Puyo Puyo Compendium

Void P. H.

Contents

1. Introduction
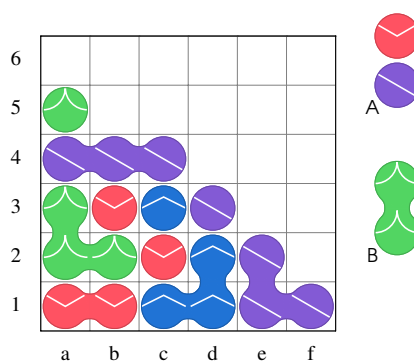
1.1 What is Puyo Puyo?

If you've never played Puyo Puyo before, you might get the impression that it is a quirky "version" of another popular puzzle game, such as Tetris or Candy Crush. Be careful, though – many Puyo players will take offense if you talk about it this way!

In fact, the goal of this section is to argue for the opposite: that Puyo Puyo is a *very* unique game, and that beneath the surface lie many complexities which serve only to enrich the game and make it all the more interesting. Hopefully, this will encourage you to take a deeper dive, and explore Puyo Puyo for yourself.

> **Note** From now on, we'll refer to Puyo Puyo as just Puyo. There's no point in repeating ourselves, right? ∎

1.1.1 Basic elements

There are two elements that are indispensable for any Puyo game. The first is the **board**, which is just a grid where you can place puyos. The second is, well, the **puyos**! Here is an example of a board with a few puyos.

We have a few things to unpack here, so bear with me. As you can see, this is a 6×6 board. You can fit one puyo onto each square. In most official game modes, you'll receive a 6×13 board to work with; however, since we're just getting started, a simpler board will

suffice.

The round shapes within the board are our puyos. Notice that puyos of the same color connect. The purples in row 4 are an example of that. This connective property will become very important soon, so keep it in mind!

You've probably also noticed that there are two pairs (pieces) of puyos outside of the board. This is what we call a **piece preview** – it lets us know which pieces we'll receive next, and lets us improve our game plan. Typically, we receive the piece on top first, and then the piece at the bottom. There's no limit to the number of pieces we can receive – it all depends on how long the game lasts!

> **Terminology** In the example above, the second piece in the preview is made of two green puyos. I'll be referring to pieces like this as "**double greens/reds/blues/etc.**" ∎
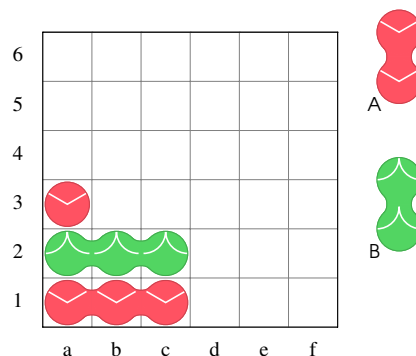
> **Note** The letters and numbers in the example above are **not** present in most versions of the game. We'll make use of them in this compendium to make your life – and mine – easier. For instance, instead of saying "the group of purples that look like an L on the right side of the board," we can just say "the purples at 2e." ∎
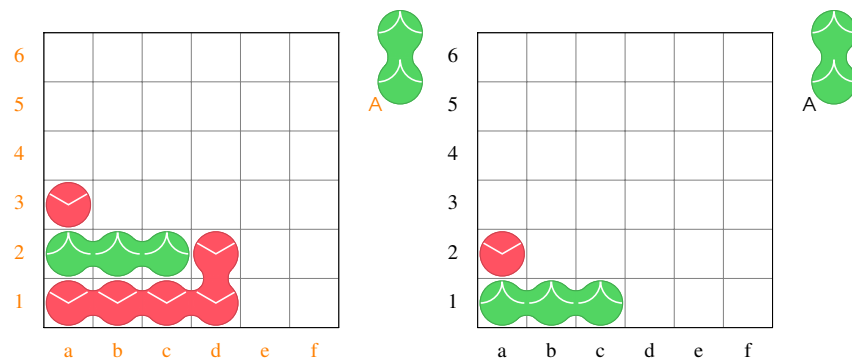
1.1.2 Chains

In the previous section, I mentioned that puyos of the same color connect. There is a reason for this: when you connect four puyos of the same color, they pop! This is also true if you manage to make groups with five or more puyos.

This property of groups is crucial, since it allows us to build **chains**. If you know a bit of chemistry, you're probably familiar with the concept of *chain reactions*. Well, Puyo chains are very similar: if you pop the right group of puyos, others will follow suit, and soon you'll have popped dozens of puyos indirectly!

Consider the following example. Here, we have 2 groups. There are the reds in row 1, the greens in row 2, and a lonely red in row 3. Our piece preview is giving us double reds and greens. What do we do here?
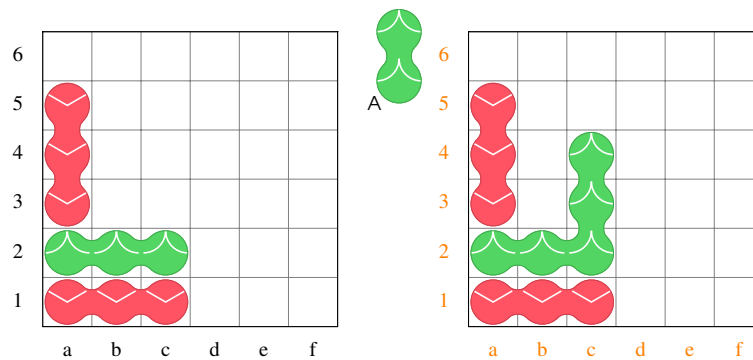

