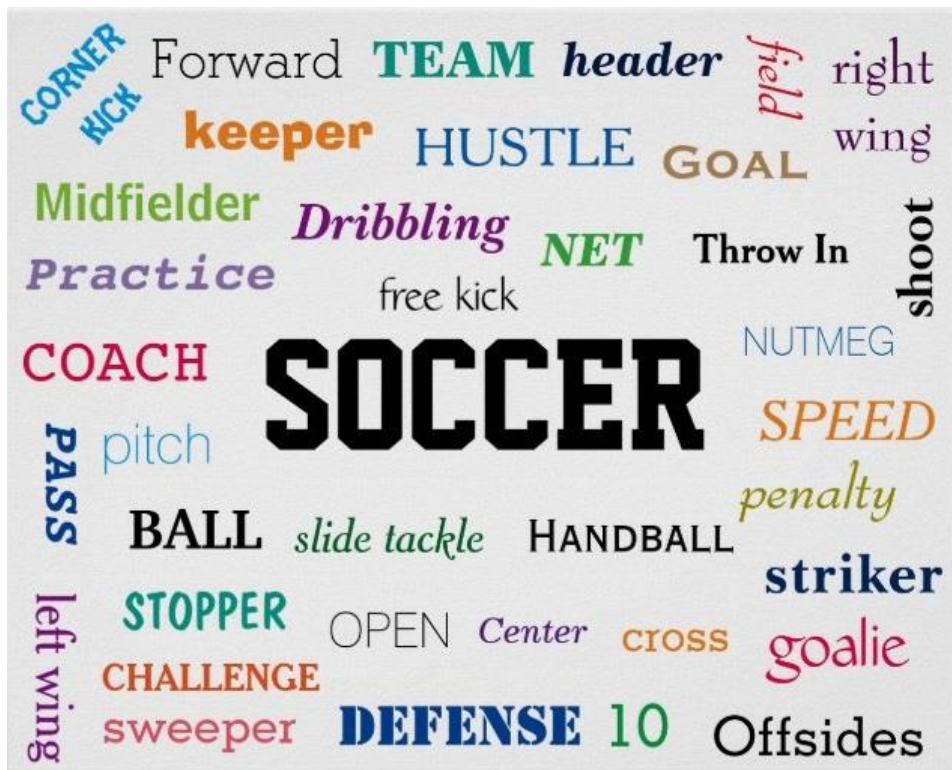


# 350+ Soccer Terms

You must know.



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## **Numbers: 0 - 9**

**1** – This number on the back of the soccer jersey is usually worn by the number one goalkeeper on the team.

**11-a-Side** – This is the soccer you will see on the TV and is the most popular format of the sport. Eleven players on each side compete to win the game.

**12th Man** – This expression refers to the fans when they wholeheartedly get behind their team and provide support. The atmosphere they create gives the team a significant boost as they act almost as a 12th man.

**3 Points** – This is the number of points a team gains for a victory. They get one point for a draw and zero points for a loss.

**4-4-2** – One of the most popular soccer formations where teams line up with four defenders, four midfielders and two attackers. Four Four Two is also a popular magazine.

**5-a-Side** – One of the most common variants other than full-sized soccer matches is 5-a-side which means that five players are on each team. Many countries have small pitches dotted around their cities for people to play 5-on-5.

**50-50** – This is a challenge between two players which could go either way.

**6 Pointer** – This is when two teams who really need the points play each other. They could be fierce rivals, both be challenging for the title, both be trying to avoid relegation or a mixture of the two. The heightened importance of the result means that people often say that the match is a '6 pointer' although in reality only the usual 3 points are up for grabs.

## **-- A --**

**Academy** – Many professional and amateur teams have their own academies to train young players.

**Added Time** – This is the additional time that comes at the end of the match. After the 90 minutes are up the referee will add some extra time for any fouls, injuries, or substitutions that may have taken place.

**Advantage** – When a player has been fouled but play is allowed to continue by the referee as their team are in a good position, consequently 'advantage is played'.

**Against the Run of Play** – When a team is not playing well and are being overwhelmed and outplayed by the opposition, it is said that they ‘scored against the run of play’ if they suddenly go and score.

**Aggregate** – In tournament soccer where teams play each other both home and away, the aggregate score is used to determine who proceeds to the next round.

**Amateur** – A person who plays soccer for enjoyment, not as a job.

**Angle of the Run** – A player usually tries to run in behind the defense at an angle to get in the best possible position to receive the ball. It is the ‘angle of the run’ that the teammate with the ball has to try and take into account when making the pass.

**Anti-Football** – Teams are routinely described as playing ‘anti-football’ when they are set up defensively to prevent the opposition from scoring and show little attacking ambition.

**Assist** – A pass a player makes that ends with their teammate scoring a goal.

**Attacker** – The team’s forwards are called attackers and it is they who usually score the main bulk of the team’s goals.

**Athlete** – A person who plays sports.

**Attacking Midfielder** – A midfield player who is offensive minded is called an attacking midfielder.

**Attacking Team** – The team that has the ball and is threatening the opposition’s goal is called the attacking team.

**Away** – When a team plays at another team’s stadium, they are playing ‘away’ or ‘away from home’.

**Away End** – This is where the away team’s supporters are inside the stadium.

**Away Goal** – In some tournaments and cup fixtures, an ‘away goal’ (so when a team scores in their opponent’s stadium) counts more than one scored at home. This is to encourage attacking soccer.

## **-- B --**

**Back Four** – This denotes that the team is playing with four defenders at the back.

**Back Heel** – The player uses their heel to pass the ball or attempt a difficult shot on goal.

**Ball Carrier** – Usually one of the central midfielders who carries the ball forward with them, pushing the team up the pitch.

