

Monday July 4, 2022



The BC adult leagues wish to issue a statement in response to the video issued by BC Soccer on June 27th, 2022. This video was presented as an antagonistic situation between member groups and the invocation of hypotheticals about the state of soccer here in British Columbia. Following the receipt of the letter from [Canada Soccer](#) in September 2021, there have been ongoing conversations between youth districts, adult leagues, and BC Soccer about the voting structure. The current arrangement of 50/50 voting rights between youth districts and adult leagues has historical links to the formation of BC Soccer as it currently operates from two past organizations that focused on youth soccer and adult soccer, respectively. The adult leagues are not looking to remain beholden to historical precedent as they recognize that such patterns can support inequitable practices. We do have concerns about any restructuring options which would set up a minority vote with no real ability to effect change in the governing organization.

BCSA President Gayle Statton said that this process had to respect the key stakeholders – the soccer players. The soccer players are represented in BC Soccer by fifteen youth districts and eleven adult leagues; they rely on us to express their needs to BC Soccer and that means having a voice that is meaningful within the organization. Right now, the proposal would be like the opposition party with a majority government – you can have the right to speak but not affect a vote or change the course of action. We would be doing a disservice to our membership if we did not work to have a more meaningful voice at the table than the one proposed by BC Soccer.

Two days after the special general meeting, BC Soccer issued Information Bulletin IB_2022-23 which contained the report of an external review of BC Soccer's Operational Efficiency by [Toa Consulting](#). The outcome of the report includes 32 key insights and 54 recommendations. The report had a wide scope but particularly relevant to the restructuring conversation is the insight that there is a disconnect between Board and staff about who BC Soccer should serve. This was shown using a ranking system for groups such as youth districts, adult leagues, players, coaches, referees, clubs, and others. Furthermore, there is a perceived missing connection between grassroots and small community soccer and BC Soccer. There is a belief that large members get a disproportionate amount of input and that smaller organizations are lost in the shuffle. Issues like these should be taken into consideration during any voting structure review to ensure that all aspects of equity are being addressed.

The premise of keeping a fair scenario for all parties is the foundation of all discussions held between the adult leagues and BC Soccer. Over the past seven months, all parties required time and information to evaluate how best to restructure the voting system with

respect for the history of the organization and looking forward to the future of soccer within BC. During these conversations, BC Soccer presented several options and their preferred choice to all members this spring. The reasons for the inadequacy of the rejected options were not clarified and counter options presented by the adult leagues were rejected without further discussion.

The adult leagues initiated communication with the youth districts to gain an understanding of their desired outcomes and needs from the vote restructuring. These conversations were ongoing when BC Soccer announced a follow-up meeting for members to bring counterproposals. The adult leagues and youth districts requested a delay on the meeting from BC Soccer to allow all sides to conclude their communications and gather input from members, this request was rejected. Following this premature feedback meeting, the date of the special general meeting to vote on BC Soccer's preferred restructuring choice was set. When the vote did not pass the proposal at the SGM, (special general meeting) held on June 1, 2022, all communications about the voting restructuring between BC Soccer and the adult leagues and youth districts ceased. BC Soccer made the decision to stop all negotiations.

Much of the video presented by BC Soccer were descriptions of possible sanctions by Canada Soccer to BC Soccer as an organization, painting a picture in which soccer would virtually halt in the province. When there is a breakdown in discussions, the reasonable response is not to punish all parties but to introduce mediation to help talks. BC Soccer's constitution states that they prioritize the alternative dispute resolution methods of mediation to resolve conflicts. The timeframe provided by Canada Soccer to resolve the vote restructuring is until BC Soccer's next AGM, November 2022. There is still sufficient time for all parties to come back to the table and take part in good faith, two-way communication and arrive at a fair and equitable solution as instructed by Canada Soccer.

To frame the current situation as youth districts versus adult leagues is to ignore their shared goals. We are an enthusiastic community that respect the game and all who enable people to participate whether that is to play for the first time – recreationally or competitively – or for life. Our purpose is to raise people up through participation in our chosen sport – this is a shared purpose between youth districts, adult leagues, and BC Soccer. When youth players age out of youth districts, they are welcomed into the adult leagues as players, as referees, as trainers. The adult leagues value their relationship with the youth districts and recognize their impact on the future of the sport. Youth and adult players just want to be able to play the game in a safe environment; youth districts and adult leagues work to provide that outcome with the support of BC Soccer.

The adult leagues are prepared to talk with the youth districts and BC Soccer; we want to work on solutions for the betterment of the game - for youth and adults across the province.

Approved by the 9 Adult Leagues below

BC ADULT LEAGUES

BMSA Burnaby Men's Soccer Association; **FVSL** Fraser Valley Soccer League; **LIWSA** Lower Island Women's Soccer Association; **MIWSL** Mid Island Women's Soccer League; **MWSL** Metro Women's Soccer League; **NSWO30** North Shore Women's O30; **RASA** Richmond Adult Soccer Association; **VISL** Vancouver Island Soccer League; **VMSL** Vancouver Metro Soccer League.