

*Suburban Friendship League*  
**Procedures and Processes – Regular Season Game**  
**Scheduling Process for Odd Team Scheduling Divisions**  
(April 12, 2018)

**SUMMARY**

Most clubs desire to have their SFL teams play their home games on Saturday, e.g., during the Spring 2018 season, clubs stated that the preferred game day for over 95 percent of the teams was Saturday. This is not an issue when an age group division has an even number of teams. However, when an age group division has an odd number of teams, then one team needs to play its home games on Sunday. Otherwise, a team will have to play two games on one day – a practice, except for tournaments, that is not encouraged by either the SFL or VYSA.

The issue of what to do with odd team scheduling groups has been a longstanding problem for the SFL and several approaches have been tried to address this issue. These include using a formula to determine which club has to provide a “Sunday team” and combining two odd team scheduling groups. Each of these approaches results in complaints, e.g., “my team should not have to play Sunday games since I only want to play Saturday games”, “it is not fair for me to play division 1 teams”, etc. Several clubs have suggested that the SFL should find a better way to spread out the burden of having to support Sunday games.

The SFL Commissioners have reviewed this issue and decided to adopt a different approach for handling odd team divisions starting for the Fall 2018 season. The following summarizes the approach that will be taken.

- When an odd team division has at least one team scheduled to play its home games on Sunday, then the current process will be used, i.e., a team that normally plays its home games on Sunday will be assigned to be the “Sunday team” for all 4 Sunday games.
- The SFL will no longer mix odd team divisions within an age group to create even team scheduling groups so that the requirement for Sunday teams is eliminated.
- When a division (or an odd team scheduling group within an age group division that cannot be readily paired with another odd team scheduling group within a given division), then four teams will be scheduled to play the required Sunday games. Specifically, each team will be required to play one home game on Sunday. Should a team or the club not be willing to play this game or support the game being scheduled on Sunday, then the team will be assessed a scheduling forfeit and the SFL will make no attempt to reschedule the game. As with any scheduling forfeit, if the teams and clubs are able to reschedule this game, then the scheduling forfeit will be removed once the game is played.

The following sections provide additional information on how this process will be implemented.

## **BACKGROUND**

Most clubs desire to have their SFL teams play their home games on Saturday, e.g., during the Spring 2018 season, clubs stated that the preferred game day for more than 95 percent of the teams was Saturday. This is not an issue when an age group division has an even number of teams. However, when an age group division has an odd number of teams, then one team needs to play its home games on Sunday. Otherwise, a team will have to play two games on one day – a practice, except for tournaments, that is not encouraged by either the SFL or VYSA.

The issue of what to do with odd team scheduling groups has been a longstanding issue for the SFL and several approaches have been tried to address this issue. These include using a formula to determine which club has to provide a “Sunday” team and combining two odd team scheduling groups between regular season divisions. Both of these approaches have resulted in complaints and the SFL has been requested to develop a better approach. As shown in Table 1 below, 50 percent of the age group divisions for the Spring 2018 season had an odd number of teams.

**Table 1: Number of Teams Registered In Each Age Group Division – Spring 2018 Season**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Division 1 Teams</b>	<b>Division 2 Teams</b>	<b>Scheduling Approach</b>
U11 Boys	18	18	No odd team scheduling groups
U11 Girls	11	13	Combined division 1 and 2 scheduling groups
U12 Boys	17	30	Sunday team
U12 Girls	16	16	No odd team scheduling groups
U13 Boys	24	33	Sunday team
U13 Girls	16	23	Sunday team
U14 Boys	21	33	Combined division 1 and 2 scheduling groups
U14 Girls	17	21	Combined division 1 and 2 scheduling groups
U16 Boys	28	49	Sunday team
U16 Girls	17	24	Sunday team
U19 Boys	19	35	Sunday teams
U19 Girls	17	15	Combined division 1 and 2 scheduling groups

As shown above, in the Spring 2018 season, all the approaches were used. In some of the scheduling groups where Sunday teams were used, clubs were asked to provide a Sunday team, i.e., when the team was registered, the team was expected to play its home games on Saturday. However, once the odd team number of teams was identified, the club was requested and agreed to have one of its teams play its home games on Sunday.

## **REVISED APPROACH**

Starting with the Fall 2018 season, the following scheduling approach will be used for age group divisions that have an odd number of teams.

