typically cost?.....  | 8         |
| Are there any financial grants or other assistance available to players? .....                               | 8         |
| How do I get selected for the Provincial Program? .....  | 8         |
| How does BC Soccer ensure that the BCSPL participating clubs are compliant with the rules and regulations? . | 8         |
| How many players are registered in BC for the U14 to U18 age groups? .....                                   | 9         |
| Is there a limit to the number of BCSPL participating clubs? .....   | 9         |
| How do BC Soccer ensure the BCSPL is a safe environment for players? .....                                   | 9         |
| Does BC Soccer encourage diversity and inclusion within BCSPL programming? .....                             | 9         |
| <b>4. Appendix .....</b>   | <b>10</b> |
| a. BC Soccer Document Links .....  | 10        |
| b. Canada Soccer Document Links .....  | 11        |

# 1. Introduction

## a. Document Purpose

This document is designed to provide all players, parents and the wider BC Soccer membership, with information on the BC Soccer Premier League (BCSPL). It outlines the purpose of the league, including why the league was initially established, the target participants, the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in delivering the league, as well as frequently asked questions regarding the league.

## b. Guiding Principles

BC Soccer, through the BCSPL, commits to four key principles related to player identification and development within the Province of British Columbia:

1. **To promote a Person/Player First Approach.**
2. **To support the Canada Soccer's Long-Term Player Development Principles.**
3. **To provide Clear and Recognized Pathways for players to be identified, developed, and supported within.**
4. **To support and enhance Technical Standards within the BCSPL.**

## c. BC Soccer Premier League Overview and Purpose

The BCSPL is a standards-based development environment for girls and boys aged U14 to U18 and is positioned as the highest level of youth development community soccer within BC. Its purpose is to bring together identified players from the BC Soccer membership in training and game environments that support overall development, as well as providing further opportunities for player identification into higher levels of play including, Provincial Programming, University, League 1 BC, Professional, and National teams programming and progressing into adult community soccer.

The BCSPL is also designed to support the development of coaches and referees, who are required to attain a minimum level of certification to ensure high standards are in place. This is complimented with ongoing technical support through the BCSPL Participating Clubs, BC Soccer, and Canada Soccer.

It is important to note that participating Clubs in the BCSPL have received Canada Soccer's National Youth Club Licence (NYCL) which covers administration, governance, infrastructure, and technical criteria. Receiving this designation from Canada Soccer in addition to gaining BC Soccer Board of Directors' approval allows for BCSPL participation. Further, participating Clubs must also comply with the BCSPL league rules and regulations. By receiving Canada Soccer's NYCL and complying with the BCSPL rules and regulations, this provides assurance that the participating Clubs are adhering to quality standards and are operating at the highest level of youth community soccer within BC and Canada.

#### **d. Background**

Looking back as we look forward.

##### **2011**

The BC SPL was established following a directive from Canada Soccer to the Provincial Member Associations to develop and introduce high performance youth leagues. Canada Soccer's intention with the directive was to create standards-based youth leagues to support the provincial development pathways at the U13 to U18 ages. In British Columbia, a Request for Proposal process was established and, in partnership with the Vancouver Whitecaps FC, eight founding BC SPL franchise clubs were selected.

##### **2011 to 2014**

A league Board of Governors composed of the participating club representatives was established to oversee BC SPL operations. From 2011 to 2014, BC Soccer supported league operations primarily through a review of technical delivery and providing technical recommendations based on good practices specific to player and coach development.

##### **2016 to 2019**

In accordance with BC Soccer's 2016-2019 Strategic Plan, BC Soccer established the BC SPL Club Licence (introduced in 2017), initially designed to set out the minimum technical standards to which franchise clubs were required to adhere. The BC SPL Club Licence also identified areas for clubs to improve and was a mechanism for BC Soccer to remove a franchise club that did not meet the requirements, thus creating the ability for another organization outside the BC SPL, but within BC Soccer's membership, to apply to join and participate in the BC SPL.

During this time, BC Soccer also took a more active role in supporting the BC SPL, specifically working with the BC SPL President and leadership group to better align the governance model and, with the direction provided by Canada Soccer, the operation of the BC SPL transitioned from an independently operated society to a BC Soccer program.

##### **2019**

In 2018, Canada Soccer introduced its Club Licensing Program. The highest level within that program is the National Youth Club Licence designation (NYCL). One of the requirements of the NYCL is that holders participate in the highest level of youth play in each province; in BC, that is the BC SPL. Based on the introduction of national club licensing program, BC Soccer dissolved its BC SPL Club Licence, moving key technical requirements in the BC SPL league rules and regulations as well as retooling the resources and support into a BC SPL by way of the Technical Service Plan being introduced in 2019.

