

1
2 *Suburban Friendship League*
3 Discussion Topics for Rule and Process Changes for the Fall 2017 Season
4 (as of July 15, 2017)

5 **OVERVIEW**

6
7 We received a number of proposed changes this season to the various procedures and process
8 documents, rules, and web site. On July 8, 2017, the SFL Commissioner met to discuss these
9 issues. Based on this meeting, the SFL Commissioners reached consensus and are
10 recommending approval on all the proposals. Consistent with past practice, a final decision on
11 all the proposed changes will be made at the Fall 2017 preseason meeting.

12
13 The proposals received affect the following.

- 14
15 • Limitations on players being allowed to play up
16
17 • Definition of an altered SFL Team Roster
18
19 • Sharing of players
20
21 • Game format
22
23 • Substitutions
24
25 • Discipline
26
27 • Roster challenges

28
29 This document is broken down into two sections. The first section summarizes the proposal
30 received and whether the proposal is recommended for adoption. If the proposal is recommended
31 for adoption, then it summarizes the proposed change. The second section describes each
32 proposal in detail and provides the rational used when deciding the proposed course of action on
33 a given proposal.
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Issue/Proposal	Summary of Recommended Change
<p data-bbox="203 268 795 514">Rule Changes</p> <p data-bbox="203 331 795 514">Issues related to players being allowed to play up one or more age groups. About one percent of the players play up two or more SFL age groups. Examples of playing up one SFL age group include.</p> <ul data-bbox="203 556 795 745" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="203 556 795 630">• U10s could play on U11 teams but not on U12 teams. <li data-bbox="203 661 795 745">• U14s could play on U16 teams but not on U19 teams. 	<p data-bbox="820 331 1412 478">Allow players to play up more than one age group when (1) the club’s Board/Executive Director approve request and (2) waiver is granted by appropriate SFL Commissioner.</p>
<p data-bbox="203 808 795 1176">Definition of an altered SFL Team Roster. The rules say that (1) substitute roster forms are not allowed and (2) altered rosters result in a forfeit. However, the rules are silent on whether this means the “form” or just the player data, i.e., the question is whether the form’s watermark and fonts have to be same as long the player data is the same and the form is basically the same or should a forfeit be assessed.</p>	<p data-bbox="820 808 1404 913">Form must be identical to what the SFL provides, e.g., fonts, watermarks, data, etc. must be the same.</p>
<p data-bbox="203 1207 795 1606">Sharing of players has evolved over time. The SFL is routinely receiving requests to for teams to share players between age groups, e.g., Under 13 age players on a Under 14 team be allowed to play on an Under 13 team. In addition, the tournament rosters for these teams have a very large number of players which places their opponents at a disadvantage and may not even allow the players to play 50 percent of the game as required by the SFL rules.</p>	<p data-bbox="820 1207 1404 1354">The recommendation is to leave the sharing of players rules basically unchanged except for the number of players allowed on a tournament roster.</p> <ul data-bbox="820 1386 1404 1585" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="820 1386 1404 1459">• Under 11/12 teams – Maximum size is 14 players. <li data-bbox="820 1501 1404 1585">• Under 13/19 teams – Maximum size is 16 players.

Issue/Proposal	Summary of Recommended Change
<p>1 In the Fall 2017 season the game format 2 changes from 8 v 8 to 9 v 9. The current rules 3 specify the current 8 v 8 format.</p>	<p>Until the rules are moved into the proposed format of following US Soccer, US Youth Soccer, and VYSA guidelines, a transition section is proposed that is consistent with the new approach – the Laws of the Game as defined by US Soccer, US Youth Soccer, and VYSA define the minimum and maximum team size that is appropriate for a given age group, e.g., 11 v 11 is the maximum team size for the Under 19s.</p>
<p>4 The SFL rules should be modified to also 5 allow substitutions during water breaks in 6 accordance with current practice.</p>	<p>Until the rules are moved into the proposed format of following US Soccer and US Youth Soccer, a transition section is proposed that is consistent with the new approach – substitutions may be made in accordance with the current Laws of the Game as defined by US Soccer, US Youth Soccer, and VYSA .</p>
<p>7 Slight change needed to definition of fighting 8 to make it more consistent with how the SFL 9 actually defines fighting and expand section 10 on how reports of racial slurs are handled.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wording changed to eliminate the requirement that the event happens after the whistle to stating that the action is outside of the ordinary play of the game. • Racial slurs are covered in current rules. A discussion section is added to state that referee reports are required when this happens and this is the primary means used to assess the penalty.
<p>11 The SFL needs to better define when it will 12 enforce game suspensions for racial slurs.</p>	<p>Added a discussion section that incorporates the information in the Email that was sent out earlier about this issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFL has a zero tolerance policy for using racial slurs. • Clubs are requested to (1) have the game officials include cases of racial slurs in their game reports and (2) automatically forward these reports to the SFL.