Let's get the most obvious option out of the way. What happens if we connect our reds to the ones in row 1? One way to do it is as follows:
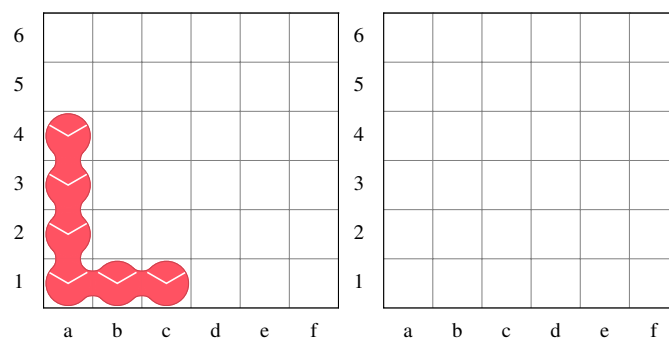
After we connect the 5 reds, the group pops. Because Puyo follows the laws of gravity, everything above this group falls to the bottom of the board, and we are left with the board state on the right. Very cool! So what?

Well, actually, this is quite boring, right? There's nothing special about it. Let's take an alternative route. We'll begin by placing the reds on 4a, and then we'll pop the greens instead, like this:

Once the greens pop, we get this:

Great! With just one piece, we got rid of *two* groups! On top of that, our board is now empty – which, as we'll see, gives us an interesting advantage in competitive Puyo!

> **Terminology** An **All Clear** (AC) happens when you pop all the puyos on your board, leaving it empty. Note that the empty board state at the start of a match doesn't count as an all clear! ∎
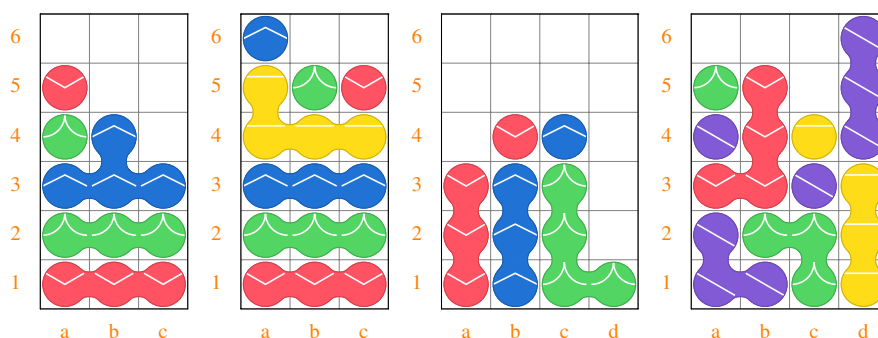
Terminology The **trigger** is the group of puyos you pop in order to start a chain. In this example, it's the greens.   ▪

At this point, you are saying one of two things:
- "I think I need a break, this is already too complicated for me."
- "This is a game for babies! Do people really need a tutorial for this?"

If you're the first type of person, do take a break! Funnily enough, gravity is the first major roadblock you'll encounter in Puyo. It's perhaps the hardest thing to wrap your mind around, and even veterans make mistakes every now and then, which can mostly be traced back to gravity. Once your mind is at ease again, you can come back.

Here is an exercise. Try to understand how these chains work:

Note If you click on one of the boards above, you'll be sent to **puyo.gg**, a free simulator that allows you to build theoretical chains and practice. Another popular chainsim is **Puyo Nexus' chainsim**. Pay attention to the board coordinates – if they are orange, that means the board is clickable!   ▪

The first board is similar to what we've seen so far. The groups pop in the order $B \to G \to R$ – blues, then greens, then reds; keep this notation in mind! This gives us a bigger chain than before, but it's now harder to build and read.

The second board is more interesting. We add the yellows to our stack of groups, and the pop order is now $Y \to B \to G \to R$. Note that it's perfectly fine to put the green and the red on 5b and 5c. In fact, we can swap the positions of every puyo on top of the yellows, as long as the yellows still pop.

The third board is an example of what we call **stairs**. Stairs consists of multiple pillars of puyos, stacked side by side, with the puyo that connects to the next group being placed on top of the previous group. Stairs is one of the easiest patterns to learn, which is why you'll often see beginners using it. The pop order here is $G \to B \to R$.

The fourth board is the weirdest of them all. I urge you to click on it, if you're having trouble visualizing it. The pop order is $R \to P \to G \to Y \to P$.
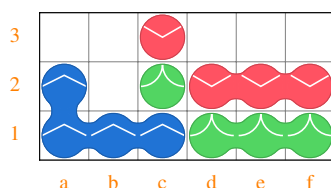
Keep in mind Hubris is one of your greatest enemies. Sometimes, you just have to watch a chain in action in order to understand what's going on. This is why watching Puyo matches is just as important as playing the game.   ▪

I bet the game doesn't seem so simple now, does it? But don't think about those chains too much. For now, I want you to keep in mind that Puyo is all about gravity.

Another thing I'd like to bring up is the fact that our vocabulary is quite limited right now. Let's remedy that. Other than weird shapes, you've probably noticed that the boards

differ in terms of **chain length**. The chain length tells us how many groups have to be popped in sequence for a chain to **resolve** (finish). For example, the first board has pop order $B \to G \to R$. That's a sequence of 3 groups, so we have a **3-chain**. The other boards contain 4-, 3-, and 5-chains, respectively.

