



CLUB STATEMENT

Richmond Football Club (RFC) is aware of the changing landscape of community soccer within the City of Richmond. It has always been RFC's mandate to provide the best environment for all youth soccer players in our community and RFC has always welcomed all genders to participate in soccer activities. Historically, once girls reached a certain age, RFC has directed female athletes to Richmond Girls Soccer Association (RGSA). We have always maintained a good relationship with RGSA and have respected this option for girls looking for female-focused programming.

As a youth soccer club, we are governed by Canada Soccer. In 2018, Canada Soccer initiated a new National Youth Club License which sets the highest standards for all aspects of a youth soccer club. The National Youth Club License also requires clubs to have programming from grassroots through to the highest level of provincial youth soccer – the BC Soccer Premier League ("BCSPL"). Previously, grassroots clubs could only have teams up to the Metro level. BC Soccer's BCSPL is also requiring clubs to have programs for all youth regardless of their gender and, therefore, is shifting away from single-gender clubs.

Last year, both RGSA and RFC wanted to pursue the National Youth Club License. After discussions between Directors from both clubs, the joint decision was to integrate RGSA with RFC and RFC would undertake the work to apply for the youth license. Shortly after agreeing to work together, RGSA made it clear that it was no longer interested in any collaboration between the two clubs and chose to exit the relationship and pursue a partnership with Fusion FC – a club in the BCSPL.

RFC is still interested in achieving the National Youth Club License as a way to help improve our club. Therefore, RFC has begun taking steps to expand our existing programs for female athletes to include all age groups because it is a league requirement for BCSPL.

UNIFICATION

The RFC Board of Directors remains open to collaboration and the creation of a unified club to serve all youth soccer players in Richmond. However, we must remain focused on providing the best programs, training and support that we can. As a "non-profit" grassroots club, this is our first and only objective. RFC was never looking to "take-over" RGSA nor are we attempting to poach teams, coaches, players or staff.

Our goal is to help encourage more youth to play soccer and as part of the National Youth Club License, we want to provide programs for all genders. As an initial step, RFC reached out to School District #38 to offer introductory soccer camps to female high school athletes. Our focus was on female athletes who were not already playing for a community club; however, the program was open to all players. Similarly, we have launched a spring “training-only” program for girls – which is complimentary training and not competitive play.

With respect to elite programming – beyond the Metro level – RFC has decided to work with all regional clubs within the BCSPL (sometimes referred to as HPL). We believe this offers a better pathway and more options for Richmond’s elite players.

OUR FOCUS: Richmond’s Youth

RFC has been extremely active in pursuing our goal to provide the highest quality soccer environment for all players regardless of age, ability or gender. Some of our initiatives in recent months include:

- Commenced an indoor league at elementary schools
- Created a training camp for girl’s high school soccer teams
- Offered professional and certified coaching assistance for high school soccer teams
- Secured sports-minded entrepreneurs to assist in sponsorship funding initiatives
- Enlisted internationally respected and licensed coaches that have specialization in women’s programming at the highest levels of the game
- Engaged a full-time Executive Director to oversee our management and programming

All of this has come as a result of our stated aim of **FOCUSING ONLY ON RICHMOND YOUTH IN SOCCER**. Recently, there have been many rumors around these initiatives. RFC is committed to improving the soccer experience for Richmond’s youth and will continue striving for the highest standards in youth soccer which includes achieving the Canada Soccer National Youth Club License and, as a part of BCSPL requirements, programs for girls. We are only concerned with providing a fun, friendly and high-quality environment for all children who want to play soccer.

THE FUTURE

RFC remains open to the creation of a single unified club to represent the best interests of all youth soccer players in Richmond and we will continue to advocate for all children who want to play soccer in the City of Richmond.

The RFC Board of Directors and Staff, thank you for being part of Richmond’s soccer community.