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## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** MEMBER SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTORS & PRINCIPALS, LOCAL ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS, BCSS SPORT COMMISSIONERS  
**FROM:** JORDAN ABNEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**SUBJECT:** GUIDELINES AND DATA FOR REZONING  
**DATE:** DECEMBER 3, 2018  
**CC:** BCSS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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On behalf of the Board of Directors, please find enclosed a package to assist zones and commissions with planning and adjusting to the new BCSS zones, coming into effect in September 2019. For those unfamiliar, the membership approved a transition to nine zones from the current 7, effectively changing the current Lower Mainland and current Fraser Valley zones, into four new zones.

In this package you will find:

- i) **Guiding Principles and Recommendations Document**  
This contains information on what things cannot be altered, and what either zones or commissions have to determine. In addition, there is guidance on the various decisions to be made, in an effort to have more consistency between zones and sports, while still recognizing not every sport or zone is identical either and leaving some discretion to those directly involved.
  
- ii) **Zone Map and list of districts**  
This map will detail the zones for those unfamiliar with the new alignment
  
- iii) **Data**  
There are multiple pieces of data included to assist the zones and commissions.
  - A list of all schools, in each sport, broken down by tier
  - Third, is a list of just those schools that had a team registered in the last year, broken down by tier and sport.

We can appreciate that this will necessitate some significant changes for some areas of the province as well as some sports. We recognize that change can be difficult, but it is our hope that by providing this information, zones and commissions can find a good solution for any challenges brought on by the changes ahead.



I, along with the great staff at BCSS are here as a resource to help any zone or commission as they work through the process, and I encourage you to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jordan Abney", written in a cursive style.

Jordan Abney  
Executive Director  
BC School Sports



## **BCSS COMPETITIONS: GUIDING PRINCIPLES & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **BCSS ZONE CHAMPIONSHIPS**

#### ***1) OBJECTIVES OF ZONE CHAMPIONSHIPS***

- To provide a systematic, transparent, equitable and objective process for qualification into the Provincial Championships
- To provide meaningful and quality competition for the teams/athletes that have demonstrated a high competency through exhibition, regular season, and post-season play in an effort to enhance the educational and athletic experience provided to our student-athletes, in alignment with our mission and values
- To provide an equitable opportunity to determine the strongest teams/athletes to represent the zone at the provincial championships
- To enhance the significance and importance of the regular season and local association post-season play
- To operate a tournament structure that lessens the time required for the zone championships (a week or less) which in turn allows for regular season and exhibition play to be extended for all schools, allowing more students to play longer into each season of play.

NOTE: It should be recognized that on occasion, not every “strong” team will make their zone championship by virtue of losing an important contest at the local level. This is consistent with the objective of adding importance to league playoffs. However, the general goal is to ensure that more often than not, an equitable process is in place that generally allows the best teams to fairly earn a spot at the zone championship and have an equitable qualifying path to the provincial championships.

#### ***2) ZONE STRUCTURE***

- All zones and sports must follow the nine (9) BCSS Member approved zones.
- Neither zones nor BCSS Commissions are permitted to make exceptions or changes to the schools involved in a zone, or zone boundaries.
- All teams qualifying for a BCSS Provincial Championship, **MUST** qualify through their appropriate BCSS zone



- Student-athletes competing in individual sports must qualify for a BCSS Provincial Championship through their appropriate zone championship. Individual sports may have a process approved by the BCSS Sport Commission to allow students to apply for qualification without competing at zone championships in exceptional circumstances, and that process must be clearly defined and approved by the Executive Director
- No subset of schools or school specifically shall be granted a berth directly. The berths are awarded to the local associations in that zone.

### ***3) SIZE OF ZONE CHAMPIONSHIPS***

- This is at the discretion of the zone executive, with input from the administrators and AD's in their zone
- BCSS recommends that 25-35% of all registered teams per tier, per sport, in your zone, qualify for the zone championship.
- It is recommended that the minimum size for a zone championship be four (4) teams, and the maximum be sixteen (16).
- In addition to considering the above, the number of teams in a zone championship should be determined with consideration to how many berths the zone has to provincials. As a guideline, a zone championship should have 2.0-3.2 teams as berths in the provincial championship (ie. if the zone has 3 berths to provincials, the zone championship should be 6-10 teams. If the zone has 5 berths, the zone championship should be 10-16 (max) teams etc.
- In our individual sports, the traditional team concept will not apply, but the same philosophies should be used, in an effort to achieve the outcomes best applied to that sport.

### ***4) QUALIFYING INTO ZONE CHAMPIONSHIPS***

Berths into a zone championship must not be assigned to a specific school or subgroup. They must be allocated to a recognized Local Association, and it is the responsibility of the Local Association to determine their zone representatives, most commonly through a district or association playoff.

