

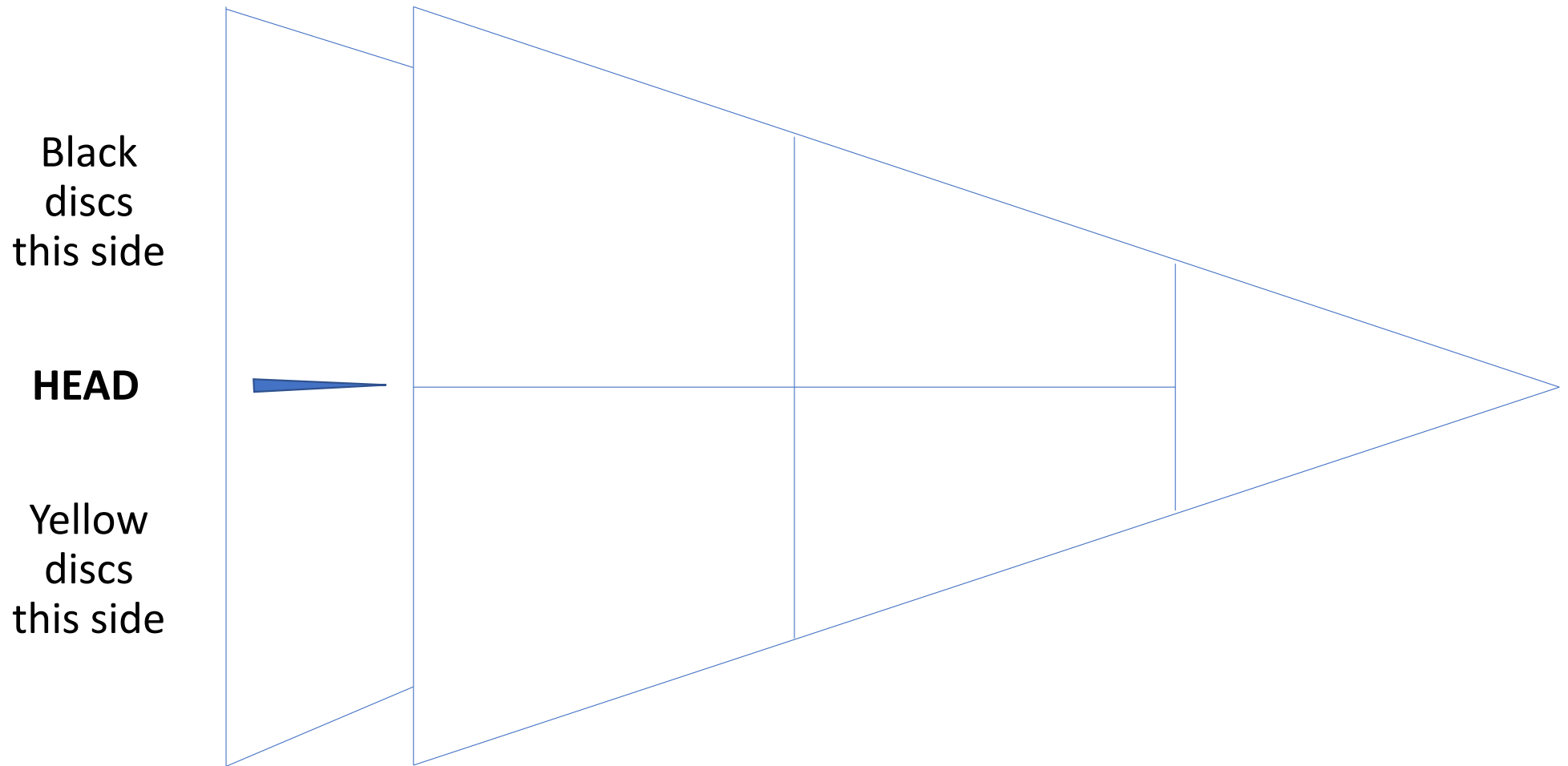
Shuffleboard Court Evaluation using Setups

Thom Robertson
bsustarman@gmail.com

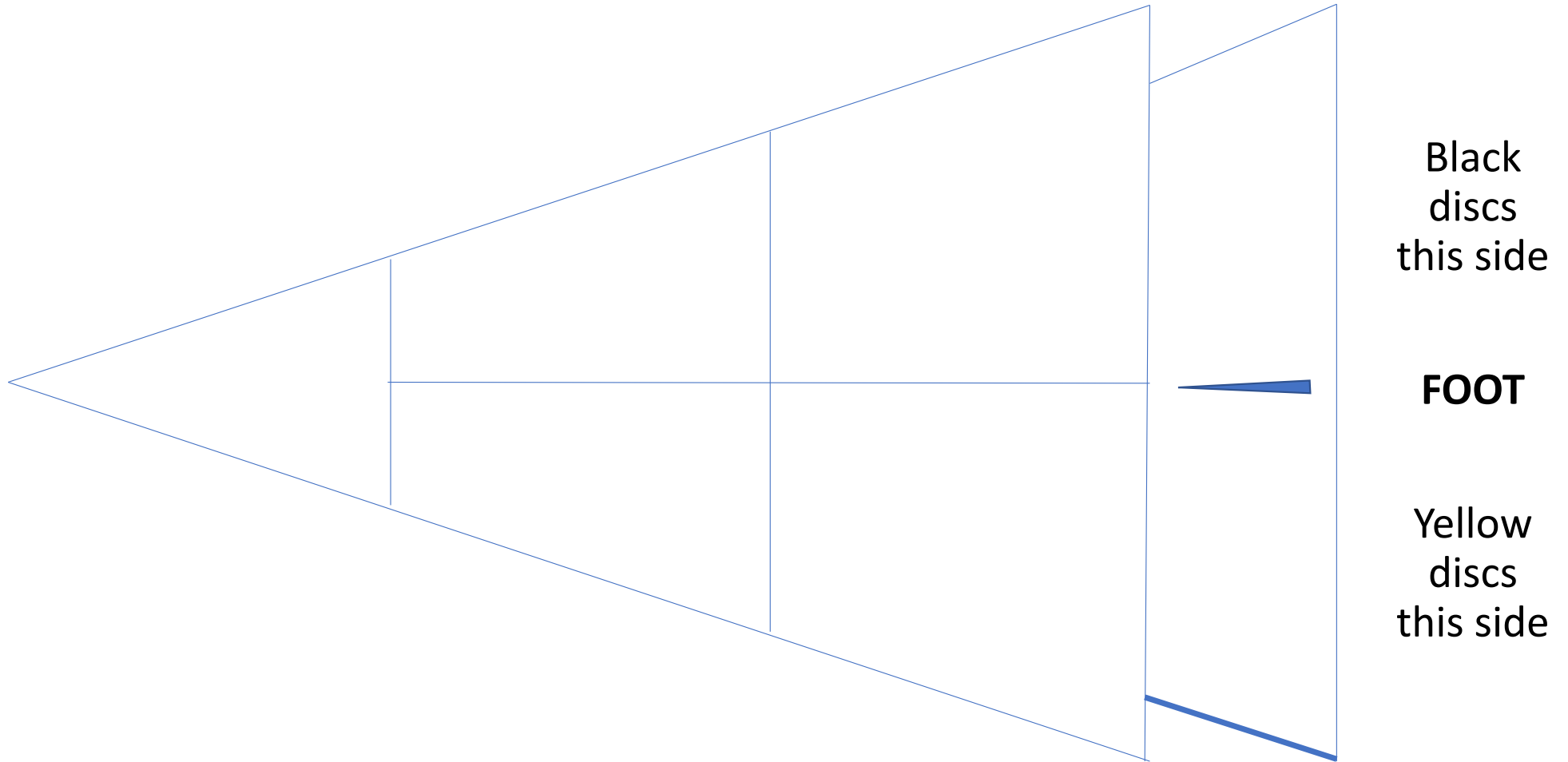
Court Evaluation using Setups

Setups are used in tournaments to evaluate the condition of the court prior to play. They can also be used in practice to evaluate court conditions. A common assumption by beginners is that all courts are flat and that shots that deviate from the intended path result from an error on the part of the shooter. For beginners, shooting inaccuracy is greater than for experienced players, but court defects also cause deviations in the path of the disc for all players. In fact, most courts are not flat and discs drift in a systematic way in spite of the best efforts of the shooter. Setups are used to determine the drift of the court in key areas of interest. Certain practice shots are used to evaluate the conditions of the court.

