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## **Prologue**

This document explains the Suburban Friendship League's administrative requirements as they pertain to each Law of the Game. It is not the intent of the SFL to alter, change, or modify any of the laws of the game as presented by the International Federation Association Board and US Soccer. Members can find the latest "Laws of the Game," by going to the US Soccer web site, <http://www.ussoccer.com/referees/laws-of-the-game>, for the most recent updates. Nothing in these rules precludes a club from imposing more stringent rules on their own teams.

The SFL's administrative requirements have evolved over the years due to situations brought to the attention of the SFL Commissioners by the clubs. The SFL's administrative requirements are designed to provide guidelines, common operating procedures, and rules to facilitate cooperation between the clubs and, if necessary, consistent disciplinary actions.

While all the "Laws of the Game," are enumerated in this document, not all laws will have an administrative requirement attached to it.

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4 **SFL Administrative Rules For**  
5 **The Laws of the Game**

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18 **I. Law 1 – The Field of Play**

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A. If a team does not believe that a game is being played on a field that is not compliant with the applicable field guidelines, the coach should play the game and then notify the appropriate SFL Club Representative of the problems. The SFL Club Representative may then request the SFL to review the matter and make a decision on whether a forfeit should be awarded.

1. Forfeits will not be awarded for the following conditions.

- a. Fields that are properly sized but the markings are not entirely compliant with the applicable guidelines.
- b. Corner flags not being present.

18 **II. Law 2 – The Ball**

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A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.

22 **III. Law 3 – The Players**

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A. SFL Team Roster Presentation – Each coach is expected to provide a **paper copy** of the SFL Team Roster to the opposing coach (and referee if requested) before the start of each game.

1. If a team is unable to provide a **paper copy** of the SFL Team Roster to the opposing team, the opposing team may declare a forfeit (forfeits are mandatory during the tournament).  
**Electronic copies of SFL Team Rosters are not acceptable substitutes.**

- a. If a SFL Team Roster is requested but not provided and both teams agree to play (regular season games only), then neither team can request a forfeit because a roster was not available.

(1) If a forfeit is accepted because of a roster problem, then the teams should leave the field. In other words, the teams should not use the game as a scrimmage.

B. Player eligibility

1. General eligibility

- a. All players must be registered with the proper state soccer association (e.g., Virginia Youth Soccer Association), listed in that state soccer’s recreational player data base and has adequate insurance, as defined by the state association for their players. A player must be registered with an associated club and meet their requirements for being a recreational or house player.

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- (1) Players can only appear on one (1) SFL Team Roster.
  - (2) Special exception for recreational players
    - (a) Under no circumstances may a SFL player participate on a travel team on a weekend which the SFL normally has scheduled games. Some travel leagues may allow recreational players to play on a travel team as a guest player. This is allowed under the following conditions:
      - (i.) The player does not routinely practice with the travel team. One-time “tryouts” are allowed.
      - (ii.) Travel tournaments – The player is playing for a travel team participating in a tournament that occurs either (1) before the first weekend of the SFL season, (2) after the last weekend of the SFL season, or (3) during a week when the SFL does not hold games, e.g., holiday weekends. The SFL must be notified by Email of the player’s name and date of birth along with the game dates that the player is playing for the travel team if the game dates fall between the start and end of the SFL season, e.g., holiday weekends.
    - b. If a player played on a travel or select team during the previous season, the player should complete SFL Form 3 (Player No Longer Playing Travel or Select Soccer). This form should also be signed by the Coach and SFL Club Representative. A copy should be sent by Email to the SFL with the original maintained by the coach. Players appearing on this form and complying with its certifications are not considered travel or select players.
    - c. Ineligible and illegal players
      - (1) **Ineligible players** are players assigned to the team but are not eligible to play for some reason and the opposing coach has not given the player permission to play. Ineligible players are not the same as illegal players. However, as discussed elsewhere, an ineligible player may become an illegal player and the penalties for using an illegal player apply. When the SFL determines that the ineligible player used was inadvertent or an administrative error then no penalties will be imposed. The penalty for using an ineligible player when the SFL concludes that the use was advertent or not an administrative error includes a forfeit for the game where the ineligible player was used. Examples of ineligible players include the following.
 

**Example A**

Player’s name does match the roster during a roster check and the name is not a common nickname for the name shown on the SFL Team Roster, e.g., player goes by the nickname name of “Dusty” while the roster shows “Sam.” Examples of

1 common nicknames include Charlie for Charles, Sue for Susan, Ted for Theodor,  
2 Sam for Samantha, etc.

3  
4 **Example B**

5  
6 Player's birth date does not agree with SFL Team Roster during a roster check.  
7

8 **Example C**

9  
10 SFL Team Roster shows roster issues for the player, e.g., duplicate uniform  
11 number, no uniform number, etc.  
12

13 **Example D**

14  
15 Player shows up at a game (1) with a different uniform number than the Assigned  
16 Number on the SFL Team Roster and (2) the SFL Team Roster does not show the  
17 player's actual number in the Game Day Number as one of the allowable uniform  
18 number changes.  
19

20 (2) **Illegal players** include (1) travel players, regardless of whether they are shown on  
21 the SFL Team Roster, (2) players shown on the SFL Team Roster but declared  
22 ineligible during a player validation and later used in the game, and (3) players not  
23 shown on the SFL Team Roster. The penalties for using illegal players include  
24 forfeits for the games where illegal players are used and the team may be excluded  
25 from the SFL tournament.  
26

27 (a) If a SFL player participates in a regular season travel game, then (1) the club  
28 must notify the SFL of the player's name and birth date and (2) ensure that the  
29 player no longer plays on the SFL team. Subsequent participation of the  
30 player in SFL games will result in game forfeits and the team's elimination  
31 from the SFL tournament.  
32

33 (b) VYSA's Olympic Development Program (not the VYSA Developmental –  
34 Olympic Development Program).  
35

36 (c) Players who are listed in the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA)  
37 travel data base (or any other state youth travel soccer database) and those  
38 players who participate in travel/select programs may not participate, except  
39 as noted above.  
40

41 **Discussion**

42  
43 The following examples illustrate how the SFL will determine (1) whether the definition  
44 of an ineligible or illegal player will be used in sample situations and (2) whether any  
45 penalties apply when an ineligible player is used. These examples are not designed to

1 cover all possible situations and the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner will  
2 make the final determination.

3  
4 **Example A**

5  
6 A travel player is found on the roster of Team A after the week 3 game is played. This  
7 player is considered as an illegal player and Team A is assessed forfeits and Team  
8 Demerits for the 3 games that have been played regardless of whether the player actually  
9 played in the game. Additional penalties may apply depending on whether the coach  
10 knew about the illegal player.

11  
12 **Example B**

13  
14 A player is shown on the SFL Team Roster as having a roster issue, e.g., missing  
15 uniform number, duplicate uniform number, etc. During the roster exchange process,  
16 the opposing coach tells the other coach and the game official that the player cannot be  
17 used. During the game, the player is found participating in the game. The game official  
18 is notified and confirms that the player in question did participate in the game. The  
19 player is considered an illegal player knowingly used by the coach and the applicable  
20 penalties apply. Although the player was shown on the roster was an ineligible player,  
21 when the coach was told by the opposing coach that the player could not be used and  
22 was then used, the player became an illegal player.

23  
24 **Example C**

25  
26 A player is shown on the SFL Team Roster as having a roster issue, e.g., missing  
27 uniform number, duplicate uniform number, etc. During the roster exchange process,  
28 neither coach discusses the roster issues shown on the SFL Team Roster. During the  
29 game, the player is found participating in the game. The game official is notified and  
30 the opposing coach requests that the player be removed from the field. The player's  
31 coach complies and the player no longer participates in the game. The player is  
32 considered as an ineligible player that was used and the use of this player is considered  
33 as an inadvertent or an administrative error. Accordingly, no penalties are assessed.

34  
35 **Note:** If the player in question was used after the player's coach and game official had  
36 been told by the opposing coach that the player could not play, then the use of this  
37 player is considered an illegal player knowingly used by the coach and the applicable  
38 penalties apply.

39  
40 **Example D**

41  
42 A player is shown on the SFL Team Roster as having a roster issue, e.g., missing  
43 uniform number, duplicate uniform number, etc. During the roster exchange process,  
44 neither coach discusses the roster issues shown on the SFL Team Roster. After the  
45 game, the opposing coach sees a picture of the opposing team that shows a player on the  
46 field whose number does not agree with any of those shown on the SFL Team Roster.



