

Suburban Friendship League
2416 Rosedown Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1620
February 15, 2021

Dear Club Representative:

First, thank you for all of your hard work in providing a safe, enjoyable soccer environment for our players. We know that this season has already been stressful and difficult and we really appreciate your commitment to the SFL. This letter is going to be different from letters of the past so we appreciate your understanding and patience.

CLUB PARTICIPATING WITH THE SFL

As you know, in January we sent out an Email with a letter requesting a commitment from the clubs on their participation in the SFL for the Spring 2021 season. This Email was in response to several clubs who requested the SFL make a commitment to the season much earlier than the originally scheduled date of mid March. As noted in the January Email and attached letter, the SFL was committed to the Spring 2021 season as long as the clubs were committed to registering teams. We requested the clubs to let us know by February 15, 2021, if they planned to participate. As it turns out, several of the clubs requesting the SFL to make a commitment earlier than March 15 decided that they did not want to commit to the SFL this season.

Based on the responses received, the SFL believes that it has enough club participation to schedule games for the Spring 2021 season although the SFL will be much smaller than in previous seasons. The following clubs have committed to be part of the SFL this season.

- Annandale
- Braddock Road
- Burke Athletic
- Fairfax
- Fauquier
- Gunston
- Herndon
- Lee-Mt. Vernon
- Northern Virginia
- Old Dominion
- Southwestern
- Springfield
- Warrenton

Seven clubs responded that they did not plan on participating while the remaining clubs either did not respond or were still undecided. We wish all these clubs the best in whatever option they pursue to provide games outside of the SFL.

A “back of the envelope” calculation indicates that we should have at least 10 teams per age group which is our minimum number of teams to support an efficient schedule. We also realize that making a real commitment of teams at this point is a waste of time so we plan on being flexible.

PRESEASON MEETING

The SFL was not planning on having an in person preseason meeting. However, because of all the uncertainties the clubs may have with how we are going to proceed, we thought it might be better to

have our planned virtual meeting sooner than mid March. We also understand that it may be difficult for all to commit to one date. Accordingly, we would like to propose two meeting dates to provide our current thoughts and answer questions. We would like to propose the following dates and times.

- Friday, February 19, 2021 – 7 PM (If at all possible, we would like everyone to commit to this date and time)
- Saturday, February 20, 2021 – 7 PM

We are also willing to have some one-on-one video meetings if that is a better alternative or you would like to discuss some specific club issues. Please let us know what you think of these proposed meeting times.

GAME APPROACH

In our original paper we proposed two options and the responses we received back did not provide a clear choice. We are very concerned about the ability to support a tournament because of external factors beyond our control. However, it is clear that many clubs want a tournament. We are also concerned about finalizing the teams on March 10 based on the responses of several clubs. In addition, at least in Fairfax County, schools are not going to reopen until after that date. At this time we still think there are too many unknowns and would like to propose a third option as a compromise.

- **Tournament** – It is clear that many clubs want a tournament and we have no problems to making an initial commitment. However, if either of the jurisdictions includes in their field permits that tournaments are not allowed, e.g., like Fairfax did last fall, then we will abandon the tournament at the season start and play regular season games on that weekend (see below). Although we do not know this now, we do believe it is reasonable to know this by April 1. Accordingly, we should know early on whether we are going to have a tournament for that reason. Regarding the requirement to play enough games, we still have concerns about that and can see how it works out. Regardless, if we cannot play the tournament, we can still schedule games for that weekend (see below).
- **Regular season games** – The decision on when to start games was also mixed. It appeared that many wanted to start one week later and we believe that this is a better approach since it gives the clubs an extra week to make sure they have enough players. Accordingly, we would like to use March 17 as the final cut off date for team changes and April 17 for the first game weekend. This should give us 7 regular season games with one tournament game weekend. This also should support the scheduling approach discussed below.
- **Scheduling approach** – We are going to schedule 8 weeks of regular season and “save” the week 8 games, i.e., they will not be displayed on the web site when the draft and initial game schedules are published. If the tournament is cancelled early in the season, e.g., Fairfax County says “No” tournament games in their permit, then we will “activate” those games and send out an Email to let everyone know. At that time they will appear on the web site. If we decide to cancel the tournament later in the season, we will work out how that will be done when the time arises. For those clubs that want to play games on April 10, we will let the clubs “work that out,” i.e., if

a team can find someone willing to play a game and a club can host it, then it can be played. All the club has to do is let us know and we will put it into the system.

