

SUBURBAN FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE
CHARTER

(Adopted March 12, 1999)

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I. PURPOSE

- A. The Suburban Friendship League (SFL) was established to coordinate and provide competitive soccer amongst the various house league teams who desire to compete with teams from other clubs. Although limited travel is involved, the teams in the SFL are house league teams and travel or *select* players may not participate.
- B. The SFL is set up and run with the "**GOOD of the PLAYERS**" first and foremost in all actions taken.
- C. The SFL recognizes that each soccer club has different operating procedures and that this is healthy for the league. The clubs are expected to adhere to their own operating procedures and provide guidance, cooperation and, if necessary, discipline in carrying out the requirements of this charter. The SFL Commissioner and SFL Age Group Commissioners are given authority to adjust to the various operating procedure differences, if it is in the best interest of the organization. A member club's procedures and rules may be more stringent, but not any less stringent than those imposed by the SFL. The SFL does not impose any restrictions other than those expressly stated in this charter (see section II.C. for additional information).

II. OPERATING PROCEDURES

- A. The SFL's organizational structure consists of the SFL Commissioner, SFL Age Group Commissioners, SFL Board of Commissioners, SFL Disciplinary Panel, SFL Club Representative, and SFL Administrator. In addition, a club may also appoint Club Age Group Commissioners to represent the teams of a given age group. The following specifies the duties of these seven positions:
 - 1. **SFL Commissioner** - Monitors the seasonal and daily operations of the league. This is done with the assistance of the SFL Age Group Commissioners and the SFL Club Representatives. The SFL Commissioner also hears all appeals of decisions made by a SFL Age Group Commissioner or the SFL Disciplinary Panel. The SFL Commissioner's decision is final and no other appeal is available. The SFL Commissioner shall be voted in office during the fall preseason meeting for the fall and following spring season.
 - 2. **SFL Age Group Commissioners** - Each age group will have a SFL Age Group Commissioner who shall be responsible to the SFL Commissioner. The SFL Age

Group Commissioner shall be voted in office during the fall preseason meeting for the fall and following spring seasons. The SFL Age Group Commissioners will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the teams in their age group and will coordinate with the SFL Club Representatives and, if necessary, notify the SFL Commissioner when problems arise or disciplinary action is required.

3. **SFL Board of Commissioners** - The SFL Board of Commissioners (SFL Board) consists of the SFL Age Group Commissioners and the SFL Commissioner who is the chairperson. The SFL Board is responsible for general administrative actions of the SFL which are not otherwise described in this charter and preparing the items necessary for the preseason meeting. Examples of items that would normally be available for the preseason meeting include a proposed budget, proposed rules, and any proposed changes to the charter.
 - a. Each SFL Age Group Commissioner shall have one vote with the SFL Commissioner voting to break any ties. If the same person holds more than one SFL Age Group Commissioner position and that individual is not the SFL Commissioner, then that person shall have one vote for each position held with a maximum of two votes.
 - b. If the SFL Commissioner is also an SFL Age Group Commissioner, then the SFL Commissioner shall only have one vote regardless of the number of Age Group Commissioner positions held. However, if the initial vote on a matter results in a tie, then the SFL Commissioner will be allowed break a tie vote by casting one additional vote.

Example

Person A is the SFL Age Group Commissioner for the Under 14, 16, and Under 19 Girls. Person A has two votes since Person A hold 3 positions and is not the SFL Commissioner. If Person A was the SFL Commissioner, then Person A could only cast one vote unless the initial vote resulted in a tie. If the initial vote was a tie, then Person A could cast one additional vote, as the SFL Commissioner, to break the tie.

- c. The SFL Board of Commissioners may also appoint other individuals to assist them in carrying out their duties.
4. **SFL Disciplinary Panel** - The SFL Commissioner or a SFL Age Group Commissioner may also convene a Disciplinary Panel to investigate a complaint or protest submitted by a SFL Club Representative. The structure and role of this panel are discussed in Section IX.

