

Glossary of Soccer Terms

ASSISTANT REFEREE

Person (often a parent volunteer) who assists the referee; previously known as a "linesperson" is assigned to each touchline. Their primary responsibility is to indicate when the ball is out of play (i.e. when the whole of the ball crosses the whole of the touchline or goal line). The AIR also signals which team has the right to put the ball in play again by using their flag to show the direction of play for the restart.

CHARGING

A method of unbalancing the player who has possession, or is attempting to gain possession, of the ball. The maneuver of using a "shoulder" (actually from elbow up to and including the shoulder) against an opponent's shoulder to gain an advantage; permissible only when the ball is playable (i.e. within 3 feet).

CLEARING

The act of moving the ball out of the vicinity of one's own goal area by throwing (goalkeeper only) or kicking it (generally up the sideline).

CORNER KICK

A kick made by the attacking team from the corner arc on the side of the field where the ball went out of play. A corner kick is awarded when the ball is last touched by a defensive player and goes out of play over the goal line without resulting in a goal. Opponents must be at least 10 yards away from the ball when the kick is taken. A goal may be scored directly (without being touched by another player) from a corner kick.

CROSS

A pass in which the ball is kicked from one side of the field to the other side.

DANGEROUS PLAY

Play that is likely to cause injury. Examples are high kicking, playing while lying on the ground, or playing the ball while it is in the possession of the goalkeeper.

DEFENDER

Also called fullback. A player who functions primarily in the defensive third of the field and whose major role is to repel attacks on the goal by the opposing team.

DIRECT FREE KICK

A free kick from which a goal can be scored directly (i.e. without first being touched by another player). It is awarded for substantial infractions of the rules (see Summary of the FIFA Laws of the Game, Law XU, this section). Opponents must be at least 10 yards away from the ball (opposing players may stand on their own goal line between the goal posts), but the player taking the kick: may do so without waiting if he/she wishes. The ball is not in play until it has traveled its own circumference. The ball must be stationary when kicked and the kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it has been played by another player (of either team).

DROP BALL

A ball held by the referee and allowed to fall directly to the ground between two opponents. The ball is in play after it touches the ground. A drop ball restarts the game after play is stopped for no penalty situation (e.g. after an injury). The ball is dropped where it was last in play or at the nearest point outside the penalty area. A goal may be scored directly from a drop ball.

FORWARD

Player who functions primarily in the attacking third of the field and whose major responsibility is to score goals.

GOAL

A one-point score occurring when the whole of the ball passes entirely over the goal line, between the vertical goal posts, and under the horizontal crossbar. A goal is not scored if the ball was not touched by another player (of either team) after an indirect free kick, goal kick, kick off: or throw in.

GOAL AREA

Area (20 x 6 yd. on a full-size field) marked within the penalty area, and directly in front of goal, from which all goal kicks originate.

GOALKEEPER

Player who functions primarily in the penalty area and whose major responsibility is to prevent the opponents' shots from entering the goal for a score. The goalkeeper is the only player allowed to touch or pick up the ball with his/her hands, and may only do so when the ball is within his/her own penalty area. The keeper is the team's last line of defense.

GOAL KICK

Taken by any defending player to restart the game after the ball goes out of play over the goal line, having last been touched by an attacking player. It may be taken from any point within the half of the goal area nearest where the ball went out. All opposing players must stand outside the penalty area. To be in play, the ball must leave the penalty area (inbounds); otherwise the kick is retaken.

INDIRECT FREE KICK

A free kick from which a goal cannot be scored until the ball is touched by another player. It is awarded for technical and minor infractions of the rules (see Summary of the FIFA Laws of the Game, Law XII, this section). Opponents must be at least 10 yards away from the ball (opposing players may stand on their own goal line between the goal posts), but the player taking the kick may do so without waiting if he/she wishes. The ball is not in play until it has traveled its own circumference. The ball must be stationary when kicked and the kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it has been played by another player (of either team).

