

Suburban Friendship League
2416 Rosedown Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1620
June 30, 2021

Dear Club Representative:

First, thank you for all of your hard work in providing a safe, enjoyable soccer environment for our players. Please remind everyone involved that this is a recreation league and no one gets a college scholarship or a shoe contract based on these games. Play on!

This letter and package is a little different than the normal club and team registration package. The SFL has received requests from several clubs to adopt a regional scheduling approach. As discussed below, the SFL has given a great deal of thought to this so that the clubs have the information they need to decide (1) if they would like the SFL to implement some form of this concept for its regular season scheduling efforts and (2) the business rules necessary to effectively implement the desired solution. Depending on the clubs' desires, changes to the club and team registration process may be needed and the SFL needs to know certain information before the club and team registration process begins on July 15, 2021. Accordingly, we are holding a virtual preseason meeting on Friday, July 9, 2021, at 7 PM. We will send the link out for that later. This meeting will discuss all the proposed rule and process changes although we expect that most of the discussion will center on regional scheduling options.

Enclosed in your package are the following items along with this letter:

- Proposed rule changes for the Fall 2021 season
- Regional Concept for Regular Season Scheduling
- Proposed budget for the Fall 2021 season

The proposed rule changes document contains the changes that, if accepted by the clubs, will be incorporated in the Administrative Rules for the Laws of the Game, Club and Coach Guide, and COVID Guidelines. Since the proposed wording for a given change is included in the proposed rule changes document, we are not including the proposed rules documents in the mailing to save costs. However, they have been posted to the web site on the SFL Documents page.

We have also adopted the following agenda for our meeting:

- Opening statements by SFL Commissioner
- Election of SFL Commissioners
- Approval of weekend game dates (September 11, 18, 25, October 2, 16, 23, 30, and November 6)
- Approval of tournament weekend (November 13/14)
- Establishment of registration and tournament fees
- Discussion of proposed rules and process changes including regional scheduling options

- Discussion of rules to be used for the upcoming season
- Acceptance of rules, and registration fees to be used for the upcoming season
- Other matters

SFL COMMISSIONERS NEEDED

We are accepting nominations for the SFL Commissioner and SFL Age Group Commissioners for the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 seasons. If you would like to become an SFL Commissioner please let us know.

KEY DATES

We plan on sending out our registration Email as scheduled on July 15, 2021. In that Email we will provide the club, team, and field information from the previous season for your use as a starting point as discussed below. **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 August 10. 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 division structure is discussed below. Please note the requirements to provide the Master Player Roster (**without uniform numbers**) for all your players by August 10. The following are the key dates for team registrations, scheduling, and rosters:

Date	Event
August 1	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. If a team is dropped after this date, then the club will be assessed the registration fee for this team.
August 10	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. This is also the deadline for (1) providing accurate field information for scheduling and (2) adding any additional teams that should be scheduled, and (3) notifying the SFL of any teams registered previously that need to be dropped.
August 30	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.
September 1	Game schedules finalized and the package sent to the contractor for mailing.
September 8	Deadline for providing the Master Player Roster that will be used by the SFL to generate the SFL Team Rosters.

- September 11 First game weekend.
- September 28 Last day to submit changes on the Master Player Roster – SFL Team Rosters considered final.

PROCESS AND RULE CHANGES

Attached is a document discussing the proposed rule and process changes along with the recommendation of the SFL Commissioners on each item. (Minor word changes or clarifications are not shown.) These changes cover the following.

- Rules governing substitutions
- Mercy rules
- Uniform numbers for goalkeepers
- Tournament issues
- Retaining COVID guidelines
- Expanding the SFL to cover the Under 9 and Under 10 age groups starting with the Fall 2022 season
- Approach for the SFL recovering its fixed costs for the Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021 seasons
- Adopting a regional scheduling approach for regular season games

The Regional Concept for Regular Season Scheduling paper included in this package is a critical part of these rule and process changes. Please take some time to review this paper. Adopting a regional scheduling approach is more complicated than it may first appear.

AGE GROUPS AND DIVISION ASSIGNMENTS

In the registration Email, we will provide a file that shows (1) the Spring 2021 teams and (2) the proposed age group and division placement for those teams for the Fall 2021 season. The following is how we assigned the age groups and divisions to the teams shown in your file.

