

November 5, 2020

Attention: BC Soccer Members

From: BC Soccer

Subject: Follow up to Proposed Youth District Association Standards for New Club Membership Applications

In follow up to the [Proposed Youth District Association Standards for New Club Membership Applications document](#), circulated September 4th, 2020, BC Soccer would like to thank those who submitted their questions/feedback. In total, five organizations submitted feedback, including from three associate members and two Youth District Association members.

Over the last three weeks, BC Soccer’s internal group that has been actively involved in the process and discussions to date, has been reviewing the feedback and questions received. Some points of feedback were easily addressed with simple amendments; however, other points of feedback prompted larger discussion about what is best for soccer in British Columbia. Ultimately, it was agreed that Youth District Associations need to be as inclusive as possible, in a way that responsibly onboard new clubs and continues to support current clubs.

Based on this, below is a summary of updates that will be made to the Proposed Youth District Association Standards for New Club Membership Applications document (hereinafter, the “Standards document”). Additionally, BC Soccer received a couple of key questions for which answers are also shared below.

SUMMARY OF UPDATES

Field Space

Feedback suggested that the requirement of “how much” field allocation was not clear; therefore, the Standards document will be updated to reflect that the allocation required is the amount that allows for safe training and match play for all of the applicant club’s registered players.

Rationale: Field space and allocation varies by municipality and/or District. The amount of field allocation required for all players varies based on the age and level of players; therefore, in reviewing a membership application, only a District would be able to determine the specific amount that is reasonable and sufficient for the new club.

Bonds

The proposed maximum bond of \$25,000 will be amended to a maximum of \$10,000.

Rationale: Feedback received stated that if a \$25,000 bond were implemented, it would be a barrier to application, let alone inclusion. In the original [template provided last year](#), the maximum bond was noted at \$10,000, for which there were no objections. The initial rationale (as discussed by BC Soccer’s 2018-2019 Associate Advisory Working Group) for having a bond in place which was to ensure a new member club had financial backing, especially if that club were a newly operating organization. Youth District Associations did not want to risk incurring expenses on behalf of a club if they were not sure if the

club could provide reimbursement. Further, this would also to deter otherwise unproven clubs (often allegedly started by disgruntled individuals whereby operations, historically, would cease within one year).

With this in mind, and considering that in the first instance, most new club applicants would likely be current associate members of BC Soccer that have been operational for three years or more, a maximum bond of \$10,000 is reasonable because it provides Youth District Associations financial security, deters unproven new clubs, yet, is not a financial barrier for clubs seeking membership that have been operational for multiple years.

Budgets

The requirement for a club applicant to provide a budget for the next two fiscal year will be reduced to require a club applicant to provide a budget for only the next fiscal year.

Rationale: Budgeting two years out is challenging and unrealistic in some cases.

Registering Players

The optional item which would allow Youth District Associations to require club applicants to commit to registering up to a maximum 5% of the District's total unique player registration from the previous year will be amended to a maximum of 2%.

Rationale: After much discussion, various calculations, and consideration to the geographical realities across the province, it was determined that 5% was much too large a number. The original template provided last year stated 3%; however, in larger Districts (8500+ players), even 3% could result in a number high enough to become a barrier to application. Further, in some cases, 3% would not be allowed by the Proposed Standards document which already stated, "the lesser of 250 or 3% of total unique registration". Therefore, 2% is more reasonable and realistic for large to medium size Youth District Associations. In smaller Youth District Associations, 2% would not be enough to meet the minimum of 44 players; therefore, the 44 player requirement would take precedent, which could be challenging as is.

Restriction of Eligibility for Highest Level of Programming

The optional, additional item that would allow Youth District Associations to prohibit a new club member from applying to deliver programming at the highest level within the Youth District Association for a maximum of three years will be amended to a maximum of one year.

Rationale: Some soccer clubs that apply for membership with a Youth District Association may have already been operational for many years, potentially as long as (or longer) than some currently affiliated clubs. Similarly, these potential applicant clubs have worked to create well-developed programming that could be worthy of providing the highest level of programming within a Youth District Association. Based on this, prohibiting the opportunity to apply to deliver the highest level programming for longer than one year would not be leveling the playing field, which is one of the goals of including for-profit/not-for-profit/academy clubs. Further, a Youth District Association that implements a fair and impartial process to determine which clubs provide the highest level programming within the District, would likely weed out potentially new/unqualified clubs naturally.

Business Plan

The requirement for a new club applicant to provide a business plan will be removed.

Rationale: The requirement to provide a business plan would be somewhat repetitive with the other minimum requirements and member obligations; further, the review of a business plan by a Youth District Association would not be relevant to the application. Whether a business plan is of “sufficient quality” would require the District to have a number of criteria in place and that could end up being a barrier to application.

Technical and Operational Plan

The requirement for a new club applicant to provide a technical plan and an operational plan will become optional for a Youth District Association to include in its application criteria. Additionally, a Youth District would only be allowed to do so if these items are already required of the Youth District Association’s current club members.

Rationale: If Youth District Associations do not regularly require current club members to provide a technical plan or an operational plan, then it does not make sense for them to require it of a new club.

Referee Programming

To be added as an option for Youth District Associations, will be a requirement for new club members to provide referee programming.

Rationale: If a new club is joining the District and participating in match-play, more referees will be needed. If current clubs (or the District) provide referee programming to support match play it would be reasonable that a new club be held to the same standard of referee program delivery.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Will BC Soccer be providing a templated application form (similar to the one circulated last year)?

Answer: Yes, to assist Youth District Associations, a template and supplemental scorecard are currently in development. The template includes all of the mandatory and optional criteria that a Youth District Association may implement and the scorecard is designed to lead a more objective review by Youth District Association Membership Committee/Panel members. They will be made available in Word and Excel formats for Youth District Association’s use.

2. Will BC Soccer be handling any potential appeals that result from a membership application?

Answer: Yes, through the independent Appeal Chair of BC Soccer and appeals policy and procedures as outlined in the Judicial Code and Policies of BC Soccer.

Next Steps

As referenced in previous related memos [available on BC Soccer’s website](#), on Saturday, November 7, 2020 the Full Active Members of BC Soccer will vote on bylaw amendments that, if carried, would allow for-profit organizations to become members of Youth District Associations, and, remove the ability of for-profit organizations to be members of BC Soccer. Should those amendments carry, BC Soccer will seek to circulate the updated Youth District Association Standards for New Club Membership Applications document which reflects the updates noted above, along with the application template and scorecard.

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