



Names And Abbreviations For Key Soccer Positions

Goalkeeper

Defenders

- Sweeper (SW)
- Center-back / Center Full-back / Central Defender (CB)
- Right and Left Full-backs (RB/LB)
- Right and Left Wing-backs (RWB/LWB)

Midfielders

- Defensive / Holding Midfielder (DM)
- Center Midfielders (CM)
- Attacking Midfielders (AM)
- Wide Midfielders / Wingers (RW/LW)

Forwards

- Center Forward (CF)
- Second Forward / Second Striker / Support or Withdrawn Striker (CF or S)
- Striker (S)

As you can see, there are plenty soccer positions and not all of them can play at once. Below, is an outline with the traditional numbers for each soccer position. Historically, these numbers were used to indicate position, with the players on the field designated as #1 - 11. In the modern game, jersey numbers vary greatly depending on formation as well as a player's personal preference.

GOALKEEPER (GK)

Traditionally Assigned Soccer Position Number: 1

Every formation features a goalkeeper. The goalie is the only player who can legally use his or her hands to touch the ball on the field. To any other player, touching the ball with anything between your fingernails and shoulders is not permitted.

DEFENDERS

Sweeper (SW)

Traditionally Assigned Soccer Position Number: 4

The sweeper position is not commonly used anymore, but it was popular back in the day. The sweeper is the last man in the defense line. He is located between the goalkeeper and the center-backs. He is not normally assigned to personally mark a rival player but rather to close down gaps left by teammates, to anticipate opponents' moves and to clear loose balls.

Center-back / Center Full-back / Central Defender (CB)

Traditionally Assigned Soccer Position Numbers: 2, 3 & 4

In contemporary football, center-backs constitute the last defensive line in the central area of the field. Their responsibility is to block rival forwards and to do anything in their ability to stop them from getting face to face with their goalkeeper. Center-backs are often tall, strong, and have good leadership attributes.

Full-backs [Right & Left] (RB/LB)

Traditionally Assigned Soccer Position Numbers: 2, 3 & 6

Full-backs are in charge of blocking the other team's wingers and wide midfielders and to prevent them from crossing dangerous balls into their box. While full-backs may on occasion venture into more attacking positions, their chief responsibility is to defend and help hold a line with the center-backs.

Full-backs are often lighter than the center-backs and run up and down the field marking rivals.

Wing-backs [Right & Left] (RWB/LWB)

Traditionally Assigned Soccer Position Numbers: 2, 3 & 6

The wing-back position is similar to the full-back in that wing-backs play close and along the sidelines of the field. The main difference is that wing-backs have much more attacking responsibility than full-backs do. Many full-backs have played as wing-backs and wing-backs have played as full-backs.

A wing-back's role depends on the team formation and specific moments of the game. For example, if you have a defensive line of four defenders (two center-backs and two full-backs) and your team is in need of a goal, you will want the full-backs to behave more like wing-backs and attack. If, on the contrary, you are clinging to a narrow advantage, you will want your wing-backs to play more defensively. Also, if you have five defenders (three center-backs and two wing-backs), this allows more liberty for the wing-backs to venture attacking.

MIDFIELDERS

Defensive/Holding Midfielder (DM)

Traditionally Assigned Soccer Position Numbers: 5 & 6

The defensive midfielder plays directly in front of the center-backs. His or her job is to collaborate with defense, retrieve as many balls as possible and organize attacking plays from the back. Holding midfielders are usually rugged, strong players capable of physically disputing the ball with opponents.

Sometimes defensive midfielders have a more creative role. While they anticipate rivals' passes and plays, they also creatively structure attacking plays and contribute with assists.

Center Midfielders (CM)

Traditionally Assigned Soccer Position Numbers: 6 & 8

Center midfielders are the foremost organizers and creative playmakers in the game. Having a strong midfield is key to establish a dominating playing style. When FC Barcelona had Sergio Busquets, Andrés Iniesta and Xavi Hernández as midfielders, they were arguably the best team in history because they handled the ball so well, establishing the so-called "tiki-taka" style that consisted in endless passing of the ball from one side to the other with remarkable accuracy and tempo.

Center midfielders are tasked with linking the defense with the offense and contributing with goals, assists and key decision making.

Attacking Midfielders (AM)

Traditionally Assigned Soccer Position Number: 10

Their role is similar to that of the center midfielders, but more focused on attacking (shooting, assisting, scoring). Some of soccer's best players of all time have been attacking midfielders. Exquisite technique and accuracy are a must for this position. Characterized by field vision, ball control and technique, attacking midfielders are often in charge of free-kicks and penalty kicks.

