1. Finite Differences

Errors for different finite differences:

1: Position: 0.057701 meters Orientation: 0.007574 rads

0.1: Position: 0.010831 meters Orientation: 0.024507 rads

0.01: Position: 0.000674 meters Orientation: 0.007756 rads

0.001: Position: 0.000479 meters Orientation: 2.752757 rads

Thus, I conclude a finite difference of 0.01 is the best.

2. Checkers:

is_state_high_quality() is used to see if this state (the one the sim is currently in) is good enough to make the next move after calculating the next move. is_state_valid() is more expensive to compute and is thus only called every 12 steps to make sure the state is okay. It does not need to be called more often than that as the state does not dramatically change between the 12 steps.