

MAYSA – September 8, 2023

Due to what we see as too many lop-sided games over the years, we are still offering a “mercy rule” option – also known as the “5-8” rule. This is exclusively for MAYSA league games and does not apply to tournament or any WYSA State League games or matches that involve teams from another district. This applies to all MAYSA age levels.

“5-8” rule. *If a team is behind by 5 or more goals, they may add an additional player onto the field. The additional player can remain on the field until the goal differential has been reduced to 4 goals. If there is an 8-goal deficit, the team that is behind may bring another player onto the field. That player may remain on the field until the goal differential has been reduced to 7 goals.*

If a player for the opposing/winning team is issued a red card and thus ejected, the losing team under the “5-8” rule is not required to also remove a player until the score differential is reduced to 4 or 7 goals. The final score/result should be reported exactly to MAYSA, e.g., 8-7, 9-3, 15-0, etc. This rule adaptation cannot be applied to any tournament play nor any competitions not exclusively under MAYSA oversight/direction.

For example, at the U9-U10 age group level (normally 7v7):

- If Team A goes up by 5 goals, Team B may add a player making it 8v7.
- If Team A goes up by 8 goals, Team B may add another player making it 9v7.
- If Team B comes back to bring the goal differential to 7 goals, it must remove a player making it 8v7.
- If Team B comes back to bring the goal differential to 4 goals, it must remove a player making it 7v7.

Note: The team behind by 5 or more (or 8 or more) goals is not required to abide by the rule. It is only an option. Referees may want to remind coaches of this rule especially at the beginning of a season.