This following areas to be determined at the discretion of the zone executive, with input from the administrators and AD's in their zone



- Each recognized local association as defined by BC School Sports, shall have at least one representative at the Zone championships, as is consistent with the philosophy to provide one berth to every zone at the provincial level.
- Beyond that, the zone executive, may determine how to allocate the remaining at-large berths into the zone championship based on the size of the zone championship as decided above.
- It is important to also put a cap on the number of teams from any one local association. The appropriate cap will depend on the number of berths, but generally speaking the maximum berths for any single Local Association should be no greater than 50% of the teams. Each zone may determine a lower maximum where they feel it is necessary.
- It is recommended that the zone uses a combination of factors in determining this in an effort to ensure the zone championship features as many of the strongest teams as reasonably possible while also providing geographical diversity and equitable opportunity through the local associations. These considerations may include, but are not limited to:
  - **Number Based Allocation**
    - This method essentially looks at the number of teams registered with BCSS in a given season, and proportionally assigning the berths based on the quantity of teams from each Local Association.
    - There are many variations of this approach that have nuanced differences with respect to how calculations are done. BCSS only asks that the process is detailed and explicitly clear, so it can be followed regardless of who is doing it.
    - The other consideration when doing a numbers-based allocation is will it be based on a ratio (calculated to a decimal number, with rounding up or down) or on a threshold, where berths are only allocated upon having a set number of teams, and every exact multiple of that that number (see chart below). Like with all of the methods outlined there are pros and cons to both options, and either is acceptable, as long as it is *clearly* defined by the zone how the berths will be allocated



<b>Example: Allocation of Berths - <u>Threshold</u></b>		
<i>Zone</i>	<i># Of teams in Zone</i>	<i># of Berths (based on threshold of 4)</i>
Red	4	1
Blue	7	1
Green	8	2
Pink	11	2
Orange	12	3

- **Zone Championship results from the preceding year**
  - This is where some berths are allocated to the Local Association from the teams that finished in a certain finish the previous year. (ie. 8 Team Zone Tournament  
Local Association Champions – 3 berths (one per association)  
Allocation by Registered Teams – 3 berths  
Local Association represented by previous year’s finalists – 2 berths)
  - Also remember, it is not recommended you use this method as the primary, but use this in conjunction with a numbers-based allocation, to round out the final berths available.
- **Historical Strength - Rolling Average over 3 years**
  - In this system, a results table is developed that assigns a point structure for all placings in the zone championships in that sport and tier. That point structure is then used on a 3-year historical basis to determine the assigning of certain berths.
  - Again, this is not recommended to be used as the primary allocation method, but is in use in other jurisdictions for remaining berths where available



- **Selection Committee/Provincial Rankings (if available)**
  - The formation of a committee to use various pieces of data to determine what associations should receive the additional berth(s) based on strength.
  - Using the provincial rankings may also be of assistance, however, one challenge may be that most provincial rankings list a top-10 provincially, therefore the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> best team in your zone (if looking to fill the last spot(s) in an 8-team championship, are likely not going to be ranked).
  - This should be used as a supplementary method, and is likely only going to be valid for the final 1-2 berths in the zone championship, if at all. It requires trust that the committees conducting the provincial rankings have an established and well-executed process to create the rankings.
  - It also requires a committee at the zone level to evaluate teams and associations based on a list of prioritized metrics, and must be clear of any conflict of interests.
  
- **League and Tournament Results**
  - The zone identifies a handful of events that the results will be measured or quantified in a manner that allows for the awarding of berths to a local association.
  - This should be used more as a "tertiary" method

#### ***5) APPEALING ZONE CHAMPIONSHIP BERTHING***

- It will be the responsibility of the Zone executive to approve a system for allocating berths into the zone championships. It is recommended that each sport have a small group with representation from every local associations to take guidance from the zone leadership, and work to bring forward a process that all can agree on.
- Where a zone is unable to agree on a process for allocation, or where a local association feels that the berths awarded are an unfair or unreasonable allocation, the President of the Local Association may appeal to the Executive Director of BCSS in writing and shall include the details of the allocation, and why they feel it is unfair or unreasonable.



- The BCSS Executive Director will review the appeal, conduct inquiries with all appropriate parties, and render a decision which shall be implemented for the zone championship in question.

## **BCSS PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

### ***1) OBJECTIVES OF PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS***

- To provide a highly competitive, educationally based athletic event to recognize excellence in school sport, and crown a provincial champion
- To recognize schools from across the province as the best teams from their region
- To create an opportunity to celebrate BC School Sports, our zones, local associations, member schools and student-athletes, and the positive effects of education-based athletics
- To add significance and importance to zone championships

Note: The BCSS Handbook provides some goals of a championship, that are generally summarized above, or that are extraneous to the purpose of this document.

