

SUBURBAN FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

Rules and Administrative Items for the Spring 2018 Season

(Adopted March 9, 2018)

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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 recreational teams and that players participating in travel or select programs may not participate. These players are commonly referred to as “travel players”. The SFL considers any individual that practices with or plays in a VYSA recognized travel/select program to be a travel player under any and all conditions and circumstances except for the limited exceptions noted in the SFL rules. Coaches should discuss with each player on their team the prohibition of playing on a SFL team and participating in a VYSA recognized travel/select program and make sure that the team realizes that the identification of a “travel player” on that team will result in forfeiture of games and elimination from the SFL tournament.

Examples

Based on previous requests and decisions made by the SFL, an individual participating in the following programs and tournaments would result in the individual being considered as a travel player.

- Any player contained in the VYSA data base of travel players.
- VYSA Olympic Development Program (not the VYSA Developmental – Olympic Development Program).
- State Cup competitions or any other tournaments that may require players to play tournament games on weekends where SFL games are regularly scheduled .

Note: These are only examples and this list is not intended to be all inclusive.

- B. The SFL is set up and run “**For 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 appropriate state soccer association (such as the Virginia Youth Soccer Association) guidelines and rules; their own operating procedures; and provide guidance, cooperation and, if necessary, discipline in carrying out the SFL’s requirements. 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’s club procedures and rules may be more stringent, but not any less stringent than those imposed by the SFL.
1. The SFL shall be notified in writing if a club does not comply with any rules and regulations issued by their applicable state soccer association.
 2. Payment of the team registration fee signifies that the club (1) is in compliance with applicable state soccer association rules and regulations, (2) has properly registered all players playing in SFL scheduled games with the applicable state association, and (3) agrees to abide by the rules imposed by the SFL.

1
2 **II. PLAYER REGISTRATION, TEAM ROSTERS, AND ROSTER CHALLENGES**
3

- 4 A. A youth league player must be registered with an associated club, who registers them with the
5 appropriate state soccer association (such as the Virginia Youth Soccer Association) and meet
6 their requirements for being a recreational or house player. A player, therefore, cannot be on a
7 select or travel team and participate in the SFL during the same season.
8
- 9 1. If a player played on a travel or select team during the previous season, the player should
10 complete SFL Form 3 (Players No Longer Playing Travel or Select Soccer). This form
11 should also be signed by the Coach and SFL Club Representative. A copy should be mailed
12 to the SFL Age Group Commissioner with the original maintained by the coach. Players
13 appearing on this form and complying with its certifications are not considered travel or
14 select players.
15
 - 16 2. If a question is raised on whether a player should be considered a recreational player the
17 definition used by the United States Youth Soccer Association shall be used.
18
 - 19 3. Some travel leagues may allow recreational players to play on the travel teams as guest
20 players. This is allowed under the following conditions:
21
 - 22 a. The player does not routinely practice with the travel team. This does not exclude one
23 time “try outs” for the team.
24
 - 25 b. **Travel tournaments** – The player is playing for a travel team participating in a
26 tournament that occurs either (1) before the first game of the SFL season, (2) after the
27 last game of the SFL season, or (3) during a week when the SFL does not hold games,
28 e.g., holiday weekends. The SFL must be notified by Email of the player’s name and
29 date of birth along with the game dates that the player is playing for the travel team if
30 the game dates fall between the start and end of the SFL season, e.g., holiday weekends.
31
 - 32 c. **Regular season travel games** – Some travel leagues may allow recreational players to
33 play on a travel team during that team’s regular season travel games. The SFL does not
34 support this policy for many reasons including the potential that a player may end up
35 playing on a travel team and SFL team throughout the season which effectively
36 eliminates the prohibition against travel players playing on SFL teams. Accordingly, if
37 a SFL player participates in a regular season travel game, then (1) the club must notify
38 the SFL of the player’s name and birth date and (2) ensure that the player no longer
39 plays on the SFL team. Subsequent participation of the player in SFL games will result
40 in game forfeits and the team’s elimination from the SFL tournament.
41
- 42 B. As stated in Section I, PURPOSE, the SFL Commissioner and SFL Age Group Commissioners
43 can make adjustments in unique situations to accommodate the various club rules. The ruling
44 must be in the best interest of the *players and the league*.
45
- 46 C. A player must meet the USSF birth date requirements for their age group.
47
- 48 1. The SFL encourages the clubs to only assign players whose birth dates comply with their
49 team’s age group, e.g., U11 age players are assigned to U11 teams, U15/16 age players are
50 assigned to U16 teams, etc.
51
 - 52 a. **Under 11 through Under 14 teams** – A club may allow a player to participate on a
53 team that is two age groups older than the player (commonly referred to as playing up)

1 without having to request a waiver from the SFL, e.g., the club may decide to assign
2 U11 age players to U13 teams, U12 age players to U14 teams, etc.

3
4 (1) For the Spring 2018 season only, clubs may request waivers that allow a player to
5 play up more than two (2) SFL age groups. Such waiver requests must include a
6 signed statement from the club's Board of Directors/Executive Director that they
7 have reviewed the application and believe that the player should be allowed to play
8 up two (2) or more SFL age groups and that the club accepts all the risks associated
9 with allowing players to play in an age group that is older than the player's birth
10 date would dictate. The individual signing this determination must (1) be a Board
11 Member/Executive Director and (2) someone other than the SFL Club
12 Representative or a coach in the SFL
13

14 b. **Under 16 and Under 19 teams** – A club may allow a player to participate on a team in
15 an age group that is one (1) year older than the player (commonly referred to as playing
16 up), e.g., the club may decide to assign U14 age players to U16 teams and Under 16 age
17 players to Under 19 teams. No players may play on teams that are two or more age
18 groups older than the player, e.g., Under 13s may not play on Under 16 teams and Under
19 14s may not play on Under 19 teams.
20

21 Age Group Matrix

22 Team Age Group	23 Player's Actual Age Group
24 Under 11	25 Under 9, 10, and 11
26 Under 12	27 Under 10, 11, and 12
28 Under 13	29 Under 11, 12, and 13
30 Under 14	31 Under 12, 13, and 14
32 Under 16	33 Under 14, 15, and 16
34 Under 19	35 Under 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

36 **Note:** Unless otherwise noted, clubs may not request waivers to these age group
37 allowances, e.g., Under 8s playing on Under 11 teams, Under 14s playing on Under
38 19 teams, etc.
39

40 2. Players cannot play in a younger age group (playing down) unless a medical waiver has
41 been obtained from the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner.

- 42 a. Requests for play down waivers are only granted for medical reasons and the SFL Club
43 Representative must provide the following information:
- 44 (1) Signed statement from the club's Board of Directors/Executive Director that they
45 have reviewed the application and believe that the player should be allowed to play
46 down for medical reasons. The individual signing this determination must (1) be a
47 Board Member/Executive Director and (2) someone other than the SFL Club
48 Representative or a coach in the SFL.
 - 49 (2) Signed statement from a doctor explaining the medical condition that requires the
player to play down.

- 1 b. If the request is granted, the waiver shall state that the waiver is a medical waiver but
2 not provide the reason the medical waiver was granted.
3
4 c. Clubs must submit a request each season for medical waivers even if a request has been
5 approved in the prior season. This request must include a new determination by the
6 applicable club's board that the player should be granted a medical waiver.
7
8 (1) All requests for medical waivers must be submitted prior to March 31 for the
9 spring season and August 31 for the fall season.
10

11 D. Player eligibility and roster questions should be directed to the appropriate SFL Age Group
12 Commissioner by the appropriate SFL Club Representative. The Email addresses for the SFL
13 Commissioner and SFL Age Group Commissioners are included in the season package.
14

15 E. The SFL has two player roster forms – Master Player Roster (SFL–4E) and SFL Team Roster
16 (SFL–2E). The Master Player Roster is submitted to the SFL and used by te SFL to generate
17 the SFL Team Rosters that are provided to the SFL Club Representatives for distribution to the
18 teams. The paper copy of the SFL Team Roster is the form that is used in the roster exchange
19 process between teams. **The SFL Club Representatives and coaches should not expect the
20 SFL to distribute the SFL Team Rosters directly to the teams.**
21

22 1. The Master Player Roster is an Excel spread sheet and the instructions contained in the file
23 and those contained in the Procedures and Processes – Master Player Roster Summary
24 document discuss the data requirements for the Master Player Roster. Both of these
25 documents may be obtained from the SFL web site on the SFL Forms and SFL Documents
26 pages respectively. The following are the general requirements that apply to the Master
27 Player Roster and Team Roster forms.
28

29 a. The SFL Club Representative is responsible for ensuring that (1) the Master Player
30 Roster accurately represents the data on the player contained in the club’s registration
31 system which is expected to comply with applicable VYSA requirements, e.g., player
32 birth dates are validated, (2) any problems identified by the SFL with the data submitted
33 is corrected in a timely manner, and (3) the SFL is provided any changes to the Master
34 Player Roster in a timely manner. It is up to the club to address any issues identified by
35 the club or the SFL with the data contained on the Master Player Roster and submit a
36 revised Master Player Roster when required. Otherwise, the club’s team may be unduly
37 penalized.
38

39 b. Clubs must submit the Master Player Roster on the SFL provided form. The current
40 SFL Form SFL–4E is the official form used for submitting Master Player Rosters. No
41 substitute forms may be used even if those forms provide the same information or were
42 allowed in previous seasons.
43

44 c. Master Player Rosters are Emailed to the general SFL Email address
45 (sfl@sflsoccer.org). The subject line should contain (1) Master Player Roster and (2)
46 the club’s name, e.g., Master Player Roster – Reston. The SFL will make sure that this
47 roster is distributed to the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioners.
48

49 d. The Master Player Roster contains the official information used by the SFL to resolve
50 roster issues such as whether a given player has been assigned to a specific team.
51

52 e. **Roster submission dates** – Each club is required to submit at least two Master Player
53 Rosters each season.
54

1 (1) March 15 for the spring season and August 15 for the fall season. This submission
2 is used by the SFL to validate that the club has a sufficient number of players to
3 support the registered teams. Valid uniform numbers are not required for this
4 submission and the player assignments to a team are not binding, i.e., the clubs are
5 free to reassign players to other teams.
6

7 (2) On the Monday preceding the first game week, the SFL must receive by 6:00 PM
8 the actual Master Player Roster that should be used to generate the SFL Team
9 Rosters. This submission must contain the actual player assignments and the
10 uniform numbers that are expected to be used by the players on a given SFL Team
11 Roster. The SFL Team Roster section discusses the process that should be used
12 when a club cannot provide accurate uniform numbers for this submission.
13

14 (3) Each week after the first game week the SFL Club Representative may submit one
15 (1) Master Player Roster update by Wednesday at 6:00 PM.
16

17 (a) Players may be added to the Master Player Roster until April 25 for the spring
18 season and September 25 for the fall season. No player additions may be
19 made after April 25 for the spring season or September 25 for the fall season
20 without approval of the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner.
21

22 f. A player may be listed on only one roster in a given season and each player on a given
23 team must have a unique uniform number that remains constant during a given season.
24 The Process and Procedures – SFL Team Rosters document discusses the process that is
25 used when a player shows up at a game wearing a different uniform number. This
26 document also includes a section discussing how to handle duplicate numbers when
27 teams are authorized to combine teams.
28

