

World Cup 2010

Glossary of Football Words and Expressions



18 yard box

Another way to say PENALTY BOX

Abandoned match

A match that the REFEREE stops before REGULATION TIME (and sometimes before the game starts), for example because of very bad weather, or a bad PITCH INVASION

Above the relegation zone

In a position that will mean that you don't have to worry about being RELEGATED to a lower DIVISION if you are still in that position at the end of the SEASON, e.g. the fifth team from the bottom. Often used with a number of points, e.g. "Blackpool must be relieved now that they are seven points above the relegation zone"

Accuracy

Putting the ball where you want to go, usually used about PASSES and SHOTS. Often used in contrast to power.

Aerial skills

Being good at HEADING the ball

aet

A short form of AFTER EXTRA TIME

After extra time

The score after 90 minutes plus an extra thirty minutes, because the score was EVEN after 90 minutes

Against the run of play

A goal scored when the other team seems to be doing much better, for example when most of the play is in the other half of the pitch

Agent

Usually used to talk about the people who represent the players, e.g. during TRANSFER negotiations

Aggregate score

Calculated by adding the two scores together when teams play two matches, one at HOME and one AWAY, for example in the SEMI FINALS

All

Used to show that the FINAL SCORE was a draw, e.g. "Two all" for "Two two"

All-seater

A stadium with no standing room on the TERRACES where everyone must sit down instead. All British grounds in the top divisions have to be all-seaters due to safety concerns

Anticipation

Being able to predict what will happen next, for example where a STRIKER will try to score

Area (the)

The rectangular part of the pitch near the goal within which the GOALKEEPER is allowed to use their hands to control the ball. More properly called the PENALTY AREA

Artificial turf

TURF made from man-made materials rather than the usual grass. It is easier to maintain but difficult to play on and can injure players who fall on it

Assistant referee

The modern official name for a LINESMAN

Association football

The official name of football, to contrast it with rugby football. The informal form SOCCER is a shortening of the word “association” in this expression

Attacker

(1) Any player with the ball who is trying to move it towards the OPPOSITION’s goal (2) A striker

Attempt

Usually means a failed SHOT AT GOAL

Automatic booking –

A YELLOW CARD or RED CARD that the referee has to give due to the rules, with no place to make their own judgement on the matter, e.g. a LATE TACKLE from behind with STUDS UP

Automatic promotion

Teams who can go up to the next DIVISION without needing to go through a PLAYOFF match with other candidates for PROMOTION, usually because they finished first or second in their division at the end of the REGULAR SEASON

Away fans

SUPPORTERS of the team that is not playing at their own GROUND, almost always fewer in number than the HOME FANS

Away goal (rule)

When the AGGREGATE SCORE from HOME and AWAY matches is a DRAW (e.g. 2-2), goals scored AWAY count more than goals scored at home and so can decide which team progresses to the next round (in the example, the team who was playing at home in the second match because they scored once away from home wins)

Away leg

When a TIE is played in LEGs at both teams' GROUNDS, the match that isn't played at your own ground. The opposite of HOME LEG

Away

playing away from your HOME GROUND at the ground of the OPPOSITION. The opposite of HOME

Away strip

A second set of clothes (KIT) that teams use when teams play AWAY and their usual strip would be too similar to that of the HOME TEAM, e.g. because both Liverpool and Manchester United play in red.

Azzurri

Nickname for the Italian NATIONAL SIDE, meaning "the Blues" due to the colour of their STRIP

B team

Another way to say RESERVES.

Back four

The DEFENDERS of one team

Back heel

Using the back of your foot to PASS the ball, or sometimes SHOOT

Back of the net (in the)

A goal, as a ball which goes into the goal is usually trapped at the back of the net until it is picked up

Back pages

A nickname for the sports pages of a newspaper, due to their position in British and other newspapers

Bafana Bafana

The nickname for the South African team, meaning "The Boys"

Ball control



See CONTROL

Ball watching

Looking only at the ball and so not seeing where the other players are, especially the player who you are trying to MARK

Balloon shot

A SHOT that went far too high

Banner

A long piece of cloth that has a message written on it and is usually supported at both ends by poles. It is displayed by the crowd to support particular players, protest decisions by the management, etc.

Beat the keeper

Score a goal

Beat

Win against another team

Typical mistake "SPURS won Aston Villa" should be "Spurs beat Aston Villa"

Beautiful game (the)

Football

Bench warmer

A player who is always a substitute and rarely used

Benefit match

A match where the profits go towards a charity or a player's retirement

Bicycle kick

A shot in which the player flips their body over to SHOOT (or more unusually CROSS) by kicking the ball while it is over their own head

Bid for a player

A team saying how much they would pay the team that a player has a contract with if that player was to TRANSFER to their club

Big man

A tall player, often used for an attacker in a team that plays LONG BALL football

Big-money signing

A player that the club had to pay a lot of money in TRANSFER FEES for

Blind

A common insult used for referees who have made a wrong decision, e.g. not seen a FOUL

Blues (the)

Nickname for English side Birmingham City, due to the colour of their HOME STRIP

Blunder

A bad, probably embarrassing, mistake

Bobble (n/v)

Movement of the ball on the ground, e.g. due a PITCH that isn't flat, that means that it doesn't move in a straight line and so makes it difficult to kick, TRAP or SAVE

Boo (n/v)

A noise made by the FANS to show disapproval

Bookie

A very common short form of BOOKMAKER

Booking

Being shown a YELLOW CARD or RED CARD for doing something wrong, such as HANDBALL or a FOUL

Bookmaker

A person or company who takes bets. In the UK, bookmakers will take bets on anything apart from when someone is likely to die, so you could bet today on David Beckham's son being in the England team one day

Boot the ball

Kick the ball hard and far, perhaps without thinking about where you want it to go

Bosman (transfer)

A FREE TRANSFER of a player who has come to the end of their contract, possible due to a ruling by the European Court of Justice on the case of Belgian footballer Jean Marc Bosman

Bosman ruling

See BOSMAN (TRANSFER)

Bottom half of the table

If there are 12 teams in a division, the lowest 6 teams at that time. This expression is usually used to indicate that those teams are in danger of RELEGATION at the end of the season.

Bottom of the table

The 12th team in a twelve team DIVISION, likely to suffer a automatic DEMOTION to a lower division if they don't win soon

Bovril

A hot drink made from meat extract that smells like gravy and is popular in English football grounds, as it keeps you warm and alcohol is not available

Box (the)

see PENALTY BOX

Box to box

A move that quickly goes from near one goal to the other end of the PITCH

Brace

Two goals, usually by the same player, in one match. One less than a HAT TRICK

Bring someone down

Tackle someone so that they fall on the ground. Often, but not always, a FOUL

Bury the ball (in the net)

Score a goal

Cap

An appearance for a team, e.g. the NATIONAL SIDE. Often used to express the number of times that a player has played for one side, e.g. "David Beckham got his 100th cap for England last weekend"

Captain

A player who is given responsibility for organising the other players on the pitch

Captain's armband

A piece of fabric worn around the upper arm that shows who the CAPTAIN of each team is. If the captain is SUBSTITUTED, this is passed to another player.

Card

YELLOW CARDS and RED CARDS given for breaking the rules of the game. Often used to show how badly one or both sides broke the rules during the match, e.g. "Last night's match produced a record 12 cards, including 4 red ones, for the two sides"

Carrying (the ball)

A GOALKEEPING walking more than three steps while holding the ball

Caution

Being told by the REFEREE that you are doing something wrong. Usually followed by a YELLOW CARD or RED CARD if you do the same thing again

Central defenders

The one or (usually) two DEFENDERS who play near the middle of the PITCH rather than on the WINGS

Central midfield

MIDFIELDERS who play near the centre circle rather than on the WING

Centre circle

The circle in the centre of the PITCH, with a 10 yard radius centred on the CENTRE SPOT. The KICK OFF takes part at the centre of this, with players from the opposing side staying outside this circle until the whistle for kick off is blown.

Centre forward

The FORWARD who plays nearest to the goal and so is often the TARGET MAN

Centre half

Another way to say CENTRAL DEFENDER

Centre spot

The point right in the middle of the pitch where you KICK OFF from

Chairman

The businessman who organises the business side of a football club, often someone who owns the club or has invested a lot of money in it. Higher up the chain of command than the MANAGER, but much less involved in the day to day running of the club

Champions' League - the European Champions' League.