1 The player is considered as an ineligible player that was used and the use of this player  
2 is considered as an inadvertent or an administrative error. Accordingly, no penalties are  
3 assessed. The rationale used is that there is no evidence that an illegal player was used,  
4 e.g., no roster challenge was used to ascertain the identity of the player, the coach did  
5 not ask the game official or team with the player in question to not use the player, etc.  
6 Accordingly, the coach with the player in question could have addressed the problem by  
7 simply using one of the three (3) allowed number corrections for regular season games,  
8 etc.  
9

10 **Note:** If the SFL Team Roster provided to the opposing coach showed that the allowed  
11 number of uniform number changes, e.g., three (3) for a week 5 regular season game,  
12 then the player in question would be considered as an illegal player. The rationale for  
13 this decision is that the coach had shown the other coach that the maximum of three (3)  
14 player uniform number changes had been used and the player in question would have  
15 resulted in four (4) players having uniform number changes. Accordingly, the coach  
16 was required to get the opposing coach's permission. Since the coach did not get the  
17 opposing coach's permission, the use of the player in question is considered as a  
18 deliberate attempt by the coach to use a player that was not eligible to play and the  
19 applicable penalties apply.  
20

### 21 **Example E**

22  
23 The coach for Team A requests a SFL Team Roster from Team B for a regular season  
24 game. Team B's coach says that he left the SFL Team Roster in his car or that he left it  
25 at home and he will have someone get it so that the other coach will have it by halftime.  
26 The coach for Team A agrees to play the game with the expectation that (1) a paper  
27 copy of the SFL Team Roster will be provided at half time and (2) no changes, such as  
28 uniform numbers, are needed to it other than those identified by Team B's coach at the  
29 start of the game. For example, Team B's coach could tell the coach from Team A at  
30 the start of the game that the player wearing number 22 normally wears uniform number  
31 14 but picked up the wrong jersey for today's game. Since this would be an allowable  
32 uniform number change if the SFL Team Roster were present, this would be handled  
33 using the normal procedures and not considered as an attempt by Team B to use an  
34 ineligible player. At half time, the coach from Team B provides Team A a copy of the  
35 SFL Team Roster. Team A's coach sees that the players on the field are wearing the  
36 uniform numbers shown on the SFL Team Roster except for a player wearing the  
37 number 22 which is shown as a uniform number change on the paper SFL Team Roster  
38 provided at halftime. Since the coach from Team B had told Team A about this change  
39 prior to the start of the game, Team A has not used an ineligible player. On the other  
40 hand, if the SFL Team Roster for Team B showed roster issues such as missing uniform  
41 numbers and duplicate uniform numbers for players on the field and these issues had not  
42 been discussed with Team B prior to the start of the game, then Team B would be found to  
43 have used at least one ineligible player. Accordingly, the applicable penalties would be  
44 assessed to Team B, e.g., game forfeiture and suspension of the coach as called for in  
45 the rules.  
46

1           **Note:** If Team B does not produce the roster by the time promised for a regular  
2 season game, e.g., halftime, then the game should continue until the  
3 completed. Team A can then request the SFL to award a forfeit since the  
4 coach of Team A had waived the forfeit at the start of the game with the  
5 understanding that a SFL Team Roster would be provided and was willing to  
6 give Team B additional time to produce the roster so that the players could  
7 play. On the other hand, if the coach of Team A had waived the presentation  
8 of the roster at the start of the game, then no forfeit can be requested.  
9

10           **Example F**

11  
12           The birth date for a player on the Team A’s SFL Team Roster is incorrect. The coach  
13 for Team A notices the discrepancy and tells their SFL Club Representative who  
14 validates that the player is still eligible to play on that team. However, the date for  
15 submitting changes to the Master Player Roster for that week has passed. Team A’s  
16 coach notifies the opposing team of the error in the birth date prior to the start of the  
17 game and Team B’s coach agrees to let the player play. Since Team B’s coach has  
18 agreed to waive the SFL Team Roster issue, Team A no longer has an ineligible player.  
19 On the other hand, assume that Team B is not notified of the birth date error at the start  
20 of the game and Team B requests the game official to validate the players shown on the  
21 SFL Team Roster presented by Team A. During this process, the birth date error is  
22 identified. Team A would be considered as having used an ineligible player, even if the  
23 Team B’s coach had agreed that the Team A could use this player after the roster  
24 validation, since Team B had not been notified in advance of the birth date discrepancy.  
25 The rationale for this decision is the following.  
26

- 27           • Changes shown on the SFL Team Roster, like uniform numbers not matching the  
28 SFL Team Roster that are allowed, provide the opposing coach an opportunity to  
29 make a decision on whether to request the game official to validate the player(s) in  
30 question or tell the coach that the player may not play since the birth dates do not  
31 agree.  
32
  - 33           • Since the opposing coach was not notified in advance of the birth date discrepancy,  
34 Team B’s coach was never given an opportunity to eliminate the player from  
35 playing before a subsequent event, such as a roster validation request, that may  
36 have originated for some other reason identified the ineligible player.  
37
- 38           2. Player validations are conducted through the official present using that team’s SFL Team  
39 Roster. In some cases, e.g., regular season games, the player validation process may only  
40 be needed for a specific player or players while in the tournament all players on a team are  
41 validated. The player(s) line up by uniform number and each player is validated by stating  
42 their name and birth date when the game official calls their uniform number.  
43
- 44           a. Player issues include but are not limited to (1) name/birth date provided by the player  
45 does not agree with the SFL Team Roster, (2) uniform number worn does not agree with

1 SFL Team Roster, (3) SFL Team Roster shows player issues such as missing uniform  
2 numbers, duplicate uniform numbers, etc.

- 3  
4 b. Player issues shown on the SFL Team Roster or detected during the player validation  
5 process are considered ineligible to play in that game unless (1) the opposing coach  
6 waives the suspension (regular season games only) or (2) a SFL official waives the  
7 suspension.  
8  
9 c. Players may be required to spell their name or sign their name on a blank piece of paper  
10 if required by the official.  
11

12 **Note:** Common nicknames are exempt from the matching name requirement while  
13 uncommon nicknames are not. For example, a player that goes by the  
14 nickname name of “Dusty” should be shown on the roster if the name on the  
15 roster shows “Sam” since this is not a common nickname. Examples of  
16 common nicknames include Charlie for Charles, Sue for Susan, Ted for  
17 Theodor, Sam for Samantha, etc. Accordingly, if the SFL Team Roster shows  
18 the player name Samantha Jones but the player says Sam Jones, then this is  
19 not considered as a roster name issue.  
20

- 21 d. Coaches should ensure that their players understand the information that will be  
22 requested by the official conducting the player validation. However, the coach may not  
23 tell a player how to answer the questions, e.g., the coach may not tell the player the birth  
24 date that should be provided. Any instructions provided by the coach to the team  
25 concerning how the process works should be made in the presence of the official  
26 conducting the review.  
27  
28 e. When a player validation is performed during a regular season game, a report on the  
29 results must be submitted to the SFL by both coaches. The report will include (1) team  
30 making the request and reason for the request, (2) game reference number, (3) game  
31 date, (4) game field, (5) result of the validation, and (6) the details associated any  
32 discrepancies. If no discrepancies were noted, then this should also be reported. Based  
33 on the reports received, the SFL Age Group Commissioner will make a decision on the  
34 appropriate penalties that should be applied should a discrepancy be noted.  
35

36 3. Tournament player validation is required for all tournament games.  
37

- 38 a. When player validations are being performed for tournament games, a team  
39 representative from each team must be present during the player validation process.  
40 This representative does not have to be the coach.  
41

42 **Suggestion**  
43

44 Team representatives and game officials are encouraged to clearly annotate on the  
45 applicable SFL Team Rosters to show the players that have undergone validation

1 process. For example, assume that the SFL Team Roster shows 18 players and 15  
2 players have been validated. Placing a check mark next to these 15 names makes it easy  
3 to determine whether a uniform number on the field has been properly validated.  
4

5 b. Player validations are performed as follows.  
6

- 7 (1) Initial player validation – required to be performed before the start of each  
8 tournament game. Game officials may not be requested to perform a player  
9 validation on arriving players after the initial validation until the second half.  
10
- 11 (2) Second half – Any late arriving players after the initial validation are validated  
12 before the start of the second half. Players missing the second half validation are  
13 not eligible to play in the game.  
14
- 15 (3) Validation for suspected ineligible and illegal players during the game.  
16 Specifically, a team may request the game official to confirm that a player the team  
17 believes has not been validated has participated in the game.  
18

19 c. Players whose uniform numbers do not agree with the SFL Team Roster or where the  
20 SFL Team Roster shows player issues are not allowed to play.  
21

22 d. Players that have not been validated must leave the “team area” on the field or take  
23 other actions, such as replacing their uniform jersey with some other form of clothing,  
24 so that there is no confusion on the players that have undergone a validation and are  
25 allowed to play.  
26

### 27 C. Age Groups

- 28 1. A player must meet the USSF birth date requirements for their age group.  
29
- 30 2. A club must register all their recreational players for each age group for which they wish to  
31 participate.  
32
- 33 3. The SFL Age Groups are: 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 19. The SFL encourages the clubs to only  
34 assign players whose birth dates comply with their team’s age group.  
35
- 36 4. Playing up is allowed as shown below. **WAIVERS WILL NOT BE GRANTED.**  
37  
38

