



soccer glossary

words and terms of the game

*A comprehensive list to assist
players, parents, and anyone
else wanting to learn the
game of soccer!*

1 on 1

(Also called "1v1") - When an attacking player with the ball confronts one defender, this is "one on one". Sometimes these 1v1s are confronted and the attacker or defender wins, or the ball is played elsewhere for a better chance of beating that defender or moving the ball forward.

2 on 1

(Also called "2v1") - A 2v1 situation is created when two attackers with the ball confront a single defender. There are several ways to beat that defender, usually with a wall pass. A 2v1 situation is also a "numbers up" situation.

6-Yard Area

The 6-Yard Area (goal area) has only one identifiable purpose - a line in which to place goal kicks. The area is lined 6 yards from each goal post and 6 yards from the end line.

12-Yard Spot

(Also "The Mark"; "The Penalty Spot") - On a full sized soccer field, this spot is 12-yards away from the goal line, on each end of the field. In case of a foul (a direct kick) within the 18-yard box, a penalty kick is awarded and the ball is placed on that spot. This spot is adjusted closer on modified fields for U10 (8-yards from the end line), and for U12 (10-yards from the end line).

18-Yard Area

(Also "The Penalty Area"; "The 18"; "The Area") - The 18-yard area is a rectangular area on each end of the field, that extends 18-yards from the end line and 18-yards from each goal post. This is the area where the goalkeeper may use their hands (keeping within the Laws of the Game). Also, any direct-kick fouls committed (called by the referee) inside this area result in a penalty kick. On modified fields, this area is adjusted in size. For U10 (10-yards from the end line and 10-yards from each goal post; for U12 (14-yards from the end line and 14-yards from each goal post).



Based on a Full-Sized Field

Advantage

(Also called "Play On") - Advantage is what a referee might call if a foul has been committed, but the team that was fouled maintains possession of the ball in a favorable condition (in the best interest of the possessing team/player).

The Arc

(Also "The Penalty Arc", "The D") - The arc is placed at the top of the 18-yard area and extends 10 yards from the Penalty Spot. On free kicks, opponents must be 10 yards away from the ball, so the Penalty Arc is a device that puts all (opposing) players at least 10 yards from the spot of the ball. It is not part of the penalty area.

Assist

An assist is a pass from one player to another that results in the second player scoring a goal. It can also be the previous TWO passes that result in a goal being scored. A maximum of two assists can be allowed for each goal.

Assistant Referee

The Assistant Referees are the two officials who run the lines in a match (formerly called Linesmen). They assist the referee in all calls on the field and with out-of-bounds calls. Their number one priority is "offside".

Association

(Also "Local Association", "Club") - A local association is the governing body of soccer for that particular town, entity or area. The local association is a member of NC Youth Soccer (governing body for the State), which is a member of US Youth Soccer, which governs the youth in the United States. US Youth Soccer is a member of US Soccer, which is the governing body of soccer in the United States. US Soccer is a member of CONCACAF, the Regional governing body, which is member of FIFA, the world governing body.

Attacker

Whenever a team is in possession of the ball, every player is an attacking player! However, the player that has the ball is usually called the attacking player. For a team to attack, they must attack the first defender, use combination passes and try to unbalance the defense.

The first attacker is the player with the ball and tries to beat the first defender. The second attacker supports the first attacker in trying to beat the first defender.

The third attacker(s) try to unbalance the defense away from the ball.

Attacking Third

(Or the Final Third.) The Attacking Third of the field is that third of the field that is front of your opponent's goal. It is expected that players/teams in this third to play more daring in trying to score or finish the play.

Back

A back is a defensive player. They can be referred to as center-back (covering the middle of the field, also known as the stopper), outside-back (the outside of the field, also known as wing-back). Backs are also known as fullbacks.

"Backs" are the collective group of players that defend/play behind the midfielders.

"Back" can also be a verbal communication to another player to play the ball backwards, usually for safe possession.

Bending Ball

(Also called a "bender", formerly "banana kick") - A bending ball is a ball that is kicked on the side that causes it to spin left, right or down. A bending ball can be used to curve around a wall, away from a goalkeeper, or if struck properly, to fly up and dip downward very quickly. A bending ball can used to swing (bend) towards running players (teammates) who will try to head, shoot or otherwise control a ball.

