



BC Soccer Premier League U14 to U18 Evaluation & Selection

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1. Introduction

Purpose

This document has been designed in consultation with Canada Soccer with the aim to provide clubs, players, and parents with information on the evaluation and selection of players for the BCSPL within the U14 to U18 age groups. Also included is the overview and background to the league, as well as valuable answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs).

BCSPL Overview

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 community soccer within BC.

The purpose of the league is to bring together identified players from the BC Soccer membership into training and game environments that support the player's overall development, as well as providing further opportunities for identification into higher levels of play including, Provincial Programming, College and University, League1 Canada, Professional/National teams programming and progressing into Adult community soccer.

To achieve this, BC Soccer and the BCSPL commits to four key responsibilities to player identification and development within the Province of British Columbia. These include:

Four Key Responsibilities

1. To promote a Player-First Approach.
2. To support Canada Soccer's Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) Principles.
3. To provide Clear and Recognized Pathways for players to be identified, developed, and supported within.
4. To support and enhance all technical and operational standards within the BCSPL to align with Player Development Program (PDP) standards.

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

It is important to note that participating Clubs in the BCSPL have met the Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence requirements, covering administration, governance, infrastructure and technical components. 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 the BCSPL Operations Manual and Match Day Guidelines. This provides assurance that the BCSPL Clubs are compliant with quality standards and are operating at the highest level of youth community soccer within BC and Canada.

2. Background

To better understand how the BCSPL came to fruition and its evolution over the past ten years, the timeline below draws attention to key dates during the existence of the BCSPL.

2011

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

2011 to 2014

A league representative Board of Governors was established to oversee BCSPL 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.

2015 to 2019

In accordance with BC Soccer's 2016-2019 Strategic Plan, the BCSPL Club Licence (introduced in 2017), initially designed to set out the minimum technical standards to which franchise clubs were required to adhere. The 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 a Member Organization outside the BCSPL to apply to join and participate in the BCSPL. Furthermore, BC Soccer took a more active role in supporting the BCSPL, specifically working with the BCSPL President and leadership group to better align the governance model and the operation of the BCSPL transition from an independently operated society to a BC Soccer program.

In 2018, the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program was launched. 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, this is considered to be the BCSPL. With this in mind, BC Soccer dissolved its BCSPL Club Licence, moving key technical requirements into the BCSPL league rules and regulations. Additionally, further resources and support were retooled into a BCSPL Technical Service Plan, which was introduced in 2019.

2020 to 2025

In September 2020, the BCSPL expanded from 8 founding franchise member clubs to 11 BCSPL Clubs, further expanding to 12 in 2021, and from September 2022 through to 2023 there were 13 BCSPL Clubs. In September 2024, 3 additional clubs entered the BCSPL to bring the club total to 16.

3. BCSPL Clubs

As previously mentioned, it is important to note that participating Clubs in the BCSPL have met the Canada Soccer National Youth Club License 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 a BC Soccer Member Organization applies 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 BC Soccer Member Organization will be able to participate in the BCSPL beginning in September 2025.

As of September 2024, the BCSPL consisted of 16 BCSPL Clubs, including two on Vancouver Island, one in the Okanagan and 13 in the Lower Mainland. For more information on the participating Clubs in the BCSPL, please see below.

BCSPL Clubs	Location	Website
Abbotsford SA	Abbotsford	https://www.abbotsfordsoccer.com
Burnaby FC	Burnaby	https://www.burnabyfc.com
Coastal FC	Surrey	https://www.coastalfc.ca
Coquitlam Metro Ford SC	Coquitlam	https://www.cmfc.ca
Fusion FC	Richmond	https://www.fusionfc.ca
Langley United Soccer Association	Langley	https://www.lusa.ca
Nanaimo United FC	Nanaimo	https://www.nanaimounitedfc.com/
North Vancouver FC	North Vancouver	https://nvfc.ca/
Okanagan United FC	Okanagan / Interior Region	http://okanaganunited.ca
Port Moody SC	Port Moody	https://www.portmoodysoccer.com/
Ridge Meadows SC	Maple Ridge	https://ridgemeadowssoccer.ca/
Surrey FC	Surrey	https://surreyfc.com/
Surrey United SC	Surrey	https://www.surreyunitedsoccer.com
TSS Rovers	Richmond	https://www.tss.ca
Van Isle Wave powered by Pacific FC	Victoria	https://www.poweredbypacific.ca/
Vancouver United FC	Vancouver	https://vancouverunitedfc.com/

4. U14 to U18 Evaluation Philosophy

As outlined above, the purpose of the BCSPL is to bring identified players into training and game environments that support the player's overall development, as well as providing further opportunities for identification into higher levels of play including, Provincial Programming, University, League1 Canada, Professional/National teams programming and progressing into Adult community soccer. It is recognized that the identification process can be extremely stressful for young players. This is particularly true if player identification is done through a traditional "tryout", which provides a relatively limited opportunity to demonstrate the ability to play at the BCSPL level in an unfamiliar and high stress environment.

