

Managing Imbalanced Games

Avoiding Blowout Games

Coaches should do their best to manage potential blow-out situations in your games. Opposing coaches along with referees should work together to help each other manage the potential blowouts versus doing nothing at all.

Competition and winning are both important elements in sport, in soccer, and in our league. But also important is kids enjoying soccer and coming back for more soccer the following practice and game.

What Can Be Done?

When a single team is dominating another team and basically scoring at-will, here are some among many other steps that can be taken to proactively avoid a blowout game:

Communicate

Don't wait- if a game appears as though it's becoming lopsided or "out of hand," both coaches as adults in the room should talk at halftime or just before that next kick-off. Discuss with each other and with the referee so that everyone's on the same page.

Positional Change

If a team is dominating the opposition, the winning coach should consider positional changes such as having their best scorers playing defense or goalie.

Formation Change

Formation, aka changes to System of Play can sometimes effectively balance the competition on the field. If your team is dominating in a lopsided game- are you playing 3 forwards? Consider dropping down to 2 or 1 forward/striker. Consider adjusting your formation to a less attacking and more ball-possession system.

Change the Challenge

If your team is winning and scoring at-will, challenge your players to accomplish new goals on the field such as more passing, or shooting with their weaker foot, or scoring only from outside of the penalty box. Challenge your team with a 3-pass challenge, where your team doesn't shoot at goal until they've first made 3 passes as example.

Add A Player on the Field

As example- if the score differential is 5 goals or greater, consider at the next kickoff, quarter break, or halftime break discussing this option with the referee and the opposing coach. The losing team may want to add an extra player on the field in an attempt to balance the game. We don't want to take a player off and deny everyone playing. But if the opposing coach is okay with it, adding a player on the field may balance the competition on the field.

Everyone STILL Plays

Please stick to the tenets of Everyone Plays and do not penalize an effective scorer or player by "benching" them. See positional changes & challenge above as the proper way to manage a blowout game while still playing all of your players an equal amount.

- **Do not** tell your team you want them to stop playing so hard because the score is too high.
- **Do not** tell them to stop scoring. This is no fun for anybody.
- **Do give them additional challenges that make it harder to score. This keeps all the players in the game on both sides and provides an opportunity to teach additional game skills appropriate to each side.**