



## **PROLOGUE**

This document explains the Suburban Friendship League's administrative requirements as they pertain to each Law of the Game. It is not the intent of the SFL to alter, change, or modify any of the laws of the game as presented by the International Federation Association Board and US Soccer. Members can find the latest "Laws of the Game," by going to the US Soccer web site, <http://www.ussoccer.com/referees/laws-of-the-game>, for the most recent updates. Nothing in these rules precludes a club from imposing more stringent rules on their own teams.

The SFL's administrative requirements have evolved over the years due to situations brought to the attention of the SFL Commissioners by the clubs. The SFL's administrative requirements are designed to provide guidelines, common operating procedures, and rules to facilitate cooperation between the clubs and, if necessary, consistent disciplinary actions.

While all the "Laws of the Game," are enumerated in this document, not all laws will have an administrative requirement attached to it.

**SFL ADMINISTRATIVE RULES**  
**For**  
**THE LAWS OF THE GAME**

**I. LAW 1 – THE FIELD OF PLAY**

A. If a team does not believe that a game is being played on a field that is not compliant with the applicable field guidelines, the coach should play the game and then notify the appropriate SFL Club Representative of the problems. The SFL Club Representative may then request the SFL to review the matter and make a decision on whether a forfeit should be awarded.

1. Forfeits will normally not be awarded for the following conditions.

a. Fields that are properly sized but the markings are not entirely compliant with the applicable guidelines.

b. Corner flags not being present.

**II. LAW 2 – THE BALL**

A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.

**III. LAW 3 – THE PLAYERS**

A. Eligibility

1. All players must be registered with the proper state soccer association (e.g., Virginia Youth Soccer Association), listed in that state soccer’s recreational player data base Data base, and has adequate insurance, as defined by the state association for their players. A player must be registered with an associated club and meet their requirements for being a recreational or house player.

a. Players can only be registered with one club.

b. Special exception for recreational players

(1) Under no circumstances may a SFL player participate on a travel team on a weekend which the SFL normally has scheduled games. Some travel leagues may allow recreational players to play on a travel team as a guest player. This is allowed under the following conditions:

(a) The player does not routinely practice with the travel team. One-time “tryouts” are allowed.

- (b) Travel tournaments – The player is playing for a travel team participating in a tournament that occurs either (1) before the first weekend of the SFL season, (2) after the last weekend of the SFL season, or (3) during a week when the SFL does not hold games, e.g., holiday weekends. The SFL must be notified by email of the player's name and date of birth along with the game dates that the player is playing for the travel team if the game dates fall between the start and end of the SFL season, e.g., holiday weekends.
- 2. If a player played on a travel or select team during the previous season, the player should complete SFL Form 3 (Player No Longer Playing Travel or Select Soccer). This form should also be signed by the Coach and SFL Club Representative. A copy should be sent by Email to the SFL with the original maintained by the coach. Players appearing on this form and complying with its certifications are not considered travel or select players.

#### B. Ineligibility

- 1. If an SFL player participates in a regular season travel game, then (1) the club must notify the SFL of the player's name and birth date and (2) ensure that the player no longer plays on the SFL team. Subsequent participation of the player in SFL games will result in game forfeits and the team's elimination from the SFL tournament.
- 2. VYSA Olympic Development Program (not the VYSA Developmental – Olympic Development Program).
- 3. Players who are listed in the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA) travel data base or any other state youth travel soccer database, and those players who participate in travel/select programs may not participate, except as noted above.

#### C. Age Groups

- 1. A player must meet the USSF birth date requirements for their age group.
- 2. The SFL Age Groups are: 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 19. The SFL encourages the clubs to only assign players whose birth dates comply with their team's age group.
- 3. Playing up is allowed as shown below. **WAIVERS WILL NOT BE GRANTED.**

## Age Group Matrix

Team Age Group	Player's Actual Age Group
Under 11	Under 9, 10, and 11
Under 12	Under 10, 11, and 12
Under 13	Under 11, 12, and 13
Under 14	Under 12, 13, and 14
Under 16	Under 14, 15, and 16
Under 19	Under 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

### 4. Medical Waivers

- a. Requests for play down waivers are only granted for medical reasons and the SFL Club Representative must provide the following information:
  - (1) A signed statement from the parents/guardians requesting permission for the child to play down, with a brief description of the reason for the request.
  - (2) A signed statement from a doctor explaining the medical condition that requires the player to play down.
  - (3) A signed statement from the club's Board of Directors that they have reviewed the application and believe that the player should be allowed to play down for medical reasons. The individual signing this determination for the Board must (1) is a Board Member or (2) someone other than the SFL Club Representative or a coach in the SFL.
  - (4) If the request is granted, the waiver will state that the waiver is a medical waiver but not provide the reason the medical waiver was granted.
  - (5) Clubs must submit a request each season for medical waivers even if a request has been approved in prior seasons. This request must include a new determination by the applicable club's board that the player should be granted a medical waiver.
  - (6) **All requests for medical waivers must be submitted prior to 31 March for the spring season and 31 August for the fall season.**

### D. Substitutions – Substitutions may be made under the following conditions:

1. After a goal.

2. Prior to a goal kick.
3. Prior to the start of the second half.
4. Prior to a throw-in by the team in possession. The opposing team may only substitute if the team in possession substitutes.
5. For an injury when the injured player is replaced. The opposing team may also substitute a player at that time.
6. After a player caution, at the request of the player's coach. Only the cautioned player may be replaced with a substitute at that time.
7. At water breaks, if stoppage for the break occurs during one of the above substitution opportunities. Referees are encouraged to schedule water breaks during substitution opportunities for both teams.