- **Divisions** – We doubt that we will have enough teams in a given age group to have divisions. However, we will ask to see if we can support divisions.

PROPOSED RULES

We did not receive many comments back on our proposed rules. Accordingly, would like to discuss any proposed changes during our video conferences and reach a final consensus next week. We did receive a couple of comments that appear worthy of considering and discussing. They include the following.

- Increasing the time between game starts to allow more spacing. We think this is a good idea and would like to schedule the games 120 minutes apart for the U13 through U19 age groups and 105 minutes for the U 11 and U12 age groups. We need to know whether you have the field slots to implement this.
- One club noted that most of the web site software used by the clubs has a “health option” that the players and parents that must complete before each game and practice. It was suggested that we mandate the use of that where available. We would like some wording on how to put this in our guidelines.

BUDGET

The SFL has incurred significant expenses during the 2020 seasons. Originally, it was decided that we would not recover those associated with the Spring 2020 season until the Fall season. Those were estimated be \$40 per team registered in the Spring 2020 season. The SFL Commissioner agreed that we would defer collecting those until the Spring 2021 season once the Fall 2020 season was cancelled and that the SFL would not assess any fees associated with the costs incurred for the Fall 2020 season. It has been decided that we will once again defer the collection of the Spring 2020 costs since a large number of clubs are not participating in the Spring 2021 season and these collections will be assessed in the Fall 2021 season.

A significant factor in our fees are the costs associated with the tournament. Since we do not know whether the tournament can be held, we have decided to adopt a two tiered approach. Specifically, we plan on maintaining our normal registration fee and the amount returned to the clubs for referee reimbursement costs should the tournament be held. This fee was established for the Spring 2015 season. Should the tournament be cancelled by April 1, then we will adjust the bills and give a credit for the tournament costs that will be avoided. If the tournament is cancelled later, then the credit will be applied to the Fall 2021 season’s fees. The following are the proposed fees, credit if the tournament is cancelled, and referee reimbursement rate.

Age Group	Registration Fee (per team)	Potential Tournament Credit (per team)	Tournament Referee Reimbursement (per game)
Under 11/12	\$215	\$115	\$75
Under 13/14	\$245	\$145	\$95
Under 16	\$265	\$165	\$125
Under 19	\$290	\$190	\$125

As can be seen in the above table, the season fees for web development and operating expenses are expected to be about \$100 per team.

SFL COMMISSIONERS NEEDED

We are accepting nominations for the SFL Commissioner and SFL Age Group Commissioners for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 seasons. Greg Giovanis has now moved out of the area. He currently handles 2 age groups (Under 16 Boys and Under 19 Girls) and he has stated that while he is willing to continue this remotely, long term we need others to handle these age groups. If you would like to become an SFL Commissioner please let us know.

KEY DATES

In our registration Email we provided the club, team, and field information which is what we sent out for the Fall 2020 season. We recognize that this will be of little use, however, it may be of help. **PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO CHECK THE ADDRESSES OF YOUR FIELDS (www.sflsoccer.org/field-directions). We have a link to Google Maps for each field so the correct address is more important than ever.** If at all possible, please provide us the updated field information as soon as possible by Email (sfl@sflsoccer.org) and **DO NOT** wait until March 17. Waiting until the last minute does not allow any time to correct mistakes that may be made by your club or the SFL. Also, pay particular attention to a team's age group and division information. Each season we have several clubs make mistakes in this area.

The dates below assume that the March 17 deadline for team changes and April 17 for the first week's games will be approved, if not, then the key dates will be moved back by 7 days. Please note the requirements to provide the Master Player Roster (**without uniform numbers**) for all your players by March 17. The following are the key dates for team registrations, scheduling, and rosters:

Date	Event
March 1	Initial date for providing team information to better understand the expected size of the Spring 2021. If a team is dropped after this date, then the club will be assessed the registration fee for this team. Accurate team contact information is not required at this time.

