

USER GUIDE

Bob Kroeger's Croquet Strategy Video Series

VOLUME 1

For American Rules Six Wicket Croquet

Thank you for your interest in viewing my video series. I want to give a big special thanks to Harvey and Pam Geiger for making this series possible. Their generosity to this and many other croquet projects have had a huge positive impact on our sport. Also, this is dedicated to Ted Prentis, the person who taught me how to play and teach croquet. I and all who knew "Teddy" miss him dearly. His spirit is embedded in these videos.

The purpose of me creating this series is to give you a visual understanding of the tactics used in the game. I want users to take these presentations to the court, set up the balls, clips, and deadness and play them out. Here are two approaches you can take:

- 1) If you fail a particular shot, redo it until you can get a good relative safety?
- 2) If seeing the big picture is more important to you rather than mastering a particular shot, then by all means, place the balls where they should have gone.

After having completed the series I discovered that downloading the video files to an Apple IOS device (iPhone/iPad) is a bit more challenging than I thought. Downloading to either a Mac or Windows computer is not an issue as well as an Android smartphone. Rather than giving you a work around here, I will create a video that covers this. Be assured, there are ways to get these files so you can view them offline (not connected to the Internet) on an Apple IOS device.

Below are three topics that are referenced throughout the series:

- Can I end my turn in position at my wicket with relative safety?
- Do I have a Three-Ball Break?
- Do I have a Four-Ball Break?

Please read through these prior to viewing the videos.

The videos are numbered 01–10. Video #07 has three segments: 07a, 07b, and 07c. Please watch those in order the first time you go through them. After that, you can pick and choose. As for the other videos, there is no particular order you should follow. When starting a video, you will see an image of the beginning of each scenario showing ball positions, deadness, and clips. It also states which ball is to play. At the end of each video, I include my Final Thoughts. I extended this section longer than you may need. I wanted to give time to read at a comfortable pace. You can also pause this section. Once you're done, simply close the video.

Can I End My Turn In Position At My Wicket With Relative Safety?

An important question to ask yourself when you step on the croquet court to play your turn—do conditions exist (or can you create these conditions) to safely (this word described below) end your turn in position at your wicket? While we would always love to be clean of deadness at the end of our turn, sometimes it's impossible. The reason this question is important to answer is due to the enormous downside of having serious deadness at the end of your turn, especially deadness on partner. What did I mean by the word safely above? We know there is always a chance the opponent can make a long roquet to ruin your day but if you can identify conditions that make it difficult for the opponent to do this, you'll have a much better chance of having your tactical play work out. In the video segments, I use the words 'relative safety' when addressing this subject. So, what are these conditions? Let's assume your partner is alive on the opponent balls.

- If you can leave your partner with the spent ball (the ball that just played / the ball your partner plays before) and you can put the danger ball (the ball that plays next) in a place far from any ball it's alive on (12+ yards away), you in theory can end your turn with relative safety.
- If the spent ball is dead on its partner and far away from where your balls are at the end of your turn while the danger ball is "ineffective" (far away from balls it's alive on), you can end your turn in position with relative safety.

Do I Have A Three-Ball Break?

- 1) What wicket am I trying to score? (Always answer with the wicket number.)
- 2) Is there a ball that I can roquet or rush to score my wicket (yes or no)?
If the answer is no, you do not have a three-ball break. If the answer is yes, please go to question three.
- 3) What wicket will I be trying to score after I score my wicket (called a pioneer wicket)? (Always answer with the wicket number).
- 4) At this moment, is there a ball located quite near my pioneer wicket?
(If the answer is yes or no, go to question five.)
- 5) If there isn't a ball located near your pioneer wicket, can you send one there (yes or no)? If the answer is no, you do not have a three-ball break. If yes, you do have a three-ball break.

Do I Have A Four-Ball Break?