#### E. Team Size

1. All players in good standing must play at least 50 percent of the game. The applicable club is responsible for defining what is considered good standing.
2. Minimum
  - a. 11 v 11 format – 7 players
  - b. 9 v 9 format – 6 players
3. Maximum (This is to be implemented for the Spring 2019 season.)
  - a. 11/12 age groups – 20 players
  - b. 13/14 age groups – 22 players
  - c. 16/19 age groups – 25 players

**Note:** These limits were established to help satisfy the 50 percent playing time rule.

#### F. Play Down Rule

1. The team with the higher number of field eligible players may (1) play down to the same number of players as the team with the fewer players or (2) play no more than two players above what the opposing team can play.

2. The above rule also applies when players from the team with the lesser number of players leave a game due to injury or illness.
3. Red carded players on the team with the lesser number of players, does not cause the team with more players to play down.

#### G. Mercy Rule

1. When the goal differential between two teams has reached five (5), the winning team is obligated to remove a player from the field. This process continues for every goal that increases the differential, until the winning team is left with the required minimum as discussed elsewhere.
  - a. For every goal that the losing team scores, the winning team may add one player.
  - b. At any point when the goal differential reaches six (6) or more, the losing coach may terminate the game without a penalty. The game is terminated when the coach or team captain informs the referee. The score reports should include that the game was terminated early because of the mercy rule.

#### H. **Team Rosters** – A player may be listed on only one roster in a season. The Master Player Roster contains the official information used by the SFL to resolve roster issues such as whether a given player has been assigned to a specific team. The Process and Procedures – SFL Team Rosters document contains additional information.

1. The sharing of players between teams is not allowed. **WAIVERS WILL NOT BE GRANTED.**

#### I. Combining Teams for the Tournament

1. If a club decides that it cannot field all its teams within an age group, the club may request permission from the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner to combine two teams to form a “tournament team.” If this permission is granted then the following conditions apply.
  - a. The higher ranked team is used to determine the tournament group for the combined team.
  - b. The SFL Club Representative will prepare and submit to the SFL, a revised Master Player Roster on the Monday after the last regular season game.
    - (1) The “combined roster” must only use players currently shown on the two teams being combined.

- (2) The maximum number of players that may be used on this combined team is (1) fourteen (14) for the 11/12 age groups and (2) sixteen (16) players for the 13 and above age groups.

#### **IV. LAW 4 – THE PLAYERS EQUIPMENT**

- A. The Process and Procedures – SFL Team Rosters document discusses uniform requirements including unique uniform numbers and how to resolve situations where both teams wear the same uniform color.

#### **V. LAW 5 – THE REFEREE**

- A. All referees must be USSF certified.
- B. Referees are encouraged to visit [www.usoccer.com/referees](http://www.usoccer.com/referees) for additional information.
- C. Clubs are expected to provide adequate officials for the games. If adequate officials cannot be provided, then (1) the visiting team should be notified by Friday night that the game cannot be played and (2) a forfeit will be assessed to the home team.
- D. Rules of Competition
  1. From the US Soccer web site:  
<http://www.usoccer.com/stories/2014/03/17/11/16/may-2008-archive-ii-of-ii>  
  
“As to local rules of competition, the intelligent referee will always obtain a copy of these rules before accepting any assignments. That way he or she knows what lies ahead and he or she can determine whether or not to accept assignments/appointments to those games.”
  2. Referees are encouraged to visit the SFL web site and under SFL Documents, download “SFL Guide to Referees (Regular Season & Tournament).”
- E. Age Requirements
  1. The center referee will be at least two (2) years older than the age group they are officiating except as noted below.
    - a. The referee possesses a Grade 7 or higher license.
    - b. The referee is at least the age of the game they are officiating, and at least one adult of 21 years or older is serving as an assistant referee.
  2. Referees should not be immediate family members to team officials except in an emergency.



## F. Quality of Officials

1. The SFL has no role in assigning the officials to a game since this is a club responsibility. However, the SFL provides a mechanism for coaches to report on the quality of the officials provided for their games. Comments can be sent directly to the home team's SFL Club Representative using the standard email address that is contained in the season package. When reporting on the officiating, please provide the game number, teams, game field, and game time. For those that would like a form, the web site has one suggested form that can be used. (The form is on the SFL Documents page.)
2. As noted by FIFA, the decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including if a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final. Accordingly, (1) game results will not be changed because of referee errors and (2) teams will not be compensated for referee errors. The mechanism available to address such matters is to notify the club providing the officials of the errors so that they can consider such cases when evaluating their referees' performance and guidance that may be needed on how to implement a given rule or set of rules so that these errors do not happen in future games.

