



CLUB PHILOSOPHY AND CODE OF CONDUCT

PHILOSOPHY

Vancouver Athletic Football Club (“VAFC”) is run by volunteers and elected directors. The Club’s mission is to organize and encourage youth to play soccer in our local communities, in a supportive environment which promotes and values fair play and skill development.

In carrying out its mission, VAFC’s goals are to provide players with opportunities to learn and to enjoy the game of soccer through development of:

- individual and team skills;
- dedication to practice and self-improvement;
- commitment to team and club; and
- values of sportsmanship, fair play, inclusiveness, diversity and respect.

Ultimately, VAFC seeks to promote a lifelong involvement in soccer based on the notion that playing the game is fun.

VAFC endorses and follows the B.C. Soccer Association (“BCSA”) Long Term Player Development (“LTPD”) model, which is a player-centered approach that provides guidelines for correct training, competition and recovery based on scientific principles of human development and athlete training, combined with the knowledge of expert coaches. Player-centered means VAFC respects the developmental needs of players first and foremost. VAFC ensures that young players have fun while they learn so they want to continue playing. It also means VAFC provides challenging opportunities for special talents so they can develop their abilities and pursue excellence.

VAFC endorses the BCSA recommendation that 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 to and promotion of the “try-out” mentality within the club and team atmosphere. All evaluations and assessments are conducted under the direction and guidance of the VAFC Head Coach, supported by experienced and trained coaches.

Games are to be played with an emphasis on enjoyment, sportsmanship, responsible player development and talent identification practices, education and respect for teammates, opponents and referees.



CODE OF CONDUCT

For Players

At VAFC, players are taught the structure and discipline of training, along with dedication and commitment to team and club. Individually, players are taught to develop internal motivation to work hard to promote success both on and off the field.

Players are also taught to develop respect for teammates, their opponents, match, team and club officials, as well as parents and spectators from their own team and from opposing teams. This is accomplished through an understanding of sportsmanship, camaraderie and fair play.

Violent play, trash talking, disrespectful conduct or gestures, threats or harassment on the part of players will not be accepted at VAFC.

Players who engage in such conduct may be subject to formal or informal discipline, either through the policies and procedures of the BCSA or through internal VAFC processes.

For Coaches & Team Officials

The mission of coaches and team officials is to convey soccer knowledge and social skills to young players. To achieve this, coaches and team officials must understand a child's individual characteristics and take into account age and skills. Coaches and team officials must teach through encouragement and positive reinforcement. Coaches and team officials are the most important influence on players; those who positively guide, mentor and help players to enjoy the game will promote a lifelong enjoyment of soccer.

The person who accepts the responsibility of coaching a soccer team is a special kind of person who should understand people, particularly youngsters. This person should also have a deep interest in the players and have a genuine enthusiasm that can be passed onto the players. When a person assumes responsibility to coach a team, the individual also accepts a responsibility to the players, to their parents, to the club and to the game of soccer.

The following is a partial list of responsibilities of youth soccer coaches and other team officials:

Player Safety

1. It is recommended that coaches and team officials become certified in first aid and are aware of their club, league, district, or provincial requirements in this area.
2. Be prepared to handle first aid situations as well as medical emergencies at all practices and games, both home and away.
3. Have and know how to use a first aid kit and ice.
4. Know 911 procedures and the nearest telephone location.



5. Know the location of the nearest medical facility.
6. Follow up on all injuries with parents or guardians.
7. Know and understand the laws of the game, rules and policies.
8. Inspect players' equipment and field conditions for safety reasons.
9. Utilize proper teaching and instructing of players regarding safe techniques and methods of play.
10. Implement appropriate training programs to make sure players are fit for practice and competition.
11. Supervise and control players so as to avoid injury situations.

Player Development

1. Teach the players the skills, strategies and rules of soccer.
2. Develop the child's appreciation of the game.
3. Teach the players the benefits of teamwork and co-operation with their fellow players.
4. Keep a proper perspective on winning and losing.
5. Be sensitive to each child's developmental needs.
6. Educate the players to the technical, tactical, physical and psychological demands of the game for their level.
7. Implement rules and equipment modifications according to the players' age group.
8. Allow players to experience all positions.
9. Players need to have fun and receive positive feedback.
10. Practice should be conducted in the spirit of enjoyment and learning.
11. Strive to help all players reach their full potential and be prepared to move to the next stage of development.



