



Golf Croquet Coaching Pod on Five-Shot Thinking

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Target Players

This pod is aimed at GC players with handicaps in the range 2 to 7. Although it would be useful to players with higher handicaps, many of the examples require the skills of a lower handicap player. It deals with optimizing your choice of shot by thinking through your next two shots, and therefore the probable, or possible, shots by the other three balls.

What does it mean?

This session covers the process of thinking ahead before deciding which shot to play now. The Five-Shot coaching principle covers your shot, the possible shots by the other three balls and then your next shot. If you have thought through these 5 shots then you will probably select the correct shot to play. This doesn't mean that the opponents have to do what you expect but you should have considered what they are most likely to do and what else they might do.

There should be no difference between singles and doubles, except that if the doubles partners have very different abilities then you should ensure that the high handicapper is only expected to play shots within their capability.

Sections

Go for the hoop or delay?
Setting Up
How to run the hoop
Optimising the use of partner

Taunton Deane Croquet Club

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Go for the Hoop or Delay?

In this session your ball is in a good position to run hoop 1; should you or shouldn't you run it? It all depends on the positions of the other balls and what they are likely to do.

Your thinking should be :

- A What are my options?
- B For each option, what will Red do, what can Black do, what will Yellow do?
- C What is my next shot?

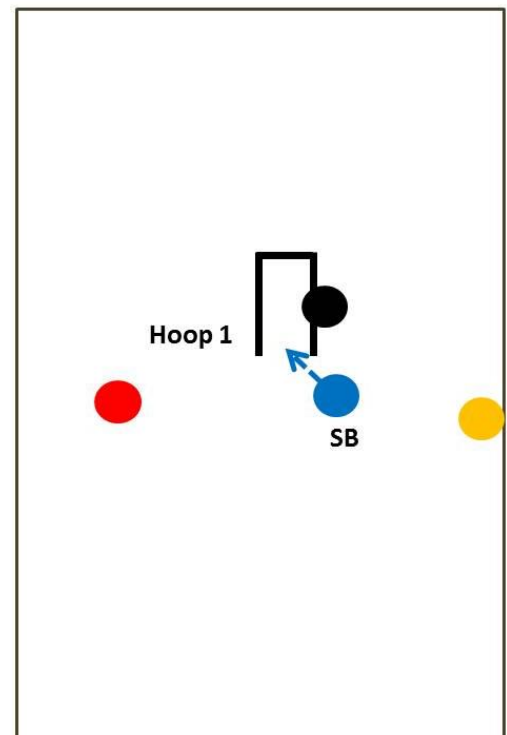
In these examples you have three options:

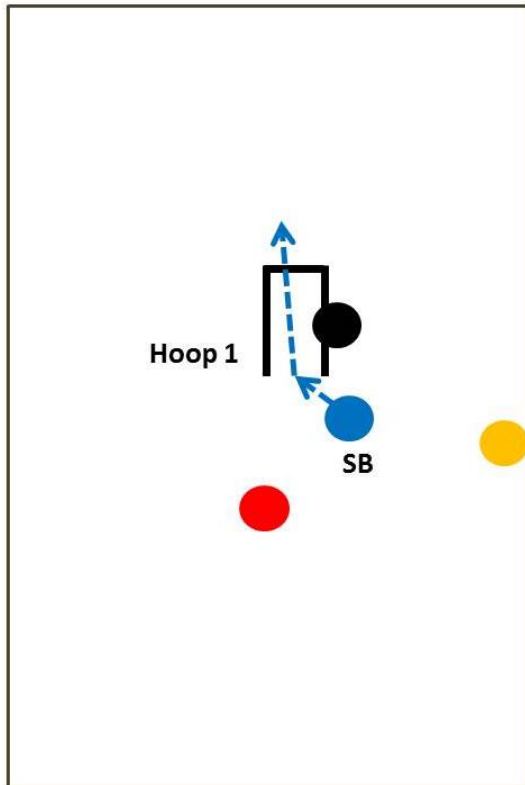
- a Go gently into the jaws.
- b Go gently through the hoop, into a hampered position.
- c Go hard through the hoop, into a clear position.