## G. Games Halted

1. Regular season games – A game halted at half time or later due to unsafe playing conditions will stand as indicated by the score when the game was halted.
  - a. If due to unsafe playing conditions a regular season game is halted prior to half-time, it will be replayed unless waived by the SFL Age Group Commissioner.
2. If a tournament game is halted due to unsafe playing conditions after being started, the game result at the time of termination will be used as the final game result unless waived by the SFL Age Group Commissioner.

### **Example**

A regular season game is terminated 30 minutes into the first half due to unsafe playing conditions. The game is rescheduled to be played later unless waived by the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner. On the other hand, a tournament game terminated five minutes into the first half because of unsafe playing conditions would use the game results at the time of termination. The SFL will decide how to handle tournament games ending in a tie that is scheduled using the single elimination format.

## H. Other

1. In order to keep the tournament games on schedule, the referee will normally keep a running clock, i.e., the clock is not stopped for injuries, substitutions, etc. However, the referee may decide to stop the clock if the referee believes that it will not adversely affect the overall tournament game schedule. This is a decision made by the referee and may not be protested.

2. The referee is allowed to use their discretion on when it is too dark to play safely. Therefore, the last games of the day may be shortened because of darkness. This is a decision made by the referee and may not be protested.

## **VI. LAW 6 – THE OTHER MATCH OFFICIALS**

- A. All match officials must be USSF certified.
- B. Referees are encouraged to visit [www.ussoccer.com/referees](http://www.ussoccer.com/referees) for additional information.
- C. All match officials should be familiar with LAW 5 – THE REFEREE above.

## **VII. LAW 7 – THE DURATION OF THE MATCH**

### **A. Regular Season Games**

1. 11/12 Age Groups – Two 30 minute halves.
2. 13/14 Age Groups – Two 35 minute halves.
3. 16 Age Group – Two 40 minute halves.
4. 19 Age Group – Two 40 minute halves.
  - a. For the 19 age group – Two 45 minute halves if time allows and both coaches agree.

### **B. Tournament Games**

1. 11/12 Age Groups – Two 30 minute halves.
2. 13 and above Age Groups – Two 35 minute halves

## **VIII. LAW 8 – THE START AND RESTART OF PLAY**

- A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.

## **IX. LAW 9 – THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY**

- A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.

## **X. LAW 10 – DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF A MATCH**

- A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.

## **XI. LAW 11 – OFFSIDES**

A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.

## **XII. LAW 12 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT**

A. For the Good of the Players – It should be remembered that the SFL is governed by the principle that all actions are “**For the Good of the Players**” and unsporting behavior or violation of the Laws of the Game cannot be tolerated. It should also be noted that the SFL is primarily a scheduling organization and that the resolution of complaints, disciplinary actions, and protests is primarily the responsibility of the affected clubs. The role of the SFL is to help facilitate the resolution of complaints, disciplinary problems, and protests.

B. Misconduct – Individual Demerits and Team Demerits are used to identify individuals and teams that have a history of infractions related to misconduct and administrative issues while game suspensions are used to penalize specific individuals for the infractions.

1. Penalties for Misconduct – The SFL has three types of penalties relating to misconduct, (1) game suspensions, (2) individual demerits, and (3) team demerits. Game suspensions and individual demerits apply to an individual based on the infraction while team demerits apply to a team. Although in many cases the number individual demerits assigned to the individual and the team may be the same, this is not always the case as shown below. The following shows the game suspensions, individual demerits, and team demerits assigned for given types of misconduct.

a. Player infractions resulting in one (1) game suspension; one (1) individual demerit; and one (1) team demerit.

(1) Denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving toward the player’s goal by an offense punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick.

(2) Denying the opposing team, a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own penalty area).

(3) Receiving a second caution in the same match.

**Note:** If a player receives a red card after receiving a second caution a decision is made on whether the red card was received based on the player committing a red card offense or receiving a second caution. For example, assume that a player receives a caution for dissent and then received a red card for using offensive/insulting/abusive/language/gestures. This is treated as a red card for using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures rather than a second yellow card for dissent.

(4) Serious foul play.

- (5) Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures.
  - (6) Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Conduct that warrants a one game suspension that is not specifically covered by other suspension offenses. Examples include failing to serve a game suspension by a player. When an individual does not properly serve a suspension period, this penalty is in addition to the original penalty. For example, assume a player suspended for one game and does not serve the one game suspension. The player would be suspended for one additional game.
- b. Infractions incurred by players, coaches, and others resulting in two (2) game suspensions, two (2) individual demerits, and two (2) team demerits.
- (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 another player or any other aggressive action after the whistle has blown to stop play, (3) kicking/striking or attempting to kick/strike a player, or spitting. A player “defending himself/herself” is not exempt from this penalty.
  - (2) Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Conduct that warrants a two game suspension rather than the standard one game suspension or not specifically covered by other infractions. Examples, include racial slurs, non players (such as coaching staff or spectators) being asked to leave the field or showed a red card, inappropriate behavior toward a game official, etc. Inappropriate conduct toward a game official includes persistent inappropriate comments, verbal threats, being followed to the parking lot in an inappropriate manner, or other actions that would make a referee fear for his/her safety.

