

Common Soccer Terminology

-- A --

Advantage rule - A clause in the rules that allows the referee to refrain from stopping play for a foul if a stoppage would benefit the team that committed the violation. See "Play on".

Assist - the pass or passes that precede a goal. A maximum of two assists can be allocated for one goal.

Attacking midfielder - the most forward-playing midfielder, playing right behind the forwards; he supports the offense by providing passes to forwards to set up goals.

"Away" - clear the ball out of the area it is in, usually the Penalty Area (PA)

-- B --

Back - a defender.

Back heel - A ball played with the back of the foot to a teammate.

Back tackle - An attempt by a defender to take the ball away from a ball carrier by swinging the defender's leg in front of the ball from behind. This is an illegal tackle and could result in carding or a free kick.

Banana Kick - A kick (usually a long corner kick) that curves so much that it take the shape of a banana. The idea is to curve the ball from the corner directly into the goal.

Bending Runs - runs made by players on the team with the ball that are not straight. If you run straight down the field in front of a teammate you can not receive a pass since your back is to the passer. By making a bending run you are always in a position "open" to a pass.

Bending the ball - Striking the ball with an off-center kick so that it travels in a curved path; also known as a banana kick.

Bicycle kick - An expert move, popularized by Brazilian great Pele that is made by throwing the body up into the air with the legs moving as if pedaling a bicycle. The player then kicks the ball backward over his head.

Blind-side run - A type of running off-the-ball in which a player without the ball runs outside of the opponent's field of vision in order to receive a pass.

Block tackle - A defensive skill used to gain possession of the ball; the player uses the inside of the foot to block the ball away from an opponent.

Breakaway - A situation where an attacker with the ball breaks free of defenders and creates a one-on-one situation with the goalkeeper.

Bundesliga - The German professional football league.

-- C --

Call the Ball - going for a loose ball; for example, "Gary's ball"; do not yell "mine" as it may be construed as ungentlemanly conduct, trying to deceive an opponent verbally.

Cards - Because soccer is often played between players and fans who may not speak each other's language the card system was devised as the universal symbol of fouls. See also Red Card and Yellow Card.

"Carry" - Dribble usually for a distance

Carrying the ball - a foul called on a goalkeeper when he takes longer than 6 seconds before clearing the ball.

Center - a pass from a player located near the sideline towards the middle of the field; used to get the ball closer to the front of the goal; also called a cross.

Center circle - A marked circle with a 10-yard radius in the center of the field. Kickoffs are taken here to start or restart the game after halftime.

Center spot - A small circular mark at the center of the center circle. This is the spot where the ball is placed to start or restart the game after halftime.

Central Defender - a player who guards the area directly in front of his own goal in a zone defense; does not exist in a man-to-man defense.

Charge - to run into an opponent; illegal against a player without the ball or even with the ball if from behind.

Check In Check Out (AKA Checking Run and Pull-Return) When a receiver runs away from the ball handler but then quickly runs back toward the ball handler. The idea is to draw the defender away from the ball handler to create an open space that the receiver can then run back into in hopes of being open for a pass. (I.e., the first run was a "dummy run"). The opposite of a "hooking run". (Other similar moves are "Hooking Run", "Show", "Third Man Running", "Movement Off-The-Ball" & "Creating Space").

Checking Marking - a movement in one direction, stopping, and then moving off in the opposite direction.

Chest trap - when a player uses his chest to slow down and control a ball in the air.

Chip pass - or shot that is lofted into the air from an attacker to a teammate or on goal, usually over the head of a defending player.

Chip shot - a kick lofted into the air to try to sail the ball over the goalkeeper's head and still make it under the crossbar into the goal.

Clear - When the defending team kicks the ball away from the goal and out of the goal area.

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).

Coachable Moment - A quick freeze of the action during a drill. The coach blows his whistle. The players freeze their positions. The coach gets in, makes an observation or point, and then immediately gets back out. No preaching and no long drawn out speeches. This is the consensus pick among coaches as the best way to coach drills.