1                   **Age Group Matrix**  
2

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<b>Team Age Group</b>	<b>Player’s Actual Age Group</b>
Under 11	Under 9, 10, and 11
Under 12	Under 10, 11, and 12
Under 13	Under 11, 12, and 13
Under 14	Under 12, 13, and 14
Under 16	Under 14, 15, and 16
Under 19	Under 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

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11                   5. Medical Waivers  
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13                   a. Requests for play down waivers are only granted for medical reasons and the SFL Club  
14                   Representative must provide the following information:

- 15  
16                   (1) A signed statement from the parents/guardians requesting permission for the child  
17                   to play down, with a brief description of the reason for the request.  
18  
19                   (2) A signed statement from a doctor explaining the medical condition that requires  
20                   the player to play down.  
21  
22                   (3) A signed statement from the club’s Board of Directors that they have reviewed the  
23                   application and believe that the player should be allowed to play down for medical  
24                   reasons. The individual signing this determination for the Board must (1) is a  
25                   Board Member or (2) someone other than the SFL Club Representative or a coach  
26                   in the SFL.  
27  
28                   (4) If the request is granted, the waiver will state on the SFL Team Roster that the  
29                   waiver is a medical waiver but it will not provide the reason the medical waiver  
30                   was granted.  
31  
32                   (5) Clubs must submit a request each season for medical waivers even if a request has  
33                   been approved in prior seasons. This request must include a new determination by  
34                   the applicable club’s board that the player should be granted a medical waiver.  
35  
36                   (6) **All requests for medical waivers must be submitted prior to March 31 for the**  
37                   **spring season and August 31 for the fall season.**  
38

39                   D. Substitutions – Substitutions may be made under the following conditions:

- 40  
41                   1. After a goal.  
42

- 1 2. Prior to a goal kick.
- 2
- 3 3. Prior to the start of the second half.
- 4
- 5 4. Prior to a throw-in by the team in possession. The opposing team may only substitute if
- 6 the team in possession substitutes.
- 7
- 8 5. For an injury when the injured player is replaced. The opposing team may also substitute a
- 9 player at that time.
- 10
- 11 6. After a player caution, at the request of the player's coach. Only the cautioned player may
- 12 be replaced with a substitute at that time.
- 13
- 14 7. At water breaks, if stoppage for the break occurs during one of the above substitution
- 15 opportunities. Referees are encouraged to schedule water breaks during substitution
- 16 opportunities for both teams.
- 17

#### 18 E. Team Size

- 19
- 20 1. All players in good standing must play at least 50 percent of the game. The applicable club
- 21 is responsible for defining what is considered good standing.
- 22
- 23 2. Minimum
- 24
- 25 a. 11 v 11 format – 7 players
- 26
- 27 b. 9 v 9 format – 6 players
- 28
- 29 3. Maximum
- 30
- 31 a. 11/12 age groups – 20 players
- 32
- 33 b. 13/14 age groups – 22 players
- 34
- 35 c. 16/19 age groups – 25 players
- 36

37 **Note:** These limits were established to help satisfy the 50 percent playing time rule.

#### 38 F. Play Down Rule

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- 40
- 41 1. If the number of field players that appear for a game is equal to the minimum required for a
- 42 legal team and not more than the maximum field players allowed, all players must play.
- 43 **No players may be designated as substitutes.**
- 44
- 45 2. The team with the higher number of field eligible players may play no more than two (2)
- 46 players above the opposing team's field eligible players.

- 1  
2 a. The above rule also applies when players from the team with the lesser number of  
3 players leave a game due to injury or illness.  
4  
5 b. Red carded players on the team with the lesser number of players, does not cause the  
6 team with more players to play down.  
7  
8 3. The maximum number of field players will be equal to the maximum number of field  
9 players allowed minus (1) removal of red carded players and (2) the number of players  
10 allowed due to the Mercy Rule being enforced.  
11

12 **Example**

13  
14 Team A starts the game with eight (8) players and two (2) additional players arrive later. A  
15 player on Team A is required to leave the field because of a red card or a mandatory  
16 reduction caused by the mercy rule. Team A may now play nine (9) players. This is  
17 computed as follows: Original players (8) plus late arriving eligible players (2) less  
18 mandatory player reduction (1).  
19

20 **G. Combining Teams for the Tournament**

- 21  
22 1. If a club decides that it cannot field all its teams within an age group, the club may request  
23 permission from the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner to combine two teams to  
24 form a “tournament team.” If this permission is granted then the following conditions  
25 apply.  
26  
27 a. The higher ranked team is used to determine the tournament group for the combined  
28 team.  
29  
30 b. The SFL Club Representative will prepare and submit to the SFL, a revised Master  
31 Player Roster on the Monday after the last regular season game.  
32  
33 (1) The “combined roster” must only use players currently shown on the two teams  
34 being combined.  
35  
36 (2) The maximum number of players that may be used on this combined team is (1)  
37 fourteen (14) for the 11/12 age groups and (2) sixteen (16) players for the 13 and  
38 above age groups.  
39

40 **IV. Law 4 – The Players Equipment**

41  
42 **A. General requirements**

- 43  
44 1. If it is determined that the form used by a coach is not a form generated by the SFL, it is an  
45 automatic forfeit, regardless if all the information on the form is correct.  
46

- 1 2. Coaches are required to inform their SFL Club Representative, as soon as possible, of any  
2 changes that are needed for their roster.  
3

4 **Suggestion:** Coaches can require their players to wear their jerseys to practice to  
5 record/validate their uniform number. Additionally, the date of birth, correct spelling of  
6 the name can be validated. Any changes should then be forward to the SFL Club  
7 Representative for submission to the SFL.  
8

- 9 B. Jersey Issues – It does not matter what jersey color is worn by a team as long as no color clash  
10 exist and uniform numbers are consistent with SFL Team Roster. Teams are encouraged to  
11 only wear the primary uniform color as shown on the SFL web site to prevent unanticipated  
12 color clashes on game day.  
13

- 14 1. **Color Clashes** – Color clashes requiring the home team to resolve the color clash can only  
15 exist when the primary color shown on the SFL web site is the same for both teams. The  
16 home team is responsible for resolving such color clashes.  
17

- 18 a. Color clashes when the primary color shown on the web site for both teams is the same  
19 the following may be used to resolve the conflict.  
20

- 21 (1) One team wearing an alternate jersey color that has uniform numbers consistent  
22 with the SFL Team Roster.  
23

- 24 (a) The SFL does not require clubs to provide players with an alternate color  
25 jersey that is consistent with the official club jersey or pennies. The alternate  
26 color jerseys can be as simple as a consistent color T-Shirt (such as white) that  
27 has the player’s proper uniform number on the back made with a permanent  
28 marker.  
29

- 30 (2) Pennies of a different color may be used by either team with the opposing coach’s  
31 consent.  
32

- 33 b. When game day color clashes results from one or both teams not wearing their primary  
34 uniform colors, then the team(s) not wearing the primary color shown on the web site  
35 for that team must change into the uniform color shown the web site. It is possible for  
36 both teams to have to change uniforms, e.g., both teams are wearing white when white  
37 is not the primary color shown on the web site for either team.  
38

39 **V. Law 5 – The Referee**  
40

- 41 A. All referees must be USSF certified.  
42

- 43 B. Referees are encouraged to visit [www.ussoccer.com/referees](http://www.ussoccer.com/referees) for additional information.  
44



1 C. Clubs are expected to provide adequate officials for the games. If adequate officials cannot be  
2 provided, then (1) the visiting team should be notified by Friday night that the game cannot be  
3 played and (2) a forfeit will be assessed to the home team.  
4

5 1. It is recognized that, in most cases, the coach of the home team has very little, if any,  
6 control over whether officials will be present for a game. Therefore, should a situation  
7 arise in which at least one USSF certified official is not present by game time plus 15  
8 minutes, the visiting team is encouraged to select one of the following options rather than  
9 accepting the forfeit and leaving the field of play.  
10

11 a. **Option 1** – Reschedule the game for a later date. (In this situation, the home team may  
12 want to consider offering to play at the visiting team's home field.)  
13

14 b. **Option 2** – Except for the Under 16 and Under 19 age groups, play the game using team  
15 officials agreeable to both coaches. Should this option be adopted, the game results are  
16 binding and neither team may request a forfeit.  
17

18 (1) If the two coaches believe that a safe and effective match can be played, then they  
19 should play as long as the safety and the rules of the sport are not sacrificed. If  
20 either coach believes that the match cannot be safely and effectively played, then  
21 the coaches should consider a rematch. However, the visiting coach does have the  
22 right to accept a forfeit.  
23

24 (a) If a forfeit is accepted because either coach does not believe that a safe and  
25 effective game can be played, then the teams should leave the field. In other  
26 words, the teams should not use the game as a scrimmage. If the teams do  
27 decide the scrimmage, then both teams are assessed a forfeit.  
28

29 (2) If a properly qualified center official is not present for an Under 16 or Under 19  
30 game then the home team forfeits and both teams should leave the field, i.e., the  
31 game should not used as a scrimmage. In addition, should the teams not leave the  
32 field, e.g., use the game as scrimmage, both teams will be assessed a forfeit.  
33

#### 34 D. Rules of Competition 35

36 1. From the US Soccer web site:  
37

38 <http://www.usoccer.com/stories/2014/03/17/11/16/may-2008-archive-ii-of-ii>  
39

40 “As to local rules of competition, the intelligent referee will always obtain a copy of  
41 these rules before accepting any assignments. That way he or she knows what lies  
42 ahead and he or she can determine whether or not to accept assignments/appointments  
43 to those games.”  
44

45 2. Referees are encouraged to visit the SFL web site and under SFL Documents, download  
46 “SFL Guide to Referees (Regular Season & Tournament).”