The most prestigious competition in Europe, where the top teams from each national league play against each other in GROUP and KNOCKOUT stages

Change ends

At HALF TIME, the teams have to switch which goal their GOALKEEPER plays in and so which goal they will try and score in (to avoid advantages from things such as wind direction and a sloping pitch)



Changes at half time

SUBSTITUTIONS that happen during the 15 minute HALF TIME break

Changing rooms

The place where the players change into and out of their KIT, take a shower etc. Also LOCKER ROOM and DRESSING ROOM

Chant

Songs that SPECTATORS sing or shout during the match, often based on other songs and supporting or making fun of a particular player

Charity Shield

The normal and informal way of saying the FA Community Shield (from its old name), a one off match played between the previous SEASON's winners of the LEAGUE and FA CUP in England and so therefore theoretically deciding on the best SIDE in the country

Chip also "chip shot".

A shot that is hit high in order to bend over the GOALKEEPER's head and go into the goal

Clean sheet

Not letting any goals in, often used to describe how well a GOALKEEPER or DEFENCE is playing, e.g. "Peter Shilton kept a clean sheet for 15 matches"

Clean sweep

Winning all the TROPHIES that it is possible to in one season

Clean tackle

Taking the ball from someone without it being a FOUL

Clearance

Getting the ball away from your own goal, e.g. by kicking it far away towards the other goal

Climb

Jump to HEAD the ball

Closing minutes/ Closing seconds

The last few minutes or seconds of a match, often with one side desperately attacking to make up for a DEFICIT

Club side The opposite of INTERNATIONAL SIDE

The team that players usually play for, in contrast to the NATIONAL SIDE.



Coach

Often confused with MANAGER, as a modern football manager has a job similar to a coach in earlier times, and newspapers often use the terms as synonyms. A coach is often someone between a manager and a TRAINER, and deals with practical things connected to play, whereas a manager takes a more strategic role connected to picking a team, tactics etc.

Coaching staff

The non-playing parts of the team, such as the COACH and masseurs

Coin toss

See TOSS

Comfortable on the ball

Good at DRIBBLING

Coming back from injury

playing or training after missing some matches due to injury,

Commentator

Someone on radio or TV who explains the action to listeners or viewers

Competitive match

The opposite of a FRIENDLY, in which the points gained actually count towards QUALIFICATION, winning a CHAMPIONSHIP etc

Concede a goal

A goal being scored against your team. The opposite of score a goal.

Control

TRAPping and DRIBBLing

Corner

Also "Corner kick"

A DEAD BALL situation in which you kick the ball from the spot on the corner of the pitch near the OPPOSITION goal, usually as a CROSS. Collocations
Awarded a +, Take a +

Corner flag

The piece of fabric on a pole that marks the CORNER

Cramp



A medical condition in which it becomes impossible to move a muscle and it becomes stiff and painful, often used by not drinking enough liquids or not doing STRETCHes before playing

Cross (n/v)

The ball being kicked from the WINGS towards a player, usually a STRIKER, near the OPPOSITION goal. Collocations LOOPING CROSS, LOW CROSS

Crossbar

The piece of wood that goes horizontally across the top of the goal, supported by the two POSTs. "The ball hit the crossbar" usually means that it was nearly a goal.

Cruise

Win easily, or seem to be winning easily when something surprising happens

Cup champion

The opposite of a LEAGUE CHAMPION, a team that has won a CUP COMPETITION

Cup competition

A competition that includes or entirely consists of a KNOCKOUT competition. The opposite of a LEAGUE

Cup tie

A match in a KNOCKOUT completion, often contrasted with more important LEAGUE matches

Cut (the)

When it is decided which of the players won't be on the TEAM SHEET for the forthcoming match or championship, e.g. when a World Cup coach leaves out seven players of the original list of thirty in order to only take 23 to the championship

Cut infield

A WINGER coming away from the TOUCHLINE and towards the PENALTY BOX

D (the)

The normal colloquial name for the PENALTY ARC, which players must stay outside while a penalty is being taken

Dangerous in the air

Likely to score goals with his head

Dangerous position

A FREE KICK which is likely to lead to a goal, for example because it is near the goal or the attacking side has a DEAD BALL SPECIALIST



Dead ball

A situation in which play has stopped and so the side which has the ball can take their time about how and when they move the ball into play, e.g. a penalty or corner. Some teams spend a lot of time planning and practising these situations.

Dead ball specialist

Someone who is particularly good in DEAD BALL situations, especially someone who is very good at FREE KICKS

Debut

The first time a player plays for a particular side or at a particular level, e.g. "He must be very nervous to have his international debut at the age of 17"

Decider

A goal or match which settles which team will win, e.g. one which gives one side an UNASSAILABLE LEAD, or a GOLDEN GOAL

Decision

What the referee decides, for example whether a player was OFF SIDE and so whether a goal should be DISALLOWED or not

Deducted

Points taken off a team's total for the season (so far) for breaking the rules, for example illegally TAPPING players, bribing REFEREEs, going bankrupt, or THROWING a match

Defend a lead

Stopping the other team scoring to even up the score, for example defending when it is 1-0 to your team at HALF TIME or when the score is 2-1 to your team after the FIRST LEG

Defender

A person whose main role is to stop the opposition's attacking players from scoring and getting the ball near their goal

Defensive midfielder

A midfielder whose main role is to PLAY DEEP or SHIELD the defenders, i.e. whose main duties are defensive

Defensive wall

see WALL

Deficit



The number of goals or points that a team is behind. Collocations Make up the +

Deflection

A SHOT AT GOAL hitting a player that is in the way and so changing route, often making it harder to SAVE and so causing a goal

Deliberate hand ball

Most HAND BALLs just involve the ball accidentally hitting someone on the hand or lower arm, but players sometimes try to use their hands or arms to CONTROL the ball. See HAND OF GOD for a famous example

Demotion

The same as RELEGATION. The opposite of PROMOTION. Being forced to go down to a lower DIVISION because you finished the SEASON

Derby

A match between sides who play in grounds that are close to each other, for example in the same or neighbouring towns

Diamond – See MIDFIELD DIAMOND

Direct free kick

A FREE KICK that will count as a goal if it goes into the NET without touching any other players. The opposite of INDIRECT FREE KICK.

Dirty match

A match that has many FOULs and so probably many CARDS given in it

Dirty team

A team that FOULs the other team a lot, or even aims to injure people

Disallowed goal

The time when the ball goes INTO THE NET but the referee says it was not a goal, for example because a player was OFFSIDE

Disciplinary record

How many YELLOW CARDS and RED CARDS a player has got, recently or over their career

Dissent

Arguing too much with the referee, for example after a CARD is given. This can lead to a RED CARD or other punishment.



Dive

A player pretending that they have been FOULED and falling over so that they can get a FREE KICK, PENALTY or even a BOOKING for a player on the other team. This is an offense and will lead to a CARD for the attacking player if the REFEREE decides that it is a DIVE rather than a FOUL

Diving header

A header of a LOW CROSS, meaning that the player's body is nearly horizontal when they make contact with the ball and that they usually land flat on the ground

Division champions

The team at the top of the TABLE at the end of the SEASON. The division champions of the top division, e.g. the English PREMIERSHIP, are LEAGUE CHAMPIONS, and the division champions of lower divisions are usually PROMOTED

Division

Usually 12 to 16 teams who play each other twice during a SEASON to see which team will be DIVISION CHAMPIONS, which teams will get a PROMOTION and which teams will get a RELEGATION, for example the English PREMIERSHIP

Domestic double

Winning two different competitions in your own country, e.g. the FA CUP and the LEAGUE in the same season

Domestic football season

The part of the year when teams play in competitions in their own country, often with tours to other countries beforehand and with European and other international finals afterwards

Domestic

Things in your own country, contrasting with international, European etc

Draw

(1) equal scores at the end of a match (2) picking which teams will play against which in a championship

Dreaded vote of confidence

A chairman saying that he has complete confidence in the manager or coach, "dreaded" because it is almost always followed by being fired

Dressing room

The place where the players get changed before and after a match. Also CHANGING ROOMS and LOCKER ROOM



Dribble

Controlling the ball with your feet as you run

Drop back

Players playing for a while closer to their own goal than usual, e.g. to defend against an attacking move or to DEFEND A LEAD

Dummy

Pretending you are going to move one way so that you can GO PAST by moving in the other direction, or the same with kicking the ball. Also FEINT

Early bath

An amusing way of saying a RED CARD, because you will go back to the LOCKER ROOM before the other players

Elimination

Losing a match and going out of a KNOCKOUT COMPETITION, or losing a match and so not being able to get enough points to PROGRESS to the NEXT STAGE

Engine room

Similar to a PLAYMAKER, but often used about a player who has that impact due to running and hard work

Equaliser

A goal which makes the scores EVEN, for example going from 2-1 to 2-2

Even

Both teams having the same score during a match, e.g. being 2 ALL (2- 2) at HALF TIME. Often confused with a DRAW, which is the score at the end of the match being equal

Executive box

A luxurious area in which the chairman of the club, rich businessmen etc can watch the match and socialise in comfort

Exposed at the back

Problems in defence, usually because of players being too close to the OPPOSITION goal, but also possibly due to injuries to the first choice DEFENDERS

Expulsion

see RED CARD

Extra time



Play continuing after the REGULATION TIME of 90 minutes because the scores are EVEN and so the winner is not yet decided. GOLDEN GOAL is a particular kind of extra time.