Coerver - Weill Coerver - well known Dutch coach who teaches soccer moves and a total soccer concept known as the Coerver method. It relies on lots of repetition to gain ball handling skills.

Contain - Slow down player with the ball. Also see jockeying.

Corner arc - A quarter-circle with a one yard radius at each corner of a soccer field. The ball is placed inside or on a corner arc during a corner kick.

Corner flag - the flag located at each of the 4 corners of the field, inside the corner area.

Corner kick - A method of putting the ball into play after it has crossed the end line and was last touched by a member of the defending team.

Creating Space - A term meaning to draw your mark away from your teammates or away from the area that you want open. The most obvious use of this is to draw defenders out of the box on set plays (i.e. corner kicks) so that a player on your team can use that space to receive, shoot or head the ball.

"Cross" or Crossing Pass - a kick into the middle of the goal box, a pass from an attacking player near the sideline to a teammate in the middle or opposite side of the field; used to give the teammate a good scoring opportunity. A pass in which the ball is kicked from one side of the field to the other side.

Crossbar - The 24-foot horizontal bar or beam that forms the top of a goal. The crossbar sits on top of the two goalposts, eight feet above the playing surface.

Cruyff turn - A turn used for change of direction and to deceive an opponent; named for Johan Cruyff, the famous Dutch player who popularized the move.

Cut - A move, made while dribbling, in which the player advancing the ball shifts direction suddenly, using a foot to redirect the ball.

Cut down the angle - When a goalkeeper leaves the goal area and moves toward an attacker, decreasing the angle that the attacker has to successfully shoot the ball into the net.

Cut off the line - A defense against teams that always do their throw-ins "down the line", a defender close "marks" or checks the intended receiver.

Cut off - When a defending player positions his or her body between an attacker and the defending goal. The positioning should force the attacker out toward the sideline.

-- D --

Dangerous play - when a player attempts a play that the referee considers dangerous to that player or others. Play that is likely to cause injury. Examples are high kicking, playing while lying on the ground if a defender is also playing the ball, or playing the ball while it is in the possession of the goalkeeper. What is a dangerous play at U10 may not be a dangerous play at U14.

Dead ball - A situation that occurs when the ball is not in play while on the field, which is usually on free kicks, corner kicks, penalty kicks, and throw-ins.

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.

Defense - A team's attempt to keep the opposing team from scoring. The team without possession of the ball.

Defensive midfielder - the player positioned just in front of his team's defense; he is often assigned to mark the opposition's best offensive player; also called the midfield anchor.

Defensive pressure - when one or more defenders closely mark a ball carrier to harass him into losing the ball.

Deflection - the ricochet of a ball after it hits a player.

Direct Free Kick - a free kick that is awarded for fouls that involve physical contact such as tripping, holding, or pushing or for a hand ball by field players or for a hand ball by the goalkeeper when he is outside of the penalty area. A free kick requires the other team to back off of the ball ten yards and allow a free striking of the ball. A free kick can score by going directly into goal. It does not have to be touched by anyone other than the kicker. 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).

"Down the line" - a cry heard in youth soccer during Throw-ins meaning to throw the ball close to the touch line toward your opponent's goal rather than toward the center of the field.

Dribbling - Basic skill of advancing and controlling the ball close to your feet while running. Rapid dribbling is known as speed dribbling.

Driving - (running with the ball) playing the ball well forward and running after it. Used to accelerate away from an opponent.

Drop - pass backwards into negative space (usually) dropping a ball for a teammate to possess or shoot.

Drop ball - One of the rarest plays in soccer, it is used after an injury stops play, or after play has been stopped without the ball going out of bounds. The referee drops the ball at the site of the stoppage; one bounce must occur before the ball can be played.

Drop kick - A distribution method used by the goalkeeper; it is done by dropping the ball from the hands to the ground and then striking the ball immediately after it bounces.

