

Summary - Responsibilities for Coaches and Club Representatives

The following is a summary of the key responsibilities for coaches and SFL Club Representatives. **Additional information and a more thorough explanation of these responsibilities, can be found in the attached package. Simply reading this page and the cover letter will address many of your questions.**

Coaches

1. The home team must call the opposing coach by the Wednesday preceding the game date and discuss at least the following: game time, field directions, roster exchange process, and team colors (the home team must change if a color clash exists).
2. Your **SFL Club Representative** is responsible for submitting a roster for your team. **All roster changes must go through your SFL Club Representative.** The coach is not allowed to add or subtract players to the team's roster without the SFL Club Representative's approval. In addition, the team roster should already include the jersey number for each player shown on the roster. **TEAMS ARE REQUIRED TO EXCHANGE PAPER ROSTERS BEFORE EACH GAME REGARDLESS OF THE AGE GROUP.** You should also have a copy available for the referee if requested.
3. **If the team contact information contained in this package is incorrect, you must contact the opposing teams and let them know of the change.**
4. Problems or questions should be addressed to your SFL Club Representative.
5. Both teams must report the game score, yellow cards, and red cards by Email (sfl@sflsoccer.org) or by voice mail by the following Monday (6:00 PM). **EMAIL IS THE PREFERRED METHOD FOR REPORTING SCORES.** We have developed and posted to the web site a FAQ document that shows how to report scores (<http://www.sflsoccer.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Reporting-Game-Results.pdf>).

SFL Club Representatives

You are the SFL's contact with your club regarding administrative items and discipline.

1. Master Player Roster and Team rosters. (Teams will not be considered eligible for tournament play if the SFL has not been provided with a Master Player Roster)
 - Distribute to your teams the SFL Team Rosters generated by the SFL.
 - All changes to the roster must go through you. Changes may be made through April 25 for the spring season and September 25 for the fall season. Any changes must be made on the Master Player Roster submitted to the SFL.
2. When rescheduling a game, notify the SFL as soon as possible of the game number, new game date, and game time.

Suburban Friendship League
2416 Rosedown Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1620
March 29, 2018

Dear Coaches and Club Officials:

This season the SFL has more than 520 youth teams and we would like to extend a special welcome to those who are new to the SFL and hope that you have an enjoyable season. We would also like to welcome back the returning teams.

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

This is considered the season mailing and contains the following:

- Season letter
- Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on concussions.
- Information from US Soccer on concussions.
- Information concerning lighting safety.
- Referee Guide
- SFL Coach's Guide
- Listing of team contacts, Email addresses (see discussion below), and phone numbers. This listing also provides the contact information for the SFL Commissioner and SFL Age Group Commissioners. (This information is not published on the web site version).
- Listing of SFL Club Representatives. **You should contact your SFL Club Representative concerning questions that arise during the season. Also, if you have problems contacting another team during the season, you should contact that team's SFL Club Representative. The SFL Age Group Commissioners will formally respond only to matters referred to them by the appropriate SFL Club Representative.** (This information is not published on the web site version.)
- Rules for the current season. These rules were approved by the SFL Club Representatives during the preseason meeting. Several proposed rule and process changes were considered by the SFL Commissioners and clubs after the Fall 2017 season. The web site contains (1) a summary of the

items considered and (2) detailed information relating to the proposal and why the SFL Commissioners recommended approval or disapproval of the proposal to the SFL Club Representatives. This document can be found on the web site's SFL Documents page.

