

Suburban Friendship League
2416 Rosedown Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1620
November 1, 2018

Dear Coach/Club Representative:

Hopefully, we will have good weather for the Wayne Gilbert Memorial Tournament. The weather this season has been tough and a number of games had to be cancelled and then rescheduled. We appreciate all the efforts the clubs and teams have made to play the games originally cancelled.

This season about 390 tournament games have been scheduled in 116 tournament divisions. Please remember that the SFL could not function without the support of a number of your club officials. The next time that you see your club officials, please take the time to express your appreciation for all the hard work that they do to help ensure that your games get played. Until you have performed their role, it is hard to understand just how much time and effort they put into your program.

I would also like to express our thanks for the large number of volunteers who make this tournament possible. This is a massive undertaking that could not be conducted without the help of the clubs, their administrative organizations, and the coaches. **IF YOUR TEAM IS UNABLE TO PLAY IN THE TOURNAMENT PLEASE NOTIFY US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** Teams who do not show up for tournament games are very disruptive and cause unnecessary problems. If you cannot play, then please be considerate of the other teams and let us know in advance.

The tournament format is complicated and requires all participants to understand their responsibilities. Therefore, **IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU READ THIS ENTIRE LETTER SO THAT YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT IS REQUIRED OF YOU AND THE RULES THAT WILL BE USED FOR THE TOURNAMENT.** Please take the few minutes necessary to read this letter before the tournament begins. It should reduce the amount of confusion and misunderstandings that happen when failures to communicate occur.

This letter discusses (1) roster issues, (2) how to obtain answers to frequently asked questions, (3) the tournament format, (4) tournament commissioners and tournament responsibilities, and (5) general rules and reminders. This package also contains the following items.

- Referee Guide – This two-page guide was sent to the Club Referee Coordinators to help the referees understand some of the unique rules that apply to the SFL's regular season and tournament games.
- Contact information for the site coordinators and tournament division commissioners.
- Game schedules

Note: This package contains the game schedules in effect at the beginning of the date shown on the schedules. However, sometimes after the schedules are prepared, we are notified of teams dropping out of the tournament or other changes. These changes will also be posted to the web site. **THEREFORE, PLEASE CHECK THE WEB SITE PERIODICALLY TO ENSURE THAT CHANGES TO YOUR SCHEDULE HAVE NOT BEEN MADE.**

TEAM BEHAVIOR

We would like the coaches to remind their teams and parents that the SFL does not tolerate inappropriate behavior toward other teams and game officials. This season, as it has done in seasons past, the SFL has terminated the season for teams, players, and coaches. In addition, players and coaches have been referred to VYSA for disciplinary actions because of the actions taken on the field toward game officials and other teams. While season termination is the extreme example of what happens, a far greater problem is the impact it has on obtaining and maintaining the game officials willing to participate in games. Without these individuals, the games are not possible. A June 16, 2017, Washington Post article discusses this issue and we recommend you take a few moments to read it. Below is the title of the article and the link.

Verbal Abuse from Parents, Coaches Is Causing a Referee Shortage in Youth Sports

https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/highschools/verbal-abuse-from-parents-coaches-is-causing-a-referee-shortage-in-youth-and-high-school-sports/2017/06/16/cf02a016-499a-11e7-a186-60c031eab644_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.c1aa4c861ae5

You do not have to be a Washington Post subscriber to read this article. The Washington Post allows non subscribers to review a limited number of articles each month without charge.

HOW THE TOURNAMENT GROUPS WERE ESTABLISHED

This season the SFL Commissioners waited until the week 6 games were played to determine the tournament groups. We used the game results received as of noon on Tuesday, October 23, 2018, to determine the tournament groups. All but 9 on the game results for the week 6 games had been reported by this deadline. As called for in the Procedures and Processes – Tournament Scheduling document, almost all tournament groups were established using the 4 team single elimination format (page 9). As noted in this section, teams are ranked based on game point percentage, bonus points, and goals allowed after eliminating the impacts of forfeits and penalties relating to reporting scores late. Accordingly, the ranking process will generate a different result than that showed on the web site. The Tournament Scheduling document is available on the web site on the SFL Documents page (<http://www.sflsoccer.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/tournament-scheduling-03092018.pdf>).

