
Pilot Proposal: U15C Regional Event

Background

The current system for U15C Provincials qualification relies on **District Playdowns**, with each District entitled to send one representative. However, this structure creates significant inequities:

- In **smaller rural districts**, there are often too few teams to hold meaningful playdowns. In some cases, a single team advances by default.
- In **smaller rural districts**, cost and geographical distance to travel to a Provincial can be prohibitive causing some teams to opt out of participating in District Playdowns.
- In **larger districts**, playdowns can be highly competitive, creating inconsistent experiences across the province.
- Many **teams and players not interested in Provincials** are left without a meaningful post-season play option.

Meetings of the Rural Participation Working Group highlighted that rural communities in the **Interior/North** and **Vancouver Island** regions need an alternative system that provides fair access to Provincials while ensuring every team gets a valuable year-end competition.

While the Rural Participation Working Group originally conceived of using a Regional Qualification competition for identifying provincially-bound U15C teams, upon considering the cost to attend both a Regional Qualifier as well as a Provincial, the decision was made that the existing District Playdowns structure remains the preferred competition for identifying provincially-bound U15C teams. However, the Rural Participation Working Group continues to believe that a Regional competition is important for the U15C level in order to create a meaningful year-end event for non-provincials-intent teams.

Rationale for Removal of Provincial-Intent Teams

- Aligns with the purpose of offering a postseason opportunity for non-provincial-intent teams only.
- Ensures competitive balance.
- Eliminates confusion about the role of the pilot event.
- Simplifies communication to coaches and parents.

NOTE:

Revision submitted by the Rural Participation Working Group for review by Softball BC board of Directors December 7, 2025

Purpose

To provide **non-provincial-intent U15C teams** with a meaningful, competitive, end-of-season playing opportunity that does **not** serve as a step in the pathway to Provincials. This model strives to meet the need for meaningful competition opportunities in rural regions. This event is intended to:

- Support retention by offering a competitive experience for teams not pursuing Provincials.
- Provide an accessible, positive postseason opportunity.
- Reduce pressure on small or rural associations to declare provincial intent when they are not structured for it.
- Create a pilot that can be tested, evaluated, and refined without interfering with the Provincial Championship system.

This pilot **is not a qualifier, is not a pathway** to Provincials, and **does not include provincial-intent teams**.

Key Features

1. Structure

The proposal recommends the Pilot consists of holding **two Regional Competitions**:

- **Vancouver Island Regional**
- **Interior Regional**
 - **NOTE:** If multiple associations volunteer to host, keep in mind that teams from northern BC are more likely to participate if the event is held no further south than Quesnel.

2. Eligibility

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Teams:

- Must be registered U15C teams with no provincial intent declaration. Teams that participate in District Playdowns are ineligible.
- Must apply for entry by the event deadline.

Players:

- Must be rostered on the team they are playing with.
- Teams may use replacement players for any player on their roster that is unable to attend. This rule is consistent with the Replacement Player rule for U13C Regionals.

3. Format and Rules

- The format for the U15C Regional will be the same as the format for the U13C Regional.
- The rules for the U15C Regional will be the same as the rules for the U15C Provincials.

4. Benefits

- **Rural teams included** in Regional events, even if they are not Provincials-bound.
- **Enhanced access:** Regional events will be more geographically accessible for rural areas which lightens the cost and travel barriers for rural teams.
- **Equity across regions:** All players, regardless of their district size or goals, have access to a meaningful season-ending event.

Pilot Recommendation

- Implement this **regional event** for U15C in the 2026 season.
- Host **two U15C Regionals**:
 - **Vancouver Island Regional**
 - **Interior Regional**
- Evaluate success after one season using the following measures:
 - Number of teams participating in Regionals

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- Feedback from teams, parents, and associations.
 - Regional representation at Provincials.
 - Travel/time impacts on rural families.
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Evaluation Framework

1. Participation Metrics

- Total number of teams attending Regional events.
- Number of teams attending U15C Provincials from the Regions implementing a Regional compared to previous seasons.

4. Stakeholder Feedback

- Surveys from coaches, players, and parents/guardians regarding satisfaction and experience (see U15C Regional Event – Pilot Feedback Survey).
- Event reports from Softball BC Board Representative and UIC.
- Identification of challenges, bottlenecks, or unforeseen issues during the pilot season.

5. Recommendations for Future Seasons

- Identification of potential improvements to the hybrid model.
 - Evaluation of whether to continue, modify, or expand the Regional events.
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