- Procedures and Processes – SFL Team Rosters. Please take some time to read this document. **The coaches play an important role in validating the information contained on their SFL Team Roster and are expected to be familiar with the information contained in this document.** The document also contains a two-page attachment that summarizes the information in the document and can be used as a reminder on the field. Please pay particular attention to the roster process as it applies to tournament games. First, the coach is not allowed to make any uniform number changes on the roster. If a player's uniform number does not agree with the roster, then that player can only play if the opposing coach allows it. Second, a roster check will be required before each tournament game. If a coach does not have a roster, then the team forfeits the game. History has shown that very few coaches agree to play tournament games when the opposing team does not have the proper SFL Team Roster. Finally, any altered SFL Team Rosters will result in an automatic forfeit. Examples of alternations include rosters that do not have the SFL watermark on them. Last season we had several needless forfeits declared or players not being allowed to play during the tournament since the coach disregarded the basic roster rules of (1) bringing a copy of the roster to the tournament game or (2) not notifying his/her SFL Club Representative of the proper uniform number of the players on the team which made them ineligible.

Note: The process used for generating rosters eliminates leading zeroes. If a player has a printed uniform number with a leading zero, e.g., 01, then (1) the coach is allowed to make this uniform number change on the roster and it is not considered a uniform number change and (2) is not considered a duplicate number, e.g., 1 and 01 are not considered duplicate numbers.

KEY DATES

The following are some of the key dates:

Date	Event
April 4	Deadline for providing the Master Player Roster that will be used by the SFL to generate the SFL Team Rosters (see discussion below).
April 5	SFL Team Rosters provided to SFL Club Representatives
April 6	Coaches provided approved rosters by SFL Club Representative.
April 7	First game weekend.
April 25	Last day to make player changes to a team roster without approval of the applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner.

May 2	Last day to submit uniform number changes to SFL Team Rosters – SFL Team Rosters are considered final for the season.
May 26	Holiday – No games
June 9/10	Tournament weekend. If your team is unable to play this weekend, please let us know as soon as possible.

SIGNIFICANT RULE AND PROCESS CHANGES

This season two changes were made to the rules and processes that affect all teams. These involve substitutions and how the tournament will be conducted.

Substitutions

Last season the SFL implemented the US Youth Soccer policy of allowing unlimited substitutions at any stoppage in play. The SFL found that this rule was abused by some coaches and the SFL received several Emails from the clubs requesting that the rule changed to limit the substitutions to specific situations. These Emails noted that the changes were needed in order to preserve the integrity of the game so that play is continuous without the constant interruption of play and the wasting of time. Specific complaints included how the combination of unlimited substitutions with substitutions being allowed at any stoppage of play was used to slow the game down, stopping an opponent's attack on goal, etc. Based on these complaints, the clubs have decided to limit substitutions to specific situations. This season, substitutions may be made under the following conditions.

- After a goal.
- Prior to a goal kick.
- Prior to the start of the second half.
- Prior to a throw-in by the team in possession (the opposing team may only substitute if the team in possession substitutes).
- For an injury when the injured player is replaced (the opposing team may also substitute a player at that time),
- After a player caution, at the request of the player's coach (only the cautioned player may be replaced with a substitute at that time).
- At water breaks, if stoppage for the break occurs during one of the above substitution opportunities. Referees are encouraged to schedule water breaks during substitution opportunities for both teams.

Tournament Changes

In the Fall 2017 preseason meeting, the SFL noted that it was not a matter of “if” but “when” the tournament in its existing format could not longer be supported by the clubs and would have to be discontinued. For example, during the Fall 2017 season, about 18 percent of the games scheduled that season were being played on one weekend. After the Fall 2017 season, the SFL undertook a comprehensive look at the tournament and considered 4 options that were provided by the clubs and SFL Commissioners. The resulting paper that examines these options in detail – Tournament Alternatives Considered for the Spring 2018 Season – can be found on the SFL Documents page (<http://www.sflsoccer.org/sfl-documents/>).

Based on this analysis, the SFL recommended to the clubs to adopt one of two options since these were the only options that resulted in (1) about the same number of Saturday games as a regular season weekend, e.g., if we have 500 teams, then about 250 Saturday games would be expected and (2) the number of Sunday games would be no more than the current tournament approach. At the Spring 2018 preseason meeting, the clubs voted overwhelmingly to adopt the four team single elimination format. In summary, the approach adopted does the following.

