

Soccer Positions

Goalkeeper/Goalie/ Keeper – The player positioned directly in front of the goal who tries to prevent shots from crossing the goal line; the only player allowed to use their hands and arms, though only within the 18-yard penalty area.

Defender – A player who works mainly in the defensive third of the field. They are primarily focused on stopping the opposition's attackers from scoring.

Fullback/Wingback – A defender that plays on the left or right side of defense.

Midfielder – A player generally positioned in the middle third of the field between the forwards and defenders. Their job is to link the defense and the offense through ball control and passing. They play both an attacking role and a defensive role.

Forward – A player who is responsible for most of a team's scoring. They play in front of the rest of their team (or in the attacking third of the field) where they can take most of the shots.

Striker – Generally the same as a forward, though it sometimes refers to a forward that is the team's primary scoring threat.

Advanced Soccer Positions

Central Defender – A player who guards the area directly in front of their own goal.

Defensive Midfielder – The player positioned just in front of their team's defense.

Stopper – A hybrid position created between a Central Midfielder and a Defensive Midfielder. The Stopper usually plays in the center of the midfield in front of the team's defense.

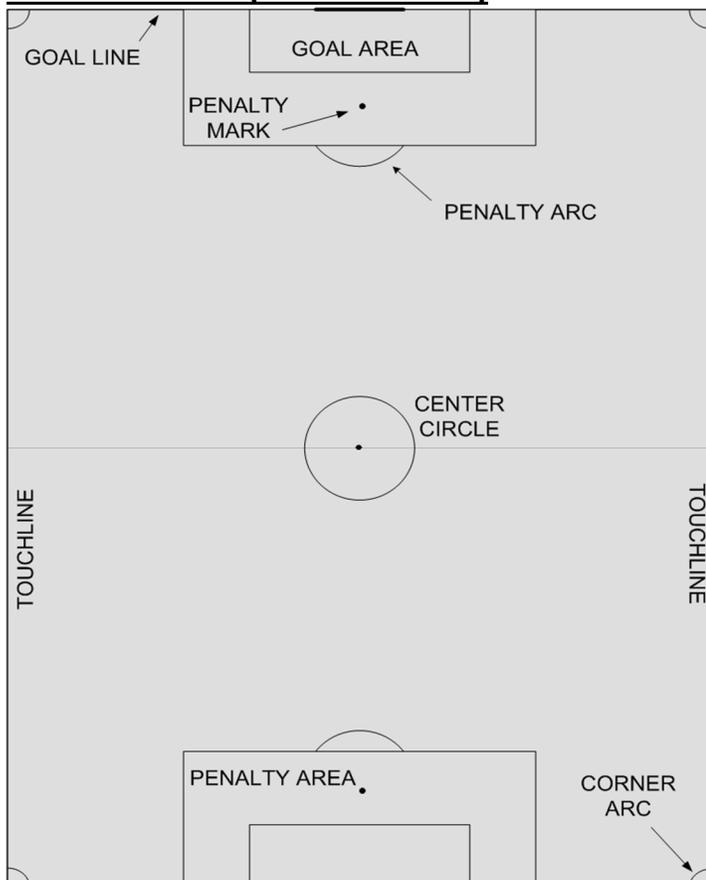
Central Midfielder – The midfielder most responsible for organizing play in the midfield area, creating scoring opportunities for the attackers, and often a team's leader.

Attacking Midfielder – The midfielder that plays right behind the forwards; they support the offense by providing passes to forwards to set up goals.

Wingers – The outside forwards and midfielders who play on the sides of the field. Their primary task is to provide them with accurate crossing passes, so they can shoot at the goal.

Center Forward – A team's best-scoring forward who plays toward the center of the field.

The Soccer Field (aka "the Pitch")



Goal/End Line – the boundary line extending from corner to corner along its width at each end.

Goal Area/Six Yard Box – the rectangular area (20 x 6 yd. on a full-size 11v11 soccer field) marked within the penalty area (or inside the larger rectangle) and directly in front of goal. *Purpose: Marks the area from which all goal kicks must be taken.*

Penalty Spot – the mark from which penalty kicks are taken. It is 12 yards from the goal line on a full size 11v11 field.

Penalty Area/Penalty Box – The larger rectangle (18 x 44 yd. on a full size 11v11 field) in front of the goal that includes the Goal Area. *Purpose: Marks both where the goalkeeper can touch the ball with his hands AND the area where harsh fouls committed by the defending team result in penalty kicks.*

Penalty Arc – The arc at the top of the penalty area. *Purpose: Designates how far back all players must be away from the ball while a penalty kick is being taken.*

Breakout Line – A line midway between the top of the penalty box and half way line that defending players need to be behind when the opposition is taking a goal kick. *Purpose: To allow players to play the ball out from the goal kick, building confidence in the defensive players by increasing touches on the ball. For U11 players and younger*

Center Circle – a circular marking with a 10-yard radius in the “center” of the field from which kickoffs are taken to start or restart the game.

Center Spot – The “center” of the center circle from which kickoffs are taken to start or restart the game.

Halfway Line – a line in the center that divides the field in half along its width and runs parallel to the goals. *Purpose: Used for start and restart as well as for calling offside. A player cannot be offside on their half of the field. Also called the Center Line.*

Corner Arc – an arc or quarter-circle with a radius of 1 yard located at each of the 4 corners of the soccer field. *Purpose: A reference line, the ball must be kicked from inside this arc on a corner kick.*

Corner Flag – the flag located at each of the 4 corners of the soccer field, inside the corner area.