Dummy run - When a player without the ball makes a run toward the goal to draw defenders away from the dribbler or passer.

-- E --

Encroachment - When a player enters an area beyond the legal limit set by the rules during a penalty kick, free kicks, corner kicks or throw-in.

-- F --

Fake or feint - a move by a player meant to deceive an opposing player; used by a ball carrier to make a defender think the ball carrier is going to dribble, pass or shoot in a certain direction when he is not.

Far and Wide - Spread out using the width and length of the field

Far post - The goalpost farthest from the ball.

Feint - A deceptive movement by a player, which can be applied with or without the ball, meant to fake out an opponent.

Finish - The ability to complete a play or move. Younger players have problems "finishing". Because they lack confidence in their ability to shoot or pass accurately from long distances they tend to dribble or possess the ball too long and end up losing the ball to an opponent. Strikers must be "good finishers".

Flank - The left or right side of the field. Also known as the wing.

Flat Back Four - A popular defensive formation that relies on lots of support.

Flat footed - if you stand on your heels or even with your legs stiff you cannot react quickly to the play and will get "caught " or beaten to the ball.

Flick - A quick header, flick header

Flick pass - A short, quick kick of the ball to a teammate.

Follow-through - The distance the foot travels after it first strikes the ball.

Foot trap - a player's use of the bottom or sides of his shoe to control a rolling or low-bouncing ball.

Formation - the arrangement into positions of players on the field; When listed as numbers formations always leave the goalkeeper off and work from the defensive end to the offensive end. For example, a 4-3-3 formation places 4 defenders, 3 midfielders and 3 forwards on the field.

Forward line - the 3 or 4 forwards who work together to try and score goals; consists of two wingers and 1 or 2 strikers.

Forward pass - a pass made towards the opposition's goal.

Forward - The three or four players on the field who are responsible for most of a team's scoring.

Forwards - the 2, 3 or 4 players on a team who are responsible for most of a team's scoring; they play in front of the rest of their team where they can take most of its shots; strikers and wingers. Player who functions primarily in the attacking third of the field and whose major responsibility is to score goals.

Foul - A rules violation. In response to a foul, a referee calls for either a direct free kick or an indirect free kick.

4-2-4 - a formation that consists of 4 defenders, 2 midfielders and 4 forwards.

4-3-3 - a formation that consists of 4 defenders, 3 midfielders and 3 forwards; the most common formation used by teams.

4-4-2 - a formation that consists of 4 defenders, 4 midfielders and 2 forwards - also one of the most popular formations currently used by World Cup teams.

Free kick - A kick awarded to a player after an opponent commits a foul. The ball is set at the spot of the foul and the player kicks it without any opposing players within 10 yards of the ball. Also see direct free kick and indirect free kick.

Front Header - the striking of a ball in the air by a player's forehead; the most common type of header.

Front Tackle - an attempt by a defender to kick the ball away from an attacker by approaching him from a head-on position.

Funnel - an imaginary funnel shape on the field with the wide portion of the funnel originating at the points where the mid-field line meets the touch-lines and the narrow end of the funnel pouring into the mouth of your own goal. This is a term used by the defense to get the opponent out of the funnel area where the angle on shots is good.

-- G --

"Get it out of there!" - An obvious call to kick the ball out from in front of the goal.

"Get square" - an offensive tactic of getting ten to twenty yards away from your teammate who possesses the ball at a 90 degree angle (formed between the teammate and the goal.)

Give-and-go - Also known as a 1-2 and wall pass. A pass to a teammate who one-touches the ball back into space for the player to run onto.

"Go Wide" - means move to the outside edge of the field

Goal Area - the rectangular area 20 yards wide by 6 yards deep in front of each goal from which all goal kicks are taken; inside this area, it is illegal for opposing players to charge a goalie not holding the ball. 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.