- The round robin tournament divisions for the top teams will be eliminated.
- Teams will be broken down in 4 team single elimination divisions rather than creating tournament divisions to have teams with comparable records play each other, e.g., if 6 teams have the same game point percentage, these teams will be split between at least two different tournament divisions rather than being placed in the same tournament division under the old approach. The Tournament Alternatives Considered for the Spring 2018 Season paper on the SFL Documents page explains this situation in more detail.

The Procedures and Processes – Tournament Scheduling document on the SFL Documents page discusses how the tournament will be scheduled using the new approach and discusses how such things odd team tournament groups are handled. For example, assume that a regular season age group division has 25 teams in it, this number is not evenly divisible by 4 so some other approach is needed to schedule all the teams. This paper discusses how that is handled.

PLAYER HEALTH AND SAFETY

As many of you know, on-field player sports injuries have been a hot topic in the news over the past few years. In addition, some confusion has been experienced in prior seasons on what should be done when severe weather is present and how goals should be secured.

Concussions

We continue to see improvements in the awareness of concussions. Included in this package are the following items:

- Guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control – We also suggest that you visit their site (www.cdc.gov/concussion/) for additional resources that include an online training course.
- Guidance provided by US Youth Soccer – We also suggest that you visit their web site <http://www.usoccer.com/about/recognize-to-recover/concussion-guidelines> for additional information on this topic.

In addition, the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA) has also implemented a no heading rule for Under 11s and below. Specifically, at age group divisions U11 and younger, whenever the ball strikes a player in the head, play is stopped. The proper restart depends upon whether the player deliberately played the ball with his or her head. If deliberate, the proper restart is an indirect free kick to the opposing team. If this occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If the play by the head is deemed inadvertent, then the proper restart is a dropped ball.

We urge each club to take the following steps to help ensure a safe playing environment for our players:

- **Coaches:** Train your players in proper and legal technique. For example: go straight up for headers (headers in practice for the younger age groups are limited by VYSA and US Soccer); cleats down on slide tackles; avoid tackles from behind. If a player is injured during a game, get them proper care and do not allow them to return to play if there is any doubt about their condition. Use smart applications to determine when lightning is present in your playing area rather than depend on “sight.”
- **Referees:** Make player safety a point of emphasis this season. Injuries are more severe when one or both players are permitted to go up for a head ball at an angle rather than straight up. Tackles with studs up, or from behind and through an opponent's legs increase the likelihood of injury. Be prepared to stop play quickly if a player appears to be injured. For example, as recommended in US Soccer's concussion guidance, players who may have suffered a concussion during games may be substituted for evaluation without a penalty. Also, use smart applications to determine when lightning is present in your playing area rather than depend on “sight.” One club uses the policy that if these applications to show lightning within one mile of the field, then they follow the US Youth Soccer guidelines and get the individuals off the field and take appropriate shelter.
- **Parents:** soccer is a contact sport. If your child is injured, you and your family doctor are the best judges of when it is safe for your child to return to the field. Our advice is – **WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT.**

Severe Weather

In the past some confusion has existed over what should be done when severe weather is present in the area. Severe weather is not to be taken lightly. We encourage you to take the time to review the guidance included in this package from US Youth Soccer. It can also be found at http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/news/lightning_safety_outdoors/.

Properly Securing Soccer Goals

A continuing point of emphasis from VYSA is the need to ensure that the goals on a game field are properly secured. VYSA and the SFL are asking that all clubs, coaches, referees, parents, and players to pay close attention to the safety of the goals on the fields you are using. In the past, a young player was killed by a goal that fell on him. Shortly after that incident another player was injured by a goal falling, only this one had a better ending. We are asking all those involved to make goal safety a top priority.