Notice how I've been talking about *sequences*. By that, I mean that two groups popping *at the same time* constitute *a singular part of the chain*. For example, the following chain is only a 2-chain, not a 3-chain.

> **Terminology** We use the term **link** to refer to each part of a chain sequence. In the example above, the blues constitute the first link, while the reds and greens together constitute the second link. ∎

> **Terminology** **Power chain** is a loose term used to describe chains where multiple groups pop in a single link. It can also be used for chains with really big groups. ∎

> **Terminology** **Power bonus** is the extra damage a chain sends for having extra puyos or groups per link. ∎
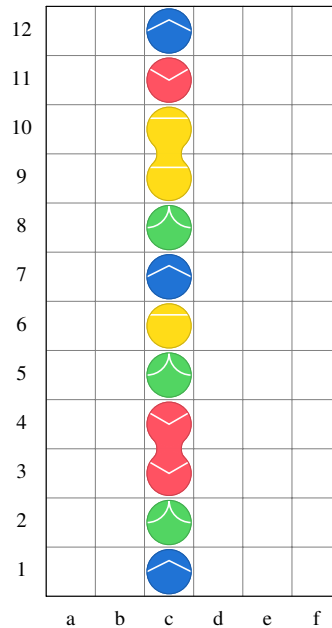
So why am I talking about chain lengths? That's what we'll see next.

1.1.3 Game objective

The game's objective depends on what you are playing. If you are playing practice mode, or any other single-player mode (such as the score and time challenges from Puyo Puyo Champions), you'll focus on developing a certain type of efficiency, or a self-imposed goal. There are certain skills that you might find easier to develop in single-player, since it puts you under no pressure from other players, allowing you to think more clearly.

I'll focus on **versus** here. By that, I mean any adversarial mode: whether you're playing against a CPU or another human, the same objective applies.
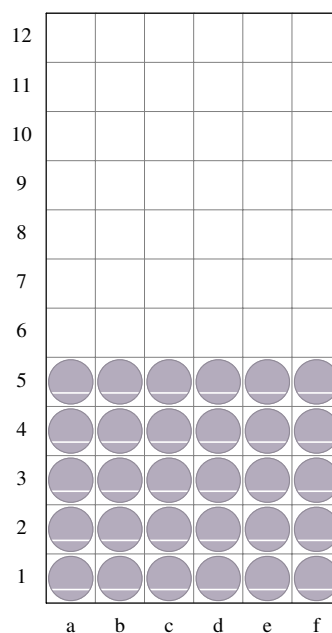
So, what is your objective in versus mode? Naturally, it's to defeat your opponent. To do that, you need your opponent to **top out**. A top out occurs when a player fills their third column completely. When that happens, the game can't spawn any pieces on the player's board, and they lose. In most games, you'll see a red X on the topmost slot of the third column. You don't want to put a piece there.

Of course, if your opponent also knows the objective, they won't top out by themselves. So how do you make them top out?
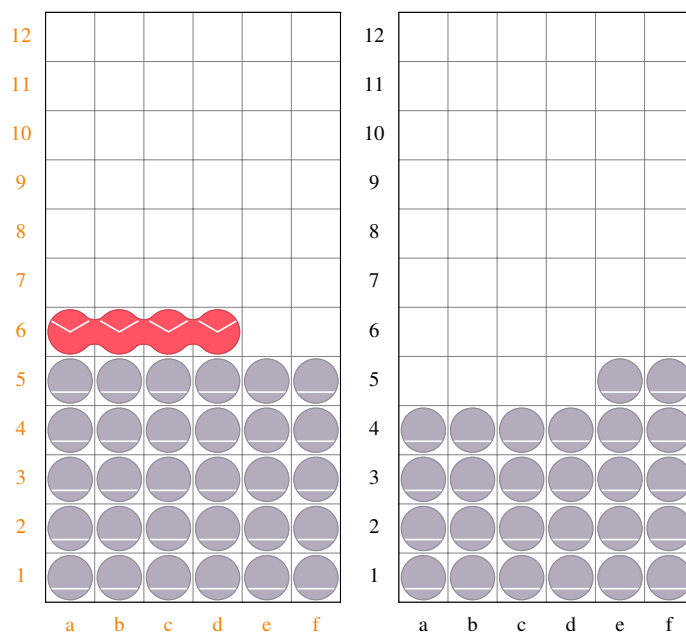
1.1.4 Sending damage

Your chains cause damage to the opponent. What's more, the lengthier the chain, the stronger it will be. That's why I've been telling you about that. But how exactly do chains "damage" your opponent? Well, if the idea is to make them top out, then you fill their board with garbage!
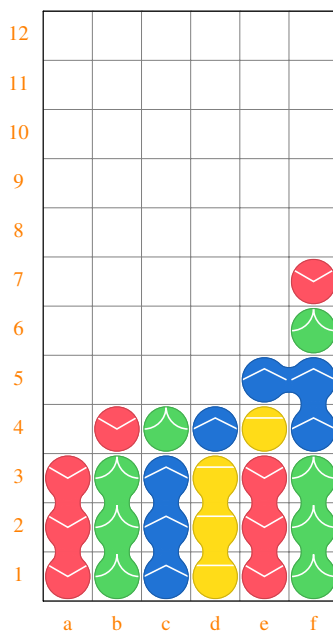

The "gray puyos" on this board are actually **garbage**, or **nuisance** puyos. These puyos have a few quirky properties that make them quite annoying to deal with. For one, they don't connect with each other, so the garbage in the example above won't pop by itself. To
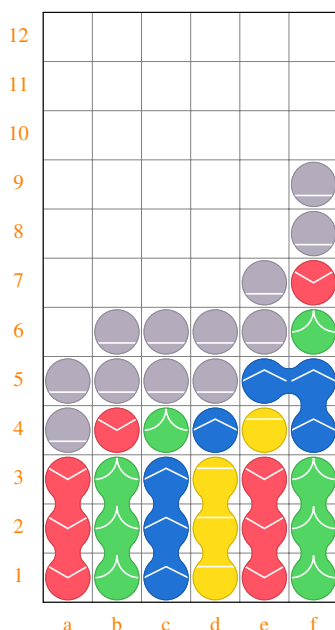
make garbage pop, you have to pop a group of puyos that's *adjacent to it*. Consider this example.