Scoring “Triangle” or Area – Head (scoreboards are always at the head)



Scoring “Triangle” or Area – Foot (scoreboards at other end of court)



Start of Play (at Head) – Shooting Area

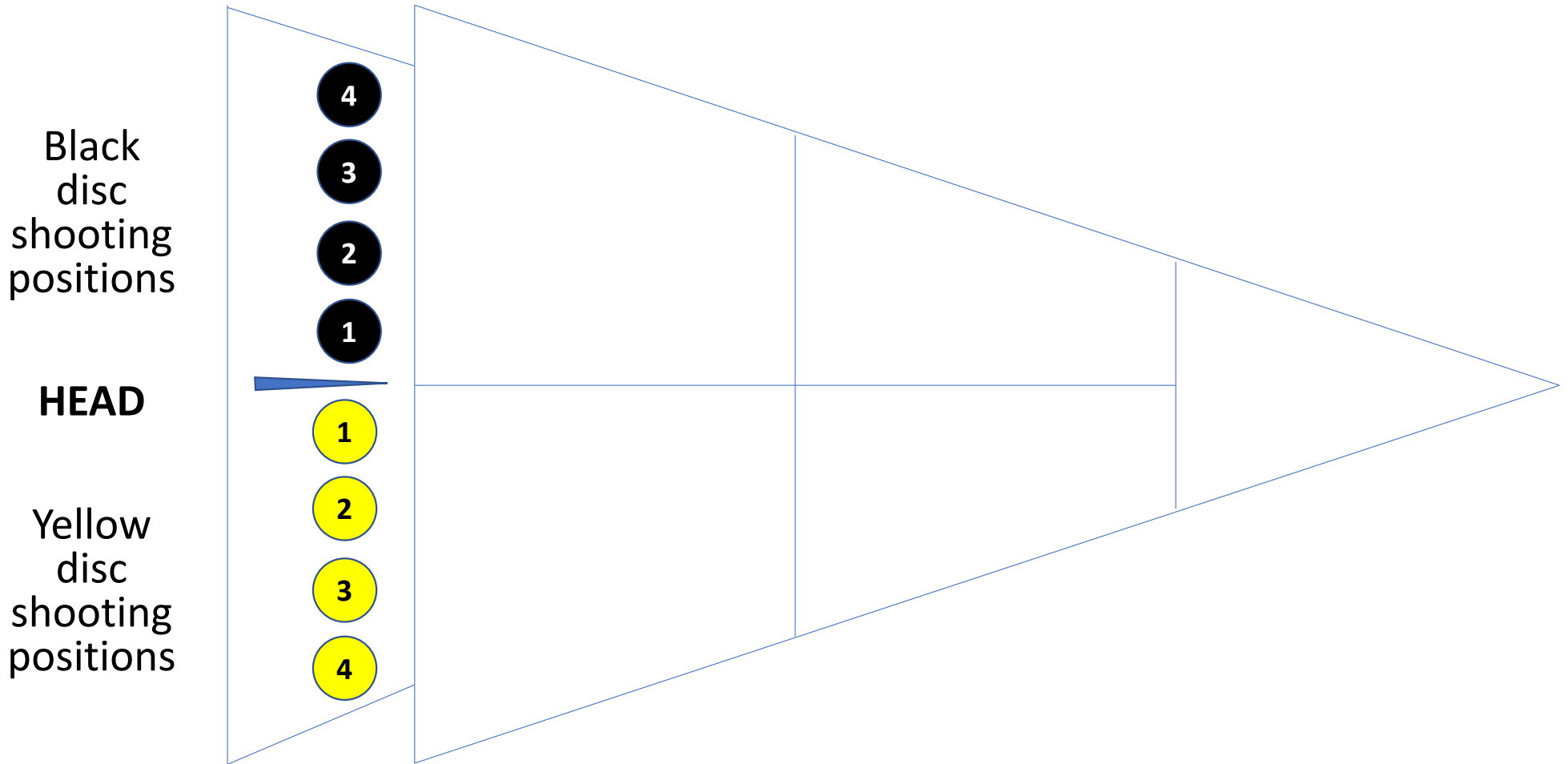
To begin play all yellow discs must be in the right side of the shooting (ten-off) area as seen by the shooters at the head of the court. A small “separation triangle” divides the shooting area but is not used to disqualify a disc when scoring toward that end. All black discs are in the left side of the shooting area at the head of the court.

The disc closest to the separation triangle is in the “1” position. The disc farthest from the separation triangle is the “4” position.

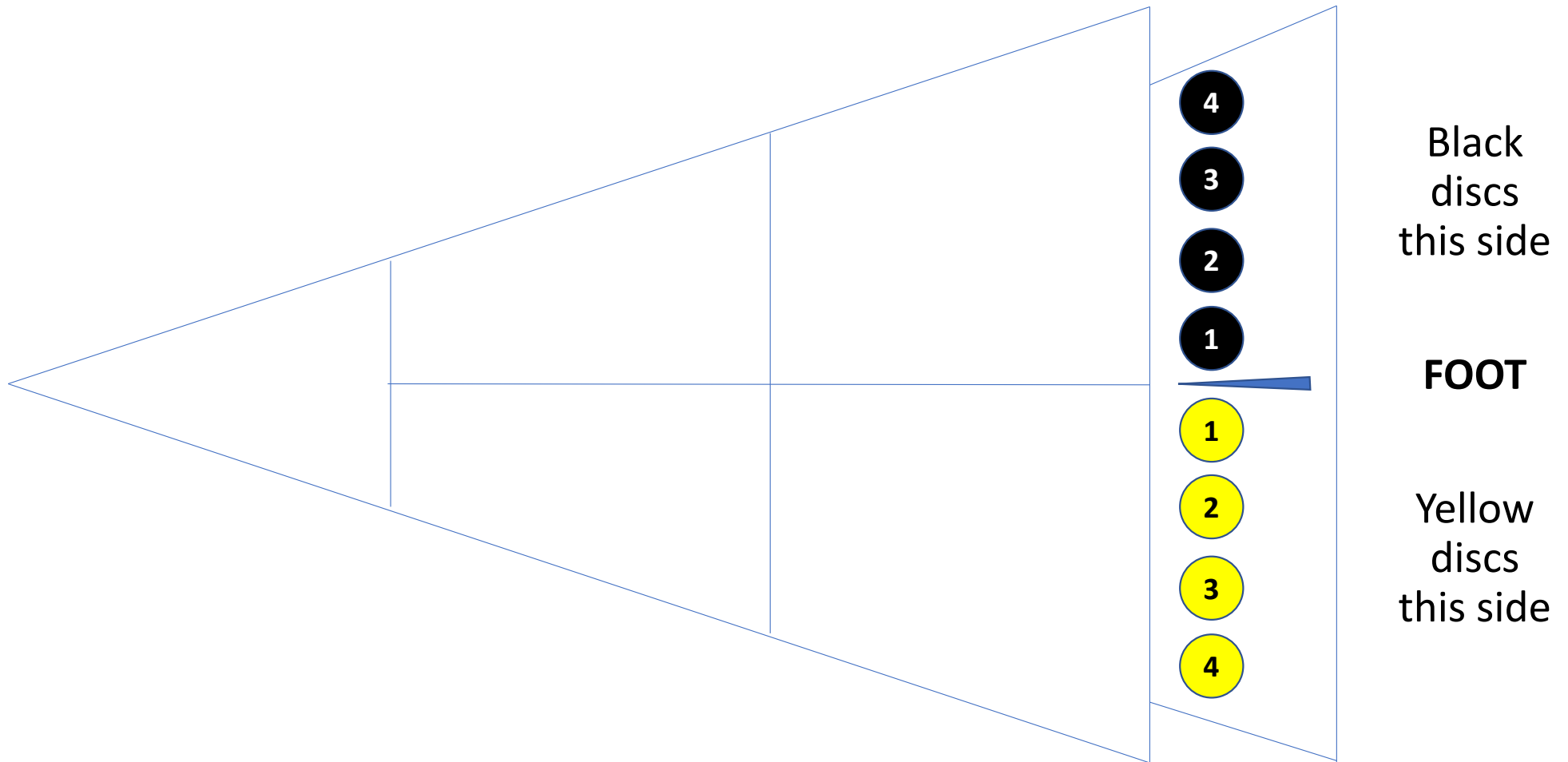
Most shots are taken from the 1 position because discs are least affected by the drift of the court when shot from this position.

