

Suburban Friendship League
2416 Rosedown Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1620
April 1, 2022

Dear Coaches and Club Officials:

This season the SFL scheduled about 480 teams. We would like to welcome back the returning teams and extend a special welcome to those who are new to the SFL and hope that all teams have an enjoyable season.

It is the SFL's goal to provide timely and accurate information to the clubs and teams playing in this league. Our Web Site (www.sflsoccer.org) helps us accomplish this objective. One especially important page for all the teams and participants is our COVID page that provides the current Return to Play requirements provided by the various clubs. **Every home and visiting team must comply with these requirements as discussed elsewhere (www.sflsoccer.org/club-covid-rules/).** Our Email address is sfl@sflsoccer.org. The Web Site contains most of the information in your package and we will try to keep it updated. We would appreciate any comments you may have on how the league operations can be improved. Additional information about the season's operations and our web site is discussed below.

This is considered the season mailing and contains the following:

- Season letter
- COVID Guide – Spring 2022 Season
- Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on concussions.
- Information from US Soccer on concussions.
- Information concerning lighting safety.
- Overview of SFL Processes and Procedures for Coaches and SFL Club Representatives
- SFL Club and Coach Guide
- SFL Administrative Rules for The Laws of the Game
- Listing of team contacts, Email addresses (see discussion below), and phone numbers. This listing also provides the contact information for the SFL Commissioner and SFL Age Group Commissioners. (This information is not published on the web site version).
- Listing of SFL Club Representatives. **You should contact your SFL Club Representative concerning questions that arise during the season. Also, if you have problems contacting**

another team during the season, you should contact that team's SFL Club Representative. The SFL Age Group Commissioners will formally respond only to matters referred to them by the appropriate SFL Club Representative. (This information is not published on the web site version.)

We have also developed a Guide for Game Officials that extracts the key material from the above documents that relate to the game officials in one easy-to-use document. In addition to posting this document to the SFL web site on the SFL Documents page, the SFL will be sending this guide to SFL Club Referee Coordinators for their use.

The SFL has four key documents that govern its operations.

- COVID Guide – Spring 2022 Season
- Overview of SFL Processes and Procedures for Coaches and SFL Club Representatives
- SFL Administrative Rules for the Laws of the Game
- SFL Club and Coach Guide

It is critical that you, the team members, and the parents and spectators associated with your team take some time to review (1) the COVID Guide – Spring 2022 Season document (www.sflsoccer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/spring-2022-covid-rules.pdf) and (2) the individual COVID guidelines that apply to a given game your team may play. Specifically, it is important everyone understands that both the home and visiting teams must comply with the home team club's COVID requirements that are published on the web site (www.sflsoccer.org/club-covid-rules/). Failure to comply with the applicable guidelines can result in (1) an individual's suspension for the remainder of the season and (2) suspension of a game with the team out of compliance being assessed a forfeit.

We would also like you to take some time and review the Overview of SFL Processes and Procedures for Coaches and SFL Club Representatives Document. This is designed to provide (1) a one page summary of the key SFL Club Representative duties and dead lines, (2) a one page summary for each of the seven (7) SFL processes, and (3) a glossary of terms commonly used in the process charts and by the SFL, e.g., proper red card report, scheduling forfeit, game rescheduling, etc. Reviewing pages 3, 4, and 5 of this document should help the vast majority of the coaches (1) understand what they must do and (2) how their actions (or inactions) impact their team, club, and the SFL. Spending a few more minutes reading the glossary of terms, will also provide a better understanding of the specific requirements discussed in the process charts. We welcome suggestions on how to make this summary guide more useful.

KEY DATES

The following are some of the key dates:

Date	Event
April 6	Deadline for providing the Master Player Roster that will be used by the SFL to generate the SFL Team Rosters (see discussion below).
April 7	SFL Team Rosters provided to SFL Club Representatives
April 8	Coaches provided approved rosters by SFL Club Representative.
April 9	First game weekend.
April 9	Coaches allowed an unlimited number of uniform number changes on their SFL Team Rosters. Starting on April 23, teams are limited to three (3) uniform changes.
May 4	Last day to submit uniform number changes to SFL Team Rosters – SFL Team Rosters are considered final for the season.
April 16/May 28	Holiday weekend – No games
June 11	Special game weekend (see discussion below). If your team is unable to play this weekend, please let us know as soon as possible.

INCOMPLETE GAME AND FIELD INFORMATION

We did not receive all the game field and time information for some of the games scheduled since some clubs are waiting for the travel schedules to set these games to maximize the referees and field slots. Once we are provided with this information, we will update the web site. In addition, several clubs did not confirm that the field slots submitted were still correct prior to the publication of the game schedules. Accordingly, please check the web site before your game is played to make sure that the most current information is being used. As noted earlier, the web site highlights game changes and Google Maps is available to assist in getting field directions.

SIGNIFICANT RULE CHANGES

The rules for this season are fairly consistent with those used in past seasons. The SFL Documents page (www.sflsoccer.org/sfl-documents/) contains a discussion of all the rule and process changes considered for the Spring 2022 season and the rationale used for adopting or rejecting a given proposal. 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, hopefully, temporary changes in the various documents, it was decided that (1) a COVID web page would be developed to consolidate all the COVID Return to Play documents

(www.sflsoccer.org/club-covid-rules/) and (2) a dedicated COVID document for the current season. This document covers (1) compliance with state, local, VYSA, and club COVID related guidelines, (2) COVID related notifications and reporting requirements, and (3) game cancellations and rescheduling cancelled games. The rules in this document supercede the rules contained in other SFL documents unless otherwise stated.