Assume that the approach angle is such that option 'c' is not feasible because of the high likelihood of bouncing off. The choice is therefore between 'a' and 'b'. In these examples it is Blue's turn to play.

For example, in demo 1 your opponent is in no position to clear you from the jaws and your partner is in no position to run to the next hoop. In this case you should play into the jaws, rather than run through.

Demo 1 : Into the jaws





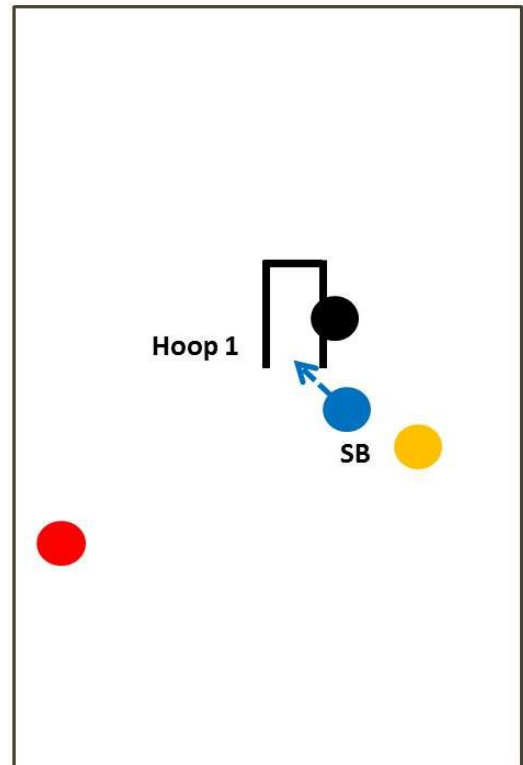
In demo 2, the situation is exactly the same except that the Red is in a position to jump you. You should therefore take your hoop while you can.

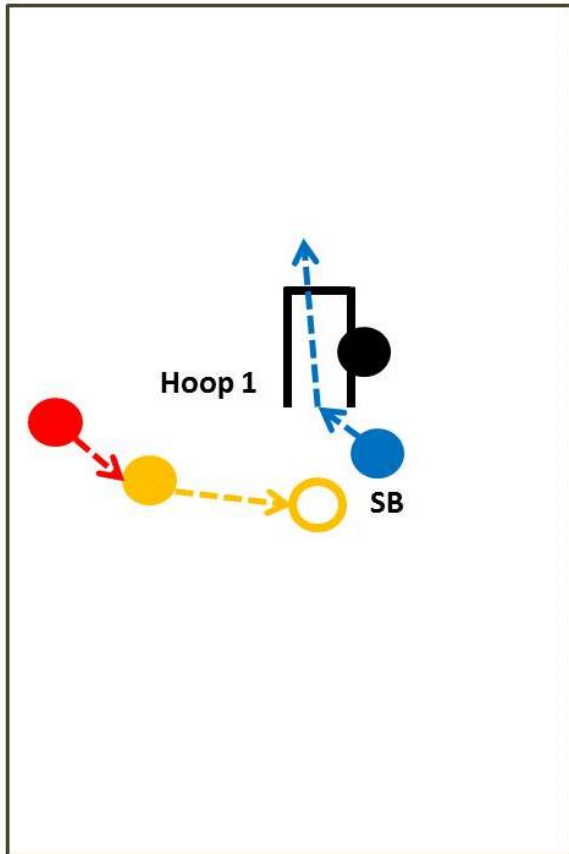
Demo 2 : Avoid being jumped

This would be the same if Red were behind the hoop in a position to clear you.

In demo 3 it is Yellow that is in a position to jump you but Black could clear Yellow and is protected from Red so you should go for the jaws.

Demo 3 : Black to clear Yellow





In demo 4, neither opponent is in a position to jump but Red could promote Yellow into a jumping position so take the hoop now.