##### **2020 to 2023**

In September 2020, the BC SPL expanded from 8 founding franchise member clubs to 11 BC SPL Clubs, further expanding to 12 in 2021 and from September 2022 through to 2023 there will be 13 BC SPL Clubs.

##### **2024 +**

The league will expand to 16 clubs in September 2024 and through the 2022 BC SPL consultation process, BC Soccer condensed the playing age groups from U13 to U18 to U14 to U18 for implementation in September 2024 and beyond.

## 2. BC Soccer Premier League (BCSPL)

### a. Organizational Roles and Responsibilities

There are several key stakeholders that contribute to the oversight, support, and delivery of the BCSPL. These stakeholders primarily include, Canada Soccer, Professional Soccer Programming, BC Soccer, and importantly the BCSPL participating clubs. Provided below is a high-level summary of each’s role and responsibilities as it relates to the BCSPL.

#### Canada Soccer

To oversee and facilitate the application, review, and approval process and on-going quality assurance of the Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence designation while supporting BC Soccer with the oversight and direction of the BCSPL.

#### BC Soccer

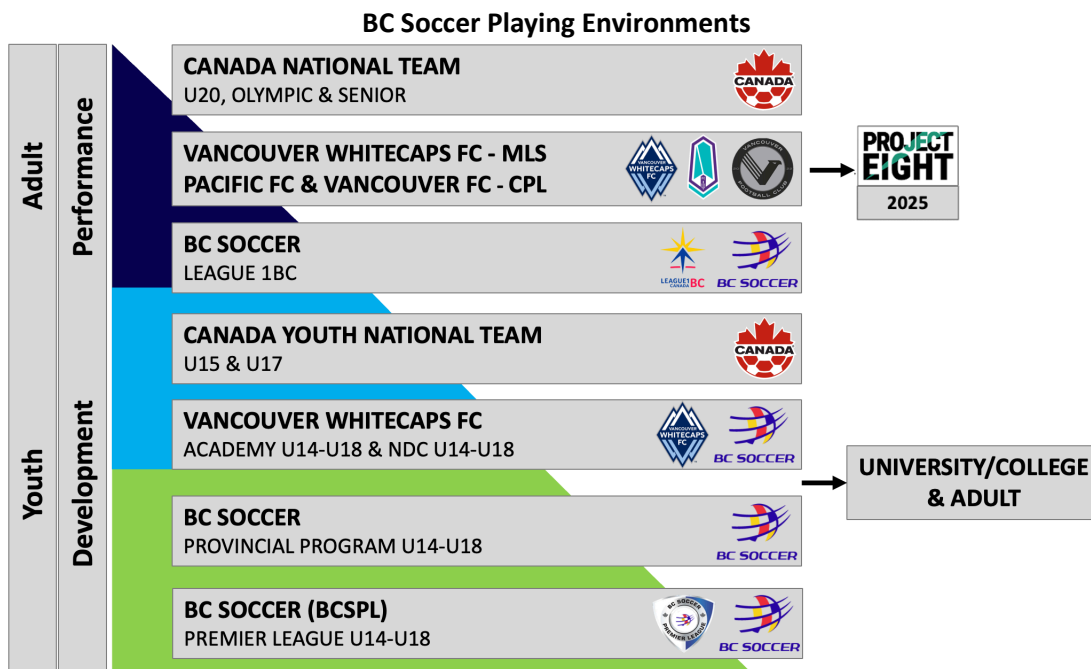
To manage the operation of the BCSPL under the guidelines provided by Canada Soccer, along with reviewing BCSPL Clubs against the implementation of the BCSPL rules and regulations.

#### BCSPL Participating Clubs

To create the best possible environment to deliver the programming that best meets the needs of the participants, while continuing to adhere to the ongoing Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence requirements and BCSPL rules and regulations.

#### Professional and National Soccer Programming

To work in collaboration with BC Soccer, specifically the BC Soccer Provincial Program and the BCSPL participating clubs to support player identification into appropriate Youth Professional and National soccer programming.



\*A number of player development environments support the player pathway, including district associations, affiliate soccer clubs in BC and BC Soccer associate member organizations.

## b. BCSPL Participating Clubs

Importantly, participating Clubs in the BCSPL are required to have met the Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence requirements, covering administration, governance, infrastructure, and technical. This requirement is in addition to gaining BC Soccer Board of Directors' approval for participation. Furthermore, participating Clubs in the BCSPL must also abide by BCSPL league rules and regulations.