Issue/Proposal	Summary of Recommended Change
<p>1 The SFL is receiving an increasing number of 2 complaints asking that the SFL take actions 3 that are well outside its scope of operations.</p>	<p>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 through more appropriate means such as referring the matter to VYSA and/or the appropriate law enforcement agency.</p>
<p>4 SFL Team Rosters</p>	
<p>5 Current rules are unclear on (1) how long 6 players arriving after the game has started are 7 still allowed to play and (2) when roster 8 checks are required to be performed on 9 players arriving after a tournament game has 10 started.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tournament Referee Guide modified to discuss how late arriving players are handled. • Players arriving after halftime that have roster issues, e.g., uniform numbers that do not match the SFL Team Roster, player's stated birth date does not agree with roster, etc. are not allowed to play since the opposing coach has no ability to waive the issues.

11 **LIMITATIONS ON PLAYERS BEING ALLOWED TO PLAY UP**

12 **Section II.C.**

13 **Current Wording**

14 A player must meet the USSF birth date requirements for their age group.

- 15
- 16 1. The club may allow a player to play in an age group older than the player (commonly referred to as playing up) but cannot play in a younger age group (playing down). It is up to the club to assign players to teams in accordance with the SFL policy and guidelines for age groups and divisions. These guidelines can be found at our web site (www.sflsoccer.org) under SFL Documents. If a club needs to assign a player to a team that would result in not complying with the applicable SFL policies, then the SFL Club Representative should request a waiver BEFORE the season begins. The approval of this request will be shown on the SFL Team Roster. Until the SFL Team Roster shows this approval, the coach should not use the player.

1 a. A club may request that a medical waiver from the appropriate SFL Age Group
2 Commissioner to allow a player to play in an age group younger than the player's
3 age (commonly referred to as playing down) for medical reasons.
4

5 (1) Requests for play down waivers are only granted for medical reasons and the
6 SFL Club Representative must provide the following information:
7

8 (a) Signed statement from the club's board of directors that they have
9 reviewed the application and believe that the player should be allowed to
10 play down for medical reasons. The individual signing this determination
11 for the board must (1) be a Board Member and (2) someone other than the
12 SFL Club Representative or a coach in the SFL.
13

14 (b) Signed statement from a doctor explaining the medical condition that
15 requires the player to play down.
16

17 (2) If the request is granted, the waiver shall state that the waiver is a medical
18 waiver but not provide the reason the medical waiver was granted.
19

20 (3) Clubs must submit a request each season for medical waivers even if a request
21 has been approved in the prior season. This request must include a new
22 determination by the applicable club's board that the player should be granted
23 a medical waiver.
24

25 (4) All requests for medical waivers must be submitted prior to March 31 for the
26 spring season and August 31 for the fall season.
27

28 **Issue/Proposal** – The SFL has generally allowed the clubs to make a decision on whether a
29 player should be allowed to “play up” and not create undue risk for the player. However, last
30 season several cases were identified where the clubs were allowing a significant jump in age
31 groups. Examples include Under 13 players being allowed to play on Under 16 teams and
32 Under 8 players being allowed to play on Under 11/12 teams. When the SFL questioned this
33 policy, the clubs generally responded that the SFL did not place a limitation on the number of
34 years a player could “play up” and the parents and coaches were comfortable with these
35 cases. A recommendation was made for the SFL to formalize any limitations on players
36 playing up.
37

38 **Comments** – It has been a common practice for club to allow players to play up one SFL age
39 group so that teams have enough players. The following table shows how many players
40 played up during the Spring 2017 season.
41

Age Group	Correct Age Group	Playing Up One Age Group	Playing Up Two or More Age Groups
Under 11	726	51	4
Under 12	704	116	12
Under 13	1,285	205	14
Under 14	1,411	605	33
Under 16	1,976	284	20
Under 19	1,597	234	10
Total	7,699	1,495	93

As shown above, about 1 percent of the players were playing up two or more age groups.

Proposed Change

Clubs are allowed to continue to “self certify” players that are playing up one age group and disallowing players from participating on SFL teams whose proper age group is two or more years younger than the team’s age group unless a waiver is obtained from the appropriate SFL Commissioner. The request for this waiver must include a signed statement from the club’s Board/Executive Director that such a waiver should be granted.

C. A player must meet the USSF birth date requirements for their age group.

1. The SFL encourages the clubs to only assign players whose birth dates comply with their team’s age group, e.g., U11 age players are assigned to U11 teams, U15/16 age players are assigned to U16 teams, etc. If a club needs to assign a player to a team that would result in not complying with the applicable SFL policies, then the SFL Club Representative should request a waiver BEFORE the season begins. The approval of this request will be shown on the SFL Team Roster. Until the SFL Team Roster shows this approval, the coach should not use the player.
 - a. The club may allow a player to participate on a team in an age group older than the player (commonly referred to as playing up) when the player’s age group is one year younger than the team’s age group without having to request a waiver from the SFL, e.g., the club may decide to assign U11 age players to U12 teams, U14 age players to U16 teams, etc.

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

10
11 (a) If a club has more than one player, then all the players may be submitted
12 on one list. For example, assume that the club is requesting waivers for 3
13 players that are playing on U11, U14, and U19 teams. All 3 players can be
14 shown on one waiver request.

15
16 (2) Clubs must submit a request each season for age waivers even if a request has
17 been approved in the prior season. The submission requirements are the same
18 as if a request has never been submitted in a prior season.