1 a. Should a game official have a question regarding the SFL requirements relating to a  
2 game, they may call the SFL at 703-476-6611. During the regular season the SFL does  
3 not guarantee that someone will be available.  
4

5 3. Reporting misconduct – Referees are required to automatically report serious misconduct  
6 to the SFL through their club’s reporting process. These required reports include red cards  
7 issued, racial slurs (regardless of whether a red card is issued), individuals asked to leave  
8 the immediate game area, i.e., within 100 yards of the game field, (regardless of whether a  
9 red card is issued), pervasive inappropriate actions toward a game official regardless of  
10 whether the individual is ask to the immediate game area, etc.  
11

12 a. A referee may request from the coach, player, or other team official the name of any  
13 coach, player, or team official that the referee needs to perform their reporting  
14 responsibilities. If this information is not provided or incorrect information is provided  
15 to the referee, the team will be assessed two (2) Team Demerits in addition to any other  
16 Team Demerits that may be assessed during the game.  
17

18 E. Age Requirements  
19

20 1. The center referee will be at least two (2) years older than the age group they are officiating  
21 except as noted below.  
22

23 a. The referee is at least the age of the game they are officiating, and at least one adult of  
24 21 years or older is serving as an assistant referee.  
25

26 2. Referees should not be immediate family members to team officials except in an  
27 emergency.  
28

29 F. Quality of Officials  
30

31 1. The SFL has no role in assigning the officials to a game since this is a club responsibility.  
32 However, the SFL provides a mechanism for coaches to report on the quality of the  
33 officials provided for their games. Comments can be sent directly to the home team’s SFL  
34 Club Representative using the standard Email address that is contained in the season  
35 package. When reporting on the officiating, please provide the game number, teams, game  
36 field, and game time. For those that would like a form, the web site has one suggested  
37 form that can be used. (The form is on the SFL Documents page.)  
38

39 2. As noted by FIFA, the decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play,  
40 including if a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final. Accordingly, (1) game  
41 results will not be changed because of referee errors and (2) teams will not be compensated  
42 for referee errors. The mechanism available to address such matters is to notify the club  
43 providing the officials of the errors so that they can consider such cases when evaluating  
44 their referees’ performance and guidance that may be needed on how to implement a given  
45 rule or set of rules so that these errors do not happen in future games.  
46

1 G. Other

- 2
- 3 1. Game officials may determine that the game conditions are unsafe to play or continue
- 4 playing a game. This is a decision made by the referee and may not be protested.
- 5
- 6 2. In order to keep the tournament games on schedule, the referee will normally keep a
- 7 running clock, i.e., the clock is not stopped for injuries, substitutions, etc. However, the
- 8 referee may decide to stop the clock if the referee believes that it will not adversely affect
- 9 the overall tournament game schedule. This is a decision made by the referee and may not
- 10 be protested.
- 11
- 12 3. The referee is allowed to use their discretion on when it is too dark to play safely.
- 13 Therefore, the last games of the day may be shortened because of darkness. This is a
- 14 decision made by the referee and may not be protested.
- 15

16 **VI. Law 6 – The Other Match Officials**

- 17
- 18 A. All match officials must be USSF certified.
- 19
- 20 B. Referees are encouraged to visit [www.ussoccer.com/referees](http://www.ussoccer.com/referees) for additional information.
- 21
- 22 C. All match officials should be familiar with LAW 5 – THE REFEREE above.
- 23

24 **VII. Law 7 – The Duration of the Match**

- 25
- 26 A. Game Times – The following governs the game times for regular season and tournament
- 27 games.
- 28

29 Age Group(s)	Regular Season Games	Tournament Games
30 12 and Under	30 minute halves	30 minute halves
31 14 and Under	35 minute halves	35 minute halves
32 16 and Under	40 minute halves	35 minute halves
33 19 and Under	40/45 minute halves if time allows and both coaches agree	35 minute halves

- 34
- 35 B. Games Halted – A game halted at half time or later due to unsafe playing conditions will stand
- 36 as indicated by the score when the game was halted.
- 37
- 38 1. If due to unsafe playing conditions a regular season game is halted prior to half-time, it
- 39 will be replayed unless waived by the SFL Age Group Commissioner.
- 40

- 1 2. If a tournament game is halted due to unsafe playing conditions after being started, the  
2 game result at the time of termination will be used as the final game result unless waived  
3 by the SFL Age Group Commissioner.  
4

5 **Example**

6  
7 A regular season game is terminated 30 minutes into the first half due to weather  
8 conditions. The game is rescheduled to be played at a later date unless waived by the  
9 appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner. On the other hand, a tournament game  
10 terminated 5 minutes into the first half because of weather conditions would use the game  
11 results at the time of termination. The SFL will decide how to handle tournament games  
12 ending in a tie that is scheduled using the in single elimination format.  
13

14 **VIII. Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play**

- 15  
16 A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.  
17

18 **IX. Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play**

- 19  
20 A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.  
21

22 **X. Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of A Match**

- 23  
24 A. Mercy Rule

- 25  
26 1. When the goal differential between two teams has reached four (4), the winning team is  
27 obligated to remove a player from the field. This continues for each additional goal scored  
28 until the minimum number of players needed to play the game is reached, i.e., seven (7)  
29 players for games playing the 11 v 11 format and six (6) players for games playing the 9 v  
30 9 format.  
31

32 **Example**

33  
34 Team A is playing Team B using the 11 v 11 format. However, Team B only has eight (8)  
35 players present. Accordingly, as noted elsewhere, Team A may only play ten (10) players.  
36 When the score differential reaches four (4) with Team A winning, Team A is required to  
37 remove a player and this would continue each time the score differential increases until  
38 Team A only has seven players on the field.  
39

- 40 a. For every goal that the losing team scores, the winning team may add one player.  
41  
42 b. No forfeit may be awarded should a team not follow this rule. As noted elsewhere, the  
43 losing coach may terminate the game without penalty when the game score reaches four  
44 (4) or more goals for any reason.  
45

- 46 2. When the score differential reaches four (4) goals, the losing coach is allowed to terminate

1 the game without penalty, i.e., the losing team will not be assessed a forfeit and the game  
2 score at the time the team decides to terminate the game is used.  
3

- 4 3. When the minimum number of players is reached for the winning team, the winning coach  
5 is also allowed to terminate the game without penalty. If the game is not terminated and  
6 both coaches agree to continue the game, and the score differential continues to increase  
7 either coach may inform the referee and opposing coach that the game is being terminated  
8 at any time without penalty to either team.  
9
- 10 4. When the score differential results in the winning team having the minimum number of  
11 players on the field, assuming both teams desire to continue the game, no more players are  
12 removed from the field if the winning team's score differential increases.  
13
- 14 a. If the minimum number of players are present and the winning team receives a red card,  
15 then the game is automatically terminated, without penalty to either team, because the  
16 winning team would no longer have a sufficient number of players on the field.  
17

#### 18 **Example A**

19  
20 Team A is playing a game using the 11 v 11 format. Based on the score differential,  
21 Team A has seven (7) players on the field. Both teams desire to continue playing the  
22 game. Team A scores an additional goal. Assuming that both teams desire to continue  
23 playing, then Team A does not have to remove another player, i.e., Team A can still  
24 field seven (7) players.  
25

#### 26 **Example B**

27  
28 Team A is playing a game using the 11 v 11 format. Based on the score differential,  
29 Team A has eight (8) players on the field. A player from Team A receives a red card.  
30 Assuming that both teams desire to continue playing the game, the game is continued  
31 with Team A having seven (7) players on the field. On the other hand, if Team A had  
32 seven (7) players on the field prior to a player receiving a red card, then the game would  
33 be terminated without a penalty to either team since Team A no longer had the  
34 minimum number of required players, i.e., Team A is not allowed to substitute for the  
35 red carded player.  
36

### 37 **XI. Law 11 – Offsides**

- 38  
39 A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.  
40

### 41 **XII. Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct**

- 42  
43 A. For the Good of the Players – It should be remembered that the SFL is governed by the  
44 principle that all actions are “**For the Good of the Players**” and unsporting behavior or  
45 violation of the Laws of the Game cannot be tolerated. It should also be noted that the SFL is  
46 primarily a scheduling organization and that the resolution of complaints, disciplinary actions,

1 and protests is primarily the responsibility of the affected clubs. The role of the SFL is to help  
2 facilitate the resolution of complaints, disciplinary problems, and protests.

3  
4 B. Misconduct – Individual Demerits and Team Demerits are used to identify individuals and  
5 teams that have a history of infractions related to misconduct and administrative issues while  
6 game suspensions are used to penalize specific individuals for the infractions.

7  
8 1. Penalties for Misconduct – The SFL has three types of penalties relating to misconduct, (1)  
9 game suspensions, (2) Individual Demerits, and (3) Team Demerits. Game suspensions  
10 and Individual Demerits apply to an individual based on the infraction while Team  
11 Demerits apply to a team. Although in many cases the number Individual Demerits  
12 assigned to the individual and the team may be the same, this is not always the case as  
13 shown below. The following shows the game suspensions, Individual Demerits, and Team  
14 Demerits assigned for given types of misconduct.

15  
16 a. Player infractions resulting in one (1) game suspension; one (1) Individual Demerit; and  
17 one (1) Team Demerit.

18  
19 (1) Denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving toward the  
20 player’s goal by an offense punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick.

21  
22 (2) Denying the opposing team, a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity by  
23 deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own  
24 penalty area).

25  
26 (3) Receiving a second caution in the same match.

27  
28 **Note:** If a player receives a red card after receiving a second caution a decision is  
29 made on whether the red card was received based on the player committing a red  
30 card offense or receiving a second caution. For example, assume that a player  
31 receives a caution for dissent and then received a red card for using  
32 offensive/insulting/abusive/language/gestures. This is treated as a red card for  
33 using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures rather than a second  
34 yellow card for dissent.

35  
36 (4) Serious foul play.

37  
38 (5) Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures.

39  
40 (6) Ineligible players used – SFL concludes that a team deliberately used one or more  
41 ineligible players – head coach suspended for one game and one Team Demerit per  
42 player, e.g., if one (1) ineligible player was used, then one (1) Team Demerit, two  
43 (2) ineligible players, then two (2) Team Demerits, etc.

44  
45 (7) Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Conduct that warrants a one game  
46 suspension that is not specifically covered by other suspension offenses. Examples

1 include failing to serve a game suspension by a player. When an individual does  
2 not properly serve a suspension period, this penalty is in addition to the original  
3 penalty. For example, assume a player suspended for one game and does not serve  
4 the one game suspension. The player would be suspended for one additional  
5 game.

6  
7 (a) Games where a forfeit or scheduling forfeit has been assessed are not  
8 considered games where an individual has served their suspension and the  
9 required suspension will become applicable to the next game the team plays.

10  
11 b. Infractions incurred by players, coaches, and others resulting in two (2) game  
12 suspensions, two (2) Individual Demerits, and two (2) Team Demerits.

13  
14 (1) **Violent conduct and fighting as defined by the SFL regardless of whether a**  
15 **red card is shown.** Conduct which will be treated as fighting includes but is not  
16 limited to (1) fighting in the opinion of the referee, (2) shoving another player or  
17 any other aggressive action outside the normal course of play, (3) kicking/striking  
18 or attempting to kick/strike a player, or spitting. A player “defending  
19 himself/herself” is not exempt from this penalty.

20  
21 (2) **Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League** – Conduct that warrants a two  
22 game suspension rather than the standard one game suspension or not specifically  
23 covered by other infractions. Examples, include racial slurs, hate speech, taunting,  
24 non players (such as coaching staff or spectators) being asked to leave the field or  
25 shown a red card, inappropriate behavior toward a game official, etc.  
26 Inappropriate conduct toward a game official includes persistent inappropriate  
27 comments, verbal threats, being followed to the parking lot in an inappropriate  
28 manner, or other actions that would make a referee fear for his/her safety.

29  
30 (a) When a report of inappropriate language is received, the SFL will (1) request a  
31 game report from the home team’s club, (2) ask for a referee report, and (3)  
32 request the appropriate SFL Club Representative to take any other actions  
33 considered necessary to validate the claim. Should the claim be validated,  
34 then the appropriate penalties will be imposed.

### 35 36 **Discussion**

37  
38 The SFL has a zero tolerance policy toward the use of racial slurs, hate speech,  
39 taunting, etc. Unfortunately, we have seen an increasing number of complaints of  
40 taunting along with racial slurs, and hate speech being used. In some of the reports  
41 the coaches noted that this was “trash talk” and “players say this a lot to each  
42 other,” etc. In effect, the inference was that this behavior was not considered to be  
43 harmful or offensive. Unfortunately this is a subjective judgement and what is not  
44 offensive to one person may be offensive to another. History has shown such  
45 statements have resulted in very unpleasant situations on the field or in the  
46 “parking lot” after the game.

1 c. Infractions incurred by players, coaches and others resulting in season suspensions and  
2 three (3) Team Demerits.

3  
4 (1) Head Coach – Illegal players used. In addition, the coach is suspended for the  
5 subsequent season as well.

6  
7 (2) Individual Conduct Detrimental to the League – Offenses that warrant a three-  
8 game suspension rather than the standard one or two game suspensions. Offenses  
9 that would normally warrant this type of suspension include referee assault  
10 incidents or other behavior that should be referred to VYSA for review.

11  
12 2. Administrative penalties assessed to individuals and teams.

13  
14 a. **Illegal players used** – One (1) Team Demerit per illegal player per game. Illegal  
15 players include (1) travel players regardless of whether they are shown on the SFL Team  
16 Roster, (2) players shown on the SFL Team Roster but declared ineligible during a  
17 roster check or roster challenge, and (3) players not shown on the SFL Team Roster. As  
18 noted in Section III. a team using illegal players will be assessed forfeits for the games  
19 where illegal players are used and may be excluded from the SFL tournament.

20  
21 (1) If the coach is assessed a penalty for using illegal players, then the Team Demerit  
22 penalty is not assessed unless more than three (3) illegal players are used.

23  
24 b. **Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – One Team Demerit.** Conduct by  
25 members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other  
26 suspension or team offenses and warrants one Team Demerit. Examples include failing  
27 to ensure a suspended player does not play (this is in addition to the penalty assessed to  
28 the individual), etc.

29  
30 c. **Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – Two Team Demerits.** Conduct by  
31 members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other  
32 suspension or team offenses and warrants two Team Demerits. Examples include  
33 actions that cause a game to be terminated early and failing to properly report red cards  
34 or individuals (including the Head Coach) being asked to leave the field.

35  
36 (1) When the game is terminated early, a forfeit is also assessed to the team causing  
37 the game to be terminated early. The applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner  
38 may assess both teams this forfeit depending on the reasons for the game  
39 termination.

40  
41 (2) When suspension offenses are not properly reported, the team is also assessed  
42 additional Team Demerits and game forfeits until the information is properly  
43 received.

44  
45 d. **Team Conduct Detrimental to the League – Three Team Demerits.** Conduct by  
46 members of the team or its supporters that are not specifically covered by other



1 suspension or team offenses and warrant three Team Demerits. Examples include  
2 actions that warrant review by VYSA.  
3

4 (1) In extreme cases, the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner may impose limit  
5 of non players allowed to attend future games for at least two games up to the  
6 remainder of the season when at least one (1) other SFL Age Group Commissioner  
7 concurs that such a penalty is warranted. Specifically, the SFL Age Group  
8 Commissioner may allow only two (2) individuals that are not players to attend a  
9 given team’s game – the coach and one other individual to ensure that no other non  
10 players, e.g., parents, friends of the players, etc., associated directly or indirectly  
11 with the team are no closer than 100 yards from the field of play.  
12

13 (a) When such a penalty is imposed, it is up to the appropriate SFL Club  
14 Representative to ensure that (1) the team and its supporters are notified of the  
15 penalty, (2) ensure that the two (2) individuals allowed to attend the game  
16 representing the team are capable of enforcing the penalty and notifying the  
17 club and SFL that the penalty was not properly enforced, e.g., one or more  
18 parents were closer than 100 yards from the field of play.  
19

20 (i.) Should the penalty not be properly enforced, the (1) the team will be  
21 suspended for the remainder of the season and (2) placed on probation,  
22 should the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner allow the team to  
23 return the following season.  
24

25 (ii.) Should the opposing coach believe that the penalty is not being properly  
26 enforced by the two (2) individuals allowed to represent the team, then  
27 (1) the game official should be notified and asked to include this  
28 information in the game report and (2) contact the SFL via Email that  
29 they believe a violation of the suspension occurred with a full  
30 description of the violation.  
31

32 a) The game should continue to be played and no forfeit assessed  
33 until the SFL reviews the matter. Specifically, the SFL will make a  
34 final determination on whether the team violated the suspension.  
35

### 36 C. Individual and Team Demerits 37

38 1. **Individual Suspensions** – An individual that receives three (3) Individual Demerits during  
39 a season, including post season play, is automatically suspended for the remainder of the  
40 current season. In addition, if the third Individual Demerit is received in either the last  
41 regular season game played by the team or a tournament game, then the individual will also  
42 be assessed a “carryover” Individual Demerit for the following season. Such “carryover”  
43 Individual Demerits will be combined with any Individual Demerits received by the  
44 individual during the subsequent season to determine whether the player should be  
45 suspended for the remainder of the subsequent season. For example, assume an individual  
46 had one “carryover” Individual Demerit and then received a red card for violent conduct in

1 game 1 of the following season. The individual would be suspended for the remainder of  
2 the following season.

