

"My team is really strong and often is many goals ahead early. What can I do to contain blowouts within reason?"

From a coaching perspective, the challenge is *not* to penalize the winning or scoring team (the purpose of the game after all) or humiliate or discourage the opposing team that is being easily beaten. A few pointers for consideration:

- Coaches should be proactive as *early* as possible if they see an obvious disparity.
- The winning team should *not* be penalized, i.e., stopping scoring or sitting better players.
- The losing team should *not* be patronized, i.e., blatant efforts like playing three players down.

Rather, we should look at some *proactive and challenging coaching conditions* for coaches *before* the score is out of hand:

- Rotate players' positions on the winning team (GK plays striker, strikers play GK/defender, etc.)
- Introduce a specific number of passes to score (a reasonable challenge that is less noticeable). Plus, you've got to start over at one every time the opposing team touches the ball.
- Set a midfield boundary – tell your offensive players they can't cross midfield to help the defense (lets the opposing team have a numbers advantage). Tell your defense the same thing: not to cross midfield to help the offense score.
- Ball needs to be played "wide" before being put into offensive area.
- Selected players can only shoot using their weaker foot.
- Players must perform a specific turn or move, i.e., step-over before shooting.

Despite the challenge, a proactive awareness and effort by the winning coach *can* help lessen the impact. It should also be noted that prioritizing "development over winning" from day one could help the player's perspective.