In addition to being stressful on young players, tryouts are also not the most effective way to evaluate players. Evaluating players on an ongoing basis over an extended period, preferably in an environment in which they are comfortable, is a better approach in terms of the effectiveness of the evaluation and in limiting the amount of stress on young players.

While creating an inclusive environment that provides opportunities for all players with the desire and ability to compete at the BCSPL level is a priority, doing so holistically and taking a player-first approach to identification, which considers the mental, social, and emotional well-being of these young athletes in addition to their technical, tactical, and physical ability, is essential.

Wherever possible, the BCSPL Evaluation Philosophy and Process shall rely on continuous evaluation of players to determine if they are at the BCSPL level and therefore suitable for selection to a BCSPL team that includes league play. For the clubs lacking this supporting programming infrastructure, a similar suitable evaluation environment should be created. Players should be evaluated within U13 team or training environments, and without "tryouts" taking place. "Open Tryouts" (or other similarly structured evaluation events) cannot be advertised for BCSPL programs.

In principle, players should participate in the BCSPL program that is closest to them. This reduces the amount of time that the player will spend travelling to and from training and games. The goal of the evaluation process is to determine if a player is at the BCSPL level, while considering the most effective and least stressful processes. Clubs should form their BCSPL teams from players within their club and partner clubs before considering players from other clubs.

With the above Philosophy in mind and in respect of the fact that *not every player can be evaluated in the same manner*, below is the **U14 to U18 Evaluation and Selection Guideline**.

5. U14 to U18 Evaluation and Selection Process

1. There are no boundaries in place within the BCSPL; therefore, a player from any location within BC has the opportunity to be selected by any one of the current BCSPL clubs.
2. Within the BC Soccer membership and for purposes of BCSPL Player Evaluation and Selection, clubs and their registered players are divided into four categories. For these purposes, a player's U13 club or league team (where they appear on an official team roster) defines where they are officially registered* (BC Soccer registration) and the category into which they would fall below:

Player Categories:

A = Players currently registered with a BCSPL club.

B = Players currently registered with a BCSPL "designated partner club."**

C = Players currently registered with a club that has no BCSPL affiliation.

D = Players currently registered with a BCSPL club or designated partner club who would like to be evaluated for BCSPL participation by a club *other than* the club at which they are currently registered.

* In the situation where a player is registered in a U13 club but pays for supplemental training outside their club, their U13 team is considered where they are committed to in this period.

** A designated partner's program is where it is clearly stipulated in writing (i.e., on a website) that a partnership exists between two clubs.

3. Evaluations should be a minimum of two (2) weeks in length and include at least six (6) training sessions.
4. U13 Players being evaluated for the upcoming U14 BCSPL season should be evaluated within their U13 team without "tryouts" taking place.
5. "Tryouts" (or other similarly structured evaluation events) cannot be openly advertised for any of the BCSPL age groups (U14 - U18), including social media and website(s).
6. In consideration of the Player and their registered Club, evaluation opportunities in training or matches should be coordinated without or with limited conflict wherever possible.
7. Player Identification and Evaluation Process:
 - a. Category "A" Players are training and playing matches with a BCSPL club and should be evaluated in that environment. A supplemental tryout is not necessary to determine if these players are at the BCSPL level.
 - b. Category "B" Players are training and playing matches with a "designated partner club" and can be evaluated in their home environment as a part of the working relationship with the BCSPL club or invited to be evaluated in the BCSPL club training environment to determine if they are at the BCSPL level. A tryout is not necessary to determine if these players are at the BCSPL level.
 - c. Category "C" Players may be scouted and observed in their current environment at any time and may be invited to be evaluated for BCSPL participation as outlined in BC Soccer Rule 21***, with the following requirements:
 - i. Permission to contact players to offer an opportunity for evaluation to join the BCSPL shall not be unreasonably withheld.
 - ii. If the player's current club Technical Director does not comply with the request, the BCSPL organization may contact BC Soccer for permission to approach the player's parent or guardian or coach/official of the player's current team.

- d. Category “D” Players may participate in the BCSPL evaluation process with the following restrictions:
- i. BCSPL clubs are not permitted to contact a player or parent or guardian of a player who is registered with another BCSPL club at any time. No attempt to recruit, persuade, or entice players from another BCSPL club shall be permitted. Recruitment refers to the unsolicited, deliberate, proactive, persuasion or attempted persuasion of a player registered to another organization, with the intention of enticing them to leave their current organization.
 - ii. Contact with players registered at other BCSPL organizations may be initiated by the player’s parents or guardians only. Clubs may offer an evaluation opportunity once contact has been initiated.
 - iii. If an evaluation opportunity is offered, the club must inform the parent/guardian that the Technical Director of the club at which the player is registered will be informed. The Technical Director of the club offering the evaluation must inform the Technical Director of the club at which the player is registered of the evaluation prior to it occurring.

