

## Target Players Receiving the Ball

Lawrence Fine

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When a target player (usually a forward with a defender right on them) receives a ball under pressure it's extremely important the target player receive the ball with their correct foot.

If a center midfielder has the ball and is looking to play the ball up to a target player who is under pressure, it's important for the target player to position himself or herself in a way that they will receive the ball "side on" to the defender. This means, positioning their body in a way so that instead of having their back to the defender, they have their shoulder to the defender which allows the target player to receive the ball with the opposite foot allowing the target player to use their entire body to shield the ball from the defender.



***Peter Crouch Tottenham & England, using his whole frame to shield the ball away from the defender***

Too many target players receive the ball with their back to the defender, which allows the defender to poke the ball away easily. Or, they receive the ball with their body side on to the defender but with the wrong foot making it easy for the defender to dispossess them from the ball.



***Abby Wambach of the US Women's National Team, fights to gain possession as she has not placed her body between the ball and the defender***

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If the target player positions their body so their right shoulder is against the defender, the ball should be received with the outside of the left foot. This keeps the ball as far from the defender as possible while still allowing multiple options for the target player. If the target player positions their body with their left shoulder against the defender, the ball should be received with the outside of their right foot.

There are many exceptions to this but it's a good general rule to work from.

It's extremely important for a target player to prepare for this situation and to be equally adept at receiving the ball with the outside of either their left or right foot.

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