**Ball Watching** – A player can be caught ball watching which means that they haven't noticed their opponent nearby who may nip in and take the ball off of them.

**Bicycle Kick** – A difficult (and incredible) move that is rarely performed. This acrobatic overhead kick means players has flipped their legs above head height to connect with the ball and send it towards the goal.

**Booking** – A player receives a booking or a yellow card after they have committed a caution able offence.

**Brace** – When a player scores two goals.

**Break** – Teams can hit each other on the break by streaming forwards to the opposition's goal. This often happens if a defending team wins the ball back near their goal from a corner.

**Bundesliga** – The top soccer league in Germany is home to such famous teams as Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund, and Schalke 04.

**Byline** – The line on the shortest side of the pitch which has the goals on it at either end.

### -- C --

**Cap** – A player receives a cap whenever they appear for their national team. So a player who has played 68 times for their national team is said to have 68 caps.

**Captain** – One player on each team is the captain and it is they who wear the armband that denotes the position.

**Career Ending** – A horrific challenge which could possibly result in a bad injury is often called a 'career ending tackle' due to its poor execution and dangerous nature. A career ending injury is when a player unfortunately can no longer play due the injuries they sustained.

**Caretaker Manager** – If the team does not have a full-time manager for whatever reason then a caretaker manager is put in place temporarily.

**Caution** – If a player commits a particularly bad foul or an accumulation of fouls, they may receive a caution from the referee. This is also known as a yellow card.

**Centreback** – These are the central defenders who play in front of the goalkeeper and attempt to stop the opposition from scoring.

**Centre** – When a player out wide centers the ball into the box for the attacker to get on the end of it.

**Centre Circle** – The ball is placed on the center circle at the beginning of the game, at halftime, and whenever a team scores the ball is brought back to it for the game to recommence.

**Centre Forward** – The team's main striker.

**Central Midfielder** – These players occupy the center of the pitch and are in between the team's defense and attack.

**Challenge** – A tackle that a player makes to win the ball.

**Champions League** – Each continent has their own version of it though it most commonly refers to the UEFA version in Europe. The tournament includes all the best teams in the continent who then compete to win the cup.

**Chest** – A player may 'chest' the ball to their teammate. This means they simply use their chest to pass it. Alternatively, they used their chest to control the ball and bring it down.

**Chip Shot** – When a player attempts to lob the keeper and get it up and over them but under the bar and into the goal.

**Clear** – The player clears the ball to get rid of it from around their goal and kick it away from danger.

**Clean Sheet** – When a goalkeeper does not let in a goal, they have kept a 'clean sheet'.

**Close Down** – Players attempt to limit the player with the balls options by closing them down.

**Club** – The soccer team itself is known as a soccer club and this includes all the administrative and organizational structures that help to run it and keep it functioning.

**Coach** – A coach is a person who teaches soccer.

**Control** – This has two meanings. The first is to control the ball, so to receive it and use any part of your body (excluding hands and arms) to keep the ball in your possession. The second meaning is to control the game by keeping possession and dictating the tempo of the match.

**Corner Kick** – Teams can win corners if their opponents put the ball out of play behind their own goal line.

**Counterattack** – Teams can hit each other on the counterattack by attacking at speed when most of the opposition's players are out of position.

**Cover** – When the opposition are attacking, the defending players attempt to cover one another in case their teammate makes a mistake or gets beaten in their duel.

**Create Space** – To help the team attack, players may make runs to create space for their teammates and pull the opposition out of position.

**Cross** – Players cross the ball or center it into the box, aiming for the teammates.

**Crossbar** – The long bar that runs along the top of the goal.

**Crossfield Pass** – This is used to change the side of the pitch that the team is playing on. The aim is to switch the play through a Crossfield pass in an attempt to gain an advantage and make the most of the space on the other side of the pitch.

**Cruyff Turn** – A move created by one of the best and most influential players throughout history, Johann Cruyff. Designed to shake off an opponent and lose them, the player uses one foot to cut the ball back behind their other leg and elude their opponent's attempted tackle. Video below...

**Cult Hero** – A player who is very popular with a large part of a club's supporter.

**Cup** – A tournament that teams play in.

**Cup Run** – When a team does well in the cup and keeps progressing through the rounds. This usually refers to lower teams that do better than expected.

**Cup-Tied** – This is when a player cannot appear in a particular cup because they have already appeared for another club in the same tournament.

**Cushion** – A player can 'cushion' the ball into the path of one of their teammates for them to have a shot. They can also use their body to take the pace and power out of the pass and in doing so lightly cushion the ball and have greater control over it.

**Cut Back** – When a player makes it to the by-line and attempts to play a cut back (so a pass backwards) for one of their teammates to have a shot on goal.

### -- D --

**D** – This is the D shaped line that is just outside the penalty box.

**Dangerous Play** – If a player commits a terrible tackle or dirty foul, it is said to be dangerous play.

**Dead Ball** – A dead ball situation is when the ball is stationary due to it having gone out of play or the game has stopped due to a foul. The resulting foul or corner is therefore a 'dead ball' situation.

**Decoy Run** – When a player makes a run knowing they won't get the ball so as to create space for their teammates to exploit.

**Defenders** – The players who are tasked with preventing the opposition from scoring.

**Defensive Third** – The third of the pitch which includes the defending team's goal.

**Defensive Midfielder** – This midfielder is more defensive-minded and as such helps out at the back and doesn't venture forwards too much.

**Defensive Wall** – The goalkeeper erects a wall of players to prevent the opposition having an easy shot on goal from a direct free kick.

**Deflection** – When the ball ricochets or deflects off of a player.

**Delivery** – A player is said to have 'great delivery' if they can cross the ball very well or are great at dead ball situations.