Once a tournament group was defined, a review was made to see whether the Saturday games would result in games being played between teams that (1) had already played each other during the regular season or (2) were expected to play each other during the remainder of the regular season as of the score reporting cut off date. These are commonly called “duplicate games.” Unscheduled games between teams were eliminated from this analysis. For example, assume that Team A and Team B

were scheduled to play each other in week 5 but the game was canceled for some reason, e.g., weather, and it was not rescheduled by the score reporting cut off date discussed above. This game would not be considered for this analysis. When this analysis showed that the initial Saturday games would result in teams playing each other twice, then the following process was used.

- An attempt was made to reorganize the tournament group to eliminate any teams from playing “duplicate games” on Saturday.
- When “duplicate games could not be eliminated, then the combination that generated the earliest duplicate game(s) was used. For example, if Team A played Team B, Team C, and Team D in the regular season, then the earliest date that Team A played Team B, Team C, and Team D was used for the duplicate game.
- In 5 team tournament groups, an attempt was made to have the second Saturday game be the one where “duplicate game” was scheduled. For example, assume that Team C played both Team B and Team D. Team A and Team C would be switched. This would eliminate Team C from playing Team B on Saturday. While Team C could still end up playing Team D, this would be the second game for Team D, i.e., Team D would have to win its game against Team E for the duplicate Saturday game to occur.

The following is a breakdown of the types of schedules used.

Type Schedule	Number of Tournament Groups
3 Team Round Robin	4
4 Team Single Elimination	72
5 Team Single Elimination	39
6 Team Single Elimination	1

As shown above, the vast majority of the tournament groups used the four team single elimination format as called for in the tournament scheduling document. The other tournament formats were used when a regular season division had an odd number of teams which made an even number of 4 team tournament groups impossible.

ROSTER ISSUES

This season we have had several roster issues and the roster rules applicable to the tournament are different from those for the regular season. I would like to emphasize the following points:

- Roster checks are required before each game. Failure to have a paper copy of your SFL Team Roster available for the referee and your team will result in an automatic forfeit. Accordingly, it is advisable to have more than one adult associated with your team to have the necessary

copies of your SFL Team Roster. **Please remember that electronic copies are not acceptable.**

- Unlike the regular season where a coach is allowed to make up to 3 uniform number changes, during the tournament, the players must wear the uniform number shown on the roster. Players not wearing the correct uniform number are not allowed to play unless the opposing coach agrees to allow the change. Accordingly, please talk to your players about the importance of wearing the correct jersey number. You are not allowed to use tape or any other temporary material to “fix” uniform number issues. Adding a leading zero to a number of the SFL Team Roster is not considered a uniform number change. For example, assume that a player’s permanent uniform number is “00”, the SFL Team Roster will show a “0” and the coach may show “00” in the Actual Number column. This is not considered a uniform number change.
- Players shown on the SFL Team Roster with roster problems are not allowed to play unless the opposing coach agrees to allow them to play. Examples of the problems shown on the SFL Team Rosters that prevent a player from playing include (1) missing uniform numbers, (2) duplicate uniform numbers, and (3) players requiring a waiver but never receiving the waiver. For example, assume the SFL Team Roster shows that Player A and Player B both wear the number 32. Neither player may play even if only one shows up at the field unless the opposing coach agrees.
- The only approved team roster form is the one generated by the SFL. If you have a question on whether the SFL provided the form used by the other team, take a look at your form and it should look the “same.” You can also Email a copy of the roster received to us from the field, at sfl@sflsoccer.org if you have questions.
- Only players contained on that roster are eligible to play on the assigned team.
- The pre game roster check should eliminate the need for roster checks during the game. However, if you have a question on the players being used by the other team, use the roster challenge process discussed in the rules and FAQ document. **Please remember, you still need to go through the roster challenge process if you want to raise concerns with a roster.**
- **AUTOMATIC FORFEITS FOR ROSTER ISSUES ONLY OCCUR WHEN A ROSTER IS NOT AVAILABLE. IN ALL OTHER CASES, THE SFL DETERMINES WHETHER A FORFEIT WILL BE ASSESSED SO MAKE THE CALL TO 703-476-6611 IF YOU HAVE ROSTER QUESTIONS.** Please do not ask us after the game is completed to adjudicate roster issues especially when the above process is not followed. During the tournament weekend, we have someone who answers the phone at 703-476-6611 to address these problems as they occur.