Another property of garbage is that it doesn't fall in pairs, like the pieces you receive. Instead, garbage is sent in bulk. This can create very uncomfortable situations. For example, let's suppose your opponent is building something big, like this.

This is a 7-chain, and that's huge. As we'll see in a moment, it's enough to instantly defeat an opponent. Now, if you manage to make a chain that sends 12 garbage, for example, *all 12 garbage will be sent at once*, like this:

Now your opponent can't access their chain, and they'll have to **dig** through the garbage you sent to make their 7-chain work. I recommend trying out this problem for yourself, if you're a beginner. Click on the board above and try to dig through the garbage. See how long it takes you to send the 7-chain! (Tip: You have to place a blue puyo in column 5.)

As you can see, I kind of lied to you. There is an objective in Puyo that precedes beating your opponent, and that is to survive. In the situation above, we aren't really trying to make our opponent top out yet. Instead, we are protecting ourselves by sending enough garbage to our opponent's board that they won't be able to use their chain anymore, which could make *us* top out! Trust me, though, we're only scratching the surface here. And that's perfectly fine when you're a beginner!

1.1.4.1 Score system

Let's talk about how Puyo's garbage system works! We must first look into the game's score system. The score is the number you'll see underneath your board in the games. It tells you how much garbage your chain is going to send. The score is determined by a pretty complicated formula that we aren't really interested in. What really matters is that there are four variables involved:

- How many puyos were cleared in the chain.
- How long your chain is.
- How many puyos popped in each group.
- How many groups of different colors popped at the same time.

Once we delve into sophisticated versus tactics, each of these items will become very important. Because all of these things are taken into account, Puyo is a very situational game. For example, depending on the situation, a chain that pops a lot of groups in one link is better than a lengthy chain. This depends entirely on context, though.

> **Terminology** Dropping the pieces faster (usually by pressing down) is known as **soft dropping**. You'll notice that soft dropping also increases your score, which is important in very specific circumstances.   ∎

To determine how many garbage puyos the opponent will receive, the game divides

your chain's score by the *target points*, a hidden variable that's 70 by default. To send 2 lines of garbage like in the previous example, you would need a score of 840, which lies somewhere between a 2-chain and a 3-chain. This information isn't super useful in the heat of a match, but it becomes relevant when discussing the difference in power between two big chains.
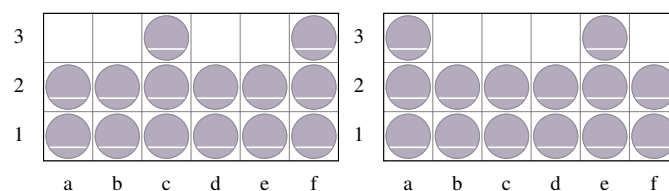
> **Note** This is a slightly simplified view of the garbage calculation. As explained in the article linked above, the remainder of the division by the target points is stored and included in future calculations. ∎

> **Terminology** The target points decrease over time, which means your chains send more damage the longer a match lasts. The **margin time** is a variable you can configure before a match, and it defines how quickly the target points decrease. ∎

> **Keep in mind** Knowing the numbers will hardly ever help you in Puyo. Intuition is orders of magnitude more important than the math behind the game! To develop your intuition, you'll have to play and see for yourself how strong each attack is. ∎

1.1.4.2 Garbage in batches

As I said before, garbage is sent in bulk to the opponent. Up to 30 garbage puyos can be sent to the opponent at once, which is equivalent to 5 rows of garbage. When you don't send enough garbage to complete a line, the garbage is sent randomly at the incomplete line. For example, if you send 14 garbage puyos, the two rows at the bottom will be completely filled, but the row on top may fall in multiple different ways.

> **Terminology** **One in six** is a term you'll hear often in competitive Puyo. It's mostly used in situations where one player sends a single garbage puyo to the opponent's board, and it lands on a spot that breaks the opponent's chain, or makes it inaccessible, or even makes them top out. ∎

Puyo has its own quirky system of symbols to indicate how much garbage your opponent is going to receive. When you send a chain, the symbols start appearing over your opponent's board. This is known as the **garbage queue**.

Symbol	Name	Amount of garbage
	Pebble	1
	Line	6
	Red Rock	30
	Star	180
	Moon	360
	Crown	720

As an example, if you send 🔴 ⚪ ⚪ garbage to your opponent, that's $30 + 6 + 6 = 42$ garbage puyos. Once again, the precise math hardly ever matters in a match. You should know that, most of the time, you're in big trouble if you receive a red rock; and you're most likely dead if you receive two.

