

Basic Soccer Terms

CORNER KICK -- a free kick taken by an attacking player whenever a defender last touches the ball before it completely crosses the goal line.

DANGEROUS PLAY -- an action on the field ruled by the referee that will likely cause an injury; will at minimum draw a yellow card but could draw a red card for the offending player.

DIRECT FREE KICK -- awarded as the result of a personal foul, such as kicking, tripping, holding or pushing; the kick is taken from the point of the infraction and the designated player taking the kick may score directly without another player having to touch the ball.

GOAL -- the manner in which points are scored in soccer; to score, the ball must completely cross over the goal line and into the goal; a goal counts as one point (the exception to this applies in certain indoor soccer leagues).

GOALS -- standing in the center of the goal lines; each goal consists of two wooden posts, 24 feet apart, and a crossbar, 8 feet above the ground.

GOALKEEPER -- defends the goal; the only player who can handle the ball within the penalty area with his hands.

GOAL KICK -- a free kick taken either by the goalkeeper or member of the defending team after the attacking team puts the ball over the goal line.

GOAL LINES -- lines which runs from corner flag to corner flag across each end of the field of play and which the goal is situated; represents the end of the playing area at the far end of each side of the field.

HALF -- one of two periods in a match.

HANDBALL -- infraction called when a player other than a goalkeeper intentionally plays a ball with his hand; if a defender handles within the penalty area, a penalty shot is awarded; if the goalkeeper handles the ball outside the penalty area, a direct free kick is awarded.

INDIRECT FREE KICK -- awarded for less serious infractions to the team fouled; for a goal to be scored on an indirect free kick, a player other than the kicker must touch the ball before it can be scored; the kick is awarded from the point of infraction.

LINESMAN -- two officials who are stationed outside of the touchline to indicate when a ball is out of play or a player who is offside.

OFFSIDE -- an infraction which occurs when an attacker sends a pass to a teammate without two defenders, which can include a goalkeeper, between the teammate and the goal.

PENALTY AREA – The area in front of each goal in which the goalkeeper can use his/her hands.

PENALTY KICK -- awarded for any personal fouls or for intentionally handling of the ball by a defending player within the penalty area; a penalty shot is taken from the designated spot, 12 yards from the goal line in the center of the penalty area, with only the goalkeeper defending the shot.

RED CARD -- the card shown to a player being ejected from a match by the referee; players ejected cannot be substituted for, and often a red card offense carries a penalty of additional matches missed.

REFEREE -- the only on-field official charged with enforcing the rules of the game; acts as timekeeper as well; has the authority to expel a player from a game for repeated fouling or misconduct behavior. Makes calls based “in the spirit” of the game

SAVE -- the goalkeeper stopping a scoring opportunity by either catching the ball or knocking it away from the goal.

THROW-IN -- the method of restarting play when the ball has crossed the touchlines; a throw-in is awarded to the opposing side of the team which knocked the ball out of play. 2 feet must remain on the ground with both hands throwing ball behind head evenly.

TOUCH LINES -- the boundary lines running the full length of the field on each side of the playing area.

YELLOW CARD -- a caution card showed to a player by the referee after a dangerous play foul; a second yellow card in the same match earns the offending player a red card and automatic ejection; some leagues and tournaments have rules regarding the receipt of yellow cards in successive matches, which often result in a one-game ban.