

Playing Rules – Sportsmanship and "Running Up the Score"

As it is well believed that "Running up the Score" on an opponent will sometimes happen when two teams are unevenly matched, it is believed that this practice is also not beneficial for the winning team and very discouraging for the losing team.

To stem this practice, LEAYSA will be implementing the following procedure:

In any game decided by a score difference of eight (8) or more goals, the head coach will be contacted by the age group commissioner to determine if the game constitutes a situation requiring the coach to be brought before a "Sportsmanship Panel." A panel should consist of three people, made up of coaches, parents, board members, or invited guests to discuss their team's play.

At the meeting, the coach will have the opportunity to present the steps they took to keep the score down to preserve the fun and learning environment which is expected during a recreational soccer game. Also, at this meeting, the losing team coach, referees, board members, or spectators may present evidence of sportsmanship or non-sportsmanship-like behavior against the offending coach.

The panel may also look at the team's entire schedule and record to determine if a pattern of running up the score is evident and may be considered in determining any penalties.

The panel will be appointed to deal with any games at the U9-U19 level with a goal differential of 8 or more points weekly as needed. In addition, for U4-U8 games where scores and standings are not kept, a panel may be appointed to discuss "running up the score" based on feedback, complaints, referee or board member observations.

The panel will deal with LEAYSA teams. Teams from other associations will be referred to their Board of Directors for any disciplinary measures. However, LEAYSA does reserve the right to deduct points and forfeiture of game(s) in the standings for any team that abuses the sportsmanship policy if not addressed by the team's association.

After completing the meeting, the panel will determine if the coach acted with good sportsmanship and employed enough possible strategies to attempt to stem the excessive scoring of their team. Should the panel determine that not enough or all possible efforts were not engaged, disciplinary actions will be recommended to the LEAYSA Executive Committee for approval, including any or a combination of the following:

1. Suspension of the Coach for one or more games
2. Forfeiture of the game
3. Forfeiture of Standings Points commensurate with the offense
4. Forfeiture of the right to play in LEAYSA sponsored postseason tournaments, including Tournament of Champions.

Multiple occurrences may result in steeper penalties, including the possibility of dissolution of the team for future seasons.

Possible Strategies To Keep a Competitive Game and Enhance the Development of Players Include:

- Remove players from the field and play short
- Require players to make extra passes before scoring (focusing on making assists and good passes instead of scoring).
- Substituting players who continue to score.
- Pass back to the keeper from the offensive side of the field and pass the ball between midfield
- Play goalkeeper out of the penalty area as a defender leaving the goal open.
- Change player positions to those that they don't usually play (goalie or defense) to round out their soccer experience/knowledge
- Require players to kick with their off foot
- Make five or more passes before a shot can be taken
- Require players to touch the ball before a shot can be taken
- Players can only shoot from crosses
- Players can only score from ahead (U13 and above)
- Only shoot using their weaker foot
- Exchange defensive players and keepers for the offensive players

There may be other strategies (this list is not intended to be exhaustive); the only limit is the limit of imagination.