1.1.4.3 All Clear bonus

Recall that an AC happens when you send a chain that empties your board. This triggers a special mechanic that adds a red rock to the damage output of your next chain. This makes ACs especially relevant early in a match, and it can give a big advantage to whoever manages to find an AC first.

> **Terminology** An **All Clear start** happens when there is a trivial AC at the start of a match. For example, when a match starts with two double reds on the piece preview. ■
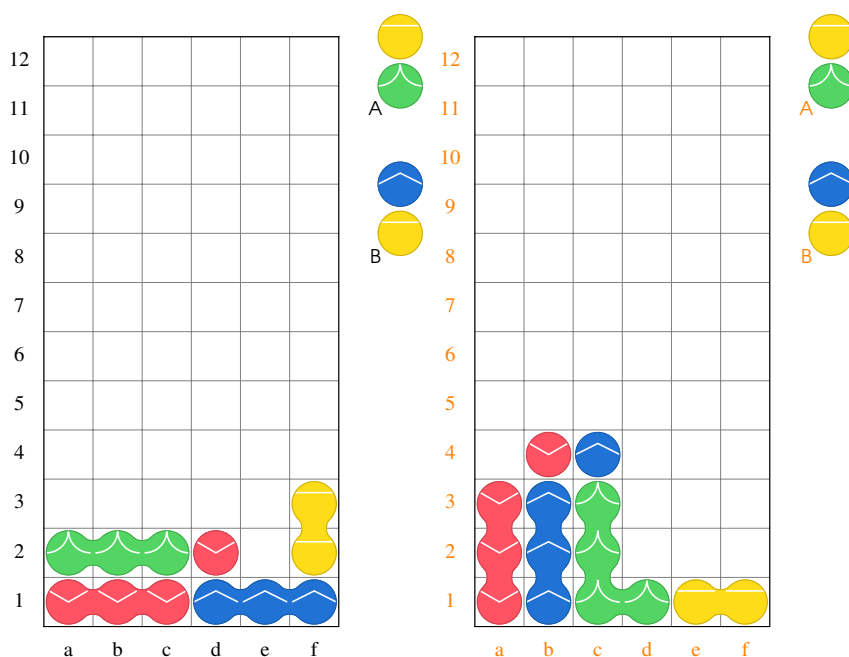
> **Terminology** **All Clear fishing** describes the act of building chains in unusual ways in an attempt to find an AC. This is a risky strategy at higher levels of play. ■

1.1.5 Fighting back

So far, I've been talking about this game as if you were the only one who can send damage to your opponents – never the other way around. So here's an important question: what if you're the one under attack? Is there anything you can do to defend yourself?

The oldest games in the Puyo series *didn't give you any way to fight back*. The star, moon and crown symbols didn't even exist back then, because they would've been useless. Thankfully, it wasn't long before the **offset system** was invented. Its premise is simple: in order to counter the opponent's attack, you have to send a stronger attack!

Let's look at an example. Suppose you're playing versus, and your opponent (right side) starts sending their chain.

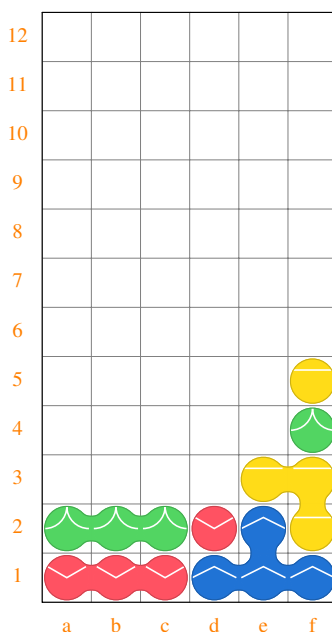The opponent has a 3-chain, and it'll send ⚪ ⚪ ⚪ ⚪ (2 lines and 2 randomly placed

pebbles). What do you do here?

The first thing to keep in mind is that no garbage will fall on your board until the following sequence of events happens:

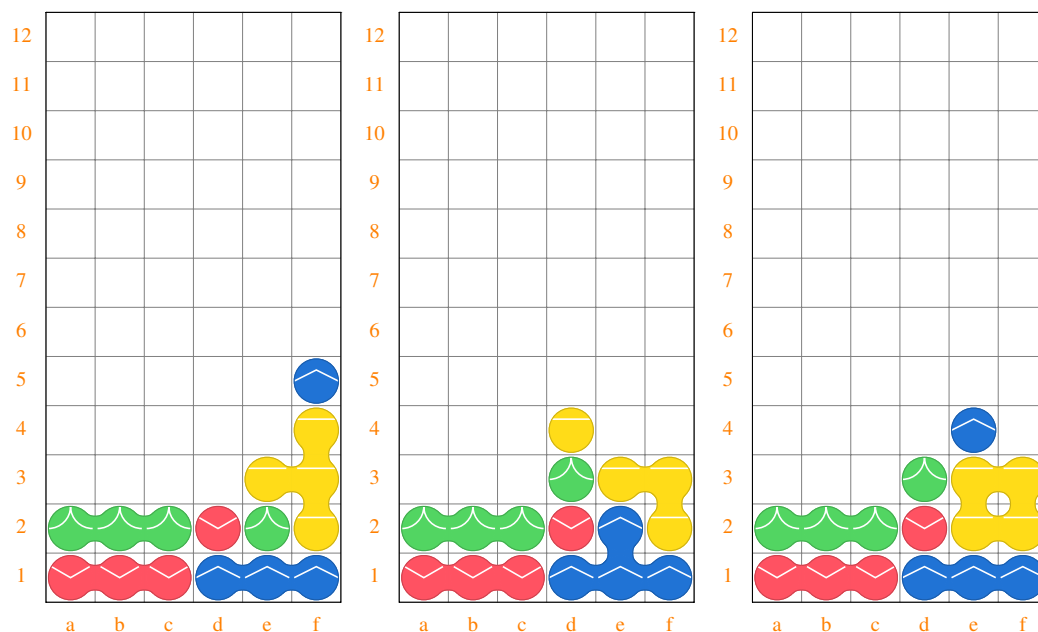1. The opponent's chain resolves.
2. You place a piece on the board.