5. **SFL Club Representatives** - Each club is required to appoint one individual as the SFL Club Representative. This individual is the official representative of the club and is responsible for ensuring that all rules and regulations of their club and that of the SFL are being followed. This individual also acts as liaison between the club and the SFL over disputes and rule infractions. The SFL is not required to act upon any issues raised by someone other than the SFL Club Representative or the President (or equivalent) of the Club's governing body. The SFL Club Representative must also be able to communicate with the SFL using an Email service that is acceptable to the SFL unless a written waiver is granted by the SFL Commissioner. Examples of duties normally performed by the SFL Club Representative include:
 - a. Providing team information such as number of teams; team colors for each team; coaches's names, addresses, and phone numbers; and playing fields, directions, and times.
 - b. Providing game officials for their teams' home games,
 - c. Ensuring that adequate insurance coverage is available for all teams playing on their home fields.
 - d. Performing other responsibilities required by the SFL.
 6. **SFL Administrator** - The SFL Board of Commissioners may appoint an individual to perform necessary administrative functions on behalf of these individuals. The duties and responsibilities of this position shall be defined by the SFL Board of Commissioners. The SFL Administrator is not allowed to vote in SFL matters unless this individual is also the SFL Commissioner, SFL Age Group Commissioner, and/or SFL Club Representative.
 7. **Club Age Group Representative** - Each club may appoint one individual to represent the teams of a given age group. This individual may assist the SFL Club Representative but will not be allowed to vote on SFL matters or act as an official representative of the club unless the club has also appointed this individual as the SFL Club Representative. Examples of duties perform by Club Age Group Representatives include providing team information on the teams in their assigned age group and acting as a point of contact when another team has a problem contacting a coach.
- B. **Club Responsibilities** - All clubs must register their players with the proper state soccer association (e.g., Virginia Youth Soccer Association) and have adequate insurance, as defined by their state association, for their players.

- C. It is understood that as more experience is gained, it is in the interests of the SFL to customize the rules and make interpretations of the rules without formally changing the charter. Therefore, rules that are consistent with this charter may be proposed at the preseason meeting for acceptance by the SFL Club Representatives present. A vote must be taken with simple majority signifying acceptance.

III. CLUB REGISTRATION

- A. Each club must register their team(s) with the SFL in the manner prescribed by the SFL. Examples of items that must be provided by a club before any of their teams are considered registered include:
 - 1. Name, address, phone number, and Email address of the SFL Club Representative.
 - 2. Name, address, and phone number of the club's referee coordinator.
 - 3. Name and address of the club.

IV. REGISTRATION FEES

- A. The registration fees for each age group will set at the pre-season meeting. The registration fee will cover all administrative expenses, such as postage and trophies, and referee costs incurred by the clubs hosting the tournament.
- B. Clubs hosting the tournament will receive reimbursement for the games hosted based on a game reimbursement rate established at the preseason meeting.
- C. The registration fee, and tournament game reimbursement rates must be approved by a majority of the SFL Club Representatives present at the pre-season meeting.

V. PLAYER REGISTRATION

- A. A player must be registered with an associated club and meet their requirements for being a recreational or house player. A player, therefore, cannot be on a select or travel team and participate in the SFL during the same season.
- B. As stated in Section I, "PURPOSE", the SFL Commissioner, or SFL Age Group Commissioner, can make adjustments in unique situations to accommodate the various club rules. The ruling must be in the best interest of the *players and the league*. Decisions made by a SFL Age Group Commissioner must be provided in writing to the SFL Commissioner.
- C. A player must meet the USSF birth date requirements for their age group.

1. The club may allow a player to play in an age group older than the player (commonly referred to as playing up) but cannot play in a younger age group (playing down).
2. Each SFL Club Representative is responsible for preparing and maintaining the player roster for each of their teams in the manner prescribed by the SFL. The SFL Board of Commissioners may also require that a club submit team rosters to the SFL. The actual procedures that will be used for team rosters will be included in the rules that govern a given season.
3. A player may be listed on only one roster in a given season unless the SFL has approved otherwise. The SFL rules governing a given season shall state under what conditions a player can play on more than one team.

