



New York State West Youth Soccer  
Association

## 1v1: defending, attacking, decision-making

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### Newsletter January

Age group: 6-12

Without questions, the 1v1 dual is a basic component of soccer. Kids always love to compete in the immediate duel, and love to trick the opponent or steal the ball. It is attractive for coaches because it is easy to set up with little equipment. This article will demonstrate how to teach the basics of the 1v1 (attacking and defending), step-by-step. This article includes warm-up/preparatory games for the topic, basic and complex 1v1 training sessions.

#### Coaching points 1v1 offense:

- Take on opponent with courage and determination.
- Use tricks and moves combined with change of speed and direction.
- Dribble towards one specific foot of the defender in order to move to the other foot with speed.
- Analyze the current situation and decide for the best move in the situation.

#### Coaching points 1v1 defense:

- Close down the space for the attacker.
- Get in lateral position to the attacker.
- Take on striker's speed.
- Keep your eye on the ball.
- use your whole body to defend > get the striker off balance to steal the ball > don't just try to kick the ball away.

## Warm up/tag games

### 1. Pinnie Stealing

**Set up:**

- 15x15yd field
- Every player gets a pinnie (different colors) which is tucked in shorts/pants, pinnie needs to be visible.

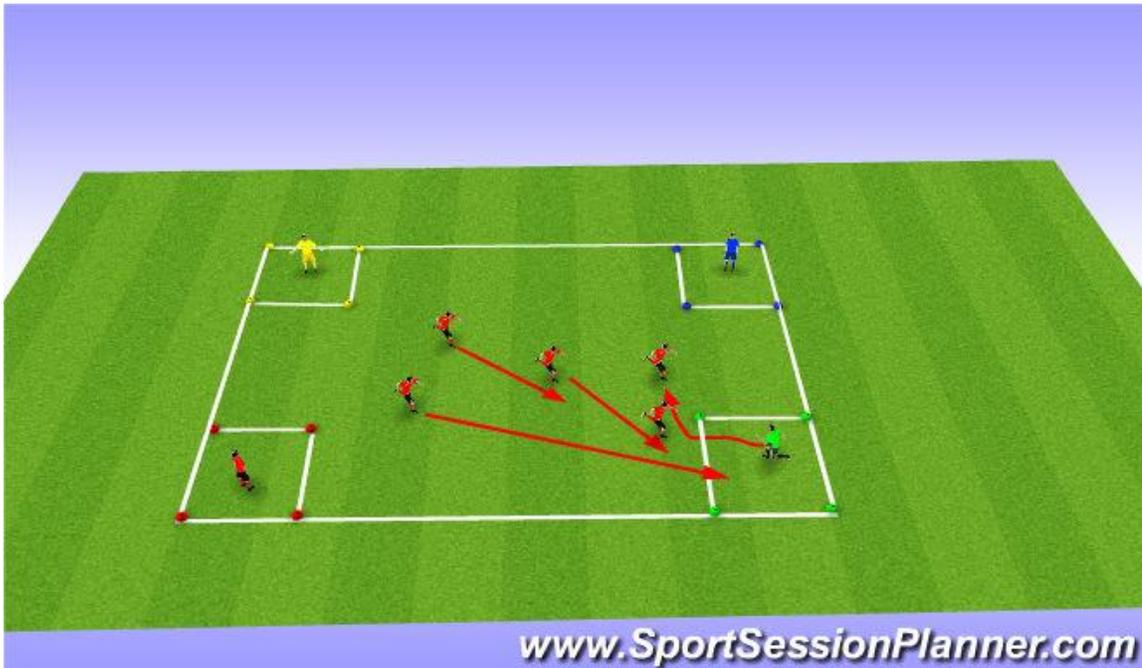
**Execution:**

- Everyone against everyone; every player tries to steal as many pinnies as possible; stolen pinnies will be tucked in, too.
- Players cannot hold on to pinnies.
- Who stole the most pinnies after one minute?

**Variation:**

- Points for pinnies of different color, e.g. 1 point for yellow pinnie, 2 points for blue pinnies, 3 points for red pinnies...