March 17	Deadline to provide club contacts, field information, and team numbers (including age group and division) and fields that should be used by each team. Accurate team contact information is not required at this time. In addition, a Master Player Roster that contains all registered players and team assignments for all the teams registered with the SFL. Accurate uniform numbers are not required for this submission.
April 3	Expected deadline for changes to team contact information. The SFL Club Representatives will be notified of the actual date when the actual date for the team contact information is better known.
April 10	Game schedules finalized and the package sent to the contractor for mailing.
April 14	Deadline for providing the Master Player Roster that will be used by the SFL to generate the SFL Team Rosters.
April 15/16	SFL Team Rosters provided to Club Representatives for distribution to teams.
April 17	First game weekend.
May 5	Last day to submit changes on the Master Player Roster – SFL Team Rosters considered final.

ELECTRONIC CLUB AND TEAM REGISTRATION

As noted in the registration Emails that were sent to the SFL Club Representatives, Field Coordinators with Email, and Referees Coordinators with Email, we are using an electronic process to obtain our registration information. Attached to that Email were several Excel spread sheets and files. As noted in the Email, these Excel files have been changed from prior seasons and are the only ones that should be used.

- CLUB TEAM REGISTRATION.XLSX** (e.g., LM CLUB TEAM REGISTRATION.XLSX) – This Excel file is used to provide the SFL with club and team information. It is designed to (1) capture all the required contact information in one file along with the teams that should be registered, (2) eliminate the need to provide duplicate contact information except when an individual coaches more than one team and/or is the SFL Club Representative, and (3) provide error checking on the data entered to eliminate common errors such as using duplicate team names in the same age group which results in teams not being registered, assigning more than one person to the same non coaching role, and imputing data that does not conform to certain business rules. **PLEASE REVIEW THE ERROR MESSAGES SHOWN ON THE FORM AND MAKE THE NECESSARY CHANGES PRIOR TO SUBMITTING THE FORM TO THE SFL.** Only the teams contained on this list that are received by the registration dead line will be considered registered. Any additions made after this date will be put on a waiting list and (1) may not be scheduled or (2) scheduled with other teams on the waiting list which means that they may be playing with teams that are not in their geographical location. **It is not important**

to have accurate team contact information by the registration dead line. Therefore, you may use the existing team contact information as a place holder for that team even if you know that a change will be made but have not yet identified the new contact. The team contact information can be changed at a later date as discussed elsewhere in this letter. Failure to provide accurate information by the deadline subjects your club at best to a penalty. It may also result in none of your teams being registered.

- **CLUB TEAM REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS** – This document provides detailed instructions on how to complete the CLUB TEAM REGISTRATION Excel file and how to perform actions, such as sorting data, that may be desired but not directly supported by the spread sheet.
- **MASTER PLAYER ROSTER.XLSX** – This spread sheet is used to show all the players that have been assigned to a team. If you would like a copy of what we used last season, please let us know. We have also posted a blank form on the web site on the SFL Forms page (<http://www.sflsoccer.org/sfl4e.xlsx>) that can be used for this season. Please use the updated form on the web site or the form that we sent with the Email since it contains some updated features that were designed to address problems experienced by some in the past.
- **MASTER PLAYER ROSTER INSTRUCTIONS** – Detailed instructions on how to complete the Master Player Roster.
- **FIELD SLOTS.XLS (e.g., LMFIELD.XLS)** – **This spread sheet is used to provide the field information that should be used for three purposes – scheduling teams, rescheduling games, and possible tournament fields.** The fields shown in this listing were the fields used in previous seasons. **Only fields that are going to be used for scheduling regular season games need to have Columns D – U completed.** In other words, if the field is only going to be used for possible makeup games or the tournament, all you need to complete is Columns A – C which is the club name and field name. **PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO PUT IN THE FIELD NAMES THAT MAY BE USED FOR RESCHEDULING GAMES OR USED IN THE TOURNAMENT.** It will save you and the SFL time later when games need to be rescheduled or added to support your teams for the tournament. **IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO NOT CHANGE OR DELETE THE FIELD NAME INFORMATION SHOWN. You may change the location, e.g., “1” to “Turf 1”.** The new data base we are using keeps old games in it and needs to keep this information for its use.

We have included explanations on each of the spread sheets to help clarify the data that is needed and welcome any suggestions that would improve their usefulness to you. These Excel files contain the information from last season and you may change the data to reflect your changes. However, **PLEASE DO NOT CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE COLUMNS IN THESE SPREAD SHEETS.**

If you would like a blank form, then send us an Email. Additional information on each of these Excel files is provided below.