### **Discussion**

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

- c. Infractions incurred by players, coaches and others resulting in season suspensions and three (3) team demerits.
    - (1) Head Coach – Illegal players used.
    - (2) Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Offenses that warrant a three-game suspension rather than the standard one or two game suspensions. Offenses that would normally warrant this type of suspension include referee assault incidents or other behavior that should be referred to VYSA for review.
2. Administrative penalties assessed to individuals and teams.
- a. Illegal players used – One (1) team demerit per illegal player per game. Illegal players include (1) travel players regardless of whether they are shown on the SFL Team Roster, (2) players shown on the SFL Team Roster but declared ineligible during a roster check or roster challenge, and (3) players not shown on the SFL Team Roster. As noted elsewhere, a team using illegal players will be assessed forfeits for the games where illegal players are used and may be excluded from the SFL tournament.  
  
**Note:** If the coach is assessed a penalty for using illegal players, then this penalty is not assessed unless more than three (3) illegal players are used.
  - b. Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – One Team Demerit. Conduct by members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other suspension or team offenses and warrants one team demerit. Examples include failing to ensure a suspended player does not play (this is in addition to the penalty assessed to the individual), etc.
  - c. Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – Two Team Demerits. Conduct by members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other suspension or team offenses and warrants two team demerits. Examples include actions that cause a game to be terminated early and failing to properly report red cards or individuals (including the Head Coach) being asked to leave the field. When suspension offenses are not properly reported, the team is also assessed additional team demerits and game forfeits until the information is properly received.
  - d. Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – Three Team Demerits. Conduct by members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other suspension or team offenses and warrant three team demerits. Examples include actions that warrant review by VYSA.

### C. Individual and Team Demerits

1. Individual suspensions – An individual that receives three (3) individual demerits during a season, including post season tournament play, is automatically suspended for the remainder of the season including tournament play.
2. **Team suspensions** – Two types of team suspensions may result from the accumulation of team demerits (1) suspension from the tournament, and (2) suspension from regular season and tournament games.
  - a. Suspension from the tournament – A team that averages one (1) team demerit per game played when the tournament schedules are prepared will be excluded from the tournament but will be allowed to continue playing regular season games until the maximum team demerits allowed are reached. For example, if a team has played four (4) games when the tournament scheduling process is started and has been assessed four (4) or more team demerits, then that team will not be scheduled for the tournament although it may continue playing its regular season games until the maximum team demerits allowed is reached.
  - b. Suspension from regular season and tournament games – A team that accumulates team demerits that equal or exceeds the maximum team demerits allowed will be (1) suspended for any remaining regular season games, (2) excluded from the tournament if scheduled for any tournament games, and (3) placed on probation for the following season.
    - (1) Maximum Team Demerits Allowed – the lesser of (1) the number of regular season games scheduled or (2) the actual games played.

**Example:** Team A is originally scheduled for eight regular season games. However, a team drops out and that game is cancelled. In addition, the last game of the season is also cancelled and cannot be rescheduled. Team A plays all six remaining games. The maximum team demerits allowed for Team A is six since (1) its regular season game scheduled was reduced to seven games when the team dropped out even though other teams may have played eight regular season games and (2) one game was not played for other reasons.

- (2) Games Played – A game where a team is assessed a forfeit for any reason is not considered as a game played. In addition, if the game is unscheduled and neither team has been assessed a forfeit, then that game is also not considered as a game played. For example, Team A is scheduled for eight regular season games and the web site shows that all eight games are considered played. However, Team A is assessed a forfeit for some reason for one game. Team A is considered to have played seven games.

c. **Appeal of regular season and tournament suspensions** – A SFL Club Representative may appeal the regular season and tournament suspension associated with the accumulation of Team Demerits to the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner when **all the Team Demerits were associated with one game**. Based on the facts of the situation, the SFL Age Group Commissioner may (1) retain the suspension, (2) allow the team to complete the regular season but not play in the tournament, or (3) allow the team to complete the regular season and participate in the tournament.

(1) When the SFL Age Group Commissioner agrees to let a team continue to play, then such approval is automatically revoked should the team receive a Team Demerit for any reason in a subsequent game. Accordingly, the team is automatically suspended for the remainder of the season.

#### **Example A**

Team A is assessed eight (8) Team Demerits in regular season game 5. These Team Demerits are associated with several different infractions that are not considered “one event.” Team A has not received any other Team Demerits prior to this game. **The SFL Club Representative is allowed to appeal** the regular season and tournament suspensions required because the team had accumulated eight (8) Team Demerits.

