

FAQ'S: Every Coach Should Know

Ideas on how to coach a lop-sided game and how to keep the score down...

- Be aware of the possibilities early on. Coaches need to be proactive and be ready to adjust when the game is at 3-0 or 4-0 not when the score is 7-0.
- Start the so called stronger players at defender or goal keeper if you know that you are playing a weaker team. This may prevent scores becoming lopsided early.
- Check the scores from previous weeks to know who you are playing and be helpful to weaker teams.
- Before the season begins ensure that all coaches are educated at both coaches meeting and coaches clinic. All coaches should know about SAY philosophy and how running up scores will not be seen as positive coaching.
- Stipulate rules. For example: the team must make five passes before scoring.
- Goals can only be scored by the weaker foot, from outside the penalty area or after the player has performed a move such as the Maradona that has been worked on in training.
- Goals can only be scored once every player in the team has touched the ball.
- Coaches should work together. After four goals are scored, consider allowing the opposition to add a player and be prepared to add another player if the score dictates.
- Teams can take a player out of the game if the score moves above 4-0. The option above will not penalize playing time of the kids just for scoring goals. It is also suggested that the referee should intervene when the score moves above a certain point. This way the coaches are not put in tense situations.
- Finally, it's ok to tell the players not to score anymore and talk about good sportsmanship so they understand why.

How do you handle a child that causes problems at practice?

- The coach needs to be patient, encourage and try to remain upbeat with the child and the rest of the group at all times. Do not allow one child to bring practice down for the whole team.
- Always highlight positive behavior of the child causing problems at both training and games.
- If the child will not join an activity, ask the child to sit out of the exercise. When you have finished the exercise play the child's favorite game. The first time you play this game, do not allow this child to play. Play the game a second time and allow the child to play although explain the consequences that if he/she disrupts the session again, he/she will not be allowed to play the game next time.
- Talk to the parents and explain to them the challenges you are facing with their child at practice. Ask the parents if they could talk to their child and stay for a couple of practices; one to see the problems they are causing and secondly to take care of their child if they disrupt the sessions.
- The final solution would be to ask a local board member to observe a practice. Resulting in that the child may be moved to another team or your last course of action may be to remove the child from the program for the season.

How do we keep kids motivated during a losing season?

- As a coach always be energetic, enthusiastic and positive in all training sessions and game environments.
- At the U-6 and U-8 age group, children do not care about the score. Often scores are not kept it is only the parents who make a big deal about the outcome of the scrimmage. At the end of the game the players are more concerned at running through the parent's tunnel and seeing what the after game snack is.
- Try to socialize out of soccer and encourage team bonding exercises. The bonding exercises can take place in the form of a pizza party, going to the cinema, bowling or a picnic. Encourage team participation and bonding rather than just winning. Enjoying each others company will help with morale in a losing season.
- Create themed training evenings and make them both fun and interesting. Bring snacks and small prizes and hand them out during practice. For example: you could call the evening a South American soccer evening. Each child has to come in the colors of the country they have been given (Brazil, Argentina, etc.) paint their face and bring three interesting facts about their country. This builds morale after a couple of big defeats and gets the kids thinking that soccer is FUN.