Do not let another tragedy occur. Take a few moments to make sure that all the players are safe by inspecting (1) all goal posts and nets for safety (including making sure that they are properly anchored and secured) and (2) the field and areas around the field that is being used. While it is our understanding that the referees should be checking the goals to ensure that they are properly secured and the field is safe, we would also like both coaches to check the goals to make sure that they are properly secured and if you have any questions, ask the referee. If there is still a question, then do not play the game. The Consumer Product Safety Commission has also published a goalpost safety manual. (<http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/Soccer.pdf>).

TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Please remember that if your contact information is not correct, then you are required to contact your opponents and let them know the correct information.

Email addresses are provided to improve communication between the team contacts when those individuals agree to have their Email addresses published. This is commonly referred to as an “opt in” policy. The procedures adopted to implement this policy include the SFL Club Representatives contacting each of their teams and providing the Email addresses that the team contacts desired the SFL to publish in the enclosed listing. As noted above, we do not provide this information on the web site. The SFL web site contains two documents relating to this policy – the SFL privacy policy and a policy and procedures document that is used to manage it. Both of these documents are available on the web site on the SFL Documents page (<http://www.sflsoccer.org/sfl-documents>). If you have a question on why your Email address was published, then please contact your SFL Club Representative since this is where the SFL (1) got the Email addresses that were published and (2) confirmation that the team contact had consented to have his/her Email address(es) published.

Our expectations are that any Email addresses published by the SFL are handled in a responsible manner. However, the SFL has no control over how these published Emails are used by other individuals who may see the published list. In a given season the list will be mailed to around 600 individuals and the SFL Club Representatives are provided an electronic version who may Email the list to others. Any request to remove an Email address from the published list must be submitted through the appropriate SFL Club Representative who is responsible for ensuring that Email addresses are removed in subsequent revisions to the list. Much like the phone numbers, the SFL is also not responsible for the validity of the Email address(es) provided. If you have a problem with an Email address or phone number, then contact the appropriate SFL Club Representative. This list is expected to be generated once a season and is not expected to be updated.

As noted in our privacy policy, the SFL does not sell or otherwise distribute the Email addresses provided to it. This does not mean that you will not end up getting SPAM Email that appears to be addressed from the sflsoccer.org domain. Every day, we get numerous SPAM Emails addressed from us to us. The following may help you decide on whether you are getting a SPAM Email from the sflsoccer.org domain:

- The only valid senders are sfl@sflsoccer.org, John.Paladino@sflsoccer.org, and Rick.Reid@sflsoccer.org. Other Email addresses, such as webmaster@sflsoccer.org, u16boys@sflsoccer.org, etc. are bogus. It totally amazing at how many Emails we receive each day from nonexistent SFL Email addresses telling us we need to do something to maintain our Email account, provide a “must see” web link, or provide us an offer that we cannot refuse.
- We will not be sending out an Email telling you that you need to log into the site to do anything. The only restricted pages on the web site are the field pages that the clubs use to see a consolidated schedule of their home games. Access to these pages is handled directly with these individuals.
- We will not be sending an Email telling you how you can make millions by helping us to transfer some money or how to buy your soccer equipment.
- We will not be sending you an Email telling you to open an attachment so you can do something that is required or provide some personal information. The primary individuals who receive attachments are the SFL Club Representatives and they know what those documents are. While we may send others documents upon request, those documents are normally PDF files. If you have a question on a document, then do not open it.

If you have a question on whether an Email is valid, then send it back to us.

The only standard Email address used by the SFL is sfl@sflsoccer.org. The contact list has the direct Email addresses for the SFL Commissioners and SFL Club Representatives.

INCOMPLETE GAME AND FIELD INFORMATION

We did not receive all the game field and time information for some of the games scheduled for Sunday since some clubs are waiting for the travel schedules to set these games to maximize the referees and field slots. Once we are provided with this information, we will update the web site. In addition, several clubs did not confirm that the field slots submitted were still correct prior to the publication of the game schedules. Accordingly, please check the web site before your game is played to make sure that most current information is being used. As noted earlier, the web site highlights game changes and Google Maps is available to assist in getting field directions.