Goal Kick - Kick made from inside the goal area away from the goal. A goal kick is awarded to the defending team when a ball crosses the goal line that was last touched by a player on the attacking team.

Goal line - The marked line running the width of the field at each end. The goal line, also called the end line, runs directly across the front of the goal. A ball must completely cross the line to be a goal.

Goalkeeper, Goalie, keeper - The player positioned directly in front of the goal whose purpose is to prevent shots from getting into the goal. The goalkeeper, or keeper, is the only player allowed to use his or her hands and arms, but only within the penalty area.

Goalmouth - the front opening to each goal.

Goalposts - The two 8-foot tall posts that are 24 feet apart. They form the sides of the goal and provide support for the crossbar. See near and far post.

Goal-side - Keep opponent with or without the ball towards the outside touchline

-- H --

Hacking - kicking an opponent's legs. NOT a very nice thing to do and can result in being "carded"

Half volley - A kick or shot that is made immediately after the ball hits the ground on the short hop.

Halfback - Midfielder.

Halfway line - A marked line that divides the field into an attacking zone and a defending zone for each team.

Hand-Ball - This term means deliberate handling of a ball by a player other than the goal-keeper in the Penalty Area. This is considered as a deliberate action by the player and is penalized normally if there is movement of the hand towards the ball. This is the opposite of Ball-to-Hand which means a movement of the ball into the player's hand, which is not deliberate. That action requires no penalty but not many referees can distinguish this!.

Handle - What the goalkeeper can do inside of the 18-Yard Box - use his hands to pick up the ball.

Header - Using your head to pass or control the ball.

Help - Support teammate in trouble

Hips open - this is the way a player should receive the pass from a teammate. By having you hips open to the field in the direction that you are attacking you can receive the ball on your back foot without stopping or trapping it and thus can play it forward immediately. Also the "hips open" position allows the player to see the whole field so he can remain aware of open teammates or defenders.

Hook - the curved trajectory of a ball due to spin imparted on it by a kicker, such as in a banana kick.

Hospital Pass - a pass from one teammate to another that should be crisp but instead is too soft. This results in a pass that becomes a 50/50 ball instead of one that is easily received without being contested by the opposition. A hospital pass is just what it says it is - a pass that could result in an injury that puts the receiver in the hospital.

-- I --

In bounds - When the ball is within the boundaries of the field. A ball is in bounds until it completely crosses the sideline or goal line.

In play - When the ball is within the boundaries of the field and play has not been stopped by the referee.

In Touch - A ball that is out of play is called "in touch" - A ball that crosses the plane of the touch line or goal line is in or out of play. It does not have to make contact with the ground or an object. This means it can be blown in or out of bounds without ever actually touching a player or ground.

Indirect Free Kick - a free kick that is awarded for other fouls that are judged to be not overtly serious. The player kicks a stationary ball without any opposing players within 10 metres of him; a goal can only be scored on this kick after the ball has touched another player. It is awarded for technical and minor infractions of the rules. 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.

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

Instep - The portion of the foot to the side of the shoelaces; the inside of the foot.

In-swinging - A kick that curves in towards the goal mouth.

-- J --

Jockeying - The act of slowing down an attacker where a defender may fake tackles and try to disrupt the attacker's dribbling; used to provide other teammates with time to recover and get into defensive position. A good delaying form of defense against teams that tend to dribble too deeply into the corners before serving their crosses into the mouth of the goal. As long as the attacker is going wide the defender will try to deny the cross while defending against a cut-back dribble into the middle. This defense often pushes the attacker into an error so deep that he carries or shoots the ball over the goal line.

Juggling - Skill performed by keeping the ball in the air with any part of the foot or body, excluding the arms or hands. Usually used for practice and developing coordination.

-- K --

"Keeper!" - or "keeper's ball" goal keeper's command that he is going or should go for the ball.