19
20 (3) All requests for age waivers must be submitted prior to March 31 for the
21 spring season and August 31 for the fall season.

22
23 b. Players cannot play in a younger age group (playing down) unless a medical
24 waiver has been obtained from the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner.

25
26 (1) Requests for play down waivers are only granted for medical reasons and the
27 SFL Club Representative must provide the following information:

28
29 (a) Signed statement from the club's Board of Directors/Executive Director
30 that they have reviewed the application and believe that the player should
31 be allowed to play down for medical reasons. The individual signing this
32 determination must (1) be a Board Member/Executive Director and (2)
33 someone other than the SFL Club Representative or a coach in the SFL.

34
35 (b) Signed statement from a doctor explaining the medical condition that
36 requires the player to play down.

37
38 (2) If the request is granted, the waiver shall state that the waiver is a medical
39 waiver but not provide the reason the medical waiver was granted.

40
41 (3) Clubs must submit a request each season for medical waivers even if a request
42 has been approved in the prior season. This request must include a new

1 determination by the applicable club's board that the player should be granted
2 a medical waiver.

- 3
4 (4) All requests for medical waivers must be submitted prior to March 31 for the
5 spring season and August 31 for the fall season.
6

7 **Section II.E.2.a.**

8
9 **Current Wording**

- 10
11 a. The SFL Team Roster produced by the SFL is the only acceptable form that may be used.
12 Modifications to the names, birth dates, and SFL provided comments may not be made to
13 the SFL Team Roster by either the coach or the club. For example, names may not be
14 added or changed, birth dates added or changed, and SFL comments relating to a player
15 or team may not be changed or deleted. All such changes are made by the SFL using the
16 Master Player Roster process and a new SFL Team Roster is provided to the club for
17 distribution to the coach. The SFL expects the club and the coach to take the necessary
18 steps to provide accurate uniform numbers on the Master Player Roster and that the
19 uniform numbers worn by the players agree with the SFL Team roster unless a color clash
20 between two teams exists. The Process and Procedures – SFL Team Rosters document
21 discusses exceptions to this rule and the process that is used when a color clash exists.
22 Unauthorized modifications to the SFL Team Roster may result in game forfeitures and
23 team elimination from SFL competition.
24

25 **Issue/Proposal**

26
27 Questions have been raised on what constitutes an altered roster. For example, if the form
28 does not bear all the markings, such as the watermark or fonts, that is contained on form
29 issued by the SFL but essentially looks like the SFL Roster and contains the proper player
30 information, should this be considered an altered roster? The current rules have conflicting
31 requirements. For example, substitute forms are not allowed for the SFL Team Roster while
32 the above section does not specifically state that the form must be identical to that generated
33 by SFL. Rather, it discusses the data on the form. The rules should be modified to clearly
34 define what constitutes an altered roster.
35

36 **Comments**

37
38 The SFL has seen several cases where the SFL form did not appear to be used. The following
39 are examples of SFL Team Roster issues.
40

- 41 • The presented form did not contain the watermark generated on SFL Team Rosters
42 generated by the SFL while the player data was correct.
43

- 1 • The presented form did not contain the same fonts as those used on the SFL Team
2 Rosters generated by the SFL but did contain the watermark.
- 3
- 4 • Although the form appeared to be consistent with that generated by the SFL, e.g., font and
5 watermark were consistent, the player data contained one of more errors.
6

7 While the rules clearly address the situations where the player data (name, uniform number,
8 and birth date) have been changed and where the SFL comments have been changed, the
9 requirement over the form “presentation” is unclear.

10 **Proposed Change**

- 11
- 12
- 13 a. The SFL Team Roster produced by the SFL is the only acceptable form that may be used.
14 Modifications to the names, birth dates, SFL provided comments, and SFL form
15 presentation, e.g., fonts, watermark, etc. may not be made to the SFL Team Roster by
16 either the coach or the club. For example, names may not be added or changed, birth
17 dates added or changed, and SFL comments relating to a player or team may not changed
18 or deleted. All such changes are made by the SFL using the Master Player Roster process
19 and a new SFL Team Roster is provided to the club for distribution to the coach. The
20 SFL expects the club and the coach to take the necessary steps to provide accurate
21 uniform numbers on the Master Player Roster and that the uniform numbers worn by the
22 players agree with the SFL Team roster unless a color clash between two teams exists.
23 The Process and Procedures – SFL Team Rosters document discusses exceptions to this
24 rule and the process that is used when a color clash exists. Unauthorized modifications to
25 the SFL Team Roster form or content may result in game forfeitures and team elimination
26 from SFL competition.
27

- 28 (1) The SFL distributes the SFL Team Rosters in the Portable Document Format (PDF).
29 Should the reproduction of the document, i.e., printing, result in the lost of form data
30 or a change to the form, e.g., the watermark is lost, fonts changed, etc., then the SFL
31 must be notified immediately.
32

33 **Note:** The Procedures and Processes – SFL Team Rosters document will also be modified to
34 contain the same language used in rules since it contains the same wording as the
35 rules.
36