INCOMPLETE TEAM INFORMATION

You will note that we did not have a number of team colors or in some cases the even the name of the coach or the phone number. Also, if we did not have the necessary address information, we did not

attempt to mail the standard package. You should contact your SFL Club Representative to obtain an electronic version of the season package or a copy of the team contact information included in the package. The documents in the season package, with the exception of the contact information, are on the web site on the SFL Documents page.

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

In the cases where a valid team contact and phone number was not provided in time for this package, we used the SFL Club Representative's information. Accordingly, when you check the web site and see a team contact is different from the information in this package, you can still contact that individual's SFL Club Representative since when the correct information is provided to us, we have told the club that the new coach should contact the opposing teams and let them know the correct information. Also, **if your name or phone number is incorrect or missing, then you are required to contact each of your opposing teams as soon as possible and let them know the correct information. Although we post the team color and name information on our Web Site, we do not post phone numbers, Email addresses, or mailing addresses due to privacy considerations.** Our web site contains our privacy policy and it can be found at www.sflsoccer.org/privacy-policy-of-the-suburban-friendship-league.

RULE REMINDERS

The rules for this season are fairly consistent with those used in the fall with the exception of the substitution rule discussed above. However, we would like to highlight the following rules.

Individual and Team Demerits

A standard process is used assesses Individual and Team Demerits for various infractions. An individual (player or coach) that receives three (3) Individual Demerits is suspended for the remainder of the season. Any team that accumulates six (6) Team Demerits by week 6 is suspended from the tournament while any team that receives 8 Team Demerits is suspended for the remainder of the season. The following table shows how various infractions are treated. The following table shows how various infractions are assessed Individual and Team Demerits.

Infraction Description	Individual Demerits	Team Demerits
<p>Player Infractions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving toward the player's goal by an offense punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick. • Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own penalty area). • Receiving a second caution in the same match (note 1). • Serious foul play. 	1	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures. • Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Conduct that warrants a one game suspension that is not specifically covered by other suspension offenses. Examples include failing to serve a game suspension by a player. When an individual does not properly serve suspension period, this penalty is in addition to the original penalty. For example, assume a player is suspended for one game and does not serve the one game suspension. The player would be suspended for one additional game. 		

Infraction Description	Individual Demerits	Team Demerits
<p>Head Coach and Player Infractions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violent conduct and fighting as defined by the SFL regardless of whether a red card is shown. Conduct which will be treated as fighting, regardless of whether a red card is shown, includes but is not limited to (1) fighting in the opinion of the referee, (2) shoving another player or any other aggressive action after the whistle has blown to stop play, (3) kicking/striking or attempting to kick/strike a player, or spitting. A player "defending himself/herself " is not exempt from this penalty. Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Conduct that warrants a two game suspension rather than the standard one game suspension or not specifically covered by other infractions. Examples, include racial slurs, non players (such as coaching staff or spectators) being asked to leave the field or showed a red card, inappropriate behavior toward a game official, etc. Inappropriate conduct toward a game official includes persistent inappropriate comments, verbal threats, being followed to the parking lot in an inappropriate manner, or other actions that would make a referee fear for his/her safety. 	2	2
<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – Three Team Demerits. Conduct by members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other suspension or team offenses and warrant three Team Demerits. Examples include actions that warrant review by VYSA. 	Various	Various

