

**Mike Kilpatrick** Sports nut

## It's not political correctness, it's just madness

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I'm not one of those people who rail against political correctness like it's actually had a detrimental effect on my life.

In fact I can't think in any way in which my life has been made worse by the so-called nanny state.

**But even I have my limits - and when I [read this story from Canada](#) I have fears that something similar will be introduced in New Zealand at some point.**

Yes, the geniuses in charge of an Ottawa football league have decided that any team that wins a game by more than five goals will lose by default.

Staggering, isn't it?

Let me just state I have no problem with 'player of the day' and 'sportsperson of the day' being awarded so that everyone gets a certificate at some point during the season.

I've seen the boost this gives kids - particularly those who are less confident - first hand.

**But penalising kids for being too good is a step too far and goes against every instinct children have when it comes to sport.**

My wee boy is five years old and this is his first year of playing rugby. I wouldn't say he's particularly competitive, certainly compared to some of the other kids his age.

But put him in a rugby jersey and give him the ball and he knows what he needs to do - help his team win.

Every time he runs past the sideline he asks whether his team is winning and at the end of the game he celebrates with the rest of them when they've won.

If they lose then he knows it means they weren't good enough and he's going to have to try harder next week.

**I think there's far more danger of talented kids walking away from the game for good because they're not allowed to be as good as they can be because of this than a poor player walking away because his team keeps getting smashed.**

Apparently this rule replaces the five-goal mercy rule which meant any more than five goals scored weren't registered. Even that was bad enough.

Coaches of the stronger teams are now encouraged to rotate players, get players to kick with their wrong foot, take players off the field and get kids to try and score from further away.

But kids of that age aren't stupid. How long is it going to be until a team is defaulted because their opponents are losing 5-0 and 'accidentally' score an own-goal.

Or maybe they give away a penalty and the player has to deliberately miss for fear of his team losing.

**Although that last one might not be too bad - at least that player could get a game for England in a World Cup semi-final!**

But this isn't actually a laughing matter. If we want to succeed on the world stage in sport we can't completely mollycoddle the kids - even at five years old.

That won't turn them into winners. It'll just turn them into accepting losers.

It's not political correctness gone mad. It's just madness.

**So what do you think? What's your experience with your kids playing sports? Or do you support this? If so, why?**