Demo 4 : Avoid the promotion

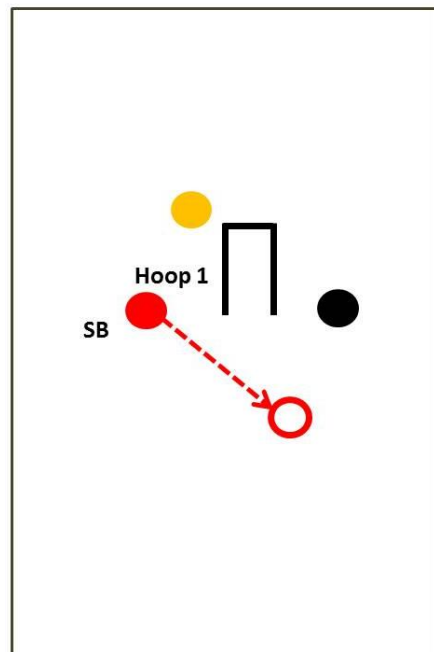
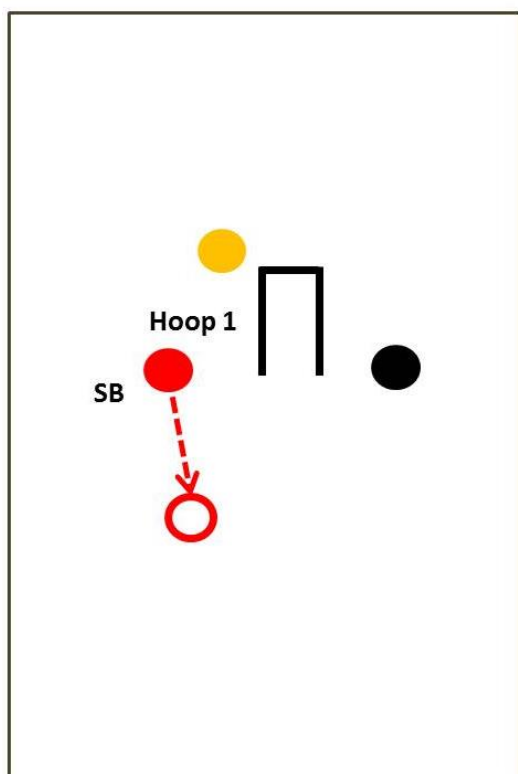
Setting Up

Setting up in front of the hoop is often a simple stroke and it may seem that it is necessary if the hoop is to be run. However, there are many situations when putting your ball in front of the hoop helps your opponent more than it helps you.

In these examples it is Red's turn to play and Blue is a long way away.

In demo 5, for example, by putting Red in front of the hoop you are giving Black the opportunity of doing a stop-shot and wiring itself from Yellow.

Demo 5 : Setting up in front

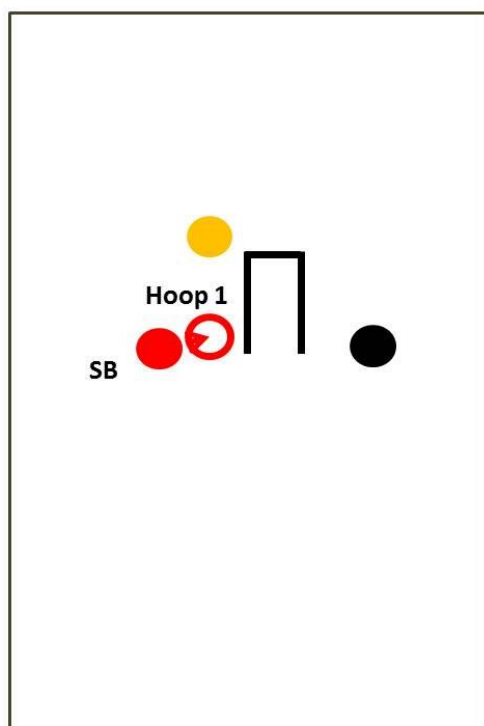


If you are going to set up then always put your ball on the opposite side of the straight approach from the next opponent to play. This means that Black will be moving away from the hoop when it hits Red and cannot hide from Yellow.

Demo 6 : Set up on the opposite side from the opponent

It may
greater
demo 7
hoop
Black then
promote
Black
position in

Demo 7 :



sometimes be possible to gain a much
advantage by setting up a promotion. In
Red is played to a position beside the
where it cannot be cleared by Black. If
sets up in front of the hoop, Yellow will
Red to a hoop-running position. (If
clears Yellow then it simply returns to a
front of the hoop.)

