

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44

Suburban Friendship League

Procedures and Processes – Determining Tournament Size and Teams Eligible to Be Considered for the Tournament (Effective January 12, 2008)

OVERVIEW

The last weekend of the season is used to schedule a tournament with the maximum number of regular season games possible scheduled during the remaining weeks of a season. At the start of each season, each club provides the field names and slots that can be used and supported with referees for the tournament. The SFL then determines the maximum number of teams that these fields can support. Around week 4 or 5, the clubs certify that the fields and referee availability had not changed or would provide the actual number of fields and referees that would be available. If fields were lost during the process, then the maximum number of teams established at the beginning of the season would be reduced. On the other hand, if fields are added, then they are only used to the extent that fields were lost, i.e., no more teams would be added to the tournament than the number originally established at the beginning of the season. For example, if the fields provided at the start of the season would support 60 percent of the teams, then no more than 60 percent of the teams would be scheduled for the tournament regardless of the number of fields that were made available during week 4 or 5. Significant financial and team penalties are assessed to clubs who do not support their field and referee commitments. Specifically, a club that is unable to provide the fields and referees necessary to support their teams can expect that its teams will not be scheduled for the tournament. For example, if Club A provides field and referee commitments to support 75 percent of their teams, then Club A can expect that 25 percent of their teams will not be considered for the tournament regardless of a team's standing. The actual process used to assign eligible teams to the tournament divisions and how the tournament is operated, e.g., ranking teams, etc. are contained in the SFL rules and outside the scope of this document.

BACKGROUND

The SFL Commissioners realize that one of the great benefits of the SFL is the tournament. It gives an opportunity for teams with comparable abilities to play games against each other. While some may view the top divisions as the ones that really benefit from the tournament, we also get a number of compliments from the divisions composed of teams that have less than a stellar season.

As the SFL has grown larger, the logistics associated with the tournament have become much greater and more taxing on everyone involved. Each season the tournament becomes more and more difficult to schedule. In the Fall 2007 tournament, all of the field slots available and then some were used to schedule the tournament. A couple of clubs provided more fields that required to support their teams. If this had not happened, then we would have dropped teams.

1 Even with these additional fields and officials, several clubs were threatened with that penalty
2 prior to providing fields and officials. The club names do not matter since this is a constant
3 problem, i.e., the problem remains the same, only the names change. At least 3 issues cause the
4 problems we have with the initial tournament scheduling efforts – field availability, referee
5 availability, and competing club demands. The following is a brief overview of each problem
6 area.

- 7
- 8 • **Field Availability** – A club initially commits a field for the tournament. Some event
9 happens outside of their control and another program claims priority for the field and
10 refuses to (1) move the game to another field and/or (2) move the time of the game to
11 support a dual use. Accordingly, the field is not available or the club is only willing
12 to commit to Saturday games since they cannot provide assurance that Sunday slots
13 will be available. One example of this problem includes regular season cancellations
14 in other programs, such as travel or other sports, that have access to the field.
15
- 16 • **Referee availability** – It is no great surprise that many of the referees for the younger
17 age groups come from the players in the older age groups. This works well during the
18 regular season, however, the tournament makes some of these resources unavailable
19 since they are not playing even close to their home field and their game schedules are
20 not known until the last minute since the SFL does not release the tournament
21 schedules until about a week before the tournament starts.
22
- 23 • **Competing club demands** – Many of the clubs have internal tournaments for their
24 house teams that are not part of the SFL. Accordingly, while these may not affect the
25 fields we need, they do place increased demands for referees.
26

27 The fall seasons are especially challenging. Because of daylight concerns, a field can
28 realistically only support 5 Saturday game slots rather than the 6 slots used in the spring. This
29 translates into a significant loss of fields. For example, assume that we use 50 fields to support
30 the tournament in the spring. This translates into about 425 to 450 useable game slots.
31 Supporting the same number of slots in the fall requires about 60 fields – a 20 percent increase.
32

33 Because of the inability to assure field availability we also experienced changes to the
34 tournament schedule after it is developed. The tournament scheduling process takes a great deal
35 of time and the time frames are tight – the initial draft field schedules are done about 1 week
36 after the games used to determine the tournament divisions are completed with the schedules
37 posted to the web site about 3 to 5 days later. This does not allow for much manual rework.
38 However, we almost always had numerous changes caused by several reasons – teams dropping
39 out after the schedule has been developed or clubs wanting to change fields. The manual rework
40 is error prone and time consuming. When this happens before the schedules are posted, the
41 effort is less, however, we always have several cases where this happens after the schedules were
42 posted.
43