- 1) What wicket am I trying to score? (Always answer with the wicket number.)
- 2) Is there a ball that I can roquet or rush to score my wicket (yes or no)?
If the answer is no, you do not have a four-ball break. If the answer is yes, please go to question three.
- 3) What wicket will I be trying to score after I score my wicket (called a pioneer wicket)? (Always answer with the wicket number.)
- 4) At this moment, is there a ball located quite near my pioneer wicket?
(If the answer is yes or no, go to question five.)

- 5) If there isn't a ball located near your pioneer wicket, can you send one there (yes or no) while going to a ball that is centrally located (this ball is called a pivot ball)? If the answer is no, you do not have a four-ball break. If yes, you do have a four-ball break due to your ability to then roquet the pivot ball and use the two shots to go to the ball at your wicket.

Final Thoughts Before Watching The Video Clips

I wanted my narration to be unscripted, much like I am when teaching a private lesson or clinic. While I'm talking, I'm moving balls around describing the action. I believe in all but one video, I simply left the clips and deadness board where they were at the beginning of the video. The assumption is you would know that the deadness changes when the striker ball scores a wicket and that the clip would be picked up.

In some cases where a soft roquet was made, the roqueted ball doesn't show movement. In some thin take-offs, the croqueted ball isn't moved. I often include a text insert saying that it moved. If you find a croqueted ball didn't move on a thin take-off and I didn't address it in my narration or text, please assume it moved. The same holds true with a gently roqueted ball that wasn't moved.

The balls and wickets are quite large and not to scale—this to make them easier to see. You will see some shots where it seems the balls and wickets are obstacles. Please be assured the striker would check to see there is a clear path for all balls concerned.

I did my best to make sure the spelling is correct along with grammar and usage. If you find a lingering error with regard to these details, I thank you for your understanding. The boundary balls may seem too far out in the court. The reason for this is I wanted to show there is room for a ball to go between the boundary line and the boundary ball—this to get a rush on it. Finally, my solutions presented here are not the only ones available. Don't be surprised if you or another player says, "I wouldn't have done that, I would have done this."

Croquet is full of options and the ones that are chosen often depend on skill level. Now, let's get down to the videos! You may want to print the court diagrams that follow so you can take them to the court.



I hope you find this series useful. I have put a massive amount of time and effort to create this and hope those of you who have purchased it or received it as a gift find it useful will tell others about it.

Please do not share these files with those who have not purchased the series or received it as a gift. I really appreciate your understanding.