VI. GAME REQUIREMENTS

- A. All games will be played in accordance with "FIFA Laws of the Game" as modified by the USSF for youth play and as clarified in these operating instructions.
- B. Nothing in this charter precludes a club from imposing more stringent rules on their own teams.
- C. All players in good standing must play at least 50 percent of the game.
- D. Game times
 1. **Adults** - 45 minute halves with a 5 minute half.
 2. **Under 19** - 45 minute halves with a 5 minute half.
 3. **Under 16** - 45 minute halves with a 5 minute half.
 4. **Under 14** - 35 minute halves with a 5 minute half.
 5. **Under 12** - 30 minute halves with a 5 minute half.
- E. **Substitutions** - Substitutions may be made with the consent of the referee, at the following times:
 1. throw-in in your favor,
 2. goal kick by either team,
 3. after a goal by either team,
 4. after an injury to either team when the referee stops play, or
 5. half-time.
- F. Team Size

1. **Minimum** - Teams must field a minimum of seven (7) players at game time.
 2. **Maximum** - Although there is no maximum, the SFL suggests that no more than eighteen players be assigned to one team. This is because of the fifty percent playing time rule, (section VI.C.)
- G. **Team Colors** - Teams must have matching colored jerseys with a unique number assigned to each player. If a color clash between two teams exists, it is the responsibility of the home team to change colors by either using an alternate colored jersey. Required numbers will be waived.
- H. **Equipment** - Shin-guards are mandatory and each player must wear FIFA approved soccer shoes or tennis shoes.
- I. **Play Down Rule** - At the beginning of the season, the SFL Club Representatives will decide if the play down rule is employed. The coach with the most player's may also decide to playdown. A legal lineup consists of seven players. (This requirement may be waived by the SFL Board of Commissioners for tournament play.) If there is seven or eight players, the opposing team is required to play nine. If there are nine or ten players, the other team may play all eleven if the playdown rule is not employed.
- J. **Home Team Responsibilities - Regular Season Play**
1. Providing a suitable game field for the given age group (for example for the Under 14 age group the field shall be a minimum of 50 yards X 100 yards), goals with nets, lines, corner flags, and game ball.
 2. Providing either three USSF certified referees (one center and two assistant referees) using the Diagonal System of Control (DSC); or two USSF certified referees using the DSC with one "club" Assistant Referee provided by one of the two teams; or in an emergency, a single USSF certified referee. If the proper number of officials are not present by game time plus 15 minutes, the game will be forfeited by the home team.
 3. Contacting the visiting coach by the Wednesday preceding the game to confirm the game time, location, directions, and any other information they may need.
 4. Determining if a color clash exists. In case of a color clash, the home team must change colors.
 5. Notifying the visiting team if a game is postponed due to weather. The home team should call the visiting team at least 3 hours before the scheduled start time. The home team should then notify the SFL that the game has been postponed and, if

possible, the makeup date. Games will not be played if the field has been closed by either the Department of Recreation, the local club, or referee.

K. Other

1. Slide tackling is permitted, however, the referee will have the final decision as to whether the tackle was properly executed. Coaches are directed to instruct their players on proper technique and the potential of injury to other players and themselves when improperly done.
2. Under 12, Under 14, Under 16, and Under 19 girls are allowed to place their arms across their chest for protection. The referee has the final decision as to whether the action was legally executed.

VII. GAME FORMAT, SCHEDULES, AND RELATED INFORMATION

- A. It is recommended the regular season play consist of at least 7 games with a post season tournament of two or three games. If a majority of the SFL Club Representatives present at the preseason meeting do not desire a post-season tournament, then the regular season should consist of 8 to 10 games.
- B. Game schedules and related information will be developed by the SFL. Normally, half of a teams regular season games will be played on their home field.
- C. The following information should be provided to each of the coaches and club representatives for regular season games:
 1. Game schedule showing the home team, game time, game field, and directions to game fields.
 2. Listing of team information for opponents including other coaches names, coaches phone numbers, and team colors.

