

Last time we covered where to hit the first ball towards the next hoop. Placement of the first ball depended on which hoop we were shooting at, i.e., an odd numbered hoop, a corner hoop, a hoop in the middle of the court, etc.

This time we're going to expand this discussion to placement of all four balls towards the next scoring hoop. For convenience, we'll assume the first ball towards the hoop in question is blue, followed by red, black, and yellow. This discussion is more general, so the exact hoop in question is not important for these purposes.

The player of the first ball, **BLUE**, should try to get that ball into the "Golden Triangle" (GT) in order to give him/herself the best chance of scoring that hoop on his/her next turn.

The player of **RED**. If **BLUE** gets in the GT, the pressure is on **RED** to eliminate that threat, either by clearing **BLUE** out of scoring position or by blocking it from scoring. But, if **BLUE** is not in the GT, **RED** should set up in a scoring position, but should do so "defensively," i.e., be far south of the wicket or to one side or the other of the GT, so that if the opponent clears **RED**, the opponent's ball will not remain in a good position to score either.

The player of **BLACK**. If **BLUE** remains in good position to score on its next turn, **BLACK** should focus on protecting **BLUE** by trying to block **YELLOW** from clearing **BLUE**. If possible, try to not only put on the block but also place **BLACK** in position to score on its next turn too, just in case; this is not always possible. But if **BLUE** is not in good position to score, **BLACK** should set up with a good shot on the hoop. **BLACK** may have to set up "defensively" and far away from **RED** if **BLUE** is not close enough to clear **RED** away before **BLACK** has a chance to shoot on its next turn.

The player of **YELLOW**. If **BLUE** is still in good position to score (meaning **RED** was ineffective in its shot), **YELLOW** should try to clear it or block it. At the higher levels of play, where players are confident they can clear with just one shot, it is said that you block with the **RED** ball (hoping to have a shot on the hoop if **BLUE** cannot score) and you clear with the **YELLOW**. If you are not as confident in your clearing ability, and **BLUE** is in position to score, you can take two shots at **BLUE** with **RED** and **YELLOW**. You've doubled your odds of clearing! If **BLUE** is not in good position to score, but **RED** is in good position, try to protect **RED** from **BLUE** by blocking it. Try hard, if you can, to also put **YELLOW** in position to score, just in case things don't work out.

At this stage, there are so many variables that it becomes a bit like predicting the weather. But after all four balls have shot towards the next wicket, things should be fairly clear. In the future, we'll discuss what to think about when taking the next series of shots.