FA (The)

The (English) Football Association, the English member of FIFA, in charge of all divisions below the PREMIERSHIP, and the NATIONAL SIDE

FA Charity Shield

See CHARITY SHIELD

FA Cup

The most prestigious CUP COMPETITION in England. Unlike the LEAGUE CUP, NON-LEAGUE SIDES can also play in this competition

Fan

A supporter of a particular club. Although fan comes from the word FANATIC, their modern meanings are very different.

Fanatic

Someone who is too obsessed with a particular team, an extreme FAN

Fanzine

A magazine (usually more like a newsletter) written by and published by fans, often critical of the club management and sold by people in the street outside the stadium before a game

Far post

The post that is furthest away from the person taking a SHOT at goal

Favourite

The team that most people think will win

Feint

See DUMMY

FIFA

The International Federation of Association Football (French: Fédération Internationale de Football Association), in charge of international football such as the World Cup. Pronounced as it was one word, like “feefer”

Final

The last match of a CUP COMPETITION, deciding who the champion is



Finishing

SHOOTing, usually used to talk about how well a player does so

Firm

A slang way of referring to a gang of football hooligans

First half

The first 45 minutes of match (plus INJURY TIME), followed by a break

First leg

When which team wins will be decided after two matches, usually HOME and AWAY (e.g. the Champions' League SEMI FINALS), the first of the two matches which is played is the first leg

First team

Another way to say SENIOR TEAM

First touch

(1) Being able to quickly control the ball when it comes to you, e.g. being to PASS it without needing to TRAP it first (2) The first time a player kicks or heads the ball after coming into the match, e.g. "After coming on as a SUBSTITUTE, Owen scored the EQUALISER with his first touch (of the ball)"

Five a side

A form of football with only 10 players in total on the pitch, which is usually smaller than a REGULATION PITCH

Fixture

A MATCH

Fixture list

A list of all the games that a team will play during a season and which ones will be AT HOME or AWAY

Flag

See CORNER FLAG

Flag post

The (traditionally wooden) post which marks the corner and has a fabric flag on it

Flair player



A player who is very skilful, for example being able to DRIBBLE, GO PAST MEN or do the BICYCLE kick. Often used to suggest that the player isn't so reliable or won't do boring things like DEFEND

Flank

Another way to say WING

Flat back four

The defenders playing in (more or less) a straight line. The opposite of the SWEEPER system

Flick

Like a DEFLECTION in that the ball isn't deflected much from its original route, but deliberate and usually with the foot or head

Floodlights

Lights that mean play can continue when it would otherwise be too dark

Fluke

A lucky goal or save, for example the ball going off your bottom INTO THE NET

Follow a team

Support a particular SIDE

Football kit

See KIT

Football pitch

See PITCH

Footie

An informal British way of saying football, more popular in the UK than the expression "SOCCER" since Brits realised that Americans always use "soccer" ("football" in the USA meaning American football)

Formation

How the players are arranged on the pitch, e.g. FOUR FOUR TWO

Forward

A more official way of saying STRIKER

Four four two

A FORMATION with four DEFENDERS, four MIDFIELDERS and two STRIKERS.

Fourth official

A referee who watches the match on TV and can be asked to look at SLOW MOTION REPLAYs to make a difficult decision, e.g. whether the ball CROSSed THE LINE

Free kick

Similar to a PENALTY, but with the ball further from the goal. Collocations Awarded a + , Take a +, INDIRECT FREE KICK, DIRECT FREE KICK

Free transfer

A player moving from one team to another without the new club needing to pay TRANSFER FEES, for example as a BOSMAN TRANSFER at the end of their contract

Friendly

A match that is just for practice or charity. The opposite of a COMPETITIVE MATCH

From 12 yards

From the PENALTY SPOT (12 yards is the distance from the goal to the penalty spot).

Full backs

Wider defensive players, in contrast to CENTRAL DEFENDERS

Full international

A match with NATIONAL SIDE that is COMPETITIVE, i.e. not a FRIENDLY. This expression is often used to show that a player has reached the top level of the game, e.g. “Roberts never expected to play his first full international at the age of 34”

Fumble

The GOALKEEPER not catching the ball properly, often leading to a goal

Gaffer

A slang way of saying “boss”, often used for a MANAGER

Game in hand (a)

When two or more teams are equal on points but one team has played one fewer match and so might have more points when they have played that game, they are said to have a game in hand

Game of two halves (a)

A clichéd expression to say that games often change in the SECOND HALF, for example because of something the COACH has said, a change in tactics, or a SUBSTITUTION



Game

See MATCH

Gamesmanship

UNSPORTSMANLIKE behaviour

Gazza

The nickname for PAUL GASGOIGNE, a creative but troubled former England player

Gel

Start to work well as a team, similar to form a good RAPPORT

Get on the scoresheet

A player who hasn't scored yet scoring their first goal, usually used about one match but sometimes for a whole season

Get the nod

Be chosen to play in a match, as if the players were standing in a line and the manager was choosing them one by one by nodding his head to indicate a player or say yes

Giant killers

A team that has BEATEN a team from much higher in the LEAGUE, e.g. a NON LEAGUE TEAM beating a team in the PREMIERSHIP and ELIMINATING them from the FA CUP

Gifted players

Often "Naturally gifted players". Very skilful and creative players. Often used about people who waste their talent.

Give the ball away

For example, PASSING the ball to a player from the other team, being too easy to TACKLE or losing the ball while trying to DRIBBLE. A very negative expression, more so than LOSE THE BALL

Go down

Be RELEGATED

Go in front

Take the lead, for example go from 1-1 to 2-1

Go past someone

DRIBBLE the ball around someone so that you end up closer to their goal than they are

Go the right way

A GOALKEEPER guessing which way a SHOT will go and so diving in the right direction. Often used for PENALTIES.

Go the wrong way

The opposite of GO THE RIGHT WAY

Go top

Reach first place in the DIVISION during the SEASON

Go up

Be PROMOTED

Goal

(1) The rectangular opening consisting of a horizontal CROSSBAR supported by two BARS, usually with a net behind. (2) Kicking the ball into the goal of the other team

Goal area

Official name for the SIX YARD BOX

Goal celebrations

The way in which players show their enjoyment at having scored a goal, e.g. dancing, embracing or pulling your shirt over your head. These are often individual to certain players or decided on before the goal is scored, but some goal celebrations such as over-long ones can be an offense

Goal difference

When two teams have an equal number of points in a league, which one is further up the TABLE is decided by which has a better total from adding up all the goals they have scored and then taking away all the goals scored against them, e.g. "Chelsea and Birmingham have the same number of points, but Birmingham are FAVOURITES to win the LEAGUE due to a much better goal difference of +22"

Goal fest

A game with lots of goals, e.g. 6-4. The opposite of a NO SCORE DRAW

Goal hanger

An insulting term for a player who rarely goes back into their OWN HALF but instead stays very close to the OPPOSITION goal, mainly used in schoolboy football as they would often be OFFSIDE in professional football

Goal kick



A DEAD BALL situation in which the goalkeeper is allowed to kick the ball from the spot without being tackled, usually due to the ball going behind the GOAL LINE off a player from the other team, but also sometimes in place of a FREE KICK

Goal line

The line that goes through the GOAL and to the two corners, often mentioned when it is controversial whether the ball went into the GOAL or was SAVED

Goalie

An common informal way to say GOALKEEPER.

