

Suburban Friendship League
2416 Rosedown Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1620
November 2, 2021

Dear Coach/Club Representative:

Hopefully, we will have good weather for the Wayne Gilbert Memorial Tournament. The weather this season has been great and almost all the scheduled games were played. We appreciate all the efforts the clubs and teams have made to play the games scheduled.

It is important to remember that the Wayne Gilbert Memorial Tournament requires significant resources and coordination. This season we scheduled 358 tournament games in 109 tournament divisions. These tournament games are using 48 game fields and 178 teams (about 39 percent of the participating teams) are playing on their home field. 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. Many of these individuals are uncompensated.

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. In addition, this season the clubs have found it more difficult than usual to provide at least one game official for the SFL games. We are asking the clubs to let us know if any of the SFL tournament games do not have assigned officials by 6 PM on Friday, November 12. We are doing this so teams do not travel to a tournament site only to find that no officials are available which automatically cancels the tournament game. Although we do not expect to have any such cancellations, should they occur, the web site should be updated by 8 PM. This is discussed further below.

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.** Taking time to read this letter in its entirety 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.

- **Guide for Game Officials** – This document 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. It also contains a two page summary (Appendix I). Topics covered in this document include player eligibility and how to perform roster validations.
- 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 we have seen a significant increase in these unnecessary incidents. As it has done in past seasons, 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 and it has been surprising at the number of SFL games that did not have a certified center referee for the game. 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 26, 2021. Obtaining game scores has been an increasing problem this season and week 6 was no different. Although we waited until well after the 6 PM Monday deadline, we still did not have scores for about 15 games that were scheduled to be played. As called for in Section XI. of the Club and Coach

Guide, teams were 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 shown on the web site. The Club and Coach Guide is available in your season package and on the web site on the SFL Documents page.

Once a tournament group was defined and determined to be using a single elimination tournament format, 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.

Based on this criteria, only seven tournament groups using the single elimination format have teams playing a team in the first round tournament game that they played or were scheduled to play during the regular season.

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

Type Schedule	Number of Tournament Groups
3 Team Round Robin	29
4 Team Single Elimination	49
5 Team Single Elimination	31

As shown above, the majority of the tournament groups used the four or five team single elimination format. The large number of three team round robin scheduling groups was caused primarily by one of two factors – significant differences in the game point percentages existed in a tournament division and groups of six teams had similar records. The latter reason was used to create three team round robin tournament groups because it was easier to break a six team group into three team scheduling groups rather than leave them as a six team single elimination group. Specifically, the same number of games are played either way (four games on Saturday and two games on Sunday). However, the two tournament groups can be spread out between clubs rather than having to dedicate a field at one club for the games. This allows more flexibility in using the available fields and allows more teams to play on their home field.

ROSTER ISSUES

This season we have had several games with 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 the opposing 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.**
- **When player validations are being performed for tournament games, a team representative from each team must be present during the player validation process.** This representative does not have to be the coach. The team representatives and game officials are encouraged to clearly annotate on the applicable SFL Team Rosters to show the players that have undergone validation process. For example, assume that the SFL Team Roster shows 18 players and 15 players have been validated. Placing a check mark next to these 15 names makes it easy to determine whether a uniform number on the field has been properly validated.
- **Player validations only occur at two times** – initial and before the second half begins. The initial player validation is performed before the start of each tournament game. **Game officials may not be requested to perform a player validation on arriving players after the initial validation until the second half.** Any late arriving players after the initial validation are validated before the start of the second half. Players missing the second half validation are not eligible to play in the game.

Note: Validation for suspected ineligible and illegal players may be made during the game. Specifically, a team may request the game official to confirm that a player the team believes has not been validated has participated in the first half of the game during the half time or at the end of the game when the discrepancy is noted in the second half.

- 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 and the opposing coach is not allowed to waive these issues.** Accordingly, coaches should talk to their teams about the importance of wearing the correct jersey number. Teams 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 considered a uniform number change since the SFL Team Roster should already show leading zeros.** For example, assume that a player’s permanent uniform number is “00”, the SFL Team Roster should already show “00”.
- **Players shown on the SFL Team Roster with roster issues are not allowed to play and the opposing coach is not allowed to waive these issues.** 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. **Accordingly, coaches should instruct the players with roster issues to not attend the tournament games in their uniform to avoid any confusion on the players allowed to participate in the game.**
- 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 the current SFL Team Roster maintained by the SFL are eligible to play on the assigned team. If you have a question on whether the roster provided is the current one that should be used, then contact the SFL for further instructions.
- **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, wear a uniform number that duplicates the number of another player, etc. that is not allowed. 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 only the players whose uniform number agrees with the SFL Team Roster may participate, i.e., the opposing coach may not waive roster issues. 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.

Issue: The rules clearly state that (1) only players that have been validated may participate in the game and (2) roster validations are only allowed before the start of the game and before the second half for late arriving players. During the first half, we noted that a player wearing the number 15 was on the field. Based on our notes, although a player assigned uniform number 15 is shown on SFL Team Roster, this player did not go through the initial player validation process. What should I do?