29 2. The SFL Team Roster (SFL Form 2E) is generated by the SFL based on the data contained
30 in the Master Player Roster. **The SFL does not deal with coaches on SFL Team Roster**
31 **issues. If a coach needs a SFL Team Roster or needs corrections made to the SFL**
32 **Team Roster, then the coach should contact their SFL Club Representative.** The
33 Process and Procedures – SFL Team Rosters provides additional information relating to the
34 generation and use of the SFL Team Rosters. The SFL Club Representatives and coaches
35 are expected to be familiar with the information contained in this document. It can be
36 obtained from the SFL web site on the SFL Documents page.
37

38 a. The SFL Team Roster produced by the SFL is the only acceptable form that may be
39 used. Modifications to the names, birth dates, SFL provided comments, and SFL form
40 presentation, e.g., fonts, watermark, etc. may not be made to the SFL Team Roster by
41 either the coach or the club. For example, names may not be added or changed, birth
42 dates added or changed, and SFL comments relating to a player or team may not
43 changed or deleted. All such changes are made by the SFL using the Master Player
44 Roster process and a new SFL Team Roster is provided to the club for distribution to
45 the coach. The SFL expects the club and the coach to take the necessary steps to
46 provide accurate uniform numbers on the Master Player Roster and that the uniform
47 numbers worn by the players agree with the SFL Team roster unless a color clash
48 between two teams exists. The Process and Procedures – SFL Team Rosters document
49 discusses exceptions to this rule and the process that is used when a color clash exists.
50 Unauthorized modifications to the SFL Team Roster form or content may result in game
51 forfeitures and team elimination from SFL competition.
52

53 (1) The SFL distributes the SFL Team Rosters in the Portable Document Format
54 (PDF). Should the reproduction of the document, i.e., printing, result in the lost of

1 form data or a change to the form, e.g., the watermark is lost, fonts changed, etc.,
2 then the SFL must be notified immediately.
3

4 b. **Player comments** – The SFL Team Roster may contain comments relating to one or
5 more players on the roster. Depending on the comment, the player may not be able to
6 play even if they are shown on the roster. These comments may include whether the
7 player has been given a waiver to play in a certain age group and whether the player is
8 allowed to play on the team until an identified problem is resolved. The SFL Team
9 Roster contains an explanation of the comments and clearly indicates whether the player
10 is allowed to play. The Process and Procedures – SFL Team Rosters contains additional
11 information in this subject.
12

13 c. **SFL Team Roster preparation dates** – The process of generating SFL Team Rosters is
14 time consuming for the SFL and the clubs. It is critical that the clubs develop adequate
15 internal processes to reduce the burden on both parties. The SFL recognizes that some
16 of the information, such as the uniform number, on the Master Player Roster may need
17 to be provided by the coach and that changes may need to be made to the SFL Team Roster
18 during the season. The SFL also recognizes that sometimes players need to be added
19 just before the season starts or even after the season begins. The SFL is committed to
20 providing reasonable support to processing changes and providing revised SFL Team
21 Rosters to the club. However, do not expect to send an Email to the SFL on Friday and
22 have an updated SFL Team Roster for Saturday’s game. **Also, the SFL will not**
23 **provide SFL Team Rosters directly to the teams.** Electronic SFL Team Roster files
24 are provided to the SFL Club Representative and the coaches may obtain additional
25 copies from their SFL Club Representative. The following describes the expected
26 process and time frames.
27

28 (1) **Initial SFL Team Rosters** – As noted above, the SFL Club Representative is
29 expected to provide a Master Player Roster that can be used to generate the initial
30 SFL Team Rosters by 6:00 PM on the Monday preceding the first game week. By
31 Wednesday at 9:00 PM, the SFL expects to provide the SFL Club Representatives
32 the SFL Team Rosters for distribution to their teams. Once the SFL has generated
33 these rosters, no changes may be requested until the following week. For example,
34 if the SFL generates the SFL Team Roster on Monday after the Master Player
35 Roster has been received, then no changes may be requested later that week.
36

37 (2) **Revised SFL Team Rosters** – Each week the SFL Club Representative may
38 submit one (1) updated Master Player Roster and request revised SFL Team
39 Rosters. These submissions must be received by 6:00 PM on Wednesday. The
40 SFL is expected to process this request and provide the updated SFL Team Rosters
41 back to the SFL Club Representative by 9:00 PM on Friday for distribution to the
42 coaches.
43

44 (3) Master Player Roster submission after the dates and times described above may
45 result in the SFL not generating SFL Team Rosters until the following week.
46

47 3. **Exchanging rosters with the opposing team** – Coaches are required to provide a **paper**
48 **copy** of their approved SFL Team Roster to the opposing team before the start of every
49 game. If a team is unable to provide a paper copy of their approved roster the team is
50 assessed a forfeit. Therefore, it is a good idea to provide copies of the approved roster to
51 more than one individual on your team.
52

53 a. If a SFL Team Roster is requested but not provided and both teams agree to play, then
54 neither team can request a forfeit because a roster was not available. If a forfeit is

1 accepted because of a roster problem, then the teams should leave the field. In other
2 words, the teams **should not** use the game as a scrimmage.

3
4 b. The game official may also request a copy of each team's SFL Team Roster.
5

6 **F. Roster Challenges – If a coach does not have a SFL Team Roster when challenged, they**
7 **will be assessed a forfeit.** Therefore, it is a good idea for coaches to provide copies of the
8 SFL Team Roster to more than one individual on the team. The SFL does not expect that roster
9 challenges will become a common practice and the number of challenges will be monitored. If
10 a coach appears to abuse this policy, then the appropriate SFL Club Representative will be
11 notified and appropriate disciplinary action suggested. Two types of roster challenges may be
12 made – field challenges and roster form challenges.
13

14 1. **Field Challenges** – The Process and Procedures – SFL Team Rosters document discusses
15 how to conduct a roster challenge on the field. As noted in this document, **in almost all**
16 **cases, the SFL will make a decision after the game is played whether a forfeit will be**
17 **awarded when a team has a SFL Team Roster. The referee is only expected to**
18 **perform the roster challenge process and is not expected to make a decision on a**
19 **forfeit since this decision is left to the applicable SFL Commissioner.**
20

21 2. **Roster Form Challenges** – A coach may challenge the accuracy of the Team Roster
22 provided by the opposing team through that coach's SFL Club Representative. A copy of
23 the SFL Team Roster provided by the opposing team must be provided with the challenge
24 along with the reason for the challenge. The SFL will then validate that the information on
25 that form agrees with the latest version of the SFL Team Roster provided to the applicable
26 SFL Club Representative. As noted elsewhere, unauthorized modifications to the SFL
27 Team Roster may result in the forfeiture of games and team elimination from future SFL
28 games.
29

30 G. A club must register all their recreational teams in a given age group.
31

32 **III. SHARING PLAYERS BETWEEN TWO TEAMS AND COMBINING TEAMS** 33

34 **Important: It was agreed at the Spring 2018 preseason meeting that starting in the Fall 2018**
35 **season, no teams will be allowed to share players.**
36

37 A. Sharing players between two teams for regular season games.
38

39 1. Some clubs may allow a player to play on two teams which is not in accordance with the
40 SFL rules that a player may only appear on one roster
41

42 2. A club that has too many players for one team but not enough for two teams is allowed to
43 form two teams and share players to ensure an adequate number are available for a game
44 when the SFL approves the sharing of players between teams.
45

46 a. The applicable SFL Commissioner will consider a request to share players when the
47 following conditions are met:
48

49 (1) The request must normally be submitted before the season begins.
50

51 (2) A club must make a good faith effort not to abuse this exception. For example, if a
52 club has 52 players, they should establish 3 teams to make sure that enough players
53 will be available to play each game. They should not establish 4 teams.
54

- 1 (3) Each team must have at least 12 players in the Under 11/12 age groups and 14
2 players in the Under 13/19 age groups. Furthermore, if the combined number of
3 players on the two teams sharing players is less than 26 for the Under 11/12 age
4 groups and 30 for the Under 13 and older age groups, then the SFL may require the
5 teams to play their home games on Sunday.
6

7 **Note:** The SFL makes no efforts to deconflict game schedules for teams
8 authorized to share players.
9

- 10 b. When the SFL approves a request to share players, the SFL Team Roster will show (1)
11 when a team is authorized to “share players”, (2) the team rosters that are authorized to
12 be used when sharing players, e.g., Team 1 and Team 5 – Under 14 Girls, and any
13 limitations or other comments, e.g., only being allowed to share players during the
14 regular season games.
15

- 16 (1) The minimum number of players that are assigned to a team must be consistent
17 with section above on the minimum number of players that must be on a team
18 before the sharing of players is authorized, i.e., twelve (12) for U11/12 teams and
19 fourteen (14) for U13/19 teams.
20

- 21 c. The coach(es) sharing players must (1) provide copies of the SFL Team Rosters for both
22 of the teams authorized to share players to the opposing coach during the roster
23 exchange process and (2) notify the opposing coach and the officials before the game
24 which players will play and which players are being added from the other team.
25

26 **B. Combining teams for the tournament.**
27

- 28 1. A team is not allowed to share players between teams for tournament play without express
29 written permission of the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner.
30
- 31 2. The SFL Club Representative must prepare a “tournament roster” using a SFL approved
32 team roster form before the tournament and provide it to the coach(es) of the teams showing
33 the players that are eligible to play on each team. A name may only be shown once. For
34 example, if Player A is shown on Team A’s roster, Player A may not be shown on Team
35 B’s roster. A copy of the “tournament roster” shall be submitted to the appropriate SFL Age
36 Group Commissioner at least one week before the first tournament game is scheduled to be
37 played by Email with a copy provide to the coach of each team. The SFL Club
38 Representative should make sure that the coach(es) understand that they are not allowed to
39 share players for tournament play.
40
- 41 a. If a club decides that it cannot field all the teams that have been allowed to share players
42 during the regular season for tournament play, then the SFL Club Representative is
43 responsible for notifying the SFL prior to the tournament scheduling process the team(s)
44 that should not be scheduled for tournament play. The players on the regular season
45 roster of the team(s) not scheduled to play in tournament may be added to the other
46 team(s) tournament roster.
47
- 48 (1) Only players on the teams that are allowed to share players during the regular
49 season may be merged onto a single team without the express written permission
50 of the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner. The size of the combined roster
51 may not exceed fourteen (14) players for the U11/12 age groups and sixteen (16)
52 players for the U13/19 age groups.
53

1 **Example 1**

2
3 Teams A and B are allowed to share players during the regular season and Team A
4 decides that it cannot play in the tournament. Players from Team A may be added
5 to Team B's tournament roster as long as the tournament roster does not exceed 14
6 players if the team is in the U11/12 age groups or 16 players if the team is in the
7 U13/19 age groups. However, players from Team A may not be added to any other
8 team's roster without express written permission from the appropriate SFL Age
9 Group Commissioner.

10
11 **Example 2**

12
13 Teams A and B are allowed to share players during the regular season and Team C
14 decides that it cannot play in the tournament. Players from Team C MAY NOT be
15 added to either Team A's or Team B's tournament roster without express written
16 permission from the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner.