**Derby** – This is a match between two fierce rivals who may be teams from the same city or part of the country.

**Designated Player Rule** – In the MLS in the USA, teams have to abide by a salary cap. Designated players, however, are not included under this part of the team's budget and as such can be paid much more.

**Direct Free Kick** – A player may have a shot on goal from the free kick.

**Diving** – When a player goes to ground too easily or without contact to try and win an advantage or a penalty. Diving is frowned upon and players found guilty of this type of cheating should receive a yellow card.

**Diving Header** – When the player throws themselves at the ball and dives to head it.

**Double** – The double is when a team wins their league and the main domestic trophy. The term can also be used to mean that a team has won against their opponent both home and away over the same season.

**Drag the Ball Wide** – This is when a player takes a shot but miss-hits it or is not accurate enough and as such 'drags the ball wide'.

**Draw** – The game ends in a tie or a draw if the teams cancel each other out and score the same amount of goals.



**Dribbling** – A player uses their great close control and technique to ‘dribble’ the ball in between their opponents, weaving their way through challenges and emerging with the ball at the end of it.

**Drop Deep** – When the whole team sits back and tries to absorb the opposition’s attacks by compressing the space in which they have to play. Alternatively, this is when an attacker drops deep to try and get the ball if their team is struggling to get the ball forward.

### -- E --

**Early Ball** – The player plays the ball in quickly and unexpectedly.

**Eighteen Yard Line** – This is sometimes the name given to the line at the edge of the penalty area.

**El Clasico** – One of the most popular matches around the globe, matches between the fierce rivals of Barcelona and Real Madrid are entertaining and exciting to watch.

**Equaliser** – When a team scores to make the match equal again.

**Europa League** – The secondary Europe-wide competition after the Champions League. The champions of the lesser-ranked European leagues and the runners-up of the main leagues compete for this trophy.

**Extra Time** – At the end of the 90 minutes the referee allocates extra time for any stoppages that occurred in the match. Extra time also takes place in cup matches that do not have a clear winner at the end of the normal time.

### -- F --

**FA Cup** – The main domestic trophy in the UK and the oldest cup competition in the world.

**False 9** – A central striker who often drops deep to either dictate play or disrupt the opposition’s midfielders and drag defenders out of position for other strikers to exploit the space they leave behind

**Fan** – A supporter of a team or someone who follows the sport.

**Fan Favorite** – A soccer player who is very popular with the fans.

**Far Post** – This is the post that is farthest away from the ball. So if a player puts in a cross from one side, the far post is at the opposite side of the box from them.



**Favorite** – When teams play each other, the strongest one is usually considered the favorite to win.

**Feeder Club** – Some big teams have agreements with lower league teams whereby the bigger team loans young players or players who need first team experience in the expectation that they will be able to get more game time at the lower level.

**Feign Injury** – When a player pretends to be injured.

**Feint** – This is when a player does a dummy or trick to confuse the opposition's players.

**Fergie Time** – One of the most famous and successful managers of all time, Sir Alex Ferguson, was a combative competitor and opposition fans often felt that the referee allocated too much extra time when his Manchester United team were losing. This became known as 'Fergie time'.

**FIFA** – The governing body of world soccer. It stands for Fédération Internationale de Football Association otherwise known in English as the International Federation of Association Football though everyone refers to it as FIFA.

**First Eleven** – These are the players who are usually always trusted by the manager to start the game.

**First Team** – Soccer clubs have quite large first teams and this comprises the first eleven and all the other players who challenge them for a starting place or sit on the bench.

**First Touch** – Players are said to have 'a great first touch' if they are very good at controlling the ball immediately.

**Fixture** – One of the team's matches.

**Flank** – Each side of the pitch out wide is also called the flank. Out on the flanks are where wingers play.

**Flat Back Four** – When a team plays with four defenders in defense.

**Flick** – A player may flick the ball over an opposing player's challenge. A flick denotes that the ball has gone through the air but not for very far.

**Flick-On** – An attacker may challenge a defender in the air and aim to flick the ball onto a teammate without controlling it.

**Football** – What soccer is known as in Europe. The ball used is also known as the football.

**Formation** – How the team decides to line up. 4-4-2 and 4-3-3 are very popular formations.

**Forward** – The forwards in the team are attacking players.

**Foul** – When an infraction has been committed.

**Foul Throw** – If a player takes a throw-in incorrectly it is called a foul throw.

**Fox in the Box** – This is a player who is great at sniffing out goals and is very efficient at scoring.

**Free Kick** – When a foul has been committed the team receives a free kick which is a dead ball situation. From here, play may recommence.

**Free Kick Routine** – This is when a team has clearly practiced how to take the free kick and it usually involves something unusual or elaborate which the opposition won't suspect.

**Friendly** – A friendly match is an exhibition game so it doesn't count for points and it's not part of a cup competition. Teams usually organize friendlies in pre-season so that they can practice and get up to speed again.

**Fullback** – The two wide defenders at the back are called fullbacks and it is their job to protect the team out wide from the opposition's wingers.

**Full-Time** – This is the end of the match. So, the referee blows for full-time to signal that the match is over.

**Futsal** – Usually played indoors, two teams of five battle it out and it is a very technical and fast-paced sport. As it is so frenetic, teams are not limited in terms of how many substitutions they make.

### -- G --

**Game of Two Halves** – This is when one team dominates one half of the match and the other dominates the other half.

**Giant Killing** – When a lower league team beats a team from a higher division that was expected to win the match and in doing so knocks them out of a cup competition.

**Give-and-Go** – Also known as a one-two. A pass to a player and they give it back to you quickly. This is used to get around an opponent.

**Goal** – To win soccer matches you need to score goals. A goal is awarded when the ball passes over the line, between the posts and under the bar. It is also the structure itself that comprises the crossbar, nets, and posts.