So, you're actually safe for a few seconds. And luckily, you have many response options here! Here's what many desperate beginners would do:

1. Notice the incoming chain.
2. Panic!
3. Notice that they can send a 2-chain with the blues ($B \to R$).
4. Throw the first piece on the preview to the right.
5. Send the 2-chain with the blues.

The result is the most basic 2-chain, totalling ⬭ ⬭ ⬭ ⬭ ⬭ (5) garbage puyos. Let's do the math: the opponent sent 14 garbage to your queue, and you responded with 5 garbage. That means you take $14 - 5 = 9$ garbage of damage instead. This is how you use the offset system to *reduce the damage you take*.

Let's explore three different scenarios now. Can you figure out how to arrive at these board states using the piece preview? Which one do you think is better?

All of these are 3-chains. The first one has pop order $Y \to B \to R$. Every link in this chain matches every link in the opponent's chain: only one group pops per link, and every group has 4 puyos. Hence, this chain also sends 😊 😊 ☺ ☺ garbage. As a result, you receive no garbage! This is known as a **perfect counter**.

> **Note** Perfect counters are so rare that they are almost guaranteed to surprise players and spectators alike. However, they usually give a slight advantage to the opponent, since they have time to build a new chain while your chain is offsetting theirs. ∎

The chain in the middle has pop order $B \to (G,R) \to Y$. This chain matches the opponent's in chain length and number of puyos popped in each group; however, it pops two groups in the second link. This makes it a stronger chain, and sends 😊 😊 😊 ☺ ☺ ☺ (21 garbage). Since this is more garbage than what the opponent sent, you end up *countering* the opponent, and sending $21 - 14 = 7$ garbage their way.

How about the chain on the right? This one has pop order $Y \to B \to (G,R)$. As you might expect, this chain is also stronger than the opponent's, for the same reason as before. However, it is also stronger than the chain in the middle, because the reds and greens pop in the third link. This chain sends a whopping 😊 😊 😊 😊 ☺ ☺ (26 garbage), totalling 2 lines of garbage against the opponent.

> **Keep in mind** Power chains tend to be stronger when the power bonus happens closer to the end of the chain. ∎

Notice that the last 2 chains result in ACs, so you'll send 5 extra rows of garbage the next time you send a chain. So not only are they stronger than the perfect counter – they are *much* stronger. But that doesn't mean the game is over for your opponent! While you're busy offsetting their chain, they have time to build a new chain, which gives them the chance to *counter your counter*! This back-and-forth is called a **volley**. Volleys last longer when both players build big chains. That's because longer chains give players more
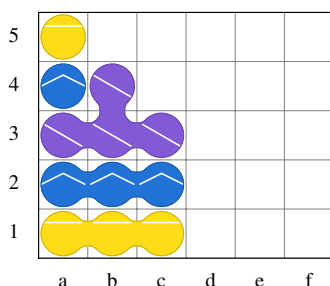
time to prepare a counter. There's a popular TAS[1] video that showcases an 8-minute match full of volleys!

1.1.6 Random number generator

By now, I believe it's become clear just how different Puyo is from other puzzle games, and why some even go as far as to call it a fighting game. For all intents and purposes, there is an infinite number of single-player games. Versus mode creates even more possibilities. Chains are akin to combos in a fighting game, and responding to attacks requires great vision and understanding of various mechanics and strategies that we have yet to explore.

But I would argue that Puyo's most defining feature is its random number generator (RNG). RNG exists in most modern games, and it's basically an algorithm that allows random[2] events to occur. In Puyo, the RNG is responsible for generating the pieces that you receive. This is a game changer, because it introduces unpredictability to the game.
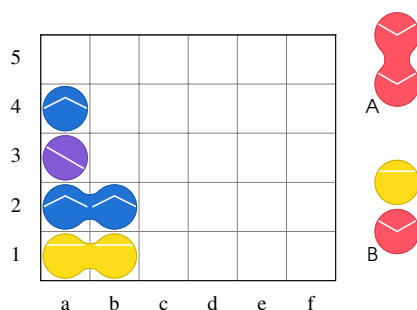
Let's explore a simple example. I showed you plenty of horizontal stacks in previous sections. So let's say you're very excited to practice. You close this compendium and open a Puyo game. You can't wait to build a stack like this.