Beating a Player

It may sound violent, but it isn't what you might think! To beat a player means one player has the ball and one player is defending that player. If the player with the ball can either get by the defender, or shoot and score, then he has "beat" that player.

Behind the Defender

This is space behind a defender. This space can be very dangerous to have the ball or an attacking player exploit (which makes getting "beat" bad for a defender!). Sometimes this space is directly between the defender and the goal, which should be closely protected!

Bicycle Kick

(Also called "Over-the-head, Scissors Kick) - A kick that places the feet over the head to strike the ball to a point behind the kicker. This is done by having a ball served slightly behind a player and high. The kicking player jumps with the kicking foot (let's say their

right foot) and thrusting their left foot into the air to get the head down towards the ground. Then if the timing is correct, the right foot (kicking foot) goes up (while the left leg comes down) and the ball is struck at a height well above the head and behind the player.

Breakaway

A breakaway is created when the attacker with the ball has gotten behind all defenders and is "breaking in" (or 1v1) with the goalkeeper.

Caution

(Sometimes "Yellow Card") A caution occurs when the referee "warns" a player or coach for an infraction of the Laws of the Game, deemed more severe than simply blowing his whistle and restarting play. A caution is at the discretion of the referee (in the opinion of the referee) and cannot be protested or challenged.

A referee may caution a player for persisting in fouling others, for unsportsmanlike conduct, for dissent (complaining or questioning the officiating) or any other reason deemed by the official. A player can be cautioned either verbally or by showing them the yellow card.

However, coaches (adults on the sideline) are NEVER shown a card (yellow or red), as cautions/ejections are handled verbally.

Center

(Also, "Cross", "Switch It In", "Serve it In") - When a ball is kicked from the outside to the inside of the field, it is considered "centered". Someone may also say "have the cross" if the ball is on the outside and needs to be kicked to players running in.

Center Line

(Also "midfield line") - the line that divides the field in half. On the middle of the center line is a "mark" which indicates the middle of the field, where kick-offs are taken.

Center Circle

The center circle is a 10-yard radius in the center of the field. On a kick off, players from the opposing team must be OUTSIDE the center circle until the ball is touched (kicked forward).

Challenge

When a defender confronts and tries to take the ball from an attacker (challenging the

ball). Generally a defender will challenge the ball when they have supporting defenders in place, in case of an ineffective challenge.

Charge

There are various types of charges, both legal and illegal. A charge is when one player physically challenges another player, using their body. A SHOULDER charge, where two players collide at the shoulders, side-by-side - could be considered legal, as long as the hands (palms or elbows out) do not extend to create a pushing motion. However, that same "shoulder charge" where a player comes in with their shoulder into an opponent's back, would be considered an illegal charge and result in a free kick, and possibly a caution or even an ejection, if the charge were violent enough.

Check

To check (or checking back) is when a player runs back towards to the ball to either receive the ball or to create space behind them.

Chest

(Also "Chest Trap") - When a player chests the ball, they use their chest to bring the ball out of the air and control it for their next touch. On occasion, a player may make a chest pass, in which they use the force of the ball as it strikes their chest, deflecting the ball to another player.

Chip

A chip is when the ball is struck directly underneath, causing the ball to go straight up in the air. This is used to get the ball over defenders, landing near or at a teammate - or lofting the ball over a goalkeeper for a shot. A quick, stabbing motion of the foot under the ball creates the loft.

Clear

(Also "Have it Out", "Get it Out") - A clearing ball is a long high ball, kicked by a defender that puts the ball out of pressure and from in front of his own goal. A general rule of thumb is that cleared balls are high and wide (out of danger). If someone yells "have it out" or "get it out", they are looking for the ball to be cleared.

Club

A club is a group of teams that play in a league. The club name and the local association name can be the same. In some cases, (HFC - Highland Futbol Club, plays under the ABYSA association).

CONCACAF

The Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football is the governing body of soccer for our region and one of six continental authorities that administer the game, along with FIFA (the national governing body). CONCACAF members are involved in World Cup qualifying, with the advancing teams participating in the Cup. Member nations are: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, French Guyana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, Saint-Martin, Sint-Maarten, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and The Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, The United States.

