



Bridgewater Youth Soccer Association

How to Keep Games Competitive

Bridgewater Youth Soccer attempts to keep all games competitive. We spend a lot of time looking at past placements and talking about skill level of players with past and present coaches. However, we do not know every player in our program and there are always players that have progressed at different levels since last evaluated and players moving up age groups does not always translate the same.

Therefore, for our Fall Recreational program we rely on our coaches to keep it competitive, but fun for all. It is not fun for either team when one wins by double digits. We review the scores every week and contact coaches when there are games with large victories.

On week 1 we tend to see a lot of scores that were double digit wins. I will give coaches the benefit of the doubt on week 1 since the coaches may not have known who their stronger players are and how to match them up accordingly. BYSA will be addressing each coach individually if there are any scores of a margin greater than 5 after week 1. Here are some helpful tips to prevent lopsided matches.

Remember, Coach, YOU ARE THE ADULT. It is not the player's responsibility to prevent lopsided games; they need to learn that is poor sportsmanship. If you give them instruction and praise their efforts it works. Also, it is the responsibility of both coaches. This is about R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Sportsmanship starts with the players and the coaches. It extends to the opponents and spectators. Hopefully, the better side will put a limitation on going to goal but often the losing team gets very discouraged, sometimes very frustrated, and stops trying to play. It's the right thing to do and Make adjustments EARLY. 3-0 is the time to start implementing measures to stop scoring. 6-0 is NOT the time to start.

The best limitations that I have seen work are:

- Can only shoot with weaker foot.
- Own goalkeeper must touch the ball before an attack can be initiated.
- Add a player to the losing team and play down. For coaches who are down, please accept putting an extra player on the field. This is best case scenario as more players get to touch the ball. If you don't, the other coach is forced to pull a player, meaning fewer touches for everyone.
- Require minimum number of passes completed before they can score.
- Pull back, let the other team attack, and have your team practice their passing and defending skills.
- Every player on the field MUST touch the ball before anyone can shoot.
- Pass the ball to the opposing keeper instead of shooting. If you shoot it AT the keeper, it's not likely to go in the goal. The keeper doesn't even need to know that's what you're doing.
- Place weaker players in forward positions.
- Change formations to have only one forward. This makes it easier for the opponent's defense to stop your offense.
- Play keep away.

I hope this is addressed, the above are utilized, and we have games without lopsided scores going forward.

Thank you,

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