- 17
18 C. The Process and Procedures – SFL Team Rosters document discusses other requirements that
19 apply to sharing players and including (1) a limitation on the number of players that may play
20 on the shared teams and (2) how to address the duplicate uniform issues that may arise.

21
22 **IV. GAME REQUIREMENTS**

- 23
24 A. All games will be played in accordance with “FIFA Laws of the Game” as modified by the
25 USSF for youth play and as clarified in these operating instructions.
26
27 B. Nothing in these rules precludes a club from imposing more stringent rules on their own teams.
28
29 C. All players in good standing must play at least 50 percent of the game. The applicable club is
30 responsible for defining what is considered good standing.

31
32 **D. Regular Season Game Times and Time Slots**

- 33
34 1. The following are the regular season game times that were approved at the preseason
35 meeting for each age group.
36
37 a. Under 11/12 Boys and Girls – two 30 minute halves.
38 b. Under 13/14 Boys and Girls – two 35 minute halves.
39 c. Under 16 Boys and Girls – two 40 minute halves.
40 d. Under 19 Boys and Girls – two 40 minute halves. However, if time is available and
41 both teams agree, then the Under 19 age groups may play 45 minute halves.
42
43 2. The following are the minimum regular season game slots that were approved at the
44 preseason meeting for each age group.
45
46 a. Under 11/12 Boys and Girls – 75 minutes
47 b. Under 13/14 Boys and Girls – 90 minutes
48 c. Under 16 Boys and Girls – 90 minutes
49 d. Under 19 Boys and Girls – 90 minutes

50
51 **E. Tournament Game Times** – The following game times were approved at the preseason
52 meeting:

- 53
54 1. Under 11/12 Boys and Girls: two 30 minute halves.

1 2. Under 13 through Under 19 Boys and Girls: two 35 minute halves.
2

3 **Note:** The minimum time slot for tournament games is one hour and 45 minutes (105 minutes)
4 to allow for the required roster checks and, if required penalty kicks. In addition, these
5 game times are subject to change depending on the tournament format that is selected
6 for a given site. See the section on tournament schedules for additional information.
7

8 F. Substitutions may be made under the following conditions.
9

10 1. After a goal.
11

12 2. Prior to a goal kick.
13

14 3. Prior to the start of the second half.
15

16 4. Prior to a throw-in by the team in possession. The opposing team may only substitute if the
17 team in possession substitutes.
18

19 5. For an injury when the injured player is replaced. The opposing team may also substitute a
20 player at that time.
21

22 6. After a player caution, at the request of the player's coach. Only the cautioned player may
23 be replaced with a substitute at that time.
24

25 7. At water breaks, if stoppage for the break occurs during one of the above substitution
26 opportunities. Referees are encouraged to schedule water breaks during substitution
27 opportunities for both teams.
28

29 G. **Team Size** – The Laws of the Game as defined by US Soccer, US Youth Soccer, and VYSA
30 define the minimum and maximum team size that is appropriate for a given age group, e.g., 11
31 v 11 is the maximum team size for the Under 19s. Although the SFL does not have a
32 maximum roster size, the SFL suggests no more than twice the number of players allowed on
33 the field are assigned to a team because of the 50 percent playing rule discussed elsewhere.
34

35 H. **Team Colors** – Teams must have matching colored jerseys with a unique number assigned to
36 each player. If a color clash between two teams exists, it is the responsibility of the home team
37 to change colors by using an alternate colored jersey. Required numbers will be waived.
38

39 I. **Equipment** – Shin-guards are mandatory and each player must wear FIFA acceptable sport
40 shoes or sneakers are required. Metal cleats shall not be worn.
41

42 J. **Play Down Rule** – If one team has less than the maximum number of players allowed the
43 following rules shall be used:
44

45 1. A team must have at least 4 fewer players than the maximum number allowed for 11 v 11
46 format games, e.g., if the game format is 11 v 11, then seven (7) players are needed to play a
47 game and 3 fewer players for 9 v 9 format games.
48

49 2. If one team has does not have the maximum number of players, then the opposing team may
50 only play no more than two (2) players.
51

1 **Example – Team Playing 11 v 11**
2

- 3 • If one team has seven (7) players, then the opposing team is required to play no more
4 than nine (9) players.
5
6 • If one team has eight (8) players, then the opposing team is required to play no more
7 than ten (10) players.
8
9 • If one team has nine (9) or ten (10) players, the other team may play all eleven (11)
10 players.

- 11
12 3. The above play down rules also apply when players from the team with the lesser number of
13 players leave a game due to injury or illness. In these circumstances, the opposing team
14 should not continue play with more than two players over the number that the other team
15 has on the field of play.
16
17 4. Red carded players on the short sided team do not cause the team with more players to play
18 down. For example if Team A has 11 players and Team B has 9 players and Team B
19 receives a red card, Team A is not required to play down.
20

- 21 K. Coaches are required to reduce the number of players on the field once a team has scored 5
22 goals more than the other team until the minimum number of players for a game is reached
23 (e.g., 7 for 11 v 11 games). For example, if a team is winning the game 5 – 1 and scores
24 another goal, they must reduce the number of players on the field down by at least one player,
25 if it scores another goal, then another player must be removed, etc. Should the goal differential
26 be reduced after a player is removed, then the team with the higher score may add back a
27 player. For example, if the goal score differential is 6 the team with the higher score will have
28 removed 2 players. If the other team scores a goal, then the team with the higher score may
29 add back one player, i.e., they will still be playing one player down. A game score of 10 – 0
30 provides no more benefits than a game score of 3 – 0 since goals scored is not used in any of
31 the ranking factors.
32

- 33 1. Mercy rule – The losing coach has the option to terminate a game without penalty when the
34 winning team has a 6 or more goal lead. The game is terminated once the referee has been
35 notified by the losing coach or the captain of the losing team that the mercy rule is being
36 invoked. The losing coach has the sole discretion when to implement the mercy rule. The
37 score reports filed for the game should also include a statement that the game was
38 terminated early because of the mercy rule.
39

40 **L. Home Team Responsibilities – Regular Season Play**
41

- 42 1. Providing a suitable game field for the given age group (for example, for the Under 14 age
43 group the field shall be a minimum of 50 yards X 100 yards), goals with nets, lines, corner
44 flags, and game ball.
45
46 a. Clubs are expected to provide fields in accordance with the guidelines establish by US
47 Soccer, US Youth Soccer, and VYSA.
48
49 (1) If a team does not believe that a game is being played on a field that is not
50 compliant with the applicable field guidelines, the coach should play the game and
51 then notify the appropriate SFL Club Representative of the problems. The SFL
52 Club Representative may then request the SFL to review the matter and make a
53 decision on whether a forfeit should be awarded.
54

1 (a) Forfeits will normally not be awarded for the following conditions:
2

3 (i.) Fields that are properly sized but the markings are not entirely compliant
4 with the applicable guidelines.
5

6 (ii.) Corner flags not being present.
7

8 2. Providing either three USSF certified referees (one Center Referee and two Assistant
9 Referees) using the Diagonal System of Control (DSC); or two USSF certified referees
10 using the DSC with one “club” Assistant Referee provided by one of the two teams; or, in
11 an emergency, a single USSF certified referee. If the proper number of officials are not
12 present by game time plus 15 minutes, the game will be forfeited by the home team.
13

14 a. Referees should not be immediate family members to team officials except in an
15 emergency.
16

17 **Discussion** 18

19 It is recognized that, in most cases, the coach of the home team has very little, if any,
20 control over whether officials will be present for a game. Therefore, should a situation
21 arise in which at least one USSF certified official is not present by game time plus 15
22 minutes, the visiting team is encouraged to select one of the following options rather
23 than accepting the forfeit and leaving the field of play. One option is to reschedule the
24 game for a later date. (In this situation, the home team may want to consider offering to
25 play at the visiting team’s home field.) A second option is to play the game and use
26 team officials and consider the results binding.
27

28 If the two coaches believe that a safe and effective match can be played, then they
29 should play as long as the safety and the rules of the sport are not sacrificed. If either
30 coach believes that the match cannot be safely and effectively played, then the coaches
31 should consider a rematch. However, the visiting coach does have the right to accept a
32 forfeit. If a forfeit is accepted because either coach does not believe that a safe and
33 effective game can be played, then the teams should leave the field. In other words, the
34 teams **should not** use the game as a scrimmage.
35

36 b. Center referees shall be at least two (2) years older than the age group they are
37 officiating except as noted in section (1) below. For example, the referee shall meet at
38 least the Under 14 age criteria to officiate Under 12 games or meet the Under 16 age
39 criteria to officiate Under 14 games. Therefore, individuals meeting the Under 13 age
40 criteria or lower may not act as a center referee for Under 12 games.
41

42 (1) It is recognized that some clubs have a referee training program that allows
43 referees that do not meet the two (2) years or older requirement to officiate games
44 to facilitate their training. This practice is acceptable when (1) the referee is at
45 least the age of the game they are officiating, e.g., an Under 16 game must be
46 officiated by a referee who meets at least the Under 16 age criteria and (2) at least
47 one adult of 21 years or older and is a qualified referee serves as an assistant
48 referee.
49

50 (2) Clubs are expected to provide adequate officials for the games. If adequate
51 officials cannot be provided, then (1) the visiting team should be notified by Friday
52 night that the game cannot be played and (2) a forfeit will be assessed to the home
53 team.
54

- 1 (a) If a question on whether the center referee is of the appropriate age arises on
2 game day, then the game should be played unless the home team coach has
3 positive knowledge that the center referee does not meet the age requirements.
4
5 (i.) If the home team coach has positive knowledge that the center referee
6 does not meet the age requirements, then the game should not be played
7 and the home team is assessed a forfeit upon verification of the referee's
8 age.
9
10 (ii.) If the home team coach does not have positive knowledge of the center
11 referee's age, then the visiting coach may then file a protest through their
12 SFL Club Representative and request the SFL to determine whether the
13 center referee for the subject game was of the appropriate age. Once the
14 SFL receives this request, it will request the home team's club to
15 confirm that the center referee was of the appropriate age. If the referee
16 was not of the appropriate age, then the home team will be assessed a
17 forfeit.
18
19 (iii.) Under no circumstances may a coach, team official, or other individual
20 request the referee to provide evidence of their age.
21
22 (b) Clubs that are unable to provide center referees of an appropriate age will be
23 penalized if the SFL determines that two (2) or more games actually played
24 are officiated by center referees that do not meet the age requirements.
25 Specifically, all home games for the given age group and above will be
26 cancelled and the home team(s) assessed forfeits for those games. For
27 example, if Club A does not provide appropriately aged center referees for two
28 of the Under 16 games actually played, then all Under 16 and Under 19 home
29 games for teams associated with Club A will be cancelled and those home
30 teams will be assessed forfeits.
31
32 (3) Forfeits assessed for referee problems may be removed if the both teams agree to
33 play the game at a later date.
34

35 Example

36
37 Team A notifies Team B that its club cannot provide proper officials on Friday
38 night for Saturday's game. Team A is assessed a forfeit. Team A and Team B
39 then agree to play the game at a later date. Once this game is played, the forfeit
40 against Team is removed and the actual game result is used.
41