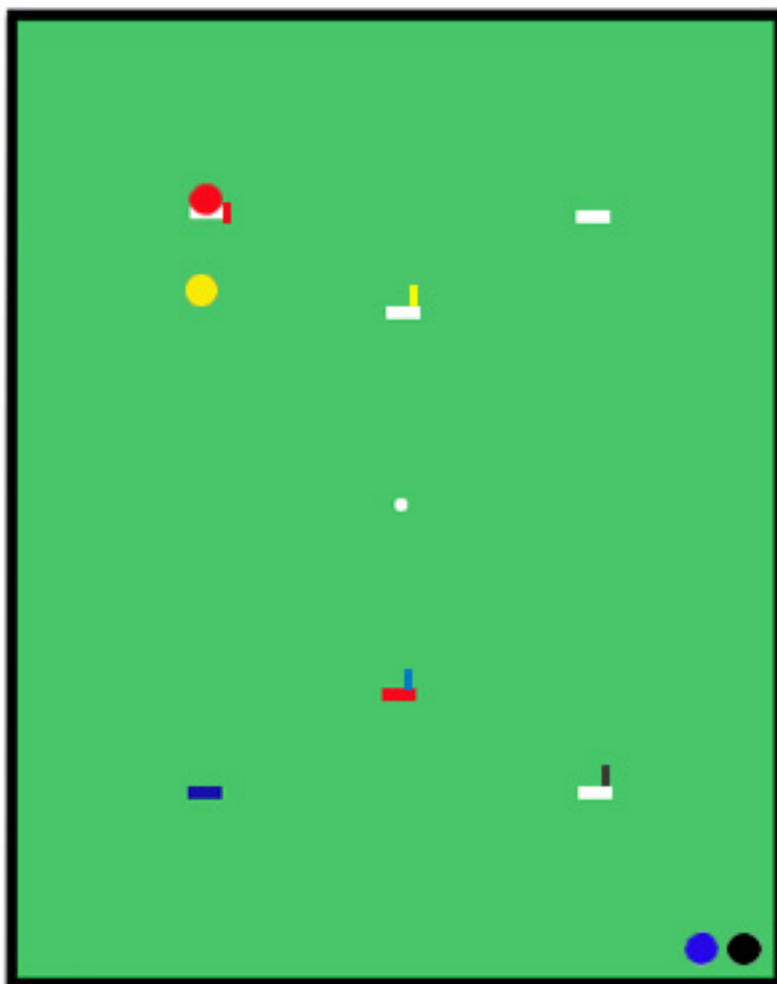
Thank you and enjoy,

Bob Kroeger
December 2018

Video Clip 01

This segment deals with an opportunity available when the opponent has just stuck in the 1-Back Wicket. It does require skill to pull this off. You would see low handicap players using tactics like this. If you feel this play is beyond your skill level, find one or two shots or a sequence of shots you feel you might be able to master. Doing so will only improve your shot-making to handle other situations you're sure to encounter.

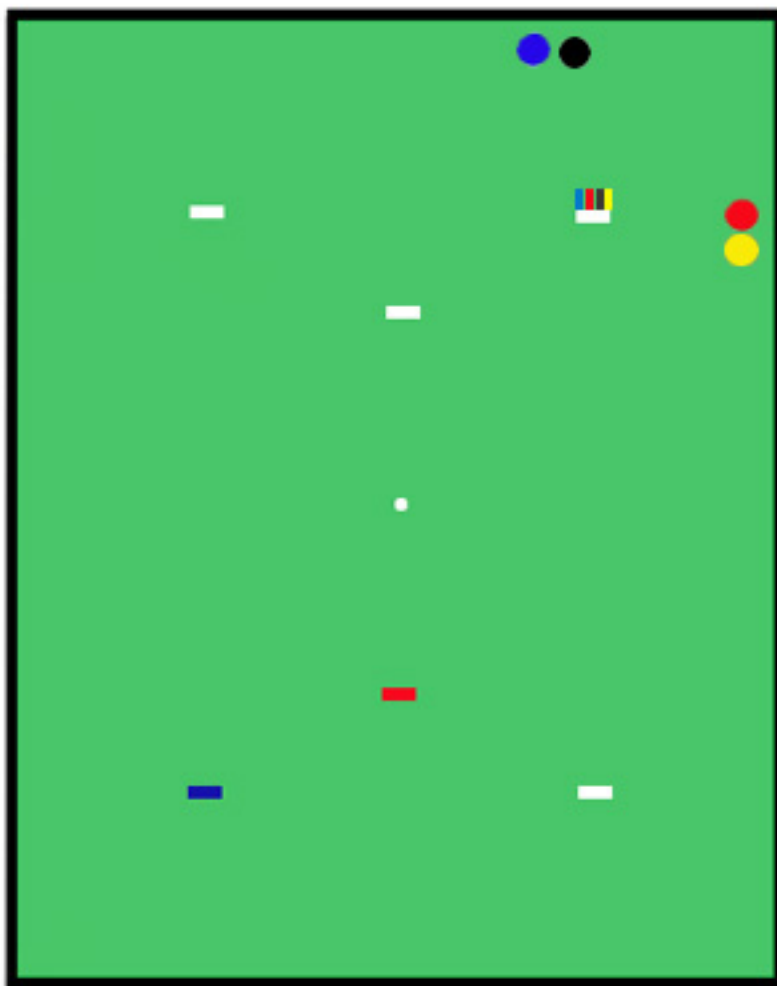
BLACK TO PLAY



Video Clip 02

Here we deal with a play First and Second Flight players might see. Both sides are being cautious near the wicket they are for - the third wicket. The play shown here is a Take-off to the Attack. While not my favorite form of attacking, it can work if the boundaries don't slope and the distance of the take-off isn't too long. If boundaries slope off, it's not worth attempting.