1 The SFL Commissioners met in early December 2007 to discuss alternatives for addressing the
2 problems and it was agreed that the SFL would develop a document that outlines (1) two basic
3 options to address these issues, (2) advantages and disadvantages of each option, and (3) any
4 other items that may apply to a given option. This document is available on the web site under
5 SFL Documents. On January 11, 2008, a meeting with the clubs was held and it was agreed that
6 the SFL should continue the tournament and adopt revised process requires clubs to commit
7 tournament fields and referees at the start of the season. This is commonly referred to as the
8 process used to determine the tournament size.
9

10 **PROCESS USED TO DETERMINE TOURNAMENT SIZE**

11

12 The following is the basic process for determining (1) the size of the tournament and (2) the
13 number of teams from each club that are considered eligible for tournament scheduling. The
14 actual process used to assign the eligible teams to the tournament divisions and how the
15 tournament is operated, e.g., ranking teams, etc. are contained in the SFL rules and outside the
16 scope of this document. The process can be broken down into the following major sections –
17 how to determine the tournament size, penalties for not meeting club commitments, and how
18 tournament size affects the registration fees.
19

20 **Determining Tournament Size** 21 **and Club Commitments** 22

23 The following process is used to determine the size of the tournament and the club commitments
24 necessary to support the tournament determination process.
25

- 26 • On April 1 for the spring season and September 1 for the fall season, each club is
27 required to provide the field names and slots on those fields that had been reserved
28 for the SFL tournament and state that referees can be provided to cover those slots.
29 Clubs are not be allowed to provide unnamed fields, i.e., a club will not be allowed to
30 provide something like “2 fields to be determined later”. The SFL will notify a club
31 if the number of fields are inadequate to support that club’s registered teams. As a
32 general rule, a club needs to provide 1 field for every 8 to 9 registered teams if all
33 registered teams from that club are expected to play in the tournament.
34
- 35 • The SFL will calculate the number of teams that can be supported on the fields
36 provided. This becomes the maximum number of teams that will be scheduled for the
37 tournament. For example, if the field slots provided support 60 percent of the teams,

1 then only 60 percent of the teams will be scheduled for the tournament. The top
2 eligible teams from a club would then be scheduled for the tournament.¹
3

- 4 • At the end of week 4 or 5, the SFL will ask the clubs that are providing fields to
5 confirm (1) that the fields provided at the beginning of the season are still available
6 and (2) referees are available to support those fields. If a club cannot provide the
7 fields promised, then the number of teams that will be scheduled for the tournament
8 will be reduced unless other fields with referees are provided by other clubs. Even if
9 additional fields are identified, the maximum number of teams scheduled for the
10 tournament will not significantly change from the initial season estimate since the
11 trophy order will be based on the initial number of teams. At this time, clubs are
12 allowed to substitute fields without penalty. For example, Club A may have provided
13 Field 1 and 2 at the beginning of the season. However, because of field closures, they
14 are now providing Field 3 and 4. If a club does not provide a timely response to the
15 commitment request, then the SFL will consider that the fields originally promised
16 are no longer available and its teams will be dropped from the tournament regardless
17 of team rank.
18

19 **Penalties For Not Meeting Club Commitments**

20
21 After the week 4 or 5 commitment, the fields are considered “locked” and a club will be assessed
22 financial and possible team penalties if a promised field or its time slots need to be changed.
23

24 **Financial Penalties**

25
26 Financial penalties in most cases will be assessed for changing or dropping fields originally
27 committed at the start of the season. The penalty for changing fields and game slots after a field
28 is considered locked are as follows.
29

- 30 • \$20 per game slot changed if that change is made before the schedule is developed.
- 31
- 32 • \$30 per game slot if the change is made after the schedules are developed but not
33 posted
- 34
- 35 • \$40 per slot if the change is made after the schedules are posted.
36
37

¹ A club providing adequate fields and referees to support its teams can expect that all its teams will be scheduled for the tournament. For example, if a club has 8 teams and provides 1 field with referees, then all 8 teams regardless of standing should be scheduled for the tournament. On the other hand, a club with 8 teams that cannot provide a field with referees for the tournament can expect that none of its teams will be scheduled for the tournament.

1 Example

2
3 Club A commits to Field 3 and 4 and then decides to change the games to Field 1 and 5.
4 Assuming 14 games were expected to be scheduled on these fields, the club would be
5 assessed a (1) \$280 penalty if this change was requested before the actual schedules have
6 been developed, (2) \$420 penalty if the schedules have been developed but not posted,
7 and (3) \$560 penalty if the schedules have been posted. As noted above, if the field
8 change is made during the commitment process, then the club is not assessed a fee.

