



# BC Soccer Premier League Rules & Regulations 2024

December 2023

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## 1. Introduction

### a. Document Purpose

This document provides information on the guiding principles of the league as well as the overview and purpose of the league. Furthermore, it provides detailed information on the BCSPL Rules & Regulations, which the BCSPL Club participants need to deliver against to maintain their status within the BCSPL.

### b. Guiding Principles

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

- 1. To promote a Player/Person First Approach.*
- 2. To support 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 all technical standards within the BCSPL.*

### c. BC Soccer Premier League Overview and Purpose

The BCSPL is a standards-based development environment for female and male players 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 into training and game environments that supports overall development, as well as providing further opportunities for player identification into higher levels of play including, Provincial Programming, University, Professional/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.

Participating Clubs in the BCSPL have received Canada Soccer's National Youth Club Licence (NYCL) which covers administration, governance, infrastructure, and technical criteria. This designation from Canada Soccer in addition to gaining BC Soccer Board of Directors' approval allows entry into the BCSPL. BCSPL 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.

## 2. League Requirements

### a. Governance

BC Soccer oversees the operation of the BCSPL in accordance with BC Soccer Rule 21. All competition in the league is governed by BC Soccer.

The BCSPL Rules and Regulations are reviewed by BC Soccer staff, in consultation with Canada Soccer and BCSPL clubs and approved annually by the BC Soccer Board of Directors.

To maintain the standard BCSPL demands, BC Soccer will conduct annual club engagement and feedback collection, in accordance with a calendar of engagement activities published before the start of the season.

BC Soccer may establish Working Groups with defined scope of work and timelines to address specific areas of the league

BCSPL Clubs may submit requests for dispensation to the BCSPL Rules and Regulations to the BCSPL General Manager. A rationale must be provided. Dispensation may or may not be granted at the discretion of the BC Soccer, Soccer Development Department.

### b. Participation and Review Process

All participating clubs in the BCSPL are required to comply with all BCSPL Rules and Regulations within this document along with upholding the rules, regulations, and policies of BC Soccer, as well as meeting the on-going requirements of the Canada Soccer National Youth Club License.

The annual BCSPL Club Compliance Report will highlight compliance to the BCSPL standards and be used at the discretion of the BC Soccer Board of Directors per Rule 21.f. (participation in the BCSPL). Furthermore, this compliance report will be provided to Canada Soccer to support their assessment of the BCSPL Clubs against their National Youth Club License criteria.

If a club is removed from the participation within the BCSPL, Canada Soccer has confirmed the club will also have their Canada Soccer National Youth Club License designation removed.

### c. Financial

The league fee for 2024 is \$1,500 per team per calendar year and for new teams entering the BCSPL in Phase 2, the league fee for is \$750 per team. At the end of each calendar season, the league administrative fee for each club will be invoiced by January 31 of the preceding season.

#### i) Fines

Fines will be assessed for violations of league rules and not meeting minimum standard requirements. At the end of the season the sum of the total amount of Fines collected will be allocated to the BCSPL Scholarship Fund. Applicable fines are stated in the appendix.

Canada Soccer prohibits the imposition of fines on youth age players. Teams, team officials and organizations are not exempted from fine and performance bond policies.

## ii) Service Payment

All payments made to those providing services as it pertains to the BCSPL clubs' delivery of programming and competition within the BCSPL, such as administrators, coaches, referees must be made in accordance with CRA and BC employment standards requirements.

## d. League Structure

### i) League Age Groups

The BCSPL age group structure will be as follows:

- a. U14 "Intake"
- b. U14
- c. U15
- d. U16
- e. U17
- f. U18

### ii) Playing Season

The BCSPL Regular season runs from February through November, and the 'Intake' Season runs from September to November.

### iii) League Schedule

The league schedule is the responsibility of the BCSPL General Manager. The official schedule will be published annually by BC Soccer and at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the regular season. Clubs must comply with all league rules and regulations regarding cancellation, rescheduling of matches, and compensation to teams affected by cancellations or forfeits. Scheduling changes will only be allowed with approval of BCSPL General Manager via the appropriate "BCSPL Match Change Form".

