



*Updated March 2023*

## Managing a Lopsided Match

Many of us have been on the receiving end of a lopsided score at some point or another. The team losing is dejected and all but stops playing, the winning team isn't getting much out of it because it is too easy to score. Teams leave without accomplishing the objectives of enjoyment, sportsmanship and development. Managing scores in a lopsided game can be difficult but it is important to be prepared so we can create a positive environment for all youth players. Here are some tips on how to manage scores.

To encourage fair play and sportsmanship, teams subject to standings will have one point deducted each time a team prevails in a match with a goal differential greater than 7 goals.

### **Coaching Tips**

1. Be prepared on ways to manage the score before you arrive at the game.
2. Intervene early (3-0, 4-0 or earlier if you recognize the outcome will be lopsided). Don't wait for 7-0 to start adding restrictions.
3. Don't shout out the restrictions for the other team's players to hear. Yelling "stop scoring" defeats the purpose of showing sportsmanship. Instead pass the information on to a player or sub and have them spread the message discreetly to their teammates.
4. Scoring easy goals doesn't equal team and player development.
5. You are in charge of managing your team environment. If you have a player that isn't following the sportsmanship restriction that you give, sub them out and explain to them the importance of why you are doing it.
6. If you are looking for more competition than the games are providing try setting up practice games against older teams in your club.

### **Game Restrictions to Avoid**

1. Putting your defenders as forwards: When you put athletic defenders up at forward it is difficult to ask them not to score. In fact, since they rarely get the opportunity to score, they often work even harder to get their goals.
2. Removing a player from the field: You have players that deserve to play and the fact the game isn't even shouldn't prevent them from getting playing time.

### **Game Restrictions to Use (managing the game and developing your team)**

1. Consecutive passes (helps with passing and possession): Set a number of consecutive passes the players have to make before they can go to goal. Choose a number that will be challenging for the team. When the other team touches the ball, the count starts over.
2. Corner flag to corner flag (helps with switch the field and using width): Have the team advance the ball to an attacking side corner flag then switch the ball to the other attacking side corner flag before attacking goal.
3. Wall pass followed by cross (helps with penetrating into the attacking 1/3 and crossing): Have your players perform a wall pass (give and go) then take the ball to the end line for a cross.
4. Back to goalkeeper (helps with building out of the back and involving multiple players): Every time your team loses and then regains possession of the ball play back to your goalkeeper before initiating the attack.
5. Shoot with non-dominate foot (helps players develop both a right and left foot): Players can only shoot the ball with their non-dominate foot.
6. Shoot only from outside the penalty area (helps develop long range shooting techniques): an addition to this can be shoot only outside the penalty area with the weaker foot.
7. Change formation to only have 1 striker (helps develop team defending in the back and forces possession to get players up the field): If you run a formation with 3 in the back make it 5. If you have 4 in the back make it 6. Overload the back line instead of continuing with multiple strikers.
8. Allow opposing team to add additional player(s) (helps create more resistance for your team which can make it more enjoyable for both teams).
9. Ball must touch every player on the team before going to goal (helps by involving all players on the team and focuses on completing consecutive passes): If the opposing team touches the ball start over.
10. STOP SCORING! If all else fails have your team just pass the ball. Players and teams will continue to develop even if you change your teams focus to possession.

Thank you for your dedication toward the soccer players in our community and for creating an enjoyable experience for all involved!