9
10 Clubs will be assessed the following financial penalties if a field is withdrawn after it is
11 committed at the beginning of the season.

- 12
- 13 • The penalty for withdrawing a field initially provided at the start of the season and
14 not providing a suitable replacement during the week 4 or 5 commitment process will
15 be \$20 per game slot lost.
- 16
- 17 • If the field is “lost” after the commitment process but before the schedules are
18 developed, then the fee is \$30 per game slot lost.
- 19
- 20 • If the field is lost after the games are schedules are developed but not posted, then the
21 fee is \$40 per slot.
- 22
- 23 • If the schedules are posted and the field is lost, then the fee is \$50 per game slot.
- 24

25 Example

26
27 Club A commits Field 1 and 2 at the start of the season and decides that it cannot support
28 any fields for the tournament. Assuming 14 games were expected to be scheduled on
29 these fields, the club would be assessed a (1) \$280 penalty if this field loss occurred
30 during the week 4 or 5 commitment phase, (2) \$420 penalty if the loss occurred after the
31 week 4 or 5 commitment phase but before the schedules have been developed, (3) \$560
32 penalty if the schedules have been developed and not posted, and (4) \$700 penalty if the
33 schedules have been developed and posted to the web site.

34
35 **Team Penalties**

36
37 As noted elsewhere, clubs that provide adequate fields and referees to support their teams have a
38 reasonable expectation that all their teams will be scheduled for the tournament regardless of
39 team rank. However, clubs are subject to team penalties if a field is withdrawn after the initial
40 (April 1 for the spring season and September 1 for the fall season) field and referee
41 commitments.

- 42
- 43 • If a field is lost during the commitment process, then the number of teams from that
44 club that were associated with that field will probably be dropped unless other fields

1 have been provided by the clubs. For example, Club A has 8 teams and all 8 teams
2 are ranked in the top 20 percent of their respective regular season age groups. Club A
3 then withdraws the tournament field used to support these 8 teams during the
4 commitment process. All 8 teams from Club A will probably be dropped from the
5 tournament.

- 6
7 • Clubs will also probably be assessed team penalties if a field is withdrawn after the
8 week 4 or 5 commitment. If a club decides to drop a field after the week 4 or 5
9 commitment, then at a minimum, the number of teams from that club playing on the
10 field withdrawn will be dropped from the tournament. Additional teams from that
11 club playing on other fields may also be dropped to help recover the lost slots. For
12 example, Club A has 8 teams and all 8 teams are ranked in the top 20 percent of their
13 respective regular season age groups. Club A then withdraws the tournament field
14 used to support these 8 teams. This field had (1) 1 team from Club A playing in the
15 top tournament division which was expected to play in a 4-team round robin
16 tournament division and (2) 1 team playing in a 4-team single elimination division.
17 The following actions would be taken. First, both of Club A's teams expected to play
18 at home on the lost field would be dropped from the tournament. This would
19 eliminate 3 games since (1) the round robin tournament division would be converted
20 from a 6 game round robin format to a 3 game round robin format and (2) the 3 game
21 single elimination division would probably be changed to a 3 game round robin
22 format. Next, these two new round robin tournament divisions would probably be
23 moved to fields where Club A had its other teams playing. Those Club A teams
24 would be eliminated from the tournament to make room for these tournament
25 divisions. This process may result in creating new tournament divisions or simply
26 "fitting them into" a given field slot. The actual approach and teams dropped from
27 the tournament from Club A would be determined by what is needed to make up for
28 the lost field.

30 **Impact of Tournament Size on Registration Fees**

31
32 Registration fees are based on the assumption that all teams would be scheduled for the
33 tournament. However, if it turned out that a significant number of teams could not be scheduled,
34 then a rebate on the next season's fees would be made much like the current process which takes
35 any excess revenue and rebates it back to the clubs the following season. The rebate would be a
36 general rebate with all clubs sharing equally. For example, assume that registration fees are
37 developed based on the assumption that all 500 registered teams will play in the tournament.
38 However, only 60 percent of the teams could be supported for tournament play and the SFL has
39 \$30,000 of excess revenue primarily caused by the reduction in the tournament size. Each club

1 would receive a \$60 per team reduction in its fees for the following season.² As more experience
2 is gained, the initial registration fees may be adjusted to reflect a more realistic tournament
3 scenario. For example, if after several seasons it is clear that only about 60 percent of the teams
4 will be able to play in the tournament, then the registration fees will be based on assuming that
5 only 60 percent of the teams will participate in the tournament.

² The actual rebate per team may vary based on age group. For example, it is more costly to support an Under 19 game than an Under 12 game. The SFL Commissioners will determine the approach that should be taken to award rebates.