### ***2) STRUCTURE OF PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS***

BCSS member approved policy recognizes BCSS Sport Commissions as the standing committees responsible for coordinating the provincial championships. There are many things that commissions, through their approved processes have the autonomy to decide such as:

- Field of Play and Sport Specific Technical Rules
- Tournament Structure (ie. Round Robin, Power Pools, Single Elimination Bracket etc.)
- Allocation of Provincial Championship Berths
- Tournament Seeding
- Championship Hosts & Dates of Competition

### ***3) SIZE OF PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS***

This is determined by the BCSS Sport Commission for each sport. BCSS provides the following guidelines to assist with the determination:





- BCSS recommends that approximately 20-25% of all registered teams in that tier in that province, compete at the provincial championship.
- We recommend the minimum size for a provincial championship be eight (8) teams, and the maximum be sixteen (16).
  - Note: the 8-team championship is only an option where at least one zone does not have a school with a team in a specific tier.

#### ***4) QUALIFYING INTO PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS***

Berths into a provincial championship are allocated by the BCSS Sport Commission. They must be allocated to a zone, and not to a specific athletic association, subgroup, or specific school, with the exception of those commissions that guarantee the host school a berth.

It is the zone's responsibility to conduct a zone championship, following the guidelines above, to fill the appropriate number of berths as allocated by the BCSS Sport Commission.

Each zone as defined by BC School Sports, shall have at least one berth into each provincial championship. This is a long-standing policy to ensure our championships are accessible to students across the province, and truly are representative of the best teams from all regions in the province. The result of this is that all zone champions will compete at the Provincial Championships.

Zones may not have a team registered in a specific sport and tier, or are unable to fill a berth. Those unfilled berths will be added to the number of at-large berths to be allocated in accordance with the commission processes.

It is recommended that the Commission use a combination of factors in determining this in an effort to ensure the Provincial Championship features as many of the strongest teams as reasonably possible. These considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- **Number Based Allocation**
  - This method essentially looks at the number of teams registered with BCSS in a given season, and proportionally assigning the berths based on the quantity of teams from each Local Association.



- While the principle remains the same, there are many variations of this approach that have nuanced differences with respect to how calculations are done. BCSS asks that the process is detailed and explicitly clear, so it can be followed regardless of who is doing it.
- The other consideration when doing a numbers-based allocation is will it be based on a ratio (calculated to a decimal number, with rounding up or down) or on a threshold, where berths are only allocated upon having a required number of teams and zones are then granted an additional berth for every exact multiple of that required number. The threshold number is still based upon a calculation of the number of teams in each zone. The threshold method will usually end up with more berths to be allocated by another means, whereas the ratio method, due to rounding, will usually allocate all berths.

<b>Example: Allocation of Berths - <u>Threshold</u></b>		
<i>Zone</i>	<i># Of teams in Zone</i>	<i># of Berths (based on threshold of 4)</i>
Red	4	1
Blue	7	1
Green	8	2
Pink	11	2
Orange	12	3

- **Provincial Championship results from the preceding year**
  - This is where some berths are allocated to the zone based on the finishes from the previous years' provincial championship
  - Example of how this could be used:  
Use the Numbers Based Allocation as above, but leave 1-3 berths (depending on the size of tournament, and outcome of the Numbers Based Allocation open), the remaining berths will go to the zone from which the 3 top finishers the previous year came from. It is important to



recognize it is not the specific school, but the provincial championship berth is awarded to the zone the team comes from.

- Also remember, it is not recommended you use only this method, but use this in conjunction with a numbers-based allocation.

- **Historical Strength - Rolling Average over 3 years**

- In this system, a results table is developed that assigns a point structure for all placings in the provincial championships in that sport and tier. That point structure is then used on a 3-year historical basis to determine the assigning of certain berths.
- Again, this is not recommended to be used as the primary allocation method, but is in use in other jurisdictions for some of the at-large berths where available

- **Selection Committee/Provincial Rankings (if available)**

- Using the rankings that are published by the committee (in some sports), to identify the highest ranked team(s) that didn't qualify.
- This should be used as a supplementary method, and is likely only going to be valid for the final 2-3 at-large berths at a provincial championship. It requires that the committee responsible for allocating the available berths to the zones through this method have an established and well-executed process to evaluate teams, a list of prioritized metrics to facilitate discussion and evaluation, representation from all regions and protocols in place to avoid any conflicts of interests, real or perceived.
- The challenge with this method is it still is dependent on a group of people, in a room, deciding who is in and out of a tournament which will inevitably invite criticism. Ideally, the berths should be known ahead of the zones, where then the athletes can win their way in. However, this does remain an option, despite its shortcomings.

- **League and Tournament Results**

- The commission identifies a handful of events that the results will be measured or quantified in a manner that allows for the awarding of berths to a zone, strictly based on the results of the identified events.
- The events chosen would have to be numerous enough and geographically diverse enough to present equitable opportunity, and require enough play to eliminate statistical outliers.