- 42 **3. The home team is required to call the visiting team by the Wednesday preceding the**
43 **game to confirm the game time, team colors, location, directions, and any other**
44 **information they may need.** In addition, both teams should discuss how the team roster
45 exchange process will be handled. If a coach does not have the information needed to place
46 this call, then the Club Age Group Commissioner or SFL Club Representative should be
47 called.
48
49 a. If you have not been contacted by a coach and do not know the name or phone number,
50 then you should call either the Club Age Group Commissioner or the SFL Club
51 Representative that applies for that age group. For example, if you are scheduled to play
52 Reston 1 and you are in the Under 14 Girls age group and you do not know the coach's
53 phone number, then you would first call the Reston Under 14 Girls Age Group
54 Commissioner. If you cannot reach the appropriate Club Age Group Commissioner,

1 then you should call the SFL Club Representative. A listing of Club Age Group
2 Representatives and SFL Club Representatives is provided in the regular season
3 mailing.
4

- 5 4. Determining if a color clash exists. In case of a color clash, the home team must change
6 colors. The requirement for unique uniform numbers is waived for the team required to
7 change colors.
8
- 9 5. Notifying the visiting team if a game is postponed due to weather. The home team should
10 call the visiting team at least 3 hours before the scheduled start time. The home team
11 should then call the Age Group Commissioner and notify them that the game has been
12 postponed and, if possible, the makeup date. Games will not be played if the field has been
13 closed by either the Department of Recreation, the local club, or referee. (See section on
14 Game Rescheduling for additional information on how games are rescheduled.)
15

16 M. Other

- 17 1. Slide tackling is permitted unless otherwise stated, however, the referee will have the final
18 decision as to whether the tackle was properly executed. Coaches are directed to instruct
19 their players on proper technique and the potential of injury to other players and themselves
20 when improperly done.
21
- 22 2. Under 12, Under 14, Under 16, and Under 19 girls are allowed to place their arms across
23 their chest for protection. The referee has the final decision as to whether the action was
24 legally executed.
25
- 26 3. A team must be ready to play the game within 15 minutes of the scheduled game time. If a
27 team is not ready to play, then the opposing team has the right to request a forfeit or have
28 the game rescheduled. If a forfeit is accepted because a team is not ready to play, then the
29 teams should leave the field. In other words, the teams **should not** use the game as a
30 scrimmage.
31
- 32 4. Teams are required to check the web site after Friday at 8:00 PM to ensure that no changes
33 have been made to their Saturday (or Sunday) game schedule for that week.
34
35

36 V. GAME CONDITIONS AND WEATHER RELATED CANCELLATIONS

- 37 A. The home team should call the visiting team as soon as possible that a game has been canceled
38 because of weather. This notice should be at least 3 hours before the game time. In the case of
39 inclement weather, the home team should also notify the visiting team that a game will be
40 played. Unless otherwise shown below, the decision of Fairfax County Parks Authority will
41 apply to all game fields regardless of whether the field is actually managed by the Fairfax
42 County Parks Authority. The following phone numbers can be used to check field conditions:
43
44
 - 45 • Fairfax County Parks Authority – (703) 324-5264
 - 46 • Games played at Alexandria – (703) 746-5597
 - 47 • Games played at Arlington – (703) 228-4715 and Press 1
 - 48 • Games played at Bles Park (Ashburn) – (703) 729-7050 or www.ashburnsoccer.org
 - 49 • Games played at Ashburn – use Loudoun – (703) 777-5897
 - 50
 - 51
 - 52
 - 53
 - 54

- 1 • Games played at Braddock Road – (703) 354-7101 or www.brycsoccer.org.
- 2
- 3 • Games played at Burke Athletic – 1-866-855-4BAC (1-866-855-4222) (Sat./Sun.)
- 4
- 5 • Games played at Chantilly – (703) 830-1272 or www.cyaweather.com
- 6
- 7 • Games played at Clarke County – (540) 955-9002 or www.clarkesoccer.org
- 8
- 9 • Games played at Fairfax – (703) 385-7976) (This is a Fairfax City recording)
- 10
- 11 • Games played at Falls Church – (703) 248-5125
- 12
- 13 • Games played at Fauquier – (540) 349-8722 and go to mailbox #94
- 14
- 15 • Games played at Gunston – (703)360-7013
- 16
- 17 • Games played at Haymarket – www.vsa-heat.org
- 18
- 19 • Games played at Herndon – (703) 318-8552
- 20
- 21 • Games played at Lee-Mt. Vernon – (703) 799-1112
- 22
- 23 • Games played at Loudoun – www.loudounsoccer.com
- 24
- 25 • Games played at McLean – www.mcleansoccer.org/page/show/38975
- 26
- 27 • Games played at Northern Virginia – Ben Lomond – (703) 792-3281, Hellwig – (703)
- 28 792-3283, Nokesville (703) 792-3294
- 29
- 30 • Games played at Prince William – Tyrell – (703) 792-3285, Chinn (703) 792-3291
- 31
- 32 • Games played at Reston – <http://www.restonsoccer.com/>
- 33
- 34 • Games played at Nottoway – (703) 938-7532
- 35
- 36 • Games played at Southwestern – (703) 644-8046
- 37
- 38 • Games played at Sterling – <http://www.sysa.net/>
- 39

40 **Note: Sometimes the numbers for field closures are changed after the rules are prepared**
41 **and mailed. Therefore, you should check the SFL Web Site (www.sflsoccer.org) to**
42 **make sure that the number above is current.**

43 Example 1

44
45
46 You are scheduled to play on a field that is not controlled by Fairfax County Parks Authority
47 and the field is not listed above, if the Fairfax County Parks Authority closes its fields, then the
48 field you are scheduled to play on is also considered closed.

49 Example 2

50
51
52 You are scheduled to play on a field which is not controlled by Fairfax County Parks Authority
53 and the field is not listed above. When you call the Fairfax County Parks Authority you find
54 out that it has closed some of its fields while others are open. In this case, then the field you
55 are scheduled to play on is also considered closed unless you are contacted by the home team

1 or your club and notified that the game is still scheduled to be played. Both teams must be
2 notified at least 3 hours before the scheduled game time of this decision.
3

- 4 A. If either coach does not believe that a game should be played because of the game conditions,
5 they have the right to request a forfeit from the other team. This request must be in writing and
6 mailed to the SFL within 12 hours of the scheduled game time. The appropriate SFL Age
7 Group Commissioner will make a ruling on which team will be assessed a forfeit and notify
8 the SFL Commissioner and Administrator. If a game is played, neither team can protest the
9 game conditions unless both coaches agree before the game begins to play the game under
10 protest. If a game is agreed to be played under protest, then both coaches must document the
11 reason for the protest and signify their agreement by printing and signing their names.
12 Examples of items that would normally result in a forfeit being charged to the protesting team
13 include:

- 14
15 1. only having a properly qualified center referee,
16
17 2. poorly lined fields, and
18
19 3. field conditions when the referee has made a determination that the field is playable.
20

- 21 B. **Games Halted** – A game halted at half time or later due to unsafe playing conditions will
22 stand as indicated by the score when the game was halted.

- 23
24 1. If due to unsafe playing conditions a regular season game is halted prior to half-time, it will
25 be replayed unless waived by the SFL Age Group Commissioner.
26
27 2. If a tournament game is halted due to unsafe playing conditions after being started, the game
28 result at the time of termination will be used as the final game result unless waived by the
29 SFL Age Group Commissioner.
30

31 Example

32
33 A regular season game is terminated 30 minutes into the first half due to weather
34 conditions. The game is rescheduled to be played at a later date unless waived by the
35 appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner. On the other hand, a tournament game
36 terminated 5 minutes into the first half because of weather conditions would use the game
37 results at the time of termination. The SFL will decide how to handle tournament games
38 ending in a tie that are scheduled using the in single elimination format.
39

40 **VI. REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULE**

- 41
42 A. The regular season play will consist of 7 or 8 games with a post season tournament.
43
44 B. Game points will be awarded for each game played. Game points are awarded as follows: 4
45 points for a win, 2 points for a tie, 1 point for a loss, and 0 points for a forfeit. The game score
46 for a forfeited game is 1 – 0 unless both teams are assessed a forfeit. When both teams are
47 assessed a forfeit, then the game score is 0 – 0. Bonus points will also be awarded based on
48 the goal differential up to a maximum of 3 points per game. For example, a game score of 5 –
49 1 would result in 3 bonus points.
50
51 C. The SFL web site displays team rankings in the following order: game point percentage, game
52 points, bonus points, and goals allowed.
53
54 1. The game point percentage is calculated as follows: game points earned divided by total

1 games played times maximum number of points that can be earned for a game. For
2 example, if a team plays 4 games, wins 2 games, ties 1 game, and loses the remaining game,
3 its game point percentage would be calculated as follows: $(11 \text{ game points earned } (4 + 4 + 2$
4 $+ 1) / 16 \text{ game points } (4 \text{ games } \times 4 \text{ points per game})) = 68.8 \text{ percent.}$
5

6 VII. REPORTING GAME RESULTS AND RESCHEDULING GAMES

7

- 8 A. The following three methods are acceptable for reporting scores: Email (sfl@sflsoccer.org),
9 voice mail (703-476-6610), and through the Web site (www.sflsoccer.org). **The preferred**
10 **method of reporting game results is Email.** Both teams are responsible for reporting the
11 game score, regardless of the outcome, by 6:00 PM on the Monday following the game.
12
- 13 1. If a score is not received by 6:00 PM on Monday, both teams will be assessed a 1 game
14 point penalty. Therefore, failure to promptly report a score will effect game points and may
15 affect a team's standing.
16
 - 17 2. Teams are required to provide the following information when reporting scores: name of
18 individual reporting the score, team name, game number, score for each team, and
19 **information on any yellow or red cards awarded.** For example, Sam Jones, Reston 1,
20 Game 4421, Reston 1 – 2, Reston 2 – 0, no red or yellow cards. In addition, if the opposing
21 team did not provide a roster when requested, this should also be included with the game
22 report. **When reporting scores by Email, please put the game number in the "Subject"**
23 **field. It makes filing the scores easier for us.**
24
 - 25 a. When a report is received that a team did not have a roster, then this report shall be sent
26 to the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner, SFL Club Representative, and other
27 individuals that are considered appropriate by the SFL for their information. The
28 individuals receiving these reports are not required to respond to the SFL on whether
29 any actions were taken or the actions that were taken. Repeated offenses may result in a
30 team being suspended from the tournament by the appropriate SFL Age Group
31 Commissioner.
32

33 Instructions for Using 34 the Voice Mail System

35

36 Call (703) 476-6610 and you will hear the following greeting:
37

38 Hello, this is the SFL. Press 1 to leave scores for boys games, 2 to leave scores for girls
39 games, 3 for general messages, and 4 to leave a message for a SFL Commissioner. You
40 may press your selection at any time. When leaving scores, please speak slowly and state
41 your name, age group, team name, game number, and score for each team. For example,
42 Joe Smith, Under 14 Girls, Reston 1, Game 4421, Reston 1 – 2, Reston 2 – 0. Thank
43 you.
44

45 Press the proper number and leave your message.
46

- 47 B. The process and procedures used to reschedule regular season games are discussed in the
48 **Process and Procedures – Rescheduling Regular Season Games.** This document may be
49 obtained from the web site under SFL Documents.
50

51 VIII. TOURNAMENT GAMES

52

- 53 A. The **Process and Procedures – Tournament Scheduling** document discusses the following
54 topics:

- General tournament requirements
- Teams eligible to participate in the tournament
- Placement of teams in tournament divisions
- Tournament format
- Actions taken when tournament games cannot be played as scheduled

This document may be obtained from the web site under SFL Documents.