3  
4 **Example A**

5  
6 Player A receives a third Individual Demerit in a week 3 game and the team plays five (5)  
7 more regular season games plus two (2) tournament games. Player A is suspended for the  
8 remainder of the season and is not assessed a “carryover” Individual Demerit for the  
9 following season. In addition, the player does not have any “carryover” game suspensions  
10 since the player was suspended more than games than the last infraction would warrant.

11  
12 **Example B**

13  
14 Player A receives a third individual Demerit in the team’s final regular season game. The  
15 standard game suspension for the infraction is two (2) games and the team plays one (1)  
16 tournament game. The player would be assessed one (1) “carryover” Individual Demerit  
17 and suspended for the first game of the following season since the individual had only  
18 served one (1) game of the standard two (2) game suspension.

19  
20 **Example C**

21  
22 Player A receives a third individual Demerit in the team’s final regular season game. The  
23 standard game suspension for the infraction is one (1) game and the team plays one (1)  
24 tournament game. The player would be assessed one (1) “carryover” Individual Demerit.  
25 The player would be allowed to play in the first game of the following season since the  
26 individual had served the standard one (1) game suspension for the infraction that resulted  
27 in the third Individual Demerit.

- 28  
29 2. **Team suspensions** – Two types of team suspensions may result from the accumulation of  
30 Team Demerits (1) suspension from the tournament, and (2) suspension from regular  
31 season and tournament games.  
32
- 33 a. Suspension from the tournament – A team that averages one (1) Team Demerit per  
34 game played when the tournament schedules are prepared will be excluded from the  
35 tournament but will be allowed to continue playing regular season games until the  
36 maximum Team Demerits allowed are reached. For example, if a team has played four  
37 (4) games when the tournament scheduling process is started and has been assessed four  
38 (4) or more Team Demerits, then that team will not be scheduled for the tournament  
39 although it may continue playing its regular season games until the maximum Team  
40 Demerits allowed is reached.  
41
  - 42 b. Suspension from regular season and tournament games – A team that accumulates Team  
43 Demerits that equal or exceeds the maximum Team Demerits allowed will be (1)  
44 suspended for any remaining regular season games, (2) excluded from the tournament if  
45 scheduled for any tournament games, and (3) placed on probation for the following  
46 season.

- 1  
2 (1) Maximum Team Demerits Allowed – the lesser of (1) the number of regular  
3 season games scheduled or (2) the actual games played.  
4  
5 (a) Team Demerits associated with the illegal player penalties shall be excluded  
6 from the computation of the total Team Demerits warranting a suspension of  
7 regular season games.  
8

9 **Example A**

10 Team A has eight (8) regular season games scheduled and has accumulated eight  
11 (8) Team Demerits for reasons that include two (2) Team Demerits associated with  
12 illegal players. In this case, the team would not be suspended from its remaining  
13 regular season games. On the other hand, if the team had accumulated ten (10)  
14 Team Demerits and two (2) of those were for illegal players, then the team would  
15 be suspended from the remaining regular season games.  
16  
17

18 **Example B**

19 Team A is originally scheduled for eight regular season games. However, a team  
20 drops out and that game is cancelled. In addition, the last game of the season is  
21 also cancelled and cannot be rescheduled. Team A plays all six remaining games.  
22 The maximum Team Demerits allowed for Team A is six since (1) its regular  
23 season game scheduled was reduced to seven games when the team dropped out  
24 even though other teams may have played eight regular season games and (2) one  
25 game was not played for other reasons.  
26  
27

- 28 (2) Games Played – A game where a team is assessed a forfeit for any reason is not  
29 considered as a game played. In addition, if the game is unscheduled and neither  
30 team has been assessed a forfeit, then that game is also not considered as a game  
31 played. For example, Team A is scheduled for eight regular season games and the  
32 web site shows that all eight games are considered played. However, Team A is  
33 assessed a forfeit for some reason for one game. Team A is considered to have  
34 played seven games.  
35

- 36 c. **Appeal of regular season and tournament suspensions** – A SFL Club Representative  
37 may appeal the regular season and tournament suspension associated with the  
38 accumulation of Team Demerits to the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner when  
39 **all the Team Demerits were associated with one game**. Based on the facts of the  
40 situation, the SFL Age Group Commissioner may (1) retain the suspension, (2) allow  
41 the team to complete the regular season but not play in the tournament, or (3) allow the  
42 team to complete the regular season and participate in the tournament.  
43

- 44 (1) When the SFL Age Group Commissioner agrees to let a team continue to play,  
45 then such approval is automatically revoked should the team receive a Team  
46 Demerit for any reason in a subsequent game. Accordingly, the team is

1 automatically suspended for the remainder of the season.

2  
3 **Example A**

4  
5 Team A is assessed eight (8) Team Demerits in regular season game 5. These Team  
6 Demerits are associated with several different infractions. Team A has not received any  
7 other Team Demerits prior to this game. **The SFL Club Representative is allowed to**  
8 **appeal** the regular season and tournament suspensions required because the team had  
9 accumulated eight (8) Team Demerits.

10  
11 **Example B**

12  
13 Team A received eight (8) Team Demerits in regular season game 5 and appealed the  
14 regular season and tournament suspension required in the rules. The appropriate SFL  
15 Age Group Commissioner agreed, based on the facts associated with the given game,  
16 that the team should be allowed to complete its regular season games and participate in  
17 the tournament. However, in week 7, a player on Team A receives a red card because of  
18 the accumulation of two yellow cards. Accordingly, (1) Team A receives an additional  
19 Team Demerit and (2) is suspended for the remainder of the season, i.e., is not allowed  
20 to play regular season game 8 and participate in the tournament. **No appeal of this**  
21 **suspension is available since the Team Demerits were accumulated in two games.**

22  
23 **Example C**

24  
25 Team A is assessed one (1) Team Demerit in regular season game 1 because of a player  
26 that received a red card. In regular season game 5, Team A is assessed seven (7) Team  
27 Demerits. These Team Demerits are associated with several different infractions. **The**  
28 **SFL Club Representative is not allowed to appeal** the regular season and tournament  
29 suspensions required because the team had accumulated eight (8) Team Demerits in  
30 more than one game.

31  
32 3. **Team Probations** – Teams are placed on probation when (1) the coach knowingly uses an  
33 illegal player or (2) the number of Team Demerits received in a season equal or exceeds the  
34 number of games played during that season. For example, if a team plays seven regular  
35 season and two tournament games, then the team would be placed on probation if the Team  
36 Demerits for the season equal or exceed nine Team Demerits.

37  
38 a. The SFL Club Representative is responsible for ensuring that a team is notified that it is  
39 considered on probation and aware of the rules that can affect their continued  
40 participation in the SFL.

41  
42 (1) If a team on probation has any of the following conditions, the remainder of the  
43 regular season games will be forfeited and team considered ineligible for  
44 tournament play.

45  
46 (a) Accumulation of four Team Demerits.