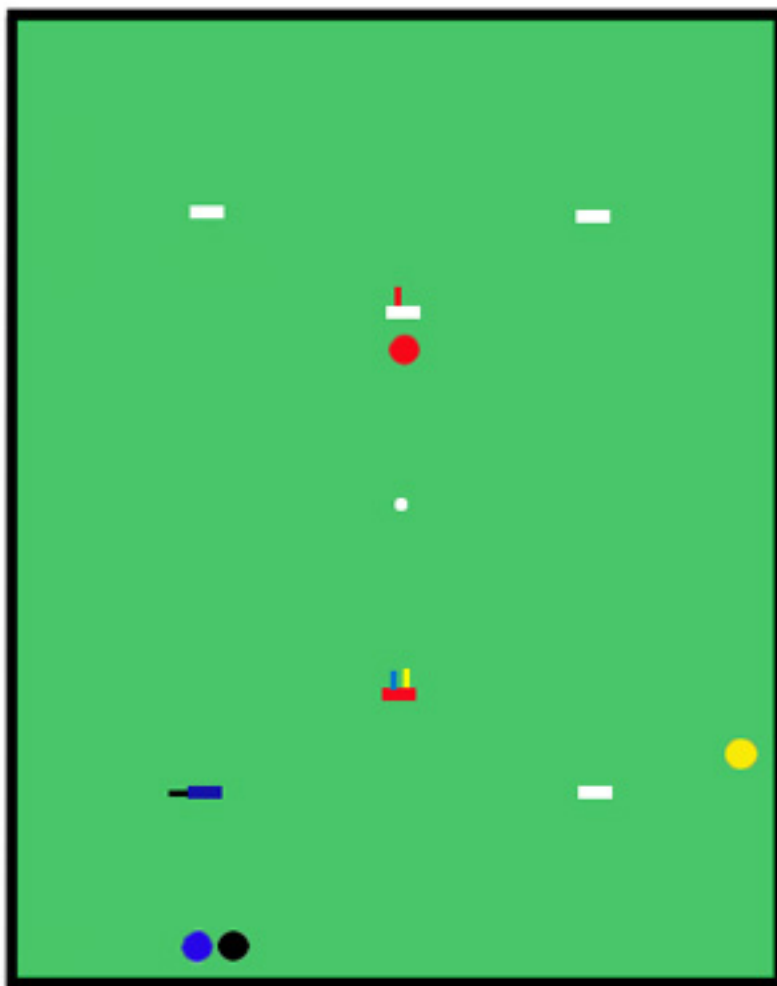
Red To Play



Video Clip 03

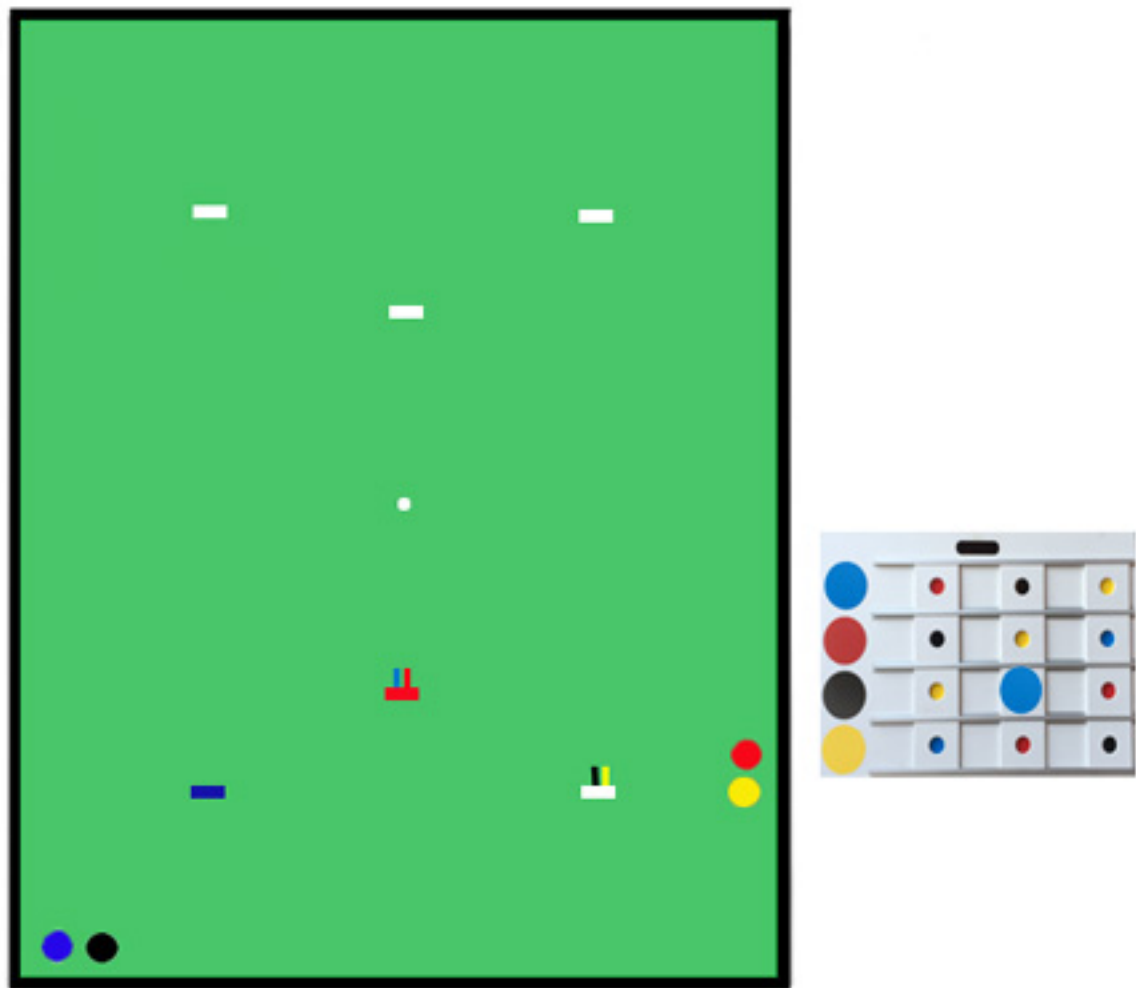
This video covers the tactic of ending your turn in position with relative safety. As is mentioned throughout the series, the opponent can always make a long roquet but the odds are in your favor they won't hit. This play requires skill in doing long take-offs. If this is a weakness in your game, RUN, DON'T WALK to the court to practice these!