Conditions Experienced In Previous Tournaments

The following are examples of conditions that have been experienced in previous tournaments and the course of action that should be followed.

Issue: The rules clearly state that a roster check should be performed prior to each tournament game. In some cases, the referee disregards this requirement and players are on the field whose number does not agree with the roster, wears a uniform number that duplicates the number of another player, etc. that is not allowed unless the opposing coach agrees. The rules clearly state that once a game is played, the coach cannot protest the game because of roster issues such as these which effectively means that should a referee not implement the rules, the coach and team will be harmed if they lose or tie their tournament game simply because of a referee mistake.

Comments: Based on past history this issue is valid. However, experience has shown that when a call is made from the field to the SFL, the problem can be adequately addressed, i.e., the SFL can tell the referee that a roster check should be performed and that resolving “number issues” is only allowed if the opposing coach agrees. The tournament rules state that when this condition exists, the coach must call the SFL from the field at game time and obtain guidance on what should be done. If the coach does not make this call, then no protest may be made and the game results will stand. If the SFL guidance received provided in response to this game time phone call is not followed by the referee, then the coach is responsible calling the SFL a second time at which point the SFL will declare a forfeit.

Issue: The rules clearly state that if a team shows up for a tournament game without a paper roster, then that team is assessed a forfeit. However, in some cases referees do not enforce this rule and tell the coaches to play the game or allow electronic rosters that may only be shown to referee. The rules clearly state that once a game is played, the coach cannot protest the game because of roster issues such as this which effectively means that should a referee not implement the rules, the coach and team will be harmed if they lose or tie their tournament game simply because of a referee mistake.

Comments: Based on past history this issue is valid and one club has told the SFL that they have instructed their referees not to declare forfeits under any circumstances since that is a league responsibility. However, experience has shown that when a call is made from the field to the SFL, the problem can be adequately addressed, i.e., the SFL can tell the referee that the game is a forfeit. The tournament rules state that when this condition exists, the coach must call the SFL from the field at game time and obtain guidance on what should be done. If the coach does not make this call, then no protest may be made and the game results will stand. If the SFL guidance received provided in response to this game time phone call is not followed by the referee, then the coach is responsible calling the SFL a second time at which point the SFL will declare a forfeit.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We have developed Frequently Asked Questions documents that can be found on the web site under Frequently Asked Questions (www.sflsoccer.org/frequently-asked-questions). These documents provide answers to questions such as how the tournament divisions were created and why the tournament divisions do not reflect the same results as those shown on the web site.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The tournament format and structure are consistent with the procedures discussed in the season rules and the Tournament Scheduling Process and Procedures document. Both these documents can be found on the web site on the SFL Documents page. A Frequently Asked Questions document on the tournament is also contained on the FAQ page. The following sections discuss two key areas that may cause confusion – how to read the schedule and types of tournament divisions.

How to Read the Schedule

Overall we believe that the schedule is fairly easy to understand since we created it and have the secret knowledge of what the numbers mean. However, just in case, we would like to provide you some guidelines that you can use to understand how to read the games that say something like “Game 1 Winner.” The way that you know which team is associated with a given game number is to look at the last number in the game reference number. For example, if Team A and Team B play in game reference number 420501, then the winner of this game is the “Game 1 Winner.” **The key is the game reference number and not the order the game is shown on the game schedule.** For example, game 420501 may be scheduled for 10:00 while game 420102 is scheduled for 8:30. The “Game 1 Winner” is still the winner of game 420501.

Types of Tournament Divisions

As required by the Procedures and Processes – Tournament Scheduling document, almost all teams were scheduled using four team single elimination tournament groups. As discussed in this document, when a regular season division does not have an even number of teams divisible by 4, then other tournament formats are used. One of these is a three-team round robin format. The key difference in rules between these two types of format structures is how ties are handled.

- If a division is scheduled using the “round robin” tournament format, then the game **CAN** end in a tie.
- If a division is scheduled using the single-elimination format, then the game **CANNOT** end in a tie. If a game is tied at the end of regulation play, it goes into an immediate shoot-out using FIFA rules.

The following is a list of the tournament groups using the round robin format.

Age Group	Group	Age Group	Group
Under 11 Boys	1	Under 14 Girls	5
Under 16 Boys	9	Under 19 Girls	3

The tournament schedule web pages also show whether a game can end in a tie. The game times are the same regardless of how the division was scheduled. The game times for the Under 11/12s will consist of two – 30 minute halves while the Under 13s and above will play two – 35 minute halves.

TOURNAMENT COMMISSIONERS AND TOURNAMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The following sections discuss (1) what to do when you become a tournament division commissioner, (2) special tournament responsibilities, (3) trophy pickup, and (4) trophy labels.

What to Do When You Become The Division Commissioner

Under the single elimination format, each coach can potentially become a division commissioner so you need to plan accordingly. Each tournament group is assigned an initial division commissioner. These are the names contained in your package. Basically, these individuals are responsible for (1) notifying the other teams in their division if the games are cancelled due to weather or have to be relocated for other reasons and (2) handing out the trophies. However, when the tournament division commissioner’s team loses and is not playing in the final game, the trophies become the responsibility of the coach who advances. (The notification of game cancellations remains with the assigned division commissioner.) In addition, in a six-team division, one of the coaches who will play for third place trophies also becomes a division commissioner.

You know you are a division commissioner when (1) you beat the assigned division commissioner’s team before the final game, or (2) you lose to a division commissioner’s team in a six team or seven team division and are eligible to play for third place. This is not overly complicated, however, it does require **preparation and communication**. If you are a division commissioner and your team losses, make sure that you talk to the other coach and give them the trophies or explain how the trophies will be handled. If your team beats the division commissioner’s team, then talk to the coach after the game and make sure you understand how the trophies are going to be made available to you. The following examples are provided to illustrate several situations:

Example 1 – Four Team Division

Team A is the division commissioner’s team and loses to Team B in the first round. The coach for Team B becomes the division commissioner and makes arrangements to get the tournament trophies so that they will be available for the championship game.

Example 2 – Five Team Division

Team A is the division commissioner's team and loses to Team B in the first round. The coach for Team B becomes the division commissioner and makes arrangements to get the tournament trophies. However, Team B loses to Team C in the second round game. The coach for Team C becomes the division commissioner and makes arrangements to get the tournament trophies so that they will be available for the championship game.

Example 3 – Six Team Division

Team A is the division commissioner's team and loses to Team B in the first round. The coach for Team B becomes the division commissioner and makes arrangements to get the tournament trophies. However, Team B loses to Team C in the second round game. The coach for Team C becomes the division commissioner for the championship game and makes arrangements to get the first and second place tournament trophies so that they will be available for the championship game. The coach for Team B retains the third place trophies for the third place game which matches the losers of games 3 and 4. Please remember that the field used for the first and second place games may be different from the field used for the third place game.

Example 4 – Site Coordinator Keeps Trophies

In some cases, the site coordinator is keeping the trophies and will make arrangements to get them to the appropriate teams. If the site coordinator is also shown as the division commissioner, then this is probably the case. If the site coordinator is worrying about the trophies, then beating a division commissioner's team does not have any real administrative impact on you.

Special Tournament Responsibilities

The tournament can only be held because a large number of people help out. Basically, we have three roles and the following is a discussion of these roles and the associated responsibilities.

Site Coordinator

1. Provides the fields, nets, and ensures that fields are properly lined.
2. Provides officials for the fields.
3. In cases of game cancellations due to weather, the Site Coordinator first notifies the Division Commissioners. The SFL is then notified by an Email to sfl@sflsoccer.org (the preferred method) or by a phone call to Chris Martin (703-476-6611). Our web site has the current phone numbers to check field conditions. The link to this page can be found on the left side of our home page under Phone Numbers for Field Conditions.

Generally, the site coordinator is the SFL Club Representative for club hosting a given tournament site.