**Goal Difference** – In a league if teams have the same amount of points, it is the goal difference that determines who gets ranked higher. You subtract the goals conceded from the goals you have scored to get the goal difference. This means you can have a positive or negative goal difference.

**Goal Hanger** – This is a player who spends most of their time waiting around the opponent's penalty area in the hopes of scoring a goal. It is quite a derogatory term and these players are generally seen as slightly egotistical and only focused on scoring goals.

**Goalkeeper** – Also known as the goalie. This player stays in goal and tries to prevent the opposition from scoring. They can use any part of their body to do this and they are the only players on the pitch who are allowed to use their hands.

**Goal Kick** – When the ball goes out behind the goal and the opposition player touched it last, the defending team receives a goal kick from which play resumes.

**Goal Line** – These are the shorter sides of the pitch on which the goals lie.

**Goal-Line Clearance** – This is when a defender just manages to clear the ball off of the line and save the team from conceding a goal.

**Goal-Line Technology** – Recently introduced, this technology alerts the referee when the ball has crossed the line and they can award a goal.

**Goalmouth** – This is the area just in front of the goal.

**Goalmouth Scramble** – This is when numerous players from both team battle for the ball right in front of the goal. The defending players try to block and clear the ball while the attacking side try and put it in the back of the net. No one has control of the ball and the messy play which is confusing and chaotic is called a goalmouth scramble.

**Goalpost** – The two goalposts support the crossbar above them.

**Goal side** – When an attacking player has managed to get in behind the defense, they are now goal side of the defender pursuing them.

**Golden Generation** – This is when a team has an amazing group of players who are super talented and should consequently challenge for titles.

**Golden Goal** – When a match in a cup competition goes to extra time which can consist of up to another thirty minutes, it may be determined by a golden goal which is when the first team to score wins and the match ends upon the goal being scored.

**Group of Death** – In a cup competition, a group of death is when all of the teams grouped together are very strong and so all the matches will be competitive and challenging.

### -- H --

**Hack** – To hack someone down is when a player kicks the other player rather than the ball.

**Halftime** – The midway point of the match when the first 45 minutes have been played and the players have fifteen minutes to take a break.

**Half-Volley** – This is when the player shoots the ball just as it bounces and touches the ground. A perfectly executed half-volley is often very powerful.

**Handbags** – When players square up to each other and have a scuffle or square up to each other without it being too violent.

**Handball** – When a player touches the ball with their hand, a handball is given against the offending player and the opposition gain a free kick. This is usually only if it is deliberate or if the arm or hand is in an unnatural position. Due to the slight ambiguity of the rule, some handballs get given while others don't and this sometimes infuriates fans and players.

**Hand of God** – An infamous goal in soccer was when Maradona unfairly used his hand to score against England in the 1986 World Cup.

**Hard-Man** – A player is considered to be a hard-man if they dish out hard tackles and have an aggressive style of play.

**Hat-Trick** – When a player scores three goals it is called a hat-trick.

**Header** – When a player hits the ball with their head.

**High Foot** – If a player goes into a tackle with their foot too high and it could possibly result in injury for the opposing player, a foul is given due to the high foot.

**High Press** – When a team presses high up the pitch to force the opposition into a mistake at the back it is called a high press. This is characterized by energetic running by the whole team as one to lessen the amount of time the opposition has on the ball and force them to play too quickly.

**Holding Player** – A central midfielder who stays back while the players in front of them attack is called a holding player. They usually sit deeper than the rest of the midfield and dictate the play from deep and help out with defensive duties.

**Hold up Play** – Some types of strikers are expected to be adept at hold up play whereby the team plays the ball long to them and they keep and shield it from the opposition's defenders before playing it to a teammate. This helps the team to move up the pitch quickly in one move rather than having to pass their way around their opponents.

**Hold the Line** – When a team keep in line in an attempt to play the opposition offside.

**Hole** – The space between the midfield and defense is often called the hole and strikers sometimes drop into the gap to get on the ball and create confusion between the opponent's two lines of players. It is said that they 'play in the hole'.

**Hollywood Ball** – When a player attempts an audacious long pass that is tricky to pull off. It does look spectacular but it is often risky and has a low chance of success.

**Home and Away** – In a league each team plays each other home and away over the duration of the season. Home is when the team plays at their own stadium.

**Hook** – A player hooks the ball to safety or hooks the ball away from the attacking player. In essence it means they get enough of a touch on the ball to stop their opponent from receiving it in a dangerous area.

**Hooligans** – This is one of the soccer terms used to describe fans that create trouble and sometimes act violently.

**Hospital Pass** – This is a horrifically bad pass that doesn't even nearly make it to the player intended. This is usually a weak pass that puts their teammate in trouble in a dangerous position and has a high probability that the opposition's striker will get there first.

**Howler** – A terrible mistake that may also be funny to observe. A goalkeeping howler would be when the goalie lets in a goal they should easily save.

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**Indirect Free Kick** – When a team wins a free kick but they are not allowed to shoot directly from it, it is called an 'indirect free kick'. This means they need to either pass or cross it to one of their teammates before anyone takes a shot.

**Indoor Soccer** – Soccer that is played indoors that usually consists of teams that play futsal or 5-on-5 or 7-a-side.

**Injury Time** – This is the extra time added at the end of each half. The referee takes into account any injuries that may have occurred and adds on the appropriate time.

**Inside Forward** – An attacking player who doesn't play completely out wide but also comes inside to try and score. They locate the area in between where a central striker and a winger would operate.

**Inswinger** – When a player crosses the ball into the box and the ball swings towards the goal.

**Intercept** – A player intercepts the ball and in doing so prevents it from reaching its original target.

**International Break** – This is when leagues around the world stop for a break as international matches are being held and the players (if selected) head off to represent their national team.