BLACK TO PLAY



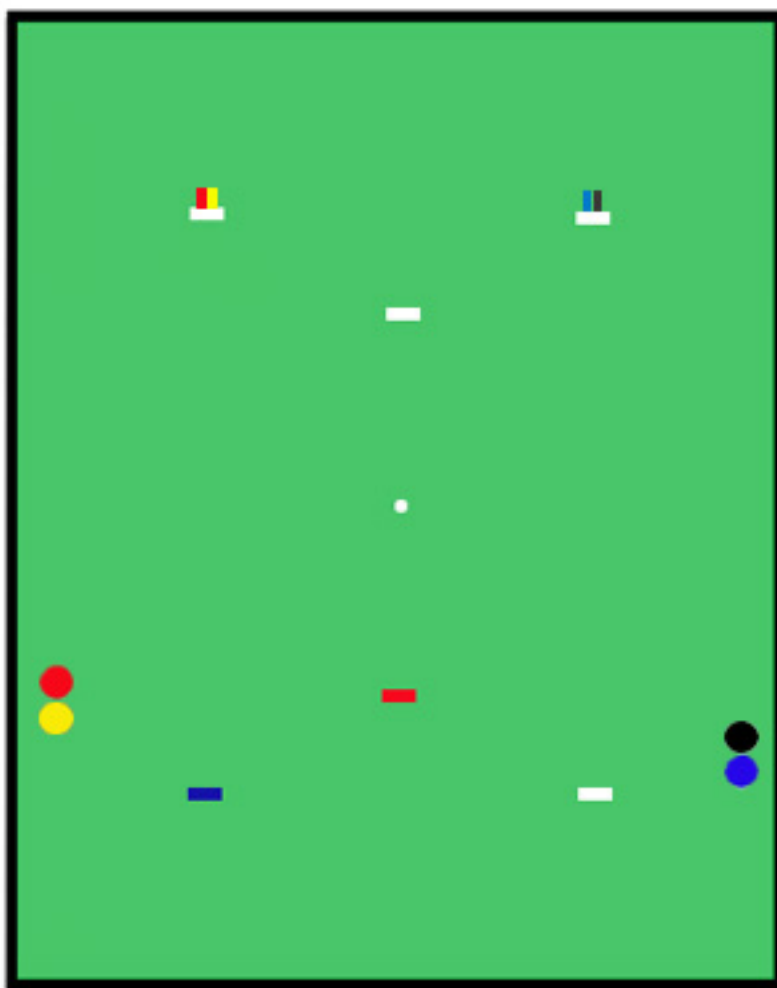
Video Clip 04

This shows a classic Rush to the Attack - my preferred method of attacking. Pulling off a play like this in a tournament game is tremendously rewarding. The reason I prefer this type of attack over a Take-off to the Attack is that if the rush goes out of bounds there is no deadness. Also, if the rush doesn't go quite right, there are contingencies such as rolling partner and striker to the spent ball and if that's not possible, you can try a take-off to the opponents.



Video Clip 05

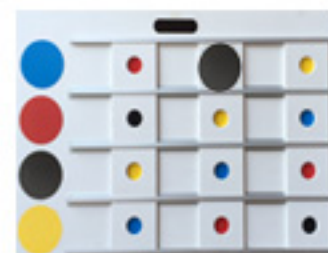
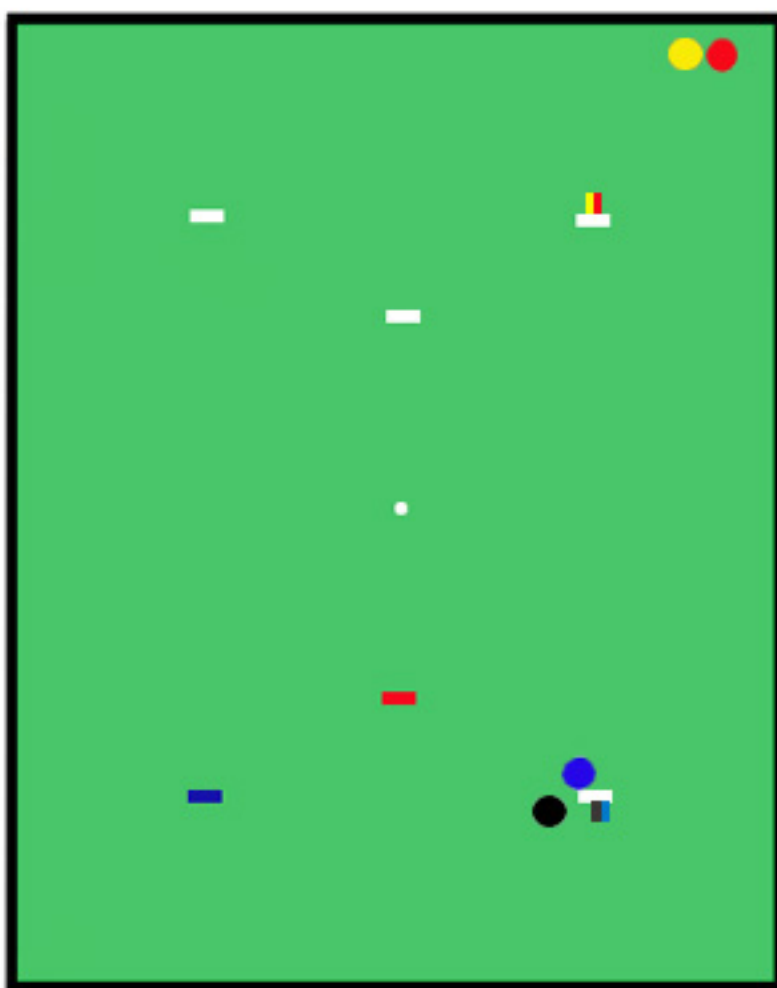
This tactic is by far the most challenging of the series and demands precise shooting and a lot of confidence. Certain shots will require a lot of practice. It shows how to develop a Four Ball Break when both opponent balls must be retrieved from the boundary. Court conditions must be good to pull this off.



