FOOTBALL EXPRESSIONS KEY

Back of the net! to score a goal

You should've seen it, it was such a great goal. Back of the net!

Man on! this is usually shouted out during a match to warn someone that a player of the other team is right behind them. Often a call to pass the ball.

• Quick! Man on! Pass the ball to Jones!

We were robbed: a phrase used to express that a defeat was unjust, possibly due to an injustice committed by somebody else.

• The referee didn't see that foul. If he'd given that player a yellow card he wouldn't have scored that goal. We were robbed!

He's (she's) got a sweet left foot: referring to a player who is very skillful at kicking the ball with his / her left foot (most players use the right foot)

 She's one of the best players on the team, and she's got a sweet left foot.

He (she) pulled off a great save, what a save! referring to a very quick, acrobatic stop of a shot by the goalkeeper.

• What a save by the goalie. That was fantastic!

Hit the woodwork: when a player intends to shoot into the goal but hits the crossbar or the post of the goal instead, and was very unlucky not to have scored.

He almost had it, but unfortunately it hit the woodwork.

Ran the defence ragged: referring to an attacking player who made the defenders from the opposing team look uncomfortable or incompetent.

 He deserves to be Man of the Match. He scored a hat-trick and ran the defence ragged!

He (she's) got a lot of pace: a very fast player

• Jones is definitely a great player, he's **got a lot of pace**.

The goalkeeper made a howler: used when the goalkeeper makes a very basic mistake (and probably lets the other team score a goal).

 They were in the lead, but then the goalkeeper made a howler and the other team scored.

It's a game of two halves: an expression referring to the fact that a football match can change unexpectedly throughout the 90 minutes. Especially between the first half and second half of the match.

• Well, they may be losing now, but it's a game of two halves!

FOOTBALL-RELATED IDIOMS

Idioms are different from the above expressions because they can be used in conversation about any topic and not just football.

Get the ball rolling: to get something started. Begin a process.

 We need to have everything ready for the party by next week, so if you could please get the ball rolling by inviting everyone, that would be really helpful.

Get a kick out of something: to enjoy watching or doing something.

• If you **get a kick out of** horror movies, then you'll love the new Quentin Tarantino film!

To kick something off, to kick-start something: to begin or cause something to begin.

- We're going to **kick-start** the summer with a lovely weekend trip to the countryside.
- If you want to be a successful businessman, you need to keep your eye on the ball all the time.
- He took his eye off the ball when he shouldn't have done, and the rival company managed to snatch the deal from him.

To watch from the sidelines: a position where someone is observing a situation rather than being directly involved in it.

 You never supported me when I needed you. You just watched from the sidelines!

To move the goalposts: to unfairly change the rules or conditions of a procedure during its course.

 Jessica quit her job because her boss kept moving the goalposts about her promotion prospects.

To be on the ball: someone who is very quick to respond and very aware of new ideas and methods.

• What's wrong with you? You used to **be on the ball** with your work all the time.

A political football: a topical issue that is the subject of continued argument or controversy.

• Retirement age is a big **political football** in the European Union'

At this (late) stage in the game: this simply means 'at this point'.

• There's nothing we can do at this stage in the game. You should've told me earlier.

To kick someone around: to treat someone roughly or disrespectfully.

• I don't think it's fair the way you **kick him around** all the time. He deserves some respect.

To score an own goal: an act that unintentionally harms one's own interests.

 Unfortunately, Sarah scored an own goal by quitting her job before signing her new contract.

To take sides: to support one person, or stand against another, in a dispute or contest.

• I'm not taking sides. I think you're both wrong, so I'm not getting involved!

League: a class or category of quality or excellence.

 When it comes to achieving perfection, John is in a league of his own.

To blow the whistle on someone: to bring an illicit activity to an end by informing on the person responsible.

 She was offered a lot of money as a bribe, because she threatened to blow the whistle on the company's illegal activities.

A game plan: a strategy worked out in advance

 We need to come up with a better game plan; this idea will never work!

Know the score: to be aware of the essential facts about a situation.

• I don't need to explain anything else to my boss, he knows the score.

A game changer: an idea, procedure or event that significantly changes the current way of doing or thinking about something.

• The new software had become known as the new 'game-changing' entertainment experience.