

1 Below describes each proposal in detail and provides the rationale used when deciding the
2 proposed course of action on a given proposal.

3 4 **CLUB AND COACH GUIDE**

5 6 **Section II. – Team Registration**

7 8 **Current Wording**

9
10 **A. Registration Due Date – The SFL Administrator will notify the clubs of the due date**
11 **that team registrations must be submitted.**

12 13 **Change**

14
15 The SFL Commissioners have decided to change the final date for team changes for
16 scheduling purposes from March 15 for the Spring seasons and August 15 for the Fall
17 seasons to March 10 and August 10 respectively. This allows additional time to finalize the
18 schedules and season packages so that they can be mailed earlier than the week of the first
19 games.

20 21 **Discussion**

22
23 Several clubs wanted to keep the original March 15/August 15 dates. However, the majority
24 of the clubs wanted to retain the existing scheduling approach and retaining the March
25 15/August 15 dates were inconsistent with this decision. Accordingly, the clubs decided that
26 adopting the March 10/August 10 cut off dates to support the current scheduling approach
27 was acceptable.

28
29 **Section III.C. – Roster Submission Dates** – Each club is required to submit at least two Master
30 Player Rosters each season.

31 32 **Current Wording**

- 33
34 1. March 15 for the spring season and August 15 for the fall season. This submission is
35 used by the SFL to validate that the club has a sufficient number of players to support the
36 registered teams. Valid uniform numbers are not required for this submission and the
37 player assignments to a team are not binding, i.e., the clubs are free to reassign players to
38 other teams.

39 40 **Discussion**

41
42 Several clubs wanted to keep the original March 15/August 15 dates. However, the majority
43 of the clubs wanted to retain the existing scheduling approach and retaining the March

1 15/August 15 dates were inconsistent with this decision. Accordingly, the clubs decided that
2 adopting the March 10/August 10 cut off dates to support the current scheduling approach
3 was acceptable.
4

5 **Change**

6

- 7 1. March 10 for the spring season and August 10 for the fall season. This submission is
8 used by the SFL to validate that the club has a sufficient number of players to support the
9 registered teams. Valid uniform numbers are not required for this submission and the
10 player assignments to a team are not binding, i.e., the clubs are free to reassign players to
11 other teams.
12

13 **Note:** Teams without sufficient players, as defined by the SFL, will automatically be
14 dropped and not scheduled. If a club fails to submit a Master Player Roster by the
15 submission deadline, then all teams from that club will be dropped.
16

17 **Note:** This change makes the initial Master Player Roster submission dates consistent with
18 the final dates for making changes to the teams registered and considered for
19 scheduling. It also makes clear that a club must submit the initial Master Player
20 Roster Summary if it wants the SFL to schedule its teams.
21

22 **Section VII. – Game Cancellations and Rescheduling Games**

23

24 **Issue/Proposal** – Several clubs routinely change the fields used for games before the game is
25 played. For example, over 10 percent of the regular season games were changed after
26 September 1, 2019, in the Fall 2019 season. In some cases, these are caused by teams
27 desiring a change, weather cancellations, and situations beyond the control of the club, e.g.,
28 field permit unexpectedly withdrawn, etc. In other cases, the club has allocated the ultimate
29 field to other programs and on the week of the scheduled game, they are notified or decide
30 that program does not need the field so they decide to move the SFL games to that field. This
31 causes unnecessary work for the SFL and the visiting teams. Compounding the problem,
32 although required by the SFL rules, the visiting coach may not be notified of the change, i.e.,
33 the visiting coach and the coach's parents and players are expected to check the SFL web
34 after Wednesday to find out the new game field.
35

36 During the Fall 2019 season, the SFL processed 355 changes to the regular season games
37 after September 1, 2019. These changes represented about 11 percent of the games scheduled
38 to be played. In some cases these changes were caused by teams wanting to change the
39 schedule, weather related closures, etc. However, over 200 or about 57 percent of these
40 changes were made to change the field, and in some cases, the game time on the originally
41 specified game date. For most clubs these changes were immaterial and clearly done because
42 for the expected reasons. However, for two clubs this did not appear to be the case. These
43 two clubs represented over 40 percent of the changes where the game date did not change but

1 the field was changed. These changes for these two clubs represented 45.7 percent and 33.8
2 percent of the games scheduled on their fields.