Goalkeeper

A player who is allowed to use their hands to save the ball from going into the goal. They have to wear a different shirt from the other players, and usually wear gloves.

Goalless draw

See NO SCORE DRAW

Goalmouth

The area very near the goal, especially right in front of it, and so an easy place to SCORE from

Goalpost

A longer but less common way of saying the (traditionally wooden) POST at the side of the goal

Golden boot

The reward for the most goals scored by one player in a season, e.g. in the Champions' League

Golden generation

Used to describe lots of great players who just happen to be born in the same country at more or less the same time, perhaps shown by winning a YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP, e.g. "Now that the Portuguese Golden Generation is aging, this is perhaps their last chance to win the World Cup"

Golden goal

A kind of EXTRA TIME where the match only continues until the next goal, at which time the team that scored it wins, with the other team having no chance to score an EQUALISER

Ground

A more common way to say stadium

Group match

A game in the early stages of a competition that finishes with a KNOCKOUT STAGE for the final etc but has teams playing in a mini-league at the beginning, like the World Cup. E.g. "England

thought they were joint FAVOURITES to win the European Cup, but now it seems they will be lucky to win any of their group matches”

Group of death

A group in which has no clear FAVOURITES and so all the teams have a good chance of getting enough points to go through to the next round and therefore the task is very difficult for them

Group stages

In a competition that finishes with a KNOCKOUT stage, the earlier stages in which several teams play each other in a mini league format to see which teams get enough points to progress to the next stage (usually the top two teams)

Gunners (the)

Nickname for English side Arsenal, as “arsenal” means a place where guns are stored

Hacking

(1) Kicking at other players’ legs, often used for someone who is trying to get the ball but is so unskilful that they often FOUL people, but also for deliberate fouls (2) Kicking at the ball in a more hopeful than skilful way.

Hairdryer treatment (the)

A COACH shouting at his team at HALF TIME if they are losing, used because you can imagine the air from their shouting mouth being like a hairdryer going over your face

Half time

The 15 minute break after the first (approximately) 45 minutes of play

Half volley

Kicking the ball after it has just hit the ground and so hasn’t really had time to bounce, making it look similar to a VOLLEY and similarly difficult to kick well

Hammer the ball home

Kick the ball very hard and score a goal

Hammers – Nickname for the English side West Ham

Hand ball

A FOUL in which the ball hits the hand or lower parts of the arm. Collocations deliberate +, intentional +

Hand of God

The goal which Maradona scored against England in the World Cup by lifting his hand above his head, named after his famously false statement after the match that it was the head of Maradona but the hand of God

Handling outside the area

A GOALKEEPER using his hands outside the area near the goal where he is allowed to, leading to a FREE KICK for the other side

Hat trick

Three goals by the same player in the same match

Head in – Score a goal with your head

Header

Using your head to control the ball, e.g. in trying to score a goal. Typical mistake heading shoot x

Heart

Often used to talk about a team who don't have excellent skills but still win or DRAW through determination, good teamwork, hard work etc.

Heavyweights

Rich, successful, big and/ or historic sides. The opposite of MINNOWS. From boxing, as if a flyweight boxer was asked to step into the ring with a much bigger and heavier fighter.

Holding midfielder

Another way to say DEFENSIVE MIDFIELDER

Home advantage

Being more than usually likely to win a match due to playing at your HOME GROUND

Home defeat

Losing a match at your own stadium

Home fans

SUPPORTERS of the team who is playing at their own stadium

Home ground

The stadium of your team

Home grown players

(1) Players who came up from the YOUTH TEAM rather than being bought from other teams (2) Players from the country they are playing in, the opposite of foreign players

Home leg

A match at your own stadium whose score will be added to a match in your opponent's stadium to decide who wins.

Home nations

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as the UK is the "home of football"

Home strip

The football KIT that a team usually uses and is famous for, e.g. black and white stripes for Newcastle

Home team

The team who are playing in their own stadium

Hooligan

A "football FAN" whose main aim is violence

Host a championship

Have a competition in your country, city or stadium, e.g. "South Africa is hosting the 2010 World Cup"

Howler

A really bad piece of play, for example a FUMBLE by the GOALKEEPER or missing a SITTER

Hugging the touchline

Playing very WIDE

Impact sub

See SUPERSUB

In form

Having a particularly productive period. Often used for STRIKERS who have been scoring a lot of goals recently.

In front

"Two goals in front" is the same as "A LEAD of two goals", e.g. 4-2

Indirect free kick



A **FREE KICK** which must hit another player before it goes into the net in order to count as a goal. Usually a lesser punishment than a **DIRECT FREE KICK**

Injury time

If the match has to stop while injured players get back up, are treated or are **STRETCHERED OFF**, the time this takes will be added onto the end of the **FIRST HALF** or the end of the match, meaning that an average match is actually 93 minutes rather than 90 minutes

Intercept

Take the ball which someone from the other team was trying to **PASS** to their own player

Interval

A less common way to talk about the **HALF TIME BREAK**, only usually used by journalists

Into the net

Into the goal

Jab

Kicking the ball without moving your foot very much

Jersey

A football shirt

Keep the ball in play

Stop the ball going over the white **TOUCHLINE** at the side of the **PITCH** and so not need to stop play for a **THROW IN**, **GOAL KICK** or **CORNER KICK**

Keeper

The normal informal way to say **GOALKEEPER**

Kick off

The start of the match, in which the team who won the **COIN TOSS** can kick the ball first from the **CENTRE SPOT**

Kick off time

The time the match will start, traditionally 3 o'clock in the afternoon

Kick

Use your foot to hit the ball

Kingpins



A player who controls the game, usually a MIDFIELDER

Kit

Also “Football kit”. The normal word for the clothes that footballers wear.

Knock

A slight injury from colliding with another player

Knock the ball down

Head the ball down to the ground so you or another player from your team can kick it, usually so that they can SHOOT

Knockout competition

A championship in which the team which loses is out of the competition and doesn't have another chance to play. The opposite of a LEAGUE

Knockout round

The part of a competition in which the team who loses is out and doesn't have another chance to play, e.g. the SEMI-FINALS. The opposite of a GROUP ROUND

Kop (the)

The nickname for some stands that are built on a slope, most famously the liveliest STAND at Liverpool's GROUND Anfield

Last ditch tackle

A TACKLE which will cause the attacking player to be in front of goal with only the GOALKEEPER to beat if it fails

Last gasp goal

A goal in the last few moments of the match, often used for an EQUALISER or a goal that gets the team points that they absolutely must get, for example to avoid RELEGATION. The literal meaning of “last gasp” is your last breath of air before you die

Late tackle

Trying to TACKLE a player after they have already SHOT or PASSEd the ball to someone else, and therefore knocking into them rather than the ball. An offense, often leading to a CARD

Lead

(1) How many goals a team is ahead during the game, e.g. if the score is 3-1 the HOME TEAM has a lead of two goals (2) How many points a team is ahead in the DIVISION

League champions

The top team of the whole LEAGUE (meaning the top team in the top DIVISION) at the end of the season. Usually the most prestigious title in the country

Leave the goal wide open

A GOALKEEPER standing in a position that makes it easy to score, for example being too close to one POST

Left-footed

(1) Finding it easier to kick with your left foot, similar to being left-handed but not always going together with that (2) Using your left foot to SHOOT, usually used about a right footed player using their WEAKER FOOT

Leveller

A goal which makes the scores EVEN, e.g. going from 2-1 to 2-2. An informal way to say EQUALISER

Lift the trophy

(1) Hold the TROPHY above your head to show it to the fans (2) Win the competition

Linesman

The traditional name for the two ASSISTANT REFEREES who run up and down outside the SIDELINES, rather than around on the pitch like the REFEREES. Linesmen often decide if a player is OFFSIDE or if the ball has gone OUT OF PLAY

Linked with

“Steven Gerard has been linked with Real Madrid” means that there are rumours about him joining that club

Loan

Letting one of your players play for another club, sometimes because you hope to sell them later and sometimes to give them practice

Locker room

Another way to say CHANGING ROOM or DRESSING ROOM

Lockout match

A match in which no FANS are allowed, for example because there was problems with violence or racist CHANTing in the last match

Lone striker

A FORMATION in which only one player stays close to the OPPOSITION goal

Long ball game

A traditional British tactic in which the ball is kicked high along the length of the pitch to be headed, rather than passed through the MIDFIELD

Looping cross

A CROSS which goes high, therefore going over DEFENDERS. The opposite of a LOW CROSS

Lose on penalties

Be EVEN after EXTRA TIME, but then score fewer penalties than the other side and so lose the game. England have done this more at the World Cup than any other team ever.