Keeper's in charge - coaches command to the keeper to remind him to communicate to all defenders on corner kicks and throw-ins deep in your own territory as to who is to mark which opponent. This is especially important when opponents overload the far post on corner kicks.

Kickoff - the method of starting a game or restarting it after each goal; a player passes the ball forward to a teammate from the center spot. The ball must move into the opponent's half of the field. The player kicking off must not play the ball again until another player has played it. Opponents must be at least 10 yards away from the ball in their own half of the field when the kick off is taken.

-- L --

Laws of the Game - The 17 rules of soccer established by FIFA.

Lead pass - A pass sent ahead of a moving teammate so that the ball arrives at its target at the same time as the teammate.

Legal slide tackle - most tackles where the defender gets all or most of the ball are considered legal. However, tackles from the front "cleats up" and almost any tackle from the rear are considered illegal by most referees.

Legal Throw-in - A throw-in made with both hands. Hands must begin behind the head. The ball can not spin when thrown - must be thrown with equal force by both hands. Both feet must remain on the ground. Part of each foot must be on the touch line or behind it.

Line - deliver the ball to or down the touchline

Linesmen - The two officials who assist the referee. Linesmen monitor the sidelines and goal lines and determine when a ball leaves the field of play or a goal is scored.

Lock on - pick up and stay with an opponent, tightly

Loft Shot - or pass with a high arc.

Long Corner - A corner kick where the attacking team attempts to kick the ball all the way into the goal box.

-- M --

"Man on" - opponent approaching fast

Man-to-man - Form of defense in which each player is assigned to mark a player on the offensive team.

Maradona turn - A turn used to change direction and elude an opponent; named for Diego Maradona, the famous Argentinian who popularized it.

"Mark" or "Mark Up", Marking - The defensive action to guard or shadow an opponent. This can be done tightly or loosely, depending on the team tactics. Guarding a player to prevent him from advancing the ball towards the net, making an easy pass or getting the ball from a teammate. Guarding or covering an opposing player (with or without the ball) when he/she moves into your area of play.

Measure - What you do to your opponent in a man-to-man system. You "measure" him. Does he always go to his right to shoot? Does he have a favorite move that he uses all the time? Does he try to always tackle or just delay on defense? Does he have a favorite receiver or passer? Generally this is done in the first portion of a match. Then a smart player will use that information to gain an advantage during the remainder of the match. For example, if you know that you opponent has a weak left foot you can cheat to his right to tackle away the ball.

Mid - short for midfielder - as in "He's playing center mid."

Midfield - the region of the field near the midfield line; the area controlled by the midfielders.

Midfielders - the 2, 3 or 4 players who link together the offensive and defensive functions of a team; they play behind their forwards. 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.

"Mine" - signifies **"My ball"** - yelled when going for a loose ball - can be considered unsporting behavior by the referee, especially if used to trick an opponent into not playing a ball.

"Move" - don't get caught flat footed and keep moving or also a move is a way of maneuvering around an opponent - "to put a move on him."

-- N --

Near Post - goal post nearest to the ball - this same post can become the far post as the ball moves to the other side of the field.

Net - hemp, jute or nylon cord draped over the frame of the goal and extending behind it; also used to refer to the goal itself.

Nutmeg - to pass or dribble the ball through the legs of an opponent.

-- O --

Obstruction - When a defensive player uses his or her body to prevent an offensive player from playing the ball. The result is an indirect free kick by the offensive team.

Offense - A team's attempt to score goals or the team with possession of the ball.

Offside - A violation is called when a player in an offside position receives a pass from a teammate. Offside is defined as occurring at the moment the ball is played by one of the attacking players to a teammate in a 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.

An indirect free kick is awarded to the non-offending team. 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 if the ball is last played by an opposing player.

Offside Trap - A play by the defense to catch the attacking team offside. It is often used on restarts (short corner kicks, deep indirect free kicks and deep throw-ins). The sweeper usually calls out "Trap" as a signal for the fullbacks to pull up past the attackers as soon as the ball is put into play by an attacker.