***** RULE 21 - RULES FOR THE OPERATION OF BC SOCCER STANDARDS BASED LEAGUES**

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.

8. Invitations

U14 age group:

January 17 - July 18

- Clubs can offer an invitation to join a BCSPL team (beginning in September) to players that are currently registered at the U13 Age Group from January 17 to July 18.
- Players (through their parent or guardian) are not required to accept BCSPL roster invitations. Players and their parents/guardians are encouraged to be respectful of the club making the offer of a roster spot as they may be required to offer opportunities to other players on challenging timelines if a response is not provided in a timely manner.
- Responses to all invitations to join BCSPL teams are required within 7 days, unless the player is being evaluated by another club, in which case an extension can be requested for a response. The extension request must include a specific date by which a response will be provided and be tied to the evaluation process in which the player is involved.
- Official rosters will be submitted at the required deadlines for the 2025 BCSPL playing season (February to June) and the Coastal season of play (September to June).

U15 to U18 age groups:

- Clubs can offer an Invitation to join a BCSPL team to players that are currently registered in the BCSPL at the U14 to U17 age groups beginning the day after Premier Cup Finals until July 18 annually.
- Clubs can offer an invitation to join a BCSPL team (beginning in September) to players that are currently registered in lower divisions of play at the U14 to U17 age groups from April 1 to July 18.

- Players (through their parent or guardian) are not required to accept BCSPL roster spots. Players and their parents/guardians are encouraged to be respectful of the club making the offer of a roster spot as they may be required to offer opportunities to other players on challenging timelines if a response is not provided in a timely manner.
- Responses to all invitations to join BCSPL teams are required within 7 days of receipt of the invitation, unless the player is being evaluated by another club, in which case an extension can be requested for a response. The extension request must include a specific date by which a response will be provided and be tied to the evaluation process in which the player is involved.

*Please note that due to geographical/region-specific requirements these dates are not in effect for **Okanagan United FC (formerly Thompson Okanagan FC), Vancouver Island Wave powered by Pacific FC, and Nanaimo United FC**. For more information on these clubs' evaluation dates and timelines please visit their club website listed on Page 5 of this document.

6. Good Practices for Player Evaluation

Recommended Player Evaluation Process

BC Soccer recommends all member clubs commit to supporting and promoting a responsible, ongoing, progressive evaluation and assessment process as it relates to player identification, selection, and placement. This includes the removal of the reference and promotion of the “TRY OUT” mentality within their club and team atmosphere.

In addition to the ongoing evaluation and assessment of players there are three additional recommendations from BC Soccer for the evaluation, selection, and placement of players.

Evaluate Players in Match Play and Training Environments

- This provides the coaching staff the opportunity to evaluate and assess players in environments which present appropriate dilemma and problem-solving requirements within the technical, tactical, physical, and emotional categories.
- It provides opportunities for coaches to receive an overall understanding of the player(s) within realistic and longer-term environments.

Maintain an Appropriate Player-to-Coach Ratio

- A maximum number of players should be set at each session to provide for a more responsible evaluation process. The maximum roster size of a BC SPL team is twenty (20) players, therefore, a Coach-to Player ratio of 1:20 – 1:22 is the maximum. From 23 players, a minimum of two (2) coaches must be present and coaching the session.

Establish Evaluation and Assessment Criteria

- All evaluations and assessments should be conducted under the direction and guidance of the technical lead and supported by experienced coaches holding the Canada Soccer Youth Licence/Diploma.
- In addition, evaluations and assessments should be implemented using a universal system which identifies a player’s competencies over a period of time and in multiple environments.

Evaluating and Offering Places to players from other BC SPL Clubs

As outlined in the Evaluation Process, BC SPL clubs are not permitted to initiate contact with players registered with other BC SPL clubs. A player’s parent or guardian may initiate contact with a BC SPL club while registered with another BC SPL club. At the point that the player will be evaluated by the club being contacted, regardless of the process by which this occurs, the parent/guardian must be informed that the Technical Director of the club at which the player is registered will be informed. The Technical Director of the club conducting the evaluation must inform the Technical Director of the club at which the player is registered prior to conducting the evaluation.