## 2. Castle guards



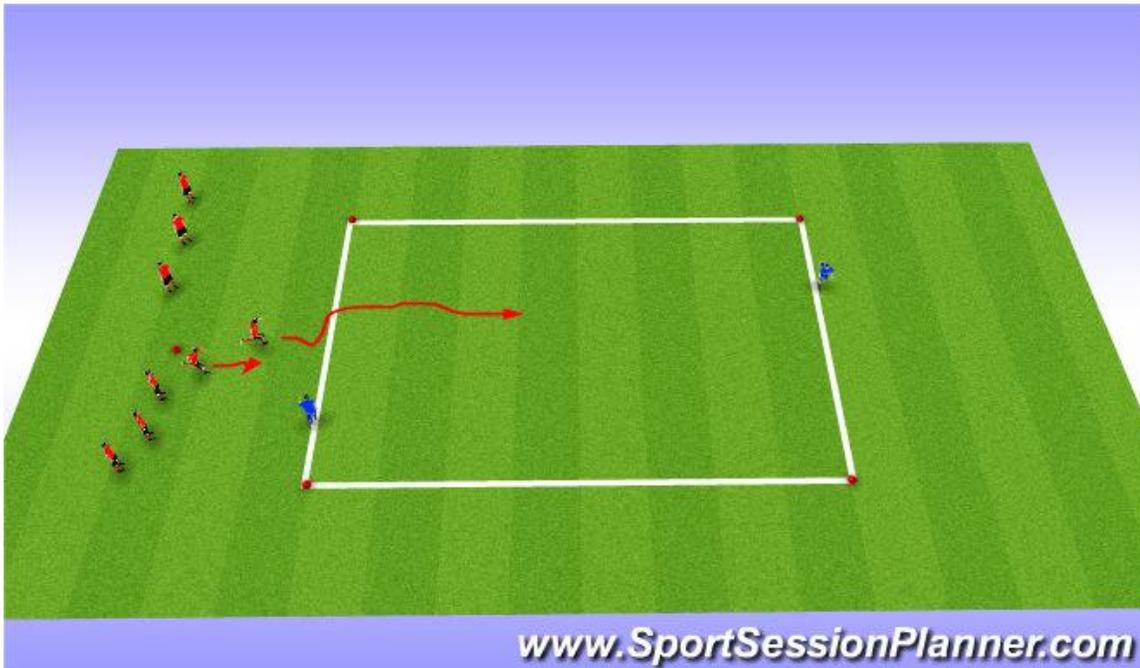
### Set up:

- 20x20yd field
- 4 5x5yd fields in each corner (castles).
- Each castle has a guard, all other players (knights) are in the big field.

### Execution:

- All knights are moving around with different exercises, e.g. high knees, reverse running, butt kicks...
- The coach will call a color of one castle > the knights must try to enter the castle. The castle guards must protect the castle by tagging the knights before entering (the guard can leave his castle).

### 3. Prison Break

**Set up:**

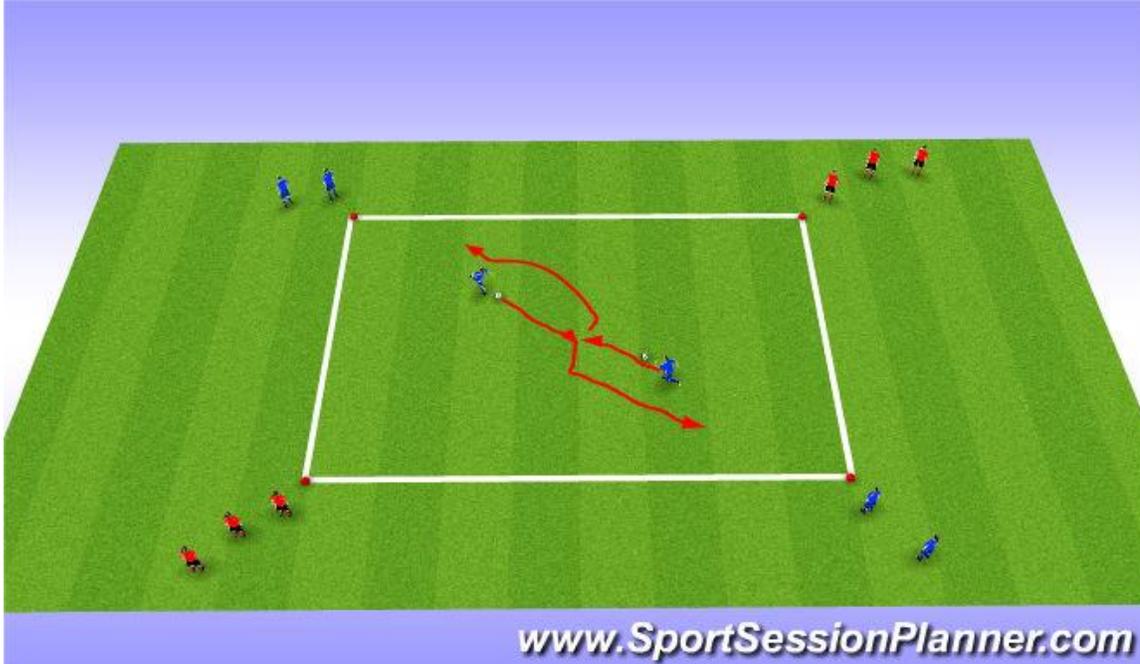
- 15x15yd field
- Starting point (cone) 10yd away from field
- 2 prison guards (blue) on first and second line (*as shown in picture*).
- Prisoners line up at the cone.