Ideally, you'd want a piece preview like this: $YB \rightarrow YB \rightarrow YB \rightarrow PB \rightarrow PP \rightarrow PY$. This is highly unlikely! Let's look at a few roadblocks that might emerge as you try to build this chain.
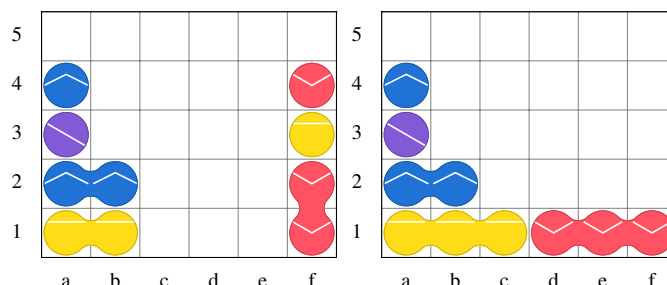
1.1.6.1 Roadblock 1: Unwanted pieces

This one is really common. In our ideal world, we only use 3 different colors for our chain. However, in standard games, we have 4 colors to work with. So situations like this are very common.
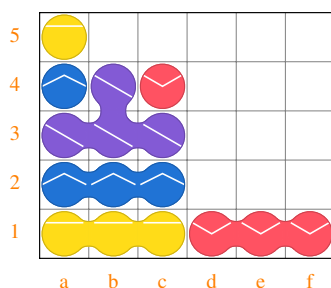

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[1]TAS stands for Tool Assisted Speedrun, and it's often used to refer to video game footage where the player uses specialized software to access the game's memory and input commands frame by frame, resulting in "perfect" gameplay.

[2]RNG in games is actually *pseudo-random*. Usually, the computer takes a variable (for example, the current time) and applies a bunch of formulas to it. The result is a seemingly random number.

What do you do with those reds that showed up all of a sudden? What most beginners do is throw **unwanted pieces** to the side – often column 6. This is completely fine when you're still learning how to chain, but it becomes a harmful habit after you reach a certain level of competence. Here's an example of what a beginner would likely do (left), versus an experienced player (right).
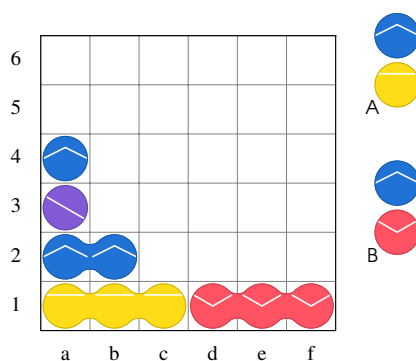
The chain on the right is better for a few reasons: (a) it completes the group of yellows; (b) it creates a group of reds that's ready to pop; (c) the reds can be added as a fourth link in the chain (as shown below); (d) it makes the board more even in terms of height (a very important thing that we will discuss later).
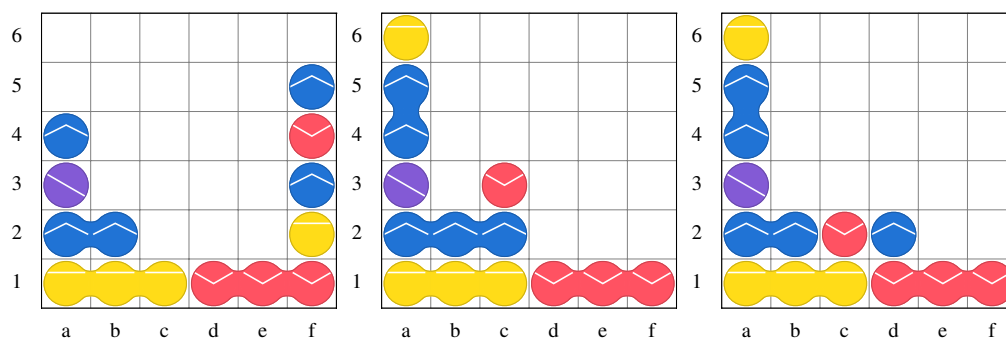
Keep in mind Most unwanted pieces are only unwanted in the short term. The most efficient players think many steps ahead when placing seemingly useless pieces. ∎

1.1.6.2 Roadblock 2: Drought

A **drought** occurs when one or more colors take too long to appear in the preview. Droughts can be extremely painful when you need a certain color to complete your chain. Let's take advantage of the previous example to elaborate on this. Suppose you're in this pickle when trying to build your ideal chain.
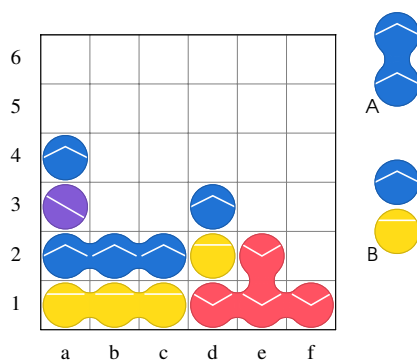
No purples in sight! This chain is quickly becoming unsustainable. Let's first look at 3 possibilities on how to proceed.

Now let's discuss each one of these, from left to right.
1. This, again, is panic-mode beginner stuff. You're not really looking for a solution here, you're just trying to build exactly what you have in mind. This is bad, and if the drought worsens, so does your chain!
2. A more level-headed player's approach. You acknowledge that it's okay for the chain to be a bit different from what you envisioned, hence the blue-yellow on 5a. You even make use of the reds! This is much better than option 1, but now the purples are in a bit of an awkward spot, since column 3 is taken by a red puyo.
3. A very classy option! Just like the previous chain, you're making sure the yellows will pop. Plus, the red-blue was placed in a way that allows you to extend the purples as envisioned, with the reds still connecting at the end of the chain. This is the best option of the bunch.
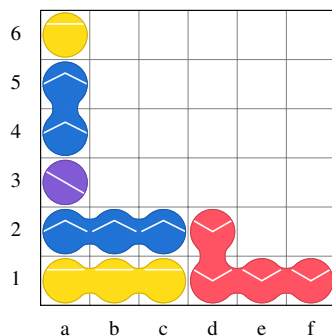
Now I present an unintuitive possibility to you.

