

How can I use Excel to return the column number of a match?

Authored by
stats writer

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Excel is a powerful tool that can be used to quickly and efficiently retrieve information from a large amount of data. One useful function of Excel is its ability to return the column number of a specific value or match within a data set. To do this, one can use the MATCH function, which allows users to specify a lookup value and range and returns the relative position of that value within the range. This feature is particularly helpful for organizing and analyzing data, as it allows users to easily identify the location of a specific value or match within a large set of data. By using Excel's MATCH function, users can save time and effort in locating and organizing data, making it a valuable tool for data management and analysis.

Excel: Return Column Number of Match

You can use the following methods to return the column number of a match in Excel:

Method 1: Return Column Number of Match within Table

=MATCH(H2, C1:F1, 0)

This particular formula will look up the value in cell H2 in the range C1:F1 and then return the column number that matches the value in cell H2.

Method 2: Return Column Number of Match within Entire Spreadsheet

=MATCH(H2, \$1:\$1, 0)

This particular formula will look up the value in cell H2

in the entire first row of the spreadsheet and then return the column number that matches the value in cell H2.

The following examples show how to use each method in practice with the following dataset in Excel:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1			Team	Points	Assists	Rebounds	
2			Mavs	22	4	10	
3			Spurs	28	4	13	
4			Rockets	24	3	8	
5			Kings	30	8	5	
6			Warriors	34	5	4	
7			Nets	28	7	9	
8			Lakers	25	6	10	
9			Thunder	15	4	12	
10			Blazers	14	12	8	
11			Jazz	18	8	5	
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							

Note: The value of 0 in the last argument of the MATCH function tells Excel to look for an exact match.

Example 1: Return Column Number of Match within Table

We can type the following formula into cell I2 to find the column number in the range C1:F1 that matches the value in cell H2:

=MATCH(H2, C1:F1, 0)

The following screenshot shows how to use this formula in practice:

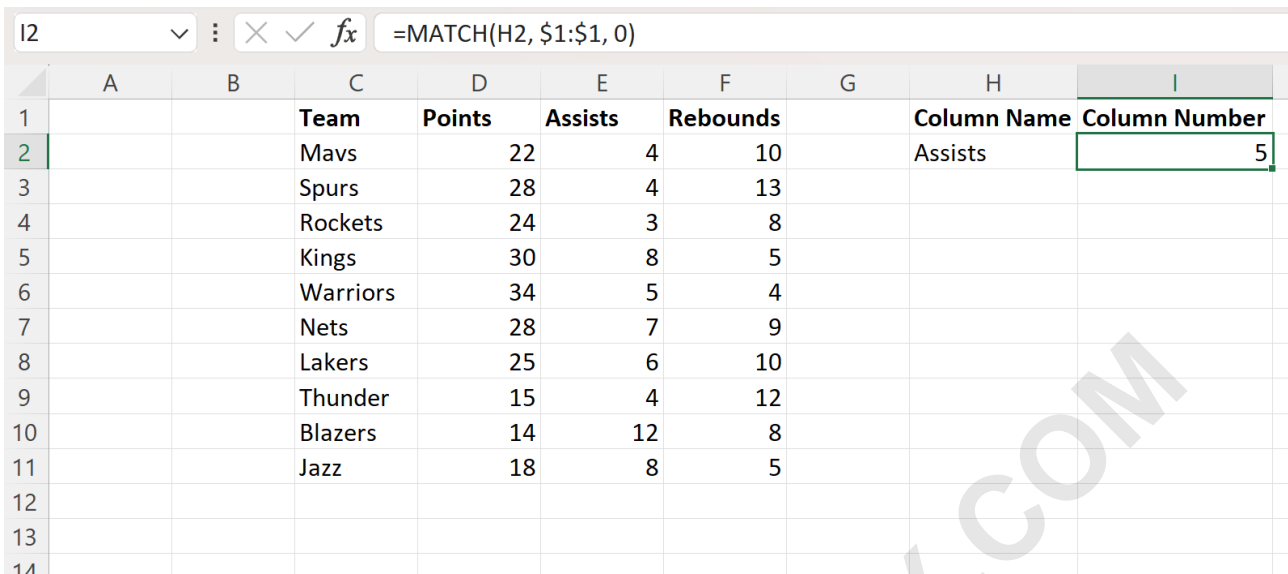
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1			Team	Points	Assists	Rebounds		Column Name	Column Number
2			Mavs	22	4	10		Assists	3
3			Spurs	28	4	13			
4			Rockets	24	3	8			
5			Kings	30	8	5			
6			Warriors	34	5	4			
7			Nets	28	7	9			
8			Lakers	25	6	10			
9			Thunder	15	4	12			
10			Blazers	14	12	8			
11			Jazz	18	8	5			
12									
13									
14									

The formula returns a value of 3 since the name "Assists" is located in column 3 of the range that we specified.

Example 2: Return Column Number of Match within Entire Spreadsheet

=MATCH(H2, \$1:\$1, 0)

The following screenshot shows how to use this formula in practice:



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1			Team	Points	Assists	Rebounds		Column Name	Column Number
2			Mavs	22	4	10		Assists	5
3			Spurs	28	4	13			
4			Rockets	24	3	8			
5			Kings	30	8	5			
6			Warriors	34	5	4			
7			Nets	28	7	9			
8			Lakers	25	6	10			
9			Thunder	15	4	12			
10			Blazers	14	12	8			
11			Jazz	18	8	5			
12									
13									
14									

The formula returns a value of 5 since the name "Assists" is located in column 5 of the entire spreadsheet.

Note that the range \$1:\$1 in the formula indicates that we should look for the value "Assists" in row 1 of the entire spreadsheet.

We could also drag this formula down to more cells in column I to find the column number of other names:

