

SUBURBAN FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

Guide to Referees

SFL Guide to Referees

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SFL MODIFICATIONS TO FIFA LAWS

All games will be played in accordance with “FIFA Laws of the Game” as modified by the USSF for youth play and as clarified in these instructions. Nothing in these rules precludes individual clubs from imposing more stringent rules on their own teams.

Law 3 – The Number of Players

The maximum number of players allowed for the respective age groups is shown in the table below along with the minimum number required to start or continue a game.

Age Group	Minimum Number	Maximum Number
U11/12 Boys & Girls	5	8
U13/14 Boys & Girls	7	11
U16 Boys & Girls	7	11
U19 Boys & Girls	7	11

SFL Play-Down Rule

1. When one team fields less than the maximum number of players, the opposing team may not play with more than two players over the number fielded by the other team. The table below shows the maximum number of players one team is allowed to use when another team fields less than the maximum number allowed.

Age Group	Players for Team A	Maximum Players Allowed for Team B
U11/12 Boys & Girls	5	7
U11/12 Boys & Girls	6 or 7	8
U13 – U19 Boys & Girls	7	9
U13 – U19 Boys & Girls	8	10
U13 – U19 Boys & Girls	9 or 10	11

2. The above play-down rules also apply when players from the team with the lesser number of players leave a game due to injury or illness. In these circumstances, the opposing team should not continue play with more than two players over the number that the other team has on the field of play.
3. Red carded players on the short sided team do not cause the team with more players to be required to play down. For example if Team A has 11 players and Team B has 9 players and Team B receives a red card, Team A is not required to play down to 10 players.
4. Coaches are required reduce the number of players on the field once a team has scored 5 goals more than the other team. For example, if a team is winning the game 5 – 1 and scores another goal, they should reduce the number of players on the field by at least one player. A game score of 10 – 0 provides no more benefits than a game score of 3 – 0 since goals scored is not used in any of the team ranking factors.

Substitution Opportunities

1. Substitutions can be made with the consent of the referee at any stoppage in play.

Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment

Shin-guards are mandatory and each player must wear FIFA acceptable sport shoes or sneakers. Metal cleats shall not be worn and shoes should not have a toe cleat. No jewelry shall be worn on any exposed part of the body, with the exception of medical alert bracelets which may need to be taped down or covered with a wrist band in order to be safe. Casts on arms must be covered in a cushioning material in order to prevent injury to other players. The decision as to whether a cast is not dangerous or used in a dangerous manner solely belongs to the referee.

Teams must have matching colored jerseys with a unique number assigned to each player. The only exception is for cases when the SFL has provided approval for a club to assign players to two teams and that results in duplicate numbers on one of the teams. (The SFL Team Roster will clearly show when players from two different teams are allowed to be combined to form one team.) In that case a duplicate number may be ignored, or tape can be used on the back of the jersey to create a unique number.

Coaches are required to contact each other during the week to discuss team colors so that conflicts can be avoided. If a color conflict exists between two teams at a game, it is the responsibility of the home team to change colors by using an alternate colored jersey. Alternate jerseys are not required to have numbers.

Law 7 – The Duration of the Game

Game times for the respective age groups are shown in the table below.

Age Group	Regular Season Games	Tournament Games
U12 Boys & Girls	30 minute halves	30 minute halves
U14 Boys & Girls	35 minute halves	35 minute halves
U16 Boys & Girls	40 or 45 minute halves ¹	35 minute halves
U19 Boys & Girls	40 or 45 minute halves ¹	35 minute halves

1. When both coaches agree and enough time has been allotted in the game slots, U16 and U19 teams may play 45 minute halves. Referees must discuss this option with both coaches prior to the match.

TEAM ROSTER REQUIREMENTS

Coaches are required to exchange paper copies of the SFL Team Roster prior to the start of each game. The referee may also request each coach to provide a paper copy of the SFL Team Roster. The only acceptable roster form is the SFL Team Roster generated by the SFL.

Only the players shown on the SFL Team Roster are allowed to play. Furthermore, the only changes allowed on the SFL Team Roster are uniform number changes. It is expected that all players at the field will be listed on the team roster and have uniform numbers that match what is shown on the team roster. The following are the limitation on uniform number changes unless the opposing coach agrees to waive these requirements:

1. Week 1 – Unlimited
2. Week 2 – No more than 3 changes

3. Tournament – No changes

The following are examples of where uniform number changes are required:

1. When the SFL Team Roster does not show a number. During the tournament, players without uniform numbers are not allowed to play without the approval of the opposing coach.
2. When the SFL Team Roster shows that duplicate uniform numbers have been assigned to two or more players. During the regular season, after week one, the actual uniform number may be shown so that the duplication is addressed for up to 3 players. During the tournament, none of the players with duplicate numbers may play without approval of the opposing coach even if only one of those players is on the field.

The SFL Team Roster shows all waivers that have been granted to the team. These include (1) medical waivers that allow a player to “play down” and allowing players from another team to supplement that team’s roster (commonly referred to as combining teams). It also shows players on the roster that have been assigned to the team that are not allowed to play because they have not received the necessary waiver and any limitations on the waiver provided. For example, players that do not meet the age requirements for their teams are not normally allowed to play and teams are only allowed to “combine teams” for regular season games only. In addition, when teams are allowed to use players from another team, (1) the players must come from the other team shown on the SFL Team Roster and (2) the combined team may not exceed 14 players when the team plays the 11 v 11 format or 10 players when the team plays the 8 v 8 format.