VIII. TOURNAMENT GAMES

- A. Regular season standings will be used to rank teams for tournament play. Teams will be ranked during the regular season based on game percentage points (total games played times 4 divided by game points earned), game points, bonus points, and least goals allowed. The tournament ranking will generally be based on the results through the fifth or sixth game.
 1. Game points are awarded as follows: 4 points for a win, 2 points for a tie, 1 point for a loss, and 0 points for a forfeit. The game score for a forfeited games is 3 - 0.

2. Bonus points will also be awarded based on the goal differential up to a maximum of 3 points per game. For example, a game score of 5 - 1 would result in 3 bonus points.
- B. The SFL Club Representative is responsible for selecting a Site Coordinator for any tournament games hosted by the SFL Club Representative's club. If more than one group of teams will be playing at a site, then a Division Commissioner will also be selected by either the SFL or the SFL Club Representative.
- C. The Site Coordinator responsibilities include:
1. providing the fields, nets, and ensuring that fields are properly lined;
 2. providing the game officials; and
 3. notifying the SFL and the Division Commissioners for their site of game cancellations due to the weather.
- D. The Division Commissioner's responsibilities include:
1. providing a game board for their division and ensuring that the scores are posted,
 2. determining the final rankings of the teams in their division based on overall game points and the tie breakers,
 3. awarding the trophies to the first and second place teams in their division,
 4. promptly notifying the SFL of the official game scores and final ranking of the teams in their division, and
 5. notifying the teams in their division of game cancellations.
- E. Tournament Rules and Standings
1. Game points are awarded as follows: 4 points for a win, 2 points for a tie, 1 point for a loss, and 0 points for a forfeit. The game score for a forfeited game is at least 1 - 0.
 2. Bonus points will also be awarded based on the goal differential up to a maximum of 3 points per game. For example, a game score of 5 - 1 would result in 3 bonus points.

3. **Team Ranking** - Teams will be ranked during tournament play based on game points, head to head competition (including regular season games if they have played each other), bonus points, least goals allowed during the tournament, and shoot out. A 3 or 4-way tie is broken by, bonus points, least goals allowed during the tournament, regular season standings, and shootout. After one team is eliminated, then the remaining teams will be ranked by starting at the top of the appropriate tie breakers.

Example 1

- Team A beats Team B, loses to Team C, and beats Team D. Team A did not play either Team B or C during the regular season, had 5 bonus points, and gave up 3 goals.
- Team B loses to Team A, beats Team C, and beats Team D. Team B lost to Team C in the regular season, had 5 bonus points and gave up 2 goals.
- Team C loses to Team B, beats Teams A and D. Team C beat Team B in the regular season, had 5 bonus points, and allowed 4 goals.

In ranking the teams, Team C would be ranked third since all teams had the same number of bonus points and it had given up more goals than either Team A or Team B. Team B would be ranked second since the first tie breaker in a two-way tie is head to head competition and it lost to Team A. Team A would be ranked first.

Example 2

- Team A beats Team B, loses to Team C, and beats Team D. Team A did not play either Team B or C during the regular season, had 4 bonus points, and gave up 3 goals.
- Team B loses to Team A, beats Team C, and beats Team D. Team B loses to Team C in the regular season, had 5 bonus points and gave up 2 goals.
- Team C loses to Team B, beats Teams A and D. Team C beat Team B in the regular season, had 5 bonus points, and allowed 4 goals.

In ranking the teams, Team A would be ranked third since it had fewer bonus points than the other two teams. Team C would be ranked second since it had given up more goals than Team B. The head to head tie breaker would not apply since Team B and Team C had both won against each other, when considering regular season and tournament competition, and both teams had the same number of game points.

4. **Games Halted** - If a tournament game is halted due to unsafe playing conditions, prior to half-time, the game result at the time of termination will be used as the final game result unless waived by the Age Group Commissioner. A game halted at half time or later will stand as indicated by the score when the game was halted.
5. **Tournament Cancellation** - If the tournament games are halted for bad weather, or has to be canceled, then the trophies will be awarded based on the decision made at the preseason meeting.