- **Division Changes** – Division changes were based on the Spring 2021 results. Generally, Division 1 teams with a game point percentage of 50 percent or less were dropped to Division 2 and Division 2 teams with a game point percentage of 65 to 69 percent or greater were moved to Division 1.

- **Age Groups** – For the U11/14 age groups, we simply moved those teams up one age group, e.g., U11 teams were moved to U12. The Under 16 and Under 19 teams were left in their respective age groups. Accordingly, the age group for those teams that have “aged up” will need to be changed.
- **Team Names** – Because of the number of changes made, we were unable to retain some of the team names from the Spring season since they would have resulted in duplications. We realize that this will cause some confusion. You are free to change any of the team names to what you would like to use. The file included in the registration Email shows (1) the team name changes made and (2) the Spring 2021 team contacts for each of the Fall 2021 teams shown to help make the transition.

Each season we have complaints on these proposed division changes especially the teams moving into the U16 and U19 age groups. Please remember that for the teams moved up to the 14 and younger age groups are essentially the same teams in that age group during the Spring 2021 season. For those teams moved to 16 and 19 age groups, the teams with the older players are also moved up and are no longer playing in that age group. For example, the Spring 2021 teams with a majority of 16s will be 19 teams. Accordingly, we recommend that you use the division assignments we recommend for each team. However, the club is free to assign any of its teams to any division they desire.

ELECTRONIC CLUB AND TEAM REGISTRATION

We are continuing to use an electronic process to obtain our club and team registration information. The Email that will be sent for obtaining club, team, and field information on July 15, 2021, will have several Excel spread sheets and files attached to it. 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. **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 team 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. Please use the updated form that we sent with the Email since it contains some updated features that were designed to address problems experienced by some last season.
- **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 shown is only going to be used for possible makeup games or the tournament you do not have to do anything. If you want to add a possible field for makeup or tournament games, 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 data base we are using keeps the 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, please let us know. 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 does 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.) The only other item that helps to avoid confusions involves coaches with two 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 Coordinator” 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.
- **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. The minimum time allowed is 90 minutes. However, the recommended spacing for the Under 16 and Under 19 age groups is at least 105 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 August 10. 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 will be 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.

SFL TOURNAMENT

The proposed per game tournament reimbursement rates for the current season are as follows:

- Under 11/12 (9 v 9) – \$75
- Under 13/14 – \$95
- Under 16/19 – \$125

These are the same fees that were paid last season. We want to establish rates that fairly compensate the officials for their time and attract the quality and number of officials that we need. If these rates are inadequate to reimburse your club for their officiating costs, please let us know the amounts that are adequate to cover your costs.

REGISTRATION FEES AND BUDGET

The SFL designs its registration fees to recover its costs and this season the SFL has maintained the registration fee structure that was adopted during the Spring 2015 season. As noted in the proposed rules, an additional assessment is planned to recover the SFL's fixed costs for the Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021 seasons. Since this amount has not yet been determined, the estimated amounts are not shown in the attached budget.

Some clubs have been confused by the SFL fee structure and why the fees vary by age group and exactly how the fees are used. As noted in the attached budget, the majority of the registration fees go to the tournament, i.e., reimbursing the clubs for the tournament officials provided and the tournament awards. Since the tournament reimbursement rates vary by age group, the amount needed to pay for those costs vary by age group. The remaining amount is to fund the SFL's operations. This amount, about \$100 per team regardless of age group, is broken down into two major components. The SFL spends about \$60 per team for administrative costs such as scheduling, server costs, insurance, corporate fees, packages sent to the clubs and teams, etc. The remaining \$40 is put in a system development fund that is designed to pay for system development and improvement efforts. This approach is taken so that the clubs have a stable basis for estimating their SFL costs from season to season and do not have to worry about special assessments that may be needed to fund a given improvement effort. This approach has enabled the SFL to maintain the same registration fee rates since the Spring 2015 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.

MAILING PROCESS

We perform three mailings each season – preseason mailing (this package), season package, and a tournament package. All the mailings are handled by our contractor. Electronic versions the packages are 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.

The SFL is expecting over 500 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