3
4 In order to provide an incentive for clubs to provide reliable field information to the SFL
5 when the schedules are being developed and minimize these disruptions, the SFL believes
6 that clubs abusing the rescheduling process should be penalized financially. While in some
7 cases such reschedules are necessary, e.g., unexpected losses of field permits, weather issues,
8 etc., the SFL believes that a meaningful means is available to (1) minimize the record
9 keeping and (2) potential problems in developing a reasonable definition of what is
10 considered a billable change. Simply assessing the clubs which average more than one
11 change per team where the game date does not change but the game field does a \$20 penalty
12 would provide a financial incentive to provide reliable field information during the game
13 scheduling process.

14 **Discussion**

15
16
17 A great deal of discussion took place on this change. After the explanation of what would
18 and what would not be considered a game schedule change applicable to this penalty the
19 clubs agree to adopt this rule change. It was agreed that the SFL would monitor this situation
20 to determine whether any additional changes may be needed.

21 **Change**

22
23
24 **VII.E. Excessive Game Schedule Changes** – The SFL recognizes that game schedule
25 changes are needed for a variety of reasons that include weather closures, field
26 permitting authorities revoking permits after the season has started, teams desires, etc.
27 However, it has also found cases where the game schedule changes were done simply
28 because the club did not have a process to ensure that the fields assigned to the games
29 during the scheduling process were the fields the teams would ultimately use for the
30 games when they were played. The reasons for this vary, e.g., dedicating the ultimate
31 field to other leagues even when those leagues did not use the field when their initial
32 schedules were developed, etc. In some cases, the change is only the field, i.e., the
33 game time does not change (commonly referred to as field only changes) while in
34 other cases the game time is also changed. Such changes create a burden on the SFL
35 and the opposing teams to make these changes. Compounding the adverse effects of
36 these changes, although required by the rules, experience has shown that the opposing
37 team is not always properly notified of the change and the hosting club expects the
38 opposing team’s parents and players to check the SFL web site. Clubs which are
39 unable to implement effective game scheduling practices should be penalized.

- 40
41 1. Clubs which average more than one (1) change per team where the game date
42 does not change but a different field is used will be assessed a \$20 per game
43 penalty. For example, a club that has ten (10) teams and nine (9) changes where

1 the game date remains the same but the game field changes would not be assessed
2 any penalty while the same club having eleven (11) such changes would be
3 assessed a \$220 penalty.
4

5 **PROPOSED RULES**

6 7 **Section V. – The Referee**

8 9 **Current Wording**

10
11 C. Clubs are expected to provide adequate officials for the games. If adequate officials
12 cannot be provided, then (1) the visiting team should be notified by Friday night that the
13 game cannot be played and (2) a forfeit will be assessed to the home team.
14

15 **Issue/Proposal** – While the rules require the clubs to provide officials as required by US
16 Youth Soccer and VYSA, numerous reports have been received where the expected game
17 officials were either (1) not present or (2) not the number required, e.g., only a center official
18 without the 2 referee assistants. While the current rules clearly state that when no game
19 officials are present the home team is assessed a forfeit, the rules are silent on whether a team
20 can request a forfeit or when to use the game results under such conditions as (1) the required
21 number of officials are not present, (2) the teams agree on someone to act as the game
22 official, (3) although the teams agree that the home team will forfeit a game, but decide to
23 scrimmage, etc.
24

25 The issue of having less than the recommended number of game officials for a game was
26 discussed in the rules used prior the major restructuring of the rules, processes, and
27 procedures and inadvertently deleted. This material has been included in the proposal below.
28

29 **Change**

30
31 **V.C.1.** It is recognized that, in most cases, the coach of the home team has very little, if any,
32 control over whether officials will be present for a game. Therefore, should a
33 situation arise in which at least one USSF certified official is not present by game
34 time plus 15 minutes, the visiting team is encouraged to select one of the following
35 options rather than accepting the forfeit and leaving the field of play.
36

- 37 a. **Option 1** – Reschedule the game for a later date. (In this situation, the home team
38 may want to consider offering to play at the visiting team's home field.)
39
- 40 b. **Option 2** – Play the game and using team officials agreeable to both coaches.
41 Should this option be adopted, the game results are binding and neither team may
42 request a forfeit.
43

1 (1) If the two coaches believe that a safe and effective match can be played, then
2 they should play as long as the safety and the rules of the sport are not
3 sacrificed. If either coach believes that the match cannot be safely and
4 effectively played, then the coaches should consider a rematch. However, the
5 visiting coach does have the right to accept a forfeit.
6

7 (a) If a forfeit is accepted because either coach does not believe that a safe and
8 effective game can be played, then the teams should leave the field. In
9 other words, the teams should not use the game as a scrimmage. If the
10 teams do decide the scrimmage, then both teams are assessed a forfeit.
11

12 **Section IX.B.1.b.(2) – Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League**