Failure to provide a proper team roster at the game is grounds for the game to be forfeited. Forfeits due to missing rosters are not mandatory for regular season games, but they are mandatory for tournament games. During the regular season either coach may request the referee to perform a roster check of the other team. **DURING THE TOURNAMENT, ROSTER CHECKS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE EVERY GAME.**

Roster checks are normally performed prior to the start of a game. However, a coach may request that the referee conduct a roster check to ascertain the eligibility of any players after the game has started if (1) a player that arrives **AFTER** the game has started or (2) when that coach has a valid reason to question a player already on the field. However, this check should be made at half time and must be made before the second half starts unless the player arrives after the second half begins.

When a roster check is conducted, the following outcomes are possible:

1. The referee can abandon the match if either coach is unable to provide a copy of his/her team roster to the referee. If the game is abandoned, both teams must leave the field and may not use the field for a scrimmage game.
2. The referee can declare one or more players as ineligible and the game will be played with those players excluded. The referee shall provide a complete report.

3. The referee will determine that all players are eligible and the game will be played with no players excluded.

Unless otherwise directed by an SFL official, the game will not be abandoned for cases in which both coaches have rosters but discrepancies are noted. The game will be played in its entirety and the SFL will make a decision later on whether a forfeit or other penalty will be assessed. During the tournament, the SFL has someone available to respond to phone calls concerning these issues.

SFL players are not issued player identification cards as travel players are, so a roster check is conducted in the following manner:

1. Each coach shall provide a paper copy of his/her SFL Team Roster to the referee. The SFL Team Roster is the only acceptable form that may be submitted.
2. Players will line up in uniform number order and state or write their name and birth date. If any information provided does not match what is shown on the SFL Team Roster, the player is considered ineligible to play in that game unless the opposing coach waives that requirement or an SFL official directs otherwise.
 - a. A coach may not tell a player how to answer the questions (e.g., the coach may not tell the player the birth date that should be provided). Any instructions provided by the coach to the team concerning how the process works should be made in the presence of the official conducting the review.
 - b. The uniform number on the SFL Team Roster must agree with the number shown on the player's uniform unless the opposing coach has agreed to waive the requirement for consistent uniform numbers.
 - c. If a coach is found guilty of using players not on the SFL Team Roster provided to the official, then (1) the SFL Club Representative will be notified with a recommendation of censure and (2) the game will be forfeited by the offending team if any portion of a game has been played.

The SFL must be notified by the coaches in their regular season game reports any time that a roster check has occurred. This information should include the name of the coach requesting the check, the game number, game date, game field, and the result of the check.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT INFORMATION

The SFL schedules games for tournament groups in two different formats:

Round Robin – Teams will play two or three games during the tournament and any game is allowed to end in a tie. Winners in each group will be determined based on the outcome of all games played and tie-breaking rules will be applied when necessary. Penalty kicks will only be used for determining the winner of a tournament group when all other tie-breakers fail to determine a winner. **Note:** In a 6-team division, the final games cannot end in a tie. The web site shows if any games are not allowed to end in a tie.

Single Elimination – Teams will advance when they win games and be eliminated when they lose a game. Therefore, all games for a tournament group must have a clear winner defined. In the event that a game ends in a tie at the end of regulation play, Kicks from the Penalty Mark will be used to determine a winner. Referees should conduct the kicks in a manner that minimizes wasted time so that subsequent games will not be significantly delayed. Referees should review the Kicks from the Penalty Mark procedure prior to the tournament to be sure they will know how to properly conduct Kicks when required.

Referees should ensure that they know the tournament format that is being used prior to the start of each game. If a referee has not been informed by his referee assignor of the format prior to the game, he should ask the coaches of the teams that are playing.

All tournament games will be played in accordance with “FIFA Laws of the Game” as modified by the USSF for youth play and as noted in the SFL modifications shown at the beginning of this document. Referees should normally keep a running clock during a game, however the clock may be stopped for injuries if that will not adversely affect the overall tournament game schedule. Referees are not allowed to shorten the duration of tournament games in order to allow subsequent games to start on time. The only exception is in the case of impending darkness, and for the safety of the players the referee may decide to have shorter halves for the last game of the day. When there is excessive heat during a spring tournament, referees may allow a short hydration break in the middle of each half if requested by the coaches.

PLAYER INJURIES

Player injuries that result in concussions have been receiving increased attention lately. While the SFL has received few reports of severe injury during SFL games, all parties should ensure that actions are taken to minimize the risk of injury to the players in our league. Referees can assist by making player safety a point of emphasis during the season. Injuries are more severe when one or both players are permitted to go up for a head ball at an angle rather than straight up. Tackles with cleats up, or from behind and through an opponent's legs increase the likelihood of injury. Be prepared to stop play quickly if a player appears to be injured.

COACH OR SPECTATOR BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

In recent seasons the SFL has received an increasing number of reports of coaches and parents who appear to have contracted “Soccer Tourettes Syndrome”. They become foul mouthed and verbally abusive toward officials and opposing team players and parents. Several have threatened physical violence. Referees should vigorously enforce the existing rules by ejecting anyone displaying this type of behavior and reporting them after the game. If a coach or spectator refuses to leave the field, then the game must be suspended until the offender complies and leaves the field. Complete details of the incident must be included in the game report as soon as possible after the game (include the names of the offenders if possible).