

Suburban Friendship League
Discussion Topics for Rule and Process Changes for the Spring 2017 Season
(as of January 31, 2017)

Based on our meeting with VYSA and concerns expressed about the definition of a “travel player”, we revised Section I.A. of the rules. We also received two proposed change to the various procedures and process documents, rules, and web site. These involved Section IV. D. of the rules and the minimum number of regular season games that would be scheduled in the spring seasons.

In addition, VYSA has mandated that starting with the Fall 2017 season, the Under 11 and Under 12 age groups will be required to play 9 v 9 in accordance with US Soccer’s mandate. The specific changes to the rules implementing this change will be shown in the Fall rules documents.

Section I.A.

Current Wording

- A. The Suburban Friendship League (SFL) was established to coordinate and provide competitive soccer amongst the various house league teams who desire to compete with teams from other clubs. Although limited travel is involved, the teams in the SFL are recreational teams and travel or select players may not participate. The SFL considers any individual that practices with or plays on a travel/select team to be a travel player under any and all conditions and circumstances except for the limited exceptions noted in the SFL rules. Coaches should discuss with each player on their team the prohibition of playing on a SFL team and a travel team and make sure that the team realizes that the identification of a travel player on that team will result in forfeiture of games and elimination from the SFL tournament.

Issue/Proposal – Over the years, the effective definition of a “travel/select” player has changed. When the SFL was formed, the definition was simple – if the individual’s name was in the travel data base maintained by VYSA, that individual was a “travel player” and these individuals could not participate in recreational programs. Conversely, the travel/select leagues did not allow recreational players to participate in their regular season games. Over the years some travel/select leagues have allowed recreational players to participate as “guest players” during regular season games which blurs this distinction and can allow an individual to play both on a recreational team and travel team for regular season games. In fact, last season we received a request, which was denied, to allow players on a SFL team to play as guest players on a travel team for its regular season games. The request noted that the travel league allowed the use of SFL players. In a January 18, 2017, meeting with VYSA, the SFL was requested to change its definition of a travel player to only those players contained in VYSA’s travel data base.

Comments – In response to the questions raised by several clubs on the SFL policy, the SFL sent a questionnaire to the member clubs and held a meeting with VYSA to discuss this issue. In our meeting with VYSA, the SFL was requested to change its definition of a travel player to the conventional definition of a player contained in VYSA’s travel data base. The rationale provided includes that this definition allows more developmental opportunities for recreational players and players can try out the travel experience before having to commit to a travel team. VYSA officials are expected to present their views at the preseason meeting.

A decision on whether to adopt the VYSA proposal will be made at the preseason meeting in order for the clubs to better understand the VYSA view. Accordingly, two proposed changes were developed to reflect the outcome of the clubs’ decision.

Proposed Change Assuming VYSA Definition of Travel Player Is Accepted

A. The Suburban Friendship League (SFL) was established to coordinate and provide competitive soccer amongst the various house league teams who desire to compete with teams from other clubs. Although limited travel is involved, the teams in the SFL are recreational teams and that players participating in travel or select programs may not participate. These players are commonly referred to as “travel players”. The SFL considers any individual is contained in VYSA’s data base to be a travel player which is consistent with VYSA’s requirement that a player cannot be registered as a travel player and a recreational player. Accordingly, recreational players in the SFL may practice with or participate on travel teams in accordance with that league’s rules. History has shown that some recreational players are shown in VYSA’s travel data base. This is not in compliance with VYSA’s rules. Accordingly, coaches should discuss with each player on their team the prohibition of playing on a SFL team and participating in a VYSA recognized travel/select program and make sure that the team realizes that the identification of a “travel player” on that team will result in forfeiture of games and elimination from the SFL tournament.

Proposed Change Assuming VYSA Definition of Travel Player Is Not Accepted

A. The Suburban Friendship League (SFL) was established to coordinate and provide competitive soccer amongst the various house league teams who desire to compete with teams from other clubs. Although limited travel is involved, the teams in the SFL are recreational teams and that players participating in travel or select programs may not participate. These players are commonly referred to as “travel players”. The SFL considers any individual that practices with or plays in a VYSA recognized travel/select program to be a travel player under any and all conditions and circumstances except for the limited exceptions noted in the SFL rules. Coaches should discuss with each player on their team the prohibition of playing on a SFL team and participating in a VYSA recognized travel/select program and make sure that the team realizes that the

identification of a “travel player” on that team will result in forfeiture of games and elimination from the SFL tournament.

