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Suburban Friendship League

Frequently Asked Questions – Team Ranking

(February 14, 2008)

Question: How are teams ranked on the standings page?

Response: The SFL web site displays team rankings in the following order: game point percentage, game points, bonus points, and goals allowed.

Question: How is the game point percentage calculated and why is it used rather ranking teams based on game points?

Response: The game point percentage is calculated as follows: game points earned divided by (total games played times maximum number of points that can be earned for a game). For example, if a team plays 4 games, wins 2 games, ties 1 game, and loses the remaining game, its game point percentage would be calculated as follows: (11 game points earned (4 + 4 + 2 + 1) / 16 game points (4 games X 4 points per game)) = 68.8 percent.

The game point percentage is used as a means of maintaining an equivalent basis for ranking teams regardless of the number of games actually played. For example, assume Team A is scheduled to play 2 games on week 1 and wins one game and loses the other game while Team B is only scheduled to play 1 game and wins that game. If game points were used, then Team A would be ranked higher than Team B even though Team B was undefeated. When the teams play the same number of games, the ranking process using game point percentage provides identical results to ranking by game points. Furthermore, since game point percentage provides an equivalent basis to rank teams when an unequal number of games have been played, it is used when developing tournament divisions.

Question: Are the web site rankings used when determining tournament divisions? If not, what adjustments are made.

Response: Tournament divisions for all practicable purposes are established based on game point percentage and teams with the comparable game point percentages are generally placed in the same tournament division. See the Tournament FAQ for additional information on how teams are assigned to tournament divisions.

Question: I checked the team standings page to see how the teams in my tournament division have done. Much to my surprise, I found that the teams I am scheduled to play in the tournament have significantly different game point percentages than my team.

1 Was an error made in my tournament division assignment and what adjustments can
2 be made so that my team is placed in the proper tournament division?
3

4 **Response:** The most likely cause of the difference is that scores have been reported since the
5 rankings were developed that were used for assigning teams to the tournament
6 divisions. Another potential cause is that forfeit and penalties for reporting scores
7 late are removed when determining the tournament divisions. The Tournament FAQ
8 has additional information on how the tournament divisions are determined and the
9 adjustments that are made when determining the game point percentages used for a
10 team during this process. The Tournament FAQ discusses in more detail (1) the
11 time line use to develop the tournament schedules which can result in scores being
12 reported after the tournament divisions have been established and (2) the
13 adjustments made that affect the game point percentage used to place teams in
14 tournament divisions.
15

16 **Question:** How are game points awarded?
17

18 **Response:** Game points are awarded as follows – 4 points for a win, 2 points for a tie, 1 point
19 for a loss, and 0 points for a forfeit.
20

21 **Question:** Why did the SFL adopt its process for awarding game points rather than using the
22 FIFA process, i.e., 3 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, and 0 points for a loss
23 regardless of the reason?
24

25 **Response:** In determining the game points that should be awarded for a game, the SFL
26 Commissioners recommended that a team that played a game and lost should receive
27 more credit than a team that forfeited a game. This recommendation was based on
28 the belief that awarding points for a loss would encourage the games to be played
29 since regardless of the outcome each team would get at least one game point. The
30 clubs adopted this recommendation.
31

32 When FIFA moved from awarding 2 points for a win and 1 point for a tie to the
33 current 3 points for a win and 1 point for a tie, the SFL changed its games points
34 accordingly.¹ It was our understanding that FIFA made its change to encourage
35 teams to “play to win” since after the change, a win and loss were worth more than 2
36 ties. The approach taken by the SFL accomplishes the same result as the FIFA
37 approach. Specifically, under the SFL approach, a win and loss generates 5 game
38 points while two ties generate 4 game points – a 1 game point difference. Under the
39 FIFA approach, a win and loss generate 3 game points while two ties generate 2
40 game points – a 1 game point difference.

¹ When FIFA used 2 points for a win and 1 point for a tie, the SFL used 3 points for a win, 2 points for a tie, 1 point for a loss, and 0 points for a forfeit.

1 **Question:** How are bonus points calculated?
2

3 **Response:** Bonus points are awarded based on the goal differential up to a maximum of 3 bonus
4 points per game. For example, a game score of 5 – 1 would result in 3 bonus points
5 while a game score of 2 – 1 would generate 1 game point.
6

7 **Question:** Are bonus points added to the game points when determining a teams rank?
8

9 **Response:** No. Bonus points are only used as a tie breaker and for all practicable purposes they
10 are meaningless except in round robin tournament divisions which may use bonus
11 points earned during the tournament to break ties. The Tournament FAQ discusses
12 how teams are ranked in round robin tournament divisions.
13

14 **Question:** FIFA and others use goal differential and goals scored in the ranking process. While
15 the bonus points are a step in this direction, they are limited and total goals scored
16 are not used. Why did the SFL decide not to use these standards?
17

18 **Response:** As noted elsewhere and the Tournament FAQ the real factor for determining
19 placement in a tournament division is a team's game point percentage. The reason
20 that bonus points are limited and goals scored are not used in the ranking process is
21 that the SFL Commissioners and clubs do not want to provide any incentive to run
22 up the score on a weaker team. A score of 3 – 0 provides the same benefits ranking
23 wise as a 10 – 0 score. The tournament FAQ has additional information on how
24 teams are placed in tournament divisions and how teams are ranked based on
25 tournament games played.
26

27 Bonus points are used as a ranking factor in the tournament divisions playing the
28 round robin format. However, the primary factors are (1) game points earned (which
29 are based on games won) and (2) head to head competition. Accordingly, a team
30 that beats the other teams it plays in its tournament division by 1 goal each will be
31 ranked ahead of the other teams in its tournament division in all but one very rare
32 and extreme case. For example, assume Team A beats Team B 1 – 0 and also wins
33 its other games by 1 – 0 while Team B wins its other games by 10 – 0. In this
34 example, Team A would have 3 bonus points while Team B had 6 bonus points.
35 However, Team A will be ranked ahead of Team B based on game points (12 versus
36 9). Even if Team A were to lose one of the other games and the 2 teams were tied
37 based on game points (9 each), Team A would still be ranked ahead of Team B since
38 it had beaten Team B during the tournament assuming that the teams did not play
39 each other during the regular season or Team B did not beat Team A during the
40 regular season. Put another way, teams that win their tournament games do not have
to worry about ranking factors like bonus points.