There are no residency rules in the BC SPL, and players can select the club at which they will play. Players cannot be prevented from being evaluated by other BC SPL organizations if the player’s parent or guardian has initiated contact. As the player is currently registered with another BC SPL club, it is important that the club holding the player’s registration is aware that the player will be playing in another environment, unless it has policy indicating that it is not required to be informed. Following this initial step, the player may be evaluated within the training environment of

the BCSPL club that has been contacted by the parent or guardian. The evaluation should extend over a minimum of two weeks. It is important for the BCSPL club to ensure that evaluation opportunities do not conflict with the home club's training and matches, which should be considered the player's priority.

Offering Places outside of the BCSPL to Players from other Clubs

As outlined in BC Soccer Rule 21, movement of players to BCSPL clubs for the purposes of development and the opportunity to play at a level not available within the current club (i.e., promotion) is permissible. BCSPL clubs are strongly discouraged from offering spots on teams outside of the BCSPL to players from outside the club, unless that level of play is not available within the current club or it is supported, in writing, by the current club.

Offering Places in the BCSPL to Underaged Players

Having children train and compete in the correct environment is instrumental in their development as young people and as soccer players. Development must be considered across all four corners of a holistic model, including social/emotional, mental, physical, and technical/tactical. Ensuring that children are appropriately challenged in each of these four areas is crucial to their enjoyment and progression in the game. There are times when children should practice and compete with and against older children; however, these are relatively rare and, generally, children should play within their own age group.

The assessment of a child's ability to be successful and continue to develop should be treated very seriously and continually monitored. "Playing Up" should never be used as an incentive to join a club. If a player has been involved with a club for an extended period of time and may have played with older players prior to the BCSPL intake age, it may be appropriate to continue to do so. Given the need to understand the player's development across all four corners (social/emotional, mental, physical, and technical/tactical), offering places in the BCSPL to underaged players from other clubs is strongly discouraged. In support of this good practice, BCSPL intake rosters will be reviewed, with underaged players and their previous participation status (club, age group) identified.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

How can my daughter/son be evaluated for the BCSPL?

Refer to Evaluation Philosophy and Process sections above.

When would I know if my daughter/son was successful in being selected to a BCSPL club?

- *Invitations to join a BCSPL club for incoming U14 players may be offered from January 17 until July 18, 2025.*
- *Clubs can offer an Invitation to join a BCSPL team to players that are currently registered in the BCSPL at the U14 to U17 age groups beginning the day after Premier Cup Finals until July 18 annually to begin play in September for U15 to U18 age groups.*
- *Invitations to join a BCSPL club to begin play in September for incoming U15 to U18 players registered in lower divisions of play may be offered from April 1 until July 18.*

How will invitations to join a BCSPL club be communicated?

All invitations to join a BCSPL club will be in writing on official Club letterhead and come from the member club's technical director.

**Please note, NO verbal invitations will be communicated and should not be seen as official if received. In addition, no AGE GROUP coach is responsible for communicating any invitations to players as this will be the responsibility of the Club's Technical Director.*

Are players allowed to be evaluated by multiple BCSPL clubs?

Yes, players can be evaluated by multiple BCSPL Clubs, but it is not encouraged if you are not serious about joining the club doing the evaluation. Players being evaluated by multiple BCSPL Clubs and the clubs evaluating these players must still abide by the timelines and processes presented in this document.

What can I expect at the BCSPL club evaluations?

All evaluations must be conducted within an environment which provides for the health and safety of the players participating and should follow the following guidelines.

1. *Maximum number of players within each session to provide a responsible environment for evaluations.*
2. *Responsible player to coach ratio as it relates to the evaluators and assessors.*
3. *Provide technical and match playing environments to assess player age-specific competencies.*
4. *Provide access to information regarding the overall process from beginning to end.*

How many players may be on a BCSPL team in an age group?

The official roster of players may not exceed twenty (20) BCSPL-registered players at this level of play.

What are some of the selection protocols I should be aware of if my daughter/son is participating in evaluations?

It is the goal of the BCSPL to promote a responsible and positive experience within the evaluation and selection process. The following are NOT acceptable practices within this process and if you encounter any of these practices you are advised to report them to Sian Bagshawe, BCSPL General Manager, at sianbagshawe@bcsoccer.net

1. *BCSPL Club Coaching staff uses pressure tactics to convince you to join their club.*
2. *BCSPL Club Coach or TD only makes verbal offers and doesn't provide a written offer to join the club.*

What are potential consequences if a BC SPL Club Technical Director or Coach violated recognized protocols and any official rules or policies within the evaluation process?

Any Technical Director or member of a BC SPL club coaching staff who is deemed to have contravened the above guidelines may be subject to disciplinary action.

This disciplinary action may take the form of but is not limited to the following.*

- *BC SPL Club internal action.*
- *BC SPL suspension, fine or other recognized action.*

** Standard BC Soccer Premier League / BC Soccer discipline procedures will be in effect.*

For further information please go to the BC Soccer and the BC SPL website at,
<https://www.bcsoccer.net/competitions/bcspl/>