

Objectives and Products of Tournament
Scheduling and Ranking Review Group

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

During the Fall 2006 tournament, the majority of the tournament games scheduled for Sunday could not be played as scheduled because of the weather. The SFL, using the rules in effect for the Fall 2006 season, calculated the trophy awards for the tournament divisions that could not be played as scheduled. A number of complaints were received on the process used and the SFL was requested to form a group to review the tournament process. The Braddock Road SFL Club Representative agreed to chair this panel and the SFL Commissioners agreed that an independent review of the tournament process was desirable. The SFL Commissioners also agreed with a suggestion that the SFL should develop a document that explains (1) the rationale used to develop the Fall 2006 tournament process and (2) the alternatives that have been considered and the reasons for not adopting those alternatives. This document is commonly referred to as the Fall 2006 Tournament Methodology.

On December 2, 2006, the SFL Commissioners held a meeting to discuss (1) the structure and contents of the Fall 2006 Tournament Methodology, (2) any tournament rules changes that the SFL Commissioners believed necessary for the Spring 2007 season, (3) the structure and responsibilities of the Tournament Scheduling and Ranking Review Group (Review Group), (4) scope of the Review Group's activities, and (5) the expected product of the Review Group's efforts. The SFL Commissioners agreed on a final version of the Fall 2006 Tournament Methodology and proposed tournament rules for the Spring 2007 season on December 7, 2006.

STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TOURNAMENT SCHEDULING AND REVIEW GROUP

The SFL has always been governed by its member clubs. Accordingly, it was agreed by the SFL Commissioners that the Review Group should be structured as follows:

- **Review Group Chairperson** – It was agreed that the Braddock Road SFL Club Representative should be the initial Review Group Chairperson since that individual had offered to help organize this group. Once the Review Group is organized, the voting members should formally vote on a Chairperson.
- **Voting members** – Each club is allowed to send one voting member to participate in the group's activities. By default, this individual will be the SFL Club Representative unless the SFL Club Representative delegates this responsibility to someone else in writing the SFL.
- **Nonvoting members** – The SFL Club Representative may allow other individuals who the SFL Club Representative believes would add value to the process to

participate in the Review Group. However, a club may add no more than two nonvoting members.

- **SFL officials** – In order to ensure that the group can conduct an independent review of the tournament process, it was agreed that the SFL Commissioners and Administrator should not be voting members of the committee and only participate in group as requested by Review Group. For example, it is envisioned that the Review Group will request information from the Administrator and input from one or more SFL Commissioners. The Review Group Chairperson may ask the SFL officials to leave the meeting at any time.
- **Completion date** – It was agreed that the Review Group should complete its activities by January 31, 2007, and disband. This date was selected since the preseason packages are scheduled to be mailed on February 15, 2007, and the SFL Commissioners will need some time to (1) review the report and associated recommendations made by the Review Group and (2) incorporate any changes into the proposed rules for the Spring 2007 season. Although the Review Group will disband no later than January 31, 2007, the Chairperson of the group must be available during the Spring 2007 preseason meeting to discuss the Review Group's activities with the member clubs.

The SFL Commissioners also believe that the Review Group's activities should represent at least 10 percent of the clubs. Accordingly, the Review Group must have at least 3 clubs actively participate in the Review Group as voting members and a majority of at least 3 voting members must agree with the Review Group's conclusions and recommendations.

SCOPE

Although the initial reason for the Review Group were the concerns expressed on how the tournament trophies were awarded during the Fall 2006 tournament, the SFL Commissioners did not believe that an adequate review of the tournament ranking process could be made unless the entire tournament scheduling and ranking process were reviewed for the following reasons.

- A number of factors can and did affect a team's ultimate ranking. For example, simply looking at the formula used to rank teams may not consider the adequacy of the process that resulted in the factors used in the formula.
- The SFL needs a formalized process that can be used for a number of different situations. For example, this is the first season that the Saturday games were totally played while the Sunday games were cancelled. In prior seasons, the Saturday games have been cancelled while Sunday games have been played. Accordingly, since a great deal of effort is being expended to review the tournament scheduling and ranking process, the entire process should be reviewed to reduce future problems.

The following items were identified by the SFL Commissioners as items that needed to be included in the Review Group's efforts:

- **Assigning game and bonus points to game results** – Game points and bonus points are key factors used in the current process to rank teams.
- **Assessment of forfeits** – The methodology used for assessing forfeits and using those forfeits in the ranking process is a key factor in determining a team's competitive abilities.
- **Rescheduling regular season games** – The process used for rescheduling regular season games directly impacts (1) the determination on whether the tournament should be held, (2) the number of games that a team plays, and (3) depending on what happens during the regular season rescheduling process, whether a team is assessed a forfeit.
- **Deciding on when a tournament should be scheduled** – The end of season tournament is not a traditional tournament at all. Rather, it is an opportunity to play games against teams with similar records. Accordingly, when a large number of games cannot be played, then it is difficult to determine the competitive abilities of a given team.
- **Preparing the initial tournament schedules** – The process used to prepare the initial tournament schedules directly affects (1) the teams in a given tournament division and (2) the number of regular season games with known results when the those divisions are created.
- **Rescheduling tournament games when the tournament games cannot be played due to weather or some other reason** – In reality, tournament games can only be rescheduled when Saturday games are cancelled and Sunday times are available. Since adequate game slots are not available to play all the tournament games, a shortened tournament format was contained in the Fall 2006 rules which ends up eliminating some teams from tournament play.
- **Determining tournament division standings when tournament games are played as expected** – Even when tournament games are played as expected, a process is needed to rank teams that play in the round robin format.
- **Determining tournament division standings when tournament games are not completed as expected** – When a tournament division cannot play its games as expected, a process is needed to award trophies if trophies are to be awarded in such situations.

- **Determining whether the proposed rules adopted by the SFL Commissioners adequately address the concerns expressed on how the SFL handles the tournament when one or more tournament games are cancelled due to weather or other reasons in a tournament division.** In the December 2, 2006, meeting, the SFL Commissioners had a discussion on what changes, if any, were needed to the current tournament rules and a number of options were discussed. Several of the SFL Commissioners present had also been SFL Commissioners or SFL Club Representatives during prior seasons when the tournament has not been played as scheduled. Based on this discussion, it was agreed that the primary complaint that has been received relates to the awarding of trophies and how teams are eliminated when games cannot be played as scheduled. Accordingly, the SFL Commissioners has developed a proposed rule change to address these concerns.

Although these items were identified by the SFL Commissioners as items that needed to be included in the review conducted by the Review Group, it is free to include a review of any other rules that the Review Group believes may impact the tournament scheduling and ranking process.

PRODUCTS

The Review Group is expected to produce a report that (1) summarizes its observations on the tournament methodology that was used in the Fall 2006 season, (2) provide comments on the proposed rules for the Spring 2007 season to address tournament scheduling issues that were developed by the SFL Commissioners, and (3) provides any recommendations that the Review Group believes should be implemented to improve the tournament scheduling and ranking process that are not included in the proposed rules. Any recommendations made by the Review Group should also contain the specific information needed to implement that recommendation including (1) recommended wording that should be used in the rules and (2) the material needed to change the methodology document. For example, the rational for the change being proposed and the reasons why the proposed SFL changes were not considered a viable alternative.