Lose the dressing room

Lose the confidence of the players or start to have a bad relationship with them. Used about a manager, usually to explain why he is being sacked.

Low cross

A CROSS which stays close to the ground, for example for a DIVING HEADER or VOLLEY

Low shot

A SHOT which stays close to the ground, often meaning that the GOALKEEPER has to dive far to their right or left to reach it

Magic sponge (the)

When players were in pain, a trainer used to come out with a bucket of water and a sponge. Amazingly, this often lead to the player getting up and starting to play again, hence “magic”

Magic spray

A modern version of the MAGIC SPONGE

Majority of possession

Your players having the ball more than the other team. See POSSESSION

Man on

Shouted to tell someone that they are in danger of being tackled

Man short (a)

Playing with ten men, because one player received a RED CARD

Man to man marking

A system in which each defender is given one attacking player from the other team that they have to stay close to. The opposite of ZONAL MARKING

Manager

Traditionally, someone who is in charge of picking a team, deciding on tactics, and buying and selling players, one level higher in management than a COACH.

Marking

Staying close to an attacking player to make sure they can't get the ball or can't PASS or SHOOT if they have it

Match fit

Fit and healthy enough to play in a COMPETITIVE GAME. Often used negatively for a player who was injured and has recovered but hasn't trained enough to be able to play effectively.

Match of the Day

Traditionally the most popular English football show on TV

Match winner

The goal that meant that your team won the match, e.g. the goal that took the score from 2-2 to 3-2. Collocations Be responsible for the +. Also "match winning goal"

Midfield anchor

Another way to say DEFENSIVE MIDFIELDER

Midfield diamond

A formation in which the four MIDFIELD players play with two side by side and the other two on their own in front and behind

Midfielder

A player who plays near the centre of the pitch, between the DEFENDERS and the STRIKERS

Mid-table

Not near the top or bottom of the DIVISION

Mid-table obscurity

A team that is always in the middle of the DIVISION, e.g. because they often draw, and are therefore never in the dramatic situation of being likely to be PROMOTED to a higher division or RELEGATED to a lower one

Minnow

A small or weak team, named after a small fish that is common in British ponds

Misdirect a pass



See MISPLACE A PASS

Misplace a pass

PASS the ball to the wrong place, e.g. to an OPPOSING player or to somewhere the player it is meant for can't possibly run to

Mistimed tackle

Trying to tackle someone before or after they have the ball, usually leading to a FOUL. Usually means a LATE TACKLE

MOTD

Short written form of MATCH OF THE DAY

Movement off the ball

Moving around even when someone else has the ball, e.g. MOVING INTO SPACE so that someone can pass the ball to you

Moving into space

Running into a place on the pitch where there are no OPPOSITION players, making it easy to pass the ball to you

National side

A common expression for the NATIONAL TEAM. The opposite of CLUB SIDE

National stadium

The usual venue for CUP FINALS, INTERNATIONAL MATCHES etc, e.g. WEMBLEY in the UK

National team

The team that represents the whole country, e.g. the teams that compete in the WORLD CUP

Near post

The post nearest to the person who is going to SHOOT, PASS, take a CORNER or take a FREE KICK

Net

The mesh that is almost always put behind the goal, connected to the CROSSBAR and POSTs then connected to the ground in some way behind. Often used to talk about scoring a goal, e.g. "in the BACK OF THE NET"

Netting



The material that the NET at the back of the goal is made from. Often mentioned to say that a CROSS hit the side of the goal, meaning that “hit the netting” which is bad thing, is very different from “GO INTO THE BACK OF THE NET”, which is a goal

Neutral venue

A stadium that is not the HOME GROUND of either side, used because there has been crowd violence or because the political situation makes it impossible to play in one of the home grounds

Neutralize

Make sure that a threatening team or player is actually not a danger, e.g. by good MAN TO MAN MARKING or by using the right FORMATION

Next round (the)

The part of the championship that you will progress to if you win a match, e.g. the SEMI-FINALS if you win the QUARTER FINALS

Niggling fouls

Very small fouls, which are more likely to annoy than to lead to a YELLOW CARD

Niggling injury

An injury that is never very painful and doesn't completely stop you from playing, but means you can never play to your best

Nil

The normal British way to say “zero”, as in “two nil” for 2-0

Nippy –Able to run quickly

No score draw

The final score being 0-0. Sometimes jokingly called a “no score bore”

Non-league side

In England, teams which are lower than the Second Division and so cannot play in the LEAGUE CUP until they are PROMOTED

Nutmeg

Kick the ball through the legs of a player

Obstruction

Deliberately standing somewhere to stop a player from running where they need to go. An offense, likely to lead to a FREE KICK



Odds

How likely you are to win a match, e.g. “The odds are against SPURS winning the next match in their league campaign”. From betting.

Off his line

Used to explain that a goalkeeper is far from his own goal, making it easy for a STRIKER to CHIP the ball over his head. Collocations Caught +, Standing +

Off target

Not towards the goal, so that it wouldn't go in even if the goalkeeper wasn't there. Collocations Shots +, + shot, +0 attempt

Off the ball

While the other player doesn't have the ball, for example SHIRT TUGGING just to annoy another player or to stop them RUNNING INTO SPACE

Official supporters' club

A SUPPORTERS' CLUB organised by the football club

Officials

The REFEREE and LINESMEN

Offside rule

The rule that aims to stop GOAL HANGING by forcing players to receive the ball further towards their own goal than the opposing side's defenders. Not understanding the offside rule is often stated as proof of women not really appreciating football.

Offside trap

Defenders running forward to force the opposing striker into an OFFSIDE position and so making sure the game is stopped and they get POSSESSION. If this tactic goes wrong it usually leaves the striker only needing to beat the GOALKEEPER to score.

On a yellow card

Having to be careful not to FOUL anyone etc. because you already have a YELLOW CARD (in that match or a previous match) and so will have to miss the rest of that match and/ or the next match if you get another yellow card

On paper

“It's a good team on paper” means that theoretically it should be a good team (but often that it isn't actually that good, for example because the players don't get on with each other)

On target

Likely to lead to a goal if no one gets in the way, i.e. going towards the goal

On the bench

A SUBSTITUTE who does not play from the beginning of the game but might later. Collocations Starting +, Stuck +. See BENCHWARMER.

On the break

Scoring on the break means scoring while most of the players are in the other half of the pitch, for example because the other team has had most of the POSSESSION and done most of the attacking

One touch football

A style of play in which players very quickly PASS the ball

Open play – The opposite of a SET PIECE

Open talks

Start negotiating with a player or team about purchasing someone

Opener

see OPENING GOAL

Opening goal

The first goal of the match, making the score 1-0 or 0-1

Opposition (the)

The most common way to talk about the team that you are playing against

Other side (the)

Another way to say the OPPOSITION

Out and out striker

Someone who purely has the role of scoring goals, rather than TRACKING BACK for defence or SETTING UP GOALS for others

Outfield players

Every player but the GOALKEEPER

Outnumbered

There being more players from the other side on the PITCH or in a particular area of the pitch, e.g. near your goal



Out-of-position

Not where you should be on the PITCH

Outside of the foot

The right side of your right foot or the left side of your left foot. Using the outside of your foot is often seen a sign of skill

Over two legs

Two matches, HOME and AWAY

Own goal

The ball accidentally going into your goal off one of your own players, e.g. a failed BACKPASS

Own half

The half of the PITCH nearest to your goal

Park the bus (in front of the goal)

Pull all the players back to defend, usually to DEFEND A LEAD

Partnership

Two players who play close to each other, e.g. two CENTRAL MIDFIELDERS

Pass

Kicking the ball from one player to another player on the same side.