Although the rules are consistent with those used in prior seasons, the clubs elected to adopt a significant program change. The previous end of season tournament will be replaced with a Special Bonus Season Game. This decision was made with great reluctance and only after a great deal of thought and discussion. The SFL Commissioners recommended, and the clubs approved, (1) that the Wayne Gilbert Memorial Tournament no longer be part of the SFL program and (2) a special regular season game should be added to the program as a replacement. In making this recommendation, the SFL Commissioners reviewed a paper that discussed the conceptual framework for replacing the tournament with a special regular season game – Approach for Replacing Tournament Games With an Extra Regular Season Game (October 25, 2021).¹ Based on this review and lengthy discussions, Section XII. was added to the Club and Coach Guide. The SFL Commissioners and the SFL Club Representatives recognize that many teams looked forward to the tournament. However, the changing soccer environment, as discussed in the rule change document, made it impossible for the SFL to continue to tournament since the clubs are unable to provide the necessary resources. The Special Bonus Season Game will still provide (1) the same number of games as the tournament provided to about 50 percent of the teams and (2) teams participating in this game, a chance to play games against another team with comparable records.

We would also like to highlight the following rules.

- **Wednesday phone call** – The home team is required to contact the visiting team on the Wednesday preceding the weekend’s game. While this has been a long-standing requirement, based on reports received this has not been done as much as it should have done. The purpose of this discussion is to resolve such issues as potential color conflicts and field directions. **However, this season the Wednesday contact is more important than ever since the home team needs to let the visiting team know how that club’s COVID Return to Play guidelines is being implemented to avoid any confusion at game time.** For example, Club A may be visiting Club B and Club B only allows one (1) spectator per player while Club A does not have a similar requirement. When Club A arrives for the game, its spectators find that many of them cannot attend the game and become upset.
- **Mercy rule** – The mercy rule requires (1) a reduction in players starting at a 4 goal differential and (2) automatic game termination when the goal differential reaches 8 goals for 11 v 11 games and 7 goals for 9 v 9 games. Should the goal differential be more than these limits, the team with

¹ This paper can be found on the Historical Documents page of the web site (www.sflsoccer.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/replacing-tournament-games-20211025.pdf).

the most goals is assessed a forfeit. (SFL Administrative Rules for the Laws of the Game – Section X.A.)

- **Color clashes and leading zeros on uniform numbers** – Section IV.B. of the SFL Administrative Rules for the Laws of the Game discusses how color clashes must be resolved. The key point is that the alternate color uniform must have a number that is consistent with SFL Team Roster or (for regular season games only) are shown as one of the acceptable uniform number changes on the SFL Team Roster. In addition, the SFL Team Roster system accepts leading zeros to uniform numbers. Accordingly, if a player’s uniform number has a leading zero, e.g., “07”, then that number must be shown on the Master Player Roster. Finally, while the jerseys that goalkeepers may use are not required to have a uniform number the goalkeeper is required to have an appropriate field jersey should a roster check be performed. (Club and Coach Guide – Section IV.B.3. discusses these issues in more detail.)
- **Names shown on SFL Team Rosters** – If a uniform has a player’s name on it or a player has a nick name that is not common to the name shown on the Master Player Roster, then that name must be shown on the SFL Team Roster. For example, assume the player goes by his/her middle name but the Master Player Roster only shows the first and last names of the player. The middle name should be shown on the Master Player Roster. In addition, final SFL Team Rosters will be generated after Wednesday following the week 3 games. (SFL Administrative Rules for the Laws of the Game – Section III.B.2.)
- **Misconduct issues and reporting game scores** – Both teams are required to report game misconduct issues involving red cards and individuals being asked to leave the field on the day of the game or forfeits may be assessed. Game scores for games not involving disciplinary issues may still be made by Monday at 6 PM without a penalty. (Club and Coach Guide – Section VI.B.5.a.(1))
- **Game cancellations and rescheduling games** – The game cancellation and rescheduling process are discussed in Section VII. of the Club and Coach Guide. Please remember that (1) the SFL must be notified by the club on the day a game is cancelled and (2) clubs are encouraged to decide on the day prior to the game day for games starting prior to 10 AM for regular season games. This section also discusses (1) when clubs are allowed to make changes in games for the convenience of the club and (2) when opposing coaches are required to agree to such changes.

WEB SITE AND PRIVACY POLICY

Each team has an individual team schedule with field directions. These pages can be found by selecting **Team Information/ Schedules** and then selecting the **Individual team schedules with game results and field directions** for a given age group, e.g., Under 12 Boys, from the home page. **You may not add any team specific information to this page and the page cannot be customized for a given team.** A privacy policy has also been developed and we encourage you to take a few minutes to read it. The privacy policy link can be found on the left side of our home page.

Please review the information that pertains to you and your team(s) and **notify your SFL Club Representative immediately of any errors**. If you have questions on any of these materials, please call Chris Martin at (703) 476-6611 or by Email at sfl@sflsoccer.org or check the information on the Web Site (www.sflsoccer.org). Please familiarize yourself with the information contained in this package and carry out your administrative responsibilities as soon as possible.

Good luck and we hope you have a successful and fulfilling season.

John Paladino
SFL Commissioner