### -- J --

**Journeyman** – A player who has played for many different teams in their career.

**Jockey** – When a player prevents an opponent from advancing dangerously by screening their passes and slowing them down until their teammates have gotten back into position.

**Juggle** – To keep the ball in the air with any part of your body, excluding your hands and arms.

### -- K --

**Keeper** – Otherwise known as the goalkeeper or goalie.

**Keepie-Uppie** – When you juggle the ball and keep it in the air without it touching the ground. Players often play keepie-uppie while warming up for a match.

**Kick and Rush** – Fast-paced soccer whereby one team punts the ball forward and rushes up the field to put pressure on the team trying to take the ball down out of the air and get it under control.

**Kick-Off** – This is when the match starts. A kick-off also occurs after the halftime break and whenever a team scores a goal. The ball is brought back to the centre circle and another kick-off takes place for the game to resume again.

**Killer Pass** – An amazing pass behind the opposition's defense that is absolutely perfect. It usually puts their teammate into a great scoring position.

**Kill the Ball** – When a player controls the ball perfectly and it just drops in front of them after their initial touch.

**Kit** – What the players wear when playing the match.

**Kop** – The Kop is a famous stand behind one of the goals in Liverpool's Anfield which has fervent fans and a great atmosphere. Although it means the stands in stadiums around the UK, it is now mainly associated with Liverpool FC.

**-- L --**

**La Liga** – The top level league in Spain. Real Madrid and Barcelona are the two most famous teams in this league.

**Last Man** – When there is only one defender between the opposition and the goal, this person is called the last man. A tricky situation to be in, if they commit a foul it is usually a red card offense as they have prevented a clear goalscoring opportunity.

**Last Minute Goal** – Drama ensues when a team scores a last minute goal in the dying seconds of the match to change the result.

**Late Challenge** – When a player attempts to tackle an opposition player but is late to the ball and consequently commits a foul.

**Lay-Off** – An attacking player lays off the ball to a player arriving in behind for them to have a first time shot on goal. It is usually a short pass that is perfectly weighted.

**League** – This is the main competition of every team. In the league teams play each other both home and away over the season and try to win points with the team that accumulates the most amount being the champions of the league at the end of the season.

**Libero** – Also known as a sweeper, this defender plays in the space behind the defense and in front of the goalkeeper. They provide cover, are usually good on the ball, and it is a specialized position although few teams use one nowadays.

**Linesman** – There is a linesman on each side of the pitch. They run up and down the line following the play and their main job is to assist the referee in the decisions they make. With their flags they highlight who the throw-in should go to, call for offside, and alert the referee to any fouls that are committed in their vicinity.



**Loan** – When a player is owned by a club but sent to play for another one. Usually the team that loans the player pays their salary or they pay a fee to the owning club to use the player.

**Lofted Pass** – This is a pass that goes off the ground and goes quite high.

**Long Ball** – This is when a player attempts to play a ball over a long distance to one of their teammates. Teams with a physical or tall striker may play long balls to them to advance quickly up the pitch. Some people look down on teams that play 'long ball soccer' as it indicates that the team is not adept at playing technical soccer on the ground.

**Lost the Dressing Room** – This is said of a manager that has lost the confidence and belief of the team. As they have 'lost the dressing room', the players stop trying so hard to win matches.

### -- M --

**Magic Sponge** – When the team doctor runs onto the pitch and rubs a player where they were injured and they miraculously get up and can continue playing, they are said to have used the magic sponge.

**Manager** – This is the person who coaches the team, picks the lineup, and determines the tactics.

**Man of the Match** – This is the player who played the best during the match. In professional matches there is usually a man of the match award given to this player.

**Man On!** – Players will shout this to each other as a warning if an opposing player is hovering around unbeknownst to their teammate and could take the ball off of them.

**Man-to-Man Marking** – This is when defenders are given a man to mark and they must follow them and do anything in their powers to prevent them from scoring. Man-to-man marking goes on during the match or at corners.

**Marking** – This is when you watch out for your opponent and stick closely to them to stop them from being comfortable on the ball or from even receiving it in the first place.

**Match** – A formal contest or game.

**Match Fixing** – When the outcome of the match is rigged before it has begun. This is cheating and highly illegal.

**Mazy Run** – When a player goes on a long jinking run past a number of the opponent's players.

**Medical** – Before signing a player, teams put their prospective signing through an intensive medical to make sure that everything is okay with them.

**Mexican Wave** – This is when crowds of spectators stand up and wave their arms in the air before sitting down. They do this in sequence and acting all together it makes it look as if a wave is going around the stadium.

**Mickey Mouse Cup** – Fans call certain competitions or trophies which they deem less important 'a Mickey Mouse cup' to make fun of it as a competition.

**Midfield Anchor** – A central midfielder who holds the team together and solidifies the center of the pitch.

**Midfield General** – A warrior of a player who drives the team on from their position in midfield. They are ferocious competitors and encourage their team to do better.

**Midfield Maestro** – A midfield maestro is usually a midfielder who is very technical, dominates possession, and controls the tempo of the match.

**Midfielder** – They operate in between the defense and attack and as such are expected to help out with both defensive and attacking duties.

**MLS** – The main professional league in the USA. Major League Soccer is growing in popularity and year on year its quality is improving.

**Movement Off the Ball** – Players are expected to help give their teammates options when they have the ball by creating space and moving around to make passing angles.

## -- N --

**Narrow the Angle** – When a player is one-on-one with the keeper, the goalie should advance forward to try and narrow the angle that the attacker has to shoot at goal.

**Near Post** – Wingers either try and cross the ball to the near post (so the one nearest to them) or the far post on the opposite side of the pitch. Attacking players should vary their runs with one running to the near post and one at the back.