1  
2 (b) A game terminated because of the team’s conduct.  
3

4 (c) Any other disciplinary reason that the SFL Age Group Commissioner deems  
5 significant and warrants suspension from the SFL.  
6

7 b. Any team on probation that is suspended is considered ineligible to return to the SFL for  
8 at least two seasons.  
9

10 (1) The applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner is responsible for determining  
11 whether the members associated with a team constitute the team ineligible to  
12 participate.  
13

14 (a) It is up to the SFL Club Representative to notify the appropriate SFL Age  
15 Group Commissioner when any members of the suspended team or coaches  
16 associated with the suspended team are placed on teams(s) that will be  
17 registered. The SFL Age Group Commissioner must approve each of these  
18 players(s) or coach(es) returning to the SFL before the two–season suspension  
19 is served.  
20

21 D. Suspensions  
22

23 1. Unserved suspensions carry over to the next season while the associated Individual  
24 Demerits and Team Demerits do not.  
25

26 2. Suspended players, coaches, and other individuals serving their suspension period are  
27 encouraged not to attend the game at all. If the individual desires to attend the team’s  
28 game during a suspension period, the individual must receive the applicable SFL Club  
29 Representative’s permission to attend any games where that individual is serving a  
30 suspension by 6:00 P.M. at least two days before the game is scheduled to be played. For  
31 example, if an individual is suspended for a game being played on Saturday and the SFL  
32 Club Representative decides to permit the individual to attend the game, then this decision  
33 must be made by 6:00 P.M. on Thursday night.  
34

35 a. The SFL Club Representative must also notify the SFL when this permission has been  
36 granted at the same time the individual is notified.  
37

38 b. If a non player receives the SFL Club Representative’s permission and does attend the  
39 game, the following applies.  
40

41 (1) The individual should not be closer to the playing field than 100 yards beginning  
42 30 minutes before game time until the game is over. The fact that a game can be  
43 seen from a public street or sidewalk which may be closer than 100 yards does not  
44 relieve the coach, team official, parent, or a spectator from complying with this  
45 100-yard rule.  
46

1 (2) The suspended individual will not be involved in any way with administration of  
2 the team during the game.

3  
4 (3) If a player is granted permission to attend the game, then that player may be  
5 granted permission be the SFL Club Representative to sit on the bench with the  
6 other players if the player does not wear a uniform and it is clear to outsiders that  
7 the player is not eligible to participate in the game.  
8

9 c. Since the tournament is only conducted during one weekend, any coach or other  
10 individual that is not a player who is asked to leave the field may not attend any of that  
11 team's remaining games since these suspensions carry at least a two game suspension  
12 and a team will not play more than two games after the game in which the offense  
13 generating the suspension occurred.  
14

15 d. A player receiving a red card that warrants a one game suspension, may attend and  
16 participate in that team's third tournament game assuming that (1) the team plays three  
17 tournament games and (2) the red card was received in the first game. The player may  
18 also attend the team's second tournament game without the SFL Club Representative's  
19 approval when (1) the player does not wear a uniform and (2) it is clear to outsiders that  
20 the player is not eligible to participate in the game. In addition, the coach should  
21 highlight on the roster provided to the opposing coach and referee the player that is not  
22 able to play because of a suspension to avoid any conclusion on whether a player with  
23 that number is allowed on the field of play.  
24

25 3. Suspensions involving individuals who have more than one role – An individual receiving  
26 a suspension may serve in more than one role. For example, the individual may coach  
27 more than one SFL team, or play for a team and coach an SFL team. The following  
28 governs what is considered serving the red card suspension.  
29

30 a. Coach received a suspension and coaches more than one SFL Team – If a coach is  
31 suspended for an infraction while coaching an SFL team then the suspension period will  
32 be considered served when that team has played the number of games called for by the  
33 suspension. For example, assume that a coach receives a two game suspension because  
34 of a misconduct incident while coaching Team A. The coach is also considered  
35 suspended from coaching any other SFL teams until Team A has played two games.  
36

37 b. Coach receives a suspension and plays on an SFL team – If a coach is suspended for an  
38 infraction while coaching one SFL team and plays on another SFL team, then the  
39 suspension period will be considered served when the team that the player coached has  
40 played the number of games called for by the suspension. For example, assume that the  
41 coach receives a two game suspension because of a misconduct incident while coaching  
42 Team A. The coach cannot participate as a player in any SFL games until Team A has  
43 played two games.  
44

45 (1) The individual's SFL Club Representative is responsible for notifying the SFL if  
46 the individual also plays for an SFL team.

1  
2 c. A player receives a suspension and coaches an SFL team – If a player is suspended for  
3 an infraction while playing on an SFL team and coaches an SFL team, then the  
4 suspension period will be considered served when the team to which the player is  
5 assigned has played the number of games called for by the suspension. For example,  
6 assume that the player receives a two game suspension because of a misconduct incident  
7 while playing for Team A. The player cannot participate as a coach for any SFL teams  
8 until Team A has played two games.  
9

10 (1) The individual’s SFL Club Representative is responsible for notifying the SFL if  
11 the individual also coaches an SFL team.  
12

13 4. Failure to serve a game suspension – A player will be considered as not serving the  
14 suspension period if (1) any player wears the same jersey number of the player who  
15 received the suspension, unless approval has been given by the appropriate SFL Age Group  
16 Commissioner, (2) the player who received the suspension plays in the game regardless of  
17 the jersey number, or (3) the suspended individual attends a game during the suspension  
18 period without obtaining the required approval from the SFL Club Representative, the team  
19 will also be assessed a forfeit.  
20

21 5. Games cancelled or games where the team receives a forfeit or scheduling forfeit are not  
22 considered as games played when determining whether a player has served a game  
23 suspension.  
24

25 **Example A**

26  
27 Player A receives a red card in week 5 and Player A’s next scheduled game in week 6 in  
28 cancelled due to weather and the team’s next game is during week 7. Player A would be  
29 required to serve the suspension during the game scheduled for week 7.  
30

31 **Example B**

32  
33 Player A receives a red card in week five. During the next game that Player A’s team plays  
34 (week 6), Player A’s team is assessed a forfeit because it did not have a proper roster.  
35 Player A would be required to sit out the next game that Player A’s team plays, e.g., the  
36 week 7 game.  
37

38 6. **Suspension notices** – Unless the team is expected to play its next game within two days of  
39 the game in which the suspension offense was incurred, the SFL will normally send the  
40 suspension notices by Wednesday or Thursday of the following week. This allows the  
41 impacts of game rescheduling and forfeits to be determined prior to the notice being sent.  
42 It is up to the applicable SFL Club Representative to ensure that any other individuals  
43 suspended from a game do not appear at the game. The following governs the suspension  
44 notices.  
45

- 1 a. Effects of scores not being reported – As noted elsewhere, game scores that are not  
2 reported by 6:00 P.M. on Monday results in both teams being assessed scheduling  
3 forfeits. As noted elsewhere, games where a team has been assessed forfeits for any  
4 reason are not considered games where an individual has served their suspension and  
5 the required suspension will become applicable to the upcoming week. It does not  
6 matter if subsequent to the notice that the SFL is notified that the game was played and  
7 the suspension was served. The individual must still not participate in the upcoming  
8 game.  
9

10 **Example**

11  
12 Assume that Player A was expected to serve the final suspension for an infraction in  
13 week 5. However, no score was reported for the game by Wednesday when the  
14 suspension notices for week 6 are prepared. Accordingly, both teams were assessed  
15 scheduling forfeits. Since the team was assessed a scheduling forfeit, Player A is  
16 considered not to have served the required suspension and a suspension notice for week  
17 6 is prepared for Player A. After receiving the week 6 notice, Player A’s team notifies  
18 that SFL of the week 5 game score and states that Player A served the suspension during  
19 that game. Since the suspension notice has already been sent, Player A is also  
20 suspended for the week 6 game since (1) the team had adequate time to report the game  
21 score for the week 5 game, (2) could easily determine from the web site that the score  
22 had not been received by the SFL, and (3) only one team must report the score to avoid  
23 this penalty even if it is not Player A’s team.  
24

- 25 b. Players’ name and uniform number issues – The information reported on player  
26 infractions that result in game suspensions is compared to the information contained on  
27 the Master Player Roster submitted by the player’s club. When significant differences  
28 arise, the coach is contacted to confirm the information reported, e.g., the game report  
29 says John Smith was wearing 22 while the master Player Roster shows that Sam Jones  
30 wears that number. If significant differences still exist when the suspension notices are  
31 prepared, then the suspension notification will contain those differences(s) and no player  
32 may play whose name or uniform number(s) appear on that notice.  
33

34 **Example A**

35  
36 A game report is received which states that Johnnie Smith wearing uniform number 22  
37 committed an offense that warranted a game suspension. The Master Player Roster  
38 shows that uniform number 22 was assigned to John Smith. Since this is not considered  
39 a significant difference, the coach is not contacted and the suspension notice will show  
40 both names.  
41

42 **Example B**

43  
44 A game report is received which states that John Smith wearing uniform number 22  
45 committed an offense that warranted a game suspension. The Master Player Roster  
46 shows that uniform number 22 was assigned to Sam Jones. The coach (1) does not



1 respond to the request for clarification when the suspension notice is prepared, or (2)  
2 confirms that the reported name and uniform number was correct, or (3) states that the  
3 Master Player Roster contains the incorrect uniform number for Sam Jones. However,  
4 in the latter case, the necessary change to correct the uniform number of Sam Joneses is  
5 not submitted by the club by the Wednesday deadline for making changes to the Master  
6 Player Roster and is not available for the preparation of the game suspension notices.  
7 The suspension notice will contain both John Smith and Sam Jones as the players being  
8 suspended and that no player wearing the uniform number of 22 may play. The penalty  
9 for both players is imposed since (1) the coach had an opportunity to correct the actual  
10 name and (2) if the problem was caused by a Master Player Roster issue, the club had  
11 time to make the necessary corrections prior to the suspension notice being prepared.  
12