B. Tournament Ranking – The following methods will be used to rank teams unless otherwise stated the **Process and Procedures – Tournament Scheduling** document which discusses how tournament game cancellations and handled.

1. **Round Robin Divisions** – When the tournament schedule is played as expected and teams within a tournament division are scheduled using the round robin format, they will be ranked in the following order: (1) tournament game points, (2) head to head competition during the tournament, (3) tournament bonus points, (4) least goals allowed during the tournament, (5) whether the team received a regular season award (if applicable), (6) head to head competition during the regular season games if they have played each other, (7) least average goals allowed during the regular season, and (8) shoot out. A 3 or 4-way tie is broken in the following order: (1) tournament bonus points, (2) least goals allowed during the tournament, (3) whether the team received a regular season award (if applicable), (4) least average goals per game allowed during the regular season, (4) regular season game point percentage, and (5) coin flip. After one team is eliminated, then the remaining teams will be ranked by starting at the top of the appropriate tie breakers. Note: Normally head to head results are not used in breaking 3 or 4-way ties since one team will not have defeated all the other teams during the tournament. However, if one team has beaten all the other teams that are tied in the tournament, then that team will be placed ahead of all the other teams that it is tied with based on game points.

Notes: Normally, the results of the first 2 games a team plays in a 6 team round robin division with mini groups are used to determine (1) the two teams that play for first and second trophies and (2) the two teams that play for third place trophies. If either of the two games used to determine the trophies end in a tie, then a shoot-out will be conducted to determine the winner of the game. The games used to determine which teams may play for trophies can end in ties.

Normally only the Under 19s are provided regular season awards. Furthermore, coaches should ensure that a shoot out is not required before dismissing their players.

2. **Single Elimination Tournament Divisions** – When the tournament schedule is played using the single elimination format, the teams will be ranked as follows:
 - a. **Three, Four, Five Team Divisions** – The winner of the final game receives the first place trophies while the loser receives the second place trophies.
 - b. **Six Team Divisions** – Teams scheduled for 6 team divisions are ranked as follows:

1 (1) **Original tournament game schedule played** – In 6 team divisions, the two teams
2 winning the second round games, play for first and second place trophies with the
3 winner of this game receiving the first place trophies and the loser receiving the
4 second place trophies. Fields and officials permitting, another game to decide the
5 winner of third place trophies will also be played. The teams playing in the game to
6 determine who wins the third place trophies are the losers of the second round
7 game.
8

9
10 3. Should a game be tied at the end of regulation play **AND** the tournament division is
11 scheduled as a single elimination tournament, then a shoot-out will be conducted. Therefore,
12 games in divisions scheduled using the round robin format may end in a tie. The winner of a
13 shoot out will be awarded one goal to their game score regardless of the number of goals
14 scored in the shoot out. For example, if the game score is tied 2 – 2, and one team scored 5
15 goals during the shoot out while the other team scored 3 goals, then the final game score will
16 be 3 – 2 with the team winning the shootout having the 3 goals.

17 a. **Shoot Outs** – If a shoot out is required, the FIFA Procedures to Determine the Winner of
18 A Match – Kicks from the Penalty Mark will apply, in accordance with applicable USSF
19 guidance, except as noted below.
20

21 (1) Players who participate in the shoot out:

22
23 (a) If the tournament is scheduled as a single elimination tournament, then only the
24 players on the field at the end of the game may participate in the shoot out.
25 This is consistent with the FIFA rules.
26

27 (b) If a shoot out is required for some other reason, such as to determine the
28 ranking of teams who are not playing each other in the final games, then the
29 coaches may select the 11 players who will participate in the shoot out. This
30 rule is very rarely used and generally only applies in tournament divisions
31 scheduled using a round robin format where all other tie breakers have been
32 exhausted.
33

34 (2) Coaches may stay with the players in the midfield circle.
35

36 C. **Tournament Responsibilities** – A coach may be assigned to be a Site Coordinator, Division
37 Commissioner, and/or Trophy pickup person.
38

39 1. The SFL Club Representative must provide **positive** confirmation by Email that a team
40 eligible to play in the tournament is willing to participate in the tournament and that the club,
41 if 4 or more teams are registered, can provide game field(s) and referees. This includes
42 confirmation that the coach is willing to serve as a tournament division commissioner and/or
43 pick up trophies. (As discussed elsewhere, if a club cannot provide adequate fields and
44 officials, then its teams may be excluded from the tournament.) In addition, if a coach is
45 unable to serve as a division commissioner or pick up trophies, then that team may be
46 eliminated from the tournament.
47

48 a. Since the tournament format for most groups is a single elimination tournament, it is
49 possible that the original division commissioner assigned to a given division may not
50 play in a subsequent tournament game. If this happens, the coach of the team beating the
51 division commissioner's team becomes the division commissioner for trophy purposes.
52 However, other division commissioner responsibilities, such as phoning the other teams
53 in case of weather cancellations, remain with the originally assigned division
54 commissioner unless the tournament site coordinator decides otherwise.

1
2 2. The Site Coordinator is responsible for (1) providing the fields and nets (2) ensuring that the
3 field(s) are properly lined, (2) ensuring that adequate officials have been assigned for the
4 fields provided, (3) notifying the League Commissioner (703-406-8550) or the SFL
5 Administrator (703-476-6611), and the Division Commissioners for their site in case of
6 game cancellations due to the weather. Generally, the site coordinator is the SFL Club
7 Representative for the club hosting a given tournament site.
8

9 3. The Division Commissioner is approved by the applicable SFL Club Representative and is
10 responsible for the following.
11

12 a. Preparing a game board (round robin tournament divisions only) for their division and
13 ensuring that the scores are posted. (The SFL Web site has a sample game board on the
14 SFL Documents page.) If the division commissioner's team loses, then the board is
15 given to the new division commissioner who assumes this responsibility. In some cases,
16 the division commissioner's team may not play until later in the day. Therefore, the
17 game board may not be available until the division commissioner's team plays its game.
18

19 b. Notifying the teams in their division of game cancellations. In the case of inclement
20 weather, the division commissioner should also notify the teams in their division if
21 games are going to be played and of any schedule changes. This responsibility remains
22 with assigned division commissioner even if the division commissioner's team loses
23 before the final tournament division game unless the site coordinator performs these
24 duties.
25

26 c. Distributing the trophies for their division. Generally the site coordinator is assigned the
27 responsibility for picking up trophies. However, in some cases, in order to reduce the
28 travel requirements, other individuals are assigned this responsibility.
29

30 d. The division commissioner is **NOT RESPONSIBLE** for collecting rosters. However, as
31 noted elsewhere, each team is required to present their roster to the other team **BEFORE**
32 the start of their game. **IF A TEAM DOES NOT HAVE A ROSTER, THAT TEAM**
33 **FORFEITS THE GAME**, the referee is notified that the game will not be played, and
34 both teams leave the field of play.
35

36 e. In the case of teams playing the "round robin" tournament format, determines the final
37 team rankings for the division.
38

39 4. The individuals assigned for Trophy Pickup are also approved by the SFL Club
40 Representative. The SFL sends these individuals an Email on how to pick up the trophies
41 and when they are ready for pickup. All trophies should be picked up by the Friday night
42 preceding the first tournament game. All trophies should be taken to the first tournament
43 game.
44

45 a. When the SFL Rules call for the trophies to not be distributed because of cancellation of
46 one or more tournament division games (see section on tournament game cancellations),
47 then the SFL Club Representative responsible for the trophies assigned to that
48 tournament division must return those trophies to the SFL in accordance with the
49 guidance received from the SFL.
50

51 D. Other
52

53 1. In order to keep the tournament games on schedule, the referee will normally keep a running
54 clock, i.e., the clock is not stopped for injuries, substitutions, etc. However, the referee may

1 decide to stop the clock if the referee believes that it will not adversely affect the overall
2 tournament game schedule. This is a decision made by the referee and may not be protested.

- 3
4 2. The referee is allowed to use their discretion on when it is too dark to play safely. Therefore,
5 the last games of the day may be shortened because of darkness. This is a decision made by
6 the referee and may not be protested.

7
8 **IX. DISCIPLINE, PROTESTS, AND APPEALS**

- 9
10 A. It should be remembered that the SFL is governed by the principle that all actions are *For the*
11 *Good of the Player* and unsporting behavior or violation of the Laws of the Game cannot be
12 tolerated. It should also be noted that the SFL is primarily a scheduling organization and that
13 the resolution of complaints, disciplinary actions, and protests is primarily the responsibility of
14 the affected clubs. The role of the SFL is to help facilitate the resolution of complaints,
15 disciplinary problems, and protests.
- 16
17 1. **Quality of Officials** – The SFL has no role in assigning the officials to a game since this is a
18 club responsibility. However, the SFL provides a mechanism for coaches to report on the
19 quality of the officials provided for their games. Comments can be sent directly to the home
20 team’s SFL Club Representative using the standard Email address that is contained in the
21 season package. When you report on the officiating, please provide the game number,
22 teams, game field, and game time. For those that would like a form, the web site has one
23 suggested form that can be used. (The form is on the SFL Documents page.)
- 24
25 2. As noted by FIFA, the decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including
26 whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final. Accordingly, (1) game
27 results will not be changed because of referee errors and (2) teams will not be compensated
28 for referee errors. The mechanism available to address such matters is to notify the club
29 providing the officials of the errors so that they can consider such cases when evaluating
30 their referees’ performance and guidance that may be needed on how to implement a given rule
31 or set of rules so that these errors do not happen in future games.
- 32
33 B. At the older age levels, the coach assumes an increased level of responsibility regarding team
34 leadership and maintenance of order and discipline of the team members and team spectators.
35 The SFL expects each of its coaches to set a positive example for their players and spectators in
36 promoting good sportsmanship and self-control. Accordingly, coaches are expected to be
37 present at every game with their team or to ensure that responsible adult leadership is present
38 for the team in their absence. A history of disciplinary infractions by one team can be grounds
39 for team, coach, and/or player dismissal from the league. Such decisions will not be made
40 lightly or hastily and will only be made after a careful review of the facts by a Disciplinary
41 Panel to resolve disputes.
- 42
43 C. **Misconduct** – Individual Demerits and Team Demerits are used to identify individuals and
44 teams that have a history of infractions related to misconduct and administrative issues while
45 game suspensions are used to penalize specific individuals for the infractions.
- 46
47 1. **Penalties for Misconduct** – The SFL has three types of penalties relating to misconduct –
48 game suspensions, Individual Demerits, and Team Demerits. Game suspensions and
49 Individual Demerits apply to an individual based on the infraction while Team Demerits
50 apply to a team. Although in many cases the number of Individual Demerits assigned to the
51 individual and the team may be the same, this is not always the case as shown below. The
52 following shows the game suspensions, Individual Demerits, and Team Demerits assigned
53 for given types of misconduct.
- 54

1 a. Player infractions resulting in one (1) game suspension, one (1) Individual Demerit, and
2 one (1) Team Demerit.