Shooting the practice discs from this position allows the shooter to evaluate the effect the drift will have on most shots taken. Changing the shooting position changes the effect of the court and complicates the drift evaluation process.

All discs must be inside the respective areas during shooting.



All discs must be inside the respective areas during shooting.



Basic Hides

Getting a disc in a scoring position is clearly important. Unfortunately, they can be easily removed by your opponent, even if new to the game. If a disc is deep in the scoring area, it can assist your opponent in scoring if they can make a near direct hit on your disc. This removes the difficulty in getting the proper distance on their shot.

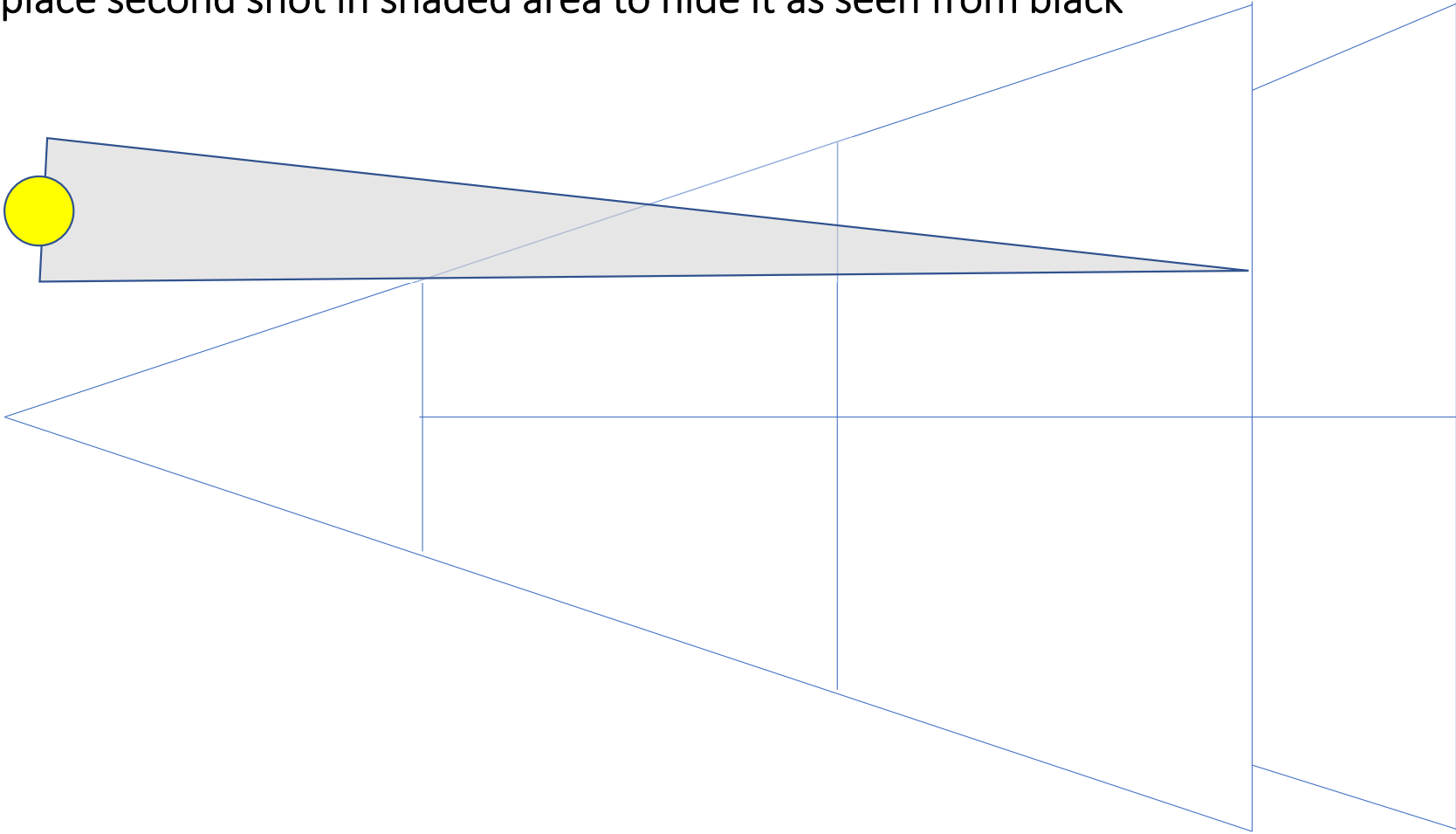
To avoid easy removal, it is useful to place a guard disc or “Hide” at the top of the scoring area first and then place a scoring disc behind it. This is the most common activity for even experienced players. It takes much practice to place an accurate Hide and just as much practice in hiding a scoring disc behind it. However, this is the key to successful shuffleboard play.

St Pete Hides

A St Pete hide is placed at the opposite end of the court, about even with the apex and about halfway from the apex to the far edge of the court (see next diagram). A St Pete hide creates a protected area in the 7 and 8 scoring zones on the far side of the court.

Practice setting St Pete hides on the far end and then shoot the next three discs behind your “Hide” disc. If the Hide disc is not exactly placed, the hidden area will move toward or away from the center line. Adjust your second shot accordingly. You may step to the opponent’s side of the court to determine the best place for your shot.

