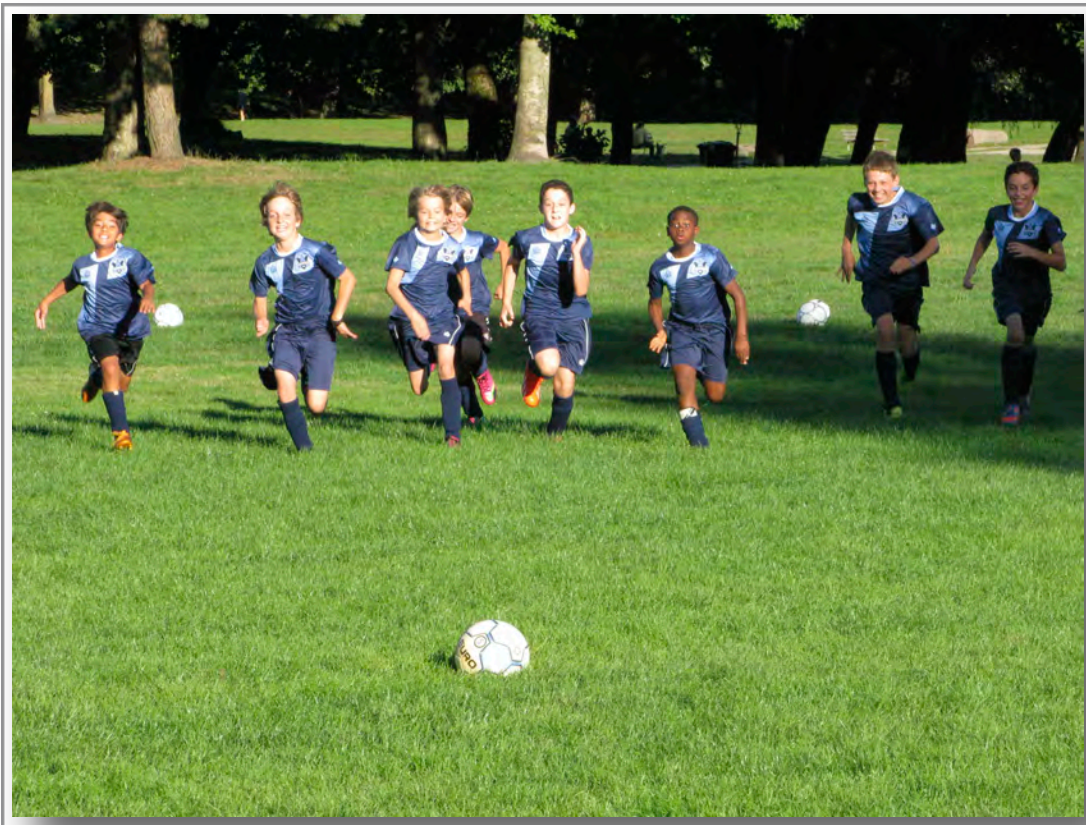




VANCOUVER **ATHLETIC FC**



## 2013/2014 SEASON START-UP GUIDE



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## ESTABLISHING A NEW TRADITION

By VAFC President Daniel Getz

On behalf of Vancouver Athletic FC, I am pleased to welcome families to the start of the 2013/2014 soccer season. This is our club's first full season operating as VAFC, with a single board of directors and single set of club officials. While our new structure is streamlined, our operations from the board on down continue to be managed by a cross-section of people from our former individual member clubs. This is important to maintain continuity and connection to our roots and our collective club history. Nevertheless, the club is excited to establish a new tradition for youth soccer in Vancouver.

This is my first season as VAFC President, although I previously served on the board of DPSC for several years and was deeply involved in the process to create VAFC. I am very pleased to be working with a dedicated and, in many cases, long-serving group of volunteer directors, including Karen MacDonald, who is our Vice President, and who has been involved with the club for many, many years. Over the course of the season, we encourage you to share your thoughts with us on how things are going, both on and off the pitch. You can find a list of director names, portfolios and contact information on our website, at [www.VAFC.ca](http://www.VAFC.ca).