Passing game

A style of play in which PASSing is the most important element, the opposite of LONG BALL

Penalty (kick)

Being able to try to score a goal in your own time from the PENALTY SPOT. This is used to decide which team wins if the score is EVEN at the end of EXTRA TIME, or is used as a punishment, for example for a FOUL inside the AREA. Collocations Be awarded a +, Take a +, Concede +

Penalty arc

The official (but rarely used) name for the D

Penalty box

The area near the goal in which the GOALKEEPER may use his hands and a FOUL will result in a PENALTY KICK



Penalty shoot out

Penalties at the end of EXTRA TIME to decide which team will win

Penalty spot

The spot 12 yards from the goal from which PENALTY KICKS are always taken

Physical

A physical team or physical match is one in which there is a lot of reliance on physical force. Often a euphemism for lots of FOULS

Pint-sized

Small, like an old-fashioned British milk bottle. Used to describe players, especially STRIKERS

Pitch invasion

The FANS rushing onto the PITCH, for example to celebrate winning the match or to protest against a decision by the REFEREE. This can result in the club being fined, or even the match being ABANDONED

Pitch

The usual word for the area that football is played on. NB, “Football pitch” but “Tennis court” and “Basketball court”. “Football GROUND” means the stadium, not just the pitch

Pivotal moment

A moment that changed the whole game, e.g. a goal which gave a team confidence, a RED CARD or an injury.

Play deep

Playing closer to your own goal than is usual for that player or position, e.g. a STRIKER playing behind another striker to help them

Play on

A signal from the REFEREE that the players shouldn't stop to take a FREE KICK but instead keep on playing, usually because they have the ball and are in a good position and so just as likely to SCORE as they would be if they were given a free kick

Playing for a draw

Aiming to defend to keep the scores EVEN rather than taking a risk in order to win the game, usually because one point is enough for you, perhaps because you won the FIRST LEG or because you have a good LEAD in your DIVISION

Playing wide

See WIDE

Playmaker

A more common expression for KINGPIN

Playoff

A special match to decide something that hasn't been decided by the normal matches, e.g. which of the teams between third and sixth position in the division will be PROMOTED

PLC

Public Limited Company. A British company that anyone can buy the shares of, similar to an American corporation. Many English PREMIERSHIP clubs are PLCs and so need to worry about keeping their share price high and being taken over.

Pools

A way of betting on football results, similar to a lottery

Position

(1) Where you play on the pitch, usually decided as part of a FORMATION (2) The name for the position where you play, e.g. LEFT BACK

Possession

(1) Having the ball (2) How much of the match your team had the ball, often given as a percentage, e.g. "Although Italy had 70% possession, they still could only manage a DRAW". Collocations

Lose +, MAJORITY OF POSSESSION

Post

The two poles at the edges of the goal that hold up the CROSSBAR, traditionally made from wood. Collocations Rebound off the +, In off the +, NEAR POST, FAR POST

Post-match analysis

The time after the MATCH when the COMMENTATORS and PUNDITS talk about the match they have just seen

Professional foul

A deliberate FOUL that is difficult for the REFEREE to spot or is meant to injure an important player on the other side

Progress (v)

Go on to the NEXT ROUND

Promoted

Allowed to go up to a higher DIVISION, for example by being the top team in your division or winning the PLAYOFFs

Promotion

See PROMOTED

Pub side

A team that represents a particular pub in a local league, often a SUNDAY LEAGUE, and which usually consists of regular customers. Used as an insulting way of talking about a bad professional football side

Pull the ball back

A PASS or CROSS which goes somewhat backwards

Pundit

A football expert, e.g. someone who analyses the match at HALF TIME rather than speaking all the way through like a COMMENTATOR

Purple patch

Another way to say IN FORM, usually used about STRIKERS

Put it away

Score a goal

Qualifying rounds

Matches that you have to play to get into a championship, for example playing other teams in your region for a chance to go to the WORLD CUP FINALS.

Quarter finals

The stage before the SEMI FINALS, where eight teams play a match (or often two TIES) to decide which four teams go forward to the NEXT ROUND

Rankings

A chart showing which teams are most likely to win a championship, often used to make sure that all the best teams are not put in one GROUP

Rapport

How well players or a whole team understand each other, e.g. being able to ANTICIPATE each other's moves. Often used about an important PARTNERSHIP

Read a pass

Know where and when a PASS is going to end up



Real

Pronounced like “rey-al”, this is the usual way of referring to Real Madrid in English-speaking countries. In Spain, Real Madrid is simply “Madrid” (Atletico Madrid being “Atletico”), while “Real” is short for Real Sociedad.

Red card

The ultimate punishment, meaning that a player has to leave the PITCH for the rest of the game and usually also miss future games

Red Devils

Idiotic nickname for Manchester United and the Korean NATIONAL SIDE

Reduced to ten men

Playing with only ten people in your team after a RED CARD, usually making it difficult to win the game

Ref

A common short form for REFEREE

Reflex shot

A SHOT kicked with no time to consciously plan what you are doing, e.g. a VOLLEY

Reflex save

A save made without any time to plan, e.g. the GOALKEEPER diving in the wrong direction during a PENALTY but sticking his leg up to save the ball

Regional championship

A competition between the best sides of the same continent or region, for example the European CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Regular first-team place

Usually being picked to play in the SENIOR TEAM, the aim for most players

Regular season

The dates that most teams will have to play games, e.g. between September and April or May in most European countries. The dates for PLAYOFFS, the CHAMPIONS LEAGUE final, WORLD CUP etc are before or after this, so are said to fall outside the regular season

Regulation ball

A ball that has been certified by FIFA for use in official matches, and therefore good practice to play with when the regulations are changed or if you want to play professional football

Regulation pitch

A PITCH whose size is within the limits set by FIFA, and so good practice for top level football. Similar to “Olympic size swimming pool” in swimming

Regulation time

90 minutes, to which INJURY TIME is added to decide on the actual length of the match

Relegation

Being forced to go down to a lower DIVISION, e.g. due to being the bottom team at the end of the SEASON or losing the PLAYOFFs

Relegation battle

(1) Have to make a great effort not to be RELEGATED (2) A match with another team who might also be RELEGATED, i.e. a SIX POINTER

Relegation zone

The places in the TABLE which will mean being RELEGATED to a lower DIVISION or having to go through PLAYOFFs to STAY UP, e.g. the last four teams out of a 16 team division

Replay

(1) Showing a part of the match again on TV (2) Playing the same match again, for example because the original match had to be ABANDONED

Reserve team

See RESERVES

Reserves

A team of players who aren't able to enter the SENIOR TEAM due to not being IN FORM etc, who often play against reserves from other clubs for practice, sometimes in a dedicated league.

Restart

Start a match again which has been paused due to things like bad weather, the SPOTLIGHTS going off, or a PITCH INVASION

Result

(1) The final score (2) Winning, e.g. “We didn't play very well, but we were just happy to get a result”

Right wing

Playing on the right edge of the pitch (from your own perspective), near the TOUCHLINE

Robbed



The expression “We were robbed” is often used to say that bad refereeing decisions were they only reason we didn’t win a match

Rock-solid

Used to describe a DEFENSE that it is impossible to get the ball past, like trying to get through a rock wall

Round robin play

Where every team plays every other team

Runners up medal

An award for the RUNNERS UP

Runners

up – The second placed team in a DIVISION or the losing team in a FINAL

Running off the ball

See OFF THE BALL

Save

Stop the ball from entering your goal. Mainly used to talk about what the GOALKEEPER tries to do

Score (a goal)

Put the ball into the OPPOSITION goal

Scoring opportunity

A chance to SCORE

Scout

A member of staff whose job it is to find new players for the club, for example by watching matches in lower divisions and trying to spot good players (especially young ones) to buy

Scraped into

Only get just enough points to do things, e.g. only be above the team below by GOAL DIFFERENCE, like a boat scraping over the rocks at the bottom of the sea or a bus scraping its roof as it goes under a low bridge

Seagulls (the)

The nickname for the excellent but surprisingly little known English side Brighton and Hove Albion



Season

Similar to an academic year for a university, e.g. “The 2008-2009 season ran from late August 2008 to May 2009”.

Season ticket

A ticket with which you can see all the HOME GAMES of your club, usually with one designated seat number

Second half

The second period of 45 minutes of the game after the fifteen minute HALF TIME break.

Secure the services of

Have a player join your team, e.g. by buying them from another club

See out his contract

Play with one club for the year or two until your contract period comes to an end rather than TRANSFERring to another club, either to retire when your contract comes to an end or to go to another club on a BOSMAN (free) transfer and so increase your wages

Semi finals

The matches that are played after the QUARTER FINALS to decide which two teams out of four will be in the FINAL

Sending off

A RED CARD

Senior team

The top team within one club, the opposite of the YOUTH TEAM or RESERVE TEAM

Set play

A FREE KICK, THROW IN or PENALTY

Set up (a goal)

Pass the ball so that it is in a position where someone else on your team can score

Severance package

The money that a team has to pay a manager who is still under contract to fire him

Shielding the defence

A MIDFIELDER helping to defend



Shimmy

Moving your hips in order to GO AROUND a player or as a FEINT

Shin pads

Protection for the bone at the front of your leg below the knee, worn under the socks

Shirt sponsors

Companies who pay for their company name to be printed on the team's shirts

Shirt tugging

Pulling at a player's shirt to restrict their ability to move. A minor offense.