Comments: Since the player was identified in the first half, the game official should be contacted at half time to validate that the player (uniform number 15) had participated in the game but had not gone through the initial player validation process. Once this is done, the SFL should be contacted and notified of the result and obtain additional guidance. If the player was identified in the second half, then the official should be contacted at the end of the game to validate that the player had participated in the game.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The tournament format and structure are consistent with the procedures discussed in the season rules and the Club and Coach Guide. Both these documents can be found on the web site on the SFL Documents 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 knowledge of what the numbers mean. However, just in case, we would like to provide some guidelines that can be used 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

The vast majority of teams were scheduled using four or five team single elimination tournament groups. As discussed elsewhere, 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(s)	Age Group	Group(s)
Under 11 Boys	6 and 7	Under 11 Girls	4
Under 12 Boys	1 and 3	Under 12 Girls	1, 4, and 5
Under 13 Boys	None	Under 13 Girls	1, 5, and 6
Under 14 Boys	4 and 5	Under 14 Girls	2
Under 16 Boys	3, 8 – 11, and 14	Under 16 Girls	3, 7, and 8
Under 19 Boys	1, 5, and 6	Under 19 Girls	2, 4, and 5

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, and (3) trophy pickup.

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 or seven-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 or web sites 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 any questions on the team ranking, be sure to give us a call on 703-476-6611.

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, then give them a call. Your season package contains the necessary contact information.

GENERAL RULES AND REMINDERS

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

- **Game Officials Not Present At Game** – Clubs have experienced difficulties this season in providing the game officials for SFL games. When a properly qualified center referee is not present at a game, the game is cancelled and treated as a weather cancellation. Specifically, (1) no forfeits are awarded and (2) all remaining games in that tournament division are cancelled. The following are two examples on how this will be implemented.

Example A – Center Referee Not Confirmed By Friday, November 11

The SFL is requesting the clubs to notify us by 6 PM on Friday (November 11) of any games assigned to their fields that do not have at least a center referee so that we can cancel the games for that tournament division. We are doing this so teams do not travel to a tournament site only to find that no officials are available which automatically cancels the tournament game and the remaining games for that tournament division. Although we do not expect to have any such cancellations, should they occur, the web site should be updated by 8 PM on Friday, November 11. Accordingly, teams should check the web site **BEFORE** they leave for their game to determine whether a reasonable expectation exists for game officials.

Example B – Teams Show Up and Game Does Not Have A Qualified Center Referee

Should a team show up at a field and a center referee not be present, then the SFL should be called immediately on 703-476-6611 and ask for instructions. Normally, we would ask the teams to wait about 15 minutes and, if a center referee is still not present, the game will be terminated. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD BE GAME BE PLAYED, REGARDLESS OF AGE GROUP, IF A GAME DOES NOT HAVE A PROPERLY QUALIFIED INDEPENDENT GAME OFFICIAL AS A CENTER**, i.e., individuals from the teams participating in the game **MAY NOT** be used as a center referee even if they are qualified referees. When only a center referee is present, then the center referee may request that individuals from the participating teams act as assistant referees.

- **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 issued and individuals asked to leave the field must be reported on the day of the game.**
- **Weather Cancellations – All notifications of tournament game cancellations must be sent to the SFL by 7:20 AM on the day of the game.** This will allow the SFL to update the game schedules on the web site by 7:30 AM. In addition, 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. 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.** It is important to remember that the home team, regardless of club affiliation, is the team required to comply with this requirement. In case of a color clash the home team must (1) wear pennies over their jerseys or (2) change jersey colors. See Section IV. of the SFL Administrative Rules for The Laws of the Game.

Example

A tournament game is being played at Prince William between Northern Virginia 1 (home team) and Prince William 1 (visiting team). The Northern Virginia 1 team would be required to comply with the requirements to address color clashes even though it is playing on a Prince William field.

- **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, winning coaches are required to reduce the number of players on the field once the score differential reaches 4 or more goals** until the minimum number of players for a game is reached (seven for 11 v 11 games and six for 9 v 9 games). For example, if a team is winning the game 3 – 0 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.

Notes

- In past seasons, good faith errors have been made in determining how teams should be ranked. If any team has a question on how a team is ranked, then they should call (703-476-6611) or Email (sfl@sflsoccer.org) to validate the rankings used.
- In three team tournament divisions, one team plays two games on Saturday while the other two teams play one game on Saturday and the second game on Sunday. Accordingly, the team playing both games on Saturday should be provided the first place tournament awards if it wins both of its games since, by definition, it will have the most game points regardless of the outcome of Sunday’s game. On the other hand, it does not win both games, then no awards should be given out until the Sunday game results are known.

Please remember that in tournament divisions using the round robin tournament format, the Sunday game may not be the “championship game”.

- 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.**
- **Water breaks** – As noted in the rules, game officials are allowed to permit water breaks, if stoppage for the break occurs during a substitution opportunity. Game officials are encouraged to schedule water breaks during substitution opportunities for both teams.

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 2022 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 March. 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
SFL Commissioner