**Neutral Ground** – When teams play neither home or away, they play at a neutral ground so neither team has an advantage in terms of the support they have.

**Nutmeg** – When a player puts the ball through another player's legs.

-- O --

**Obstruction** – When a player blocks their opponent with their body and stops them from getting the ball. The way they do it, however, means that it is illegal.

**Off the Line** – When a player clears the ball off the line, they have prevented the opposition from scoring.

**Offense** – The attack of the team is called the offense.

**Offside** – Players stray offside when they end up goal side of the second last defender before the ball has been played. An important but sometimes confusing rule in soccer.

**Offside Trap** – A defensive manoeuvre to try and make the opposition stray offside.

**One Touch** – Supports greatly value one touch play as it is quick and attractive to watch and players have to be highly technically adept to play in just one touch.

**One Club Man** – A player who has only played for one club throughout their career. This player is usually beloved by the fans due to their loyalty to the team.

**One-on-One** – When an attacker gets past all the opponent's defenders and only has the keeper before them.

**One-Two** – If a player plays a pass to their team mate and immediately receives it back it is called a one-two. This is to get around an opponent without having to dribble them.

**Open** – A player is open if there is no opponent near them.

**Open Space** – A player will sometimes play a pass into open space for their teammate to run onto.

**Open Goal** – When the keeper is out of position or not in front of the goal.

**Opportunity** – A chance to score.

**Outfield Player** – Any player who is not the goalkeeper.

**Overhead Kick** – The same as a bicycle kick so the player moves their legs like they are cycling and aims to connect with the ball which is usually above their head height or slightly behind them in the air.

**Overlap** – In modern soccer it is very important that fullbacks overlap out wide and provide their wingers with support. This is a run that a player makes outside of their teammate.

**Own Goal** – When a player (unfortunately) scores against their own team.

### -- P --

**Pace** – An important quality in modern soccer: speed!

**Parachute Payment** – When a team gets relegated to a lower division they received parachute payments to help them with the corresponding loss in revenue.

**Park the Bus** – A defensive tactic whereby teams sit deep and pull everyone back to defend the goal and prevent the opposition from scoring.

**Pass** – When a player kicks the ball to a teammate.

**Penalty Box or Area** – It is the rectangular area in front of each of the goals. This is the only area in which the goalkeeper is allowed to pick up the ball or use their hands.

**Penalty Kick** - If a player is fouled in the box they then win a penalty kick. This is a free shot on goal from twelve yards.

**Penalty Shootout** – If a match in a knockout competition ends in a tie then the result is determined by a penalty shootout with each team getting five. If no winner is decided after they have each taken five then sudden death occurs.

**Pitch** – The area in which the game is played.

**Pitch Invasion** – When fans spill out onto the pitch to celebrate or protest in anger.

**Playacting** – When a player is trying to deceive the referee into giving them a foul or send off an opponent. They try to get an advantage by cheating.

**Player** – Someone who plays a sport

**Play on the Break** – Some teams sit deep and try to play on the break to hit the opposition with their speedy players on the counter.

**Play to the Whistle** – When players stop playing because they believe the ball has gone out or a foul should have been called they are often told to play to the whistle because nothing is final until the referee has blown.

**Playmaker** – One of many soccer terms used to describe a creative player who has great vision and a lot of their team's best moves come from them.

**Play-Off** – At the end of the season teams that are up for promotion or relegation play a series of play-offs to see who ends up in which league.

**Play On** – When a foul has been committed but the team chooses to play on or the referee deems that they have an advantage by continuing.

**Points Deduction** – If a team has broken the league's rules then if it serious enough they are deducted points from the ones they have received so far.

**Possession** – When the team has the ball they have possession.

**Post** – A goalpost.

**(the) Poznan** – A celebration named after the team whose fans came up with it. Fans put arms around each other's shoulders, face away from the pitch and jump up and down.

**Pre-Season** – Before the season has properly commenced, teams organize friendlies to get their players' fitness up and get them back into the swing of things. A good pre-season is important for team bonding and working on tactics.

**Premier League** – The top professional league in England. Famous teams are Manchester United, Arsenal, and Liverpool.

**Pressing** – When a team puts pressure on their opponents in the hope that they will win the ball back or force them into mistakes.

**Professional** – When a person plays a sport (soccer) for a paid job.

**Professional Foul** – When a player deliberately fouls an opponent for the good of their team despite knowing that they will receive punishment for it.

**Promotion** – When a team in a lower league does well enough to get promoted to the league above them.

**Push Up** – Sometimes when defenders are sitting too deep and inviting pressure onto themselves, a cry goes round that they should push up and move further away from the goal.

### -- R --

**Rabona** – An unusual and infrequent type of kick whereby the player wraps their leg around their standing leg to hit the ball behind it. It is quite difficult to pull off.

**Red Card** – A player is shown a red card and therefore expelled from the game if they have committed a very bad foul due to a dangerous tackle or if they have received two yellow cards. They are sent off and the team is not allowed to replace them with a substitute.

**Referee** – The official who referees the match and makes all the decisions. They are helped by the two linesmen and the fourth official.

**Relegation** – When a team is demoted to a lower league for being one of, if not the, worst team in their league.

**Replacement** – A substitute who has taken one of the starting player's places is their replacement.

**Reserve Team** – Players who are not in the first team or who are recovering from an injury play with the reserves to gain match fitness.

**Retired Number** – If a player does an incredible job for a team over a number of years their number may be retired out of respect for them. It may also be done as a tribute to a player who has died.

**Round the Keeper** – With a one-on-one the attacker may try to take it round the keeper rather than take a shot and risk the keeper saving it.