Sideline/Touchline – the line that runs along the length of each side of the field. Commonly called the sideline in other sports.

Pitch – Another word for the field.

Basic Soccer Action Terms

Clearing – the act of moving the ball out of the area of one’s own goal by throwing (goalkeeper only) or kicking it.

Cross/Center/Square – a pass from either side of the field towards the middle. It is used primarily to get the ball closer to the front of the goal. The words “square” “center” and “cross” are used interchangeably.

Fake – a move by a player meant to deceive an opposing player. Used to gain an advantage, it is frequently used when dribbling to get past an opponent.

Header – when a player passes or shoots the ball with his head. *Only allowed for players U12 and older.*

Save – the act of a goalkeeper stopping a shot that would have otherwise gone into the goal.

Shielding –used by the person with the ball to protect the ball from a defender; the ball carrier keeps their body between the ball and the defender.

Slide Tackle – a move where a player attempts to win the ball by sliding towards the ball. If the tackling player touches the ball first, he is allowed to make contact with the player controlling the ball. If the tackling player strikes the player before the ball, a foul is assessed. A tackle from behind is always a foul regardless of whether the tackler managed to get to the ball first.

Support – when the player with the ball is helped by a teammate. The supporting player is usually behind the player with the ball in space.

Tackle – the act of taking the ball away from a player by kicking or stopping it with one's feet.

Through/Through ball – the act of passing a ball beyond the opposing teams defenders for a teammate to run onto.

Trap – the use of one’s body to slow down and control a moving ball, most often using the chest, thighs or feet.

Advanced Soccer Action Terms

Cut Down/Narrowing the Angle – when the goalie comes out of the goal several feet to make themselves closer and larger to an attacker. The effect is to leave the attacker less open net to shoot at.

Flick – a quick header. *Only allowed for players U12 and older.*

Instep Drive – a shot taken with the instep of a player's foot; usually the most powerful and accurate of shots.

Push Pass – a pass made by striking the ball with instep.

"Man On" – the call a player makes to a teammate who is closely marked by an opposing player but may not be aware of it.

Mark – to cover an opponent with or without the ball to keep them from passing, receiving or shooting the ball.

Offside Trap – a play by the defense to catch the attacking team offside. The rear defenders will quickly pull up past the attackers to put the attackers in an offside position.

One Touch Pass – when the ball is received and propelled in a single movement.

"Push Up" – a phrase used to tell the defense to move up the field in a more attacking position. Sometimes used as the command for an offside trap.

Shoulder Tackle – a tackle used to get the ball away from an opponent by making shoulder-to-shoulder contact.

Two Touch Pass – a pass in which the ball is received by a player with one touch and then played to a teammate with the next touch.

Basic Soccer Rule Terms

Goal Kick – a type of restart that is awarded when the attacking team puts the ball over the end line. The ball is kicked from anywhere inside the goal area away from the goal to restart play. After the kick is taken, the ball cannot be touched again by any player until it is outside of the penalty area.

Corner kick – a direct free kick that is awarded when the defending team puts the ball over the end line. A corner kick is taken by the offensive team from next to the corner flag.

Throw-in – a way to restart play when the ball goes out over the sidelines. The team that did not touch the ball last is allowed an overhead throw.

Indirect Free Kick – a free kick that is awarded at the spot of the infraction for other fouls that are judged not to be serious such as obstruction, dangerous play or charging (non-contact fouls), as well as for offside. Indirect kicks must touch another player (either team) before the ball goes into the net to score.

Direct Free Kick – a free kick that is awarded at the spot of the infraction for a physical contact foul such as tripping, holding, pushing, tackles from behind, jumping into an opponent, or for hand balls. A direct free kick can score by going directly into the goal. It does not have to be touched by anyone other than the kicker.

Penalty kick – A kick taken from 12 yards in front of the goal (on a full size 11v11 field) because of a contact foul or hand ball that takes place inside the penalty area.

Offside – A violation that occurs when an offensive player is closer to the opponent's goal than both the ball and the second-to-last opposing player **at the time that the ball is passed** to the offensive player by his or her teammate. Players cannot be called offside if they are in their own half of the field or if they receive the ball from a throw in, corner kick, or goal kick. When a player is called offside, the opposing team is awarded an indirect free kick. A player does not have to have the ball or be part of the play to be considered offside. A player can be considered offside if he is in an offside position at the time of the pass and his position or movement pulls a defensive player away from the attack.

Drop Ball – a method of restarting a game where the referee drops the ball between 2 players facing each other. 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.

Foul – when the referee judges a violation against an opposing player. The team that suffers the foul is awarded with a direct free kick unless the foul is committed by a defensive player inside his own penalty area, in which case the foul results in a penalty kick.

Obstruction – a foul in which a defensive player, instead of going after the ball, illegally uses their body to prevent an offensive player from playing it.

Dangerous Play – an action by a player that the referee considers dangerous to that player or others. Examples are high kicking, playing while lying on the ground, or playing the ball while it is in the possession of the goalkeeper.

Yellow Card/Caution/Booking – a disciplinary action in which the referee shows a player the yellow card. A second caution in the same match results in the player being shown the red card (ejected from the game).

Red card/Sending off – a referee shows a player a red card to signal that the player has been banned from the rest of the match. A red card can be shown for a single serious offense or as the result of being shown a second yellow card in the same game. After a player is shown a red card, the player must leave the field of play and cannot be replaced by a substitute, meaning that his or her team must finish the match with one player fewer.