Close

(Also "Closing Down") - When a player closes on an opponent (usually the opponent has the ball), it means they step closer and cut the space between them, adding pressure to the opponent.

Collecting the Ball

(Also, "Trap", "Prepare", "Touch") - Collecting the ball is using a legal part of the player's body to bring the ball under control.

Corner Arc

An arc with a 1-yard radius at each corner of the field. On a corner kick, the ball must be kicked from within this arc.

Corner Kick

(Also "Corner") - A corner kick is awarded when a team kicks or last touches the ball across the end line they are defending. The opposing team gets a corner kick (a free cross in front of the defending team's goal). A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

Counter

(Also "Counter Attack") - When a defending team wins the ball and quickly attack their opponents, they are attempting to "counter" to catch the team that was de-possessioned of the ball off guard.

Cover

Cover is the support other defenders give to the teammate that is pressuring the ball. The defender that is closest to the ball is the first defender. The second defender covers

for the first defender (supporting him) by marking either players away from the ball or the space behind the first defender.

Cross

(Also "Serve", "Serve it In", Switch It") - A crossing ball is kicked from the outside of one side of the field to either the middle or other side of the field. Typically used to put someone in scoring position or to put the ball to the side of field where there are fewer defenders.

Cross Bar

The cross bar is the pole, beam or object that makes up the top of the goal. It is 24 feet long (8 yards), the same width of the goal.

Cut

To cut the ball is to be running with the ball (dribbling) and all of a sudden chop down on the ball by wrapping the inside or outside of your foot around the ball to stop it's forward motion (cutting the ball). This is used when running with the ball and a defender is keeping up with the dribbler. Cutting the ball quickly may cause the defender to separate from the dribbler, giving him more space and time to play the ball.

Cutting the Angle

(Also "Come Out") - Cutting the angle is when the goalkeeper comes out, off their line when in a 1v1 situation. By cutting the angle, the keeper makes them self larger to the attacker. That gives the attacker less of a target to the goal behind the keeper.

Dangerous Play

The Dangerous Play foul is called when a player puts them self or another player in a dangerous situation, in the opinion of the referee. An example would be attempting to kick a ball that is over your head (bicycle kick), while an opponent is trying to head the same ball. By the player putting their kicking foot near the heading player, they have committed a dangerous play. An indirect free kick is awarded for the infraction.

Defender

If a team does not have possession of the ball, they are the defensive team, making all players defenders. While the backs are also called defenders, everyone on the field should be able to defend! Defense as a team consists of mark, cover, and balance.

The first defender is the person marking the ball. The second defender is the person covering/supporting the first defender. The third defender is the rest of the team,

creating balance and marking space so that a long pass or crossing ball doesn't exploit them.

Defensive Midfielder

The defensive midfielder is the midfield player that is closest to the backs. If there are four midfielders in a diamond shape, the top of the diamond is the attacking midfielder, the outside of the diamond are outside or wing midfielders and the bottom of the diamond is the defensive midfielder.

Defensive Third

Tactically, a field is divided into three thirds - Attacking Third (the end you are attacking), Middle Third, and Defensive Third (the end you are defending). It is expected for players/a team to play safer in the Defensive Third.

Dispossess

When a team loses possession of the ball, they have been dispossessed.

Direct Free Kick

A direct free kick is awarded when one of ten fouls are called by the referee (four by the feet): tackling an opponent and making contact with them first instead of the ball, kicking an opponent, jumping at an opponent, tripping an opponent; (four by the hands): striking an opponent, holding an opponent, pushing an opponent, handling the ball deliberately; (two other fouls): charging into an opponent, and spitting at an opponent. Of course, these fouls are "in the opinion of the referee", so they may see something completely different than those on the sideline see!

A direct free kick means that the ball may be kicked and go directly into the goal without touching a second player first. (An indirect free kick must be touched by a second player before a goal can be scored.)

Diving Header

A diving header can take place when a player jumps horizontal to the ground in order to head a ball that has been served low.

Diving Save

A diving save takes place when the goalkeeper jumps and pushes them self horizontal to the ground in order to catch a ball or push it beyond the goal post.

Dive

If you've watched a World Cup, you've seen this plenty of times! A player is dribbling the

ball and an opponent makes minimal contact with the attacker. The attacker may "dive" to the ground in an attempt to have the referee call a foul.