**Rounds** – In cup competitions, there are usually different rounds that the team has to go through if they want to progress to the final. At each round they need to beat the team they are paired with to get to the next round.

**Route One** – When a team plays long balls and keeps lumping it forward in the air.

**Row Z** – When a player clears the ball far away or takes a terrible shot which is way off target it is said to have reach row Z in the stands such is the distance it covered.

**Rules** – The law of the game.

**Run with the Ball** – When the player keeps the ball under control and progresses with it up the field.

## -- S --

**Safety** – When players clear the ball to safety it means that they have got rid of the ball out of a dangerous area.

**Save** – The goalkeeper makes saves with any part of their body to prevent the opposition from scoring.

**Score** – A number of goals each team has.

**Scorpion Kick** – An acrobatic type of volley which looks impressive to the eye.

**Scouts** – These staff members of a soccer club go to other teams' matches or sometimes even youth matches to scout how the opposition play and see if there are any players worth buying.

**Season** – This is when club teams play the cup competitions and leagues that they are a part of or have qualified for. In Europe it usually begins in September and ends in May.

**Second Season Syndrome** – After a good first season, this phrase is used to describe a new team to a league or even players themselves if they are not doing so well in their second season. The idea is that they had the element of surprise in their first season and that people have started to figure out how they play.

**Sending Off** – When a player gets a red card they are sent off and are no longer allowed to play. The team of the offending player have to continue with ten men as they are not allowed to sub off the player.

**Set Piece** – A free kick or a corner that the team have practiced to hopefully create a goalscoring opportunity.

**Shepherd the Ball** – This is when a player shields the ball with their body to allow it to go out of play while an opposition player is trying to regain possession of it. They shepherd the ball out of play.

**Shield the Ball** – When a player uses their body to protect it from the opposition's players and keep possession.

**Shin Pads or Shin Guards** – These are worn by the players under their socks to stop their shins from getting hurt.

**Shoot** – When a player kicks the ball at goal to try and score.

**Shoulder Barge** – When a player charges into their opponent with their shoulder to try and win the physical battle to regain possession of the ball. Sometimes it is a foul but it is not always given.

**Shoulder-to-Shoulder** – This is a legal challenge where plays try to win the ball by forcefully knocking the other player out of their way with their shoulder.

**Show for the Ball** – This means the player must try and find space and make themselves available for a pass from their teammate.



**Side Netting** – The net on the side of the goal. So when a player shoots from an angle and it goes just past the post it often hits the side netting.

**Sideline** – These are the white chalk lines that line the edges of the pitch out wide.

**Silverware** – Any trophy that the team competes for can be called silverware.

**Skipper** – Another name for the captain of the team.

**Slide Tackle** – A tackle whereby the player slides across the ground to try and win the ball.

**Slot** – When a player scores, people often say that they slotted the ball into the back of the net.

**Spectators** – People who are watching a soccer event.

**Spot-Kick** – Another name for a penalty kick.

**Squad Numbers** – These are the numbers that the players wear on the back of their shirt and it helps commentators and the referees to differentiate the players. Certain numbers are associated with different positions.

**Squad Rotation** – Managers often have to manage their players' workloads so squad rotation, whereby they change the playing personnel to keep them all fit and fresh, is very important.

**Square Ball** – When a player passes the ball laterally to their teammate.

**Squeaky-Bum Time** – A saying coined by Sir Alex Ferguson for when things are heating up in the league or cup competition and it is a very pressurized time of the season. Alternatively, it can be for the end of a match when the final result is still to be decided.

**Stepover** – A move whereby a player doesn't touch the ball but throws a leg in front of it to confuse the opponent and force them into moving in one direction while the attacking player then reacts quickly and takes the ball in the other. Only attacking players use stopovers.

**Stoppage Time** – Another name for extra time, additional time, or injury time.

**Straight Red Card** – When a player has committed an exceptionally dirty challenge which was dangerous, they receive a straight red card. This means that instead of receiving a first caution in the shape of a yellow card, they are immediately expelled from the game.

**Street Football** – Informal soccer played in the street. Any number of players can play and the ease at which games can start make it very popular.

**Stretch the Play** – Teams want to make the pitch as large as possible to create holes in their opponent's defensive line up. Therefore they try and stretch the play by keeping their wingers out wide and quickly changing the side of the pitch on which they have the ball.

**Striker** – Otherwise known as an attacker or forward, it is up to these players to score the main bulk of the team's goals. They played closest the opposition's goal and as such are not expected to defend as much as the rest of the team.

**Studs** – These are the cleats on the bottom of the soccer boot which stop players from slipping.

**Studs-Up Challenge** – When a player aggressively tackles the other with their studs showing. This is reckless and dangerous play and often results in a red card.

**Substitute** – A player who did not get chosen to start but sits on the bench waiting to enter if their manager chooses them. They replace one of the starting players.

**Subbed** – When a player gets taken off and replaced by a substitute.

**Sudden Death** – If at the end of a penalty shootout neither team has scored more than the other then it goes to sudden death. Players on either side keep taking penalties one after the other until one team misses and the other scores.

**Supporter** – A fan of the team.

**Survive** – When a team gets enough points to avoid relegation.

**Suspension** – After accumulating five or ten yellow cards over the season, a player is suspended and cannot play the team's next game or games. A straight red card means a player gets a suspension and cannot play in the next three games for the team depending on which competition they received in.

**Sweeper** – This player plays behind the defense but in front of the keeper and sweeps up any loose balls that come their way.

**Switch the Play** – To change the side of the pitch which the team is playing on. Teams try and do this quickly so that the opposition's players are out of position.

## -- T --

**Tackle** – A challenge that a player makes to try and win the ball back from the opposition.

**Tactical Foul** – When a player knows that they will not win the ball but need to stop the opposition's player from advancing they make a tactical foul. This helps their teammates to get back in position as it slows the opposition down because the referee usually awards the team a free kick.