- When an odd team division has at least one team scheduled to play its home games on Sunday, then the current process will be used, i.e., a team that normally plays its home games on Sunday will be assigned to be the “Sunday team” for all 4 Sunday games.
- When a division (or an odd team scheduling group within an age group division that cannot be readily paired with another odd team scheduling group within a given division), then four teams will be scheduled to play the required Sunday games. Specifically, each team will be required to play one home game on Sunday. Should a team or the club not be willing to play this game or support the game being scheduled on Sunday, then the team will be assessed a scheduling forfeit and the SFL will make no attempt to reschedule the game. As with any scheduling forfeit, if the teams and clubs are able to reschedule this game, then the scheduling forfeit will be removed once the game is played.

The SFL will no longer mix odd team scheduling groups between divisions within an age group to create even team scheduling groups so that the requirement for Sunday teams is eliminated. The following discusses how each of these approaches will be implemented.

### **Team Expected to Play Sunday Home Games**

When a club registers a team and that team is expected to play its home games on Sunday, then that team will be considered as a “Sunday team” and its home games will be used to address the scheduling issues associated with age group divisions that have an odd number of teams. This is consistent with the approach that is currently used. Accordingly, clubs that do not have any “Sunday teams” are scheduled in the normal way, i.e., they play their home games on Saturday and, if scheduled to play a “Sunday team” as the away team, play that game on Sunday.

### **Odd Team Age Group Divisions Without A “Sunday Team”**

When an age group has an odd number of teams and all the teams are expected to play their home games on Saturday, then four (4) of the teams will be assigned to play one home game each on Sunday. While, in theory, all four teams may be with the same club, this is an unlikely event

because of the way that the scheduling groups are created. Normally, no more than two teams from a club will be required to play Sunday home games. The SFL will make the decision on which teams will be assigned Sunday games in these cases and a team's club will have very little ability to make a change. This limited flexibility for the clubs is necessary because of the way that game schedules are created. Specifically, the SFL goes to great lengths to pair teams to share a time slot and this drives where a team may appear in a scheduling group.<sup>1</sup> Since where a team appears in a scheduling group drives which teams will play on Sunday, the SFL needs to retain the flexibility to place teams in a given scheduling group.

The following process is used to handle the Sunday teams once a decision has been made on which teams will be assigned a Sunday home game.

- The SFL will notify the club once a final decision has been made on when one of its teams has been identified as a Sunday team and the week when that game needs to be scheduled. If the club has a “substitution” opportunity, then the club will be told that as well. For example, assume the club has two teams in a given scheduling group but only one of the teams is assigned to play a Sunday home game. The club may switch the teams as long as that decision is made before the SFL generates the schedules.
- The club is told the game week where the Sunday game will be scheduled. Sunday games are scheduled on weeks 1, 3, 5, and 7.<sup>2</sup>

Once the club has been identified that it needs to support a Sunday home game for given team, the club has two options for scheduling the game – provide the SFL the necessary scheduling data before the schedules are generated or provide it once the draft schedules are available for review. The only requirements for the Sunday games are that the game must (1) be assigned to the same game week selected by the SFL and (2) start at 12:30 PM or later. For example, assume that the team normally plays its home games in the morning on Field 1. The Sunday game can be scheduled on Field 2 in the afternoon. In addition, assume that two teams from the club are assigned to play a Sunday home game. The club may have one game played at 1:00 PM on Field 1 and 4:00 PM on Field 2 for the second team.

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<sup>1</sup> Teams are paired to share a field slot so that the number of field slots available will support all the teams registered. For example, assume that a club has 4 teams in four age groups but only has 2 field slots. These teams need to be “paired” to share a time slot. In the Spring 2018 season, about 40 percent of the teams required needed to be paired with some other team from the club to share a field slot since both teams could not play in the same scheduling group.

<sup>2</sup> The reason that the game week may not change is because this can result in duplicate Sunday games. For example, assume that Team 5 and Team 7 are scheduled to play on week 3. In this case, Team 5 is the home team. Team 5 may also play a Sunday game against another team in weeks 1, 6, or 7.

When a club does not provide a specific field slot for a Sunday game before the schedules are generated, then the SFL will assume that the game will be scheduled on the team's normal field and start at 1:00 PM. The club is free to change that information, within the above parameters, once the draft schedules are available for review. Should a club decline to provide a Sunday time slot prior to the schedules being released to the public pages or the team declines to play the game on Sunday, then the home team will be assessed a scheduling forfeit and the SFL will make no attempts to reschedule the game. As with any scheduling forfeit, if the teams and clubs are able to reschedule this game, then the scheduling forfeit will be removed once the game is played.