KICKOFF

Officially begins the game at each half and restarts play after a goal is scored. The ball must go forward (into the opponent's half of the field) and is in play after rolling its own circumference (about 27 inches). The player kicking off must not play the ball again until it has been played by another player (of either team). Opponents must be at least 10 yards away (on a full size field). from the ball in their own half of the field when the kick off is taken.

MARKING

Guarding or covering an opposing player (with or without the ball) when he/she moves into your area of play.

MIDFIELDER

Player who functions primarily in the center (neutral) third of the field and whose principal job is to link the defense and the attack through ball control and passing.

OFFSIDE

Offside is defined as occurring at the moment the ball is played by one of the attacking players to a teammate. A player is in an offside position if he/she is nearer to the opponents' goal line than the ball, unless:

- (a) The player is in his/her own half of the field, or
- (b) there are at least two opponents (one may be the goalkeeper) nearer the goal line than the player.

A player is penalized if he/she is in an offside position AND if, in the judgment of the referee, the player is:

- (a) interfering with play or with an opponent, or
- (b) seeking to gain an advantage by being in that position.

A player is not declared offside

- (a) merely by being in an offside position;
- (b) if they receive the ball directly from a goal kick, a corner kick, a throw in, or a drop ball; or
- (c) if the ball is last played by an opposing player.

PENALTY ARC

The arc at the top of the penalty area; no player may be within this area while a penalty kick is being taken.

PENALTY AREA

Large area (18 x 44 yds on a full size field) in front of goal in which any of the "direct kick" fouls by the defending team result in a penalty kick. Also delimits the area where the goalie can use his/her hands. The penalty area includes the goal area.

PENALTY KICK

Awarded to the attacking team if the defending team commits a direct free kick violation within the penalty area. Penalty kicks are taken from the penalty mark. All players (of both teams) except the kicker and opposing goalkeeper, must remain on the field of play outside the penalty area and penalty arc. The opposing goalkeeper must stand (without moving his/her feet) on the goal line, between the goal posts, until the ball is kicked. The player taking the kick must kick the ball forward and may not touch the ball a second time until it has been played by another player (of either team). The ball is in play after it has traveled its own circumference. A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.

For any infringement of the penalty kick rules by:

- (a) the defending team, the referee will allow the kick to proceed, but if a goal does not result, the kick will be retaken;
- (b) the attacking team, other than the player designated to take the kick, if a goal is not scored it will be disallowed and the kick retaken;
- (c) by the player taking the penalty kick, committed after the ball is in play, an opposing player will take an indirect free kick at the point where the infraction occurred.

The referee's whistle always starts the taking of a penalty kick. Any penalty kick taken prior to the referee's whistle will be retaken using the referee's whistle as the proper start for the kick..

PENALTY MARK

A mark: on the field from which penalty kicks are taken; also called the penalty spot. It is located 12 yards (on a full size field) from the goal line, equally spaced between the goal posts.

REFEREE

The official who is in complete charge of the soccer game. The safety of the players is the referee's main concern. He or she is responsible for keeping time, enforcing the Laws of the Game (see Summary of the FIFA Laws of the Game, this section), stopping and restarting the game for penalties or injuries, cautioning or banishing offenders (including coaches or spectators) and ending the game, if necessary. The referee is assisted by two linespersons. ***All decisions by the referee are final!***

TACKLING

A method of gaining possession of the ball by use of the feet. Unnecessary roughness and use of the hands are not permitted.

THROW IN

Taken to restart the game after the whole of the ball crosses the outside edge of the touchline. The throw in is taken by, any member of, the team that did not touch the ball last, and at the point where the ball went out of play. The thrower must face the field and throw the ball with equal strength by both hands, in one continuous motion from the back of his/her head and over the top of his/her head. When the ball is released, the thrower must have some part of both feet on the ground on or behind the touchline.