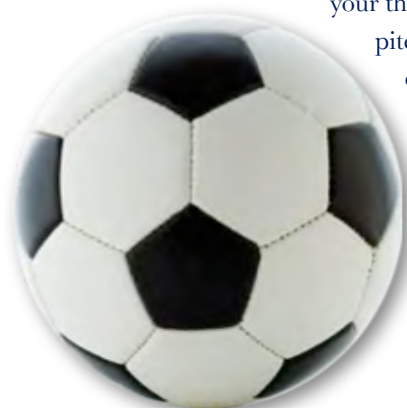
VAFC boasts more than 1,600 registered players, ages 5 to 18. These players make up more than 150 teams participating in House League and Divisional soccer. We always encourage boys and girls in our community to come and play soccer - the world's greatest game - no matter their age or previous experience.

Cont.

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On the weekends, our various soccer pitches are hives of activity; from the youngest House League players on the small-sided fields at Douglas Park, Trout Lake and Garden Park, to the 9 and 10-year olds getting used to bigger pitches, to the teenagers running full-tilt on full sized fields throughout the city and across Metro Vancouver, soccer is everywhere. As a coach of two teams myself (U-12 boys and U-12 girls), as a club director and now as President, I get an enormous thrill from watching our players take the field to represent our club. It is also my great pleasure to have the opportunity to meet and speak with the supportive families who form the backbone of VAFC and propel us forward.

In the coming weeks and months, VAFC is embarking on an ambitious program to improve and, in some cases, develop for the first time, a comprehensive set of club documents and policies for everything from player safety, codes of conduct and conflict management to playing up and player assessments, and from financial assistance and sponsorship to tournament and coaching course reimbursement. Please be patient with us as this is an enormous task. In the end, we hope that clearly formulated and well-publicized documents about all aspects of club operations will help to provide transparency and clarity for members and serve to provide answers to many of the kinds of questions that we as directors now find ourselves answering from time to time. As each policy or document is approved by the board, it will be published on our website. Eventually all of these policies and documents will be posted.



The basic philosophy that underlies our club, its approach, operations and policies, programs and documents that will eventually be published is set out below in this newsletter. I hope that all families will take the time to read about the mission and goals of VAFC and understand how our philosophy guides us in our approach to soccer.

I encourage you, for now, to go to [www.VAFC.ca](http://www.VAFC.ca) and check out what is already there. In particular, I hope you will read the Sport-Related Concussion Guidelines for Parents we have posted on our club website via ThinkFirst-SportSmart:

[http://www.douglasparksoccer.ca/docs/concussion\\_parent.pdf](http://www.douglasparksoccer.ca/docs/concussion_parent.pdf)

I hope that you will have a rewarding, challenging and, foremost, fun-filled season, to create fantastic soccer memories. I look forward to seeing and meeting you on the field!

Dan.

## Club 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
- 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.



### A Good Example of Good Sportsmanship

*If a player on the opposing team is down injured and your team has the ball, one of your players should deliberately kick the ball out of play so that the referee can stop the game and have the player attended to. If you are with the injured player and the opponents deliberately kicked the ball out of play so that your player could be attended to, it is also good sportsmanship to throw the ball in to a player on the opposing team when play resumes.*



# CODES OF CONDUCT

## 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.

## 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 BCSCA or through internal VAFC processes.

### Suggested Reading

*"The Educated Parent" on BCSoccer.net*

## 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 on the VAFC website.

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. Know and follow all rules and policies set forth by clubs, leagues, districts, provincial and national associations.
13. 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.
14. Be a positive role model. Encourage moral and social responsibility. Keep the sport in proper perspective.
15. 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.



## 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.

## Criminal Record Check

All VAFC club officials (directors, coordinators) and team officials (coaches, assistant coaches, managers) must provide an up-to-date criminal record check. Each season, these checks must be completed by August 8 for Divisional teams and September 5 for House League teams.

The BCSA has partnered with myBackCheck.com to help clubs obtain criminal record checks for volunteers. This online system allows volunteers to receive results within one business day. VAFC covers the \$25 cost for its volunteers to complete a criminal record check.

**PLEASE NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU MUST RECEIVE AN INVITATION FROM THE CLUB PRIOR TO INITIATING THIS PROCESS.**

Please contact the VAFC Administrator if you have not received an invitation.

