



**EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 22, 2022**

**Rule 5.10 Goal Differential and Sportsmanship**

- A. The goal differential for NHSL standings, tiebreakers, and playoff placement is 4 goals pursuant to Section 5.06 of New Hampshire Soccer League Policies & Procedures (Edition 15).
- B. The league understands that some matches may see circumstances where one team is stronger than an opponent for any number of reasons, thus impacting the competitiveness of the match.
- C. There have been prior issues with teams within the league winning matches by goal margins far in excess of the 4 goals recognized for consideration of standings, despite communications and educational outreach efforts. It has become necessary and in the best interests of the New Hampshire Soccer League and its participants and families to adopt a strict policy and rule to address goal differential in New Hampshire Soccer League matches.
- D. Goal differentials in excess of eight (8) goals in a match are determined excessive.
- E. In the event that a match results in a final score where the final score exceeds an eight (8) goal difference between the teams playing, both the specific team that exceeded the eight (8) goal differential and their member club will be issued a warning. This warning may also be accompanied with a fine or sanction as deemed appropriate by the League Director.
- F. In the event that a team has received a prior warning per Rule 5.10 (E) in the same season regarding excess goal differential in a match and that team again exceeds a goal differential of eight (8) goals in the same season, then an investigation will be opened by the League Director and an appropriate sanction and/or fine will be levied at the League Director's discretion.
- G. Once a member club has been issued a warning / notice pursuant to Rule 5.10 (E) about one of their teams exceeding the goal differential in an amount deemed excessive per the rule, that warning puts the club on notice and that should be relayed by the club to all coaches and teams they have playing within the New Hampshire Soccer League that season. Any other team of the club exceeding the goal differential amount set forth

herein shall result in an open investigation and an appropriate sanction and/or fine may be imposed.

- H. This rule / policy is notice to all clubs of what the New Hampshire Soccer League determines reasonable and excessive when it comes to goal differential. Teams and Clubs should keep in mind that goal differential for purposes of standings and tiebreakers is limited to a difference of 4 goals per match.
- I. Resources are available from the league if needed for suggestions on how to manage a match that may have a competitive imbalance and how to avoid an excessive goal differential.
- J. The league strongly encourages and suggests that when a team reaches the 4 goal differential with substantial time remaining in the match, and it is seen that there is a competitive imbalance, the coach of the leading team will begin to play shorthanded by voluntarily removing 1 or more players from their side. If that side continues to dominate the match, additional players would be removed until balanced play is achieved, or the minimum required players threshold for the age group is reached.