13 **Example C**

14  
15 A game report is received which states that John Smith wearing uniform number 22  
16 committed an offense that warranted a game suspension. The Master Player Roster  
17 shows that uniform number 25 was assigned to John Smith. The coach (1) does not  
18 respond to the request for clarification when the suspension notice is prepared, or (2)  
19 confirms that the reported name and uniform number was correct, or (3) states that the  
20 Master Player Roster contains the incorrect uniform number for John Smith. However,  
21 in the latter case, the necessary change to correct the uniform number of John Smith is  
22 not submitted by the club by the Wednesday deadline for making changes to the Master  
23 Player Roster and is not available for the preparation of the game suspension notices.  
24 The suspension notice will state that John Smith is being suspended and that the  
25 uniform numbers 22 and 25 are not eligible to play. Accordingly, no players on the  
26 team wearing uniform numbers 22 or 25 may participate in the game since the rules  
27 state that no one may wear the uniform number of a suspended player. If another player  
28 on the team is wearing the number 22, then that player is also not eligible to play. The  
29 penalty for both players is imposed since (1) the coach had an opportunity to correct the  
30 actual name and uniform number combination and (2) if the problem was caused by a  
31 Master Player Roster issue, the club had time to make the necessary corrections prior to  
32 the suspension notice being prepared.  
33

- 34 E. Club Review of Disciplinary Issues – The applicable SFL Age Group Commissioner or SFL  
35 Commissioner may request a club to review any incident that involves individual or team  
36 misconduct.  
37
- 38 F. Conduct Detrimental to the League – A team may be placed on probation during the current  
39 and/or subsequent season, regardless of whether any Team Demerits are assigned, because the  
40 conduct of the coach, player(s), and/or other individuals are detrimental to the league.  
41
- 42 1. The Appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner or SFL Commissioner will document the  
43 reason(s) that a team should be considered being placed on probation for conduct  
44 detrimental to the league. Once the document is prepared, it is submitted to the remaining  
45 SFL Age Group Commissioners for review.  
46

- 1 a. If a majority of the SFL Age Group Commissioners agree that the team should be placed  
2 on probation, then the applicable SFL Club Representative is formally contacted to  
3 obtain his/her views on the proposed probation. The SFL Club Representative will have  
4 one week in which to provide a formal response. If no response is received within that  
5 time, the SFL will consider that the SFL Club Representative agrees with the proposed  
6 probation.  
7
- 8 (1) Each SFL Age Group Commissioner will have one vote and a tie is broken by the  
9 SFL Commissioner. If a person holds more than one SFL Age Group  
10 Commissioner position, then that individual is allowed one vote. If the SFL  
11 Commissioner also holds an SFL Age Group Commissioner position and the vote  
12 is tied, then the SFL Commissioner may not break the tie and the team will not be  
13 placed on probation for conduct detrimental to the league.  
14
- 15 2. Once the SFL Club Representative has provided a formal response to the proposal to place  
16 a team on probation, the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner will review the  
17 response and opine on whether the proposed probation should be enforced. The SFL Age  
18 Group Commissioners will then vote on whether the proposed probation should be  
19 finalized using the same voting process that is used for proposing a team for probation.  
20 The applicable SFL Club Representative will then be notified of the final decision. If the  
21 original request was received from another SFL Club Representative, then that SFL Club  
22 Representative will also be notified of the final decision. No appeal of this decision is  
23 available.  
24
- 25 3. Teams placed on probation during the season will automatically be placed on probation for  
26 the following season.  
27
- 28 a. A team placed on probation will be suspended from the remaining games of the season  
29 when (1) the team accumulates four (4) Team Demerits for any reason during the season  
30 or (2) is considered to have conducted another offense that warrants another decision  
31 that the team has demonstrated conduct detrimental to the league. If a team has already  
32 accumulated four (4) Team Demerits prior to the decision that it has demonstrated  
33 conduct detrimental to the league, then (1) the team is automatically suspended for the  
34 remainder of the season and (2) automatically placed on probation for the following  
35 season.  
36
- 37 G. Complaints and Protests – Only an SFL Club Representative, President or equivalent of a  
38 club’s governing body can submit formal complaints or protest a game. SFL Club  
39 Representatives or Club Presidents who wish to protest a game or provide a formal complaint,  
40 must notify the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner in writing within hours after the  
41 match with a copy to the SFL Commissioner. Coaches and any other club officials are not  
42 allowed to file formal complaints or protests directly with the SFL. Although the SFL Club  
43 Representative of Club President may request other individuals to help the SFL Club  
44 representative or Club President file a complaint or protest, the applicable SFL Age Group  
45 Commissioner is only responsible for accepting information from and discussing the  
46 complaint or protest with the SFL club Representative or Club President who is acting on

1 behalf of the club. Only one individual may act on behalf of the club during the complaint or  
2 protest process.

3  
4 1. The formal complaint or protest must include:

5  
6 a. The time and location of the match

7  
8 b. The team names and age group

9  
10 c. The nature of the complaint or protest (referee judgment is not considered an item for  
11 protest)

12  
13 d. The referee's name, address, and phone number (if known)

14  
15 e. The opposing teams coach's name and other significant witnesses.

16  
17 2. During tournament play, a phone report may be made by the SFL Club Representative but  
18 must include the above information. The protest will be handled by the applicable SFL  
19 Age Group Commissioner.

20  
21 3. The SFL Age Group Commissioner is responsible for making the initial decision on an  
22 appeal unless that individual is affiliated with a club involved in the protest. The  
23 appropriate person making the protest may; appeal the SFL Age Group Commissioner's  
24 decision to the SFL Commissioner whose decision is final.

25  
26 a. If the SFL Age Group Commissioner is affiliated with a club involved in the protest,  
27 then the protest will be heard by the SFL Commissioner, unless the SFL Commissioner  
28 is affiliated with a club involved in the protest, whose decision is final.

29  
30 b. If the SFL Commissioner is affiliated with a club involved in the protest, than the SFL  
31 Age Group Commissioner's decision is considered final and cannot be appealed.

32  
33 c. If both the SFL Age Group Commissioner and SFL Commissioner are affiliated with a  
34 club involved in the protest, then the protest will be heard by an SFL Age Group  
35 Commissioner that is not Affiliated with any of the clubs involved in the protest. The  
36 SFL Administrator will determine which SFL Age Group Commissioner should hear the  
37 protest. The decision of this SFL Age Group Commissioner is considered final and may  
38 not be appealed.

39  
40 **Discussion**

41  
42 In the past, the SFL has received many protests which should not have been filed or  
43 requested to review actions which are the responsibility of a given club. For example,  
44 games were protested because of referee decisions. The SFL recognizes that protests or  
45 formal complaints are not appropriate for many conditions that a coach or club believes  
46 warrants additional review by a club. Therefore, the SFL will accept informal

1 complaints and forward them to the appropriate club for informational purposes. The  
2 SFL is not responsible for following up to determine what actions were taken by a given  
3 club on informal complaints.  
4

5 H. Video Evidence – The SFL is willing to accept video evidence to support a given disciplinary  
6 issue. However, it is up to the appropriate SFL Age Group Commissioner to determine the  
7 extent that the information is used in arriving at a decision. The following guidelines have  
8 been adopted by the SFL in guiding the decision on the extent that video evidence will be  
9 used.  
10

- 11 1. Video evidence will normally be considered in reviewing such matters as (1) deciding  
12 whether a team used illegal players that were not able to be detected through the roster  
13 checking or roster challenge process and (2) whether physical altercations that would  
14 warrant a two-game suspension may have occurred on or off the field of play that were not  
15 detected by the officiating crew.  
16
- 17 2. Video evidence will not be considered in requests to overturn referee decisions such as  
18 whether (1) a goal was or was not scored, (2) a red card should be reduced to a yellow card,  
19 etc. In addition, it will not be used to evaluate subjective items such as whether a player or  
20 team is “too physical.” Such issues should be addressed with the team’s SFL Club  
21 Representative. As noted elsewhere, when a club is concerned about a team’s “level of  
22 play,” the club may request the SFL to review the matter as conduct that is detrimental to  
23 the league. In such cases, video evidence may be allowed by the SFL.  
24

25 **XIII. Law 13 – Free Kicks**  
26

27 A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.  
28

29 **XIV. Law 14 – The Penalty Kick**  
30

31 A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.  
32

33 **XV. Law 15 – The Throw in**  
34

35 A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.  
36

37 **XVI. Law 16 – The Goal Kick**  
38

39 A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.  
40

41 **XVII. Law 17 – The Corner Kick**  
42

43 A. There are no SFL administrative rules for this law of the game.  
44