Video Clip 06

This play shows several options. A few require fine long take-off skills in addition to some thick take-off skills. Like many other segments in this series, this play allows the striker to end their turn in position with relative safety. For advanced players, you will see at the beginning of this the immediate Four Ball Break opportunity. The 15 foot split shot required is a great one to practice.

RED TO PLAY



Video Clips 07a, 07b, and 07c

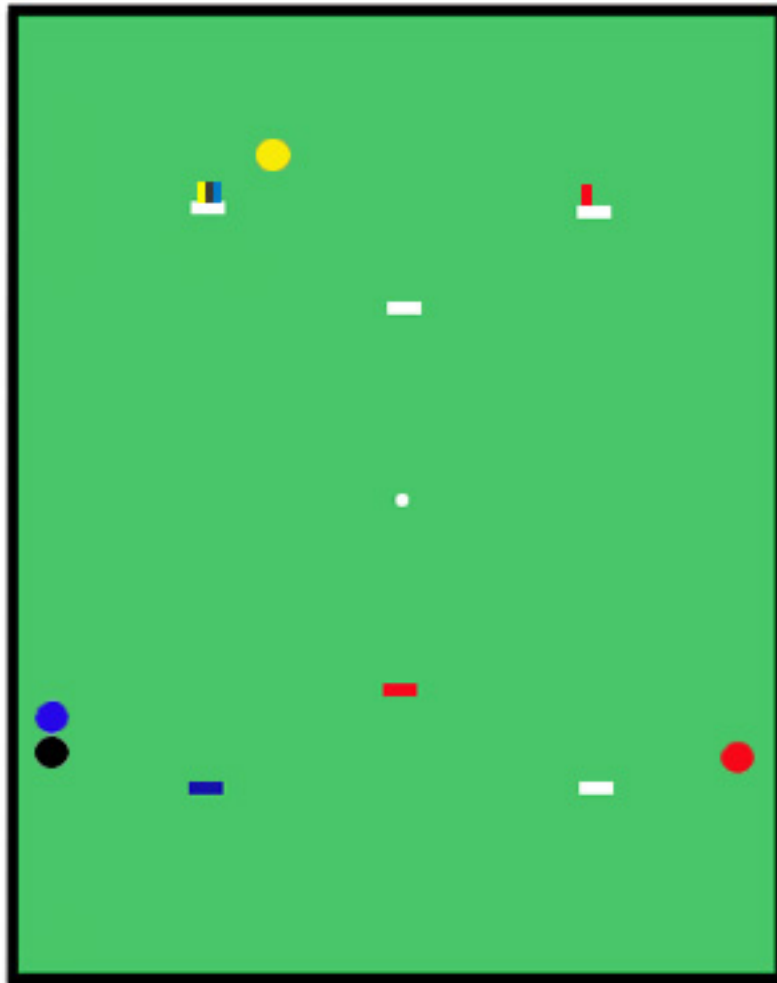
There is a lot to take in with these three video segments. Rushing to the Attack, Taking Off to the Attack, and ending your turn in position at your partner's wicket with relative safety are covered. I suggest watching the three of these in order at least once. As I mention throughout, if you find sections of these presentations are above your skill level, find a few shots that you think you can master with some practice.