Describe Expectations and Set Example for Conduct and Responsibility

1. Set out clear expectations at the beginning of each season. Describe and explain to parents the VAFC philosophy, your coaching philosophy and your expectations about the commitment required of each player and family on the team, as well as all team officials.
2. Schedule a team meeting at the beginning of each season to discuss expectations with players and parents. Provide plenty of opportunities for questions and to address concerns.
3. Set out a mechanism for providing and receiving feedback, for communicating with players and parents and to address issues that may arise over the course of the season. Make sure this mechanism is in keeping with the Conflict Management Policy set out below.
4. Show the players, by personal example, proper conduct on and off the soccer field.
5. Arrange for others to conduct the practices or the games if you are unable to attend.
6. Ensure that no player is left on his or her own while waiting for a ride home after a game or practice. By the same token, parents have an obligation not to put coaches or team officials in a position to be looking after children outside game or practice hours, except in unforeseen circumstances.
7. Advise any parents and spectators who may be interfering with the game or the referee that they are in serious violation of the rules of soccer, and that they could be asked to leave the field of play. Be prepared to take steps to control your parents by asking them to leave the field of play or to stop your team from playing.
8. The basic philosophy underlying these rules is that every child should be given the opportunity to play in all practices and games regardless of ability.
9. No youngster can be denied the opportunity to play because of a lack of ability.
10. The good of every individual involved should be kept uppermost in the mind(s) of the person(s) responsible for the team on the field.
11. Create an environment in which the skill level of the players will improve and children will generally find it a meaningful and enjoyable experience.
12. If the coach is capable, discipline can be maintained without resorting to authoritarian measures. If the coach is not capable, the team will become an unruly gang, unable to respond to group discipline. Consequently, they will bring no credit to themselves, their coach, the club or the game.
13. It is assumed that a team whose players frequently incur penalties may be judged to have a coach not capable of teaching the players to conduct themselves in a manner creditable to the game.



14. Know and follow all rules and policies set forth by clubs, leagues, districts, provincial and national associations.
15. Set a standard of good sporting behaviour and work in the spirit of cooperation with officials, administrators, coaches and spectators to provide the participants with the maximum opportunity to develop.
16. Be a positive role model. Encourage moral and social responsibility. Keep the sport in proper perspective.
17. Coaches should continue their own education in the sport. Coaches should strongly consider registering for BCSA coaching courses offered through VAFC.

Some coaches will always want to win at all costs, regardless of whether or not there are league standings. This is an unfortunate reality of community children's sport. However, the LTPD approach to competition, particularly for players U-12 and under and for players in Silver and Bronze streams of Divisional soccer, provides the best overall incentive for coaches and players to focus on broad based player development instead of a "win at all costs" approach.

For Parents & Spectators

Remember that children play organized sports for their own fun. They are not miniature professionals.

Be on your best behavior. At all times, refrain from using abusive, insulting or profane language or gestures or from harassing players, team officials, game officials or other spectators.

Applaud good plays or attempts by your own team as well as the visiting team. Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them there would be no games.

Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a competition. Condemn the use of violence in all forms. Respect the officials' decisions. Always encourage players to play according to the rules.

Stay off the field.

Provide a healthy atmosphere for children to build both athletic and life skills. Children model their behavior after the adults who care for them and they often learn more from what they observe than what they are told. It is important for adults to set a good example.

- ❖ Suggested reading: "[The Educated Parent](#)" on BCSoccer.net – found under Member Services > Best Practice Guides.

Towards Referees & Match Officials

Referees are in charge of the game. They need each team's support and respect in carrying out their duties. Dissent from players, team officials, parents or spectators is unacceptable. There will always be calls you disagree with; everyone has to learn to accept that aspect of sports. Do not question calls, or badger or harass referees during or after the game. BCSA has declared this to be a zero-tolerance issue



and may result in discipline. VAFC endorses this approach.

Team officials are responsible and accountable for the behavior of parents and supporters. VAFC will take all precautions to prevent players, team officials and spectators from threatening or assaulting anyone present at games, especially the referee and linesmen before, during or after the conclusion of the game. Any actual or attempted physical contact with referees can lead to very serious penalties from the BCSA up to and including a one to five year suspension from soccer.

Please remember that most referees are players themselves. In particular, most of the referees for House League games are Divisional soccer players. While they are trained, some of them will have limited refereeing experience. Cut them some slack and provide positive reinforcement.

BCSA defines harassment as any verbal or written (including e-mailed) comment, conduct or gesture directed towards an individual or group of individuals, which is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, malicious, threatening, degrading or offensive.