

SOCCER TALK

Advantage: A decision by the referee to disregard a foul by the defensive team if a stoppage in play would benefit the team that committed the violation. This allows the team on offense to maintain its playing advantage.

Beat: To get the ball around an opponent by dribbling or shooting.

Breakaway: When an attacker with the ball makes it past the last defender and is on his way toward the goal for a one-on-one showdown with the goalkeeper.

Clearing: Happens when a team kicks the ball out of its defensive zone, ending an offensive threat by the opposing team.

Cross: A kick made near the sideline toward the middle of the field to get the ball closer to the front of the goal.

Corner arcs: A quarter-circle located at each of the four corners of the field. On a corner kick, the ball must be kicked from inside this arc.

Chip: A short, lofted pass or shot.

Dribble: The basic skill of advancing the ball with the feet while controlling it.

Drop ball: A restart when the ball is dropped between two players and may only be played once it has touched the ground.

Goal area: A rectangular area extending from the goal line. Used to designate where goal kicks are taken.

Hat trick: Three or more goals scored in a game by a single player.

Half-volley: A kick of the ball just as it is rebounding off the ground.

Header: When a player controls or strikes a ball in the air, using their head.

Juggling: Keeping the ball in the air with any part of the body (no hands or arms). Used for practice and developing coordination.

Marking: Closely defending a player to prevent him from receiving the ball or advancing the ball by dribbling or passing.

Penalty area: Rectangular area extending 18 yards from the goal line (modified for small-sided games). Goalkeepers only can use their hands within their penalty area. Any foul against the defending team resulting in a direct kick inside this area, results in a penalty kick for the attacking team.

Receiving: When a player uses his body to slow down and control a moving ball. Most often this is done using the chest, thigh or foot.

Slide tackle: An attempt by a defender to take the ball away from a dribbler by sliding on the ground feet first into the ball.

Tackle: A move to take the ball away from an opponent's feet.

Throw-in: The only time a field player may use their hands. Used to bring the ball back in play after it has crossed out of bounds on the sidelines. Two hands must be used and the ball must be thrown from behind the player's head. Both feet must be on the ground and behind the sideline.

Volley: A kick made while the ball is in the air, before it touches the ground. Can be for a clearance or to shoot on goal.

Wall: Players stand as a line or wall to protect the goal against a free kick.



THE OBJECT OF THE GAME

Goals are at each end of the field. Each team defends their goal, while trying to score in their opponent's. Players primarily use their feet to advance the ball towards their opponent's goal. Players will often use their head, chest and thighs to control and advance the ball. The goalkeeper is the only player allowed to use their hands, but only inside their penalty area. A "goal" is scored when the entire ball crosses the goal line, inside the goal. A goal is worth one point. Games may end in tie scores. Some competitions may have over time periods, or use penalty kicks to determine a winner.

GAME TIME

For Under-6 and Under-8 age groups, games should be divided into quarters ranging from 8 to 12 minutes. Games should be divided into halves, ranging from 25 minutes for younger age groups, and up to 45 minutes for older ones. A halftime break can be 5 to 15 minutes. Teams switch sides of the field after halftime. The referee keeps the official time and does not stop the clock for out-of-bounds, throw-ins or free kicks. Referees may add extra time if they feel time was lost due to substitutions, injury or players/teams wasting time.

THE PLAYERS

There are typically 11 players on the field for each team during the game (younger age groups have fewer players). There are no required formations, but most teams will use three forwards, three midfielders, four backs/defenders and a goalkeeper. Positions are very fluid as any player may score a goal and all players may drop back to defend.

Goalkeeper: The goalkeeper (or keeper) is responsible for defending the goal and any shots that come toward it. Only the keeper can put his hands or arms on the ball, in the penalty area surrounding the goal.

Forwards: The forwards (also called attackers or strikers) are the team's primary offense. Their role is to advance the ball and score goals.

Midfielders: Midfielders play behind the forwards and in front of the defense and their job is to assist both of these groups. Generally, they'll receive the ball from the defenders and advance it to the forwards to score goals.

Defenders: (Also called fullbacks) In soccer, everyone plays offense and defense, depending on when their team possesses the ball. Specialized defensive positions are sweepers and stoppers, depending on the type of formation a team may use.

Substitutes: Any player who does not start the game, but is eligible to come off the bench. In recreational play it is recommended that all players receive equal playing time. In older age groups and more competitive levels, substitutes may be used less frequently. Typically in youth games, substitutes may only enter the field with the referee's permission during a stoppage of play, and when their team has possession of the ball on throw-ins and goal kicks.

