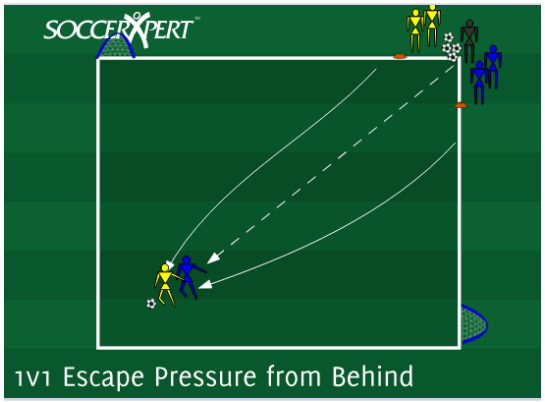

1v1 Escape Pressure from Behind

Objective:
This drill teaches players how to handle pressure when receiving with their back to goal, a situation that happens constantly in games. Players learn to position their body between the opponent and the ball to protect possession. They develop the feel for where the defender is without looking and make smart decisions about when to turn, when to shield, and when to play quickly. Reading the pressure is the key skill here. If the defender is tight, players need patience and technique to spin away. If the defender gives space, players should recognize it instantly and turn to attack. The competitive race element builds urgency and simulates the real game pressure of winning a fifty-fifty ball. Scoring on small goals adds consequence and forces players to execute their escape move with a purpose.

Drill Quick Glance

Age: 9+	**Field:** 10X10
Players: 6+	**Time:** 15 mins.
Difficulty: MEDIUM	**Focus:** TURNING
Keeper: NO	**Type:** INDIVIDUAL
Author: Chris Johnson	

Equipment

Disc Cones/Markers | Soccer Balls | Training Sticks | Pugg Goal

Setup

- Mark out a 10x10 yard grid using cones
- Place two small gates or small goals on adjacent sides of the grid
- Create two lines of 3-4 players each at the corner between the two goals
- Position the coach between the two lines with a good supply of balls
- Make sure there's space behind the goals for balls that miss and players to safely exit

Instructions

1. One player from each line steps forward as the coach prepares to serve
2. The coach plays a ball toward the opposite corner of the grid
3. Both players race to get to the ball first
4. The player who arrives first must position their body between the opponent and the ball
5. Shield the ball using your body, arms out for balance, and feel where the defender is
6. Read the pressure from the defender behind you
7. If the defender is tight on your back, use a turn or spin move to escape the pressure
8. If the defender gives you space, recognize it quickly and turn to face them
9. After escaping pressure, attack one of the two small goals and try to score
10. When the ball goes out, or a goal is scored, both players return to their lines
11. The next two players immediately step out for the next repetition

Coaching Points

- The first player to the ball must get their body between the opponent and the ball immediately
- Arms should be out for balance and to feel contact with the opponent
- Head should be up with quick glances to locate the defender and scan for the goals
- First touch should be away from pressure if possible, not stopping the ball dead
- Players need to feel the pressure through contact to know if the defender is tight or loose
- When turning, use the inside or outside of the foot and keep the ball close during the movement
- If the defender isn't applying pressure, take advantage immediately and face up
- Low center of gravity with bent knees makes shielding stronger and more stable
- After the turn, accelerate quickly into space before the defender can recover
- The player without the ball should apply immediate pressure and try to stay goal-side
- Watch for players just kicking the ball away under pressure instead of controlling it first

Variations

- Designate one line as attackers and one as defenders, giving attackers a two yard head start
- Require players to dribble through a gate instead of shooting to work on close control
- Add a touch limit where players must shoot within three touches after winning the ball
- Make players use their weak foot only for the finish
- Require a specific turn like a Cruyff turn or inside hook before they can score
- Award bonus points for scoring on the far goal to encourage turning away from pressure
- Add a time limit where players must score within five seconds of the coach's pass
- Let the winner stay on and face the next challenger in a king of the grid format
- Serve different types of balls, like bouncing, rolling, or in the air, to add variety
- Increase grid size to 12x12 or 15x15 to give more space for developing players