Division Commissioner

The applicable SFL Club Representative has confirmed the division commissioners and their contact information in this package. If you have a question on why you were chosen, then contact your SFL Club Representative. Being a division commissioner is not a complicated task and basically requires you to be on the field when your team is scheduled to play a game. The following are the specific responsibilities for division commissioners.

1. Notifies the teams in their division of game cancellations. In the case of inclement weather, the division commissioner should also notify the teams in their division if games are going to be played. **This responsibility remains with assigned division commissioner even if the division commissioner's team loses before the final tournament division game.**
2. Arranges pickup of their trophies. Generally, this is the site coordinator and hopefully, this person has already discussed with you how this is going to work. However, in some cases, in order to reduce the travel requirements, we may have someone bring the trophies to the tournament site. Regardless, make sure that you have a clear understanding of how you are going to get the trophies. We have discussed above how trophies are handled should your team lose before the final game.
3. **Rosters** – The division commissioner is not responsible for collecting rosters. However, as noted elsewhere, each team is required to present a **paper copy** of their SFL Team Roster to the other team and referee **BEFORE** the start of their game. **IF A TEAM DOES NOT HAVE A ROSTER THAT MEETS THE SFL REQUIREMENTS, THAT TEAM FORFEITS THE GAME**, the referee is notified that the game will not be played, and both teams leave the field of play. If you have a roster question, then give us a call at 703-476-6611. **PLEASE NOTE THAT AUTOMATIC FORFEITS FOR ROSTER ISSUES ONLY OCCUR WHEN A ROSTER IS NOT AVAILABLE. IN ALL OTHER CASES, THE SFL DETERMINES WHETHER A FORFEIT WILL BE ASSESSED SO MAKE THE CALL TO 703-476-6611.**
4. In the case of teams playing the “round robin” tournament format, determines the final team rankings for the division.

If you have a problem contacting your division commissioner, then contact the site coordinator. The contact information for these individuals is contained in this package.

Trophy Pickup

Some of you may have been “elected” by your SFL Club Representative to pick up trophies and deliver them to a tournament site. Your SFL Club Representative will discuss with you on how to pick them up and the directions. Please make sure that you pick up your trophies by the Friday night

before the tournament starts on Saturday and that you take them to your first game. If you have any questions on how to get the trophies to the proper person, give them a call. Your season package contains the necessary contact information.

Trophy Styles

The SFL buys its trophies in bulk so that it can have a customized design at a reasonable price. Periodically the SFL changes its style of trophies. As noted last season, the SFL is moving to medals rather than a traditional trophy. Since we had a few boxes of trophies left over we will be using those this season. The remainder will receive medals. We realize that this may be a little confusing, however, it is the most cost effective approach and next season everyone will be getting medals assuming that the tournament divisions getting trophies this season are not cancelled. We appreciate your understanding.

GENERAL RULES AND REMINDERS

I would like to remind you of the following administrative items:

- **Game Scores – Both teams are required to report the game score. Email (sfl@sflsoccer.org) is the preferred method.** In past tournaments, several teams did not report their scores which caused an unnecessary disruption for all. **Note: The score for a shootout game is computed by taking the score of the game at the end of regulation and adding one goal for the winning team.** For example, a game ends in a 1 – 1 tie at the end of regulation play. Team A scores 2 goals in the shootout and Team B scores 4 goals. Therefore, Team B would be shown as the winner with a game score of 2 – 1. **PLEASE INCLUDE THE GAME REFERENCE NUMBER, PREFERABILITY IN THE SUBJECT LINE, OF YOUR EMAIL, e.g., #420109.**
- **Red Cards – Red Cards received on Saturday must be reported on the day of the game.**
- **Weather Cancellations –** If a tournament game is postponed due to weather, the site coordinators will call the division commissioners who will then call the teams in their division. The division coordinators should be contacted by 7:30 AM on Saturday or at least 3 hours before the scheduled start time on Sunday. If you have any questions on whether a game will be played, you should contact your tournament division commissioner or the site coordinator. We are not planning on posting weather cancellations on the web site or voice mail system. You can also use the phone numbers/web site links on the web site for field conditions. Some of these numbers may have changed since the season package was originally prepared. **PLEASE REMEMBER THAT IF ANY TOURNAMENT DIVISION GAME IS CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER, THEN NORMALLY ALL THE REMAINING GAMES ARE CANCELLED AND NO TROPHIES WILL BE AWARDED. If this is not the case, then the SFL will notify the appropriate teams.** Therefore, if you end up with trophies and one or more of your tournament division games are cancelled, then you should (1) contact your SFL Club Representative and let that individual

know you have trophies that need to be returned to the SFL and (2) send an Email notifying the SFL that you have trophies that need to be returned.

- **Color Clashes** – In case of a color clash, the home team must change colors. Pennies are acceptable for resolving color conflicts. The first team listed on the schedule is considered the home team.
- **Play Down Rule** – It is up to the coach who has the most players as to whether the play down rule is in effect. However, as noted in the SFL Rules, if one team (Under 13 and above) only has seven or eight players, the opposing team is required to play no more than two players more than the other team. If one team has nine or ten players, the other team may play all eleven if the play down rule is not employed. These rules were included in the preseason mailing and can be downloaded from the web site on the SFL Documents page. In addition, as discussed in the rules, coaches are required to reduce the number of players on the field once a team has scored 5 goals more than the other team until the minimum number of players for a game is reached (7 for 11 v 11 games and 6 for 9 v 9 games). For example, if a team is winning the game 5 – 1 and scores another goal, they must reduce the number of players on the field down by at least one player, if it scores another goal, then another player must be removed, etc.
- **Game Points** – Game points are awarded as follows: 4 points for a win, 2 points for a tie, 1 point for a loss, and 0 points to the forfeiting team for a forfeit. The game score for a forfeited game is generally 1 – 0.
- **Team Ranking (“Round Robin Format”)** – **Teams not playing in the single-elimination format**, will be ranked in the following order: (1) tournament game points, (2) head to head competition during the tournament, (3) tournament bonus points, (4) least goals allowed during the tournament, (5) whether the team received a regular season award (if applicable), (6) head to head competition during the regular season games if they have played each other, (7) least average goals allowed during the regular season, and (8) shoot out. A 3 or 4-way tie is broken in the following order: (1) tournament bonus points, (2) least goals allowed during the tournament, (3) whether the team received a regular season award (if applicable), (4) least average goals per game allowed during the regular season, (4) regular season game point percentage, and (5) coin flip. After one team is eliminated, then the remaining teams will be ranked by starting at the top of the appropriate tie breakers. **Note:** Normally head to head results are not used in breaking 3 or 4-way ties since one team will not have defeated all the other teams during the tournament. However, if one team has beaten all the other teams that are tied in the tournament, then that team will be placed ahead of all the other teams that it is tied with based on game points.

Note: No age groups were provided regular season awards. Furthermore, coaches should ensure that a shootout is not required before dismissing their players.

- **Tournament Results** – Results will be posted on the Web Site (www.sflsoccer.org) throughout the weekend as the results become known. If possible, please report your scores

by Email. Remember to include the game reference number in the subject line, (e.g., #420101) and age group in your Email. **It helps us a great deal if you include the game reference number in the subject line of the Email.**

The web site shows the game scores that we have recorded. If any of the game results are incorrect, please notify us by Email (preferred) at sfl@sflsoccer.org or voice mail (703-476-6610). Please provide the game number, age group, teams, and correct scores. If you know the scores of any games that are shown as not played, please report these also. As your commissioner for this season, I thank you for your assistance and patience during this season. On behalf of myself and the other SFL Commissioners we wish you the best of luck and have a safe and successful tournament.

The SFL Commissioners will be holding a meeting prior to the Spring 2019 preseason meeting to discuss league operations. If you have a topic that you would like discussed, please let us know. Next season we expect to hold our preseason meeting in mid-August. The SFL Club Representatives are notified of this in advance and our web site has the date and time on the calendar (this is on the SFL Calendar web page) once it is finalized. Coaches are also welcome.

If you have any questions on the material in this package, please send us an Email at sfl@sflsoccer.org or call Chris Martin at 703-476-6611. I can be reached directly at commis@sflsoccer.org. Thank you for your assistance.

John Paladino