#### **Example B**

Team A received eight (8) Team Demerits in regular season game 5 and appealed the regular season and tournament suspension required in the rules. The appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner agreed, based on the facts associated the given game, that the team should be allowed to complete its regular season games and participate in the tournament. However, in week 7, a player on Team A receives a red card because of the accumulation of two yellow cards. Accordingly, (1) Team A receives an additional Team Demerit and (2) is suspended for the remainder of the season, i.e., is not allowed to play regular season game 8 and participate in the tournament. No appeal of this suspension is available since the Team Demerits were accumulated in two games.

#### **Example C**

Team A is assessed one (1) Team Demerit in regular season game 1 because of a player that received a red card. In regular season game 5, Team A is assessed seven (7) Team Demerits. These Team Demerits are associated with several different infractions that are not considered “one event.” **The SFL Club Representative is not allowed to appeal** the regular season and tournament suspensions required because the team had accumulated eight (8) Team Demerits in more than one game.

3. **Team Probations** – Teams are placed on probation when the number of team demerits received in a season equal or exceed the number of games played during that season. For example, if a team plays seven regular season and two tournament games, then the team would be placed on probation if the team demerits for the season equal or exceed nine Team Demerits.
  - a. The SFL Club Representative is responsible for ensuring that a team is notified that it is considered on probation and aware of the rules that can affect their continued participation in the SFL.
    - (1) If a team on probation has any of the following conditions, the remainder of the regular season games will be forfeited and team considered ineligible for tournament play.
      - (a) Accumulation of four team demerits.
      - (b) A game terminated because of the team’s conduct.
      - (c) Any other disciplinary reason that the SFL Age Group Commissioner deems significantly warrants suspension from the SFL.
  - b. Any team on probation that is suspended is considered ineligible to return to the SFL for at least two seasons.
    - (1) The applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner is responsible for determining whether the members associated with a team constitute the team ineligible to participate.
      - (a) It is up to the SFL Club Representative to notify the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner when any members of the suspended team or coaches associated with the suspended team are placed on teams(s) that will be registered. The SFL Age Group Commissioner must approve each of these players(s) or coach(es) returning to the SFL before the two–season suspension is served.

#### **D. Suspensions**

1. Unserved suspensions carry over to the next season while the associated individual demerits and team demerits do not.
2. Suspended players, coaches, and other individuals serving their suspension period are encouraged not to attend the game at all. If the individual desires to attend the team’s game during a suspension period, the individual must receive the applicable SFL Club Representative’s permission to attend any games where that individual is serving a suspension by 6:00 P.M. at least two days before the game is scheduled to be played. For example, if an individual is suspended for a game being played on Saturday and the



SFL Club Representative decides to permit the individual to attend the game, then this decision must be made by 6:00 P.M. on Thursday night.

- a. The SFL Club Representative must also notify the SFL when this permission has been granted at the same time the individual is notified.
  - b. If a non player receives the SFL Club Representative's permission and does attend the game, the following applies.
    - (1) The individual should not be closer to the playing field than 100 yards beginning 30 minutes before game time until the game is over. The fact that a game can be seen from a public street or sidewalk which may be closer than 100 yards does not relieve the coach, team official, parent, or a spectator from complying with this 100-yard rule.
    - (2) The suspended individual will not be involved in any way with administration of the team during the game.
    - (3) If a player is granted permission to attend the game, then that player may be granted permission by the SFL Club Representative to sit on the bench with the other players if the player does not wear a uniform and it is clear to outsiders that the player is not eligible to participate in the game.
  - c. Since the tournament is only conducted during one weekend, any coach or other individual that is not a player who is asked to leave the field may not attend any of that team's remaining games since these suspensions carry at least a two game suspension and a team will not play more than two games after the game in which the offense generating the suspension occurred.
  - d. A player receiving a red card that warrants a one game suspension, may attend and participate in that team's third tournament game assuming that 1) the team plays three tournament games and 2) the red card was received in the first game. The player may also attend the team's second tournament game without the SFL Club Representative's approval when 1) the player does not wear a uniform and 2) it is clear to outsiders that the player is not eligible to participate in the game. In addition, the coach should highlight on the roster provided to the opposing coach and referee the player that is not able to play because of a suspension to avoid any conclusion on whether a player with that number is allowed on the field of play.
3. Suspensions involving individuals who have more than one role – An individual receiving a suspension may serve in more than one role. For example, the individual may be playing on a combined team, coach more than one SFL team, or play for a team and coach an SFL team. The following governs what is considered serving the red card suspension.

