



VANCOUVER YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

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Background & History to support the VYSA decision not to affiliate 5 Marpole-Fusion Div 1 & 2 teams in August 2022.

The following is an attempt to summarize the background to the decision of the VYSA not to affiliate 5 Marpole-Fusion Div 1 & 2 teams in August 2022.

Although the VYSA is the governing body under BC Soccer for the City of Vancouver and the University Endowments Lands, the VYSA has virtually no oversight over high performance soccer which is governed directly by the BC Soccer which administers the BC Soccer Premier League (BCSPL). The VYSA governs grassroots recreational soccer having oversight over in-house leagues and clubs participating in the BCCSL. Currently there are seven affiliated clubs with over 6500 players registered with the VYSA. The VYSA mandate is basically to protect, preserve and improve grass roots soccer by promoting the bottom 95% of the playing pyramid. In doing so we try to develop and enforce policies that attract and keep players in the game to promote cradle to grave soccer. Divisions 2 and 3 are as important to the VYSA as Div 1. Maintaining viable cohorts and nurturing growth in all clubs is of paramount importance.

Fusion is a self admitted high performance club that is not affiliated with the VYSA. It was headquartered in Richmond and focused on attracting players from Richmond and Vancouver. Until 2018 no VYSA grassroots club had the right to participate in high performance soccer. The result was attrition of the VYSA clubs at the divisional levels as teams lost significant numbers of players at U13 and to a lesser degree in succeeding years. It was disruptive especially when VYSA clubs had sufficiently talented players to enter some teams in the high-performance leagues.

The CSA introduced the National Youth Club Licensing program (NYCL) to encourage and facilitate club growth and evolution in areas around player safety and development as well as club administration and governance which in turn furthered the goal of cradle to grave soccer. This enabled any of VYSA's clubs to apply for the highest level of

certification the NYCL which in turn allowed them to enter teams in the BCSPL high performance league. To this point VUFC is the only VYSA club that has completed this process. VAFC is in the process of doing so and ICSF has ambitions to find a way of continuing its proud tradition of developing high performance players.

Furthermore, the NYCL holders are required to support grass roots play so that the structure of the club is in the shape of a pyramid such that the club is committed to attracting the majority of its players at the Div. 2 and Div. 3 levels of play. The Clubs are intended to develop high performance players primarily from within their ongoing registrations who enter the club primarily in the U5-U9 age groups.

VYSA has had a New Club policy governing the admission of start-up clubs, the admission of non-affiliated clubs and changes to affiliated clubs that incorporate non-affiliated organizations within its organizational structure. The purpose is to ensure that a new club will comply with a variety of organizational requirements and be a benefit rather than a detriment to the maintenance and growth of the grassroots game in VYSA's District. BC Soccer required all Districts to update their policy for admitting new members when they abolished their Associate Member status and required those who had it and wished to enter league play to apply to Districts for full membership. BC Soccer guided this process and established some minimum standards and mandatory components that had to be incorporated. Districts had to submit their revised policy for accepting new clubs to BC Soccer for approval. VYSA did this and has a policy that has been approved by our governing body.

In December 2020, Fusion elected to amalgamate with Vancouver FC (VFC) and insisted that by doing so they had an unfettered right to all the benefits of a VYSA affiliated Club. The VYSA had asked for Fusion and VFC to consult with it before amalgamating and advised that the VYSA may not affiliate the amalgamated club merely by virtue of the amalgamation. Fusion and VFC (from now on to be referred to as "Fusion") proceeded to amalgamate in a vote that was primarily a proxy vote the vast majority of which were exercised by Fusion coaches or officials. In Feb 2021, the VYSA advised Fusion that it would not be affiliated with the VYSA without going through a formal process. That decision was upheld by a BC Soccer Judicial review. Fusion had also been notified by the VYSA in February 2021 not to represent itself as being a club that would be operating Div 1 teams in BCCSL. Fusion ignored this order and recruited players on the basis that they would be playing at Div 1 or in the BCSPL and formed teams that were expecting to play at Div 1. Fusion then commenced an action in Supreme Court claiming that the actions of the VYSA were oppressive or unfairly prejudicial and should be overturned. Fusion VFC lost and the decision of the VYSA was upheld. The VYSA offered to absorb

the Fusion Div 1 players into the affiliated clubs but most continued with Fusion and competed in the Fusion Academy.

Fusion, without further consultation with the VYSA applied in October 2021 under the BC Soccer approved New Member Admission policy to be affiliated for the 2022/2023 season. Although the VYSA New Member admission committee was open minded about the application and was comprised of a majority of members with no VYSA club affiliation, Fusion did not convince the VYSA committee that they would or could develop a grass roots club that would benefit the District and were denied membership in the VYSA. The VYSA Board voted against affiliation. The votes in all the legitimate decisions were either unanimously or overwhelmingly in support of the VYSA decision. At no time did the Chair vote as the custom is for the chair to vote only break a tie. Fusion was notified in or around February 2022. Fusion appealed and the independent BC Soccer Judicial Committee upheld the VYSA decision.

The VYSA became aware of a new “partnership” between Marpole SC and Fusion FC towards the end of February 2022 as it was referenced on the Marpole SC website. This “partnership” was a complete surprise to the VYSA as Marpole SC appeared to be on the verge of collapse and had had conversations with VYSA executives in the prior months to discuss their future. At the end of February and early March 2022 the VYSA attempted to obtain information about the Fusion-Marpole partnership from the new president of Marpole SC more than once.

Fusion-Marpole then advertised high performance options to players and held tryouts. Some of the parents of these Div 1 teams claim that they were attracted to Marpole SC because of Marpole's culture. This was puzzling as the Div 1 teams were identified as high-performance teams. Marpole had had no division one teams the prior year and very few in the prior decade. They had only 181 registered players in 2021-2022. They had no prior high-performance culture or experience. The VYSA's request for information was abruptly refused by Marpole's newly elected president. The VYSA received no further information about Marpole's intentions until receiving the teams Marpole wished to affiliate in June/July 2022. VYSA agreed to affiliate the obvious Marpole teams but noticed that there were 4 Div 1 and 1 Div 2 teams being entered. These teams were named Fusion, wore the Fusion name on the jersey, had Fusion coaches listed as their team coaches, were entered into the same divisions as that of Fusion's New Club application, were training with the Fusion Academy and travelled to tournaments with Fusion. Other information came to the attention of the VYSA that indicated a high degree of integration between Fusion and Marpole which together would trigger the New Club Application process. The VYSA informed Marpole that it would not affiliate these teams with Marpole and that Marpole was to supply further information and documentation to the VYSA

regarding its operations. Marpole SC has refused to supply this information, has attempted to disguise its relationship with Fusion, started a disinformation campaign intended to inflame public opinion and pressure B.C. governing bodies to circumvent their own policies and procedures, initiated a campaign of harassment of a board member including making calls to his work calling for his termination, and finally by using the influence of its members to obtain the assistance of the BC. Government associated sports bodies to influence the decisions of the VYSA.

The VYSA Board continues to be strongly united behind its decisions as are the VYSA affiliated clubs. The VYSA has, with through consultation with some of the Marpole-Fusion team representatives, offered to affiliate these teams directly with the VYSA under the VYSA colors on terms arising from a collaborative process to ensure the efficient functioning of these teams during the coming season. A summary of the options presented to these teams is attached.