Suburban Friendship League
Proposed Rule and Process Changes for the Fall 2105 Season
(July 30, 2015)

Note: Minor editorial changes are not shown.

No significant changes were made to the rules. A formal process was developed to accept new clubs into the SFL. This document can be found on the SFL Documents page.

We also received several comments on the rules and processes. Although no changes were made to the proposed rules and processes, these items will be discussed at the preseason meeting to determine whether any of the proposed changes should be adopted. The following are the suggestions received and some comments relating to them.

- **Club Team Registration Spreadsheet** – Change the order of columns so that the team contact's information (address/phone/e-mail) is at the end of the of the spread sheet since it is frustrating to hide and unhide the columns.

  Comments

  This change can be made. However, making this change may be confusing since for those individuals that are not team contacts, e.g., Club Representatives, Referee Coordinators, etc. that do not have team information associated with them, a number of blank columns will be present. Accordingly, the person filling out the spread sheet may have the same problem and not provide the necessary information since it so far away from the name. In the past, we had two forms and that caused problems so we went to one form.

- **Create SFL Team IDs So That Teams Can Be Tracked Season by Season** – Currently the SFL uses the team contact name to link the same teams between seasons which is not ideal. A simple solution would be to use an intelligent numbering system that includes the club, the year when the team first joined the SFL, and a sequence number starting at the first team registered. For example, BR15001 would be assigned to a new Braddock Road team for 2015 and BR15002 would be assigned to the second new Braddock Road team, etc. This format is what WAGS uses.

  Comments

  We are unsure of the benefits that this change would provide. The current system provides data for the last three seasons and if an individual wants to track a team through those seasons they can do so by (1) going to the Age Group Information page, (2) selecting the applicable age group in the Team Information section, (3) select the season desired from the drop down menu, and (4) click on the applicable team name next to a

team contact's name to see their schedule. Even if the proposed solution was adopted, an individual would have to (1) go to the Age Group Information page , (2) select the applicable age group in the Individual Team Schedules With Field Directions , (3) select the applicable team, and (4) select the season from the drop down menu. In effect, the same number of steps would be required.

The proposed approach would partially help if all a person wanted to do was see the standings since changing the season in the drop down list would automatically display the teams in a standard format. For example, if RS15007 were shown on the standings page, then the user could assume that it was the same team if it were shown for other seasons when those seasons were selected from the pull down menu. This assumes that (1) the club used the same team name when the team was registered in the other seasons and (2) the team did not change age groups in the 3 seasons covered. Accordingly, it is important to note that under either system, when a team changes age groups, that although the traceability would be maintained, a "consolidated view" of that team would not be maintained. For example, assume a team moved from the Under 13 Girls age group to the Under 14 Girls age group between the Spring and Fall seasons. The data associated with the team when it was an Under 13 Girls team would be on a different set of web pages than when it was an Under 14 Girls team. Developing web pages that keyed on the standard team name would be very expensive to implement.

The current process provides a method for the clubs to maintain traceability of the teams between seasons during the registration process when (1) teams are moved up an age group and (2) the standard team name is changed by the SFL. Specifically, a spread sheet is provided to the clubs during the registration process that shows the team name used in the upcoming season and the team name that was used in the past season if the same standard team name was not used. For example, if the team was called McLean 1 last season and the registration file shows this team as McLean 5 for the upcoming season, the spread sheet would show that last season the team was called McLean 1. In addition, this spread sheet clearly shows the age group and division changes by highlighting those changes on the spread sheet. This spread sheet also shows the team ranking information that was used in making the division assignment decisions. The clubs are also free to change the team names. For example, if the SFL assigned Northern Virginia 1 to a team contact and the club wanted that team to be called Northern Virginia 5, all they need to do is make the change on club and team registration file, i.e., the SFL does not mandate that a club must use its change.

The following are some other operational issues that this change would entail.

▸ Criteria would need to be developed on what constitutes a new team, e.g., the percentage of players that may change between seasons before it is considered a new team, whether a team contact change when most of the players do not change constitutes a new team, etc. It would be up to the clubs to use the proper standard

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team ID and effectively implement the criteria that has been developed when assigning those numbers to a given team.

- ▸ The data base and web site can accommodate this change without significant modifications although the web page display of games, standings, etc. would change significantly. For example, rather than showing an Under 16 game between Herndon 3 and Annandale 5, it may show the game is between HN15001 and AN12005. Although these teams would be in the same age group, some confusion may exist on why a team with a "12" in its name is playing a team with a "15" in it.

- ▸ The effectiveness of this system would depend on the ability of the clubs to effectively implement the criteria adopted. Some clubs may have difficulty in being able to implement the criteria since when a team is registered, they may not have adequate player information to know whether a team should be assigned a new number assuming the criteria includes the number of player changes. Furthermore, if the criteria includes a change in team contact information, then the clubs may not know the actual team contact when a team is registered. Accordingly, since they do not know if a team should be considered a "new team", they may opt to simply assign it a new number which defeats the primary purpose of this proposed change.

- **Team Contact Email Addresses** – Travel soccer publishes team contact Email addresses by default. As a coach, having an Email address is very nice. The policy should be changed to set the default to PUBLISH but allow HIDE as an option which is opposite of the current policy.

Comments

The current Email policy is commonly referred to as an "opt in" policy where an individual specifically agrees to have their Email address(es) published. The SFL Club Representative is responsible for making sure that the team contact wants his/her Email published. The proposed change is commonly considered an "opt out" policy. As noted in the proposal, adopting this change would affect several documents since it is a change in SFL policy.