- a. Coach received a suspension and coaches more than one SFL Team – If a coach is suspended for an infraction while coaching an SFL team then the suspension period will be considered served when that team has played the number of games called for by the suspension. For example, assume that a coach receives a two game suspension because of a misconduct incident while coaching Team A. The coach is also considered suspended from coaching any other SFL teams until Team A has played two games.
- b. Coach receives a suspension and plays on an SFL team – If a coach is suspended for an infraction while coaching one SFL team and plays on another SFL team, then the suspension period will be considered served when the team that the player coached has played the number of games called for by the suspension. For example, assume that the coach receives a two game suspension because of a misconduct incident while coaching Team A. The coach cannot participate as a player in any SFL games until Team A has played two games.
  - (1) The individual's SFL Club Representative is responsible for notifying the SFL if the individual also plays for an SFL team.
- c. A player receives a suspension and coaches an SFL team – If a player is suspended for an infraction while playing on an SFL team and coaches an SFL team, then the suspension period will be considered served when the team to which the player is assigned has played the number of games called for by the suspension. For example, assume that the player receives a two game suspension because of a misconduct incident while playing for Team A. The player cannot participate as a coach for any SFL teams until Team A has played two games.
  - (1) The individual's SFL Club Representative is responsible for notifying the SFL if the individual also coaches an SFL team.
4. Failure to serve a game suspension – A player will be considered as not serving the suspension period if 1) any player wears the same jersey number of the player who received the suspension, unless approval has been given by the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner, 2) the player who received the suspensions plays in the game regardless of the jersey number, or 3) the suspended individual attends a game during the suspension period without obtaining the required approval from the SFL Club Representative, the team will also be assessed a forfeit.
5. Games cancelled or games where the team receives a forfeit for any reason are not considered as games played when determining whether a player has served a game suspension.

### **Example A**

Player A receives a red card in week 5 and Player A's next scheduled game in week 6 is cancelled due to weather and the team's next game is during week 7. Player A would be required to serve the suspension during the game scheduled for week 7.

### **Example B**

Player A receives a red card in week five. During the next game that Player A's team plays (week 6), Player A's team is assessed a forfeit because it did not have a proper roster. Player A would be required to sit out the next game that Player A's team plays, e.g., the week 7 game.

6. Suspension notices – Unless the team is expected to play its next game within two days of the game in which the suspension offense was incurred, the SFL will normally send the suspension notices by Wednesday or Thursday of the following week. This allows the impacts of game rescheduling and forfeits to be determined prior to the notice being sent. The following governs the suspension notices.
  - a. Effects of scores not being reported – As noted elsewhere, game scores that are not reported by 6:00 P.M. on Monday results in both teams being assessed scheduling forfeits. As noted elsewhere, games where a team has been assessed forfeits for any reason are not considered games where an individual has served their suspension and the required suspension will become applicable to the upcoming week. It does not matter if subsequent to the notice that the SFL is notified that the game was played and the suspension was served. The individual must still not participate in the upcoming game.

### **Example**

Assume that Player A was expected to serve the final suspension for an infraction in week 5. However, no score was reported for the game by Wednesday when the suspension notices for week 6 are prepared. Accordingly, both teams were assessed scheduling forfeits. Since the team was assessed a scheduling forfeit, Player A is considered not to have served the required suspension and a suspension notice for week 6 is prepared for Player A. After receiving the week 6 notice, Player A's team notifies that SFL of the week 5 game score and states that Player A served the suspension during that game. Since the suspension notice has already been sent, Player A is also suspended for the week 6 game since 1) the team had adequate time to report the game score for the week 5 game, 2) could easily determine from the web site that the score had not been received by the SFL, and 3) only one team must report the score to avoid this penalty even if it is not Player A's team.

- b. Players' name and uniform number issues – The information reported on player infractions that result in game suspensions is compared to the information contained on the Master Player Roster submitted by the player's club. When

significant differences arise, the coach is contacted to confirm the information reported, e.g., the game report says John Smith was wearing 22 while the master Player Roster shows that Sam Jones wears that number. If significant differences still exist when the suspension notices are prepared, then the suspension notification will contain those differences(s) and no player may play whose name or uniform number(s) appear on that notice.

### **Example A**

A game report is received which states that Johnnie Smith wearing uniform number 22 committed an offense that warranted a game suspension. The Master Player Roster shows that uniform number 22 was assigned to John Smith. Since this is not considered a significant difference, the coach is not contacted and the suspension notice will show both names.

### **Example B**

A game report is received which states that John Smith wearing uniform number 22 committed an offense that warranted a game suspension. The Master Player Roster shows that uniform number 22 was assigned to Sam Jones. The coach 1) does not respond to the request for clarification when the suspension notice is prepared, or 2) confirms that the reported name and uniform number was correct, or 3) states that the Master Player Roster contains the incorrect uniform number for Sam Jones. However, in the latter case, the necessary change to correct the uniform number of Sam Jones is not submitted by the club by the Wednesday deadline for making changes to the Master Player Roster and is not available for the preparation of the game suspension notices. The suspension notice will contain both John Smith and Sam Jones as the players being suspended and that no player wearing the uniform number of 22 may play. The penalty for both players is imposed since 1) the coach had an opportunity to correct the actual name and 2) if the problem was caused by a Master Player Roster issue, the club had time to make the necessary corrections prior to the suspension notice being prepared.

### **Example C**

A game report is received which states that John Smith wearing uniform number 22 committed an offense that warranted a game suspension. The Master Player Roster shows that uniform number 25 was assigned to John Smith. The coach 1) does not respond to the request for clarification when the suspension notice is prepared, or 2) confirms that the reported name and uniform number was correct, or 3) states that the Master Player Roster contains the incorrect uniform number for John Smith. However, in the latter case, the necessary change to correct the uniform number of John Smith is not submitted by the club by the Wednesday deadline for making changes to the Master Player Roster and is not available for the preparation of the game suspension notices. The suspension notice will state that John Smith is being suspended and that the uniform numbers 22 and 25 are not eligible to play.

