

Suburban Friendship League

Frequently Asked Questions – Team Demerits

(July 10, 2011)

The following are a list of Frequently Asked Questions relating to team demerits. While we attempt to keep this information consistent with the rules, sometimes through unintentional oversight, some inconsistencies may occur. In these cases, the rules are used to resolve any inconsistencies.

Question: What is the coach's role in maintaining team discipline?

Response: At the older age levels, the coach assumes an increased level of responsibility regarding team leadership and maintenance of order and discipline of the team members and team spectators. The SFL expects each of its coaches to set a positive example for their players and spectators in promoting good sportsmanship and self-control. Accordingly, coaches are expected to be present at every game with their team or to ensure that responsible adult leadership is present for the team in their absence. A history of disciplinary infractions by one team can be grounds for team, coach, and/or player dismissal from the league. Such decisions will not be made lightly or hastily and will only be made after a careful review of the facts by a Disciplinary Panel to resolve disputes.

Question: What are team demerits?

Response: Team demerits are used to identify teams and individuals that have a history of infractions related to discipline issues. A team that averages one (1) team demerit per regular season game scheduled is (1) suspended from all tournament games and (2) all remaining regular season games. For example, if the regular season is eight (8) games and a team accumulates eight (8) team demerits in week 2, then it would be suspended from the remaining six regular season games and the tournament. Teams receiving an average of one (1) team demerit per regular season game scheduled are automatically placed on probation.

Question: Under what conditions are team demerits assessed to a team and are they only associated with red cards?

Response: Team demerits are assessed for discipline issues and they may be assessed for conduct where a red card is not shown. The following are examples of conditions which will result in the assessment of team demerits.

- **Red cards** – One (1) team demerit is assessed for each game that the player (or anyone else) that receives a red card is suspended. For example, if an individual is suspended for two (2) games, then the team is assessed two (2) team demerits.
- **Inappropriate behavior towards a game official** – Two (2) team demerits will be assessed to a team anytime a referee report received by the SFL includes a reference to the referee being harassed during or after the game by players, coaches or spectators. Examples include, verbal threats, being followed to the parking lot in an inappropriate

1 manner, or other actions that would make a referee fear for his/her safety. This penalty
2 also applies to referee assault incidents. However, additional disciplinary actions would
3 also be required to be considered by the offending club in those cases, e.g., referring the
4 incident to VYSA, conducting a club disciplinary hearing, etc.
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- 6 • **Game Suspensions and Terminations** – Two (2) team demerits will be assessed should
7 a referee terminate a match due to disciplinary problems. These team demerits are in
8 addition to any other team demerits awarded that may have led up to the game
9 termination. For example, a player on Team A receives a red card warranting a two
10 game suspension and the spectators storm the field. The referee then terminates the
11 match. At least four (4) team demerits will be awarded – two (2) for the player that
12 received the red card and two (2) for the game being suspended early because of
13 disciplinary problems.
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- 15 • **Non player (coach or spectator) is asked to leave the field by the official regardless
16 of whether a red card is shown** – At least two (2) team demerits are assessed to the
17 team each time a non player (coach or spectator) is asked to leave the field by a game
18 official regardless of whether a red card is shown. In addition, each person asked to
19 leave the field is also automatically suspended for at least that team's next two (2)
20 games.
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- 22 • **Failure to properly report red cards or coaches and spectators being asked to leave
23 the field** – A red card is considered properly reported by the team when the report is
24 received on time and includes the (1) player's name, (2) player's jersey number, (3)
25 nature of the infraction, and (4) recommended suspension period. A report on an
26 individual being asked to leave the field is considered properly reported when the
27 individual's name is provided. If a team does not properly report (1) a red card or (2) a
28 coach or spectator being asked to leave the field, then the team will be assessed
29 additional penalties. These penalties include (1) game forfeitures and (2) assessment of
30 at least three additional team demerits. The rules, which can be found on the web site
31 under SFL Documents, contain additional information including examples.
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- 33 • **Failure to serve a game suspension** – If an individual does not serve the required
34 suspension period for the offense, then an additional team demerit is awarded to the
35 player and the team.
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- 37 • **Teams Fighting** – If a fight breaks out, then each team will receive at least two (2) team
38 demerits even if no red cards are awarded. For example, a fight may break out after the
39 game and involve spectators, therefore, no red cards would normally be issued.
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41 **Question:** In looking at the rules, the examples appear to indicate that a team can end up being
42 suspended for the season for offenses where no red cards are shown and for offenses that do
43 not even involve the players. Is this correct and can the suspension be appealed?
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45 **Response:** Yes and the suspension cannot be appealed. The process of assessing team demerits is taken
46 very seriously by the SFL.

1 **Question:** The SFL sent out a notice saying that I am suspended for two games and cannot attend my
2 team's next two games. When I asked about this I was told that I had been told the leave the
3 field. First, a red card was never shown and the referee never told me to leave the field.
4 How did the SFL make this determination and how can it be appealed?
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6 **Response:** If the SFL receives a referee report saying an individual who is not a player was asked to
7 leave the field, then that individual is automatically suspended for at least two games and
8 two team demerits are assessed to the team. Referee decisions may not be appealed.
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10 **Question:** I was notified by the SFL that my team was assessed two team demerits because a referee
11 was harassed in the parking lot. I did not say anything to referee during or after the game
12 and I checked with the players and they also did not talk to the referee after the game, how
13 did the SFL make this decision and why is my team being penalized for actions taken by
14 others?
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16 **Response:** The assessment was made based on a referee report received by the SFL. It is up to the
17 coach and the team members to make sure that others understand that the team can be
18 penalized for actions taken by the parents and spectators.
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20 **Question:** As the SFL Club Representative, I received a request for red card information for one of my
21 teams and I thought that the coach would take care of it. The next thing that I know is my
22 team is penalized for not reporting a red card. Can I appeal this penalty and why did the
23 SFL not follow up with me before assessing the penalty?
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25 **Response:** This penalty cannot be appealed. Requests sent to the coach to provide the necessary red
26 card information are also the SFL Club Representative. In addition, the red card notification
27 also is sent to the SFL Club Representative. Accordingly, not receiving a red card
28 notification is a very good indication to the SFL Club Representative that the necessary
29 information has not been received. Some clubs also require their coaches to send the red
30 card information provided to the SFL to the SFL Club Representative so that the SFL Club
31 Representative has reasonable assurance that the proper information has been received in a
32 timely manner.
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34 **Question:** During my game I had the same lousy referee that I have had several times before. This
35 referee is incapable of making the correct calls and clearly favors the other team. When I
36 simply asked about a call, the referee told me to leave the field. What is the procedure for
37 (1) protesting the conduct of this referee so that this individual never officiates any more of
38 my games and (2) ensure that my team is not penalized by being assigned something called
39 a team demerit?
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41 **Response:** As noted in the rules, you may file a report on a referee to the home team's SFL Club
42 Representative using the standard Email address contained in your package. The SFL does
43 not have a protest mechanism for referee judgement calls. If the SFL receives a referee
44 report saying an individual was asked to leave the field, then (1) that individual must serve
45 at least a two game suspension and (2) the team is assessed at least two team demerits.
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