Set up a promotion

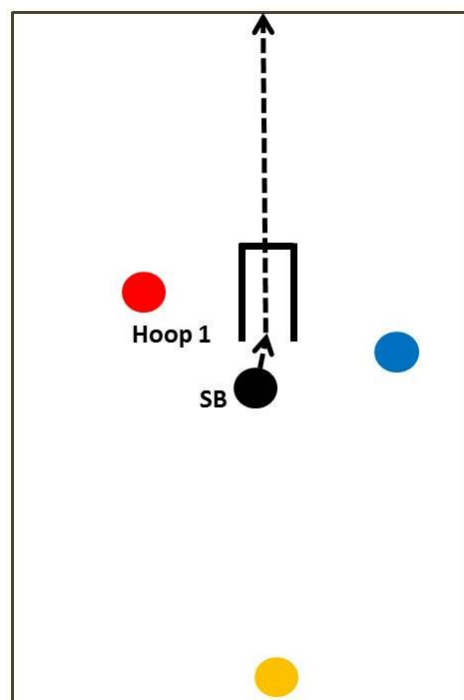
How to

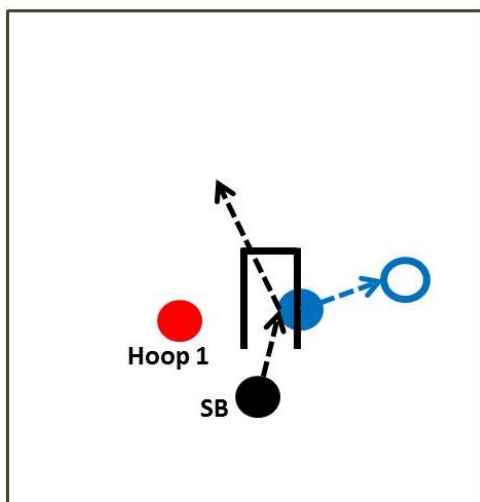
run the hoop?

The speed with which you run the hoop is very important but there are possibilities other than just speed.

If your route to the next hoop is clear and there is no benefit in delaying then run the hoop hard at an odd-numbered hoop, particularly if the next opponent to play is hampered.

Demo 8 : Run the hoop hard



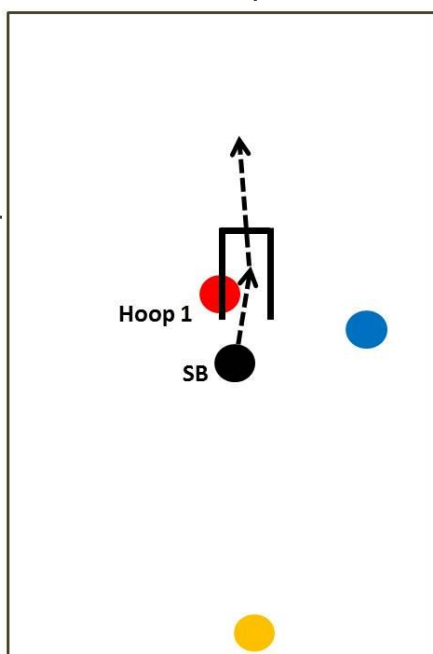


If your partner ball is hampered behind the hoop then you should play hard enough to clear it as you run the hoop.

Demo 9 : Clear your partner

If, however, it
behind the
in order to
that you and
hoop before

Demo 10 :



is your opponent that is hampered
hoop then you should play a jump shot
avoid moving them. This should ensure
your partner will both be at the next
either of the opponents.

