

Ideas for Keeping the Score Under Control

The BCYSL has added two new rules to help coaches work within the 7 goal differential that was added in the Spring.

First, for U10 games, a rule from the New England Premiership was adapted: Defenders must return to their own end of the field on all goal kicks, and normal play resumes as soon as the kicking team receives the ball outside the penalty box (Section VII.J(i) of the Bylaws). Retreating to the defensive end will remove many “poached” goals when the young goal keepers or defenders attempt to perform a goal kick. Additionally, the attacking team will get a chance to “build from the back” with possession of the ball.

Second, for games at all levels, the leading team must remove a player from the field when the goal differential reaches +5. For U12 and U14 divisions, the leading team must remove a second player when the differential reaches +7. In both cases, the leading team may return a player to the field once a goal has been scored by the trailing team. This will give the trailing team an opportunity to possess the ball and attack with a numbers advantage, while the leading team must learn to adapt to a “player down” situation - common at all levels of soccer (Section VII.J(ii & iii) of the Bylaws).

One additional point is that it is always best to be subtle about these efforts. The goal is to improve the level of soccer for both teams, not to dominate, humiliate or discourage. Don't announce full volume that you are playing a man down, or yell “okay, time to take it easy” to everyone in attendance.

When it becomes clear there is a wide difference between the two teams in experience, athleticism or skill, take action immediately, you don't have to wait for the +5 differential to act.

Additional ideas to manage the score of a game (in no particular order):

1. Require weak-footed shooting from your players.
2. Don't allow the keeper to use their hands to make saves (they can pick up the ball after stopping it with their feet).
3. Remove your better players from the field and give them extra time in more challenging games. This is a great opportunity to give game minutes to your weaker players.
4. Instruct your experienced players to shoot wide and put weaker players on your back line so the trailing team has a better chance to make something happen.
5. Don't allow your defenders to cross the mid-field line, and require your attack to stay in the attacking end, thereby creating numbers advantages for the trailing team in each end of the field.
6. Require a certain number of passes before a shot.
7. Get the keeper involved with ball movement in the defensive end.
8. Have your players only move the ball via the pass - no dribbling. Or limit the number of touches they can take before a pass is made.