37 **SHARING OF PLAYERS**

38

39 Over the years, the sharing of players has become more complicated and we have received
40 complaints about its implementation. Examples of some of the issues raised include the
41 following.
42

- 1 • Originally when the sharing of players was authorized, it was only between teams within
2 the same age group. However, in the past few seasons we have received requests to share
3 players between age groups, e.g., U13 age players assigned to U14 teams being allowed
4 to also play on U13 teams.
5
- 6 • When one of the teams approved to share players cannot participate in the tournament,
7 then a “tournament roster” can be generated which allows the players to participate in the
8 tournament. For example, we have seen “tournament rosters” of well over 22 players for
9 U13 and above teams and 16 players for U11/12 teams. Assuming that a substantial
10 number of players come to the game, the SFL requirement of each player participating at
11 least 50 percent of the game cannot be met.
12
- 13 • Minimum team sizes are specified in the rules before a request to share players can be
14 made. In the past, the normal practice as to “even out” the players between teams, e.g., if
15 the two teams had 28 players, then each team would have 14 players. However, we have
16 seen cases where this has not happened.
17

18 **Section III.A.2.b.**

19 **Current Wording**

- 20
- 21
- 22 b. When the SFL approves a request to share players, the SFL Team Roster will show (1)
- 23 when a team is authorized to “share players”, (2) the team rosters that are authorized to be
- 24 used when sharing players, e.g., Team 1 and Team 5 – Under 14 Girls, and any
- 25 limitations or other comments, e.g., only being allowed to share players during the regular
- 26 season games.
27

28 **Issue/Proposal**

29

30 Some clubs that desire to share players have raised questions on what is considered the

31 minimum roster size of a given team. Normally, when this was approved, the club “split” the

32 players between the two teams. Recently, one club wanted to place most of the players on

33 one team which resulted in the other team having less players shown on it than are required to

34 field a team. In this case, the roster would have shown 6 players when a minimum of 7

35 players is required to field a team.
36

37 **Comments**

38

39 Scheduling practices, such as scheduling both teams for Sunday games as required by the

40 rules in some cases, reduces the possibility of game conflicts which allows all the players

41 from both teams may be available to play a given game. However, in practice this may not be

42 the case. For example, some other teams may also play Sunday games and the two teams

43 allowed to share players may end up have one Sunday game at home and the other team

1 having a Sunday game away. Accordingly, each team should be able to show enough players
2 on its roster to play independently. This has happened in the past and is especially possible
3 should game cancellations occur and games get rescheduled
4

5 **Proposed Change**

6
7 The following is the proposed change.
8

- 9 b. When the SFL approves a request to share players, the SFL Team Roster will show (1)
10 when a team is authorized to “share players”, (2) the team rosters that are authorized to be
11 used when sharing players, e.g., Team 1 and Team 5 – Under 14 Girls, and any
12 limitations or other comments, e.g., only being allowed to share players during the regular
13 season games.
14
- 15 1. The minimum number of players that are assigned to a team must be consistent with
16 section above on the minimum number of players that must be on a team before the
17 sharing of players is authorized, i.e., eleven (11) for U11/12 teams and fourteen (14)
18 for U13/19.
19

20 **Section II.B.2.a.(1)**

21
22 **Current Wording**

- 23
24 (1) Only players on the teams that are allowed to share players during the regular season may
25 be merged onto a single team without the express written permission of the appropriate
26 SFL Age Group Commissioner.
27

28 **Example 1**

29
30 Teams A and B are allowed to share players during the regular season and Team A
31 decides that it cannot play in the tournament. Players from Team A may be added to
32 Team B's tournament roster. However, players from Team A may not be added to any
33 other team's roster without express written permission from the appropriate SFL Age
34 Group Commissioner.
35

36 **Example 2**

37
38 Teams A and B are allowed to share players during the regular season and Team C
39 decides that it cannot play in the tournament. Players from Team C MAY NOT be added
40 to either Team A's or Team B's tournament roster without express written permission
41 from the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner.
42

1 **Issue/Proposal**
2

3 In recent seasons, tournament rosters have been requested by club that essentially combine
4 the players from both teams on the tournament roster. This has resulted in usually large
5 rosters, e.g., 28 players on an U13 and above teams. The SFL has received complaints that
6 this (1) provides an unfair advantage when the opposing team may only have 3 or 4
7 substitutions available and (2) when the roster size is greater than twice the size of the
8 allowable players, if even a substantial number of those players show up, then the team
9 cannot meet the SFL rule that requires each player in good standing to play at least 50 percent
10 of the time. The proposals received basically focused on limiting the size of the combined
11 roster.

12
13 **Comments**

14
15 The issues raised appear to be valid concerns since they have been raised over a number of
16 seasons.

17
18 **Proposed Change**

19
20 (1) Only players on the teams that are allowed to share players during the regular season may
21 be merged onto a single team without the express written permission of the appropriate
22 SFL Age Group Commissioner. The size of the combined roster may not exceed fourteen
23 (14) players for the U11/12 age groups and sixteen (16) players for the U13/19 age
24 groups.