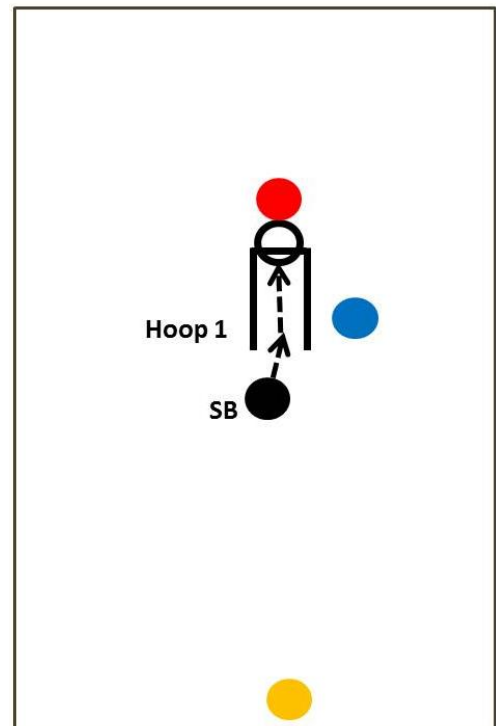
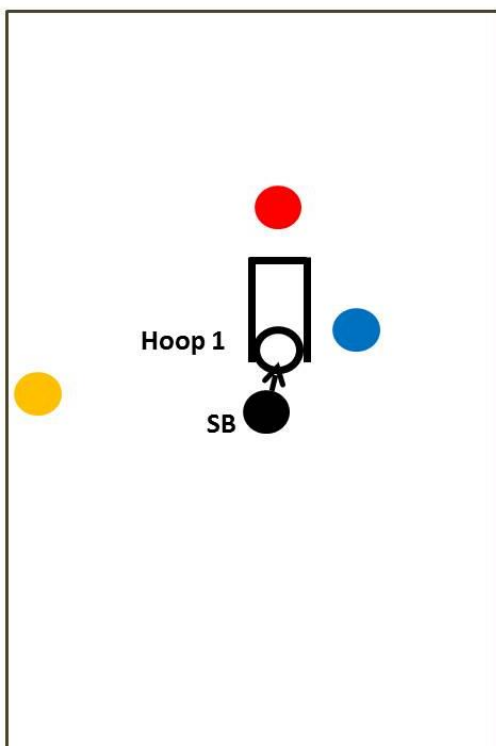
Jump a hampered opponent

Sometimes it's necessary to run a hoop even when an opponent's ball is in the way. Rather than play hard and promote the opponent, play a gentle shot through so the hamper is transferred to the opponent.

Demo 11 : Play to hamper the opponent

In this case it's not worth delaying the hoop run because Yellow can clear Blue, leaving Red in position to clear Black.

In the following demo, Yellow is in a different position.



Here Blue cannot be cleared by Yellow so Black can safely go into the jaws, leaving Blue to clear Red to the far end of the lawn.

Demo 12 : Let partner clear the blocking ball

The five shots

1. Put Black in the jaws because its route to hoop 2 is blocked.
2. Yellow cannot remove Black nor clear Blue, but may try to block Blue from clearing Red.
3. Blue clears Red as far as possible.
4. Red will probably come back to half-way but may shoot for Black.
5. Black runs to hoop 2.

Optimising the use of partner

If the opponent has a ball in front of the hoop which could be cleared by either of yours then put your first ball into position and use the second ball to clear the opponent. This decision depends on your confidence that Red can clear Black sufficiently far to make Yellow safe.

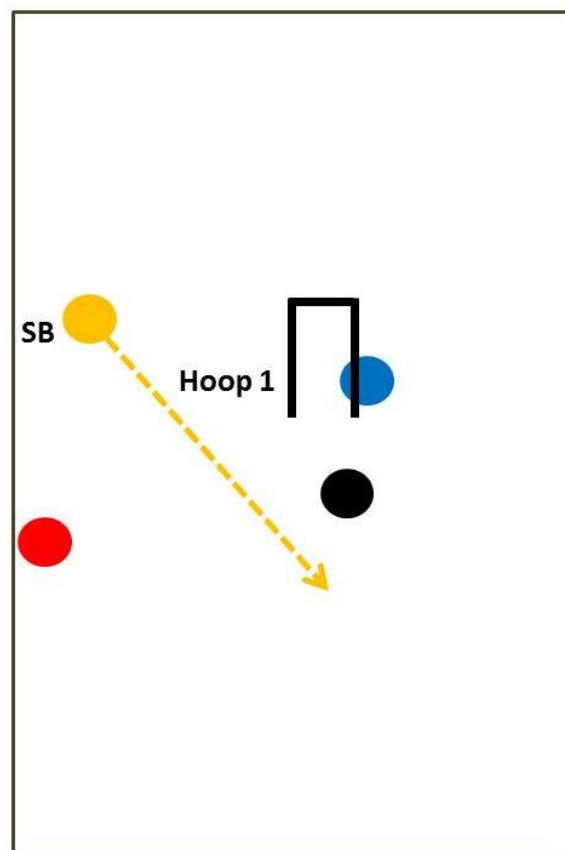
Demo 13 : Clearing with your second ball

Your planned five shots are:

1. Set up Yellow to run, but not between Red and Black.
2. Blue hits clear.
3. Red clears Black across the lawn.
4. Black returns without hitting Yellow.
5. Yellow runs the hoop.

