

Suburban Friendship League  
2416 Rosedown Drive  
Reston, VA 20191-1620  
16 November 2023

To: SFL Age Group Commissioners  
SFL Club Representatives

From: SFL Commissioner

Subject: End of Operations for the Suburban Friendship League

Please indulge me as I reflect on the mission for the last thirty-three plus years of the Suburban Friendship League, to provide an avenue, a pathway for the youth of Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia to play recreational soccer. “For the Good of the Players.”

In the Fall of 1990, Wayne Gilbert, a man with a vision, formed a new but radical idea of forming a youth recreational league in which the individual clubs would agree to submit teams and those teams would be scheduled to play against teams from member clubs. What triggered this thought is unknown to me, but maybe Wayne saw it as a way to keep children participating in the real game of football. Wayne served as the SFL Commissioner from its inception until his passing in 2010. He would be proud of what the SFL has accomplished.

While Wayne may have had the vision, a gentleman by the name of Chris Martin agreed to help. Little did he know what he was in for. They knew each other from the seasons that they were in a youth league that was operated by VYSA. Chris had the skill set to develop playing schedules, act as treasurer, secretary, edit and publish the Suburban Friendship League Administrative Rules for The Laws of the Game, and numerous other documents. But most important Chris served as the administrator, answering emails, phone calls, and helping the membership with their questions. Chris has, since the inception of the Suburban Friendship League, been the gear that made everything work. He is much too modest to admit this, but if there had been no Chris Martin, there would have been no SFL.

As the SFL grew so did the need for additional personnel, and this led to the establishment of SFL Age Group Commissioners. Some of those early age group commissioners were Lonnie Tullia, Ralph Wills, Leo Cardillo, Richard Simenon, Fred Grey, Florian Eaggleton, Rick Reid, Scott Sarratt, Chris Lane, Chris Roberts, Frank Calcagno, Jack Smit, Jeff Rae, Louis Granados, Paul Frascione, and Sue Jenkins. Including the present members Adriane Allen, Doug Fuller, Greg Giovanis, Jane Scott-Jones, Jared Ball, Jill Johnston, and Neil Krizek. Jim Rodden served as the SFL Commissioner from the fall of 2010 through the spring of 2015. Prior to this Jim served as various Age Group Commissioners. SFL Club Representatives were established and they became the point of contact between the SFL and the clubs. These individuals became the conduit that passed the necessary information from the clubs to the SFL. More of you than I could ever list here. To all of you, SFL Age Group Commissioners and SFL Club Representatives, the past and the present, I THANK YOU!

For that first year the only age group was U13/14 girls. As they migrated to the U15/16 age group, a new group of U13/14 girls entered the league. As the seasons and years passed the SFL expanded, adding additional age groups and including boys. The addition of the U19 boys league run by Leo Cardillo was the icing on the cake. As the years passed, the U11/12 boys and girls were added.

As I mentioned at the Fall 2023 preseason meeting, I encourage the membership to join the NCSL, and stay with them for two seasons. Use the first season as a learning curve, and take your concerns to NCSL in the hope that they can make adjustments for the Fall 2024 season. Remember, the SFL was not in the Fall of 1990 what it is today. Chris and I will do all that we can to help NCSL and the transition be as smooth as possible.

It has been my honor to serve as the SFL Commissioner since the Fall 2015 season. I have tried to perform the duties to the best of my ability, and with the help of all of you, and a big shout out to Chris, I thank you.

In closing I am reminded of two phrases, Latin and French. Latin from Virginia Tech, "Ut Prosim," "That I (We) May Serve," and French from the Corps of Engineers, "Essayons," "Let us try."

Sincerely,

John Paladino  
SFL Commissioner