Wide Midfielders/Wingers [Right & Left] (RW/LW)

Traditionally Assigned Soccer Position Numbers: 7 & 11

Wide Midfielders or Wingers play offensively along the sidelines. They are normally light, fast and extremely fit. This position is one of the most explosive and opportunity generating. Wingers are tasked with attacking and dribbling at full speed, crossing, assisting and scoring. Well known wingers are Ángel di María, Eden Hazard, Neymar, Arjen Robben and Cristiano Ronaldo, particularly when he was younger (and faster).

FORWARDS

Center Forward (CF)

Traditionally Assigned Soccer Position Number: 9

A center forward is typically a strong player that can win balls in the air, shield the ball from defenders while waiting for backup, perform link up duties and serve as decoy for the striker. Of course, every once in a while you get center forwards who are not as physically strong but compensate with skill, like "Kun" Agüero or Lionel Messi. Moreover, in contemporary football, the center forward has also defensive responsibility. He or she is considered to be the first defender of the team.

Exemplary center forwards are Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Luis Suárez, Lionel Messi, Harry Kane and recently Cristiano Ronaldo.

Striker (S)

Traditionally Assigned Soccer Position Numbers: 10 & 11

As this name suggests, strikers are tasked with the most commonly celebrated thing in football: scoring. While Center Forwards typically have defensive responsibilities, strikers are almost exclusively concerned with attacking. Strikers are quick and unpredictable, profit from defenders' mistakes and are at times defined as goal poachers.

Mustang Position Responsibilities

Position: Goalkeeper

- The most defensive position in soccer
- Main job to stop opposition goals
- Also organizes the defense and builds play from the back
- Wears gloves, and a different colored jersey from teammates
- Only player who can use their hands in their 18-yard box (apart from throw-ins!)

Position: Centre-back (stopper)

- Shuts down opposition attackers
- May employ zonal or man-marking strategies
- Brings the ball out from the back
- Often tall and physically strong
- Bravery and heading ability desirable, for use in either box

Position: Centre-back (sweeper)

- A safety net for the stopper(s) alongside them
- Races to cover gaps when defense is breached
- Less concerned with man-marking
- Reads the game from deep
- Joins midfield build-up when in possession

Position: Centre-back (quarter-back)

- Same, central defensive position as the stopper
- Also more likely to be used in a back three
- Keeping the ball as important as winning it back
- Confident in possession
- Greater onus on long, accurate passes

Position: Full-back

- Lines up either side of the defense
- Marks opposition wingers
- Provides support for the wide midfielder ahead of them
- May overlap and send crosses into the opposition box
- Often takes throw-ins

Position: Wing-back

- Modern variation of the full-back
- Overlaps and sends crosses into the opposition box
- Still marks opposition wingers when needed
- Expected to stay on their touchline
- One of the most physically demanding positions





Position: Defensive midfielder (ball-winner)

- Sits in front of the defense
- Wins the ball back with tackles and interceptions
- Covers teammates when they go forward
- Harries opposition attackers
- Physically fit and tenacious

Position: Defensive midfielder (deep-lying playmaker)

- Sits in front of the defense
- Creative playmaker from deep
- Distributes to teammates, near and far
- Sets the team's tempo
- Capable of tackling, though a secondary task

Position: Box-to-box midfielder

- Lines up in the middle of the field
- Equally adept at attacking and defending
- Maintains possession
- Tracks back to tackle and block shots
- Breaks into the opponent's box and tries to score

Position: Wide midfielder

- Provides width in midfield
- Gives full-backs defensive protection
- Compresses play in opponents' half
- May cross from deeper positions than wingers
- Combines speed and stamina



Position: Attacking midfielder

- Dictates play from behind the strikers
- Creates goal scoring chances for the attackers
- Technique and creativity crucial
- Ability to shoot from range an advantage
- Historically associated with the No.10 jersey

Position: Winger

- The widest attacking player
- Takes on opposition defenders
- Provides crosses into the box
- Meets crosses from the opposite wing
- Often the fastest player on the field



Position: Forward

- Plays between midfield and attack
- Assists the striker in scoring goals
- Elusive and difficult to mark
- More versatile than the target-man
- Vision, technical skill and creativity



Position: Striker

- Closest player to the opponent's goal
- Responsible for scoring goals
- Holds the ball up until teammates can join the attack
- Harries opposition defenders
- Physically strong