What else could happen?

1. Yellow could play between Black and the hoop but that might leave Red with a difficult clearance.
2. Blue could play into the jaws, so that Yellow has to play a roll shot or jump shot.
3. Red might miss Black or only clear it a short distance.
4. Black might hit Yellow.
5. Yellow might blob the hoop.

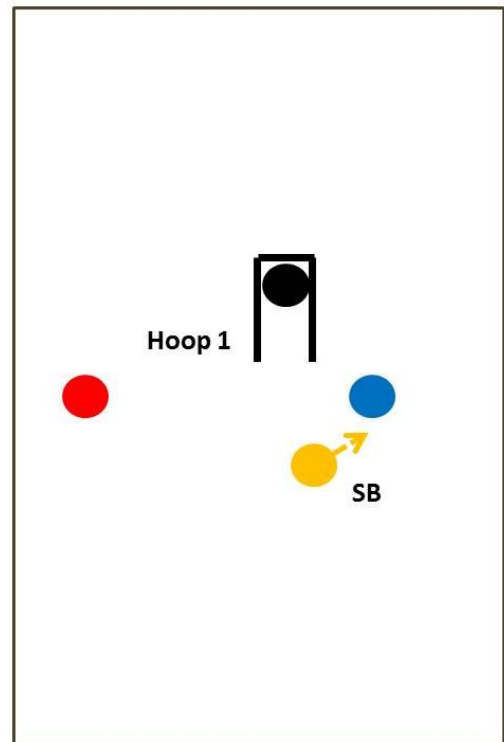
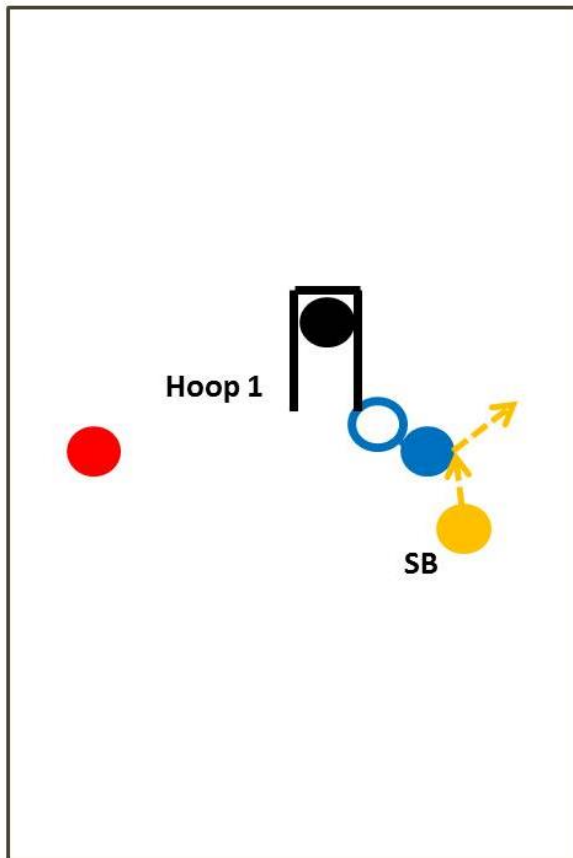


Therefore practice:

1. Sending your ball to an exact position. (Yellow)
2. Tapping a short distance into the jaws. (Blue)
3. Clearing hard, even when partner is close. (Red)
4. Clearing from a long range. (Black)
5. Hoop-running. (Yellow)

After a hoop has been run you should try to be the first side to get a ball near to the next hoop. If your first ball doesn't have a clear run then use it to hamper the opponent so that your partner ball can be first. Don't risk going for a narrow gap. In this demo, use Yellow to hamper Blue.

