

Glossary

The purpose of this glossary is to help players, parents and coaches to have a better understanding of the terms used in soccer. This is NOT a final list of terms but rather a start. If you have any questions please let me know.

- 18 Yard Box - See penalty box
- 12 Yard Spot - The spot where penalty kicks are taken from
- Assist- The pass that leads to the goal. Many say it's as important as the goal itself, some say it's even more important
- Back pass- A pass that is hit backwards (away from the goal you are attacking)
- Bending balls- A pass or shot that is hit with spin (by hitting a side of the ball) to make the ball curve.
- Checking run -A player who checks to the ball is one who is making a run on an angle directly to the ball with the intention of either receiving the ball or creating space. A checking run away from the ball is usually used to create space for the next run
- Creating space - This is the act of leaving an area of the field in order to draw the defense away from that area so that you (or one of your teammates can use the space to your advantage in the future.
- Chip - A soft pass that leaves the ground and is "floated" to an intended target. This is accomplished by striking the lower half of the ball which will cause the ball to elavate
- Closing down - Defensively getting closer to an opponent with the ball to take away space and add pressure to the opponent
- Cross- To play the ball from the side of the field toward the middle of the field in the offensive third.
- Defensive third- The third of the field closest to the goal you are defending.
- Far Post- This is the goal post (the post that makes up the side of the goal) that is furthest from the ball at the given time
- 50/50 ball-A loose ball that can be won by either team. Whoever wins the most, often wins the match.
- Finishing- To finish means to score. I like to use the term finishing rather than shooting because you don't necessarily win by shooting. You win by finishing!
- Flat back four - A type of zonal defending that involves 4 defenders each responsible for an area across the back of the defense. The reason it's called flat is that they players usually don't have as much deep support as they would with a sweeper behind them.
- Formations- Whenever you hear about formations, you hear some weird numbers like 4-4-2 or 3-4-3 or something like that. To explain it real simply, the numbers work from the back forward and the keeper is never counted. So, a 4-4-2 is a formation with 4 backs, 4 midfielders, and two forwards along with one keeper
- Forward - The players who start off closest to the goal the team is attacking. First and foremost, the forwards are responsible for scoring goals or at least creating scoring opportunities.
- Fullback - The players who are just in front of the goalkeeper and are primarily responsible for defense. However, they also do get involved in the attack.
- Keep your shape- Maintain positional discipline on defense so that you don't leave gaps for the other team to attack. If you have too many players forward, or too many on one side of the field, you have lost your shape.
- Marking- To mark means to take defensive responsibility for an attacking player. If I am marking you, my first priority is this one player. This would be similar to guarding a player in basketball.

- Midfielders - The line up between the forwards and the fullbacks and are the ones who link the two together. They have equal responsibility both offensively and defensively.
- Near Post- This is the goal post (the post that makes up the side of the goal) that is nearest to the ball at the given time
- Nutmeg- Strike the ball so it goes between the legs of the defender, and your team retains possession
- Opening the field - Spreading the field offensively to create more space for the players to work with.
- Overlapping runs- This is a run where Player A runs from behind player B and goes past her (overlaps) to either receive the ball or to create space for Player B
- Penalty box- Also known as the 18 yard box. This is the area where the keeper is allowed to use her hands. Also, any foul in this box that would result in a direct kick results in a penalty kick
- Pitch- The playing field
- Save - A save is when a keeper prevents a ball from going into the goal that has been shot by the opposing team and would go in the goal if it weren't for the keeper
- Serve - To serve a ball usually means to play a long ball into the 18 yard box to a runner or runners. It could be a cross or a ball from a back in early
- Square pass- a pass that is hit parallel to the goal line. In other words, a ball that is played to a player that goes in the direction of either of the side lines
- Stopper - Plays right in front of the sweeper and is responsible defensively either for the first forward down field or the first midfielder down field (depending on the way the team plays)
- Sweeper - The player who plays furthest back on the field (just in front of the keeper) who doesn't have any marking responsibilities and is mainly responsible for helping others out defensively when they have lost their mark
- Switch fields-To pass the ball from one side of the field to the other, in one or two passes. By quickly changing the angle of attack, you can confuse the defense and take advantage of openings that will inevitably appear as the defenders scramble to adjust.
- Takeover- Player A has the ball and allows her teammate Player B to take the ball from her (this is an effective way of deceiving an opponent)
- Touchline- The touchline is the sideline. If you hear someone say that the ball "goes into the touch" it means that it is just out of bounds.
- Thru ball- To play a pass behind the defense for one of your players to run onto. This pass has to be made with perfect pace and accuracy so it beats the defense and allows attackers to collect it before the goalkeeper.
- Transition- Making the change from offense to defense or from defense to offense.
- Wall pass- A wall pass is one where Player A passes the ball to Player B and then makes a run. Player B returns the ball to Player A one touch. think of it as if Player B is simply a wall and the ball is played into the wall and comes back to the player with the same angle