Each year BC Soccer Member Organizations from outside the BCSPL can apply for Canada Soccer's National Youth Club Licence. As the licensing process involves several steps and is an in-depth review of organizational governance and operations, the approval of new licence holders requires time. As such, new applicants approved for participation in the BCSPL will not begin play until the year following their approval. For example, if an Organization within the BC Soccer membership structure applies for the National Youth Club Licence in 2023, and meets all Canada Soccer and BC Soccer requirements identified above, the earliest approval of that organization as a National Youth Club Licence holder would occur in 2024 and that Organization will be eligible to participate in the BCSPL beginning in September 2025 beginning at U14 and adding girls and boys teams at U14 each subsequent year until full participation is achieved.

As of September 2024, the BCSPL will consist of sixteen BCSPL Clubs, including two on Vancouver Island, one in the Okanagan and thirteen in the Lower Mainland. For more information on the participating Clubs in the BCSPL, please see below.

| BCSPL Clubs                         | Location        | Website   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Abbotsford Soccer Association*      | Abbotsford      | <a href="https://www.abbotsfordsoccer.com/">https://www.abbotsfordsoccer.com/</a>           |
| Burnaby FC                          | Burnaby         | <a href="https://www.burnabyfc.com/">https://www.burnabyfc.com/</a>                         |
| Coastal FC                          | Surrey          | <a href="https://www.coastalfc.ca">https://www.coastalfc.ca</a>                             |
| Coquitlam Metro Ford SC             | Coquitlam       | <a href="https://www.cmfc.ca">https://www.cmfc.ca</a>                                       |
| Fusion FC                           | Richmond        | <a href="https://www.fusionfc.ca">https://www.fusionfc.ca</a>                               |
| Langley United Soccer Association   | Langley         | <a href="https://www.lusa.ca">https://www.lusa.ca</a>                                       |
| Nanaimo FC                          | Nanaimo         | <a href="https://www.nanaimounitedfc.com/">https://www.nanaimounitedfc.com/</a>             |
| North Vancouver FC                  | North Vancouver | <a href="https://nvfc.ca">https://nvfc.ca</a>   |
| Ridge Meadows SC*                   | Maple Ridge     | <a href="https://ridgemeadowsoccer.ca">https://ridgemeadowsoccer.ca</a>                     |
| Surrey FC                           | Surrey          | <a href="https://www.surreyfc.com">https://www.surreyfc.com</a>                             |
| Surrey United SC                    | Surrey          | <a href="https://www.surreyunitedsoccer.com">https://www.surreyunitedsoccer.com</a>         |
| Thompson Okanagan FC                | Kelowna         | <a href="http://tofc.ca/wp/">http://tofc.ca/wp/</a>   |
| TSS Rovers                          | Richmond        | <a href="https://www.tss.ca">https://www.tss.ca</a>   |
| Port Moody SC*                      | Port Moody      | <a href="https://portmoodysoccer.com">https://portmoodysoccer.com</a>                       |
| Van Isle Wave powered by Pacific FC | Victoria        | <a href="https://www.poweredbypacificfc.ca/wave">https://www.poweredbypacificfc.ca/wave</a> |
| Vancouver United FC                 | Vancouver       | <a href="https://vancouverunitedfc.com">https://vancouverunitedfc.com</a>                   |

*\*Starting September 2024*

### c. Competition Outlet (League Play) Format

The BC SPL competition outlet/league play format typically consists of two phases: Phase One (February to June) and Phase Two (August to November).

- Pre-season typically commences in February and August
- For the months of July, December, and some of January this is typically off-season.

In total a player within the BC SPL is typically provided 9 months of soccer activity over a period of 12 months.

The Competition format includes league play and the Provincial Cup. For an overview of the BC SPL schedule and competition format please see below.

#### Phase One

| Month             | Activity                   | Description  |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--|
| January           | Off-Season                 | Players take this time to rest from soccer activity and can focus on other physical development activities/sports.                                     |
| February          | Pre-Season                 | Players are physically and mentally prepared for the requirements of the game related to their position and team actions when defending and attacking. |
| March, April, May | League Competition         | BC SPL Teams compete in a round-robin competition whereby all teams have a final placing and seedings for the Provincial Cup are determined.           |
| June              | Provincial Cup Competition | BC SPL Teams are placed in a knockout competition, including quarterfinals through to a final and the winners are declared Provincial champions.       |

