

Suburban Friendship League
2416 Rosedown Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1620
September 4, 2009

Dear Coaches and Club Officials:

This season the SFL has about 500 youth teams and we would like to extend a special welcome to those who are new to the SFL and hope that you have an enjoyable season. We would also like to welcome back the returning teams.

It is the SFL's goal to provide timely and accurate information to the clubs and teams playing in this league. Our Web Site (www.sflsoccer.org) helps us accomplish this objective. Our Email address is sfl@sflsoccer.org. The Web Site contains most of the information in your package and we will try to keep it updated. We would appreciate any comments you may have on how the league operations can be improved. Additional information about the season's operations and our web site is discussed below.

RETIREMENT OF RALPH WILLS

This season Ralph Wills retired from the SFL in order to spend more time helping his parents. Ralph was instrumental in having the boys join the SFL and became the first SFL Under 16 Boys Commissioner. At that time, the SFL only consisted of Under 14 Girls and Under 16 Girls teams. He continually supported youth soccer and the SFL and his efforts will be missed. We wish Ralph and his family the best

MAILING PROCESS

Our mailings are divided into two parts. This mailing contains what is considered the "standard package" and contains the following:

- Season letter
- Listing of SFL Age Group Commissioners, SFL Club Representatives, and Club Age Group Representatives. This listing provides the contact points for each age group. **You should contact your SFL Club Representative concerning questions that arise during the season. The SFL Age Group Commissioners will formally respond only to matters referred to them by the appropriate SFL Club Representative.** (This information is not published on the web site version.)
- Listing of team contacts and phone numbers. (This information is not published on the web site version).

- Rules for the current season. These rules were approved by the club representatives during the preseason meeting and are generally consistent with those of the prior seasons. However, we encourage you to take the time and read the rules.

You will also receive another package with individual specific information. This mailing will contain:

- Cover letter.
- Data confirmation card.
- Team Schedules and Field Directions (Coaches Only). These schedules may be different than those originally posted on the Web Sites. However, the web site's home page will tell you the date and time that the web site was updated with the version that was used to prepare these schedules. In addition, changes are sometimes made after the schedules are prepared. These changes are also posted to the web site with the date and time of the change. Therefore, we would suggest that you check your schedule on the web site to determine if any changes have been made. **If you have a problem contacting a coach, call the applicable SFL Club Representative or Club Age Group Representative using the information contained in the standard package.** In some cases, the club was unable to provide the game time for a game. Once the time is known, the web site will be updated.

We expect these letters to be mailed this week.

Key Dates

The following are some of the key dates:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
September 11	Coaches provided approved rosters by SFL Club Representative.
September 12	First game weekend.
September 15	Initial Master Player Roster (with uniform numbers) sent to the SFL.
September 25	Last day to make changes to a team roster without approval of the applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner.
September 30	Final Master Player Roster sent to the SFL.
October 10	Holiday – No games

November 14/15 Tournament weekend. **If your team is unable to play this weekend, please let us know as soon as possible.**

INCOMPLETE GAME INFORMATION

We did not receive all the game field and time information for some of the games scheduled for Sunday since some clubs are waiting for the travel schedules to set these games to maximize the referees and field slots. Once we are provided with this information, we will update the web site.

INCOMPLETE TEAM INFORMATION

You will note that we did not have a number of team colors or in some cases the even the name of the coach or the phone number. Please complete the confirmation card enclosed in your package as soon as possible so that we may update our records. If you do not receive a confirmation card, then check with your SFL Club Representative since if we did not have a reliable mailing address, we sent the card to the SFL Club Representative. Also, if you would like to receive weekly game results by Email, please note this on your card. The enclosed material provides more information on this service. **You must register for this service each season.** If we did not have the necessary address information, we did not attempt to mail the standard package. You should contact your SFL Club Representative to obtain the phone numbers included in the package. The remainder of the material is on the web site under SFL Documents.

Each season we have attempted to wait until the last moment to put the team contact information in the package since we know how disruptive it is to try and contact someone (1) who is not in the phone listing or (2) has an incorrect number. However, it seems as if some clubs just cannot get us the necessary information in time. If you have a problem contacting a coach, then call that individual's SFL Club Representative. This package also has standard Email addresses that can be used to send the SFL Club Representatives an Email.

If your name or phone number is incorrect or missing, then you are required to contact each of your opposing teams as soon as possible and let them know the correct information. Although we post the team color and name information on our Web Site, we do not post phone numbers, Email addresses, or mailing addresses due to privacy considerations. Our web site contains our privacy policy and it can be found at www.sflsoccer.org/privacy.htm.