Draw

A game that ends tied 0-0.

Dribbling

When a player jogs, walks, or runs while controlling the ball, they are considered "dribbling" and that player with the ball is the 1st Attacker. A player can dribble with all parts of either foot (instep, inside, sole, outside, heel and toe).

Drop Ball

A type of restart when the referee will drop the ball between two opposing players. The ball must hit the ground before the players may touch it. A drop ball could occur when a player is injured and play is halted to tend to the injury.

Drop Kick

A drop kick is a type of kick used by a goalkeeper. Instead of punting the ball, the goalkeeper will drop the ball on the ground and kick it on the immediate bounce up (the ball will be very close to the ground).

Ejection

(Also called "Tossed", "Red Card", "Sent Off") - A referee has the authority to eject players, coaches or spectators as he deems necessary. A player will be shown a red card, while a team official will be verbally sent off (not shown the red card).

Send-Off offenses: Serious Foul Play, Violent Conduct, Spitting at or on an opponent, denying the opposing team a goal or obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately and illegally handling the ball, denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the defender's goal by committing a free-kick foul, using offensive, abusive language or gestures, and receiving a second caution in the match.

Encroachment

When a free kick is taken, the opposing team must be 10 yards from the ball (unless the kicking team decides to take the kick early). If an opposing player is not 10 yards from the ball, it is encroachment. Exception: inside the penalty area, as players would line up on the goal line (as this is as far back as they can go).

Fake

(Also called "Feint" or "Move") - A fake is used by the first attacker in attempt to deceive

the first defender and get by them. It is generally a move that will look like it's going in one direction, then with a quick burst of speed, the attacker goes in the other direction, hoping the defender commits (plants their foot) or "bites" or on the original move.

Far Post

The far post is the goal post farthest from the ball. Balls served/kicked/shot to the far post are put there so that other attacking players have a chance to score on that serve or rebound.

Field

(Also called "pitch") - The field is (of course) where the game is played. The field must be rectangular in shape, no less than 50 yards wide and no less than 100 yards long (modified fields for small-sided games are smaller).

FIFA

Federation Internationale de Football Association. FIFA is the governing body of soccer for the world. They help set rules and Laws of the game and host the World Cup.

Finish

To finish is to shoot and score. When a play is built on the field (whether with numerous passes or a re-possession), finishing the play is the reward for that work.

Flat Back

Flat back (sometimes with three or four players) is a system where three or four defensive players play "flat" across the back and mark/guard space. While there is some depth involved (depending on the position of the ball), there is no sweeper position, so the players are more flat across the field.

Flick

A flick is a light touch of the ball that causes it to deflect or slightly change direction. A flick is mostly with the head or foot, but can be any other legal body part that causes a deflection.

Force

To "force" a player means that a defender is trying to make the attacking player with the ball move to an area of the field (eg: towards the sideline) that benefits the defense.

Formation

A formation is a system of play that a team uses to line up on the field. An example of a system is the 4-3-3, meaning four defenders, three midfielders and three attackers (the

goalkeeper is not included in the numbers). There are unlimited systems and all can be tweaked to fit the needs of the team, based on the individual talents of the players.

Forward

A forward is one or more players that play in an attacking position. A forward can be a central position (striker) or outside position (wing). There can also be two forwards (eg: in a 4-4-2 formation), in which case they can work as a tandem supporting each other or independently of each other.

Foul

A foul is any infraction of the Laws of the Game which is called by the referee. The Laws of the Game are published by FIFA and its members (USSF for example). Throughout the Laws, you will see phrases such as "at the discretion of the referee" or "in the opinion of the referee". Because the game is free-flowing and there are no time-outs in soccer, decisions must be made based on what the referee and their assistants see at the time. So where a spectator may see a foul, the referee may not always see the same thing, at the same time!

Free Kick

A free kick is awarded if a foul is committed. The free kick is either a direct or indirect kick and opposing players must be at least 10 yards away from the ball (unless the kicking team decides to play the ball quickly).

Fullback

A fullback is another name for a back - the group of players that play closest to the goal they are trying to defend.

Goal

When a player shoots and it goes between the goalposts, it is considered a goal.