Open - describes an attacking player who does not have anyone marking him.

Osgood-Schlatters - A painful knee condition that afflicts many soccer players going through the growth spurts of youth.

Out - defenders are to move towards the ball, away from the goal line

Out of bounds - Outside the boundaries of the field.

Out of play - When a ball is completely outside the boundaries of the field.

Outlet passes - when a goaltender or defender passes the ball from close to his own goal toward the other team's goal; used to start a counterattack.

Out-swinging - A kick that curves away from the goalmouth. The idea is to curve the corner kick away from the arms of the goalkeeper to an attacker with a clear shot or head at goal.

Overlap - A method in which a supporting teammate runs from behind to position ahead of the player with the ball. Tactic often used to move defenders and midfielders into attacking positions.

Own goal - When a defender accidentally scores in his goal.

-- P --

Passing - when a player kicks the ball to his teammate; used to move the ball closer to the opposing goal, to keep the ball away from an opponent or to give the ball to a player who is in a better position to score.

Passive offsides - being in an offside position but not being involved in or interfering with or gaining an advantage in the play.

Penalty - A violation of the rules that can lead to a penalty kick and the offending player receiving a red or yellow card.

Penalty arc - A marked arc, with a 10-yard radius, centered at the top of the penalty area. The arc designates the area opposing players are not allowed to enter before a penalty kick.

Penalty area - The marked rectangular area, 44-yards wide and 18-yards deep, beginning at the goal line. Goalkeepers may use their hands to block or control the ball only within this box. Defensive fouls in this area such as a hand-ball or trip may result in a penalty shot.

18 Yard Box - The large area in front of the goal known as the penalty area. Most fouls in this area against the defensive team will result in a penalty kick.

Penalty mark - A mark on the field from which penalty kicks are taken; also called the penalty spot. It is located 12 yards from the goal line, equally spaced between the goal posts.

Penalty shot - a kick taken from the penalty spot by a player against the opposing goalie without any players closer than 10 yards away normally awarded for the most severe rule violations and those committed by the defense within its own penalty area.

Penalty spot - the small circular spot located 12 yards in front of the center of the goal line from which all penalty kicks are taken; positioned at the center of the penalty arc.

Penetrate - to advance the ball behind opposing defenders (between them and their goal).

Pinnie - short for pinafore, the coloured bibs worn in practice by players to distinguish each team.

Plant foot - The non-kicking foot or the foot remaining on the ground.

Play - This is a generic term as in "play the ball" - to trap, dribble, kick or head the ball.

Play on - The referee may wave his hands and yell "Play on" if, in his opinion, stopping the play at that point would benefit the team that committed the foul more than the team that was fouled. For example, if a player with a break-away is tripped from behind but the player is able to retain possession and has a chance to shoot on goal the referee would not want to stop the play at that point and charge the defender with a penalty. The referee retains his right to issue a penalty card at a later point in the action. By yelling "Play on" he lets everyone know he is aware of the foul. See Advantage.

Poke tackle - Stealing the ball from an opponent by toeing the ball away.

Possession - To have control of the ball.

Post - goalpost or the area near it.

"Pressure" - an attacking or aggressive defense - as in "We pressured the goalkeeper on all punts."

"Pull up" - command to the defense to move up toward the play

Punt - A goal keeping distribution technique where the ball is dropped from the hands and then kicked off the laces of the soccer shoe.

Push pass - To pass the ball with the inside part of the foot to a teammate.

-- R --

Ready position -The goalkeeper's basic stance when the ball is within shooting range of the goal.

Red card - What the referee holds up to signal a player's ejection from the game. The offending player's team must play the rest of the game shorthanded (unless a player from the other team also is ejected). Red cards usually are given for unsportsmanlike conduct, violent play or multiple yellow cards (two yellow card violations earn the player a red card).

Running off-the-ball - Movement of a player without the ball that creates passing and scoring opportunities for teammates.