Infraction Description	Individual Demerits	Team Demerits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal players used – One (1) Team Demerit per illegal player per game. Illegal players include (1) travel players regardless of whether they are shown on the SFL Team Roster, (2) players shown on the SFL Team Roster but declared ineligible during a roster check or roster challenge, and (3) players not shown on the SFL Team Roster. As noted elsewhere, a team using illegal players will be assessed forfeits for the games where illegal players are used and may be excluded from the SFL tournament. Note: If the coach is assessed a penalty for using illegal players, then this penalty is not assessed unless more than three (3) illegal players are used. • Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – One Team Demerit. Conduct by members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other suspension or team offenses and warrants one Team Demerit. Examples include failing to ensure a suspended player does not play (this is in addition to the penalty assessed to the individual), etc. • Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – Two Team Demerits. Conduct by members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other suspension or team offenses and warrants two Team Demerits. Examples include actions that cause a game to be terminated early and failing to properly report red cards or individuals (including the Head Coach) being asked to leave the field. When suspension offenses are not properly reported, the team is also assessed additional Team Demerits and game forfeits until the information is properly received. 	Various	Various

Note: If a player receives a red card after receiving a yellow card a decision is made on whether the red card was received based on the player committing a red card offense or receiving a second yellow card. For example, assume that a player receives a yellow card for a yellow card offense and then receives another yellow card for the same offense or some other yellow card offense later in the game. This is treated as a red card based on two yellow cards. On the other hand, assume that a player receives a yellow card for dissent by word or action and then receives a red card for using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures. This is treated as a red card for using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures rather than a second yellow card.

Uniform Numbers

A coach is allowed to make an unlimited number of uniform number changes on the SFL Team Roster during week one. After week one, the coach is limited to no more than 3 uniform number changes during the regular season without the other coach's permission. Accordingly, if your roster (1) shows unknown uniform numbers or (2) incorrect uniform numbers, you need to contact your SFL Club Representative so the necessary changes can be made **BEFORE** you play the next week's games. No uniform number changes can be made in the tournament games and players with missing and incorrect numbers may not play unless the other coach agrees. Furthermore, the roster information after the week 4 games have been played is considered final and no additional changes can be made after the following Wednesday. If your roster shows a large number of uniform number issues (missing numbers and duplicate numbers), then your team may be automatically eliminated from the tournament. Each coach is encouraged to take the necessary actions to address any uniform number issues sooner rather than later.

Please remember that tape is not allowed to be used for uniform numbers unless explicitly stated on the SFL Team Roster. A concern has been raised on the costs associated with players being forced to buy new jerseys when teams are combined to resolve uniform number issues. To mediate this concern, the rules have been clarified to allow the use of a permanent marker to make a new uniform number. For example, a printed uniform number of 16 can be modified to 116 using a permanent marker. As long as the SFL Team Roster shows that this player's uniform number is 116, then the modification made with the permanent marker is considered acceptable.

As noted elsewhere, the process used for generating rosters eliminates leading zeroes. If a player has a printed uniform number with a leading zero, e.g., 01, then (1) the coach is allowed to make this uniform number change on the roster and it is not considered a uniform number change and (2) is not considered a duplicate number, e.g., 1 and 01 are not considered duplicate numbers.

Travel Players

In past seasons, travel players have been found on SFL teams although the SFL rules clearly prohibit this practice. In most cases, the review found that the coach and club did not know that the player in question was on a travel team. When the player was questioned, the player normally stated something like they did not know that they could not do both. In addition, the SFL has received questions on when it is permissible for an SFL player to play as a guest player on a travel team and some travel leagues are at least considering allowing recreational players to participate as guest players on travel teams during the regular season. Accordingly, the SFL adopted rules clarifying the use of SFL players on travel teams. **Coaches and players should never rely on someone's assertion that "this is allowed by travel."** The following highlights these rules:

- Coaches should discuss with each player on their team the prohibition of playing on an SFL team and a travel team and make sure that the players realize that the identification of a travel player on that team will result in forfeiture of games and elimination from the SFL tournament. The coach should clearly explain to all members of the team what is allowed and what is not allowed.