Games must not be scheduled prior to 12:30pm for teams traveling to or from the Island, and 1:00pm (13:00) for teams traveling to or from the Okanagan. When Island travel is required, games must end with enough time for 2 ferry sailings to be made in case of cancelation(s). For Okanagan travel, games should be planned so that teams can arrive to the Lower Mainland or Kelowna by 10:00pm. Games between Lower Mainland teams must not begin prior to 09:00am on weekends and can start no later than 7:00pm (19:00), unless agreed upon in advance by both clubs. The latest match start times for Okanagan teams on Sundays playing in the Vancouver area would be 3:00pm (15:00).

Changes to the official schedule will be done via this process:

1. A Match Change Form must be completed by the team requesting the change and accompanied by a written agreement (email) from the opposing club and a new confirmed date before changes can be approved by the BCSPL General Manager.
2. No changes will be accepted within twenty (20) days of a match, unless approved by the BCSPL General Manager and accepted by both teams, and under special circumstances, i.e., weather, National Championships, and health related issues.
3. Approved match changes with new dates are subject to a fee of \$35.00 to the club initiating the change.

**iv) League Standings**

The BC SPL General Manager is responsible for tracking and determining the official standings the league.

The Match points system is as follows:

- 3 points for a win
- 1 point for a tie
- 0 points for a loss

If two (2) or more teams are equal on points, or PPG if applicable, after the last competition round, standings will be determined as follows:

- Greatest goal difference
- Greatest number of goals scored
- Greatest number of points obtained in the matches between the teams concerned
- Goal difference resulting from the matches between the teams concerned
- Greater number of goals scored in all matches between the teams concerned
- Disciplinary record of all teams concerned
- Drawing of lots

**v) Match Day Hosting Requirements**

All clubs hosting matches will implement two (2) minimum requirements as part of their presentation:

- If benches are not covered, tents are to be provided over both team’s benches
- For each BC SPL match, the home team will have a designated first aid trained person with an emergency action plan (EAP) on site, this EAP will be provided to the away team at least 30-minutes prior to kickoff.

**vi) Provincial Premier Cup**

All BC SPL Teams are automatically qualified to enter the BC Soccer Premier Cup. The Provincial Premier Cup is subject to the Rules and Regulations of BC Soccer regarding Provincial Premier Cup and operates under BC Soccer’s Competitions Committee.

**vii) Match Length**

Age	Game Length	Halftime
Under 14 and Under 14 Intake	2 x 40 minutes	10 minutes
Under 15	2 x 40 minutes	10 minutes
Under 16	2 x 40 minutes	10 minutes
Under 17	2 x 45 minutes	10 minutes
Under 18	2 x 45 minutes	10 minutes

**viii) Substitutions**

- All Age Groups - Unlimited substitutions restricted to 5 instances per half. Substitutions made at half-time do not count as a used substitution instance.
- Re-entry is permitted



Substitutes shall report and submit a substitution slip to the Match Officials at midfield. To replace a player with a substitute there must be a stoppage in play and the referee must be informed. The player only enters the field of play after the player being replaced has left the field and after receiving a signal by the referee. The substituted player may leave the field from any boundary line.

#### **ix) Incomplete Games**

If a match cannot continue through to full regulation time, the match will only count if one-half of the match was completed. If a match is suspended prior to the expiration of the first half due to inclement weather or extenuating circumstances, it will be rescheduled to some other date/time agreed upon by the competing teams and the BCSPL starting at the same minute that the match was originally suspended and with the same score. Referee fees will have to be paid again for the re-start. The Referee has the final decision on suspending matches due to weather or field conditions.

#### **x) Postponements**

In case of postponements, each home team shall communicate any delay of a postponement with the BCSPL General Manager and the opposing club. All efforts must be made to cancel/postpone a match before the visiting team begins travel because of inclement weather.

Any postponed match must be rescheduled, not played, within ten (10) days of the original date of the match. Any non-played matches will result in no points being awarded to either team and the match will be recorded as a non-played match.

If no agreement on rescheduling the match is reached between the home and opposing clubs, the matter will be referred to the BCSPL General Manager.

#### **xi) Forfeits**

Should any team fail to appear for a scheduled league match or not be able to fulfill a scheduled fixture, the related Club shall incur a forfeit fee of \$1,000\*. The team will also incur a deduction of three (3) points (if applicable) in the league standings and a 1-0 win will be given to the opposing team.