BLUE TO PLAY



Video Clip 08

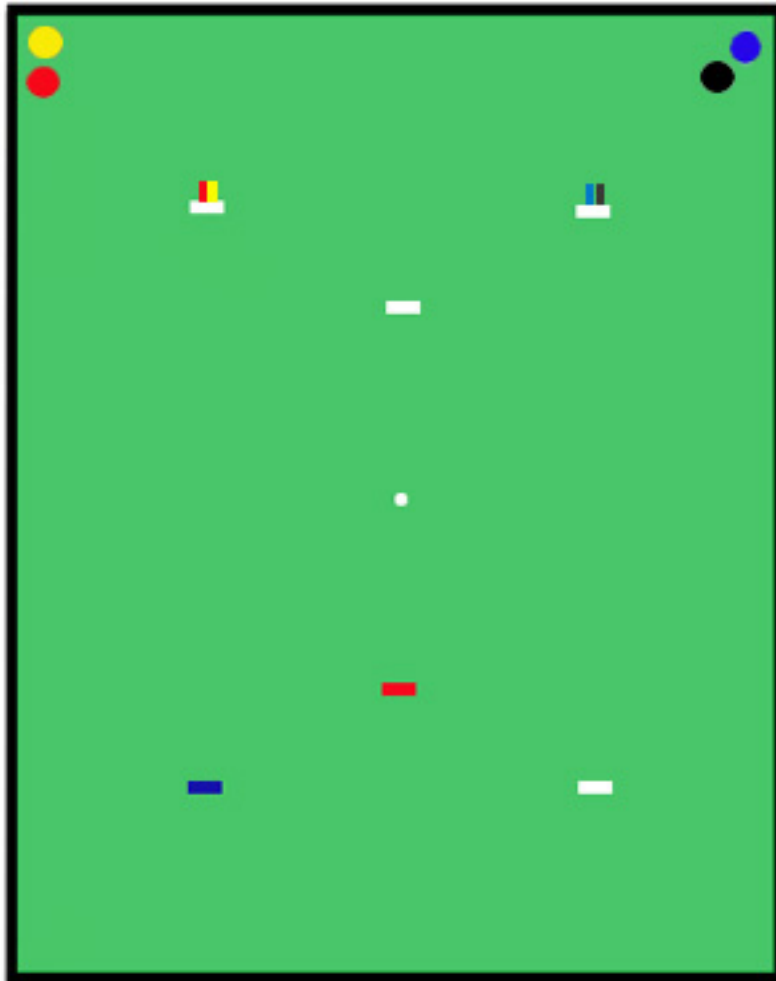
This segment shows what can happen if you rush out to a wicket that your danger ball is for and you have to leave your partner ball there because you didn't get a rush on it to your next wicket. Many beginners and some intermediates make this mistake, most advanced players don't. Having said all this, if Red knew Black had marginal shooting skills, doing a play like this makes sense. It's a good example of an enticement (aka tice) to get Black in trouble. But if Black does have good break play skills, this play can be fatal for Red.



Video Clip 09

This video shows a good example of Deadness Rotation. While many look at the deadness board thinking each side has equal deadness, it is Blue/Black that have Deadness Rotation. The way you calculate this is which live ball (Blue) has a danger ball (Red) that is dead on its partner. Knowing this can sometimes be the difference in getting your partner clean of its partner deadness. This is a good one to add to your tactical tool kit!

BLUE TO PLAY



Video Clip 10

This video focuses on how to practice a Three Ball Break starting at Wicket #4. Points I stress here are considering the distance the striker ball has to go to the ball at its wicket relative to the distance the croqueted ball goes. Also discussed is getting a rush after having made an odd numbered wicket (Wickets #5 and 1-back in this example). Finally, the placement of the Pioneer Ball at 1-back is discussed.