-- S --

Save - the act of a goalkeeper in blocking or stopping a shot that would have gone into the goal without his intervention.

Scissors fake - A skill where the dribbler draws back his or her dominant foot to make the defender think the offensive player is going to kick the ball. Instead, the dribbler throws that same foot up and over the ball, then using the outside foot, taps the ball to the side and runs off with it in a new direction.

Scissors kick - A kick made by a player while off the ground in which the ball is struck by one foot as the legs make a scissors-like motion.

Scrimmage - A term for a practice game.

"Send" or "Send It!" - A call to kick or pass the ball "long" to the open player.

Set play - a planned strategy that a team uses when a game is restarted with a free kick, penalty kick, corner kick, goal kick, throw-in or kickoff.

Shadow Dribbling - Shadow dribbling is a great warm-up exercise. Two players, one ball. One player dribbles, the other player moves around in open space. The object is for the dribbler to attempt to keep his ball, by dribbling, in contact with or very near the other player's shadow, like tag. Younger kids laugh while doing this exercise. High school boys don't it is too much work.

Shielding - A technique used by a ball carrier to protect the ball from a defender that is closely marking him. The ball carrier keeps his body between the ball and the defender.

Shooting - when a player kicks the ball at the opponent's net in an attempt to score a goal.

Shootout - A method used to break ties after overtime. Teams alternate taking penalty kicks. If the teams remain tied after five penalty kicks apiece, the shootout resumes until one team misses and the other scores.

Short Corner - A corner kick that is played to a teammate who is not around the 6 yard box and who is fairly close to the kicker as opposed to a long corner which is kicked directly to a player in front of the goal.

Shot - a ball kicked or headed by a player at the opponent's net in an attempt to score a goal.

Shoulder charge - Minimal shoulder-to-shoulder contact by a defender against a ball carrier. It is the only contact allowed by the rules unless a defender touches the ball first.

Side tackle - an attempt by a defender to redirect the ball slightly with his foot away from a ball carrier running in the same direction.

Sideline - The line that runs the length of the field on both sides, from goal to goal. Also called the touchline.

Six Yard Box - The small area in front of the goal - similar to the crease in hockey.

Snapshot - a mental picture. Strikers are often told to take a snapshot of the goal (steal a glimpse) so they know the position of the other players. That allows them to shoot on one touch without having to look up at the goal.

Soft Goal - A goal given up by a goalkeeper on what should be an easy save - i.e. no pressure, weak shot, etc.

Spread - distance on the field

"Square" - to be in position parallel the length of the field or directly level to another player based on direction of play.

"Square pass" - A pass made by a player to a teammate running parallel him or her.

"Stay Wide" - Yelled to wings and outside midfielders to remind them to hold their positions and not run to the ball.

Steal - To legally take the ball away from an opposing player.

Step - defense move up command

Stretch Out - asking forward to go as far forward as the defense allows

Striker - a team's most powerful and best-scoring forward who plays towards the center of the field.

"Sub" or "Substitution" – call by the Coach to request that the Referee allow for players to leave the pitch and substitutes to enter during a stoppage of play. All players must wait for indication from the Referee before proceeding on or off the field.

"Support" - get into an open area to support teammate in trouble (offensively or defensively)

Sweeper - A defensive back who is not required to mark anyone but instead is free to roam and take care of loose balls. He or she is usually the last line of defense before the goalkeeper.

Swerve pass - A pass that follows a curved path because of the way the ball is struck with the side of the foot.

"Switch" - A strategy used when the opposition loads one side of the field with stronger players or when players fail to make progress up one side or the other. The captain, keeper or coach will call for the ball carrier to "switch" the ball and play to the weaker or open side of the field. Often the keeper can see the congestion on one side of the field and "switch" the ball to the opposite side and an open player.

-- T --

Tackle - A defensive tactic using the foot to take the ball away from an opponent.