A criminal record check obtained through this system is valid for three (3) seasons.



### Code of Conduct Agreements

*At the start of each season, VAFC circulates code of conduct*

*agreements to be read, understood, accepted, signed and lived up to by players, team officials and parents. These will be distributed by team officials. The club encourages parents and guardians to discuss the codes of conduct with players and to refer back to them*

## Playing Fields & Field Status

VAFC is based at a number of grass fields across our three House League Chapters:

Grandview Legion Chapter	Garden Park - <a href="#">1851 Garden Drive</a>	Clinton Park - <a href="#">2690 Grant Street</a>
Douglas Park Chapter	Douglas Park - <a href="#">801 W. 22nd Ave</a>	
Vancouver Girls Chapter	John Hendry (Trout Lake) Park - <a href="#">3300 Victoria Drive</a>	

During the season, the status of fields for all House League games will be updated on our website, as well as through the club's Twitter feed and Facebook page. Generally speaking, field status will be updated by 4 p.m. every Friday.

For the locations of many of our alternate gym and gravel fields for House League soccer, as well as a number of the artificial turf fields used by Divisional teams in Vancouver, refer to this Google Map index as a reference:

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ic=UTF&msa=0&msid=201673251212920042192.0004aa28a9d69cc849fcd>

For away and alternate field locations at Divisional level, check the BC Soccer Central website's fields page:

<http://www.bcsoccercentral.com/Fields.htm>

For information on field status for other Vancouver fields, including artificial turf fields, refer to Vancouver Park Board Field Status Page:

[http://cfapp.vancouver.ca/parkfinder\\_wa/index.cfm?fuseaction=FAC.FieldStatus](http://cfapp.vancouver.ca/parkfinder_wa/index.cfm?fuseaction=FAC.FieldStatus)



*VAFC is always on the lookout for new referees, especially for House League games. Referees are paid for each game. Please contact the VAFC Administrator if you are interested in becoming a referee. VAFC provides training for all new referees at no charge.*



*Our next referee courses will be offered on the following date: Sunday, September 8 from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Grandview Legion*

## Practice Times

One of the biggest challenges each season is assigning practice times for teams. This process has become even more challenging in recent seasons as the number of players at the club has grown yet the number of available practice facilities in Vancouver has not kept pace. Before the start of each season, teams are asked to submit preferences for practice times and

locations and then an extremely dedicated group of club officials spends countless hours trying to accommodate team requests. As you can no doubt imagine,

this is a very difficult process – both for the club to deal with more demand than supply, inevitably overlapping preferences and for teams and families waiting to sort out their schedules for both soccer and non-soccer activities during the season.

Our approach in assigning practice times is to provide at least one turf practice time for each Divisional level team, with



Gold teams getting preference for a second practice on turf. Additional remaining turf slots are distributed thereafter.

Inevitably, it is impossible to satisfy all preferences. VAFC is actively trying to obtain additional practice times at additional practice facilities. In the meantime, please be understanding of the process and its limitations and have patience.

The practice schedule for Divisional teams is generally released the week prior to the first scheduled league games of the season (generally the Labour Day weekend). The gym schedule for House League

teams is released a few weeks later.

VAFC is looking at implementing a different system for practice time allocation for next season. In particular, to the extent it's possible, we are looking at providing teams with notification of their practice times for the following season by the end of the current season. No decisions have been made on this process yet.

## Team & Game Guidelines

BCSA sets a number of guidelines for team formation and game play.

House League teams are permitted to carry a maximum of 12 players on their rosters. Divisional teams are permitted to carry a maximum of 18 players.

BCSA does not allow a player to “play down” (on a younger team) under any circumstances. In exceptional cases, VAFC may arrange for a player to “play up” (on an older team), provided the player obtains

specific approval after an assessment by the VAFC Head Coach. Please refer to the VAFC Playing Up Policy on our website.