13 **Current Wording**

14
15
16 (2) **Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League** – Conduct that warrants a
17 two game suspension rather than the standard one game suspension or not
18 specifically covered by other infractions. Examples, include racial slurs, non
19 players (such as coaching staff or spectators) being asked to leave the field or
20 shown a red card, inappropriate behavior toward a game official, etc.
21 Inappropriate conduct toward a game official includes persistent inappropriate
22 comments, verbal threats, being followed to the parking lot in an inappropriate
23 manner, or other actions that would make a referee fear for his/her safety.
24

25 **Discussion**

26
27 The SFL has a zero tolerance policy toward the use of racial slurs.
28 Unfortunately, we have seen an increasing number of complaints of racial
29 slurs being used. In some of the reports the coaches noted that this was “trash
30 talk” and “players say this a lot to each other,” etc. In effect, the inference was
31 that this behavior was not considered to be harmful or offensive.
32 Unfortunately this is a subjective judgement and what is not offensive to one
33 person may be offensive to another. History has shown such statements have
34 resulted in very unpleasant situations on the field.
35

36 **Issue/Proposal** – The current rules do not specifically mention hate speech or taunting as
37 warranting a two (2) game suspension and it is unclear whether such language is prohibited
38 or warrants even a one (1) game suspension. The SFL needs to clarify its policy on such
39 speech. In addition, it is unclear what warrants the imposition of the penalty. For example,
40 when the opposing team reports such language, should the SFL impose the penalty? History
41 has shown that racial slurs, hate speech, and taunting have resulted in very unpleasant
42 situations on the field or in the “parking lot” after the game.
43

1 **Change**

2
3 (2) **Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League** – Conduct that warrants a two game
4 suspension rather than the standard one game suspension or not specifically covered by
5 other infractions. Examples, include racial slurs, hate speech, taunting, non players (such
6 as coaching staff or spectators) being asked to leave the field or shown a red card,
7 inappropriate behavior toward a game official, etc. Inappropriate conduct toward a game
8 official includes persistent inappropriate comments, verbal threats, being followed to the
9 parking lot in an inappropriate manner, or other actions that would make a referee fear for
10 his/her safety.

11
12 (a) When a report of inappropriate language is received, the SFL will (1) request a game
13 report from the home team’s club, (2) ask for a referee report, and (3) request the
14 appropriate SFL Club Representative to take any other actions considered necessary
15 to validate the claim. Should the claim be validated, then the appropriate penalties
16 will be imposed.

17
18 **Discussion**

19
20 The SFL has a zero tolerance policy toward the use of racial slurs, hate speech, taunting,
21 etc. Unfortunately, we have seen an increasing number of complaints of taunting along
22 with racial slurs, and hate speech being used. In some of the reports the coaches noted
23 that this was “trash talk” and “players say this a lot to each other,” etc. In effect, the
24 inference was that this behavior was not considered to be harmful or offensive.
25 Unfortunately this is a subjective judgement and what is not offensive to one person may
26 be offensive to another. History has shown such statements have resulted in very
27 unpleasant situations on the field or in the “parking lot” after the game.

28
29 **Section IX.B.2.d. – Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – Three Team Demerits**

30
31 **Current Wording**

32
33 d. **Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – Three Team Demerits.** Conduct by
34 members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other
35 suspension or team offenses and warrant three Team Demerits. Examples include actions
36 that warrant review by VYSA.

37
38 **Issue/Proposal** – In some cases the activities of non players may be so disruptive, abusive,
39 offensive, etc. that the appropriate penalty is to assess the team eight (8) Team Demerits
40 which would result in the team being suspended for the remainder of the season and placed
41 on probation should the team be allowed to return the following season. In other cases, the
42 Team Demerits assessed may not result in a total of eight (8) Team Demerits but warrant
43 significant penalties to eliminate potential problems in future games. In such cases, the

1 appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner may impose a limit of non players allowed to
2 attend future games. Specifically, the SFL Age Group Commissioner may allow only two (2)
3 individuals that are not players to attend a given team’s game – the coach and one other
4 individual to ensure that no other non players, e.g., parents, friends of the players, etc.,
5 associated directly or indirectly with the team are no closer than 100 yards from the field of
6 play.

7
8 **Change**
9

10 **IX.B.2.d. Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – Three Team Demerits.** Conduct
11 by members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other
12 suspension or team offenses and warrant three Team Demerits. Examples include
13 actions that warrant review by VYSA.

