



GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP TIPS

DON'T RUN UP THE SCORE!

At some point during the season it is possible that your team will be involved, on one side or the other, in a lopsided game. Especially at the younger ages, athletic ability and aggressiveness will usually trump technical proficiency; in frequent cases a better-coached team will lose a game, sometimes by a large score, to a team that has more athletic, aggressive kids. We employ scheduling flights in our U7-U10 divisions, but it is impossible to completely eliminate the occurrence of such games. These games are no fun for the losing team, and at some point they also become uncomfortable for the team that is winning. Showing good sportsmanship to and empathy for an opponent are important character traits to teach our children. If your team is up by 4 goals or more, the following are some ideas that you can use to keep the score down, but still respect your opponent, respect the game, and allow your players to work on their skills:

1. League rules for the 3v3, 4v4, 6v6 and 8v8 play formats allow the trailing team to add a field player to help restore competitive balance when a team trails by 4 or more goals.
2. The dominant team can designate a particular player as the only one allowed to score. For example, say Emma is a passive player who does not score goals very often. If Emma's team is dominating their opponent, the coach can designate Emma as the only player on the team allowed to score; other players need to pass the ball to Emma so she can score [all divisions].
3. Require all of your players to stay behind the halfway line on the other team's goal kick until the ball is kicked (this rule is already in effect in the 3v3 and 4v4 play formats).
4. Require players to shoot only with their non-dominant (usually left) foot [all divisions].
5. Require your players to complete a minimum number of consecutive passes before shooting the ball [U7-HS]; suggest 4-5 passes for U7-U8; 5-7 passes for U9-U10, 6-8 passes for U11-HS]. U9-HS divisions can also require that the ball be passed back to the goalkeeper, or that both outside backs must touch the ball during the consecutive passing restriction.
6. Limit the number of touches each player can take before passing the ball [U7-HS]; suggest 3-4 maximum touches for younger age divisions, 1-3 maximum touches for older age divisions.
7. Move players to positions they don't normally play. You should be doing this regularly anyway so that kids have an opportunity to play different positions, but if your team is dominating the opponent, switch your defenders to offensive positions, and your offensive players to defensive positions [U7-HS].
8. Impose a restriction that a goal may only be scored by a header [U13-HS divisions only].

When employing restrictions to limit the score, do not make a show of it (yelling out score-limiting instructions to your team so that everyone within earshot is aware of your sacrifice). Keep it subtle. The opposing team's coach and parents will eventually figure out what you are doing, and will appreciate your sportsmanship. More importantly, the kids on the other team will feel a little better about themselves when the game is over. Respect your opponent, and respect the game.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A GOOD SPORT!