Tackling - the act of taking the ball away from a player by kicking or stopping it with one's feet; only a minimal amount of shoulder-to-shoulder contact, called a charge, is permitted to knock the ball carrier off balance. A method of gaining possession of the ball by use of the feet. Unnecessary roughness and use of the hands are not permitted.

Tactics - Organizational concepts, on an individual, group or team basis outlining player roles within the team structure.

Target - player A player, usually a forward, who is the target of passes and crosses. He or she tends to play with their back to the goal on which they are trying to score.

Techniques - Game skills which include passing and receiving, heading, dribbling, shooting and shielding.

Territory - the half of the field which a team defends.

"The ball has no lungs" - A Brazilian saying meaning to pass the ball to cover ground rather than dribble or run after it. Save your energy by passing!

The three D's of Defense - Deny, Delay & Destroy

Thigh trap - when a player uses his thigh to slow down and control a ball in the air.

Through pass - A pass designed to go between two defenders in order to take them out of the play and release one's own player into space. Used to penetrate a line of defenders.

Throw-in - A method of restarting play after the ball has traveled outside the touchline. The ball must be held with two hands and released directly over the head while both feet are touching the ground.

"Time" or "You've got Time" - Settle down, get the ball under control - There is no pressure from the defenders.

"To me" - requesting a quick one-touch or flick pass

Touchline - The line that runs the length of the field on both sides, from goal to goal. Also called the sideline

"To the Line" - Coaches often yell "Heels on the Line" to their midfielders to remind them to remain wide.

Trailing - running behind another player.

Trap - when a player uses his body to slow down and control a moving ball, most often using his chest, thighs or feet. Trap can also be the command yelled for an offside trap by the defense.

Turnover - When a player loses possession of the ball to an opposing player.

Two-touch - passing A type of passing in which the receiving player controls the ball with the first touch and passes to a teammate on the second.

-- U --

Unlucky - a phrase used by soccer coaches to tell a player that he/she was doing what they were supposed to be doing and just because the result wasn't good that they should not change what they were doing. For example, if a goalkeeper plays a corner kick properly and the opponents still score the coach might yell "unlucky" to let him know that it was not his fault. This is a difficult concept for newcomers from other sports to understand. Acceptance of the term has as much to do with understanding that the score of a game is not the most important part of a soccer match.

Unsportsmanlike conduct - Rude and illegal behavior that is penalized by a yellow or red card, such as delay of game or using abusive language.

-- V --

Violent play - Dangerous, aggressive behavior on the soccer field. Results in a red card and removal from the game.

Volley - To kick the ball while it is in the air.

-- W --

Wall - A defensive tactic where a line of two to six defending players join shoulder-to-shoulder in an attempt to protect their goal during a free kick. The wall is designed to reduce the open goal area the kicker has to shoot at.

Wall Pass/Give and Go - a series of passes where one player passes to nearby teammate and then sprints forward to receive pass that's returned. Similar to passing the ball off of a wall and then receiving the return ball.

Wings - A forward who stays wide to either side of the field and plays to the sides of the strikers. Whose primary task is to provide them with accurate crossing passes so they can shoot at the goal. Wings are often the fastest players and best dribbler on the team.

W-M formation - A team shape used for years which forces attacking teams wide while maintaining strength in the midfield area. It provides for two sweepers and is a good defensive shape. It can be weak on the offensive end - especially if the other team is also playing a W-M. The general shape is usually a 3-2-3-2.

-- Y --

Yellow Card - a warning card issued by the referee for repeated or blatant fouls or abusive language. Anyone receiving two yellow cards in a single match is automatically ejected for the game and his team must play the remainder of the game shorthanded. They may not substitute for an ejected player.

-- Z --

Zone defense - A type of defense that assigns each defender to a particular area in front of or around his or her team's goal. They are then responsible for marking any attacker that enters that zone. Often used in youth league games but rarely in professional competition.