RULE CHANGES AND **RULE REMINDERS**

Please pay particular attention to the rules that we adopted for this season. Most of the rules are the same as last season. However, I would like emphasize some rules that have caused some confusion in the past.

Frequently Asked Questions

The SFL has developed a number of Frequently Asked Questions documents and posted them on the web site (<http://www.sflsoccer.org/faq.htm>). These documents cover such items as scheduling, reporting game results, and roster issues. We suggest that you take some time to review these materials and provide us feedback on additional questions and topics that should be covered. We have also prepared a document that summarizes the SFL Rules for referees. This can also be found on Frequently Asked Questions page. We hope that you find these documents useful and welcome suggestions on how to improve them.

Standard Email addresses for SFL Club Representatives

We have been requested to provide Email addresses of the SFL Club Representatives so that coaches and other SFL Club Representatives who are having difficulties contacting a team have a place to send their Email. The SFL's privacy policy does not allow the SFL to disclose the Email addresses without permission. In order to overcome this limitation and handle potential Email changes, the SFL has establish SFL Email addresses for each SFL Club Representative. Email sent to this address will automatically be forwarded to the applicable Email address(es) for that SFL Club Representative. **These standard Email addresses can be found in this package on the page that contains the SFL Club Representative Contact information.**

Exchanging Rosters

Coaches are required to provide a **copy** of their approved roster to the opposing team before the start of every game **regardless of the age group**. If a team is unable to provide a copy of their approved roster, the team is assessed a forfeit. Therefore, it is a good idea to provide copies of the approved roster to more than one individual on your team. Both teams are required to report the forfeited game.

As noted in the rules, only the SFL Club Representative or the Club Registrar may sign a roster. When a team's coach serves as the SFL Club Representative and Club Registrar, then another club officer must sign the Team Roster. The name of each club's SFL Club Representative is contained in your package. If you have a question on whether the individual approving a roster is the club's registrar, then send us the name and we will validate the name with the applicable club. Also, as in past seasons, each club must obtain approval for the use of substitute roster forms. The rules provide a list of the clubs that are allowed to use substitute roster forms.

Forfeits Relating to Roster Challenges

The SFL will decide when forfeits relating to roster challenges will be awarded. The primary purposes of the roster requirements is to (1) ensure that the players on the field were assigned to the team by the club and (2) encourage communication between the coaches to resolve minor problems when discrepancies arise. The roster process adopted several seasons ago have generally worked well and appeared to accomplish the first purpose. In order to prevent the

roster process from being used to obtain victories through roster challenges that could not be obtained on the field or avoid playing the game the rules require (1) a formal roster check of both teams when either coach desires to challenge a roster with each coach reporting the results to the SFL, (2) the game to be played in its entirety, and (3) the results of the challenge to be reviewed by the applicable SFL Club Representative with a report submitted to the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner. The SFL Age Group Commissioner will then make a decision on whether a forfeit (or other penalties) will be assessed based on whether illegal players were actually used rather than honest mistakes. In addition, a coach is automatically suspended one game and the team assessed one team red card point when it is found that the team used an illegal player.

During our preseason meeting, this topic was discussed at length and it was noted that some teams believe that other teams use illegal players. However, these teams did not go through the roster challenge process to determine if illegal players were actually on the team. Our experience is that the roster challenge process is very effective at identifying when a team is using players not assigned to that team. While do not expect roster challenges to become a common occurrence. However, if you believe that the other team may be using illegal players, then we suggest that you use the roster challenge process contained in the rules.

Red Card Penalties

A number of penalties apply to red cards to address the problems of (1) coaches not properly reporting red cards and (2) red cards being issued for violence and referee abuse. These penalties are discussed in section IX.E of the rules. Coaches should take the time to remind their players of the penalties and how this can impact a team. For example, a player accumulating 3 red card points is suspended for the remainder of the season.

Sideline Placement of Teams and Spectators

The SFL does not have a rule regarding the placement of teams and spectators on the sidelines. Some clubs have the teams placed on the same side of the field with the spectators on the other side of the field while others have the teams and spectators on opposite sides of the field. In several of our preseason meetings the topic has come up on whether the SFL should adopt a standard policy. Each time the clubs have wanted to maintain a policy that allows each club to determine what is best for their club. The current SFL policy is that the home team coach has the right to determine the sideline placement of teams, e.g., both teams on the same side of the field, or teams on opposite sides of the field. If a club wants a standard approach, then that club should ensure that their coaches know the club policy and the home team coach should tell the other team. This topic should be discussed during the Wednesday phone call that the home team is required to make to the visiting team. Covering this topic during the weekday phone call should reduce any confusion.