3
4 (1) Denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the
5 player's goal by an offense punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick.

6
7 (2) Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity by
8 deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own
9 penalty area).

10
11 (3) Receiving a second caution in the same match.

12
13 **Note:** If a player receives a red card after receiving a second caution a decision is
14 made on whether the red card was received based on the player committing a red
15 card offense or receiving a second caution. For example, assume that a player
16 receives a caution for dissent and then receives a red card for using offensive/
17 insulting/abusive language/ gestures. This is treated as a red card for using
18 offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures rather than a second yellow
19 card for dissent.

20
21 (4) Serious foul play.

22
23 (5) Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures.

24
25 (6) Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Conduct that warrants a one game
26 suspension that is not specifically covered by other suspension offenses. Examples
27 include failing to serve a game suspension by a player. When an individual does not
28 properly serve suspension period, this penalty is in addition to the original penalty.
29 For example, assume a player is suspended for one game and does not serve the one
30 game suspension. The player would be suspended for one additional game.

31
32 b. Infractions incurred by players, coaches, and others resulting in two (2) game
33 suspensions, two (2) Individual Demerits, and two (2) Team Demerits.

34
35 (1) Violent conduct and fighting as defined by the SFL regardless of whether a red card
36 is shown. Conduct which will be treated as fighting, regardless of whether a red
37 card is shown, includes but is not limited to (1) fighting in the opinion of the
38 referee, (2) shoving another player or any other aggressive action outside of the
39 ordinary play of the game, (3) kicking/striking or attempting to kick/strike a player,
40 or spitting. A player “defending himself/herself” is not exempt from this penalty.

41
42 (2) Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Conduct that warrants a two game
43 suspension rather than the standard one game suspension or not specifically covered
44 by other infractions. Examples, include racial slurs, non-players (such as coaching
45 staff or spectators) being asked to leave the field or showed a red card, inappropriate
46 behavior towards a game official, etc. Inappropriate conduct towards a game
47 official includes persistent inappropriate comments, verbal threats, being followed
48 to the parking lot in an inappropriate manner, or other actions that would make a
49 referee fear for his/her safety.

50 51 **Discussion**

52
53 The SFL has a zero tolerance policy towards the use of racial slurs. Unfortunately,
54 we have seen an increasing number of complaints of racial slurs being used. In

1 some of the reports the coaches noted that this was "trash talk", "players say this a
2 lot to each other", etc. In effect, the inference was that this behavior was not
3 considered to be harmful or offensive. Unfortunately this is a subjective judgement
4 and what is not offensive to one person may be offensive to another. History has
5 shown where such statements have resulted in very unpleasant situations on the
6 field. Club Referee Coordinators are requested to (1) remind the referees that racial
7 slurs are unacceptable, (2) that such occurrences should be included in their game
8 reports when they can identify the offending player(s) number(s), and (3) like the
9 reports on red cards, we would like those referee reports automatically forwarded to
10 us.

11
12 c. Infractions incurred by players, coaches, and others resulting in season suspensions and
13 three (3) Team Demerits.

14 (1) Head Coach – Illegal players used.

15
16 (2) Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Offenses that warrant a three game
17 suspension rather than the standard one or two game suspension. Offenses that
18 would normally warrant this type of suspension include referee assault incidents or
19 other behavior that should be referred to VYSA for review.

20
21 d. Administrative penalties assessed to individuals and teams.

22
23 (1) **Illegal players used** – One (1) Team Demerit per illegal player per game. Illegal
24 players include (1) travel players regardless of whether they are shown on the SFL
25 Team Roster, (2) players shown on the SFL Team Roster but declared ineligible
26 during a roster check or roster challenge, and (3) players not shown on the SFL
27 Team Roster. As noted elsewhere, a team using illegal players will be assessed
28 forfeits for the games where illegal players are used and may be excluded from the
29 SFL tournament.

30
31 **Note:** If the coach is assessed a penalty for using illegal players, then this penalty is
32 not assessed unless more than three (3) illegal players are used.

33
34 (2) **Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – One Team Demerit.** Conduct by
35 members of the team or its supporters that is not specifically covered by other
36 suspension or team offenses and warrants one Team Demerit. Examples include
37 failing to ensure a suspended player does not play (this is in addition to the penalty
38 assessed to the individual), etc.

39
40 (3) **Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – Two Team Demerits.** Conduct by
41 members of the team or its supporters that is not specifically covered by other
42 suspension or team offenses and warrants two Team Demerits. Examples include
43 actions that cause a game to be terminated early and failing to properly report red
44 cards or individuals (including the Head Coach) being asked to leave the field.
45 When suspension offenses are not properly reported, the team is also assessed
46 additional Team Demerits and game forfeits until the information is properly
47 received.

48
49 (4) **Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – Three Team Demerits.** Conduct by
50 members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other
51 suspension or team offenses and warrant three Team Demerits. Examples include
52 actions that warrant review by VYSA.
53
54

1 **2. Individual and Team Demerits**

- 2
- 3 a. **Individual suspensions** – An individual that receives three (3) Individual Demerits
- 4 during a season, including post season tournament play, is automatically suspended for
- 5 the remainder of the season including tournament play.
- 6
- 7 b. **Team suspensions** – Two types of team suspensions may result from the accumulation
- 8 of Team Demerits – suspension from the tournament scheduling process and suspension
- 9 from regular season and tournament games.
- 10
- 11 (1) **Suspension from the tournament scheduling process** – A team that averages one
- 12 (1) Team Demerit per game played when the tournament schedules are prepared
- 13 will be excluded from the tournament but will be allowed to continue playing
- 14 regular season games until the Maximum Team Demerits Allowed limit is reached.
- 15 For example, if a team has played four (4) games when the tournament scheduling
- 16 process is started and has been assessed four (4) or more Team Demerits, then that
- 17 team will not be scheduled for the tournament although it may continue playing its
- 18 regular season games until the Maximum Team Demerits Allowed limit is reached.
- 19
- 20 (2) **Suspension from regular season and tournament games** – A team that
- 21 accumulates Team Demerits that equals or exceeds the Maximum Team Demerits
- 22 Allowed will be (1) suspended for any remaining regular season games, (2)
- 23 excluded from the tournament if scheduled for any tournament games, and (3)
- 24 placed on probation for the following season.
- 25
- 26 (a) **Maximum Team Demerits Allowed** – the lesser of (1) the number of regular
- 27 season games scheduled or (2) the actual games played.
- 28

29 **Example**

30

31 Team A is originally scheduled for 8 regular season games. However, a team

32 drops out and one of Team A’s games is cancelled. In addition, the last game

33 of the season is also cancelled and cannot be rescheduled. Team A plays all 6

34 remaining games. The Maximum Team Demerits Allowed for Team A is six

35 since (1) its regular season game schedule was reduced to 7 games when the

36 team dropped out even though other teams may have played eight regular

37 season games and (2) one game was not played for other reasons.

38

- 39 (i.) **Games Played** – A game where a team is assessed a forfeit for any
- 40 reason is not considered as a game played. In addition, if the game is
- 41 unscheduled and neither team has been assessed a forfeit, then that game
- 42 is also not considered as a game played. For example, Team A is
- 43 scheduled for eight (8) regular season games and the web site shows that
- 44 all eight (8) games are considered played. However, Team A is assessed
- 45 a forfeit for some reason for one game. Team A is considered to have
- 46 played seven (7) games.
- 47
- 48 c. **Team Probations** – Teams are placed on probation when the number of Team Demerits
- 49 received in a season equal or exceed the number of games played that season. For
- 50 example, if a team plays seven (7) regular season and two (2) tournament games, then the
- 51 team would be placed on probation if its Team Demerits for the season equal or exceed
- 52 nine (9) Team Demerits.
- 53

- 1 (1) The SFL Club Representative is responsible for ensuring that a team is notified that
2 it is considered on probation and aware of the rules that can affect their continued
3 participation in the SFL.
4
- 5 (a) If a team on probation has any of the following conditions, the remainder of its
6 regular season games shall be forfeited and team considered ineligible for
7 tournament play:
8
- 9 (i.) Accumulation of four (4) team demerits.
10
11 (ii.) A game terminated because of the team's conduct.
12
13 (iii.) Any other disciplinary reason that the SFL Age Group Commissioner
14 deems significant to warrant suspension from the SFL.
15
- 16 (2) Any team on probation that is suspended is considered ineligible to return to the
17 SFL for at least two (2) seasons.
18
- 19 (a) The applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner is responsible for determining
20 whether the members associated with a team constitute the team ineligible to
21 participate.
22
- 23 (i.) It is up to the SFL Club Representative to notify the appropriate SFL Age
24 Group Commissioner when any members of the suspended team or
25 coaches associated with the suspended team are placed on team(s) that
26 will be registered. The SFL Age Group Commissioner must approve of
27 each of these player(s) or coach(es) returning to the SFL before the 2
28 (two) season suspension is served.
29

30 3. Suspensions 31

- 32 a. Unserved suspensions carry over to the next season while the associated Individual
33 Demerits and Team Demerits do not.
34
- 35 b. Suspended players, coaches, and other individuals serving their suspension period are
36 encouraged not to attend the game at all. If the individual desires to attend the team's
37 game during a suspension period, the individual must receive the applicable SFL Club
38 Representative's permission to attend any games where that individual is serving a
39 suspension by 6:00 PM at least two (2) days before the game is scheduled to be played.
40 For example, if an individual is suspended for a game being played on Saturday and the
41 SFL Club Representative decides to permit the individual to attend the game, then this
42 decision must be made by 6:00 PM on Thursday night.
43
- 44 (1) The SFL Club Representative must also notify the SFL when this permission has
45 been granted at the same time the individual is notified.
46
- 47 (2) If the individual receives the SFL Club Representative's permission and does attend
48 the game, the following applies.
49
- 50 (a) The individual should not be closer to the playing field than 100 yards
51 beginning 30 minutes before game time until the game is over. The fact that a
52 game can be seen from a public street or sidewalk which may be closer than
53 100 yards does not relieve the coach, team official, parent, or spectator from
54 complying with this 100-yard rule.