14
15 (1) In extreme cases, the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner may impose
16 limit of non players allowed to attend future games for at least two games up
17 to the remainder of the season when at least one (1) other SFL Age Group
18 Commissioner concurs that such a penalty is warranted. Specifically, the SFL
19 Age Group Commissioner may allow only two (2) individuals that are not
20 players to attend a given team’s game – the coach and one other individual to
21 ensure that no other non players, e.g., parents, friends of the players, etc.,
22 associated directly or indirectly with the team are no closer than 100 yards
23 from the field of play.

24
25 (a) When such a penalty is imposed, it is up to the appropriate SFL Club
26 Representative to ensure that (1) the team and its supporters are notified of
27 the penalty, (2) ensure that the two (2) individuals allowed to attend the
28 game representing the team are capable of enforcing the penalty and
29 notifying the club and SFL that the penalty was not properly enforced, e.g.,
30 one or more parents were closer than 100 yards from the field of play.

31
32 (i.) Should the penalty not be properly enforced, the (1) the team will be
33 suspended for the remainder of the season and (2) placed on probation,
34 should the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner allow the team
35 to return the following season.

36
37 (ii.) Should the opposing coach believe that the penalty is not being
38 properly enforced by the two (2) individuals allowed to represent
39 the team, then (1) the game official should be notified and asked to
40 include this information in the game report and (2) contact the SFL
41 via Email that they believe a violation of the suspension occurred
42 with a full description of the violation.
43

- 1 a) The game should continue to be played and no forfeit assessed
2 until the SFL reviews the matter. Specifically, the SFL will make a
3 final determination on whether the team violated the suspension.
4

5 **Section IX.C. Individual and Team Demerits**

6 **Current Wording**

- 7
8
9 1. **Individual suspensions** – An individual that receives three (3) Individual Demerits
10 during a season, including post season tournament play, is automatically suspended for
11 the remainder of the season including tournament play.
12

13 **Issue/Proposal** – The effective penalty associated with a season suspension may result in a
14 inconsistent treatment depending on when the third Individual Demerit is received. For
15 example, assume a player received the third Individual Demerit in the fourth week of an eight
16 week regular season. The player would be suspended for the remaining 4 regular season
17 games and any tournament games the team may play. Accordingly, the player may be
18 suspended for up to six (6) games (four regular season and two tournament games). On the
19 other hand, if the player received the third Individual Demerit in the next to last game the
20 team plays for an infraction that normally requires a one game suspension, then the player
21 may participate in the following season with no game suspension carryover. The rules need
22 to (1) clearly state the maximum number of games an individual is suspended when a season
23 suspension is issued and (2) under what conditions the game suspension(s) carry over to the
24 following season.
25

26 **Discussion**

27
28 A great deal of discussion took place on the appropriate penalties that should be imposed
29 when an individual receives three (3) Individual Demerits in a season. There was consensus
30 that the season suspension was warranted during the season where the Individual Demerits
31 were received regardless of when those demerits were received. The concern was how the
32 game suspensions should be carried over to next season. The overall consensus was that the
33 clubs did not want to establish a minimum number of games that is used for carry over
34 suspensions. Rather the SFL was directed to adopt a rule that used the following guidelines.
35

- 36 • Individuals receiving their third Individual Demerit in either the last regular season game
37 or a tournament game would automatically be assessed at least one (1) Individual Demerit
38 for the following season. This “carryover” Individual Demerit would help to eliminate
39 the individual should the unacceptable behavior continue in the following season. For
40 example, assume that a player receiving the season suspension had a violent conduct
41 infraction in the following season. This one (1) “carryover” Individual Demerit would be
42 combined with the two (2) Individual Demerits for the violent conduct offense and the
43 player would be suspended of the remainder of the following season.

- 1 • The game suspensions in the following season should be consistent with the current
2 practice as if the individual had not received three (3) Individual Demerits in one season.
3 For example, assume the individual received a red card for serious foul play in the last
4 game of the season. The one game suspension would carry over to the following season.
5 On the other hand, if the player had received the red card in the next to the last game of
6 the season and did not participate in last game, then the player would not serve any
7 suspensions in the following season. However, in this example, the one (1) “carryover”
8 Individual Demerit would still be assessed.
9
- 10 • A discussion was held about the ability of the Red Card system to handle situations where
11 the infraction warranted a two (2) game suspension in the following season, e.g., a violent
12 conduct infraction in the final season game but only assess a one (1) “carry over”
13 Individual Demerit. It was agreed that this would be reviewed by the SFL and if it was
14 found that this situation would require a carryover of two (2) carryover Individual
15 Demerits by the current system, then the rules should state that applicable SFL Age
16 Group Commissioner should be allowed to waive one (1) of the “carryover” Individual
17 Demerits to prevent the player from being suspended for the subsequent season when
18 warranted. For example, assume that a player received a red card in the following season
19 because of the accumulation of two (2) yellow cards. If the player had two (2) carry over
20 Individual Demerits, then the player may be suspended for another season and, in this
21 case, the season suspension penalty may be considered excessive. Accordingly, based on
22 the information received, the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner could waive one
23 of the “carryover” Individual Demerits.
24