**Tactics** – This is how the manager decides to line up the team and how they will play during the match. The best managers have an array of tactics that they can draw upon to influence a game.

**Take a Player On** – To take a player on is to run at them with the ball and attempt to dribble them or get past using their speed.

**Take a Touch** – To control the ball before passing it on or taking a shot.

**Target Man** – A big striker in attack who the team can hit long balls to and expect them to manage to control the ball under pressure or win a header and divert the ball to a team mate.

**Team** – A group of sportsmen who play together.

**Testimonial Match** – When a player who has played for a team for a long time is near the end of their career or has retired, the club often organizes a friendly match to thank them for their service. It is usually when the player has played ten years for the same team.

**Through Ball** – When a player passes the ball between and behind the opposition's defenders for one of their teammates to receive it is called a through ball.

**Throw-In** – When the ball goes out on the sidelines, a player restarts play by throwing the ball in over their head. It is the only time that outfield players are allowed to use their hands.

**Tidy Finish** – Commentators often say this when a player has scored a goal with a nice finish.

**Tidy Player** – One of the soccer terms used to describe a player who can do most things in soccer to a high level. They can usually pass, move, and control the ball very well.

**Tiki-Taka** – When a team plays short one touch passes and moves the ball around the pitch confidently and quickly, keeping possession, and looking for gaps to exploit in the opposition's shape. Often associated with Barcelona's style of play.

**Toe Punt** – To kick the ball very hard with the toes.

**Top Corner** – The corners of the goal which are hardest for the keeper to reach. It is considered aesthetically pleasing when players manage to score in this part of the goal.

**Top Flight** – The top league in the country is known as the top flight.

**Total Football** – The idea behind Total Football is that any outfield player should be able to play in any position on the pitch. Consequently, play is very fluid as players interchange positions. Created by the Dutch coach Rinus Michels, the Ajax and Netherlands national team of the 70s are the most famous teams that used this approach.

**Touch-Line** – These are the chalk lines along the side of the pitch which mark the edges of the playing field. Players take throw-ins behind these lines.

**Transfer Window** – This is a time during the season when teams are allowed to buy and sell their players. During most of the playing season, the window is closed so clubs mainly do business in the summer or during the winter break.

**Trap** – To control the ball under the sole of the foot.

**Travelling Army** – These are the fans that have travelled to an away game to support their team. They are often amongst the teams most dedicated supporters.

**Treble** – When a team wins three trophies in the season.

**Two-Footed Challenge** – An illegal challenge where both of the player's legs go off the ground.

**Two-on-One** – When two players have the ball and are running at one defending player.

## -- U --

**UEFA** – The governing body of soccer in Europe.

**Underdog** – A team that is unlikely to win against their much stronger opponent are called the underdogs.

**Under the Cosh** – When a team is defending for their lives they are said to be under the cosh.

**Unsportsmanlike Behavior** – Dirty play that warrants a booking or sometimes even a suspension that is handed out after the match. This could also be cheating or physical violence.

**Ultras** – The most hardcore fans of any soccer club are the ultras who chant throughout the match and create a great atmosphere.

**Upset** – When a team which is unexpected to win succeeds in beating their stronger opponent.

**Utility Player** – A player who can fill in in a number of positions and do a good job.

### -- V --

**VAR – Video Assistant Replay** – This technology has recently been introduced to the game to help referees come to the correct decision when officiating the match.

**Vision** – Players are said to have great vision if they can spot passes which not many other people can.

**Volley** – A shot or pass which is when the ball is hit before it touches the ground.

### -- W --

**Wall** – When the opposition have a free kick, the goalkeeper may elect to erect a defensive wall in front of it so that they do not have a clear sight of goal. This wall is made up of the outfield players who stand ten yards away from the ball and try to limit the opposition's chances of scoring.

**Want-Away** – This is a player who everyone knows wants to leave their club.

**War Chest** – This is the amount of money that a club has to spend during the transfer window on new players.

**Weight of the Pass** – How hard or soft the player passes the ball.

**Width** – Teams usually want to have a lot of width so they leave players out wide to stretch the opposition.

**Win the Ball** – To successfully make a challenge and regain possession of the ball.

**Wing** – The part of the pitch which is out wide on either side is called the wing.

**Winger** – An attacking player who stays out wide to give the team width and deliver crosses into the box.

**Winter Break** – In some leagues all of the competitive matches are suspended for a period due to the weather and time of year and the players get a well-deserved rest.

**Withdrawn** – When a player is subbed off they have been withdrawn.

**Woodwork** – The goal frame. So when a player takes a shot and it hits the post or crossbar they are said to have hit the woodwork.

**Work Rate** – Fans often like a player who has a good work rate because it shows that they are trying hard for the team.

**World Cup** – The most important international soccer competition which is held every four years. The winner of the tournament wins great prestige. Brazil are the most successful in the men's version.

**Worry the Keeper** – When a striker takes an optimistic shot from distance they want to get it on target and they hope to worry the keeper.

### -- Y --

**Yellow Card** – Given to a player when they have committed a bad foul deemed worthy of a caution. Sometimes players get a yellow card for persistent fouling and if they get two yellow cards it means that they are sent off and can no longer play a part in the game. Two yellow cards equals one red card.

**Youth** – Having a youth academy or a good youth set-up is very important for teams because then they should have a steady flow of talent who will later on join the first team.

**Yo-Yo Club** – This is a soccer team that often changes leagues because they are either getting promoted or relegated all the time.

### -- Z --

**Zonal Marking** – When a team marks areas of the pitch rather than individual players. This is often used at corners where players are designated spaces to defend instead of an opposing player.