1
2 (b) If a player is granted permission to attend the game, then that player may be
3 granted permission by the SFL Club Representative to sit on the bench with the
4 other players as long as the player does not wear a uniform and it is clear to
5 outsiders that the player is not eligible to participate in the game.
6

7 (c) The suspended individual will not be involved in any way with administration
8 of the team during the game.
9

10 (3) Since the tournament is only conducted during one weekend, any coach or other
11 individual that is not a player who is asked to leave the field may not attend any of
12 that team's remaining tournament games since these suspensions carry at least a two
13 (2) game suspension and a team will not play more than two (2) games after the
14 game in which the offense generating the suspension occurred.
15

16 (4) A player receiving a red card that warrants a one game suspension, may attend and
17 participate in that team's third tournament game assuming that (1) the team plays
18 three tournament games and (2) the red card was received in the first game. The
19 player may also attend the team's second tournament game without the SFL Club
20 Representative's approval when (1) the player does not wear a uniform and (2) it is
21 clear to outsiders that the player is not eligible to participate in the game. In
22 addition, the coach should highlight on the roster provided to the opposing coach
23 and referee the player that is not able to play because of a suspension to avoid any
24 confusion on whether a player with that number is allowed on the field of play.
25

26 c. **Suspensions involving individuals who have more than one role** – An individual
27 receiving a suspension may serve in more than one role. For example, the individual
28 may be playing on a combined team, coach more than one SFL Team, or play for a team
29 and coach a SFL team. The following governs what is considered serving the red card
30 suspension.
31

32 (1) **Player receives a red card while playing on a combined team** – Section III.
33 discusses combining teams. If (1) a player receives a red card and (2) the player's
34 team is considered a playing under the combined team rules, the player must not
35 play in the team's next scheduled game. If the player receives a red card during the
36 game as a substitute player, then they may not play in the next game that their
37 regular team is scheduled to play. In addition, they may not play with the other
38 team as a substitute player until they are eligible to play for their regular team.
39

40 (2) **Coach receives a suspension and coaches more than one SFL team** – If a coach
41 is suspended for an infraction while coaching one SFL Team then the suspension
42 period will be considered served when that team has played the number of games
43 called for by the suspension. For example, assume that a coach receives a two (2)
44 game suspension as a result of a misconduct incident while coaching Team A. The
45 coach is also considered suspended from coaching any other SFL teams until Team
46 A has played two games.
47

48 (3) **Coach receives a suspension and plays on a SFL team** – If a coach is suspended
49 for an infraction while coaching one SFL Team and plays on another SFL team,
50 then the suspension period will be considered served when the team that the player
51 coached has played the number of games called for by the suspension. For example,
52 assume that the player receives a two (2) game suspension as a result of a
53 misconduct incident while coaching Team A. The coach cannot participate as a
54 player in any SFL games until Team A has played two games.

1
2 (a) The individual's SFL Club Representative is responsible for notifying the SFL
3 if the individual also plays for a SFL Team.
4

5 (4) **Player receives a suspension and coaches a SFL team** – If a player is suspended
6 for an infraction while playing on a SFL Team and coaches a SFL team, then the
7 suspension period will be considered served when the team that the player is
8 assigned to has played the number of games called for by the suspension. For
9 example, assume that the player receives a two (2) game suspension as a result of a
10 misconduct incident while playing for Team A. The player cannot participate as a
11 coach for any SFL teams until Team A has played two games.
12

13 (a) The individual's SFL Club Representative is responsible for notifying the SFL
14 if the individual also coaches a SFL Team.
15

16 d. **Failure to serve a game suspension** – A player will be considered as not serving the
17 suspension period if (1) any player wears the same jersey number of the player who
18 received the suspension, unless approval has been given by the appropriate SFL Age
19 Group Commissioner, (2) the player who received the suspension plays in the game
20 regardless of the jersey number, or (3) the suspended individual attends a game during
21 the suspension period without obtaining the required approval from the SFL Club
22 Representative. The team will also be assessed a forfeit.
23

24 e. Games cancelled or games where the team receives a forfeit for any reason are not
25 considered as games played when determining whether a player has served a game
26 suspension.
27

28 **Example A**

29
30 Player A receives a red card in week 5 and Player A's next scheduled game in week 6 is
31 cancelled due to weather and team's next game is during week 7. Player A would be
32 required to serve the suspension during the game scheduled for week 7.
33

34 **Example B**

35
36 Player A receives a red card in week 5. During the next game that Player A's team plays
37 (week 6), Player A's team is assessed a forfeit because it did not have a proper roster.
38 Player A would be required to sit out the next game that Player A's team plays, e.g, the
39 week 7 game.
40

41 f. **Suspension notices** – Unless the team is expected to play its next game within two (2)
42 days of game in which the suspension offense was incurred, the SFL will normally send
43 the suspension notices applicable the the following week's games on Wednesday or
44 Thursday. This allows the impacts of game rescheduling and forfeits to be determined
45 prior to the notice being sent. The following governs the suspension notices.
46

47 (1) **Effects of scores not being reported** – As noted elsewhere, game scores that are
48 not reported by 6:00 PM on Monday result in both teams being assessed scheduling
49 forfeits. As noted elsewhere, games where a team has been assessed a forfeit for
50 any reason are not considered games where an individual has served their
51 suspension and the required suspension will become applicable to the upcoming
52 week. It does not matter if subsequent to the notice that the SFL is notified that the
53 game was played and the suspension was served. The individual must still not
54 participate in the upcoming game.

1
2 **Example**
3

4 Assume that Player A was expected to serve the final suspension for an infraction in
5 week 5. However, no score was reported for the game by Wednesday when the
6 suspension notices for week 6 are prepared. Accordingly, both teams were assessed
7 scheduling forfeits. Since the team was assessed a scheduling forfeit, Player A is
8 considered not to have served the required suspension and a suspension notice for
9 week 6 is prepared for Player A. After receiving the week 6 notice, Player A's team
10 notifies the SFL of the week 5 game score and states that Player A served the
11 suspension during that game. Since the suspension notice has already been sent,
12 Player A is also suspended for the week 6 game since (1) the team had adequate
13 time to report the game score for the week 5 game, (2) could easily determine from
14 the web site that the score had not been received by the SFL, and (3) only one team
15 has to report the score to avoid this penalty even if it is not Player A's team.
16

- 17 (2) **Player's name and uniform number issues** – The information reported on player
18 infractions that result in game suspensions is compared to the information contained
19 on the Master Player submitted by the player's club. When significant differences
20 arise, the coach is contacted to confirm the information reported, e.g., the game
21 report says John Smith was wearing 22 while the Master Player Roster shows Sam
22 Jones wears that number. If significant differences still exist when the suspension
23 notices are prepared, then the suspension notification will contain those
24 difference(s) and no player may play whose name or uniform number(s) appear on
25 that notice.
26

27 **Example A**
28

29 A game report is received which states that Johnnie Smith wearing uniform number
30 22 committed an offense that warranted a game suspension. The Master Player
31 Roster shows that uniform number 22 was assigned to John Smith. Since this is not
32 considered a significant difference, the coach is not contacted and the suspension
33 notice will show both names.
34

35 **Example B**
36

37 A game report is received which states that John Smith wearing uniform number 22
38 committed an offense that warranted a game suspension. The Master Player Roster
39 shows that uniform number 22 was assigned to Sam Jones. The coach (1) does not
40 respond to the request for clarification when the suspension notice is prepared, (2)
41 confirms that the reported name and uniform number was correct, or (3) states that
42 the Master Player Roster contains the incorrect uniform number for Sam Jones.
43 However, in the later case, the necessary change to correct the uniform number of
44 Sam Jones is not submitted by the club by the Wednesday deadline for making
45 changes to the Master Player Roster and is not available for the preparation of the
46 game suspension notices. The suspension notice will contain both John Smith and
47 Sam Jones as the players being suspended and that no player wearing the uniform
48 number of 3 may play. The penalty for both players is imposed since (1) the coach
49 had a opportunity to correct the actual name and (2) if the problem was caused by a
50 Master Player Roster issue, the club had time to make the necessary corrections
51 prior to the suspension notice being prepared.
52

1 **Example C**
2

3 A game report is received which states that John Smith wearing uniform number 22
4 committed an offense that warranted a game suspension. The Master Player Roster
5 shows that uniform number 25 was assigned to John Smith. The coach (1) does not
6 respond to the request for clarification when the suspension notice is prepared, (2)
7 confirms that the reported name and uniform number was correct, or (3) states that
8 the Master Player Roster contains the incorrect uniform number for John Smith.
9 However, in the later case, the necessary change to correct the uniform number of
10 John Smith is not submitted by the club by the Wednesday deadline for making
11 changes to the Master Player Roster and is not available for the preparation of the
12 game suspension notices. The suspension notice will state that John Smith is being
13 suspended and that the uniform numbers 22 and 25 are not eligible to play.
14 Accordingly, no players on the team wearing uniform numbers 22 or 25 may
15 participate in the game since the rules state that no one may wear the uniform
16 number of a suspended player. Assuming that another player on the team is wearing
17 the number 22, then that player is also not eligible to play. The penalty for both
18 players is imposed since (1) the coach had a opportunity to correct the actual name
19 and uniform number combination and (2) if the problem was caused by a Master
20 Player Roster issue, the club had time to make the necessary corrections prior to the
21 suspension notice being prepared.
22

- 23 **4. Reporting Misconduct** – Yellow cards, red cards, and individuals asked to leave the field
24 must be reported to the SFL by both teams in a timely manner. Red cards and instances
25 where individuals have been asked to leave the field must also be reported by the club who
26 provided the officials for the game. The SFL will notify the teams in advance where players
27 and coaches are suspended and are not eligible to participate in the subject game. It is up to
28 the applicable SFL Club Representative to ensure that any other individuals suspended from
29 a game do not appear at the game. Email is the preferred method of reporting the
30 information relating to red cards and individuals that have been asked to leave the field.
31
- 32 a. A proper red card report for a player includes the following information (1) player’s
33 name, (2) player’s jersey number, (3) nature of the infraction, and (4) recommended
34 suspension period.
35
 - 36 b. A proper report for a coach or spectator who has received a red card or been asked to
37 leave the field of play is the name.
38
 - 39 c. Information on red cards and individuals asked to leave the field are required to be
40 reported no later than 6 PM on Monday following the game where the red card was
41 assessed or the individual was asked to leave the field unless the team is expected to play
42 a game during the next two days. If the team is expected to play a game the following
43 two days, then the required information must be reported no later than 8 PM on the game
44 day.
45

46 **Example A**
47

48 Team A plays a game on Saturday and one of its players receives a red card. The next
49 game that Team A plays is the following Saturday. This red card must be properly
50 reported no later than 6 PM on the Monday following the game.
51

1 **Example B**

2
3 Team A plays a game on Saturday and one of its players receives a red card. The next
4 game that Team A plays is the next day (Sunday) or on Monday. This red card must be
5 properly reported no later than 8 PM on the day the game is played (Saturday).
6

- 7 d. A referee may request from the coach, player, or other team official the name of any
8 coach, player, or team official that the referee considers needed to perform their reporting
9 responsibilities. If this information is not provided or incorrect information is provided
10 to the referee, the team will be assessed two (2) Team Demerits in addition to any other
11 Team Demerits that may be assessed during the game.
12

13 **D. Club Review of Disciplinary Issues** – The applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner or SFL
14 Commissioner may request a club to formally review any incident that involves an Individual or
15 Team Demerit. If the SFL Age Group Commissioner or SFL Commissioner decides that formal
16 review is necessary, the club is expected to have its Rules and Disciplinary Committee or
17 similar organization (e.g., Rules Committee, etc.) formally review the requested incident and
18 provide a written report to the SFL that contains (1) names and titles of the officials on the
19 panel, (2) the approach taken to review the matter that was referred for review, (3) the pertinent
20 facts disclosed during their review, and (4) the actions that the club believe are appropriate. It is
21 expected that this Committee will comply with the VYSA rules for such groups. The club is
22 encouraged to include the club’s SFL Club Representative in this process.
23

