



LANGLEY UNITED SOCCER ASSOCIATION

GENDER EQUITY IN SOCCER POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Langley United Soccer Association is committed to broadening access, ensuring opportunity, and equitably distributing resources for all participants of soccer.

2. BACKGROUND

Females are historically and significantly underrepresented in all areas of soccer participation, especially in terms of management, administration, coaching, playing, directors and officiating. Such disproportionate representation can be attributed to gender inequities found throughout the soccer continuum, including but not limited to the management of facilities, the marketing of available programs, and the establishment and availability of sport programs.

This policy extends to anyone who identifies as a female.

The intent and objective of this policy is to develop a soccer sector for the community of Langley, BC that is committed to upholding a balanced representation of gender in soccer. As the leader of the soccer in Langley, Langley United Soccer Association will provide strategic insight, direction, and capacity in order to help community residents, players, coaches, administrators, and officials on field or in the boardroom create equitable access to soccer at all levels of engagement with in our community of Langley.

3. Context

The most essential belief guiding this gender equity policy is that soccer and physical activity programs should be administered in a fair and unbiased way. Recognizing that gender equity benefits the entire soccer sector, all participants regardless of gender should have equitable opportunity to participate fully in physical activity, competition, coaching, administration, leadership, and officiating.

Laws establishing gender equity can be found in all levels of government, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Section 15 states that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination on the basis of sex (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982). Further, section 8(1) of the *British Columbia Human Rights Code* prohibits anyone from denying a person or class of persons “any accommodation, service or facility customarily available to the public” and from discriminating against a person or class of persons on the basis of sex (British Columbia Human Rights Code, 1973).

Canadian Heritage’s policy, entitled *Actively Engaged: A Policy on Sport for Women and Girls*, writes that policies designed to establish equity are “founded on the belief that **efforts to improve sport experiences for women and girls in sport will not only extend the benefits of sport to women and girls and facilitate their personal development, they will also improve sport experiences for all participants. It is therefore in the interest of all system stakeholders, including men, women, and organizations, to work towards a strengthened sport system for women and girls**” (Canadian Heritage, 2009, p. 3). The *Physical Activity and Sport Act* and *Canadian Sport Policy* are also dedicated to increasing sport participation for *all* Canadians, including women, and realize that engaging women and girls in sport and physical activity is crucial for the overall objectives of the *Canadian Sport Policy*. Enabling more women and girls to participate in sport and physical activity is not merely for the benefit of improving women’s sport – it is for the benefit of the entire sport sector in British Columbia.

Policies outlining what gender equity means in the context of sport participation also exist at the national and international levels. According to the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport, “the concept of ‘equality’ often results in programs and services for one group simply being made available to another. In contrast, ‘equity’ requires consideration of the unique needs, interests and experiences of a target group when developing and delivering services and allocating resources. Therefore, some services may be the same, while others may be completely different” (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, 2012, p. 2).

The internationally recognized *Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport* states that “equal opportunity to participate and be involved in sport... is the right of every woman” (Brighton Declaration, 1994). The *Brighton Declaration* was signed into action more than twenty years ago, yet progress on its ambitious objectives has stagnated. viaSport is in a unique leadership position in the province, and is driven by a mandate to not only lead by example, but to create and support a strong, efficient and inclusive sport system *for all participants* regardless of gender or ability.

4. Policy Objective and Results

The intent and objective of this policy is to develop a soccer sector for Langley United that is committed to ensuring balanced representation of gender in soccer. This policy will seek to establish and maintain a soccer system where all participants are provided with:

- Fair, unbiased, and equitable opportunities to participate in quality soccer programming, attain and sustain leadership roles, and access resources and facilities;
- A safe, supportive, inclusive, and relevant environment for sport participation.

Implementing this policy will lead to a soccer sector where:

- Women and girls are equitably represented in all forms of soccer
- Women and girls are actively engaged as players, participants, leaders, coaches, officials, and administrators in all forms and levels of our club.

5. Application and implementation

This policy will act as a guiding framework for the delivery of soccer initiatives.

6. Policy interventions

The following strategic objectives will be pursued through the implementation of this policy:

1. **Strategic Leadership**

- Provide strategy, direction, and leadership to the soccer sector by drafting, maintaining, and revising templates for Gender Equity Policies for use by sport organizations, facilities, and municipalities.
- Create supportive policies and programming that enable more women and girls to fully and equitably participate in sport and physical activity as well as related leadership and volunteer roles.
- Address the underrepresentation of women and girls in sport through the use of strategic initiatives, advisory groups and funding opportunities designed to enhance levels and quality of participation.
- Ensure that gender equity is a central component of all decision-making in the soccer sector, including funding and grant opportunities, communications, event hosting and human resource decisions.

2. **Advocacy**

- Promote the recognition of women's and girls' involvement in soccer, including the areas of participation, coaching, officiating, administration and leadership.
- Encourage more women and girls to participate through effectively targeted marketing campaigns.
- Identify and publicize opportunities for recognition, advancement, education, leadership and training.

3. **Knowledge Management and Development**

- Serve as a repository of information and resources on establishing and evaluating gender equity.
- Conduct gender equity audits of organizations and events.
- Collect relevant data and maintain statistics on women's and girls' sport participation, available training and leadership opportunities, and funding.
- Report on the data as appropriate.