Accordingly, no players on the team wearing uniform numbers 22 or 25 may participate in the game since the rules state that no one may wear the uniform number of a suspended player. If another player on the team is wearing the number 22, then that player is also not eligible to play. The penalty for both players is imposed since 1) the coach had an opportunity to correct the actual name and uniform number combination and 2) if the problem was caused by a Master Player Roster issue, the club had time to make the necessary corrections prior to the suspension notice being prepared.

E. Reporting Misconduct – Yellow cards, red cards, and individuals asked to leave the field must be reported to the SFL by both teams in a timely manner. Red cards and instances where individuals have been asked to leave the field must also be reported by the club who provided the officials for the game. The SFL will notify the teams in advance when players and coaches are suspended and are not eligible to participate in the subject game. It is up to the applicable SFL Club Representative to ensure that any other individuals suspended from a game do not appear at the game. Email is the preferred method of reporting the information relating to red cards and individuals that have been asked to the field.

1. A proper red card report for a player includes the following information 1) players' name, 2) players' jersey number, 3) nature of the infraction, and 4) recommended suspension period.
2. A proper report for a coach or spectator who has received a red card or been asked to leave the field of play is the same as above.
3. Information on red cards and individuals asked to leave the field are required to be reported no later than 6:00 P.M. on Monday following the game where the red card was assessed or the individual was asked to leave the field unless the team is expected to play a game during the next two days. If the team is expected to play a game within two days, then the required information must be reported no later than 8:00 P.M. on the game day.

#### **Example A**

Team A plays a game on Saturday and one of its players receives a red card. The next game that Team A plays is the following Saturday. This red card must be properly reported no later than 6:00 P.M. on the Monday following the game.

#### **Example B**

Team A plays a game on Saturday and one of its Players receives a red card. The next game that Team A plays is the next day (Sunday) or on Monday. This red card must be properly reported no later than 8:00 P.M. on the day the game is played (Saturday).

4. A referee may request from the coach, player, or other team official the name of any coach, player, or team official that the referee needs to perform their reporting responsibilities. If this information is not provided or incorrect information is provided

to the referee, the team will be assessed two (2) team demerits in addition to any other team demerits that may be assessed during the game.

- F. Club Review of Disciplinary Issues – The applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner or SFL Commissioner may request a club to formally review any incident that involves an individual or team demerit. If the SFL Age Group Commissioner or SFL Commissioner decides that formal review is necessary, the club is expected to have its Rules and Disciplinary Committee or similar organization (e.g., Rules Committee, etc.) formally review the requested incident and provide a written report to the SFL that contains 1) names and titles of the officials on the panel, 2) the approach taken to review the matter that was referred for review, 3) the pertinent facts disclosed during their review, and 4) the actions that the club believes are appropriate. It is expected that this Committee will comply with the VYSA rules for such groups. The club is encouraged to include the club’s SFL Club Representative in this process.
1. If the SFL decides that a formal review is necessary, the individual(s) that should be subject to the review will normally be identified, if possible, by the SFL.
    - a. If the SFL is unable to identify the individual(s) based on the information obtained that lead to the request, then the club must provide the name(s) and any other information requested within three days of the SFL Club Representative being sent an email requesting such information.
    - b. If a club is unable to provide the necessary information, then the team will be suspended from SFL play until the necessary information is provided.
  2. Any individual (player, coach, spectator, etc.) whose actions are being reviewed by the club’s Rules Committee is ineligible to participate in SFL games until the SFL receives the written report from the club unless this penalty is waived by the SFL. The SFL will identify the individual(s) subject to this penalty.
    - a. This requirement does not apply to individuals that the Rules Committee may request to appear before it for information gathering purposes only.
    - b. It is recognized that the Rules Committee may later identify other individuals that should be penalized.
- G. Conduct Detrimental to the League – A team may be placed on probation during the current and/or subsequent season, regardless of whether any team demerits are assigned, because the conduct of the coach, player(s), and/or other individuals are detrimental to the league.
1. The Appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner or SFL Commissioner will document the reason(s) that a team should be considered being placed on probation for conduct detrimental to the league. An SFL Club representative may also petition the SFL through the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner to place a team on probation by documenting the reason(s). If the request to place a team on probation for conduct detrimental to the league comes from an SFL Club Representative, the appropriate SFL

Age Group Commissioner should opine on the request when distributing it to the other SFL Commissioners.