- Players are not allowed to routinely practice with the travel team. This does not exclude a one time “try out” for the travel team.
- An SFL player may be a guest player on a travel team participating in a tournament that occurs either (1) before the first game of the SFL season, (2) after the last game of the SFL season, or (3) during a week when the SFL does not normally hold games, e.g., holiday weekends. The SFL must be notified by Email of the player’s name and date of birth along with the game dates that the player is playing for the travel team if the game dates fall between the start and end of the SFL season, e.g., holiday weekends.
- Although some travel leagues may allow recreational players to play on a travel team during that team’s regular season travel games, the SFL does not support this policy for many reasons. This includes the potential that a player may end up playing on a travel team and SFL team throughout the season which would effectively eliminate the prohibition against travel players playing on SFL teams. Accordingly, if an SFL player participates in a regular season travel game, then (1) the club must notify the SFL of the player’s name and birth date and (2) ensure that the player no longer plays on the SFL team. Subsequent participation of the player in SFL games will result in game forfeits and the team’s elimination from the SFL tournament.
- Although some people maintain that as long as a player is not contained in VYSA’s travel data base, then that player may play on an SFL team. This is incorrect. One of the proposed rules in past season was to adopt this definition and it was not accepted by the member clubs by almost 75 percent of the clubs that voted.

Hopefully, the coach’s discussion with each player about the prohibition of playing on a travel team and SFL team will allow (1) travel players who did not know that they could not play on both teams to self-identify themselves to the coach so that they can be removed from the roster and (2) other members of the team who may know of a travel player on the team to notify the coach so that the team as a whole will not be penalized by the actions of one player. In prior seasons we had teams that were suspended from the tournament because of players that participated as a guest player on a travel team during the same weekends as the SFL held regularly scheduled games.

Exchanging Rosters

Coaches are required to provide a **paper copy** of their SFL Team Roster to the opposing team before the start of every game **regardless of the age group**. If a team is unable to provide a paper copy of their SFL Team Roster, the team is assessed a forfeit if the other coach desires it. In addition, referees may also request a copy of the roster. During the tournament, it is an automatic forfeit if a paper copy of the SFL Team Roster is not available for the referee. Therefore, it is a good idea to provide copies of the approved roster to more than one individual on your team. Both teams are required to report the forfeited game. In addition, referees may also request a copy of the roster. Accordingly, the team needs to make sure it has two copies of the roster for every game.

Forfeits Relating to Roster Challenges

The SFL will decide when forfeits relating to roster challenges will be awarded except when the coach does not have a paper copy of the SFL Team Roster to provide to the other team. The primary purpose of the roster requirements is to (1) ensure that the players on the field were assigned to the team by the club and (2) encourage communication between the coaches to resolve minor problems when discrepancies arise. The challenge roster process adopted several seasons ago has generally worked well and appears to accomplish the first purpose **WHEN THEY ARE USED**. Last season we received several complaints asking for forfeits relating to incorrect uniform numbers. As noted in various documents relating to roster issues, uniform numbers are not normally a basis for awarding forfeits.

In order to prevent the roster process from being used to obtain victories through roster challenges that could not be obtained on the field or avoid playing the game the rules continue to require (1) a formal roster check using the processes described in the Procedures and Processes – SFL Team Rosters, (2) the game to be played in its entirety, and (3) the results of the challenge provided the SFL for review by the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner. The SFL Age Group Commissioner will then make a decision on whether a forfeit (or other penalties) will be assessed based on whether illegal players were actually used rather than honest mistakes. Teams using illegal players are subject to suspension from the SFL. This penalty has been imposed on teams in previous seasons.

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

The SFL normally receives a large number of roster related complaints during the tournament and has adopted rules to address the problems and concerns experienced. The following are actions that have been taken to help address concerns that have been raised.

- Uniform number changes on the rosters are not allowed for tournament games. Players without the correct uniform number may not play unless the opposing coach agrees.
- Formal-roster checks are to be performed before each tournament game. Accordingly, a coach not having a roster will result in that team being assessed a forfeit.
- The SFL Team Roster form may not be altered, e.g., the form must contain the SFL watermark, etc.
- A process has been adopted in cases where the referee does not comply with the SFL rules.