**Performance:**

- The goal is to break out by crossing the first and second line without getting tagged by the prison guards.
- The prison guards can move only on their line (side to side).
- If the prisoner crosses the first line, the next prisoner can go.
- If the prisoners get tagged or if they break out successfully, they line up again
- How many prisoners can the guards tag?
- 2-3min > then switch guards.

**Variation:** add a ball

## Simple technical-tactical training



### Set up:

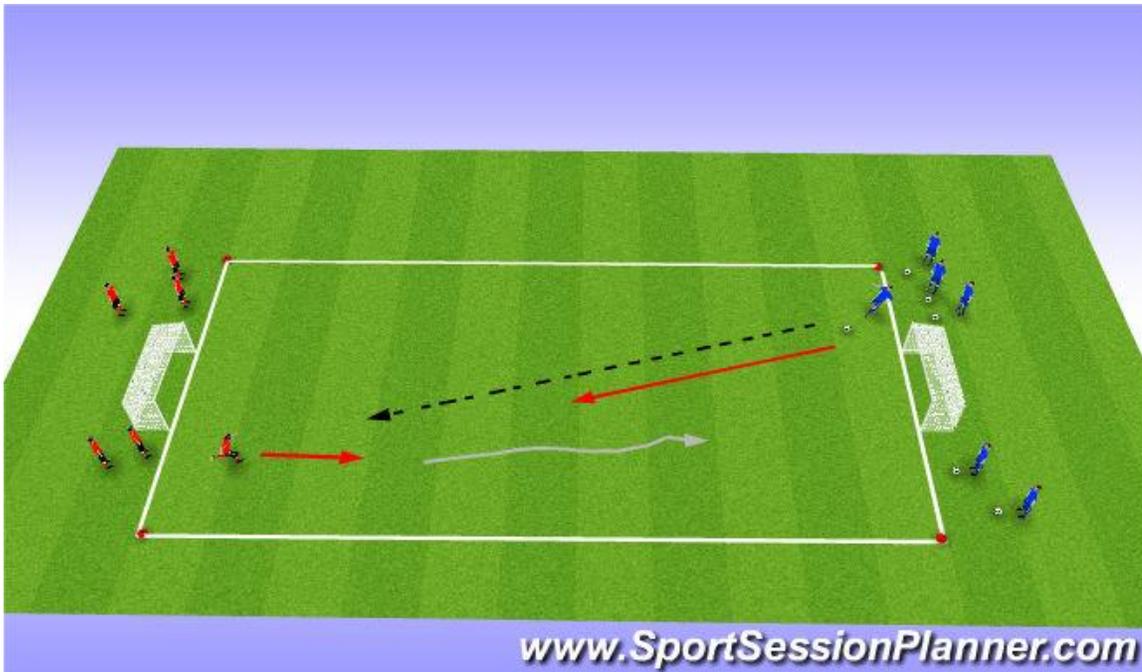
- 20x20yd square
- 3-4 players at each corner
- Every player has a ball

### Performance:

- the players across from each other dribble towards one another > once they meet in the middle, they do the same technical skill and dribble to other side and line up.
- once the first two players are done (here blue) the two other players start to dribble (here red)
  - ideas for moves/tricks:
    - right/left outside
    - roll over to the right/left
    - stepover right/left
    - scissor right/left
    - double scissors
    - sidesteps

### Coaching points:

- have the kids demonstrate the tricks and moves; they may know new tricks they just learned.
- The players must always use the same foot in order not to crash into each other.



### Set up:

- 15x20yd field with 2 mini goals
- 2 teams
- All players of the blue team have a ball

### Execution:

- A player of blue dribbles a few yards and passes then to a red player and becomes a defender.
- the red player controls the ball and tries to score on blue's goal > 1v1.
- if the blue player wins the ball, he can score on red's goal.

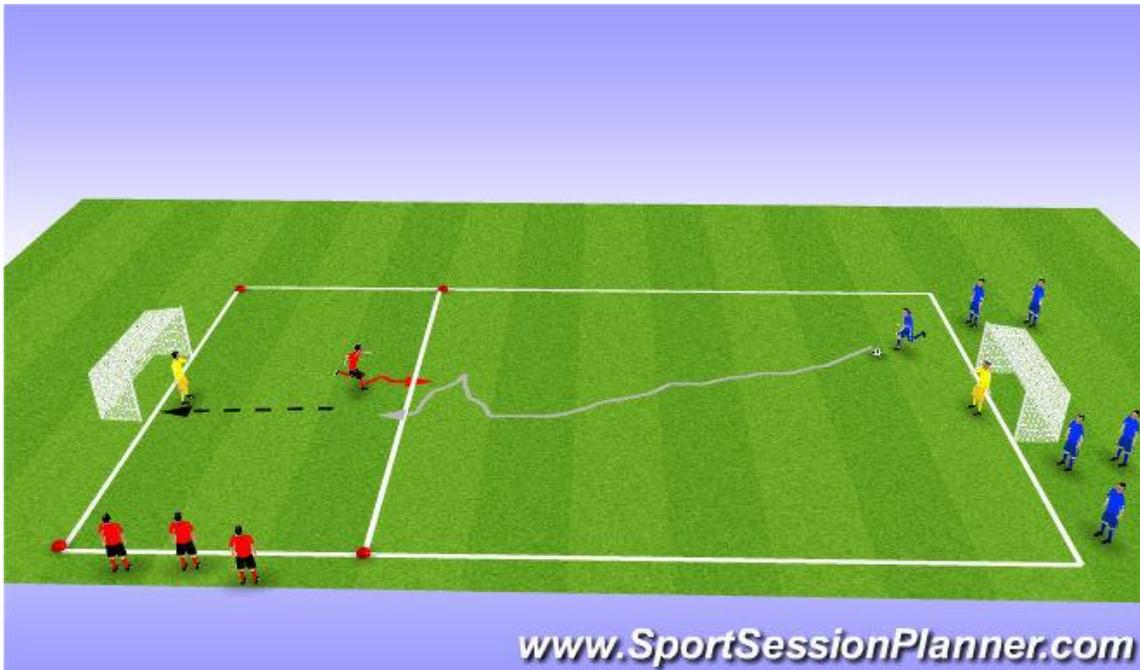
### Coaching points:

#### *For the striker:*

- Don't stop the ball completely > keep the ball rolling in front of you and accelerate (it will be more difficult for the defender if the striker comes with speed)
- Get to opponent's goal as quickly as possible

#### *For the defender:*

- don't wait for the attacker to come, keep the striker away from goal they are defending, approach in a slight curve to close out the space (take one option away from the striker)
- don't dive into the attacker (it will too easy for the striker to pass by with one simple trick).
- force striker to the outside by moving sideways, take on striker's pace, keep some distance to the striker in order being able to react quickly.
- use your body to get striker off balance in order to steal the ball.

**Set up:**

- 15x10yd field with 2 goals and goalies
- 5yd deep scoring zone
- 2 teams, blue team with balls

**Execution:**

- the first player of blue dribbles the ball into the scoring zone.
- Player can only score if he is in the scoring zone.
- Red player tries to steal the ball and scores on blue's goal.
- If ball is out of bounds or if either player scored, the next players go on the field.

**Coaching points:**

- Same as above.
- The closer the strikers gets to scoring zone the more aggressive the defender must be by using their body.
- The difference here is that the striker must enter the scoring zone and the striker and defender must tackle now.

**Set up:**

- Field set up same as above
- 2 gates with different color
- Two teams

**Execution:**

- first player of red passes through the red gate, runs through yellow gate and becomes defender.
- first player of blue runs through red gate and takes control of the ball and tries to score > 1v1.
- if the red player wins the ball, he can score on the other goal
- the same on the other side.

