

Tactical Advantage. The first ball to shoot towards the next wicket has the best chance of scoring the wicket, as that ball will be the first to shoot the wicket after all four balls have been played toward the wicket, unless it has been cleared or blocked by another ball. For this reason, you must really concentrate on this shot, for not putting the ball in a good position to score (the so-called “Golden Triangle” covered last time) reduces your advantage. Putting the first ball in position to score also increases the pressure on your opponents. With your ball in scoring position, they must now alter their strategy and go on the defensive trying to clear or block your ball, instead of staying on the offensive and setting up their ball to score. Where to position your first ball will depend on the hoop you are playing towards as follows.

Odd Numbered Hoops. When approaching odd numbered hoops, like the first hoop, you are generally hitting in a line parallel to the wicket. You may even be tempted to hit in a line directly at the wicket. But that will create problems if you over hit or under hit the ball, i.e., you will come up too short or too long with no plausible angle on scoring the hoop on your next shot. It is better to hit in a direction away from the wicket, so that if you under hit or over hit the ball, you may still have an angle to make the hoop on your next shot.

Even Numbered Hoops. When approaching even numbered hoops, like going from hoops 1 to 2, there is a temptation to try to run the wicket or put your ball very close in front of it. However hitting too hard and over running the wicket reduces pressure on your opponent. Finishing in scoring position applies pressure on your opponent as discussed above. Better to come up short on an even numbered hoop than go past it.

Corner Hoops. When approaching the corner wickets, such as hoops 1, 2, 3 and 4, it’s alright for your ball to edge more towards the closest boundary line, west or east for hoops two and four, and/or north or south for hoops 1 and 4. That way, if your ball does get cleared, it will be knocked no more than 21 feet away (the distance to the boundary) from the hoop.

Middle Hoops. When approaching the hoops in the middle of the court, or going from one middle hoop to the next middle hoop (like hoops 5 and 6) think carefully about where you want to set up. Your opponents’ balls are generally closer to your balls on these approaches, so they have a better chance to clear your ball. The best place to be is either right in front of the hoop or further away from it on the side of the Golden Triangle furthest from your opponent. That way, even if you are cleared, your opponents’ ball will probably land out of position to score.