#### Phase Two

| Month                        | Activity           | Description  |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| July                         | Off-Season         | Players take this time to rest from soccer activity and can focus on other physical development activities/sports.                                     |
| August                       | Pre-Season         | Players are physically and mentally prepared for the requirements of the game related to their position and team actions when defending and attacking. |
| September, October, November | League Competition | BC SPL Teams compete in a round-robin competition whereby the U14 to U18 teams have a final placing, and the winners are declared League champions.    |
| December                     | Off-Season         | Players take this time to rest from soccer activity and can focus on other physical development activities/sports.                                     |

### 3. Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Why should my child join the BCSPL?**

*If your child is keen to compete in the highest level of youth development community soccer and/or aspires to represent their country, play at a university, semi-professional, or professional level, then the BCSPL is an environment that aims to support their development and offer opportunities for identification into these higher levels of play.*

#### **What are the minimum standards of technical programming that the players receive?**

*BCSPL participating clubs must meet the CSA National Youth Club License standards. See Link: [Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence](#) As well as the BCSPL Rules and Regulations. See Link: [BCSPL Rules and Regulations 2024](#)*

#### **What level of play is the BCSPL designated at?**

*The BCSPL is recognized as the highest level of youth development community soccer and is the final step into higher-level playing environments such as the Provincial Program as well as semi-professional, professional and national youth programming.*

#### **How much does one season of play typically cost?**

*Importantly, the fees collected (similar to all other community-based programming) are set at the local level with the participating club. Typically, the average cost for a full season within the BCSPL is \$2,500 (based on information shared by the clubs in 2019). This may or may not include extended travel and competition outside of the BCSPL. It is important to note that there are no parameters in place from a BC Soccer level on what clubs can charge for programming.*

#### **Are there any financial grants or other assistance available to players?**

*BCSPL participating clubs do provide financial aid for players to participate within the BCSPL; however, this is on a case-by-case basis and subject to that individual BCSPL Club's discretion.*

#### **How do I get selected for the Provincial Program?**

*Players are identified and selected to the program through the BC Soccer identification network which includes the following options:*

- 1. BCSPL Club Team Head Coach recommends players to the Club's Technical Director, who in turn recommends the players to BC Soccer.*
- 2. The player is identified in a BCSPL match by a BC Soccer's soccer development staff member.*
- 3. The player is identified in a BCSPL match by a professional youth programming staff member.*
- 4. The player is identified by a Canada Soccer's youth national programming staff member.*
- 5. The player is identified on their prior performance within the BC Soccer Provincial Program.*

#### **How does BC Soccer ensure that the BCSPL participating clubs are compliant with the rules and regulations?**

*All BCSPL participating clubs must adhere to the rules and regulations, as set out in the BCSPL Rules & Regulations 2024. Failure to comply can result in fines, administered by the BCSPL General Manager. More serious offences can result in suspension or expulsion from the league, administered by BC Soccer Association Board of Directors.*



*Importantly, the BCSPL, participating clubs and all those involved at all levels, must also comply with the Judicial Code and Policies of BC Soccer.*

**How many players are registered in BC for the U14 to U18 age groups?**

*As an example, there were approximately 1692 registered players across 94 teams and 10 clubs in the BCSPL for Phase 1 in 2021.*

**Is there a limit to the number of BCSPL participating clubs?**

*Currently there is not a limit to the number of clubs that can participate within the BCSPL as set out by Canada Soccer; however, all clubs must apply for and receive the National Youth Club Licence as well as approval from the BC Soccer Board of Directors in order to participate in the BCSPL.*

**How do BC Soccer ensure the BCSPL is a safe environment for players?**

*All BCSPL personal, including, coaches, managers and referees are required to complete a Criminal Record Check and Respect in Sport Activity Leader training, as well as coaches and referees being certified/trained at the appropriate level of delivery.*

*In addition, all BCSPL participating clubs have a Code of Conduct to Protect Children, a Rule of Two Policy aligned to the Coaching Association of Canada's Responsible Coaching Movement, Guidelines for Appropriate/Inappropriate Conduct between Adults/Adolescents and Children, including what to do if you witness inappropriate conduct, and a Policy requiring that any suspicion of child abuse is reported to law enforcement aligned to the "Duty to Report". These policies, guidelines, and processes are supported by a Primary Liaison for Child Protection who has completed Commit to Kids online training through the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.*

*BC Soccer Safe Sport Statement:*

*BC Soccer believes that everyone involved in soccer has the right to participate in safe and inclusive environments free of abuse, harassment, discrimination, and to enjoy the sport at whatever level or capacity they participate in.*

*The welfare of everyone involved in soccer is the foremost consideration and in particular, the protection of children in the sport is the responsibility of everyone involved.*