**Coaching points:**

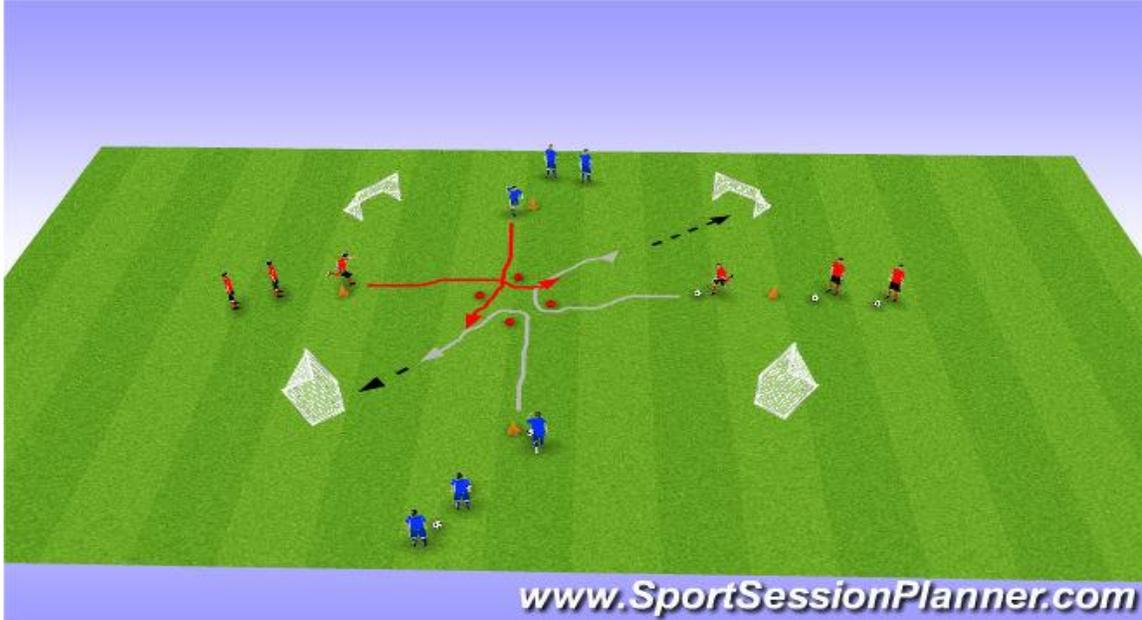
*for the defenders:*

- don't walk away from striker (in order to protect goal)
- stay close to striker; don't let them turn towards the goal > physical contact and use your body.

*for the striker:*

- dribble with speed.
- look for the direct and shortest way to the goal.

## Complex 1v1 training



### Set up:

- Set up a field with 4 goals
- Small diamond in the middle
- 2 teams that are split and are lined up across from each other
- 1 group of each time has a ball

### Execution:

- 2 1v1 games take place at the same time, blue vs blue and red vs red
- The first players of each team with the ball dribble into the field and play 1v1 against the player across (same color) and tries to score on any goal.
- In order to score, the player must cross a side of the small diamond in the center.
- If the defender wins the ball, he can score on any goal.
- After that, the players change position.
- When all players leave the field, the next players go.

### Coaching points:

#### *For the striker:*

- Pick up head.  
Be patient and watch defender.
- Drag defender into one direction and then change direction with a trick/move quickly and accelerate.



**Set up:**

- 15x15 yd with 4 goals
- A gate in front of each goal (1-2yd)
- 4 groups (*as shown in picture*)
- The players on one side have a ball