25 **Change**

- 26
- 27 **XII.C.1. Individual Suspensions** – An individual that receives three (3) Individual
28 Demerits during a season, including post season play, is automatically suspended
29 for the remainder of the current season. In addition, if the third Individual
30 Demerit is received in either the last regular season game played by the team or a
31 tournament game, then the individual will also be assessed a “carryover”
32 Individual Demerit for the following season. Such “carryover” Individual
33 Demerits will be combined with any Individual Demerits received by the
34 individual during the subsequent season to determine whether the player should be
35 suspended for the remainder of the subsequent season. For example, assume an
36 individual had one “carryover” Individual Demerit and then received a red card
37 for violent conduct in game 1 of the following season. The individual would be
38 suspended for the remainder of the following season.
39

40 **Example A**

41
42 Player A receives a third Individual Demerit in a week 3 game and the team plays
43 five (5) more regular season games plus two (2) tournament games. Player A is

1 suspended for the remainder of the season and is not assessed a “carryover”
2 Individual Demerit for the following season. In addition, the player does not have
3 any “carryover” game suspensions since the player was suspended more than
4 games than the last infraction would warrant.
5

6 **Example B**

7
8 Player A receives a third individual Demerit in the team’s final regular season
9 game. The standard game suspension for the infraction is two (2) games and the
10 team plays one (1) tournament game. The player would be assessed one (1)
11 “carryover” Individual Demerit and suspended for the first game of the following
12 season since the individual had only served one (1) game of the standard two (2)
13 game suspension.
14

15 **Example C**

16
17 Player A receives a third individual Demerit in the team’s final regular season
18 game. The standard game suspension for the infraction is one (1) game and the
19 team plays one (1) tournament game. The player would be assessed one (1)
20 “carryover” Individual Demerit. The player would be allowed to play in the first
21 game of the following season since the individual had served the standard one (1)
22 game suspension for the infraction that resulted in the third Individual Demerit.
23

24 **PROPOSALS NOT ADOPTED**

25
26 **Adopting A Different Scheduling Approach**

27
28 **Proposed Change**

29
30 The SFL developed a paper that discussed four (4) possible changes to the current regular
31 season scheduling approach. These changes were designed to address comments received
32 concerning the current process and the ability for clubs to add and drop teams later in the
33 process and the requirement to submit Master Player Rosters to determine team vitality.
34

35 **Discussion**

36
37 A discussion was held on benefits and disadvantages of the proposals over the current
38 process. It was agreed that retaining the current scheduling approach with the revised
39 submission of dates of March 10 and August 10 should be adopted.
40

Adding “Placeholder” Games to the Schedules

Proposed Change

A proposal was received that the SFL should add “placeholder” games to the game schedule to show that teams would be playing tournament games. It was believed that this change would (1) show the teams that they would be scheduled for more than the regular season games shown on their initial schedule and (2) show the clubs that their fields would be needed for tournament games.

Discussion

This proposal was not adopted since it would probably create more confusion than the existing process and unnecessary work. Examples of the issues associated with generating “placeholder” games include the following.

- Two placeholder games would need to be developed for each team with their opponent shown as To Be Determined. This would more than double the number of actual tournament games actually played. For example, assuming a 4 team single elimination division is used, three (3) tournament games are played. However, to create the placeholder games for these four (4) teams, a total of eight (8) games would need to be created since a Saturday and Sunday game would need to be created for each team. Creating these eight (8) games would cause issues on the field pages used by the clubs to understand their game support requirements. Using this example, their field page would show that the club needed to provide field slots to support eight (8) games rather than the three (3) actually required.
- A game time would need to be assigned to each game. Otherwise the web site considers the game to be unscheduled, i.e., it does not show the game date. Accordingly, all these games would need to have a standard game time, e.g., 8:30 AM. When the actual tournament schedules are generated then the teams may complain about the actual game time when it differed from the “placeholder” time, e.g., “we made plans using an 8:30 AM game and now we are being told it is 3:30 PM so we cannot play”. In addition, since “placeholder” games for all teams show the trophy game although only two (2) teams are playing, teams may also complain about losing their second tournament game.
- The tournament dates are already clearly shown on each team’s game schedule on the web site, shown on the web site’s calendar, and discussed in the season package.