25
26 **Example 1**

27
28 Teams A and B are allowed to share players during the regular season and Team A
29 decides that it cannot play in the tournament. Players from Team A may be added to
30 Team B's tournament roster as long as the tournament roster does not exceed 14 players
31 if the team is in the U11/12 age groups or 16 players if the team is in the U13/19 age
32 groups. However, players from Team A may not be added to any other team's roster
33 without express written permission from the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner.

34
35 **Example 2**

36
37 Teams A and B are allowed to share players during the regular season and Team C
38 decides that it cannot play in the tournament. Players from Team C MAY NOT be added
39 to either Team A's or Team B's tournament roster without express written permission
40 from the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner.
41

1 **Section IV.G.**

2
3 **Current Wording**

4
5 G. Team Size

- 6
7 1. **Minimum** – Team must field a minimum of seven (7) players at game time when
8 the game is being played using an 11 v 11 format. If the game format is 8 v 8,
9 then a team must field at least 5 players.
10
11 2. **Maximum** – Although there is no maximum, the SFL suggests that no more than
12 eighteen players be assigned to one team when that team normally uses 11 players
13 for a game (11 v 11) and 12 players when the team normally uses 8 players for a
14 game (8 v 8). This is because of the fifty percent playing time rule (section IV.C.)
15

16 **Comments**

17
18 The SFL is currently reviewing the structure of its rules and process and procedures
19 document. It is expected that the revised version will more closely align to the Laws of the
20 Game by reference rather than repeat the current requirement and then depend on updating
21 any changes.
22

23 **Proposed Change**

24
25 Until the rules are moved into the proposed format, a transition section is proposed that is
26 consistent with the new approach. The following is the proposed text.
27

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

35 **Section IV.F.**

36
37 **Current Wording**

- 38
39 F. Substitutions – Substitutions may be made with the consent of the referee, at the
40 following times:
41

1. Prior to a throw-in when the ball is in possession of the team substituting. The opposing team may substitute as well if the team in possession is making a substitution.
2. Goal kick by either team.
3. After a goal by either team and prior to the succeeding kick-off.
4. During the half-time interval.
5. After an injury(the injured player may be replaced and the opposing team may also substitute one player).
6. After a caution has been issued, at the request of the player's coach, for the cautioned player.
7. As recommended in US Soccer's concussion guidance, players who may have suffered a concussion during games may be substituted for evaluation without penalty.

Issue/Proposal

Consider allowing substitutions to be made during stoppages for water breaks, regardless of the restart. We are doing this already in accordance with US Soccer guidance.

Comments

The SFL is currently reviewing the structure of its rules and process and procedures document. It is expected that the revised version will more closely align to the Laws of the Game by reference rather than repeat the current requirement and then depend on updating any changes.

Proposed Change

Until the rules are moved into the proposed format, a transition section is proposed that is consistent with the new approach. The following is the proposed text.

- F. **Substitutions** – Substitutions may be made in accordance with the current Laws of the Game as defined by US Soccer, US Youth Soccer, and VYSA. **Note:** US Youth Soccer currently allows substitutions during any stoppage in play.

Section IX.C.1.b.(1)

Current Wording

- (1) 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

1 another player or any other aggressive action after the whistle has blown to stop play, (3)
2 kicking/striking or attempting to kick/strike a player, or spitting. A player "defending
3 himself/herself " is not exempt from this penalty.
4

5 **Issue/Proposal**

6
7 Sometimes it is hard to determine whether an angry shove (or an attempt to shove) occurred
8 before or after a whistle and it should not matter. The real key is whether the event is outside
9 the ordinary play of the game. A better definition is to use “outside of the ordinary play of
10 the game,” rather than “after the whistle has blown to stop play”. For example, a shove while
11 trying to defend is one thing, but a shove just because the person is angry is different.
12

13 **Comments**

14
15 Historically the SFL has used the proposed definition to define “fighting”.
16

17 **Proposed Change**

18
19 The following is the proposed change.
20

- 21 (1) Violent conduct and fighting as defined by the SFL regardless of whether a red card is
22 shown. Conduct which will be treated as fighting, regardless of whether a red card is
23 shown, includes but is not limited to (1) fighting in the opinion of the referee, (2)
24 shoving another player or any other aggressive action outside of the ordinary play of
25 the game, (3) kicking/striking or attempting to kick/strike a player, or spitting. A
26 player “defending himself/herself” is not exempt from this penalty.
27

28 **Section IX.C.1.b.(2)**

29 **Current Wording**

- 30
31
32 (2) Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Conduct that warrants a two game
33 suspension rather than the standard one game suspension or not specifically covered by
34 other infractions. Examples, include racial slurs, non-players (such as coaching staff or
35 spectators) being asked to leave the field or showed a red card, inappropriate behavior
36 towards a game official, etc. Inappropriate conduct towards a game official includes
37 persistent inappropriate comments, verbal threats, being followed to the parking lot in an
38 inappropriate manner, or other actions that would make a referee fear for his/her safety.
39

40 **Issue/Proposal**

41
42 While the rules state that a two game suspension will be given to individuals that use racial

1 slurs, it is unclear how the SFL enforces this penalty. For example, teams have reported
2 racial slurs have been used by the other team and the SFL has not suspended anyone. The
3 SFL needs to implement a process that can be used to enforce this rule.
4