Section IV. D.

Current Wording

D. Regular Season Game Times – The following game times were approved at the preseason meeting:

1. Under 11/12 Boys and Girls: two 30 minute halves.
2. Under 13/14 Boys and Girls: two 35 minute halves.
3. Under 16 Boys and Girls: two 40 minute halves.
4. Under 19 Boys and Girls: two 40 minute halves.

Note: Several clubs needed to schedule games into 1 1/2 hour time slots. Therefore, we reduced the amount of time for the Under 16 and Under 19 age groups to 40 minute halves. However, if time is available and both teams agree, then the Under 16 and Under 19 age groups may play 45 minute halves.

Issue/Proposal – Change the game times for the Under 16s and Under 19s to be consistent with travel. Specifically, Under 16 game times should be 40 minute halves while Under 19 game times should be 45 minute halves. NCSL and ODSL both use these standard time periods. Most other leagues do so as well. There is no real reason for SFL to be different. They do not do so at younger age groups. SFL charges more to register a U19 team so the players should get the benefit for what the club is paying for.

SFL allows U19 (and U16) to play 45 minute halves if both coaches agree. However this causes issues come game time. Many referees are hostile to working ten minutes more (for free) and this causes unnecessary friction before the beginning of the game. Several referees have simply announced, "we are playing forty minute halves." By setting a default of forty minute halves, some clubs schedule U19 games so that it is impossible to play forty-five minute halves even if both coaches (and the referee) wants to do so.

Setting the default to forty-five minute halves does not prevent a club from scheduling field space to accommodate only forty minute halves. Please do everyone a favor and eliminate one unnecessary bone of contention between coaches and referees.

Comments – As discussed in the preseason meeting, the reason that Under 19s are charged more than the Under 16s is because of the trophy costs associated with that age group.

Proposed Change – The following is the proposed change.

D. Regular Season Game Times and Number of Games

1. The following are the game times for the applicable age groups
 - a. Under 11/12 Boys and Girls – two 30 minute halves.
 - b. Under 13/14 Boys and Girls – two 35 minute halves.
 - c. Under 16 Boys and Girls – two 40 minute halves.
 - d. Under 19 Boys and Girls – two 45 minute halves.

Note: Clubs must provide time slots of at least 1 hour and 45 minutes for the Under 16 and Under 19 age groups.

Number of Regular Season Games

Issue/Proposal

The SFL currently schedules 8 regular season games in the fall. However, depending on Easter weekend, some spring seasons only have 7 regular season games. A proposal was received to require the SFL to schedule 8 regular season games regardless of when holiday weekends may fall during a season. Using start dates consistent with travel would accomplish this objective.

Comments – The SFL developed an informal policy of attempting to schedule the spring season games after Easter weekend based on club comments on the difficulties of having games scheduled before Easter because of (1) potential field availability and (2) differing spring break schedules between localities. This practice has resulted in spring seasons only having 7 regular season games when Easter falls late in April and/or Father’s Day falls early in June. This proposal would require the SFL to schedule 8 regular season games in a manner that would (1) not require teams to play on the SFL’s traditional holiday weekends (Columbus Day, Easter, Labor Day, and Memorial Day), (2) reserve one weekend for the SFL tournament, and (3) all SFL games to be completed prior to Father’s Day weekend in the spring and the second weekend in November.

Proposed Change – If the clubs believe that each season should consist of 8 regular season games then Section IV.D. will be modified as follows.

D. Regular Season Game Times and Number of Games

2. The SFL season consists of 8 regular season games with one weekend reserved for the tournament, i.e., games are scheduled to be played on 9 weekends. The following criteria are used to determine the game weeks.

- a. Teams are not required to play on the SFL's traditional holiday weekends (Columbus Day, Easter, Labor Day, and Memorial Day)
- b. One weekend is reserved for the SFL tournament.
- c. All SFL games must be completed prior to Father's Day weekend in the spring and the third weekend in November.