Special Note: If you are an AOL user, you may need to save your changes under a different file name before you send them back to us. In the past, for some reason, AOL did not pick up the revised file.

Club and Team Contact Information

We realize that if an individual is both an SFL Club Representative and a coach or coaches two or more teams their name will appear on the CLUB TEAM REGISTRATION spread sheet more than once. This is okay. When the data base is loaded with this information, it eliminates the duplicates. However, it is critical, that the name, address, phone number, and Email addresses are identical each time it is used. (The last time the name is used in the file is the one that is used for all the other names when the data base is updated.) Another item that helps to avoid confusions involves coaches with 2 or more teams. If a person is coaching more than one team in different age groups, then make sure that the same standard team name is used for both teams. For example, if a person in McLean is coaching an Under 14 Boys team and an Under 16 Girls team, then the standard team name for both teams should be the same, e.g., McLean 1. Please note that we may have made some changes that affect coaches with two teams.

Each club is required to provide/confirm the name, address, and phone information for the Club, SFL Club Representative, Referee Coordinator, and Field Coordinator for the club. Only one name may be shown for each of these roles. If a club desires to send information to other individuals who may assist with these roles or desires that other individuals, such as club age group commissioners, receive SFL mailings, then these individuals should be shown as “Club Other.” For example, some clubs have more than one person who handles field assignments. The primary person should be shown under the “Field” role and a secondary person should be shown under “Club Other.” An easy way to ensure that all the field people get any Emails relating to fields, is to include their Email address with the one provided to the individual shown as the Field Coordinator (the same applies to the Referee Coordinator). SFL Club Representatives automatically get a copy of these Emails.

Field Spread Sheets

The field spread sheet, FIELD SLOTS.XLS contains (1) the field information that is used to schedule the regular season games and (2) the fields that may be used to reschedule games or support tournament games. We realize that it is somewhat complicated. Hopefully, the following will make it a little easier to understand.

- **Field Name and Location** – The name of the game field, e.g., Baron Cameron 1, Baron Cameron 2, etc. – This is required for all fields that may be used for any purpose. The listing shows the fields used in previous seasons. **When in doubt, put in a name.** It will save the club and SFL time later in the season when games need to be rescheduled or the tournament is scheduled.
- **First Time Slot (Saturday)** – Only required if the field is going to be used for regular season games. The first game time available on that field when that field is normally used for Saturday games, e.g., 8:30, 1:00 PM, etc. Games will not be scheduled before 8:30 AM and the first time slot should normally be 9:00 or later.

- **Games Must End By (Saturday)** – Only required if the field is going to be used for regular season games. If the field is not available the entire day, then the time that the last game must end, e.g., 3:00 PM. If the game field is available the entire day, then enter 6:00 PM. (Do not worry, we will not schedule games after dark.)
- **First Time Slot (Sunday)** – Only required if the field is going to be used for regular season games. The first game time available on that field when that field is normally used for Sunday games, e.g., 1:00 PM, etc. Games will not be scheduled before 12:30 PM and the first time slot should normally be 1:00 PM or later. If the field is not normally used for regular season Sunday games, i.e., only used for makeups, then leave the times blank, i.e., if your club normally plays its regular season home games on Saturday, then leave the fields blank.
- **Games Must End By (Sunday)** – Only required if the field is going to be used for regular season games. If the field is not available the entire day, then the time that the last game must end, e.g., 3:00 PM. If the game field is available the entire day, then enter 6:00 PM. (Do not worry, we will not schedule games after dark.)
- **Time slot minutes** – Only required if the field is going to be used for regular season games. AS noted elsewhere, we would like this to be 2 hours for the Under 13 though Under 19 age groups and 1 hour and 45 minutes for the Under 11 and Under 12 age groups. The minimum time allowed is 90 minutes.
- **Game Schedule Order** – Only required if the field is going to be used for regular season games. The order that should be used to schedule games on a field, e.g., 19 Boys, then 14 Boys, then 14 Girls, etc. A value is only required to be entered if a given age group plays on the field. For example, if only 12s play on the field, then add the appropriate values for the 12 Boys and 12 Girls. The other columns may be left blank. **When in doubt, put in a value** since if the field is used for a given age group and no value is shown, it will be scheduled in the first available slot which may not be the desired order and require the club to make significant changes when the draft schedules are prepared. For example, assume that Field A (1) is used for 14 Boys, (2) is used on some weeks by a 16 Boys team, and (3) has the first time slot starting at 8:30. If only a value for the Under 14 Boys is shown and a game for 16 Boys is scheduled on that field, then the 16 Boys team will be scheduled at 8:30 rather than the last game of the day although the club would rather the 16 Boys team play the last game on the day when it ends up on that field. Although these games can be changed after the draft schedules are prepared, it will save the club and SFL a great deal of time and effort to do it correctly at the start. Do not worry if an age group does not end up using that field. The system schedules the first team available in the first slot. Using the example above, if the club stated that 16 Boys should be scheduled first and 14 Boys second and no 16 Boys teams ended up scheduled on the field, then the 14 Boys games would always start at 8:30.