Alternatively, a goal is the object at each end line that the players try to score on. On a regulation field, the goal is 8-feet high and 24-feet wide. The dimensions are reduced for modified fields/small sided play.

Goal Area - See 6-Yard Area

Goal Kick

When a ball goes over the defensive goal line and is last touched by the attacking team, a goal kick is awarded from the goal area (6-yard area).

Goal Line

If a ball crosses the goal line, you either have a corner kick or goal kick. If a ball crosses the goal line (between the posts), you have a goal. The ball **MUST** be **COMPLETELY** across the line in order for a goal to be scored (or for the ball to be out of play). In addition, the goalkeeper may stand **INSIDE** the goal and catch the ball before it crosses the line and it is **NOT** considered a goal.

Goalkeeper

(Also called "The Keeper", "The Goalie ") - The goalkeeper is the player that guards the goal for the defending team, their position usually in front of the goal. The keeper is the only player that can legally use their hands, and this can only happen inside of their 18-yard box, while the ball is inside the box. For instance the goalkeeper may be outside the 18-yard box and catch the ball, as long as the ball is **INSIDE** the box.

Goalmouth

The area directly between the posts, in front of the goal.

Goalposts

The two vertical structures that support the crossbar of the goal. On a full-sized field, the goalposts are 24-feet apart and 8-feet high.

Hacking

To hack an opponent is to deliberately kick at their legs or ankles in order to intentionally foul them.

Halftime

The intermission between the two halves of the match.

Halves

(Also called "Periods") - Each match is divided into two halves of equal time. In some cases (recreation matches), games may be further divided into quarters.

Hand Ball

If the ball is touched by a player using his arm or hand (other than the goalkeeper inside the 18-yard box), the opposing team is awarded a direct free kick. There are occasions where the referee will not call this foul. One obvious reason is that they did not see it. The other reason would be that the official feels the player was in a "normal playing motion" - his arms/hands were not moving in an attempt to strike the ball - and the ball strikes the player's arm/hand. If the referee believes this the case ("in the opinion of the referee"), then the foul will not be called.

Hat Trick

When one player scores three goals in the same match, it is called a hat trick.

Header

When a player strikes the ball with their head, it is called heading the ball or a header. There are many types of headers - flicks, back headers, side headers, but most times, the ball is struck on or around the forehead.

In

When a player is considered "In", they have gotten behind the defenders with the ball and are in a good position to score a goal or get the shot off.

In Play

When the ball is inside the lines of the field and play is going on, the ball is considered "in play".

Indirect Free Kick

As opposed to the direct kick (which can go directly into the goal for a score), an indirect free kick must be touched by TWO players before a goal can be scored. You will see the referee with their arm straight up in the air to signal an indirect. The ball will be kicked or touched and the arm will remain straight up until a second player (offensive or defensive player) touches the ball. While the ten direct kick fouls are listed elsewhere in this glossary, all other fouls (other than the direct kick fouls) are awarded an indirect free kick. These would include offside, obstruction, dangerous play (high kick, etc.), and etc. There are eight (8) indirect free kicks.

Injury Time

The referee is the sole time keeper in the match (though you may see some college and high school matches using a scoreboard, the referee still controls when the time is stopped and restarted). It is the discretion of the referee to add more time to the end of the match - whether for injury, delay, or whatever reason they deem appropriate. This added time is called injury time or "added time".

Instep Drive

An instep drive/kick is when a player kicks the ball with their instep or the flat, top part of the foot (the laces area). This is NOT to be confused with the INSIDE of the foot. Power generated from the instep comes from the quickness of the strike (eg: the snap of the lower leg), not so much from a long-swinging motion. If you equated it to golf, think "club-head speed"!

Juggle

To juggle a ball means a player can lightly strike the ball with their foot, thigh, head, shoulder, etc. and keep the ball from touching the ground. Juggling is an under-appreciated tool for allowing a player to gain familiarity with the ball, as well as building confidence.

Keeping Shape

A term used for players to keep the proper distance and alignment with each other. If a team is "out of shape", then there are probably gaps and spaces that can be exploited by the opposing team, or when attacking - supporting players may be too far away.

Laws of the Game

The 17 rules that make up the Laws (and their addendums) are established by FIFA.

Man-to-Man

A type of defense where each defending player matches with an attacking player.