- This should be used more as a “backup” method

#### Maximum Number of Berths

- Each commission shall place a cap on the max number of berths from any one zone. BCSS recommends that it be 50% less one berth. (For example, in a 12 team tournament, no zone shall have more than 5 berths. The commission may wish to further lower this maximum, where they feel it is appropriate to do so. With the smaller zones in effect in 2019, this is less likely to be an issue than in the past.

#### **5) SHARED BERTHS/WILDCARDS**

BCSS strongly discourages the use of shared-berths, half-berths or wild cards when allocating Provincial Championships berths. The costs incurred for many of these half-berth games to be played are usually very high, played at a neutral site at a last minute and required rush travel all for one contest. In addition, with the goals of zones being played later to allow for more season and exhibition play for all teams, it leaves less time for these games to be contested, and a very small number of teams participating in them.

BCSS strongly recommends that the allocation of berths to provincial championships is known as quickly as possible after the BCSS Team Registration Deadline. Additionally, any at-large berths not being allocated by numbers of teams, should ideally be known prior to the season. For Berths that may have been shared historically, BCSS suggests using one of the methods detailed above that are consistent with the objectives of BCSS Championships.

#### **6) VACATED BERTHS**

The Commissions should ensure that a clearly defined system is in place for the handling of berths should they become vacated by a zone. In some sports, it is not uncommon for some zones to either choose to, or be unable to send a team to the provincial championships for a specific tier. Allocating this berth to a zone should follow a process that is clear to all stakeholders well in advance. Commissions should also indicate a deadline date that zones must confirm the teams filling the berths, so there is adequate time to fill vacated berths.



### **7) CHAMPIONSHIP SEEDING**

Each Commission is responsible for establishing and executing the seeding of the provincial tournaments once the qualified teams are identified. For commissions that use rankings and result based information to seed the tournament. This should include, the process for receiving information, what should and shouldn't be considered by those responsible for the seeding, and who is involved in the process should be published in advanced.

In bracketed draws, every effort should be made to avoid two teams from the same zone playing in the first round. In pool-based events (except for Power Pools), every effort should be made to avoid placing teams from the same zone in the same pool.

### **8) HOSTING BID PROCESS**

When determining the hosts for championships, commissions are encouraged to identify a bid process to allow schools and/or districts to apply to host the championships. BCSS believes that as a provincial organization, it is important that all regions of the province have an opportunity to host championships. Some sports may also find it easier to put the championships on a rotation.

BCSS realizes that some championships are harder to move given the facility requirements for the event. In that case, the commission will work with BCSS for those sports that do not move around the province to create an entry fee that considers the inequity of the same teams having to incur costs to travel every year, while other schools have almost no costs for competing in the event.

## **Zone Leadership and Governance Structure**

### **ZONE LEADERSHIP**

Where some zones have very strong governance, leadership and processes in place, there are some zones that have less effective governance, or as a result of the change to the zones will be starting over. For those in place and unaffected by the zone changes, it always is a good practice to review your structure for possible changes, however, BCSS is not requiring you alter your governance.



For those that are creating new zones as a result of the zone realignment. BCSS recommends that each zone form a zone leadership group, for the purposes of communication, decision making and representing the zone within BCSS. It is recommended each zone executive consist of a:

- Zone President
- Zone Secretary-Treasurer
- An Administrative Rep (Principal from one of the schools in the zone)
- One AD rep from each of the local associations within the zone

The President and Sec-Treasurer position should be elected, while the Admin Rep, is likely appointed on a 2-year rotation of the associations in the Zone. The AD rep in most cases, should be the President of the Local Association, but doesn't have to be.

This group will likely have to meet 2-4 times a year, and it is best practice to have 1-3 Zone meetings, where the AD's of all the schools in the zone come together (likely once in person, and others by conference call). At this meeting you can make decisions on hosts of zone championships, and any of the other items listed above as under Zone direction. It is recommended the large Zone meetings come late in the year after the BCSS AGM, so planning can be done with the knowledge of any new rules coming into effect for the following school year. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for BCSS to communicate directly with our member AD's in a more efficient way.

## **DISSOLUTION OF FRASER VALLEY AND LOWER MAINLAND ZONES**

At the conclusion of this academic year, the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley zones should cease operations. The process for dissolution should be contained within the Bylaws each respective organization. BCSS can assist with the legal process of dissolution. The member schools within these zones should contribute to the shared outcome for the distribution of assets that each zone may have in its accounts, and the accounts of its sport-specific events. BCSS recommends money be either a) distributed back to the member schools, or b) proportionally allocated to the new zones, based on the representation from the current zone, as funds to assist with start-up and immediate operations.