Shoot

Kick the ball towards the goal to try and get the goal in it and therefore score

Shoot out

see PENALTY SHOOT OUT

Shot

The noun of SHOOT

Shots off target

The number of attempts at scoring goals by one team or player that wouldn't have gone in even if the other team hadn't been there

Shots on target

The number of goals that a player or team would have scored if the defending team had not got in the way

Showmanship

Using particularly difficult techniques like a BICYCLE KICK to entertain the crowd or show off

Side

A team, e.g. "The MANAGER says he is finally happy with the side he has put together for this season"

Sign a player

Have a player join your team, e.g. by buying them from another club

Signing



on fee – The money that a player gets when they TRANSFER from one team to another

Signings

New players, often bought from other clubs

Silky skills

Usually used to talk about skilful and apparently effortless PASSing and DRIBBLing

Silverware

A way to say TROPHIES, only usually used by journalists

Sit back

(1) Relax (2) Stop attacking, like a person relaxing into a sofa

Sitter

An incredibly easy shot, as if the ball is sitting there waiting for you to kick and score whenever you feel like it. Often used to say that someone should have scored an easy goal but missed it.

Six pointer

A match where you are playing against your closest rival and therefore a win (3 points) for you is also like taking another 3 points off them by stopping them winning and getting those points

Six yard box

The smaller of the two boxes around the goal

Skinhead

A fashion style with very short hair and often tattoos, tight jeans and Doctor Marten boots, associated with hooligans and extreme right wing groups

Skipper

An informal way of saying CAPTAIN

Sliding tackle

Trying to take the ball off someone by slipping along the ground towards them, easiest to do when the PITCH is wet but often leading to dangerous play

Slot it in

Score a goal, usually meaning due to accuracy rather than power, and maybe meaning from short range

Soccer

Short for “Association Football”, in contrast to “Rugby Football”. Used by American to contrast with American Football, which they call “football”. Generally avoided by Brits nowadays, as they hate sounding like Americans and so prefer the term FOOTIE

Soccer field

American English for FOOTBALL PITCH

Solo effort

A SOLO GOAL or close attempt

Solo goal

Scoring a goal without much help just before that time, for example GOING PAST several players rather than just HEADING in a CROSS

Special One (the)

The nickname for Real Madrid manager Jose Mourinho

Spectacle

Excitement and skill, the things that make a football match good to watch

Sponsors

Advertisers whose money goes to the team, e.g. SHIRT SPONSORS

Sportsmanlike

see UNSPORTSMANLIKE

Spot kick

A fairly common way of saying PENALTY KICK

Spurs

The nickname for English side Tottenham Hotspurs, from the last syllable of their name. The original meaning of “spurs” is the spiked things that horse riders wear on their shoes.

Squad

The players on a team

Square

Straight across the pitch, not towards either goal

Stamp



Step on a player who is on the ground, usually meaning deliberately and quite hard, and so often a RED CARD offense

Stand

One section of the stadium, e.g. one side of the rectangle. Often the four stands have different names. See KOP for an example.

Starting appearance

Playing from the beginning of a match, usually one better than being ON THE BENCH at the beginning of the game

Starting line up

The players who will be on the PITCH from the first moment of the game.

Stay up

Not be RELEGATED, usually used because it was assumed you would GO DOWN

Stoppage time

A more official way to say the INJURY TIME that is played at the end of a half of the match

Stoppages

Times when play is unexpectedly interrupted, e.g. waiting for injured players to get off the pitch or get up and start playing again

Stopper

A way of saying GOALKEEPER. Much less common than GOALIE and only usually used by journalists.

Straight to the arms of

A SHOT that is very easy to catch by the GOALKEEPER, without them even needing to move their body

Stretched off

Taken off the pitch on a kind of portable bed, usually because of a bad injury but also possibly just due to CRAMP

Stretches

Exercises that players do to make their muscles flexible before they start playing

Striker

An attacking player who plays near the opposition goal and whose main role is to score goals



Strip

Another way to say football KIT

Studs

Things that stick out of the bottom of the sole of a FOOTBALL BOOT, stopping players slipping but also sometimes causing injuries during TACKLES

Studs up

TACKLING or trying to TRAP the ball with the sole of your boot pointing towards another player, leading to a great danger of injuring another player and therefore likely to lead to a CARD

Sub

Short for SUBSTITUTE

Substitute

A player who starts the game ON THE BENCH and maybe exchanges positions with a tired or injured player during the match

Summer signings

Players bought during the time when there are no championships in Europe, the most popular time for such deals

Summer tours

European club sides visiting Asia, America etc to raise money and get match fit before the beginning of the new season (usually in late August or September)

Sunday league

An amateur competition that is run on Sundays, for example one in which PUB SIDES play against each other. Often used as a simile to talk about bad play by professional teams

Super sub

A player who is ON THE BENCH but because they are likely to surprise the other team when they COME ON rather than because they aren't good enough to be the manager's first choice

Supply line

(1) PASSes and CROSSes towards the STRIKERs (2) A player who provides those passes and crosses

Supporter

A more official way of saying a FAN

Supporters' club



A group of FANs who exchange information about the club, travel to AWAY MATCHes together etc

Suspension

The time when a player cannot play for a team, for example because they got a RED CARD or several YELLOW CARDS, e.g. "Davids is serving a two month suspension for a positive drugs test"

Swan song

The final match or competition of a player, usually one who has had a distinguished history.

Sweeper

A CENTRAL DEFENDER with more flexibility to move backwards and forwards than other central defenders

Switch flanks

Move from the RIGHT WING to the LEFT WING, or the other way round

Table football

A pub game with plastic players that can be twisted around to "kick" a small ball into two wooden goals

Tackle

Take the ball off another player, usually by kicking the ball that they are trying to DRIBBLE

Tackling back

Taking the ball off a player who just took it off you

Take the field

Come onto the PITCH, either at the start of a game or as a SUBSTITUTE

Tame shot

A SHOT with little force or kicked near to the GOALKEEPER. Similar to WEAK SHOT, but usually used to criticize the goalkeeper, e.g. "A tame shot by Rooney somehow went between the goalkeeper's legs and into the NET"

Tap it in

Score a goal with a gentle SHOT

Tapping a player

Illegal approaches to a player who is under contract with another club, as AGENTS and other clubs have to ask the present club's permission before talking to their players. The expression comes from the idea of tapping someone on the shoulder.

Target man

A OUT AND OUT STRIKER whose only job is to wait for other players to pass the ball to them and then score

Target

See ON TARGET

Team sheet

The list of the STARTING LINEUP and SUBSTITUTES, often released as late as possible to stop the other team knowing exactly which players they will be playing against

Tempo

The speed at which the game is played

Ten men

See REDUCED TO TEN MEN

Tenure

How long a MANAGER or COACH stays in one job

Terraces

Places in the stadium where there are no seats and so the fans have to stand. Often used to suggest more enthusiastic supporters. There are no terraces in ALL SEATER stadiums

The top flight of...

The highest level, e.g. "The PREMIERSHIP is the top flight of English football". Often used in sentences wondering how good a player is, e.g. "Smith was the top scorer in the 2nd division last year, but there are doubts whether he has the skills to be successful in the top flight"

There's only one...

A popular football CHANT, meaning that the player is unique (usually genuine, but sometimes sarcastically)

Thrash

BEAT by a large margin, e.g. 6-0. The literal meaning of thrash is also similar to beat, as in "The headmaster thrashed the boy for ten minutes for daring to call him by his first name"

Thread the ball

Pass the ball between two opposing players, similar to putting a thread into the hole in a needle

Three lions

The coat of arms on the England football shirt

Through on goal

Past the last DEFENDER

Throw a match

Deliberately lose a match, for example because you have bet against yourself or because you want the team you are playing against to get the points and so defeat another team that you want to be ELIMINATED. A very serious offense that could lead to a team being RELEGATED

Throw in

Returning the ball to play by throwing it from the TOUCHLINE, usually because the ball has gone off the pitch after hitting a player from the other team, but sometimes also in place of a FREE KICK. The only time when a player other than the goalkeeper is allowed to use their hands in play.