MASTER PLAYER ROSTER AND SFL TEAM ROSTERS

The SFL Club Representative must submit a preliminary Master Player Roster (SFL Form 4E) to the SFL (sfl@sflsoccer.org) by March 17. This roster is not required to contain the uniform numbers of the players. The attached Club and Coach Guide discusses the requirements for the Master Player Roster and the related Master Player Roster Summary that are generated by the SFL based on the Master Player Roster submission. A blank Master Player Roster form was included in the Email for your use. Each of these spread sheets has an Instructions work sheet that describes how to complete the form and the steps that should be taken to check the data before submission and correct errors. A PDF version of these instructions has been posted to the web site under SFL Forms. The data contained on the Master Player Roster is used to generate the SFL Team Rosters. The Club and Coach Guide discusses the requirements related to SFL Team Rosters. The Club and Coach Guide can also be found on the web site on the SFL Documents page.

MAILING PROCESS

We normally perform three mailings each season – preseason mailing (this package), season package, and a tournament package. However, this season we are not going to have a preseason mailing since we are going to have our preseason mailing earlier than normal and the rules and guides are not planned to be changed except for the Covid supplement distributed earlier. All the mailings are handled by our contractor. An electronic version of this package is also distributed to the SFL Club Representatives by Email.

PRIVACY STATEMENT AND PUBLIC EMAIL ADDRESSES

The SFL Club Representatives decided several seasons ago that Email addresses should be provided to improve communication between the team contacts when those individuals agreed to have their Email addresses published. This is commonly referred to as an “opt in” policy. The procedures adopted to implement this policy were for the SFL Club Representatives to contact each of their teams and provide the Email address(es) that the team contacts desired the SFL to publish in the enclosed listing. We do not provide this information on the web site. Because of this change, the SFL updated its privacy policy and developed the process that would be used to manage it. Both of these documents are available on the web site on the SFL Documents page (<http://www.sflsoccer.org/sfldocs.htm>) and we suggest you take some time to review these documents. Please remember that you must have the team contact’s explicit permission to publish their Email address before you place that address in the public Email column of the spread sheet. This permission must be obtained each season.

FIELD DIRECTIONS

Field directions for all fields used for SFL games during the last 3 seasons have been posted to the web site (www.sflsoccer.org/field.htm). Please review the field address and field directions on the web site and make sure that they are still current and the phone numbers for game cancellations (www.sflsoccer.org/weather.htm) are correct. The field address is used by the web site to provide a link to Google Maps. The field directions presented also need to be reviewed since sometimes stop lights

have been added or exit numbers changed. As you will note, some of these fields were not used last season, however, we leave them in our data base since fields change from season to season and sometimes makeup games are scheduled on these fields. Therefore, when the Web Site is updated, the current field directions are available to be posted. In addition, if the field that you will be using this season is not on this list, then you will need to provide field directions. The phone numbers for field closings are also posted on the web site (<http://www.sflsoccer.org/weather.htm>) and should also be reviewed.

The SFL is expecting between 150 to 200 teams this season. We appreciate the confidence in our program and look forward to working with you this season. In developing the registration procedures, we attempted to maximize the flexibility in the registration and scheduling process that we have enjoyed in past seasons while reducing the impact of late additions and deletions.

If you have any questions or comments, you may call either Chris Martin (703-476-6611) or myself (703-471-7407). You may also Email us at sfl@sflsoccer.org.

Thank you for your continued support and I hope to see you at the meeting.

John Paladino
SFL Commissioner