Reporting Game Scores, Cards, and Rosters

Both teams are required to report any yellow or red cards awarded and the score regardless of whether they win, lose, or tie. We realize that this is duplication, however, this rule was adopted to avoid confusion on who was to report game results. The penalty associated with reporting scores late is **one game point**. Therefore, both teams will be assessed a game point penalty if we do not receive scores in a timely manner. **We would also like to request that whenever possible to use Email (sfl@sflsoccer.org) for reporting scores and include the game reference number in the subject field e.g., #4521.** Email is much easier for us to use and you get a confirmation that we have received your score. The Frequently Asked Questions page (<http://www.sflsoccer.org/faqscores.pdf>) contains examples of proper game reports. As can be seen in this document, the reports do not require much information or use a complicated format.

As noted in the rules, if one team does not have a roster and the other team plays the game, then the failure to provide a roster cannot be grounds for requesting a forfeit. However, the failure to provide a roster upon request should be included with the game report. See Section VII.A.2 in the rules.

Game Cancellations

The rules contain information on how teams can find out if games are canceled due to weather (Section V.). Our web site (www.sflsoccer.org/weather.htm) also has a page with the phone numbers that should be used. See discussion above on the requirements to change games and how games should be rescheduled. Remember, in most cases you only have until the Thursday following the scheduled game date to reschedule a game if it involves playing a team from another club. After that time, the SFL will attempt to automatically reschedule the game and no changes to games rescheduled by the SFL can be made. Therefore, it is in your best interest to reschedule the game yourself. We have developed a list of Frequently Asked Questions regarding scheduling and it is posted on our web site at www.sflsoccer.org/faqseasonsch.pdf.

This season several clubs are providing artificial turf fields. We have attempted to include in the field directions and field designation if a field is artificial turf, e.g., Poplar Tree T3. Games are played on artificial turf fields when games may be cancelled on conventional surfaces. Therefore, make sure that you understand when games are cancelled by a club whether those cancellations also apply to the artificial turf field you may be using.

AGE GROUP DIVISIONS

All age groups except the Under 16 and 19 Girls have divisions. (The clubs did not identify enough Under 16 Girls teams to support a division 1 for this age group.) The divisions for the Under 12s and Under 14s are based on age while the divisions for the Under 16s and Under 19 Boys are based on skill. This season we have adopted an 8 v 8 format for the teams playing in the Under 12 age group. The SFL Documents page has the USYS rules relating to Under 12s playing 8 v 8 (www.sflsoccer.org/8v8rules.pdf).

The SFL web site (www.sflsoccer.org/agegrp.htm) has the age criteria we provided to the clubs for assigning teams to an age group and division and an age group calculator. In the fall the clubs place their Under 16s and Under 19 Boys teams in divisions while in the spring the applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner makes the determination on the division assignments for the Under 16s and Under 19 Boys.

WEB SITE

Each team has an individual team schedule with field directions. These pages can be found by selecting **Team Information/ Schedules** and then selecting the **Individual team schedules with game results and field directions** for a given age group, e.g., Under 12 Boys, from the home page. **You may not add any team specific information to this page and the page cannot be customized for a given team.** A privacy policy has also been developed and we encourage you to take a few minutes to read it. The privacy policy link can be found on the left side of our home page.

FIELD DIRECTIONS

The SFL has well over 200 fields in its data base. Although not all of these fields are used each season, many are used for regular season and makeup games. Each season we ask the clubs to verify the directions contained in our data base during the team and club registration process. If you find an error, please let us know.

In past seasons, we provided map reference numbers for the fields contained in Loudoun County, Northern Virginia, and Prince William County. Hopefully, this information will assist you in finding the field on the applicable ADC maps. Although we may not have captured the exact map section, it should be “close enough” for you to find the field using the map and the directions provided. In addition, based on a suggestion received in a prior season, we requested addresses for the fields and have included the information received on the web site. We would welcome additional suggestions on how to make this process better as well.

Please review the information that pertains to you and your team(s) and **notify us immediately of any errors.** If you have questions on any of these materials, please call Chris Martin at (703) 476-6611 or notify us via the Web Site (www.sflsoccer.org) or by Email at sfl@sflsoccer.org. Please familiarize yourself with the information contained in this package and carry out your administrative responsibilities as soon as possible.

Good luck and we hope you have a successful and fulfilling season.

Jim Rodden
SFL Commissioner