IX. DISCIPLINE, PROTESTS and APPEALS

- A. **Discipline** - At the older age levels, the coach assumes an increased level of responsibility regarding team leadership and maintenance of order and discipline. The SFL expects each of its coaches to set a positive example for their players in promoting good sportsmanship and self-control. Accordingly, coaches are expected to be present at every game with their team or to ensure that responsible adult leadership is present for the team in their absence. A history of disciplinary infractions by one team can be grounds for team, coach, and/or player dismissal from the league. Such decisions will not be made lightly or hastily and will only be made after a careful review of the facts by a Disciplinary Panel to resolve disputes.
- B. **Sideline Control** - The coach is responsible for the behavior of his/her sidelines. After being verbally warned or cautioned (yellow card) by the referee for unsportsmanlike behavior from his/her sidelines, the coach shall be red carded if the situation persists. The referee also has the power to eject any spectator at any time at the referee's discretion.
- C. **Disciplinary Panels and Appeals** - Should the SFL Commissioner or SFL Age Group Commissioner decide that a disciplinary panel should be convened, the applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner will select 3 other SFL Age Group Commissioners and form a disciplinary panel. If three panel members cannot agree on the proper decision, then the SFL Commissioner will make the final decision and no appeal is available.
 1. A SFL Club Representative may appeal a decision reached by a SFL Age Group Commissioner or the Disciplinary Panel to the SFL Commissioner for a final decision. The SFL Commissioner's decision is final and cannot be appealed.
 2. The SFL Age Group Commissioners selected for a disciplinary panel should not include a member who is involved with either the team or club who is the subject of the disciplinary panel. Should the dispute involve the SFL Commissioner's team or club, then the panel's decision is final and cannot be appealed.

- D. **Game Suspensions and Terminations** - Should a referee terminate a match due to disciplinary problems, the SFL Club Representative shall notify the applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner who will notify the SFL Commissioner. The SFL Age Group Commissioner will make a decision on whether the Disciplinary Panel will investigate the circumstances and notify the SFL Commissioner of his/her decision. A written report will be provided by SFL Age Group Commissioner of the actions taken, including game forfeiture, to the SFL Commissioner. The SFL Commissioner may direct additional actions at the SFL Commissioner's sole discretion.
- E. **Misconduct** - A player receiving a yellow card is required to leave the field of play for the period of time agreed to at the preseason meeting. The team is allowed to substitute for this player. Two yellow cards during a game constitute a red card according to the laws of the game. A red carded player, dismissed coach, or dismissed spectator will be required to sit out the next game the team plays. If a player receives three red cards during a season, including post season tournament play, the player is automatically suspended for the remainder of the season including post-season play. Red cards do not carry over to the next season. For serious misconduct, the SFL Age Group Commissioner shall decide whether a hearing will be held by the Disciplinary Panel and notify the SFL Commissioner of his or her decision.
- F. **Complaints and Protests** - Only a SFL Club Representative or the President (or equivalent) of a club's governing body are allowed to submit formal complaints or protest a game. SFL Club Representatives or Club Presidents who wish to protest a game or provide a formal complaint, must notify the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner in writing within 48 hours after the match with a copy to the SFL Commissioner. Coaches and Club Age Group Commissioners are not allowed to file formal complaints or protests directly with the SFL. Although the SFL Club Representative or Club President may request other individuals to help the SFL Club Representative or Club President file a complaint or protest, the applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner is only responsible for accepting information from and discussing the complaint or protest with the SFL Club Representative OR Club President who is acting on behalf of the club.
1. The formal complaint or protest must include:
 - a. the time and location of the match;
 - b. the team names and age group;
 - c. the nature of the complaint or protest (referee judgment is not considered an item for protest);
 - d. the referee's name, address, and phone number (if known); and

- e. the opposing team coach's name and other significant witnesses.
- 2. During tournament play, a phone report may be made by the SFL Club Representative but must include the above information. The protest will be handled by the applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner.
- G. It should be remembered that SFL is governed by the principle that all actions are For the Good of the Player and un-sportsman like conduct or violation of the rules of soccer cannot be tolerated. It should also be noted that the SFL is primarily a scheduling organization and that the resolution of complaints, disciplinary actions, and protests is primarily the responsibility of the affected clubs. The role of the SFL is to help facilitate the resolution of complaints, disciplinary problems, and protests.