\*\$500 of the Forfeit fee will be provided to the opposition club to manage any expenses associated to hosting or travelling cost associated with the cancelled fixture.

#### **xii) Cancellation of Referees**

In the case that matches need to be cancelled, Referees will have no match fees owing to them if they receive notification of field closures or game cancellations by 8am the day of their scheduled match.

If a referee receives no prior notification of a match cancellation, and upon arrival at the field declares or realizes the match is not playable for any reason, they will receive 50% of their match fees.

### **e. Team Rosters and Player Eligibility**

#### **i) Registration Deadline**

All player registrations must be registered with the BCSPL and approved by the League Manager according to the agreed upon administrative timelines. Players added during the season must be added 48-hours prior to the match to be eligible for play.

**ii) Official Roster**

Team rosters entered on the BC SPL Competition Management System are the official player rosters of the club. Player and team information must be updated and kept current prior to each match.

Players are considered committed to their BC SPL club from January 1 through November 30. Any transfers or player movement to/from a BC SPL club requires Technical Director (TD) contact with the releasing and accepting clubs. All transfers must comply with BCSA rules and regulations.

Each club must have a minimum of fourteen (14) players and a maximum of twenty (20) per team dressed in uniform, present, and eligible to participate in each match. These may include permit players. Roster size limitations may only be exceeded with written approval of the BC SPL General Manager.

**iii) Roster Submission**

All BC SPL clubs will submit their rosters on the following timelines:

**Intakes**

- Roster to be submitted August 15 for the intake season of play

**U14-U18 age group**

- Clubs to commit their teams to the BC SPL by December 15 for the following season of play
- Final roster with minimum 14 players per team submitted February 1

**iv) Eligible Player**

An eligible player is a player who is properly registered with the league and who is not subject to any kind of suspension by the league or any other league which is in effect at the time.

**v) Ineligible Player**

Players listed on the Official Roster, but not eligible to play due to reasons such as waiting for an international clearance, serving a league suspension, not age-eligible, not on the official match day roster or subject to other applicable sanctions shall be an ineligible player. Any team using players that have not been properly registered or cleared of sanctions by the league will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action as determined by the league and subject to the BCSA Discipline Policy and Procedures.

**vi) Illegal Player**

Any player that is not listed on the Official Roster, has not been registered and has not received a player ID card and competes in a match is considered an illegal player. Any team using an illegal player shall be subject to a loss of three points in the standings and forfeiture of each match in which the illegal player was used. The related club will be assessed a fine as outlined on the league's website and in effect at the time.

**vii) Player ID Cards**

All players and coaches must present their electronic ID card to the referee prior to the match. A player is not considered registered with the league until the player receives his/her player card or a letter of authorization from the BC SPL. Teams not showing ID cards when requested by match officials to do so can still play the game but may be required to forfeit the match at the League Manager's discretion resulting in a 1-0 default win for the opponent.



**viii) Permitting of Players**

A registered BCSPL player is eligible to play for a BCSPL team within their club in an older age division. No permit is required. The player must have their player card and be properly added to the match day roster of the older team.

The BCSPL will grant a BC Soccer registered player from a team outside the league permission to play for a BCSPL team of his/her true age group or older age division, contingent that

1. The player is registered within the same club, or an affiliation and development agreement exists between two different clubs.
2. The BCSPL club permitting the player from another club must complete the online permit form, share a copy with the releasing club, and add the player to the BCSPL Competition Management System so they can be selected to the match day roster.

Permit players will be permitted for league-play matches.

Players from outside the league are permitted to play in the BCSPL to their chronological age group.

Players under suspension shall not be eligible to play in the BCSPL or another league.

Any player playing on a permit must also present a valid BCSID card to be eligible to play.

Any disciplinary action applied from misconduct reported while playing in a match under permit shall be served during the very next match(s) with the players registered team.

Any team playing a player on a permit that does not conform to the above Rules shall be sanctioned as for playing an ineligible player and may have Permit Privileges withdrawn.

**ix) Transfer Deadline**

Between January 1 and March 31, intra-league transfers for BCSPL registered players must be agreed on by the technical directors of the two clubs involved. If no such agreement is reached, the matter will be referred to the BCSPL General Manager for a decision.

Where a player is released or transferred, after the transfer deadline, player will not be permitted to register with another BCSPL club or permitted into BCSPL, in any capacity, for the remainder of the calendar year.