Demo 14 : Hamper the opponent's approach



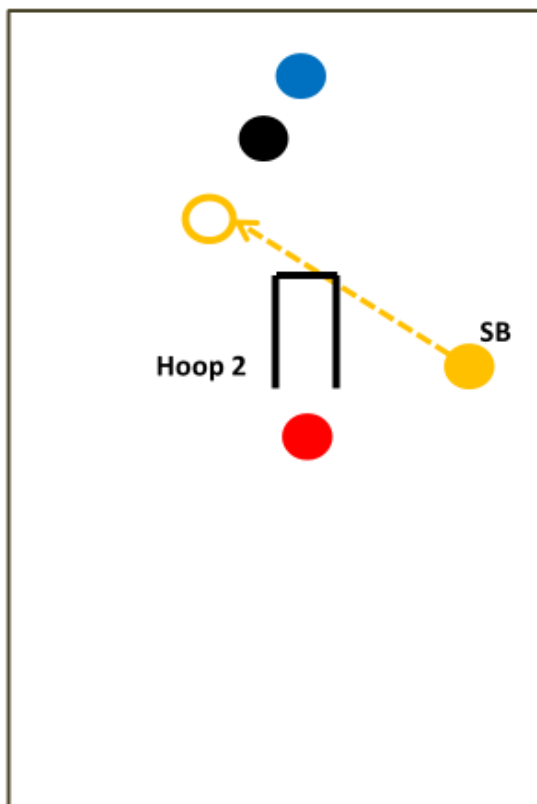
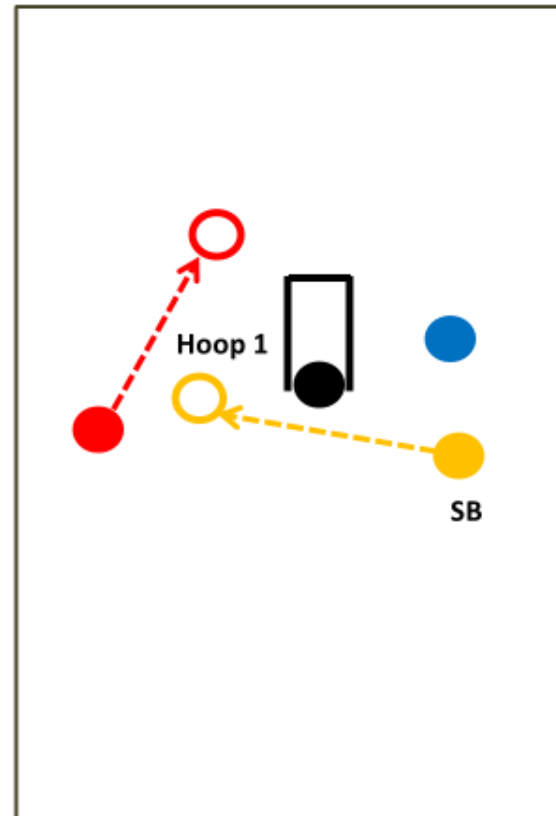
An alternative to hampering with your ball is to put the opponent into a hampered position where it can neither run to the next hoop nor clear its partner.

Demo 15 : Use the hoop as a hamper

Situations can occur when 5-shot thinking enables you to set up a promotion for your partner. This is particularly true when the opponents are about to run a hoop or when your partner is in a position to run an even-numbered hoop.

In demo 16, the opponent (Black) is in the jaws of an odd-numbered hoop and Yellow is to play. It cannot jump or promote Red but, by thinking through the five shots, Yellow can gain a major advantage at the next hoop.

Demo 16 : Set up a promotion (opponent in the jaws)



Demo 17 : Set up a promotion for your next shot

The five shots are:

1. Put Yellow in position to promote Red.
2. Blue cannot clear Red. (It may promote Black to block Red or set up a promotion rush for Black.)
3. Run Red up to Yellow. (Or to block Black.)
4. Black goes to hoop 3. (Or promotes Blue or blocks Yellow.)
5. Yellow promotes Red to hoop 3.