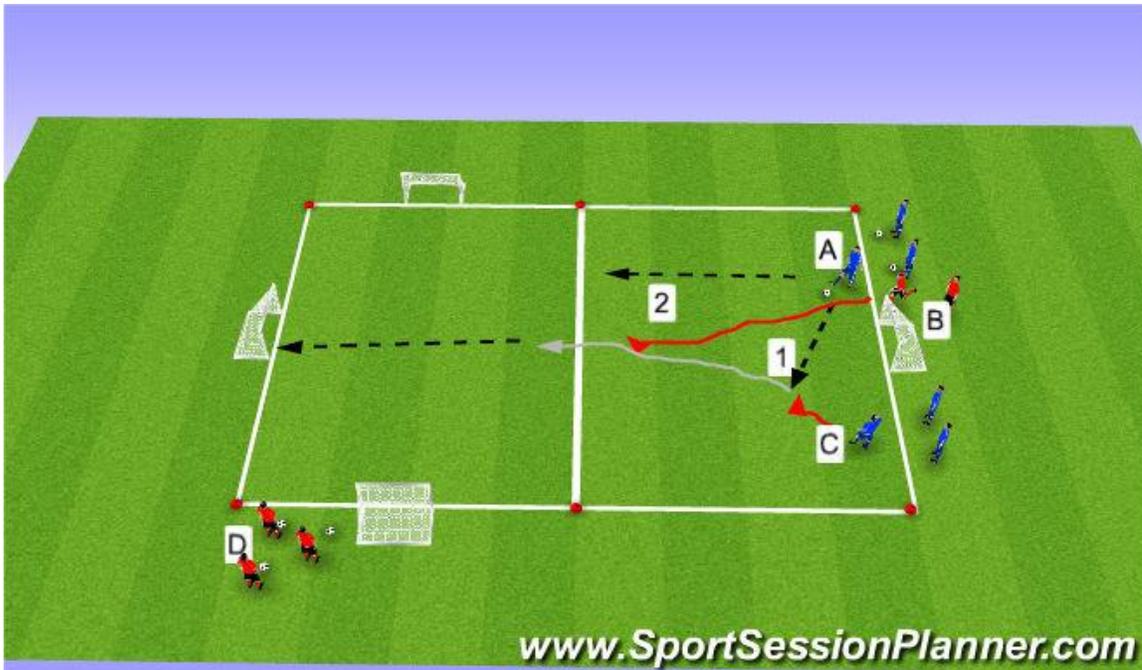
**Execution:**

- the first players with a ball start to dribble and then pass to the players diagonally; become defenders >1v1.
- the receivers try to score on any goal.
- in order to score they must cross any gate (excluding the gate at the starting point).
- if the defender wins the ball, he can score on any goal.
- when both 1v1 games are done, next player can go.

**Coaching points:**

*For the striker:*

- Don't stop the ball completely > keep the ball rolling in front of you and accelerate (more difficult for the defender if striker comes with speed).
- Don't wait for the ball, come to the ball.
- Drag defender into one direction and change direction quickly.



### Set up:

- 25x15yd field with 4 goals and a center line (*as shown in picture*)
- 2 groups lined up at positions (*as shown in picture*)

### Execution:

- A passes to B and B tries to score on opposite goal > once A passes to B, C enters the field and tries to defend and steal the ball.
- B can only score after crossing the center line.
- If B scores, he will get a second pass from A > now B tries to score on any side goal > C tries to defend and to steal the ball.
- If the defender C wins the ball, he can score on the opposite goal and B is now defending > if C scores, he will get a pass from D and tries to score on any side goal > B is defending.
- If B misses, C gets a pass from D.

### Coaching points:

#### *For the striker:*

- Don't stop the ball completely > keep it rolling in front of you and dribble towards the center with speed, don't put yourself under pressure by dribbling towards the outside.
- Get open for the second pass (get away from defender).
- Quick transition after scoring or losing the ball (double action).

#### *For the defender:*

- All defending coaching points from above.
- Quick transition after winning ball and scoring.



**Set up:**

- 20x15yd field with 3 mini goals
- 2 teams, lined up (*as shown in picture*)
- 2 groups behind the goal
- Blue is attacking, red is defending
- 1 striker and 1 defender on the field

**Execution:**

- A and B are passing to each other > meanwhile the blue striker on the field tries to get open, away from the defender so that he can receive the ball from A or B
- When the striker receives the ball, he can score on either goal.
- The defender tries to steal the ball, and if he wins the ball, he can score on the opposite goal.

**Coaching points:**

*For the striker:*

- Don't run towards A or B to receive the ball (space to receive the ball will be limited > pressure), but striker could run towards the passer in order to fake defender.
- Keep moving but be patient.
- Provoke defender, use your body to fake.
- Try to get behind the defender's back.

Ronaldo, Messi, Neymar, to name a few, are players that are very strong in 1v1 situations and can make a difference on the field. With their excellent 1v1 and finishing skills, they delight the spectators, win games, championships and trophies for their club. While moves and tricks are important, also as important is knowing when and how to get open, how to get behind the defender's back, how to catch the defender on the wrong foot and when to pass by the defender at the right moment. Messi, for example, does not need many tricks and moves, but he knows how to make the defenders ineffective in a simple way.

I hope these exercises and explanations will help to develop your player's 1v1 skills. As always please let me know if you have any questions, if you need more information or if you have any feedback. Please feel free to contact me: **[dgroth@nyswysa.org](mailto:dgroth@nyswysa.org)**.