**x) Player Recruitment and Solicitation**

Club contact to a player(s) registered with another team or club for recruitment and/or solicitation purposes for the next BCSPL Phase may only occur during the timeframe from November 30 or the end of the current playing Phase, whichever is later, and prior to the commencement of the upcoming playing Phase.

- For the U14 Age Group (2011) specifically, clubs can offer an official invitation to join a BCSPL team to players that are currently registered at the U13 Age Group from January 17 to February 28, 2024.

Recruitment and/or solicitation is not permitted between Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Any recruitment to join a team or club must be initiated by a club Technical Director or Head Coach to the club's Technical Director or Head Coach that the player is currently registered. Unless contact is initiated by the player or parent/guardian seeking to move, no other contact will be made with players from other teams or clubs while the player is properly registered.

Any team and/or club, which, through its responsible officers or representatives, attempts to directly induce a registered player of a team under the jurisdiction of BC Soccer to leave the team before the completion of the team's league, cup or provincial cup commitments, will be deemed to have committed an offence. Such offences are subject to review and action by BC Soccer's Judicial Body as outlined in Rule 6 of the BC Soccer Rules and Regulations.

#### **xi) Cast Policy**

The CSA Cast Policy will apply. Prior to the Pre-Competition Meeting any player wearing a cast or who intends to wear a brace or medical support is to be presented for inspection. The Match Official will assess the player's eligibility to play in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

#### **xii) Team Officials**

There may be no more than five (5) Team officials on the bench, who are either a: head coach, assistant coach, manager, goalkeeper coach, trainer, or authorized Club official (e.g., Club Technical Director).

Team officials of any team with rostered youth players, will consist of a minimum of one member of the same gender as the players on the team. This team official must be present on the bench and in the changing rooms.

#### **xiii) Criminal Record Check Clearances**

All Team officials must have completed their CRC requirements, per BC Soccer's Criminal Record Check Policy by February 1<sup>st</sup> for the following season or their cards are to be removed by the club. Any new BCSPL staff should not receive Staff ID cards until CRC clearance is received by their club.

### **f. Judicial Matters**

All BCSPL judicial matters (complaints, discipline, protests, appeals) follow the Policies of BC Soccer. The BCSPL General Manager may issue automatic suspensions for match play on behalf of a Judicial Body of BC Soccer.

#### **i) Automatic Sanctions and Notification of suspension**

The BCSPL General Manager will inform players and/or team officials of automatic sanctions resulting from match play. Clubs will be notified by the BCSPL office on a weekly basis when a player or team official must serve a suspension, this will be via the suspension list circulated each Thursday by 3:00pm (15:00).

#### **ii) Suspensions**

Suspensions are levied by the BCSPL office as per 'Appendix B – Sanctioning' of the BC Soccer Discipline, Complaints and Appeals Operational Procedures [\[LINK\]](#).

A player or coach that was suspended in a match must serve the suspension and must not participate with another team within the club until suspension has been served.

When a player or team official has been suspended for misconduct for a specific number of games and the suspension is not completed within the current season, the suspension will carry over into the following season.

All cumulative disciplinary records and suspensions will carry over and into any end of season matches.

Suspension must not be served until the discipline report is properly filed by the Match Official and recorded in the Competition Management System.

**iii) Match day suspension guidelines**

Players and coaches dismissed from the field are not permitted to watch the match from within their team's designated area. Additionally, coaches are not then permitted to communicate with their team, staff, or players during the remainder of the match. The type of communication prohibited would include cellular, electronic/digital, written, or verbal. Players or coaches returning to the field of play during or directly following the match are subject to additional sanctions.

### 3. Technical Requirements

BCSPL Clubs must deliver against the following technical requirements as it pertains to player, coach, and referee. Requirements cover the delivery of general club programming including the training and competition environments as well as educational and pathway commitments.

#### a. Player Requirements

##### i) Player Development Commitment (Youth)

- All BCSPL Clubs must provide BC Soccer with their Phase 1 and Phase 2 (upon request and in the template provided) training and competition plan that meets the following requirements:
  - All teams are provided with a 3:1 training to game ratio.
  - All team session durations are a minimum of 90 minutes.
  - All teams are provided with a minimum of ½ field for 1 of 3 weekly sessions
  - All BCSPL Clubs must demonstrate alignment with the BC Soccer periodized training plan
  - All clubs must supply up to date training schedules for all their teams, complete with time and location, to facilitate compliance visits that support ongoing training standards.
- All BCSPL Clubs must adhere to the BC Soccer Player Pathway, whereby higher-level programming or competition is prioritized over a player's BCSPL commitment. Environments that apply to this situation include:
  - BC Soccer Provincial Programming
  - (Professional Programming) example Vancouver Whitecaps FC Academy & Elite BC REX
  - Canada National Team Youth Programming
- All BCSPL Clubs must adhere to the scheduling of competition with higher-level programming (above the BCSPL) this includes competition scheduling with the Provincial Program and (Professional Club Programming) example Vancouver Whitecaps FC Academy & Elite BC REX programming.
- All BCSPL Club's must complete and submit the BC Soccer Player Profile Database\* within the following requirements:
  - All player 'general information' must be completed 1 week minimum to the start of Phase 1 and Phase 2, annually.
  - All player 'observational information' must be completed on request within 4-weeks of the start of the season, annually.

*\*Live document update as required.*

##### ii) Player Evaluation and Selection Process

- All BCSPL Clubs must adhere to the player evaluation and selection process as outlined for the age groups below:
  - U14 to U18 Age Group - As per BC Soccer rule 21 – Rules for the operation of the BC Soccer Standards Based Leagues, c) For the purposes of development only, a technical staff member of a club shall be permitted to approach the Technical Director responsible for any other club to request permission to contact players to offer an opportunity for promotion, such permission shall not be unreasonably withheld. Any other contact shall be deemed as poaching as described in Rule 6

#### b. Coach Requirements

##### i) Coach Certification

- All BCSPL Club's designated Technical Lead must have completed the BC Soccer Technical Directors Diploma or have registered their intent to enroll on the next available course.

- All BCSPL Club Team Head Coaches must have on appointment:
  - A minimum Canada Soccer C License Certified or above.
- All BCSPL Club Team Assistant Coaches must have a minimum Canada Soccer ‘Soccer for Life’ or above within 6 months of appointment. All BCSPL Club and/or Team Goalkeeper Coaches must have a minimum BC Soccer GK Goalkeeping Diploma or have registered their intent to enroll on the next available course.
- All BCSPL Club’s must complete and submit the BC Soccer Coach Profile Database\* within the following requirements:
  - All coach ‘general information’ must be completed 1 week minimum to the start of Phase 1 and Phase 2, annually.
  - All coach ‘observational information’ must be completed on request within 4 weeks of the start of the season, annually.

*\*Live document update as required.*

**c. Referee Requirements**

- All Referees officiating in the BCSPL must be registered and active in RefCentre for the current year/registration period.
- BCSPL Referees should be appropriately dressed in official referee uniform(s) and come prepared with flags, whistles and other means needed to officiate a game.
- Referees may be mentored, developed, and evaluated at BCSPL games. All BCSPL Club’s must complete and submit the BC Soccer Referee Profile Database\* within the following requirements:
  - All referee scores and rankings and observations/comments must be completed by December 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

*\*Live document update as required.*

**i) Assignment and payment of Referees**

- On an annual basis each BCSPL Club must provide a designated Club Referee Assignor that will assign home game officials on behalf of the BCSPL Club that adheres to the BCSPL Club Referee Assignor Agreement document (internal document).
- BCSPL Club Assignors are recommended to assign Match Officials through the BCSPL Competition Management System, using the BC Refereeing Grading protocol.
- BCSPL Clubs are required to manage the Referee payment process using the pay scale listed below.

Age	U14, U15 and U16	U17 and U18
Referee	\$65	\$75
Assistant Referee	\$40	\$50

## 4. Appendix

### a. League Fines

Fine	Fee
Late remittance of annual league fee	\$500.00
Missed Rules & Regulations deadline ( <i>including administrative, operational, and technical</i> )	\$500.00
Fine for not fielding a team in each required age group	\$1,000.00
Fail to meet Match Day Hosting Requirements	\$150.00
Fine for withdrawal of a committed team	\$500.00
Match forfeit fee	\$1000.00
Game scheduling change ( <i>Applicable to the club instigating a game change request</i> )	\$35.00
Playing a suspended/illegal player	\$150.00