2. Once the document is prepared, it is submitted to the remaining SFL Age Group Commissioners for review. If a majority of the SFL Age Group Commissioners agree that the team should be placed on probation, then the applicable SFL Club Representative is formally contacted to obtain his/her views on the proposed probation. The SFL Club Representative will have one week in which to provide a formal response. If no response is received within that time, the SFL will consider that the SFL Club Representative agrees with the proposed probation.
    - a. Each SFL Age Group Commissioner will have one vote and a tie is broken by the SFL Commissioner. If a person holds more than one SFL Age Group Commissioner position, then that individual is allowed one vote. If the SFL Commissioner also holds an SFL Age Group Commissioner position and the vote is tied, then the SFL Commissioner may not break the tie and the team will not be placed on probation for conduct detrimental to the league.
    - b. If the original request to place a team on probation for conduct detrimental to the league was received from an SFL Club Representative and the majority of SFL Age Group Commissioners do not concur, then the SFL Club Representative submitting the request will be notified of the SFL's decision and no appeal is allowed.
  3. Once the SFL Club Representative has provided a formal response to the proposal to place a team on probation, the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner will review the response and opine on whether the proposed probation should be enforced. The SFL Age Group Commissioners will then vote on whether the proposed probation should be finalized using the same voting process that is used for proposing a team for probation. The applicable SFL Club Representative will then be notified of the final decision. If the original request was received from another SFL Club Representative, then that SFL Club Representative will also be notified of the final decision. No appeal of this decision is available.
  4. Teams placed on probation during the season will automatically be placed on probation for the following season. Further more, a team placed on probation will be suspended from the remaining games of the season when 1) the team accumulates four (4) team demerits for any reason during the season or 2) is considered to have conducted another offense that warrants another decision that the team has demonstrated conduct detrimental to the league. If a team has already accumulated four (4) team demerits prior to the decision that it has demonstrated conduct detrimental to the league, then 1) the team is automatically suspended for the remainder of the season and 2) automatically placed on probation for the following season.
- H. Complaints and Protests – Only an SFL Club Representative, President or equivalent of a club's governing body can submit formal complaints or protest a game. SFL Club Representatives or Club Presidents who wish to protest a game or provide a formal

complaint, must notify the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner in writing within hours after the match with a copy to the SFL Commissioner. Coaches and any other club officials are not allowed to file formal complaints or protests directly with the SFL. Although the SFL Club Representative or Club President may request other individuals to help the SFL Club representative or Club President file a complaint or protest, the applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner is only responsible for accepting information from and discussing the complaint or protest with the SFL club Representative or Club President who is acting on behalf of the club. Only one individual may act on behalf of the club during the complaint or protest process.

1. The formal complaint or protest must include:
  - a. The time and location of the match
  - b. The team names and age group
  - c. The nature of the complaint or protest (referee judgment is not considered an item for protest)
  - d. The referee's name, address, and phone number (if known)
  - e. The opposing teams coach's name and other significant witnesses.
2. During tournament play, a phone report may be made by the SFL Club Representative but must include the above information. The protest will be handled by the applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner.
3. The SFL Age Group Commissioner is responsible for making the initial decision on an appeal unless that individual is affiliated with a club involved in the protest. The appropriate person making the protest may; appeal the SFL Age Group Commissioner's decision to the SFL Commissioner whose decision is final.
  - a. If the SFL Age Group Commissioner is affiliated with a club involved in the protest, then the protest will be heard by the SFL Commissioner, unless the SFL Commissioner is affiliated with a club involved in the protest, whose decision is final.
  - b. If the SFL Commissioner is affiliated with a club involved in the protest, than the SFL Age Group Commissioner's decision is considered final and cannot be appealed.
  - c. If both the SFL Age Group Commissioner and SFL Commissioner are affiliated with a club involved in the protest, then the protest will be heard by an SFL Age Group Commissioner that is not Affiliated with any of the clubs involved in the protest. The SFL Administrator will determine which SFL Age Group



Commissioner should hear the protest. The decision of this SFL Age Group Commissioner is considered final and may not be appealed.

### **Discussion**

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

- I. Video Evidence – The SFL is willing to accept video evidence to support a given disciplinary issue. However, it is up to the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner to the extent that the information is used in arriving at a decision. The following guidelines have been adopted by the SFL in guiding the decision on the extent that video evidence will be used.
  1. Video evidence will normally be considered in reviewing such matters as 1) deciding whether a team used illegal players that was not able to be detected through the roster checking or roster challenge process and 2) whether physical altercations that would warrant a two-game suspension may have occurred on or off the field of play that were not detected by the officiating crew.
  2. Video evidence will not be considered in requests to overturn referee decisions such as whether 1) a goal was or was not scored, 2) a red card should be reduced to a yellow card, etc. In addition, it will not be used to evaluate subjective items such as whether a player or team is “to physical.” Such issues should be addressed with the team’s SFL Club Representative. As noted elsewhere, when a club is concerned about a team’s “level of play,” the club may request the SFL to review the matter as conduct that is detrimental to the league. In such cases, video evidence may be allowed by the SFL.

### **XIII. LAW 13 – FREE KICKS**

- A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.

### **XIV. LAW 14 – THE PENALTY KICK**

- A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.

### **XV. LAW 15 – THE THROW IN**

- A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.

**XVI. LAW 16 – THE GOAL KICK**

A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.

**XVII. LAW 17 – THE CORNER KICK**

A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.