The SFL currently has a process that can be used to reach a team contact by Email when (1) the Email address is not published, (2) the published Email address is invalid, or (3) the team contact does not respond to an Email that has been sent to them. Specifically, if an individual needs to reach a team by Email and the team contact's Email does not exist, is invalid, etc., the individual can reach the team contact though the applicable SFL Club Representative. The Email addresses for the SFL Club Representatives are published in the season package which is sent to all team contacts. We have the following concerns with adopting an "opt out" policy.

- ▸ We are unsure of the reason(s) that a large number of Email addresses for team contacts are not shown. In some cases it appears that the club may not have contacted their teams and asked them whether they wanted their team contact Email address(es) published. In other cases, we know based on SFL Club Representative comments, that the team contact did not want his/her Email address published while in other cases, the team contact never responded to the SFL Club Representative's request.

- ▸ Due to the way that our registration and scheduling processes works, it is very difficult to implement an "opt out" policy. For example, we currently allow the clubs to update the team contact information, including Email addresses, until "the last minute", i.e., just before they are sent to the printer. Once they are printed, a person can no longer "opt out". Accordingly, what the SFL would have to do is notify all the team contacts that their Email address(es) would be published unless they opted out by a given date. Since these individuals would need an adequate amount of time to respond, in effect, the SFL would have to start this process much earlier, e.g., a week before we plan to send the package to the published. This would be happening when we are trying to finalize the schedules and team contact information. One problem is that the SFL would have to handle the Emails for over 500 teams – at least 1,000 Emails since one would be required to notify the team contact and at least one other Email for the reply since experience has shown that people will respond even when they are told that they do not. In addition, if an Email address was invalid, then the SFL and SFL Club Representative would have to exchange Emails to attempt to obtain the correct information. Furthermore, we would need a process to detect when the team contact information changed after the "Email opt out" had been received and then eliminate those changes from the "publish" list when the clubs desired to update their team information. It has been our experience that clubs do not always use the club and team information we provide them as a starting point for making subsequent changes since errors that we correct on a prior submission appear on the subsequent submission. This is a significant addition to the workload the SFL performs during a critical part of the season for developing schedules and finalizing team contact information.

- ▸ While the current process is far from perfect, it is an attempt to balance an individual's privacy while allowing the club maximum flexibility to control the distribution of the Email addresses associated with their teams. Experience has shown that (1) some clubs like to wait until the last minute to finalize the team contact information and (2) some individuals may have one Email address that they use for publication and another Email address they use for SFL and Club purposes.

- **SFL Rosters For Referees** – Coaches know to exchange rosters. However most coaches do not realize that they should give a roster to referee and most do not have a spare for the referee. Since referees do not want to force a forfeit, the rules should be changed to

REQUIRE rosters to be given to referees. If this is done, referees will start asking for them which will help with reporting cards correctly.

Comments

Referees are not required to declare a forfeit when a SFL Team Roster is available for the other team but not the referee. Implementing the proposed rule could be interpreted by the referee to require the referee to declare a forfeit if this condition existed which would appear to be the opposite of the intent of the proposed rule. We agree that this proposal may help in the reporting of the cards.

We have left the decision on whether the referee should request a copy of the roster to the clubs. A few clubs require this while most do not. The current rules and other SFL documents discuss this subject at length so we are unsure what making this a formal requirement would achieve except to generate more forfeits. The following are examples of where this subject is discussed.

- ▸ **Season Letter** – "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. 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."

- ▸ **Procedures and Processes – SFL Team Rosters** – "The referee may also request a copy of each team's SFL Team Roster. If either team does not have the SFL Team Roster available when requested by the referee, then the referee may declare a forfeit with the team not having the SFL Team Roster being assessed the forfeit. If both teams do not have SFL Team Rosters, then both teams will be assessed a forfeit. If a forfeit is awarded by the referee because of a roster problem, then the teams should leave the field. In other words, the teams should not use the game as a scrimmage."

- ▸ **Referee Guide** – "Coaches are required to exchange paper copies of the SFL Team Roster prior to the start of each game. The referee may also request each coach to provide a paper copy of the SFL Team Roster. The only acceptable roster form is the SFL Team Roster generated by the SFL."

All three of the documents are available on the web site with the first two included in the season package that is mailed to all the team contacts. The Referee Guide is also Emailed to the SFL Club Reps. and referee coordinators each season.

- **Sideline Placement of Teams** – Implement a rule where the home team has first choice of which side of the field its spectators, coaches, and players occupy. Opposing team and spectators will NOT occupy the same side of the field, unless field layout prohibits use of both sides.

  Comments

  This issue has been discussed at several meetings and the SFL Club Representatives have consistently voted to allow this to be club decision. This issue will be brought up again at the preseason meeting for another vote. The season letter contains the following information on this subject.

  "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."

- **Location of Players and Parents on Sidelines** – All coaches and players must remain one yard off the sideline and between the penalty boxes during the game. All spectators must remain two yards off the sideline and between the penalty boxes during the game. No one is allowed behind the goal line or past the forward edge of the penalty box during the game.

  Comments

  This should already be enforced by the game officials. We will consider adding this to the referee guide the next time it is updated.

- **Water Breaks** – The referee should be allowed to add an extra water break in the middle of each half for high heat. I believe there is a FIFA rule on this because it was allowed in the World Cup. This was activated in our last All Star Tournament since the temperature was in the 90's. The referee said the rule is that the players must stay on the field (cannot exit...consider a substitution)...but allowed to be handed water.

Comments

We do not have any rule that prohibits this and this subject is already covered in the
Wayne Gilbert Memorial Tournament Guide for Referees. This guide is sent to the Club
Referee Coordinators before the start of the tournament and is available on our web site
on the SFL Documents page.