Marking

When a defender marks a player, they are guarding that player to attempt to prevent them from receiving the ball, shooting or running alone into space.

Match

Another name for a soccer game.

Middle Third

The middle third is just as it implies, the middle one-third of the field. In the middle third, it is expected that players/the team maintain possession, looking for a pass that can get through the defense, putting their teammates "in".

Midfielders

The midfield players play between the forwards and backs. Their primary job is to possess the ball, link the ball from the backs to the forwards and support the attack, as well as the defense. Since midfielders support both attackers and defenders, they could run at least 4 or 5 miles in a game (run, sprint, jog, walk, back-pedal, etc.).

Mismatch

If a particular player is much better than their opposite (eg: a forward is much stronger and faster than the defender that marks them), then it is considered a "mismatch" and the team will look to exploit that situation until the opposing team corrects it.

Near Post

The post closest to the ball. Many times a player will shoot and the ball goes to the near post, because their hips and body don't follow through to their intended target (far post). However, a player with a power shot, may attempt to score on the near post, as it is the closest point to the goal line and gives the goalkeeper less time to react.

Numbers Up

A numbers up situation is when the attacking team has more players than there are opponents defending the goal. Generally speaking when you have numbers up, you attack more quickly to try to force the defenders into making a mistake AND before supporting defenders can get back behind the ball to equalize numbers.

Subsequently, if you are the defenders in this situation, you are in a NUMBERS DOWN situation and need your teammates to work back very quickly!

Nutmeg

When a dribbler pushes the ball between the legs of a defender, it is called a nutmeg - and bad for the defender!

Obstruction

While in basketball, players set "picks" to block players from playing the ball or getting to the dribbler, that is not allowed in soccer. If a player is not playing the ball and obstructs an opponent from getting to the ball, then an indirect free kick is awarded.

Offense

When in possession of the ball, a team is on "offense" or the attacking team.

Officials

The referees are also referred to as officials.

Offside

A player must have TWO defenders between them and the goal, when the ball is served to them, in the opponent's half of the field or they are considered offside and an indirect free kick is awarded. For example - if a player has one defender and the goalkeeper in front of them, then they are in an **ON**side position and may receive the ball. However, if a defender steps up in front of the attacking player BEFORE the ball is kicked to the attacker, then the attacker is in an **OFF**side position.

NOTE: a player EVEN with the last field player is considered **ON**side.

NOTE: a player cannot be offside in their own half of the field.

NOTE: a player cannot be offside if the defensive team plays the ball to him.

NOTE: a player cannot be offside on a throw-in.

NOTE: a player cannot be offside on a corner kick.

There are many variations to this rule, such as a player can be **ON**side with the ball is kicked and run to an **OFF**side position to receive the ball. It isn't an easy rule to learn or to fully understand, but keeping an open mind and learning as much as you can about it should make the game more enjoyable!

One Touch

(Also called "One Time", "First Time") - When a ball comes to a player and they play the ball with one touch, without first preparing the ball.

Open

If a player is unmarked, then they are considered to be open.

Open the Body

If a player is playing an outside position, when they receive the ball, their body should be facing the open area of the field (rather than the sideline or facing either forward or backward). Opening the body could give the player more options to play the ball and for the team to maintain possession.

Overlap

When one attacking player runs around their teammate who has the ball, it is called an overlap. The overlapping player either receives the ball or takes the defender away from the teammate with the ball, creating space.

Overtime

If a tournament match is tied after regulation time expires, it could go into overtime (or extra time), depending on the rules of the event. In NC State Cup play, if quarter-final, semi-final or final match is tied after regulation it goes into two (2) OT periods. For under-15s and above, the OT periods are 15 minutes each and for under-14s and below the OT periods are 10 minutes each. Different tournaments use different rules of overtime.

Pass

A pass is when the ball purposefully moves from one player to the other, preferably on the same team! A ball can be passed with any legal part of the body (foot, head, thigh,

chest, etc.). A ball that is played from one team to a player on the other team is still a pass, just a bad pass!

It should be noted that if a player simply winds up and kicks a ball, not knowing where it will go, is not a pass, but just a kick.

