

GUIDE ON HOW TO MANAGE MISMATCHES

1. IF YOU ARE THE WINNING TEAM

Keeping your players motivated is not very difficult if you are one of the fortunate coaches whose team wins most of its games BUT scoring goals virtually at will is:

- a) Unfair on your opponents.
- b) Not going to aid the development of your players.

What you can do:

It's almost unheard of for a team to come back and win a game after being 6 or 7 goals down so if your team is winning by that sort of margin, it is going to win the match.

Instead of allowing your players to continue banging the ball into the back of the net you could:

- Discreetly impose a two or three-touch rule or require a minimum number of passes before shooting.
- Move your players around - your goalkeeper will be getting bored by now so get her out of goal and put them up front. Move your defenders into attacking positions and put your strikers into defence.
- Use your subs - this type of match is an ideal opportunity to give your subs as much playing time as possible. So why not take off your "star players" and give your weaker players a chance to enjoy themselves?

Whatever you decide to do, it is imperative that you respect the opposition and always keep the FA's Code of Conduct in mind: "Place the well-being, safety and enjoyment of each player above everything, including winning"

2. IF YOU ARE THE LOSING TEAM:

Motivating a team that is getting hammered most weeks is a tough challenge but it can be done.

Regardless of the age of your players, you can minimise the importance of the final score by setting your players individual and/or team objectives either before the game or even during the game if it becomes clear they are going to lose by several goals.

The actual objectives will depend on the age and ability of your players but as an example:

- Defenders can be tasked with blocking one shot on goal.
- Any player can be set the objective of taking a throw-in with both feet on the ground or making a good pass to a team mate.
- Attackers could be asked to try to make two shots on your opponent's goal.
- The team can be set the objective of conceding fewer goals in the second half or conceding no goals for a set period of time.

It's important to make the objectives slightly stretching but achievable. Praise your players for trying to achieve their objectives (not just for succeeding) and change objectives from one game to the next as your player's skills change.