



SUBURBAN FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

COVID Guide
Fall 2021 Season

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Prologue

The SFL and clubs have identified a number of unique rules, procedures, and processes (commonly referred to as rules) that appear warranted because of the current COVID conditions. Rather than make the temporary changes in the various documents, it was decided that all changes would be included as a separate document for the current season. The rules below supercede the rules contained in other SFL documents unless otherwise stated.

**Suburban Friendship League
COVID Guide**

- I. Compliance with state, local, VYSA, and club COVID related guidelines** – The SFL does not have the resources needed to ensure compliance with applicable COVID guidelines without the clubs and teams being part of the solution.
- A. Club Requirements – Each club must provide the SFL a web link to its COVID related protocols for its home games prior to August 1. Failure to provide this information will automatically result in the club’s teams being dropped from the SFL. These web links will be published on the SFL website on the Club COVID Rules and Protocols page which can be found on the SFL Documents page or directly at <https://www.sflsoccer.org/club-covid-rules/>.
- B. Team Requirements – Each team is required to comply with its club’s “Health Check” requirements, e.g., entering the player and parent information into the club’s automated system before each practice and game, completing a club provided COVID – 19 Screening Questionnaire Signature Sheet, etc.
- C. Home Team COVID Return to Play Protocols – Each team is required to comply with the home team’s COVID related protocols or its club’s protocols whichever is stricter.
1. Game officials (or officials designed by the home team’s club) have the ability to enforce the home team club’s rules and protocols. These include taking the following actions.
 - a. Determining whether a team or individual is not complying with that club’s rules and protocols.
 - b. Requesting the team or individual to make the necessary adjustments to bring that individual or team into compliance with the club’s COVID rules and protocols.
 - c. Requesting removal of anyone not complying with the club’s COVID rules and protocols. These removals are treated as Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League and require at least a two (2) game suspension. The applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner may impose a three (3) game suspension which translates into a season suspension based on circumstances. Section XII. (Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct) of the Administrative Rules For The Laws of the Game provides additional information on these penalties and the associated penalties assessed to the given team.
 - d. Terminating a game if the game officials do not consider that the COVID rules and protocols for the club are being followed and the necessary corrective actions have not been made. Section XII. (Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct) of the Administrative Rules For The Laws of the Game provides additional information on these penalties associated with terminated games.
 - e. Clubs are required to notify the SFL of any individual or game suspensions related to failure to comply with the home team club’s rules and protocols.

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2 2. Other failures of a team, coaching staff, or the team’s spectators to following the applicable
3 COVID related guidelines must be the reported to the SFL by 6 P.M. on the Monday
4 following the game.

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6 a. The SFL will forward COVID related complaints to the applicable SFL Club
7 Representative for review.

8
9 (1) The SFL Club Representative is required to respond to the SFL on the results of
10 the club’s review of the allegations and the recommended penalties that should be
11 assessed to the team.

12
13 (a) Should the allegations have merit, then the minimum penalty is a one game
14 scheduling forfeit for the game that was played.

15
16 (i.) Should a team have two forfeits assessed for COVID related
17 infractions, the reminder of their games will be cancelled.

18
19 (b) If the club does not provide a response to the SFL by 6 P.M. on the
20 Wednesday following the game, the SFL will assume that the allegations have
21 merit and will automatically assess the team a scheduling forfeit for the game
22 that was played.

23
24 D. After Game Handshakes – It is our understanding that after the game handshakes are
25 prohibited by most of the soccer clubs. We consider this a best practice and they should not
26 be used after SFL games.

27
28 E. Player Suspensions – As noted in the SFL’s Administrative Rules for the Laws of the Game
29 (Section XII.), at least an automatic two game suspension is required when a red card is issued
30 for “spitting.” During the Fall 2021 season, if a player takes deliberate actions that could be
31 considered endangering another player by transmitting the virus to that player, e.g., spitting,
32 coughing, etc., then the suspension will be for the remainder of the season regardless of
33 whether the player committing the infraction is infected or not.

34
35 **II. COVID Related Notifications and Reporting Requirements**

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37 A. SFL Club Representative Responsibilities – SFL Club Representatives are required to inform
38 the SFL of any player, coach, parent, spectator that has been diagnosed with COVID, and
39 complete team information, i.e., team name and age group, along with when the individual
40 was diagnosed with the virus. **The club should not provide the name(s) for privacy**
41 **reasons.** The SFL will then inform the SFL Club Representative of the opposing team(s) of
42 the diagnoses.

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44 B. Individual Responsibilities – Any individual diagnosed with COVID, or in contact with an
45 individual that is diagnosed with COVID, may not attend practices or games for at least 2
46 game weeks after the diagnosis.

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2 **Example**
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4 Assume that a player’s family member is diagnosed with COVID on the Monday following
5 the week 3 games. This player may not (1) participate in practices or games until after the
6 week 5 game has been played assuming the individual has been tested and the results were
7 negative immediately prior to the week 5 game and (2) may not be in contact with any other
8 team members or coaches during this two-week period.
9

- 10 C. Contract Tracing – It is up to the SFL Club Representative to have an effective system to
11 support contact tracing should a COVID case that may affect one of that club’s teams surface.
12 One approach the club can use is to have the coach, or other designated official, provide a list
13 of players and individuals that attended that team’s games to their SFL Club Representative
14 each week.
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16 **III. Game Cancellations and Rescheduling Cancelled Games**
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18 A. Game Cancellations
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- 20 1. Teams that are unable to field enough players for COVID related reasons must notify the
21 other team and SFL as soon as possible that the game will need to be cancelled.
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23 2. Some clubs have expressed concerns about playing teams from other clubs because those
24 clubs reside in areas shown to have high infection rates. For example, current confirmed
25 rates of infections (based on the population of the county) can be found at
26 <https://www.cnn.com/resources/coronavirus-information/>. A team may decide to cancel a
27 game with any other team because of COVID related concerns as long as the opposing
28 team and SFL are notified of the game termination prior to 6 P.M. on the Wednesday
29 preceding the game schedule date. If a team decides to cancel a game after this deadline,
30 then the team will be assessed a scheduling forfeit.
31

32 B. Rescheduling Games
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- 34 1. The teams and clubs must make a good faith effort to reschedule the games canceled for
35 COVID or any other reason, e.g., weather, in accordance with the existing rules.
36
37 2. The automatic game rescheduling process discussed elsewhere in the rules will be required
38 and used should any games be cancelled for weather related reason and scheduling forfeits
39 will be assessed if unscheduled games caused by weather are not played.
40
41 a. The requirement in the current rules relating to how many games must be played in
42 order to have the tournament and how many games a team must play to be eligible for
43 the tournament will remain in effect.
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1 **IV. Game Spacing**

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- A. The minimum game time spacing is 90 minutes with 105 minutes preferred for the Under 16 and Under 19 age groups which is consistent with processes used before COVID.
 - 1. This spacing must be consistent with a club’s COVID protocols. Specifically, if a club’s COVID protocols requires two hour time slots between games, then the SFL should be instructed to use two hour time slots for that club’s games. It is up to the applicable SFL Club Representative to ensure that the time slots used by the SFL are consistent with that club’s COVID protocols.