KICKOFF TAKES PLACE AT THE CENTER OF THE FIELD AND IS USED TO START PLAY AT THE BEGINNING OF A GAME, AFTER HALFTIME, OR AFTER A GOAL IS SCORED. A GOAL CAN BE SCORED DIRECTLY FROM A KICK OFF.

REFeree TALK

Charge: To run into an opponent. This is legal if done from the side of the ball carrier. However, it is illegal against a player without the ball or from behind.

Hand ball: A foul where a player (other than the keeper in the penalty area) deliberately touches the ball with his hand or arm. The opposing team is awarded a direct free kick.

Holding: When an opponent's movement is obstructed with either hands or arms, a direct kick is awarded.

Officials: (Referees) The official protects the players and enforces the rules. The referee officiates the game and is on the field with the players. The referee keeps the official time. The assistant referees each patrol one half of the field, from opposite sidelines. Their job is to provide assistance to the referee only. ARs as they are called, use a flag to signal to the referee and to the players when the ball is out of bounds, when a player is potentially offside, or they have seen a foul committed. The referee makes the final determination whether or not to blow the whistle.

Tripping: If a player uses any part of his body to trip an opposing player, a direct kick is awarded.

Offside: (Does not apply in U6-U10 small-sided games) Occurs when a player positions himself nearer to the opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second-to-last opponent. No fewer than two defenders (usually the goalkeeper and one other defender) must be nearer to the goal line than the attacker. The person advancing with the ball must be the first to cross the line of defense.

A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball is played by a teammate, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play, interfering with play or any opponent or gaining an advantage by being in that position. When a player who is in an offside position receives the ball from a teammate or is involved directly in the play, an offside is called and an indirect free kick is awarded to the defense.

Red card: (Serious misconduct, violent play, offensive language or intentionally denying a goal). Immediate ejection from the game. The team may not replace this player and will play shorthanded for the remainder of the game.

Yellow card: (Caution) Shown to a player by the referee for dangerous or unsportsmanlike behavior. If a player is shown two yellow cards in one game, it is an automatic ejection from the game.



KICKOFF

Corner kick: Awarded to the attacking team if the defense knocks the ball out of bounds over their own endline. The kick is taken from the corner nearest where the ball went out of bounds. A goal can be scored directly from a corner kick.

Goal kick: Awarded to the defense when the attacking team knocks the ball out of bounds over the end line. The kick is taken from within the goal area, and must clear the penalty area before being touched by another player. Extremely rare and unlikely, but a goal can be scored directly from a goal kick.

Free kick: Awarded by the referee due to an infraction of the rules. The kick is generally taken from the spot in which the infraction took place. The defending team must be a minimum of 10 yards away from the ball (modified for small-sided games). There are two kinds of free kicks (direct and indirect), determined by the severity of the infraction.

Direct kick: Awarded when a serious foul is committed against another player. This is a free kick in which a goal can be scored directly by the kicker. Some fouls resulting in a direct kick are holding, striking, tripping, pushing and hand balls.

Indirect kick: Awarded when an infraction of the rules has taken place or a less serious foul has been committed. On an indirect kick, a goal cannot be scored unless the ball is touched by a second player. Some minor fouls or infractions resulting in an indirect kick are offside and dangerous play.

Penalty kick: A direct kick is awarded to the attacking team when a major foul is committed by a defender inside his own penalty area. The kick is taken from the penalty spot. Only the kicker and the keeper are allowed in the penalty area. The goalkeeper must be on the goal line until the ball is kicked.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SMALL-SIDED GAMES VISIT USYOUTHSOCCER.ORG OR CALL YOUR STATE ASSOCIATION.

PARENT QUICK TIPS

Sportsmanship is important for kids to learn. Set a good example on the sidelines by offering positive encouragement and support.

Weather can be unpredictable. Be prepared by bringing sunscreen, rain jackets, blankets, etc.

Proper hydration is key to a good game. Be sure to bring plenty of water for kids to drink both before and after their practices and games. Healthy snacks like orange wedges, grapes and sports drinks are also good for replenishing nutrients after strenuous activity.

Get to the soccer field early. Players need adequate time to warm up and stretch before practice or game time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:



Soccer Pocket Guide

A game-time guide to the rules and players



THE FIELD

