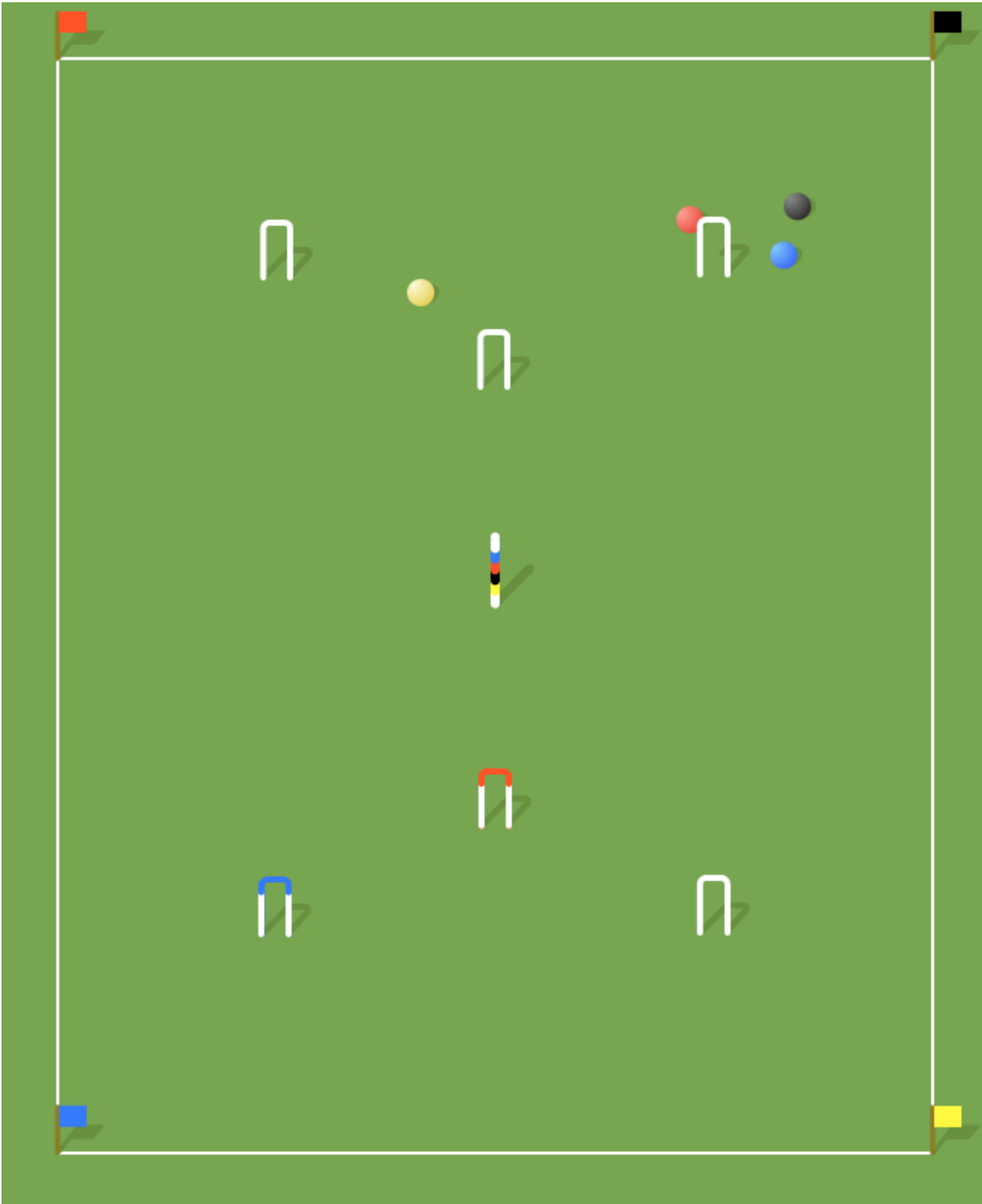


In the diagram below you are playing blue & black, contesting #3, and red has just played to pretty good position. Black has a very difficult (long and severely angled) shot at the wicket; blue has no shot. Black to play, what should you do? My answer below the diagram.



ANSWER: You can try shooting the wicket with black; there is a small chance you will either score the wicket or end in the jaws. But there's a much larger chance you will do neither, and end up out of position. If yellow then plays a good shot to position both opponent balls will be in position while both your balls are out of position.

If black doesn't run the wicket you will need to clear red with one of your balls. Which one? Many players will instinctively clear red now, with black. But black is very unlikely to stop in position after clearing red. As above, you're giving the opponent a good chance to keep you on defense.

If black simply takes good position at the wicket, yellow has a long shot to hit either black or blue. If yellow doesn't hit blue, then blue has an easy clearance on red. True, the opponent will have a couple of shots at you, but they will be fairly long shots (if you play a firm clearance shot — practice that!). You can increase your odds even further by placing black so that it is hidden behind red from yellow.