St Pete Hide for Head Yellow shooting (opposite side from shooter)
place second shot in shaded area to hide it as seen from black



Black
discs
this
side

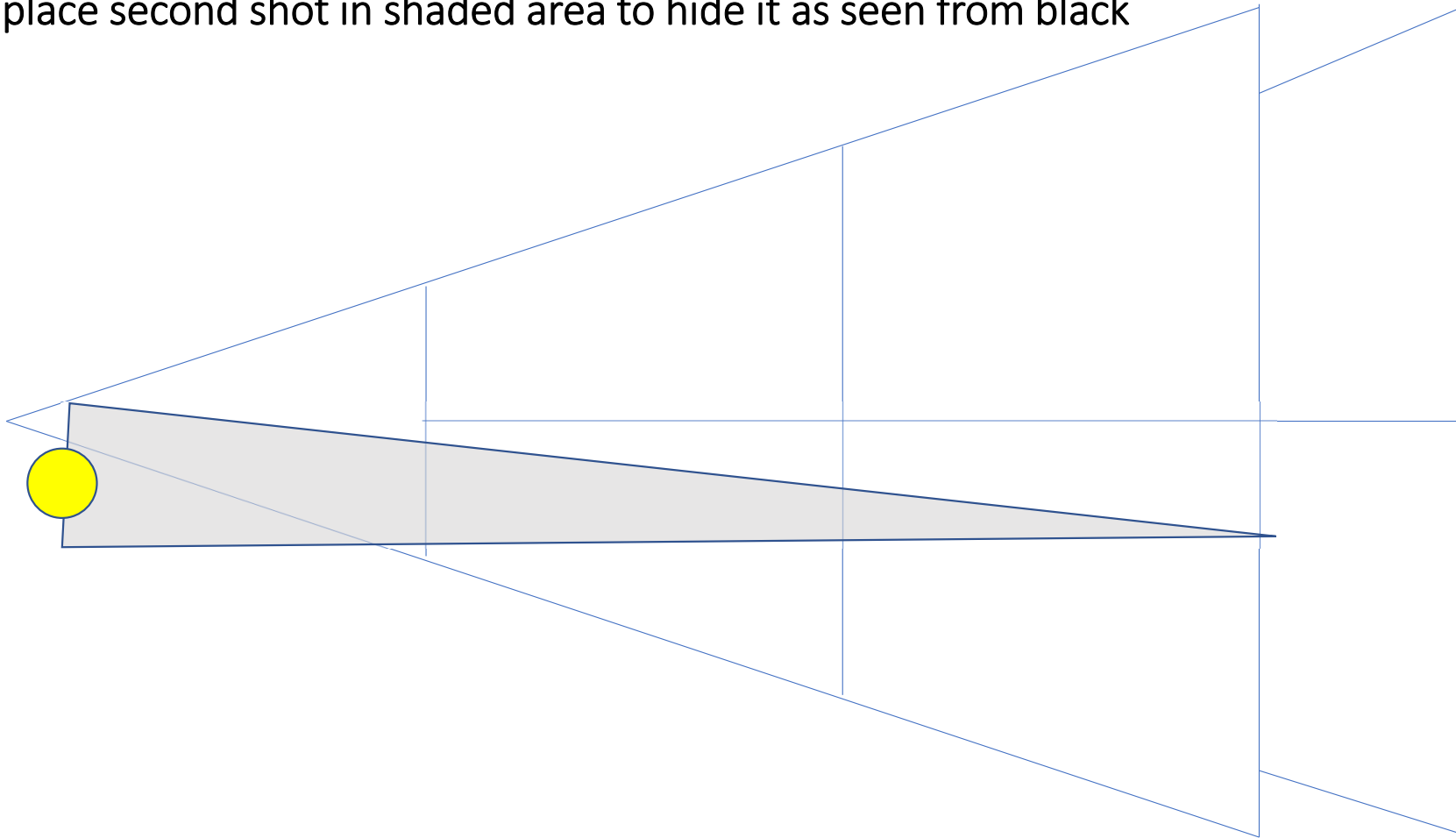
Yellow
discs
this
side

Tampa Hides

A Tampa hide is placed at the opposite end of the court, near the apex and on your side of the court (see next diagram). A Tampa hide creates a protected area in the 7 and 8 scoring zones on your side of the court.

Practice setting a Tampa hide on the far end and then shoot the next three discs behind your “Hide” disc. If the Hide disc is not exactly placed, the hidden area will move toward or away from the center line. Adjust your second shot accordingly. You may step to the opponent’s side of the court to determine the best place for your second shot.

Tampa Hide for Head Yellow shooting (same side as shooter)
place second shot in shaded area to hide it as seen from black