Tie

(1) A DRAW (2) A match, e.g. "A home tie" or "A difficult tie"

Time added on

How long the match will be played after the REGULATION TIME of 90 minutes, mainly due to play being stopped due to injuries during the match

Time wasting

A team who is IN THE LEAD or PLAYING FOR A DRAW taking a long time to take GOAL KICKS etc so the other team cannot score. A BOOKABLE OFFENSE that could lead to a YELLOW CARD

Top four finish

Between first and fourth place in the league at the end of the season. Important in leagues where the top four teams have a chance of being PROMOTED or can enter the CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Top half of the table

For example, the top 6 teams in a DIVISION of 12 teams. Used to show that they could be promoted, could have a TOP FOUR FINISH, or are in little danger of being RELEGATED

Top the group

The team with the most points from a GROUP STAGE, usually meaning that they can play a second placed team from another group in the first KNOCKOUT STAGE. Not the same as GO TOP, which can mean temporarily

Toss

When the referee flips a coin to decide which sides of the pitch each team plays in during the FIRST HALF and which team KICKS OFF. Also (but less commonly) COIN TOSS

Touchline –

(1) The white line that goes all around the edge of the pitch, showing where the ball has to stay inside if it is not to be a THROW IN, CORNER (KICK) or GOAL KICK (2) Often used to mean the area where the coach sits during the game, e.g. “Instructions came from the touchline to switch positions”

Toyota Cup

The traditional name for the match (and now championship) in which the REGIONAL CHAMPIONS play against each other to decide which the best CLUB SIDE in the world is. This is always a team from Europe or Latin America, being an unimportant TROPHY for the former and the most important one for the latter

Tracking back

Forwards coming back towards their own goal to help to defend when the other team is attacking

Tracksuit

A matching pair of casual trousers and top (usually with a zip), often worn on top of the football KIT until player WARM UP

Trainer

Someone just under the coach in the TECHNICAL STAFF, who concentrates on teaching and practising techniques with the players

Training ground

Where the players practise

Transfer

Buying a player from another club

Transfer fee

The money one club has to pay another to buy a player who is still under contract

Transfer window

If there is a time when teams cannot buy or sell players (usual nowadays), a short time in the middle where they can do so

Trap (the ball)

Stop a ball moving, for example one which was passed to you

Trophy

A cup etc that shows that you won a match or championship

Trophy cabinet

(1) The glass-fronted display cabinet that clubs show CUPS etc they have won in (2) Used as a metaphor for how many championships the club has won, e.g. “Liverpool’s trophy cabinet will be empty again this year”

Tuck it away

Easily score, maybe from close to the goal. Similar to SLOT IT AWAY

Tunnel (the)

The space just before the PITCH that players stand in lines in after coming out of the CHANGING ROOMS. This expression is often used to talk about negative things like tension (or even fights) between the two teams, or feeling nervous before a big match

Turf

The grass (or ARTIFICIAL TURF) on a pitch

Turn the tables

Put the other team into the position you were in, as if you were playing poker and you literally turned the table around so that you now had their hand of cards and they had yours.

Turnstile

(1) The turning piece of metal that only lets people who have shown their ticket into the GROUND
(2) Used in expressions to show how many people attended the match, e.g. “10,000 people came through the turnstiles”

Two

footed tackle – A dangerous way of trying to get the ball off someone where both legs are aimed towards them at the same time, similar to a wrestling move. Often results in a RED CARD

Unassailable lead

So far ahead in goals or points that other teams can’t possibly catch up

Unconvincing victory

Winning the match in an unimpressive way, for example because the other team was weak and should have been beaten by more goals, or only winning because of luck

Unintentional hand ball



The ball hitting your hand or lower parts of your arm accidentally. This is still likely to lead to a FREE KICK, but not to a CARD

Unsportsmanlike behaviour

Doing something that is within the rules of the game but is still unfair, for example not telling the referee when you know the goal went in off your hand

Unstoppable

A shot that is so WELL PLACED or (more commonly) powerful that the GOALKEEPER has no chance of SAVING it

Unveil

Show a new player or manager to the media and fans, or tell them that a new person has been found, similar to taking the veil off the bride at a wedding

Upright (the)

An informal way to talk about the two POSTs at the edge of the goal, as they are vertical (unlike the horizontal CROSSBAR)

Utility players

Players who can comfortably play in several POSITIONS, sometimes used in a negative way similar to “Jack of all trades”

Versatile

Able to play in several positions

Veteran

A player with lots of experience, and perhaps quite old

Volley

Kicking the ball when it is still in their air and so hasn't yet hit the ground and bounced, therefore making it more difficult to judge and control

WAGs

An abbreviation of “wives and girlfriends”, used to be negative about the females who used to follow the England team around but were blamed for their bad performances

Wall

Several defending players standing in a line between a DIRECT FREE KICK and the goal in order to make scoring more difficult

Wanted list



A jokey way of talking about which players a MANAGER wants to buy, similar to a poster showing criminals who the police want to arrest

Warm up

(1) Stretching exercises etc before a player starts playing (2) Matches before a championship to allow the team to practice playing together

Wasted ball

A good chance (usually to score) that is not taken advantage of, for example PASSing when you should have taken a SHOT

Water

logged pitch – Rain which hasn't disappeared from the grass yet, sometimes leading to a match being cancelled if it is very bad

Watertight defence

Players who don't let goals be scored and maybe don't let the ball through, like a dam stopping water

Weak effort

A very bad SHOT at goal

Weakened team

Not the best 11 players that the club have, for example because they are resting some of them or some of them are injured

Weaker foot

Your left foot if you are RIGHT FOOTED, or your right foot if you are LEFT FOOTED

Wearing the armband

Being captain

Weight (of a pass)

How much force a PASS is hit with, affecting how far and fast it travels

Well placed

A SHOT or PASS which is put in exactly the right position

Wembley

The most famous stadium in London, NATIONAL STADIUM of England and home of most important English FINALS but not the HOME GROUND of any team



Whistle

(1) The small metal instrument that the REFEREE and LINESMEN use to get people's attention and indicate things like a FOUL and KICK OFF (2) The sound of that instrument (3) Disapproving noises from the crowd, usually together with BOOs

Wide

On the right and left of the pitch, far from the centre and near the TOUCHLINE

Wide open

See LEAVE THE GOAL WIDE OPEN

Win the ball

Take POSSESSION of the ball, usually meaning TACKLING but maybe also by INTERCEPTING a PASS

Wing

The sides of the pitch, furthest away from the goal and CENTRE CIRCLE, and near the TOUCHLINE. Comes from the wings of a bird or plane stretching left and right from their body

Wingback

One of the possible POSITIONS for a DEFENDER. A variation on the FULL BACK, but with more of an attacking role

Winger

A player who spends most of their time on the edges of the pitch near the TOUCHLINE

Wing

half – Short for “wing half back”, an old fashioned expression for a DEFENSIVE MIDFIELDER who plays on the edges of the pitch

Winter break

A time around Christmas when some leagues have no matches

Woodwork –

The POSTS and CROSSBAR, because they are traditionally made from wood (unlike the net). Collocations Hit the +, Off the +

World Cup

Also “FIFA World Cup”, “Football World Cup” and WORLD CUP FINALS. A competition once every four years to decide which NATIONAL TEAM is the best in the world (not necessarily the best team in the world see TOYOTA CUP)



World Cup finals

Usually called just “World Cup”, it is officially called the World Cup Finals because the QUALIFYING ROUNDS count as earlier parts of the tournament

World XI

A real or imaginary selection of the 11 best players at that time in the world

Wrong flank (the)

The side of the pitch that a player doesn't usually play on, for example because they are LEFT FOOTED, or because they have SWITCHED FLANKS during the game

Wrong foot

Your left foot if you are right footed and your right foot if you are left footed

Yellow card

A yellow piece of card which the referee takes out of his or her pocket to show to a player who has done something quite bad such as committing a bad FOUL or HANDBALL, but not as bad as a RED CARD offense like fighting. A yellow card often goes together with another punishment such as a FREE KICK. Two yellow cards in one match means a RED CARD, and two yellow cards over a certain period means a SUSPENSION.

Yoyo team

A team that is often goes through PROMOTION and DEMOTION, going up and down like a toy yoyo

Zonal marking

The system by which teams defend by each player taking responsibility for a particular area of the pitch. The opposite of MAN TO MAN MARKING