

EYSA Mercy Rule Policy

The mission statement of Eastside Youth Soccer Association includes the goals of teaching the game soccer and promoting sportsmanship.

Under the heading of sportsmanship, one of the main things that we as coaches need to avoid is running up the score against opponents who are not as strong. The general rule of thumb is that if your team is ahead by five or more goals, the coach should take measures to keep further scoring to a minimum.

For U08 – U12 Recreational Games

If the score differential reaches 5 goals, then the coach of the team with fewer goals must add one field player. If the goal differential returns to 4 goals, then the coach must remove one player, thus returning to the original number of players.

If the team who is losing does not have a sufficient number of players to be able to add a player, the winning team must remove a player.

If the score differential reaches 10 goals, then the coach of the team with more goals must remove one player from the field. If the goal differential returns to 9 goals, then the removed player must be replaced on the field with any player.

Administering the Mercy Rule

It is the responsibility of the coach to adhere to this EYSA policy. Our referees may remind the coach, but it is **NOT** their responsibility to bring this to the coaches' attention or force the coaches to take the necessary steps. Please take the lead and do not put our referees in an awkward situation.

If the final goal discrepancy is 11 or more goals, the winning coach must write an e-mail to his/her club's BOD explaining the steps that he/she took to attempt to avoid such a large disparity in the final score. If the club feels that the necessary steps were not taken, the coach will be requested to appear at their next club board of directors meeting for an explanation and possible sanctions.

Ideas to Avoid Running Up the Score

The following provides a list of potential "necessary steps" that coaches can take to keep the score differential reasonable, while still providing their team with the opportunity to learn different aspects of the game and provide a fun environment for all. These are guidelines and tips only – these are not a component of the Mercy Rule policy.

- Place your stronger players in goals or defense and do not let them cross the halfway line
- Sub out the stronger players / prime goal scorers
- Play one player short (play short in midfield or forward)
- Play 3-touch soccer – Don't allow your players to take more than 3 touches once they are in the opponent's half of the field.
- Instruct your team to
 - Pass a minimum of 5 times on each possession prior to shooting.
 - Take all shots from outside the penalty area
 - Ask players to work on taking shots with their weaker leg

All of these things can be done subtly so that the other team can feel good about their increased competitiveness. Please do not ask your players to play “keep away” – this can be viewed as rubbing it in.

Other Ethical Coaching Practices

- Encourage your players to quietly celebrate goals as opposed to high-fives, etc.
- Remind sideline supporters to cheer/celebrate quietly and be supportive of both teams.
- Play a low-key role from the sidelines – avoid the temptation to keep coaching vocally from the sidelines.