Penalty Kick

(Also called "Penalty Shot") - When a defensive team commits a direct-kick foul inside their own 18-yard area, a penalty kick is awarded. The ball is placed on the 12-yard spot and one attacking player is allowed in the 18-yard box, along with the opposing goalkeeper, who must be on the goal line. All other players must be 10 yards away.

NOTE: The Goalkeeper may move side-to-side before the kick is taken, but may not move forward of the line before the ball is struck.

NOTE: The shooting player may not follow a missed shot until the ball is touched by another player. If the GK touches the ball, the shooter may follow. However, if the ball bounces off the post or crossbar, the shooter may not touch the ball again.

NOTE: If a penalty kick is called and time expires for the game or the half, the referee will allow extra time to complete the penalty kick.

Penetration

To penetrate means to push the ball deep behind defenders and into space. It can also mean a "penetrating run" by an attacker.

Possession

When a team controls the ball by passing from one teammate to another, this is called possession. Possession can also be one player dribbling or shielding the ball for a period of time.

Professional Foul

A professional foul is when a defensive player (usually in the defensive third), intentionally commits a foul to deny the attacking team a chance to score. This is somewhat unsportsmanlike in youth matches and done more in the professional and college ranks. If the referee deems that the foul directly denied a goal-scoring opportunity, then the fouling player could be ejected.

Referee

The referee is the center official in the match. It is they who are responsible for the official time and for determining fouls and other infractions regarding the Laws of the

Game. They are assisted by two Assistant Referees and in some cases a Fourth Official who will handle the bench area and substitutions.

Repossessed

If a team loses the ball, they are dispossessed. However, if they quickly regain possession, they have repossessed the ball.

Round Robin

In tournament play, teams usually play two or three preliminary matches called Round Robin. For example, in an eight-team division, there will be two brackets of four. In the four team bracket, each team will play each other in round-robin matches to determine which team(s) will make the semi-finals or finals.

Save

When a goalkeeper stops a ball from going between the goalposts (eg: scoring), they are credited with a save.

Scoring Opportunity

A situation where the attacking team has a good chance to score a goal.

Set Play

(Also called "Set Piece") - A set play can be used on restarts such as direct-free kicks, indirect kicks, corner kicks and throw-ins.

Shielding

When a player (1st attacker) shields a ball, they use their feet to control the ball and the bulk of their body to prevent the 1st defender from getting the ball.

Shin Guards

Protection worn over the lower legs to help protect players from injury.

Shooting

(Past tense: Shot) - When a player propels the ball towards his opponents goal in an attempt to score a goal.

Shorthanded

When a team has a player ejected during a match, they play the rest of that match with 10 players, while the other team has 11 players. They are then playing shorthanded.

Shoulder Charge

When a player charges an opponent with their shoulder, trying to move them off the ball. If the charge is shoulder-to-shoulder, it is generally a legal charge. However, if the player comes from behind or extends the arms/hands, then a direct-kick foul could be called.

Shut-Out

When a team scores no goals in a match, they are "shut-out".

Sideline

(Also called "Touch Line) - the lines that make up each side of the field.

Slide Tackle

A slide tackle is when a player will attempt to win or dislodge the ball from an opponent by sliding in and winning the ball. If they miss the ball and tackle the player, a direct-free kick could be called.

NOTE: If a slide tackle is clean and the ball is won by the slider, it is the responsibility of the player who lost the ball to avoid the slide. If they subsequently trip over the outstretched leg of the slider, there is no foul (of course, that would be "in the opinion of the referee"!).

NOTE: While the slide tackle can be a beautiful thing to watch if done correctly, more times than not it can place a defender on the ground and the player with the ball avoids him, putting the defending team playing shorthanded until the sliding player gets back up.

Small Sided

(Also called "Modified") - Small sided games are anything less than the regulation 11 vs 11. Youth matches (U12 and below) play small-sided matches as this gives the players more chances to touch the ball, therefore creating a better learning environment.

Square Pass

A pass that is made to a player horizontal (beside on the same "line") as the passer. A square pass near your goal can be dangerous if not done carefully, as the opposing team can intercept the pass and be "in" on your goalkeeper for a scoring opportunity.

Striker

A forward player who is generally the central attacker.

Substitution

A player from the bench that replaces another player from the field is a substitute.