Sideline Placement of Teams and Spectators

The SFL does not have a rule regarding the placement of teams and spectators on the sidelines. Some clubs have the teams placed on the same side of the field with the spectators on the other side of the field while others have the teams and spectators on opposite sides of the field. We have had a great deal of discussion on this subject at the various preseason meetings concerning whether the SFL should adopt a standard policy. The SFL Club Representatives have reaffirmed their desired to leave this up to the home team's club on the placement of teams and spectators, e.g., both teams on the same side of the field, or teams on opposite sides of the field. If a club wants a standard approach, then that club should ensure that their coaches know the club policy and the home team coach should tell the other team. This topic should be discussed during the Wednesday phone call that the home team is required to make to the visiting team. Covering this topic during the weekday phone call should reduce any confusion.

Reporting Game Scores, Cards, and Rosters

Both teams are required to report any yellow or red cards awarded and the score regardless of whether they win, lose, or tie. We realize that this is duplication, however, this rule was adopted to avoid confusion on who was to report game results. The penalty associated with reporting scores late is **one game point**. Therefore, both teams will be assessed a game point penalty if we do not receive scores in a timely manner. **We would also like to request that whenever possible to use Email (sfl@sflsoccer.org) for reporting scores and include the game reference number in the subject field, e.g., #4521.** Email is much easier for us to use. We do not provide confirmation of the Emails received due to the way that Verizon treats these responses. Normally, the score for the game should be posted on the web site within 24 hours. If you still do not see the score, just send another Email. The Frequently Asked Questions page, (<http://www.sflsoccer.org/uploads/2015/03/Reporting-Game-Results.pdf>) contains examples of proper game reports. As can be seen in this document, the reports do not require much information or use a complicated format.

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

Game Cancellations

The rules contain information on how teams can find out if games are canceled due to weather (Section V.). Our web site (www.sflsoccer.org/phone-numbers-for-checking-field-conditions) also has a page with the phone numbers/web sites that should be used. See the Procedures and Processes – Game Rescheduling on the requirements to change games and how games should be rescheduled. This document can be obtained from the web site on the SFL Documents page. Remember, in most cases you only have until the Thursday following the scheduled game date to reschedule a game if it involves playing a team from another club. After that time, the SFL will attempt to automatically reschedule the game and no changes to games rescheduled by the SFL can be made. Therefore, it is in your best interest to reschedule the game yourself. We have developed a list of Frequently Asked Questions

regarding scheduling and it is posted on our web site on the FAQ page (www.sflsoccer.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Regular-Season-Scheduling.pdf).

The web site provides a very useful page to help in the rescheduling efforts. The Weekly Game Schedule for each age group shows a consolidated list of games that is being played each week and the day they are being played. Using the information on this page helps to identify when a team is available to play a make up game.

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

Frequently Asked Questions

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

WEB SITE

The web site has been optimized for mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets. In addition, it has some features that should make it more useful. These include the following:

- **Showing when a game schedule has changed** – The system is designed to show whenever a change within the last 5 days has been made to a game schedule when the change involves either (1) the game date, (2) game time, or (3) game field. The changed games will be highlighted in red/pink and have a note on the side saying that the game has been changed. As noted elsewhere, it is a good practice to check your game schedule late in the week just to be sure that a change has not been made to your schedule.
- **Field directions have been linked to Google Maps** – The field directions include a link to retrieve customized field directions using Google Maps. When you click on a field name, e.g., the Field Directions page or a field shown on the team page, the directions provided by the club are shown along with a link to Google Maps assuming that the club has provided us an address. (Over 99 percent of the fields have addresses.) Clicking on this link will load Google Maps and show you such things as (1) where the field is located, (2) a 360-degree picture of the location, and (3) allow you to use its navigation feature to get to the field. We hope that you find this feature useful.

WEB SITE AND PRIVACY POLICY

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

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

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

John Paladino
SFL Commissioner