5 **Comments**

6

7 We have seen an increasing number of complaints of racial slurs being used. In some of the
8 reports the coaches noted that this was "trash talk", "players say this a lot to each other", etc.
9 In effect, the inference was that this behavior was not considered to be harmful or offensive.
10 Unfortunately this is a subjective judgement and what is not offensive to one person may be
11 offensive to another. History has shown where such statements have resulted in very
12 unpleasant situations on the field.
13

14 During the Spring 2017 season the SFL did issue several two game suspensions for the use of
15 racial slurs where the SFL had a means to validate the complaint. The SFL also issued an
16 Email to all SFL Club Representatives and Club Referee Coordinators to (1) remind the
17 referees that racial slurs are unacceptable, (2) that such occurrences should be included in
18 their game reports when they can identify the offending player(s) number(s), and (3) like the
19 reports on red cards, we would like those referee reports automatically forwarded to us.
20

21 **Proposed Change**

22

23 (2) Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Conduct that warrants a two game
24 suspension rather than the standard one game suspension or not specifically covered by
25 other infractions. Examples, include racial slurs, non-players (such as coaching staff or
26 spectators) being asked to leave the field or showed a red card, inappropriate behavior
27 towards a game official, etc. Inappropriate conduct towards a game official includes
28 persistent inappropriate comments, verbal threats, being followed to the parking lot in an
29 inappropriate manner, or other actions that would make a referee fear for his/her safety.
30

31 **Discussion**

32

33 The SFL has a zero tolerance policy towards the use of racial slurs. Unfortunately, we
34 have seen an increasing number of complaints of racial slurs being used. In some of the
35 reports the coaches noted that this was “trash talk”, “players say this a lot to each other”,
36 etc. In effect, the inference was that this behavior was not considered to be harmful or
37 offensive. Unfortunately this is a subjective judgement and what is not offensive to one
38 person may be offensive to another. History has shown where such statements have
39 resulted in very unpleasant situations on the field. Club Referee Coordinators are
40 requested to (1) remind the referees that racial slurs are unacceptable, (2) that such
41 occurrences should be included in their game reports when they can identify the offending
42 player(s) number(s), and (3) like the reports on red cards, we would like those referee
43 reports automatically forwarded to us.

1 **Section IX.F.**

2
3 **Current Wording**

4
5 F. **Complaints and Protests** – Only a SFL Club Representative or the President (or
6 equivalent) of a club’s governing body are allowed to submit formal complaints or protest
7 a game. SFL Club Representatives or Club Presidents who wish to protest a game or
8 provide a formal complaint, must notify the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner in
9 writing within 48 hours after the match with a copy to the SFL Commissioner. Coaches
10 and any other club officials are not allowed to file formal complaints or protests directly
11 with the SFL. Although the SFL Club Representative or Club President may request
12 other individuals to help the SFL Club Representative or Club President file a complaint
13 or protest, the applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner is only responsible for accepting
14 information from and discussing the complaint or protest with the SFL Club
15 Representative or Club President who is acting on behalf of the club. Only one individual
16 may act on behalf of the club during the complaint or protest process.

17
18 **Issue/Proposal**

19
20 The SFL has seen an increasing number of Emails requesting that it take actions against a
21 player, team, or other individual for offenses that are not covered by the existing rules. For
22 example, an Email may claim that someone assaulted someone and the SFL is requested to
23 administer penalties against the offending individual. The SFL has been requested to
24 formalize a process that can be used to adjudicate such issues and penalize the offending
25 individual.

26
27 **Comments**

28
29 The SFL rules contain a variety of standard penalties for offenses covered by the Laws of the
30 Game or SFL specific infractions such as violent conduct, fighting, and using illegal players,
31 etc. While these cover a large number of disciplinary situations, the SFL is receiving an
32 increasing number of Emails requesting the SFL to expand its ability to review infractions. It
33 must be remembered that the SFL’s primary purpose to provide a scheduling service so that
34 clubs can have a robust recreational program. The SFL Commissioners believe that other
35 avenues are available to address the issues that are not covered by the existing disciplinary
36 penalties. These include referring the matter to VYSA or the police.

37
38 **Proposed Change**

39
40 The current wording in the Discussion section is expanded.
41

1 **Discussion**

2
3 In the past, the SFL has received a number of protests which should not have not been filed
4 or requested to review actions which are the responsibility of a given club. For example,
5 games were protested because of referee decisions. The SFL recognizes that protest or
6 formal complaint is not appropriate for many conditions that a coach or club believes
7 warrants additional review by a club. Therefore, the SFL will accept informal complaints and
8 forward them to the appropriate club for informational purposes. The SFL is not responsible
9 for following up to determine what actions were taken by a given club on informal
10 complaints.