VAFC also follows BCSA guidelines with respect to playing time. Overall, playing time is dependent on a player's health and on meeting the expectations of the team regarding attendance and participation at games and practices, thereby having demonstrated a commitment to the team. As noted above, it is recommended that all teams hold a meeting with players,

parents and team officials at the start of each season. At this meeting, team officials should outline expectations of players and families both on and off the pitch, including attendance and participation requirements, playing time policies, parent/guardian involvement, as well as coaching style and philosophy. Team officials should also set out a clear line of communication to discuss any questions or issues that arise, particularly with respect to playing time. Players

cannot develop if they are not playing regularly.

### **House (U-6/7 to U-10)**

Players must play a minimum of half a game, each game, with playing time in each half. Playing positions, including goalie, should be regularly rotated. VAFC emphasizes the importance of developing interest and skill in goalkeeping.

### **Divisional (U-11 to U-18)**

Distribution of playing time is at the coach's discretion. However, our aim is that all players play at least half a game, averaged over games attended during the season. It is recommended that all players participate in Cup games, but this is not mandatory. **The 50% rule applies to all teams, from Gold to Bronze, without exception.**

### **Scoring guidelines for House League (U-6/7 to U-10)**

Scores are to be kept for team balancing purposes only.

Mismatched games with a score spread of greater than four goals are not acceptable. Any team which takes a lead of four goals must take immediate and tactful measures to ensure that the playing field is "leveled". Here are some strategies:

Frequent scorers must pass the ball to a teammate

Remove a player from the leading team and/or add a player to the losing team

Mix all the players from both teams and play with two new re-formed teams.

### **Laws of the Game**

[FIFA Laws of the Game](http://www.canadasoccer.com/fifa-laws-of-the-game-s15089) are available on the Canadian Soccer Association website:

<http://www.canadasoccer.com/fifa-laws-of-the-game-s15089>

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## **Game Responsibilities**

### **House League**

At the House League level, the team listed on the schedule as the first home team of the day is responsible for field set-up. This includes retrieving the appropriate goals/nets and corner flags from storage and setting them up prior to the start of the game. If your game is on grass, please take the spiked corner flags which are for grass use AND NOT the weighted corner flags which are for turf field use. It's not fair for divisional teams to have to run around grass fields searching for their corner flags.

The last home team listed on the schedule for the day is responsible for taking down goals/nets and corner flags and putting them back in storage. Keys to the various club storage facilities will be distributed at the beginning of the season along with the rest of your equipment.

Please keep the storage facilities neat and be responsible with the club's equipment. Replace nets in storage bags neatly. Treat the equipment as though it was your own and leave it as you'd like it left for you.

### **Divisional**

Home teams are responsible for ensuring that the opposing team knows where and when the game is to be played. A team official should always double-check the game schedule, communicate it to their own team and make contact with the opposing team to confirm the game. This should be done during the week prior to the game and no later than Friday evening.

Home teams are always responsible for field set-up. VAFC has storage lockers containing nets and corner flags at Trillium and Memorial South turf fields. Each team will be given a set of keys for these storage lockers when equipment is distributed at the start of the season. Generally, the first home team listed on the schedule will be responsible for set-up and the last home team of the day will be responsible for take-down.

Each week, a field responsibilities schedule will be distributed to all VAFC Divisional teams. This will set out clearly who is responsible for what as well as detailing where nets and flags are to be retrieved from and returned to for games on fields other than Trillium or Memorial South.

Please keep the storage facilities neat and be responsible with the club's equipment. Replace nets in storage bags neatly. Treat the equipment as though it was your own and leave it as you'd like it left for you. If there are issues with the equipment or the state of the storage facilities, please contact the VAFC Equipment Manager.

Divisional teams are also required to present player and team official photo ID cards to the referee prior to the start of each game. Any player or team official without an ID card will not be permitted to participate in the game. If the person in charge of photo IDs can't make it to the game, ensure someone else gets the photo IDs to the game.