- 24 1. If the SFL decides that a formal review is necessary, the individual(s) that should be subject
25 to the review will normally be identified, if possible, by the SFL.
26
27 a. If the SFL is unable to identify the individual(s) based on the information obtained that
28 led to the request, then the club must provide the name(s) and any other information
29 requested within 3 days of the SFL Club Representative being sent an Email requesting
30 such information.
31
32 (1) If a club is unable to provide the necessary information, then the team will be
33 suspended from SFL play until the necessary information is provided.
34
35 b. Any individual (player, coach, spectator, etc.) whose actions are being reviewed by the
36 club’s Rules Committee is ineligible to participate in SFL games until the SFL receives
37 the written report from the club unless this penalty is waived by the SFL. The SFL shall
38 identify the individual(s) subject to this penalty.
39
40 (1) This requirement does not apply to individuals that the Rules Committee may
41 request to appear before it for information gathering purposes only.
42
43 (2) It is recognized that the Rules Committee may later identify other individuals that
44 should be penalized.
45

46 **E. Conduct Detrimental to the League** – A team may be placed on probation during the current
47 and/or subsequent season, regardless of whether any Team Demerits are assigned, because the
48 conduct of the coach, player(s), and/or other individuals is considered to be detrimental to the
49 league.
50

- 51 1. The appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner or SFL Commissioner will document the
52 reason(s) that a team should be considered being placed on probation for conduct detrimental
53 to the league. A SFL Club Representative may also petition the SFL through the appropriate
54 SFL Age Group Commissioner to place a team on probation by documenting the reason(s).

1 If the request to place a team on probation for conduct detrimental to the league comes from
2 a SFL Club Representative, the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner should opine on
3 the request when distributing it to the other SFL Commissioners.
4

5 2. Once the documentation is prepared, it is submitted to the remaining SFL Commissioners for
6 review. If a majority of the SFL Commissioners agree that the team should be placed on
7 probation, then the applicable SFL Club Representative is formally contacted to obtain
8 his/her views on the proposed probation. The SFL Club Representative will have one week
9 in which to provide a formal response. If no response is received within that time, the SFL
10 will consider that the SFL Club Representative agrees with the proposed probation.
11

12 a. Each SFL Age Group Commissioner will have one vote and a tie is broken by the SFL
13 Commissioner. If a person holds more than one SFL Age Group Commissioner position,
14 then that individual is allowed one vote. If the SFL Commissioner also holds an SFL
15 Age Group Commissioner position and the vote is tied, then the SFL Commissioner may
16 not break the tie and the team will not be placed on probation for conduct detrimental to
17 the league.
18

19 b. If the original request to place a team on probation for conduct detrimental to the league
20 was received from a SFL Club Representative and the majority of SFL Commissioners
21 do not concur, then the SFL Club Representative submitting the request will be notified
22 of the SFL's decision and no appeal is allowed.
23

24 3. Once the SFL Club Representative has provided a formal response to the proposal to place a
25 team on probation, the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner will review the response
26 and opine on whether the proposed probation should be enforced. The SFL Commissioners
27 shall then vote on whether the proposed probation should be finalized using the same voting
28 process that is used for proposing a team for probation. The applicable SFL Club
29 Representative shall then be notified of the final decision. If the original request was
30 received from another SFL Club Representative, then that SFL Club Representative shall
31 also be notified of the final decision. No appeal of this decision is available.
32

33 4. Teams placed on probation during the season will automatically placed on probation for the
34 following season. Furthermore, any team placed on probation will be suspended from the
35 remaining games of the season when (1) the team accumulates four (4) Team Demerits for
36 any reason during the season or (2) is considered to have conducted another offense that
37 warrants another decision that the team has demonstrated conduct detrimental to the league.
38 If a team has already accumulated four(4) Team Demerits prior to the decision that it has
39 demonstrated conduct detrimental to the league, then (1) the team is automatically suspended
40 for the remainder of the season and (2) automatically place on probation for the following
41 season.
42

43 F. **Complaints and Protests** – Only a SFL Club Representative or the President (or equivalent) of
44 a club's governing body are allowed to submit formal complaints or protest a game. SFL Club
45 Representatives or Club Presidents who wish to protest a game or provide a formal complaint,
46 must notify the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner in writing within 48 hours after the
47 match with a copy to the SFL Commissioner. Coaches and any other club officials are not
48 allowed to file formal complaints or protests directly with the SFL. Although the SFL Club
49 Representative or Club President may request other individuals to help the SFL Club
50 Representative or Club President file a complaint or protest, the applicable SFL Age Group
51 Commissioner is only responsible for accepting information from and discussing the complaint
52 or protest with the SFL Club Representative or Club President who is acting on behalf of the
53 club. Only one individual may act on behalf of the club during the complaint or protest process.
54

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.
3. The SFL Age Group Commissioner is responsible for making the initial decision on an appeal unless that individual is affiliated with a club involved in the protest. The appropriate person making the protest may appeal the SFL Age Group Commissioner's decision to the SFL Commissioner whose decision is final.
 - a. If the SFL Age Group Commissioner is affiliated with a club involved in the protest, then the protest shall be heard by the SFL Commissioner, unless the SFL Commissioner is affiliated with a club involved in the protest, whose decision is final.
 - b. If the SFL Commissioner is affiliated with a club involved in the protest, then the SFL Age Group Commissioner's decision is considered final and cannot be appealed.
 - c. If both the SFL Age Group Commissioner and SFL Commissioner are affiliated with a club involved in the protest, then the protest shall be heard by an SFL Age Group Commissioner that is not affiliated with any of the clubs involved in the protest. The SFL Administrator shall determine which SFL Age Group Commissioner should hear the protest. The decision of this SFL Age Group Commissioner is considered final and may not be appealed.

Discussion

In the past, the SFL has received a number of protests which should not have not been filed or requested to review actions which are the responsibility of a given club. For example, games were protested because of referee decisions. The SFL recognizes that protest or formal complaint is not appropriate for many conditions that a coach or club believes warrants additional review by a club. Therefore, the SFL will accept informal complaints and forward them to the appropriate club for informational purposes. The SFL is not responsible for following up to determine what actions were taken by a given club on informal complaints.

As noted elsewhere, the SFL rules contain a variety of standard penalties for offenses covered by the Laws of the Game or SFL specific infractions such as violent conduct, fighting, using illegal players, etc. While these cover a large number of disciplinary situations, the SFL also receives requests for the SFL to undertake reviews and impose penalties that are well outside the scope of its operations. Specifically, it must be remembered that the SFL's primary purpose to provide a scheduling service so that clubs can have a robust recreational program. When situations arise that are outside its scope of operations, the SFL has adopted a policy recommending that the complaint be addressed

1 through more appropriate means such as referring the matter to VYSA and/or the appropriate
2 law enforcement agency. These organizations have the administrative policies, procedures,
3 and authority to address the concerns that are outside the scope of the SFL's operations.
4

5 **G. Video Evidence** – The SFL is willing to accept video evidence to support a given disciplinary
6 issue. However, it is up to the appropriate SFL Commissioner to the extent that the information
7 is used in arriving at a decision. The following guidelines have been adopted by the SFL
8 Commissioners in guiding the decision on the extent that video evidence will be used.
9

- 10 1. Video evidence will normally be considered in reviewing such matters as (1) deciding
11 whether a team used illegal players that was not able to be detected through the roster
12 checking or roster challenge process and (2) whether physical altercations that would warrant
13 a two game suspension may have occurred on or off the field of play that were not detected
14 by the officiating crew.
15
- 16 2. Video evidence will not be considered in requests to overturn referee decisions such as
17 whether (1) goal was or was not scored, (2) a red card should be reduced to a yellow card,
18 etc. In addition, it will not be used to evaluate subjective items such as whether a player or
19 team is “too physical”. Such issues should be addressed with the team’s SFL Club
20 Representative. As noted elsewhere, when a club is concerned about a team’s “level of
21 play”, the club may request the SFL to review the matter as conduct that is detrimental to the
22 league. In such cases, video evidence may be allowed by the SFL.
23

Glossary of Terms

1
2
3
4 **Adult League** – Normally consist of players who meet the age criteria for Under 18s and above. Teams
5 will be broken into three broad groups – Coed, Men, and Women. Members of either gender may play on
6 a Coed or Men’s team. Only members of the female gender may play on a Women’s team.

7
8 **Club Age Group Representative** – Each club may appoint one individual to represent the teams of a
9 given age group. This individual may assist the SFL Club Representative but is not allowed to vote on
10 SFL matters or act as an official representative of the club unless the club has also appointed this
11 individual as the SFL Club Representative. Examples of duties perform by Club Age Group
12 Representatives include providing information on the teams in their assigned age group and acting as a
13 point of contact when another team has a problem contacting a coach.

14
15 **Game week** – A game week starts on a Friday and normally lasts 7 days. However, if no games are
16 scheduled for a period of 14 days, such as a holiday weekend, then the game week will consist of 14 days.

17
18 **SFL Age Group Commissioners** – Each age group will have a SFL Age Group Commissioner who is
19 responsible to the SFL Commissioner. The SFL Age Group Commissioners are responsible for
20 monitoring the operation of the teams in their age group and will coordinate with the SFL Club
21 Representatives and, if necessary, notify the SFL Commissioner when problems arise or disciplinary
22 action is required.

23
24 **SFL Club Representatives** – Each club is required to appoint one individual as the SFL Club
25 Representative. This individual is the official representative of the club and is responsible for ensuring
26 that all rules and regulations of their club and that of the SFL are being followed. This individual also
27 acts as liaison between the club and the SFL over disputes and rule infractions. **The SFL is not required**
28 **to act upon any issues raised by someone other than the SFL Club Representative or the President**
29 **(or equivalent) of the Club’s governing body.** The SFL Club Representative must also be able to
30 communicate with the SFL using an Email service that is acceptable to the SFL unless a written waiver is
31 granted by the SFL Commissioner. The season package contains the name of the individual who has
32 been designated by the each club as their SFL Club Representative.

33
34 **SFL Commissioner** – Monitors the seasonal and daily operations of the league. This is done with the
35 assistance of the SFL Age Group Commissioners and the SFL Club Representatives. The SFL
36 Commissioner also hears all appeals of decisions made by a SFL Age Group Commissioner or the SFL
37 Disciplinary Panel. The SFL Commissioner’s decision is final and no other appeal is available.

38
39 **SFL Disciplinary Panel** – The SFL Commissioner or a SFL Age Group Commissioner may also
40 convene a Disciplinary Panel to investigate a complaint or protest submitted by a SFL Club
41 Representative. The structure and role of this panel are discussed in Section IX.

42
43 **Weather cancellation** – Games cannot be played for weather related reasons or conditions that are that
44 are beyond the SFL’s control, e.g., regional and national emergencies.

45
46 **Youth League** – Consists of teams who have players who meet the age criteria for Under 19s or younger.
47 Normally teams will be broken into two broad groups – boys (or mixed) and girls. Only members of the
48 female gender may play on a girl’s team while members of either gender may play on a “boy’s” team.

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