**Does BC Soccer encourage diversity and inclusion within BCSPL programming?**

*Yes, all BCSPL girls' teams must have at a minimum one staff member either, Head Coach, Assistant Coach or Team Manager that identifies as a woman as per BC Soccer Rules and Regulations.*

*In addition, as a requirement of the National Youth Club Licence, BCSPL Clubs must have a coaching strategy that encourages women in coaching, provide programming that targets underrepresented groups as outlined in the Canada Soccer Guide to Accessibility and Inclusion and programs, partnerships, and/or other mechanisms to reduce barriers to participation.*

## 4. Appendix

### a. BC Soccer Document Links

#### **Rules and Regulations**

BC Soccer oversees the operation of the BCSPL in accordance with BC Soccer Rule 21. The BCSPL Rules and Regulations are reviewed annually by the BC Soccer, Soccer Development Department and approved by the BC Soccer Board of Directors. BCSPL Clubs shall have the opportunity to provide feedback on the BCSPL Rules and Regulations to the BC Soccer, Soccer Development Department on an annual basis through an end of season BCSPL feedback survey and club meetings conducted by the BCSPL General Manager. BCSPL Rules and Regulations are subject to change at the determination of the BC Soccer, Soccer Development Department in consultation with the Canada Soccer, Development Department with BC Soccer Board of Director approval.

For more information, please access [BCSPL Rules and Regulations 2024](#)

#### **Administration Handbook**

This document acts as a supportive guide for BCSPL clubs when managing the administrative requirements of league participation. This includes but is not limited to the submission process of rosters and player registration through to information as it relates to travel requirements and player transfer forms.

For more information, please access <https://www.bcsoccer.net/competitions/bcspl/>

#### **Technical Service Plan**

The Technical Service provided to the BCSPL Clubs is designed to support the delivery of player and coach development programming. With a focus to maintain and raise the overall standard of the BCSPL training and game environments. BC Soccer provides technical resources and support to the BCSPL Clubs through documentation, workshops, club visits, as well as online software support. This service is part of a wider service plan that will be introduced to the BC Soccer membership in 2023.

For more information, please see the BC Soccer website at <https://www.bcsoccer.net/>

#### **Physical Testing Guidelines**

This document has been designed to guide and support BCSPL Franchise Clubs in implementing physical testing protocols with BCSPL Club programming from U14 - U18 boys and girls age groups. The document provides the step-step process in how to measure the physical characteristics of the players focusing on their speed, strength, and endurance. These guidelines are shared directly with the BCSPL Club.

#### **Provincial Program**

The Provincial Program is designed to bring together identified players from the BC Soccer Premier League (BCSPL) into training and game environments. The program's focus is player centered, not team centered, and aims to support each player's development while also creating an overall environment that allows scouting opportunities by Universities, Colleges, semi-professional, professional programming, and ultimately Canada Soccer's youth national teams programming.

The Provincial Program selects players in the U14 - U18 age groups. There are two phases annually within each calendar year: January to July, and August to December. Each phase consists of training sessions, match play, and camp activity. At the end of each Phase (December and July), players who have participated in training sessions receive a BC Soccer Player Progress Report. The Player Progress Report has been designed to support the players in identifying areas of strength and areas to develop within their Club activity. The report is also shared with their respective BC SPL Club Technical Director.

For more information, please see the BC Soccer website at <https://www.bcsoccer.net/players/provincial-program/>

## **b. Canada Soccer Document Links**

### **Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program / National Youth Club Licence**

The Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program is designed to guide member organizations (clubs and academies) throughout the country toward best principles for organizational development both on and off the field. Member organizations play an essential role in the development of players, coaches, and officials and provide both the daily playing environment and primary contact for participants. By raising the standards of member organizations, both the daily playing environment and participant experience are enhanced; thereby improving the overall soccer system in Canada.

To guide development from the boardroom, through the office, to the field, the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program outlines standards across four pillars: Governance, Administration, Infrastructure, and Technical. Model organizations are equally committed to quality in all areas of their governance and operations. Without strong governance structures and administrative systems, it is difficult to sustain high calibre technical programming.

In order to classify member organizations, a series of categories have been established within the Club Licensing Program. The Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence recognizes the highest achieving organizations from across Canada. Organizations achieving this licence display characteristics and demonstrate behaviours aligned with the highest expectations of governance, administration, infrastructure, and technical, support their Member Association (BC Soccer) and Canada Soccer Pathways and participate in the highest levels of competition in Canada (the BC SPL in British Columbia).

For more information on the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program, please click [here](#).