Divisional teams are also required to present two team lineup sheets to the referee for each game. The lineup sheet must list each player's name and jersey number. One lineup sheet is given to the opposing team and the other is retained by the referee. Electronic copies of blank lineup sheets will be distributed by age group coordinators at the start of the season.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

*Disciplinary infractions at the House League level will be dealt with by a VAFC Disciplinary Committee (a committee drawn from the Board of Directors).*

*Depending on their nature, disciplinary infractions by players, team officials and/or parents/guardians/spectators will be dealt with by either or both the VAFC Disciplinary Committee and/or the VYSA Disciplinary Committee (boys) or the B.C. Coastal Girls Soccer Association (girls). In general the club deals with issues raised by parents and players and the district bodies deal with issues raised by referees. Attendance at these disciplinary hearings when requested is mandatory.*

## VAFC Coach Development

### Coach Selection

With the very rare exception, VAFC coaches are volunteer parents who devote their time, skill, hard work and patience to coaching teams made up primarily of other people's children. VAFC is committed to supporting these volunteers with resources to help them develop their coaching skills.

At the House League level, age group coordinators solicit volunteers and assign roles and teams to volunteer coaches and assistant coaches. For Divisional level coaching positions, coaches submit applications to the VAFC Coach Selection Committee. The selection process for Divisional coaches seeks to balance coaching experience and qualifications with the level at which an applicant's child might be playing (bronze, silver or gold) as well as to ensure coaches are found for teams at all levels.

### Coaching Courses

Although coaches are volunteers, VAFC encourages all coaches to obtain the necessary level of coaching expertise and currently provides support through the BCSA Coaching Certification Pathway:

[http://www.bcsoccer.net/courses\\_workshops](http://www.bcsoccer.net/courses_workshops)

Many of the BCSA coaching courses are offered through VAFC at VAFC-booked facilities.

Generally, VAFC will pay for its coaches to attend appropriate coaching courses. All coaches wishing to register for a coaching course MUST obtain pre-approval from VAFC prior to registration. In some instances, VAFC will pre-pay for the course and in others the coach may be asked to pay and then obtain reimbursement from the club.

Please contact the VAFC Director of Player, Coach and Referee Development or the Head Coach for more information on how to determine the appropriate course to take, to obtain approval and for information on how to register.

### Coach Development Resources & Sessions

VAFC Head Coach Steve Weston offers free monthly coaching clinics. Details will be provided regarding times and locations as the season progresses.

In addition, time permitting, Steve is happy to attend specific team practices at the request of coaches. Please contact Steve to make arrangements.

## VAFC Player Development

VAFC runs a host of player development initiatives outside of regularly scheduled team practices and games. These range from in-season sessions during the week and on the weekend to spring and summer day camps. The program includes both free and paid sessions.

### House League U5/6 to U8

Player development for these age groups is free of charge. Sessions are integrated as part of the regular season schedule, with teams participating on a scheduled basis in player development sessions in smaller groups in place of in house game play on selected weekends. These sessions take place at Douglas Park and Garden Park/Clinton Park.

House League U9/U10 and Divisional up to U15

VAFC runs a paid player development for children at these age levels. The sessions are run on a cost recovery basis (i.e. not for profit), with payment going towards field rentals, professional coaches and the purchase of a VAFC jersey or jacket.

Players sign up for one session per week (Tuesdays or Wednesdays from 5 to 6:30 at Trillium or Sundays from 10:30 to 12 noon at Garden Park). Player development generally begins in October and runs to Christmas, then begins again in February until the end of the season. The rate is discounted slightly for players who sign up for both sessions at once.

Registration for these sessions is run through the VAFC website. Information on when to register and confirmation of times and costs will be communicated in the first few weeks of the season.

## Tournaments

There are many tournaments held throughout the year, hosted by various Metro Vancouver clubs. VAFC teams are encouraged to participate. A list of sanctioned tournaments is on the BCSA website:

<http://www.bcsoccer.net/sanctioned-tournaments>.

Every VAFC team is eligible to be reimbursed for entry in one tournament per season, up to a maximum of \$250 per team.

To apply for reimbursement, a team official should complete a **Tournament Entry Fee Reimbursement**

**Requisition Form** (found on the VAFC website) and submit it, along with proof of payment of the tournament entry fee, to the VAFC Treasurer.

VAFC will not directly submit payment for entry into a tournament or provide reimbursement to a team official prior to a team's registration in a tournament.





## VAFC Key Contacts 2013/2014

### Board Members

President	Dan Getz	president@vafc.ca
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## Club Officials

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