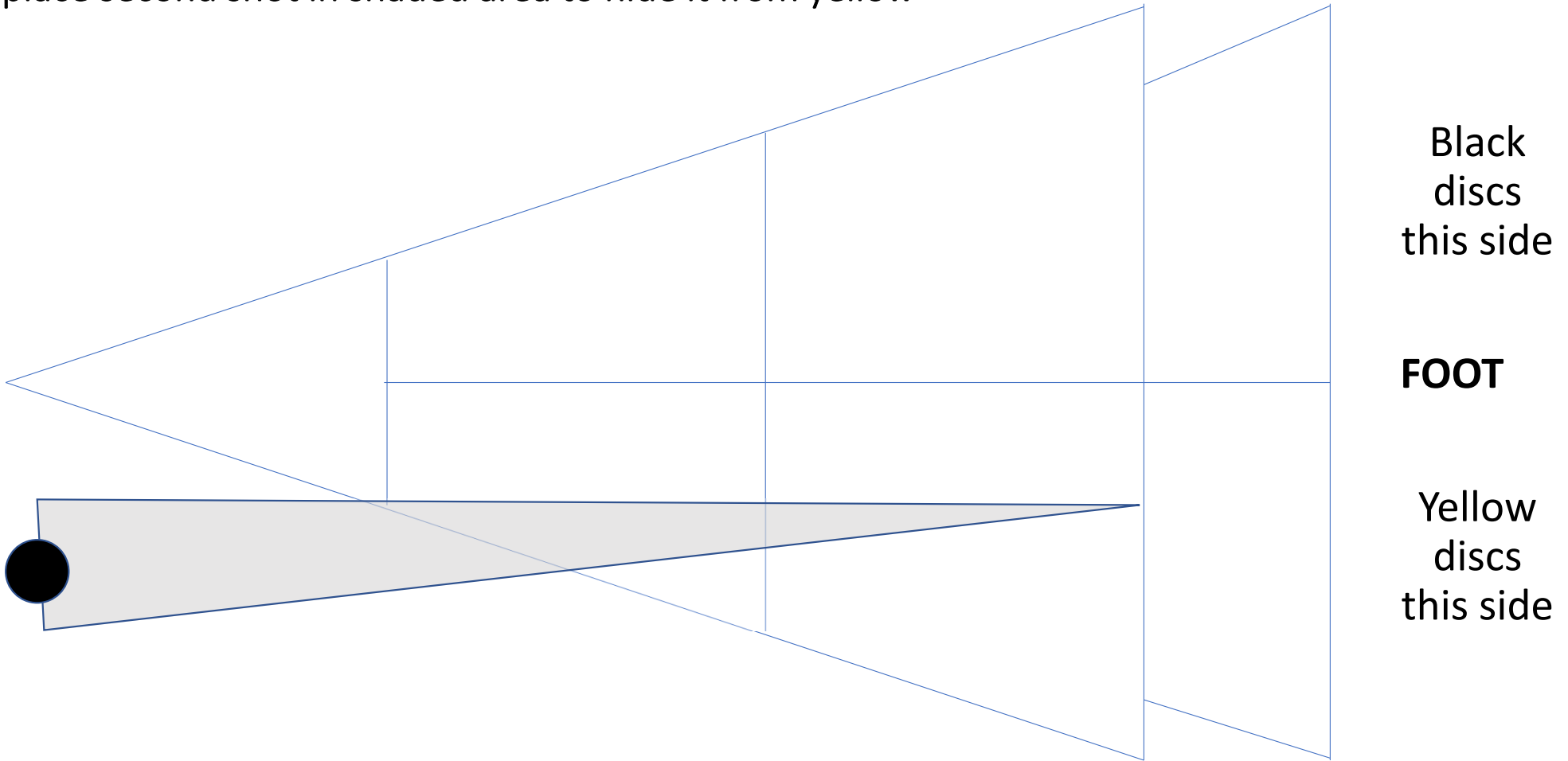


Foot

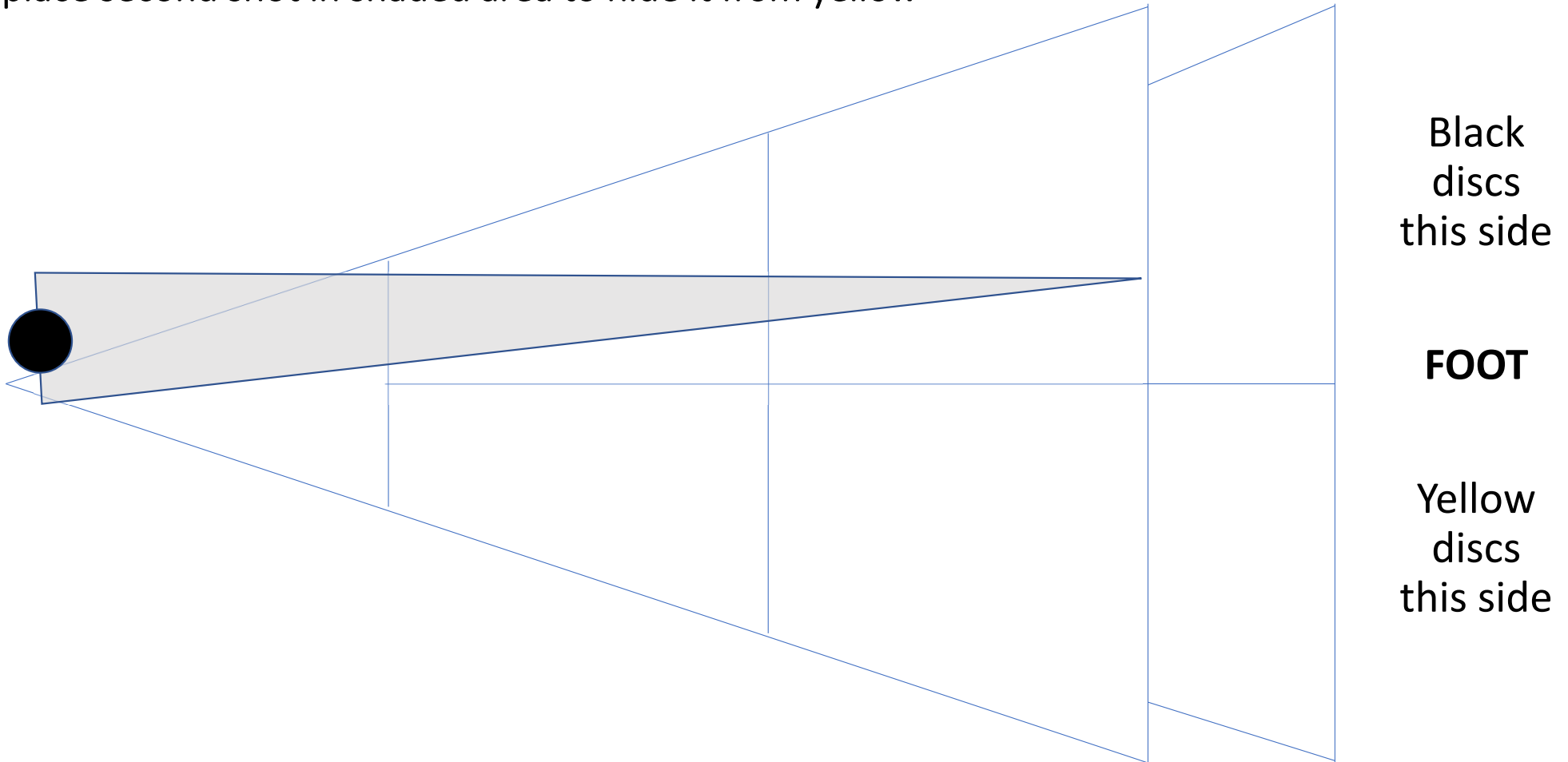
Black
discs
this
side

Yellow
discs
this
side

St Pete Hide for Black shooting from head (opposite side from shooter)
place second shot in shaded area to hide it from yellow



Tampa Hide for Head Black shooting (same side as shooter)
place second shot in shaded area to hide it from yellow



Misplaced and Unintentional Hides

A St Pete hide placed too close to the center line on the opposite side of the court becomes a Tampa for your opponent. It can be used against you. A St Pete hide placed too close to the edge of the court only covers a very small fraction of the scoring area, making it very difficult to place a scoring disc behind it.

A Tampa hide placed too far away from the center line creates an area for your opponent on your side of the court near the center line for your opponent to hide a disc.

It is good strategy to evaluate the placement of all discs that stop near the top of the scoring area, even those of your opponent, to identify potential hides and take advantage of them.

Setups Round 1 - Shots for Speed (and Drift)

In non-tournament settings players often do a basic court evaluation by shooting two (or four) discs to the far end of the court. These are primarily intended to evaluate the speed of the discs on the two sides of the court but are also used to determine the basic drifts. Head Yellow shoots all allotted discs first. After they have come to a stop, they are removed by players at the foot. Next, Head Black shoots all allotted discs. After they stop, players at the foot remove these discs. Next Foot Yellow shoots all allotted discs. Finally, Foot Black shoots all allotted discs. Routines in Rounds 2 and 3 below might provide examples of how to use these practice discs.

In tournaments settings following FSA rules, only two discs “for speed” are permitted in Round 1.

Always watch the discs of your opponent as well as your own!

Setups – Round 2

Each player shoots all four of their discs in a row in this round. Yellow shoots first and Black shoots last at each end.

Setups Round 2 - Part 1a - Hides (Head Yellow Shooting)

In tournament settings players often do a basic court evaluation by shooting two sets of four discs to the far end of the court. These are primarily intended to evaluate the drift of the discs on the critical areas of the court.

1. Foot Yellow places the top or bottom of the cue at the location of a St Pete hide for Head Yellow. Head Yellow shoots a disc from the 4-shooting position into the hidden zone, evaluating the drift along the path.
2. After the first disc stops, Foot Yellow moves the shot disc to the Tampa hide position for Head Yellow. Head Yellow shoots a disc from the 4-shooting position into the hidden zone, evaluating the drift along the path.

Setups Round 2 - Part 1b - 8s & 10 (Head Yellow Shooting)

Either:

1. Foot Yellow places the Tampa hide disc in the back of the 10 area. Head Yellow attempts to replace this disc and move it to the kitchen, evaluating the path of the shot disc and the speed.
2. Foot Yellow moves the shot disc (after it stops) to the center line halfway between the 10-8 line and the 7-8 line. Head Yellow attempts to double this disc (get two scores) with his final shot.