11
12 As noted elsewhere, the SFL rules contain a variety of standard penalties for offenses covered
13 by the Laws of the Game or SFL specific infractions such as violent conduct, fighting, using
14 illegal players, etc. While these cover a large number of disciplinary situations, the SFL also
15 receives requests for the SFL to undertake reviews and impose penalties that are well outside
16 the scope of its operations. Specifically, it must be remembered that the SFL's primary
17 purpose to provide a scheduling service so that clubs can have a robust recreational program.
18 When situations arise that are outside its scope of operations, the SFL has adopted a policy
19 recommending that the complaint be addressed through more appropriate means such as
20 referring the matter to VYSA and/or the appropriate law enforcement agency. These
21 organizations have the administrative policies, procedures, and authority to address the
22 concerns that are outside the scope of the SFL's operations.

23
24 **ROSTER CHALLENGES**

25
26 The Procedures and Processes – SFL Team Rosters document discusses how roster issues are
27 handled.

28
29 **Current Wording**

30
31 The coach may also dispute a player that arrives AFTER the game has started or when that
32 coach has some reason to question a player on the field. However, this challenge should be
33 made at half time and must be made before the second half starts unless the player arrives
34 after the second half starts. Unless otherwise directed by an SFL official, the game shall be
35 played in its entirety with the SFL making a decision on whether a forfeit or other penalty
36 will be assessed being determined after the game has been completed.

37
38 **Issue/Proposal**

39
40 Some confusion exists on when roster checks are performed on players that arrive after the
41 game has begun. This is especially important during the tournament since the SFL rules
42 require a roster check for all games. Some referees may require late-arriving players to wait
43 until halftime to check in and be eligible to play if they arrive after play as begun while others

1 may have an assistant referee do the check and allow the player to participate “immediately”.
2 Coaches are also confused on when roster checks are required to be performed on late
3 arriving players. For example, one referee reported that a coach got upset when two players
4 arrived less than five minutes before halftime and the Assistant Referee refused to stop
5 officiating to check them in so that they could play. In addition, some confusion exists on
6 how long late arriving players may be allowed to play. For example, Emails have been
7 received stating that players arrived after halftime and were sent on the field by the coach. It
8 was not clear whether a roster check was performed on these players.
9

10 **Comments**

11
12 The issue of when late arriving players are allowed to play and the process that should be
13 used validate them has been raised informally several times over the years. It appears that
14 any options considered should be divided between regular season and tournament games.
15

16 **Proposed Change**

17
18 The Procedures and Processes – SFL Team Rosters currently discusses the roster checking
19 and roster challenge process in the **ROSTER CHECKS AND ROSTER CHALLENGES**
20 section. It is suggested that this section be modified as follows. In addition, the Tournament
21 Referee Guide will be modified to reflect these changes.
22

23 **PLAYER AVAILABILITY, ROSTER CHECKS,** 24 **AND ROSTER CHALLENGES**

25
26 Only players shown on the SFL Team Roster may participate in a SFL game and teams are
27 encouraged to take the necessary actions to ensure that the players are available for a game
28 prior to the game start time. The procedures used for regular season and tournament games
29 are different. For example, routine roster checks only occur during the tournament and
30 should eliminate the need for most roster challenges during tournament games. Roster
31 challenges are generally performed during the regular season games. The discipline section
32 of the rules outlines the penalties associated with using illegal players. These include
33 forfeiture of games and game suspensions for the offending coach.
34

35 **Suggestion**

36
37 Each club is required to have a process that validates the player’s birth date when that player
38 joins the club and this is the date that is expected to be used on the Master Player Roster.
39 However, we have found problems in the systems used by the clubs that allow incorrect
40 information to be shown in their systems. We have also found cases where the players are
41 unfamiliar with the roster challenge process and feel intimidated by the process.
42 Accordingly, the SFL encourages coaches to go through a roster challenge with their teams.
43 The coach can act as the official and ask each player their name and birth date. If the coach

1 identifies any discrepancy then the coach should immediately contact their SFL Club
2 Representative and take the necessary actions to correct the identified problem so that a new
3 SFL Team Roster can be obtained.
4

5 **Regular Season Games**

6

7 Players shown on the SFL Team Roster are allowed to participate in a regular season game as
8 long as the player (1) has not been suspended by the SFL and (2) meets the SFL Team Roster
9 requirements, e.g., player has the proper uniform number, no restrictions are shown on the
10 roster, etc.,
11

12 A roster challenge process is available to the opposing coach should a question arise on one
13 or more players from the other team. The SFL does not expect that roster challenges will
14 become a common practice and the number of challenges will be monitored. If a coach
15 appears to abuse this policy, then the appropriate SFL Club Representative will be notified
16 and appropriate disciplinary action suggested. Before a game is played, the coach of one
17 team may challenge the roster of the other team through the official present. The coach must
18 state which players the coach would like the official to check. The coach may also dispute a
19 player that arrives AFTER the game has started or when that coach has some reason to
20 question a player on the field. However, this challenge should be made at half time and must
21 be made before the second half starts unless the player arrives after the second half starts.
22 Unless otherwise directed by an SFL official, the game shall be played in its entirety with the
23 SFL making a decision on whether a forfeit or other penalty will be assessed being
24 determined after the game has been completed. Roster challenges will be conducted through
25 the official present using the following process.
26

