

WDAFA Board Public Statement on Girls only Football Programming and Boys only Bantam Programming:

As Board members it is our strongest desire to ensure that all children have the most positive, fulfilling, and safe experience during their football season. This allows youth to focus on a sport they love, develop new skills, and grow friendships that will be a part of their lifelong memories. To ensure that our players can focus on the positive, not just for their season but for all the years ahead, the WDAFA Board puts an emphasis on protecting all our players. It is with this conviction that the Board unanimously made the decision to support and build a stronger females only team for the spring district seasons, and a males only team at the Bantam level for the fall seasons. In accordance with Football Canada recommendations, mixed gender teams are not recommended beyond age 13. Our Bantam program extends in age beyond this range and as such for player protection and in line with National framework direction, the WDAFA Board provides and supports both female and male only teams. This protects all our players appropriately, now and in the years to come. As our player demographics positively expand to include an increasingly diverse youth population, the WDAFA Board continues placing an emphasis on the safety and security of all our players and staff.

Key Points:

- Football Canada has several strategic goals for program development. Specifically, strategy 2.A. is a ban on playing two tackle football seasons. Strategy 2.E. sets a limit on players playing no more than 16 weeks of contact football per year, and expressly outlines “Male and female athletes may participate together up to U14 but it is recommended that if numbers allow, female participants should be provided their own participation programs.” Strategy 7 outlines the Female only football development goals, which WDAFA fully supports in this decision. The National Football Canada direction can be found here:
https://footballcanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Competition_Review_Document_April_26_2018-min-ilovepdf-compressed.pdf

- Bantam is over U14, and as such the unanimous decision of the WDAFA Board is in line with and catches up to Football Canada direction.
- The Board voted unanimously for this position for WDAFA. This unanimous decision was taken at a special meeting focussing only on this issue without distraction.
- WDAFA fully supports both boys and girls football programming.
- WDAFA believes in fair application of rules for all players and staff within our organization.
- As a result of the strategic decision WDAFA has made on this issues, WDAFA has one of, if not the strongest girls football program in Alberta.
- WDAFA fully supports and advocates for equal field time and season length between our Bantam boys season, and our Jr. and Sr. girls seasons.