Sudden Death

(Also called "Golden Goal") - In some cases, an overtime period will be "sudden death", where the first team that scores a goal, wins the game.

Sweeper

The sweeper is a defensive player that positions themselves behind the other defenders in order to offer depth and support. Their movement, side-to-side behind the defensive line gives them their name, "sweeper".

Switch Fields

To switch fields, the ball is moved quickly from one side of the field to the other, in an attempt to catch the defense in a mistake when they move to cover the space on that side of the field.

Tackling

When a defensive player challenges an attacking player in an attempt to take the ball away, it is considered a tackle. There are various types of tackles - a "block tackle" where the defender will use the side of their foot to try to take the ball, a "slide tackle" when a defender slides on the ground to try to win the ball, and a "poke tackle" where a defender will attempt to poke the ball away.

Takeover

A takeover is when Player A (who has the ball) uses a teammate (Player B) to combine and try to confuse the defense. On a takeover, Player A faces Player B, with the ball on their outside foot (the foot farthest from the defender). Player B runs to and ball side of Player A. Right as they get to each other, Player A leaves the ball Player B carries the ball away. Each player then bend their runs behind the defender they are trying to beat. If the defender follows the ball (Player B), then he can serve the ball behind the defender to space for Player A to run onto.

NOTE: Using a preconceived signal (hand signal, etc.), Player A doesn't have to leave the ball, but can keep it, with both players making the same bending runs.

Through Pass

A ball that is served on the ground between defenders to space behind them, in an attempt to time that pass with another attacking player running into the same space.

Throw-In

When a ball crosses over either sideline, the team that did **NOT** touch it last is awarded a throw-in. The throw in is where a player places both hands on the ball, brings it back over the head and throws it (using both hands) to a teammate in an attempt to maintain possession. Both of the thrower's feet must remain on the ground during a throw-in.

Touchline

Another name for the sideline.

Transition

When a team either gains possession or loses possession of the ball, then they are in transition (from offense to defense or defense to offense). Generally speaking, the team that is better in transition will have more success on the field.

Trap

One of many names used to control the ball by using the legal parts of the body. Some do not like to use the name "trap" as it implies stopping an object (eg: completely still and unmoving). Other names used to control the ball are: prepare, prep, preparation, bringing it down, bringing down balls from the air, touch, etc.

Turnover

When a team makes a mistake to lose possession of the ball, it is a turnover.

Unforced Error

When a player has no pressure on them and they lose possession of the ball (bad touch, bad pass, etc.), then that is an unforced error.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Just as the name implies, behavior that is not sportsmanlike. For instance, you cannot run up to a player just as they are kicking the ball and yell/scream at them in an attempt to make them mess up. Unsporting behavior is not confined to the field of play either! For a sideline to cheer a negative event happening to their opponents would be considered unsportsmanlike. An example would be a penalty kick. If an opposing team has a penalty kick against your team and your goalkeeper makes a good save, then it is appropriate to cheer that save. However if the opposing kicker misses the goal, you can be happy that you weren't scored on, but to cheer the player's miss would be to cheer a negative event.

USSF

United States Soccer Federation - the governing body of soccer in the United States.

Volley

A volley is when a ball is kicked out of the air (not a punt). If a player crosses a ball in the air and a player kicks that ball before it hits the ground, it is a volley.

A half-volley is when the ball hits the ground first, similar to a drop kick.

Wall

A wall is a line of players set up to cover a portion of the goal area when a free kick has been awarded to the opposing team.

Wall Pass

A wall pass is a 2 vs 1 combination pass so that two attackers can beat one defender. The 1st Attacker dribbles to the defender. Right before he gets to the defender (as the defender commits to the ball), he passes to his teammate and sprints around the defender, just as the teammate passes the ball back on the first touch (like the ball rebounding off a wall). Also called a 1-2 (one-two) and a give-and-go.

Wing

A Wing player is an outside player or flank player. Wings are considered forwards or attackers but the name can also be used as prefixes for other positions to signify outside positions, such as wingback (outside defender) and wing midfielder.

Yellow Card

(Also called "Caution") - A yellow card is given as a caution to players on the field for an infraction of the rules and Laws and to serve as a warning that they could be ejected if they continue. Two yellow cards (or two cautions to a coach) in one match causes the player/coach to be ejected.