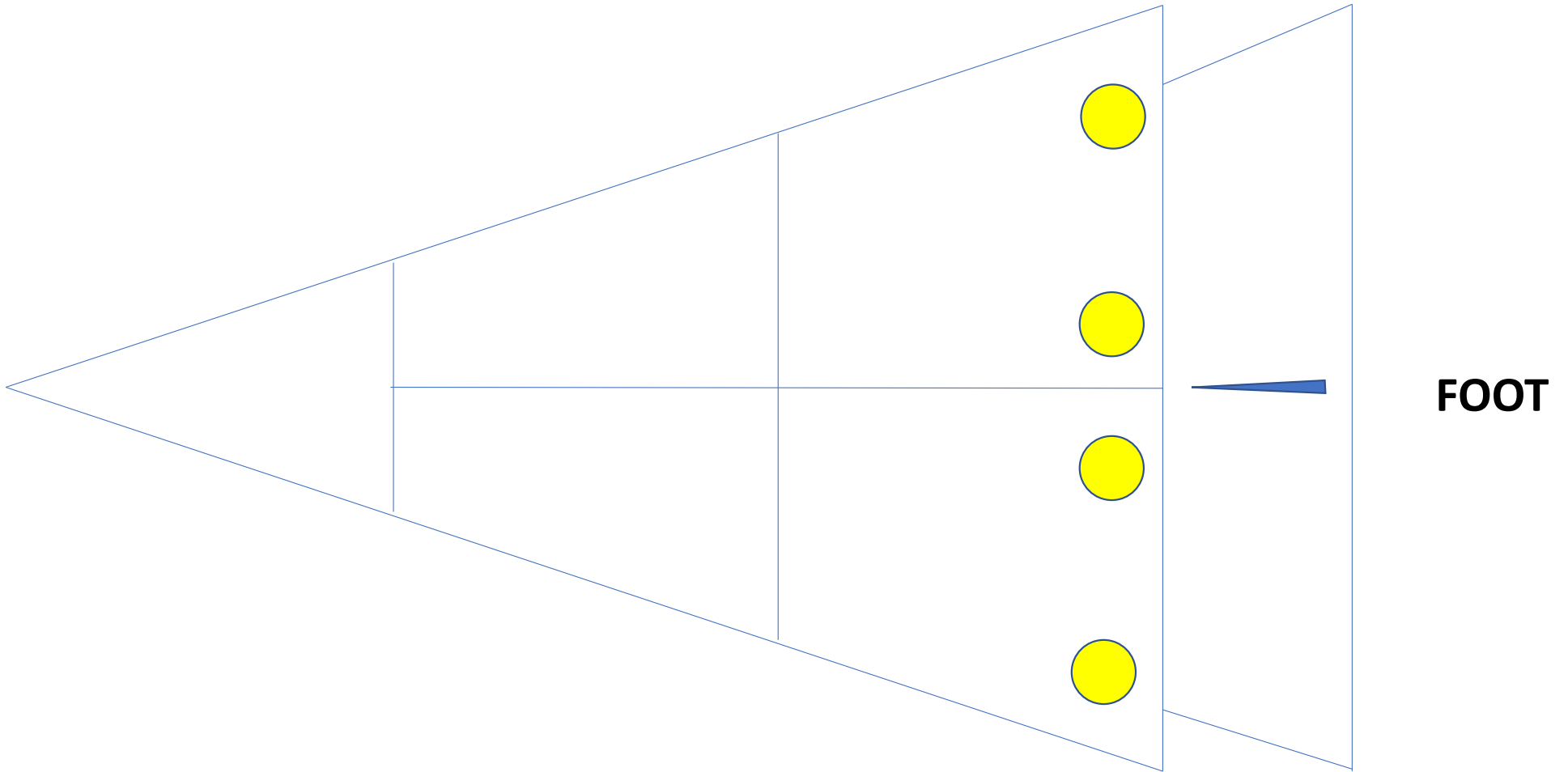
Or:

1. Foot Yellow moves one of the discs to the back of each of the 8 areas and Head Yellow tries to advance each disc into the 7 area or into the 10-off area, watching the drift on each side.

Setups Round 2 – Part 2 - 7s (Head Black Shooting)

The four yellow discs are now at the foot of the Court. These discs are placed at four points just in front of the 7-10-off line, two near the outside corners and two near the center line. Head Black shoots one disc at each of these yellow discs attempting to put them in the kitchen, evaluating the drift and speed of each shot. After the last shot, all 8 discs are moved to the shooting area for the foot of the court.

Setup of yellow discs for Head Black shooting in Round 2.



Setups Round 2 – Part 3a – Hides (Foot Yellow Shooting)

All eight discs are now at the foot of the court. The procedure for Part 1 is now repeated with Foot Yellow shooting.

1. Head Yellow places the top or bottom of the cue at the location of a St Pete hide for Foot Yellow. Foot Yellow shoots a disc from the 4-shooting position into the hidden zone, evaluating the drift along the path.
2. After the first disc stops, Head Yellow moves the shot disc to the Tampa hide position for Foot Yellow. Foot Yellow shoots a disc from the 4-shooting position into the hidden zone, evaluating the drift along the path.

Setups Round 2 – Part 3b – 8s & 10s (Foot Yellow Shooting)

Either:

1. Head Yellow places the Tampa hide disc in the back of the 10 area. Foot Yellow attempts to replace this disc and move it to the kitchen, evaluating the path of the shot disc and the speed.
2. Head Yellow moves the shot disc (after it stops) to the center line halfway between the 10-8 line and the 7-8 line. Foot Yellow attempts to double this disc (get two scores) with his final shot.

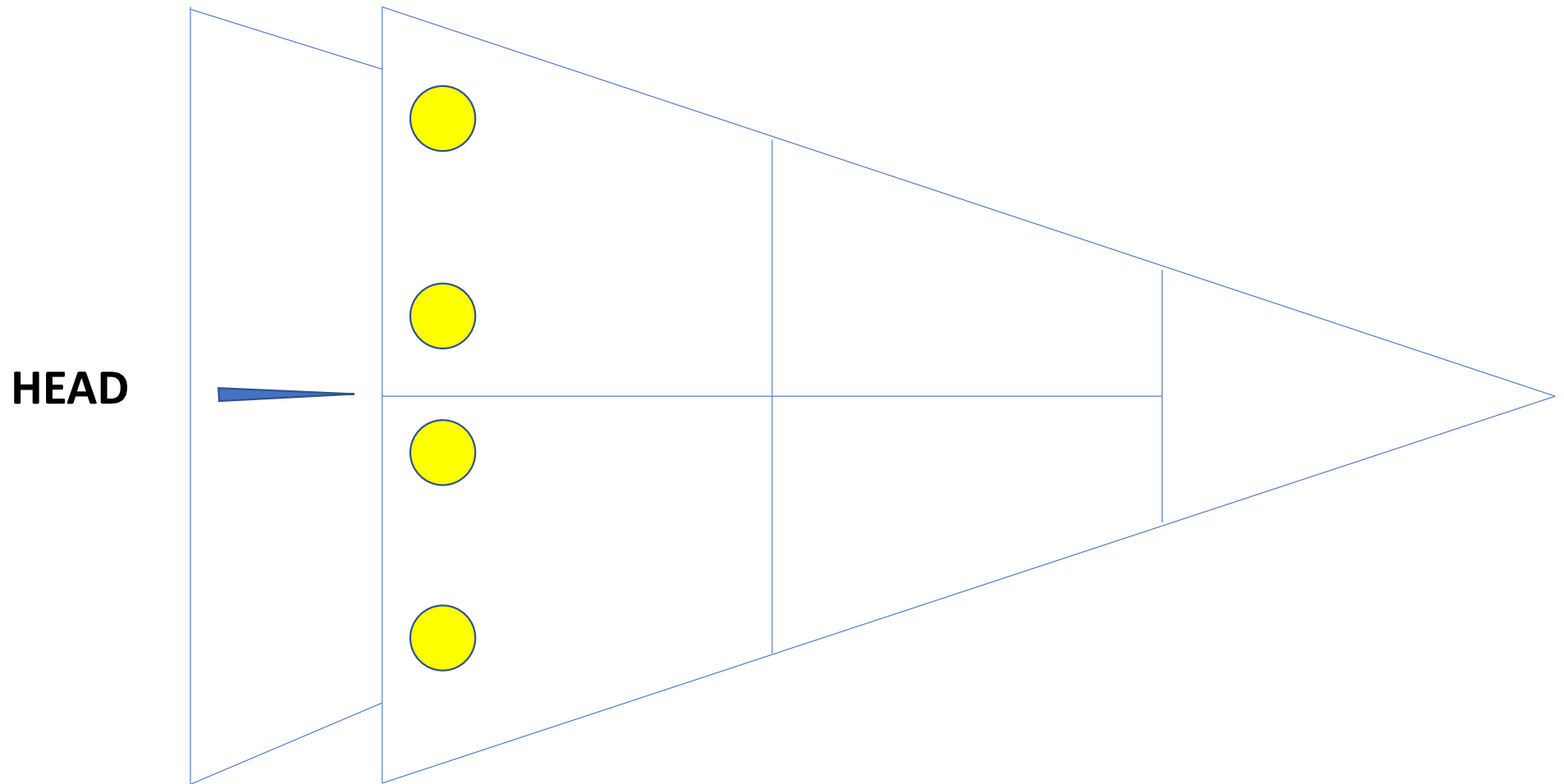
Or:

1. Head Yellow moves one of the discs to the back of each of the 8 areas and Foot Yellow tries to advance each disc into the 7 area or into the 10-off area, watching the drift and speed on each side.

Setups Round 2 – Part 4 (Foot Black Shooting)

The four yellow discs are now at the head of the Court. These discs are placed at four points just in front of the 7-10-off line, two near the outside corners and two near the center line. Foot Black shoots one disc at each of these yellow discs attempting to put them in the kitchen, evaluating the drift and speed of each shot. If any of the first three shots shows significant drift. After the last shot, all discs are moved to the shooting area for the head of the court.

Setup of yellow discs for Black Foot shooting in Round 2.



Setups – Round 3

Each player shoots four discs in this round, except Black shoots first and Yellow shoots last at each end.

Setups Round 3 – Part 5a - Hides (Head Black Shooting)

1. Foot Black places the top or bottom of the cue at the location of a St Pete hide for Head Black. Head Black shoots a disc from the 4-shooting position into the hidden zone, evaluating the drift along the path.
2. After the first disc stops, Foot Black moves the shot disc to the Tampa hide position for Head Black. Head Black shoots a disc from the 4-shooting position into the hidden zone, evaluating the drift along the path.

Setups Round 3 – Part 5b - 8s & 10 (Head Black Shooting)

Either:

1. Foot Black places the Tampa hide disc in the back of the 10 area. Head Black attempts to replace this disc and move it to the kitchen, evaluating the path of the shot disc and the speed.
2. Foot Black moves the shot disc (after it stops) to the center line halfway between the 10-8 line and the 7-8 line. Head Black attempts to double this disc (get two scores) with his final shot.

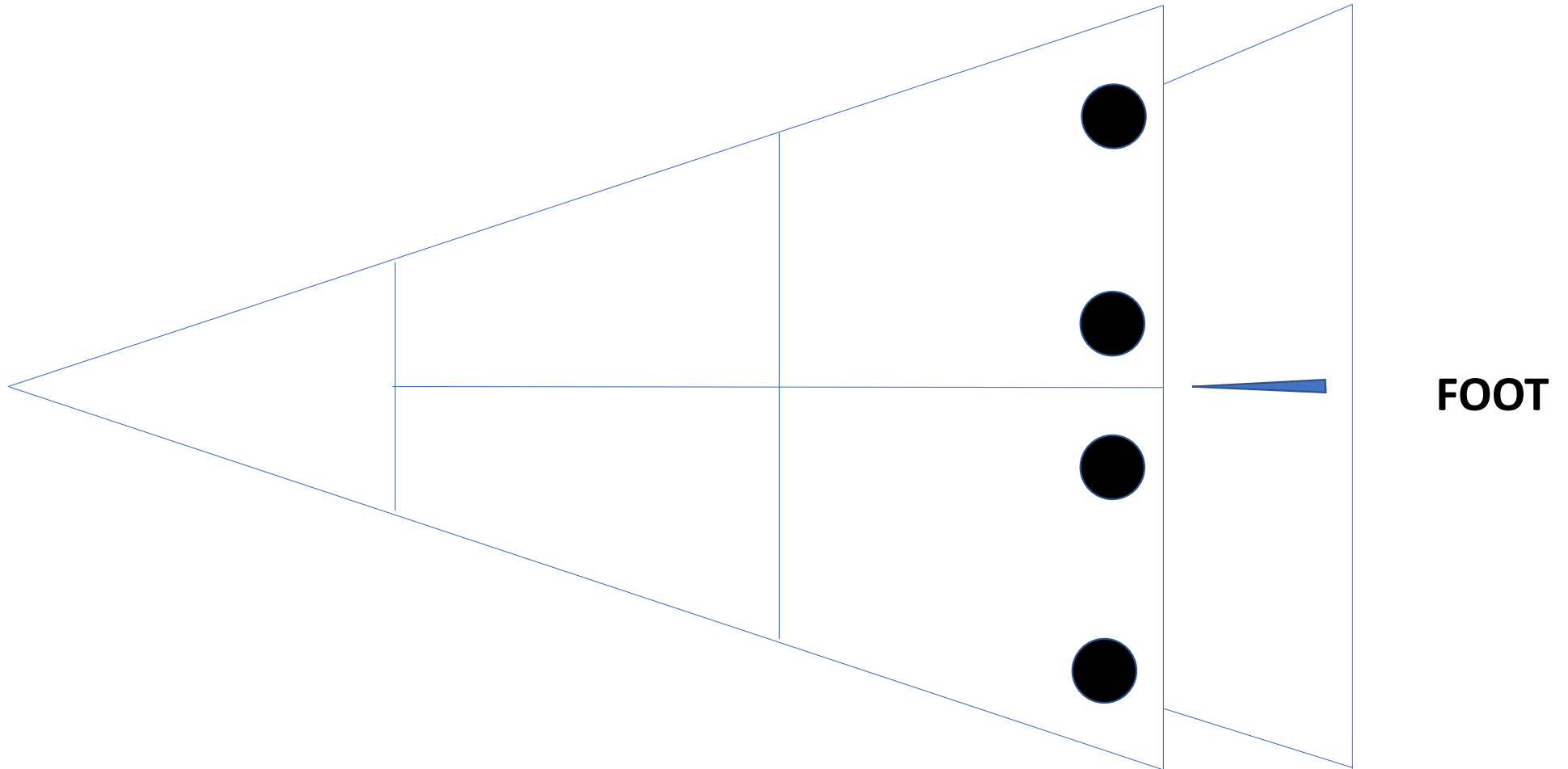
Or:

1. Foot Black moves one of the discs to the back of each of the 8 areas and Head Black tries to advance each disc into the 7 area or into the 10-off area, watching the drift on each side.