- 27 • Each team shall provide a copy of the SFL Team Roster to the official performing the
28 roster check. The players line up by uniform number and each player is required to state
29 their name and date of birth when the official calls their number. They will also be
30 required to sign their name on a blank piece of paper if required by the official. If the
31 birth date or name stated by the player (1) is not provided or (2) does not agree with the
32 information on the SFL Team Roster, then that player is considered ineligible to play in
33 that game unless (1) the opposing coach waives the suspension or (2) a SFL official
34 waives the suspension. Uniform numbers that do not match are discussed elsewhere in
35 this document.
36
- 37 • Coaches should ensure that their players understand the information that will be requested
38 by the official conducting the review. However, the coach may not tell a player how to
39 answer the questions, e.g., the coach may not tell the player the birth date that should be
40 provided. Any instructions provided by the coach to the team concerning how the
41 process works should be made in the presence of the official conducting the review.
42

- A report on the results of the roster challenge must be submitted to the SFL by both coaches for review by the SFL. The report shall include (1) team making the challenge, (2) game reference number, (3) game date, (4) game field, (5) result of the challenge, (6) why the roster challenge was requested, and (7) the details associated any discrepancies. If no discrepancies were noted, then this should also be noted. The SFL Age Group Commissioner will review these reports and, if necessary, request the applicable SFL Club Representative to review the matter and provide any additional information that may be needed. Based on the reports received, the SFL Age Group Commissioner will make a decision on the appropriate penalties that should be applied.

Tournament Games

Routine roster checks apply to all tournament games and are designed to address many of the problems that have been experienced during the tournaments relating to rosters. As discussed elsewhere, if a team does not have a SFL Team Roster, then that team forfeits the game. Players arriving after the initial roster check has been performed may participate in the game when (1) the SFL has not suspended the player from the game and (2) the player undergoes a roster check. The required roster check for the late arriving players is performed at the discretion of the game officials. For example, the game officials may wait until the first half is completed, i.e., halftime, or have the Assistant Referee perform it before a player enters the field. The following is some guidance on situations that may arise.

Condition	Alternatives for Coach
Player arrives after the game starts but the game officials do not want to do the roster check until halftime.	<p>The coach may use the player on the field when (1) the SFL has not suspended the player from the game and (2) the player does not have any roster issues, e.g., different uniform number, missing uniform number on roster, etc.</p> <p>Should the player fail the roster check when it is performed by the game officials at half time, then the team will be assessed a game forfeit, i.e., the opposing coach cannot waive any discrepancies.</p>

Condition	Alternatives for Coach
<p>1 Player arrives after the game starts but the 2 game officials do not want to do the roster 3 check until halftime. The SFL Team Roster 4 shows that the player has some roster issues, 5 e.g., missing uniform number, uniform 6 number different than the number the player 7 is wearing, SFL Team Roster shows that the 8 player's uniform number is a duplicate, etc.</p>	<p>The coach cannot use the player until (1) the roster check is performed, i.e., if the game officials state that the roster check will not be performed until halftime, then the player may not play in the first half and (2) any roster issues have been resolved by getting the opposing coach's waiver. The coach should not assume that waivers given during the initial roster check will continue for the late arriving players.</p> <p>Should a player having roster issues participate in the game before going through the roster check process then the team will be assessed a forfeit.</p>
<p>9 Player arrives shortly after the second half 10 begins.</p>	<p>Players arriving after the second half start are not allowed to participate in the game until a roster check is performed by a game official. It is the game official's sole decision on when that roster check will be performed. If a player has any roster issues, e.g., uniform number does not match the SFL Team Roster, player does not provide the correct name and birth date, etc. then (1) the player may not participate in the game and (2) should take the necessary actions, such as removing their uniform shirt, sitting well away from the team bench, etc. so that it is clear to outsiders that the player is not eligible to participate in the game.</p>

11
12 **Roster Check Process**
13

14 Before each tournament game, the referees are expected to check the players for each team
15 against the SFL Team Roster. The process used is the same as the roster challenge process
16 discussed elsewhere, e.g., the players line up by uniform number and state name and birth
17 date when the referee calls their number. Since players without numbers or duplicate
18 numbers on the SFL Team Roster are ineligible to play, they should not be included in the
19 line up and must leave the field or remove their jersey to avoid any confusion with the players
20 that are allowed to play. If a player states an incorrect name or birth date, then that player is
21 not allowed to play unless the opposing coach agrees to let the player play. (See discussion

1 elsewhere on uniform number issues.) By this time in the season, the coach and club have
2 had adequate time to ensure that the player information (uniform number, name, and birth
3 date) on the roster is accurate. For example, as noted elsewhere, the SFL recommends that a
4 coach perform their own roster check to make sure that the club does not have an incorrect
5 name, birth date, or uniform number on their SFL Team Roster to avoid any problems when
6 roster checks are performed.

7
8 **End of Game Challenges**
9

10 It is recognized that situations have arisen in the past where teams may have added players
11 that did not go through the initial roster check or arrived after the start of the second half.
12 Should a coach believe that not all the players “on the field” at the end of the game went
13 through the roster check process, the coach should ask the game officials to validate that the
14 players in question did not go through the roster check process. Should a team use players
15 that did not go through the roster check process, then that team will forfeit the game.
16
17
18