Setups Round 3 – Part 6 - 7s (Head Yellow Shooting)

The four black discs are now at the Foot of the Court. These discs are placed at four points just in front of the 7-10-off line, two near the outside corners and two near the center line. Head Yellow shoots one disc at each of these black discs attempting to put them in the kitchen, evaluating the drift and speed of each shot. After the last shot, all 8 discs are moved to the shooting area for the foot of the court.

Setup of black discs for Head Yellow shooting in Round 3.



Setups Round 3 – Part 7a – Hides (Foot Black Shooting)

All eight discs are now at the foot of the court. The procedure for Part 5 is now repeated with Foot Black shooting.

1. Head Black places the top or bottom of the cue at the location of a St Pete hide for Foot Black. Foot Black shoots a disc from the 4-shooting position into the hidden zone, evaluating the drift along the path.
2. After the first disc stops, Head Black moves the shot disc to the Tampa hide position for Foot Black. Foot Black shoots a disc from the 4-shooting position into the hidden zone, evaluating the drift along the path.

Setups Round 3 – Part 7b (Foot Black Shooting)

Either:

1. Head Black places the Tampa hide disc in the back of the 10 area. Foot Black attempts to replace this disc and move it to the kitchen, evaluating the path of the shot disc and the speed.
2. Head Black moves the shot disc (after it stops) to the center line halfway between the 10-8 line and the 7-8 line. Foot Black attempts to double this disc (get two scores) with his final shot.

Or:

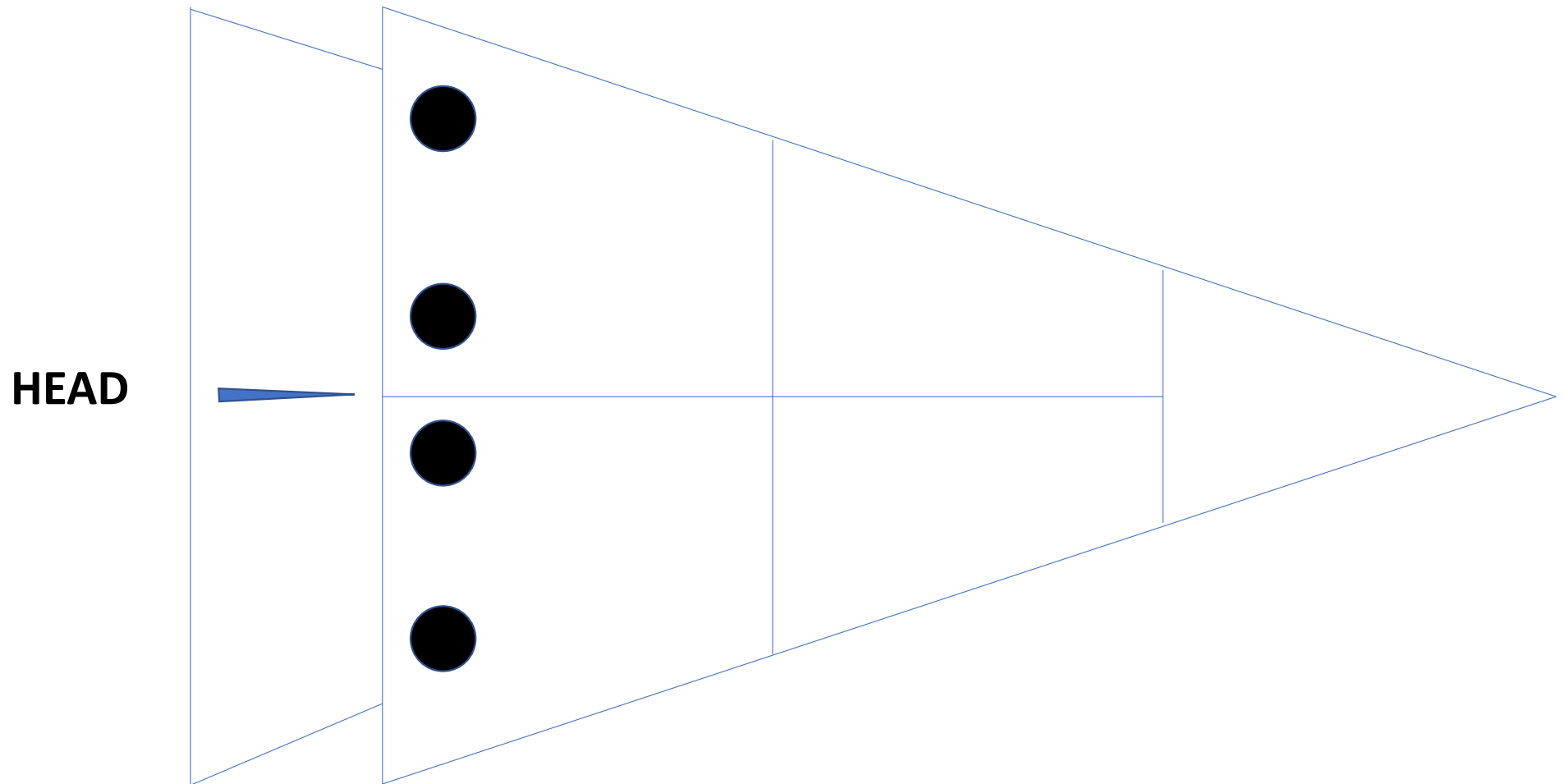
1. Head Black moves one of the discs to the back of each of the 8 areas and Foot Black tries to advance each disc into the 7 area or into the 10-off area, watching the drift on each side.

Setups Round 3 – Part 8 – 7s (Foot Yellow Shooting)

The four black discs are now at the head of the Court. These discs are placed at four points just in front of the 7-10-off line. Foot Yellow shoots one disc at each of these black discs attempting to put them in the kitchen, evaluating the drift and speed of each shot. After the last shot, all discs are moved to the shooting area for the Head of the court.

The game now begins!

Setup of black discs for Foot Yellow shooting in Round 3.



Summary

Each player shoots 2 for speed in Round 1 in the order Head Yellow, Head Black, Foot Yellow, Foot Black.

Yellow shoots two (2) Hides and two (2) 8-10 shots during Round 2 and Black shoots four (4) 7s.

Black shoots two (2) Hides and two (2) 8-10 shots during Round 3 and Yellow shoots four (4) 7s.

Note: The practice shots described for each player are a common standard but not required under tournament rules. The practice discs may be shot from any starting position toward any target of the player's choosing. Players often develop their own variations.

Demonstration

See YouTube Video –
“How to: Shuffleboard Tournament Practice” – Josh Dulabaum

Conclusions

This series of activities is very helpful in focusing your attention on the drift in key areas of the court. Whether you are preparing for a tournament or just practicing, your game will improve if you think about the drift in these areas as you play.

1. Most courts are not flat and deviations of paths of discs are often due to court drift. Your game will improve if you can adjust your shots to correct for the drift along the intended path.
2. The magnitude of the drift is greater for slower shots and less for faster shots.
3. Be sure to watch your opponent's practice discs as well as your own.

General Play

Every shot taken during a game provides an opportunity to evaluate drift and speed. When you shoot each shot, identify exactly where you want to place your disc on the court. If you fail to reach that point with the desired result, adjust your direction to compensate for drift and adjust your shooting speed to adjust for drag by the court along that line. Making such adjustments requires concentration. This is why serious players usually do not engage in conversations while shooting. If you pay attention and make adjustments, your performance will improve during the game. If you don't, you will be making the same mistakes at the end as you did at the beginning.