This one is a big brain move, and it's actually better than number 3 above depending on the situation. Take a look at the piece preview. There's still no purple coming. Now, your opponent probably depends on purples to make their chain work, as well. So, while they wait to receive the purples, you build a **secondary trigger** with the reds, which results in a power 2-chain. This sends ⚇ ⚇ ⚆ to your opponent! Two lines of garbage plus a drought is a huge hit, and it might determine your opponent's fate if you keep playing well.

> **Note** I would not recommend building this attack if, instead of $BB \rightarrow BY$, the piece preview contained purples. You'd be risking a counter from your opponent. ∎
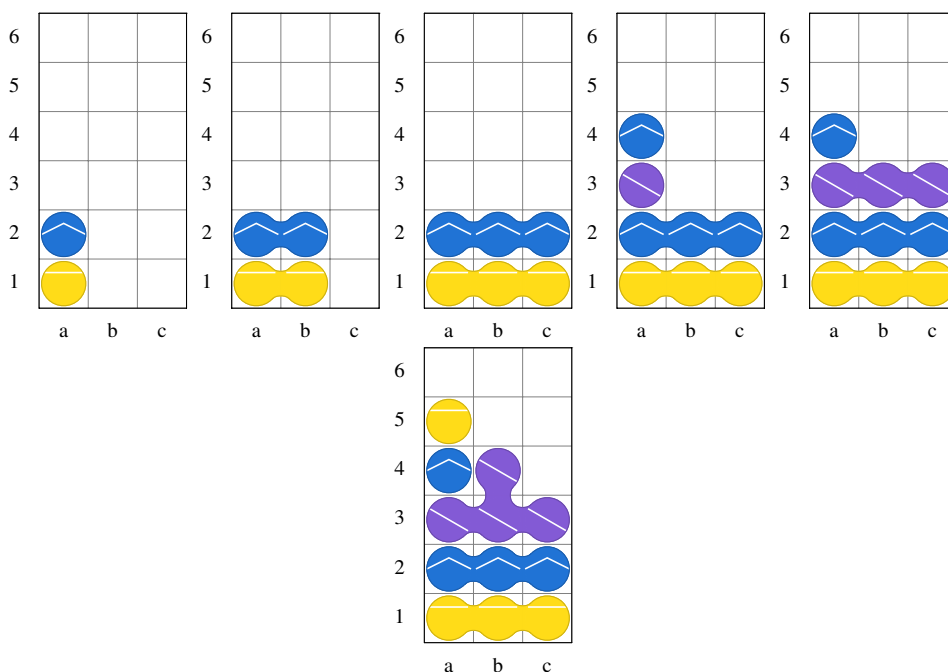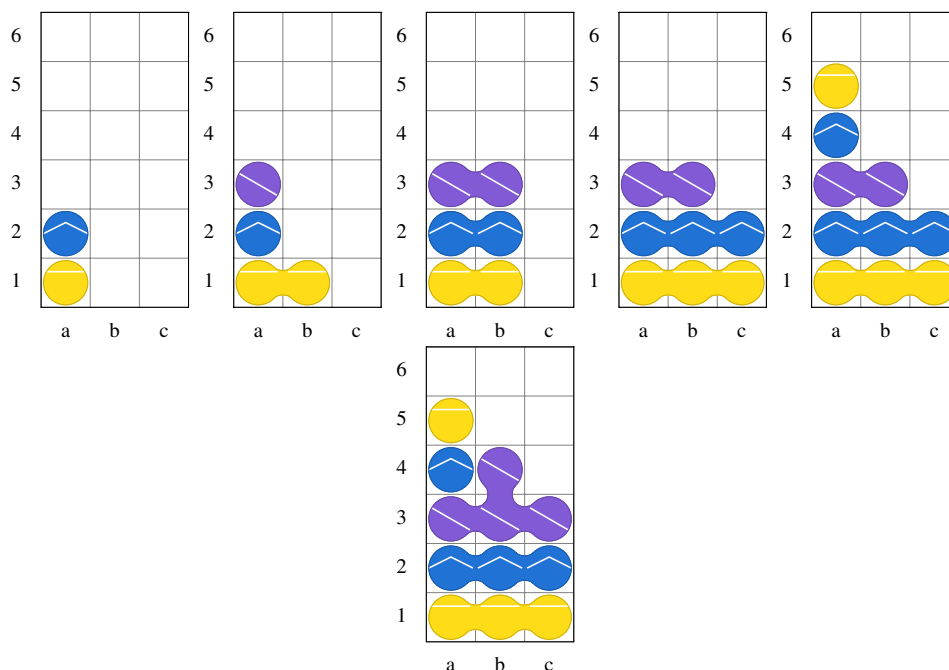
Lastly, I'd like to bring this possibility up.

This one is unintuitive because many players (not just beginners!) have a hard time realizing that it's okay to pop a few groups here and there to make your life easier. The world won't end if you just get rid of the reds here! While I don't think this is the best option, it might make your life easier, so you can go for it.

1.1.6.3 Roadblock 3: Bad piece order

Sometimes you receive exactly the pieces you need to build a chain, but you have a hard time figuring out how to build it, because you had a different build order in mind. At the start of this section, I mentioned that you'd probably want this sequence of pieces in the piece preview: $YB \rightarrow YB \rightarrow YB \rightarrow PB \rightarrow PP \rightarrow PY$. That's because I'm assuming most people would find it easier to build this chain like this.
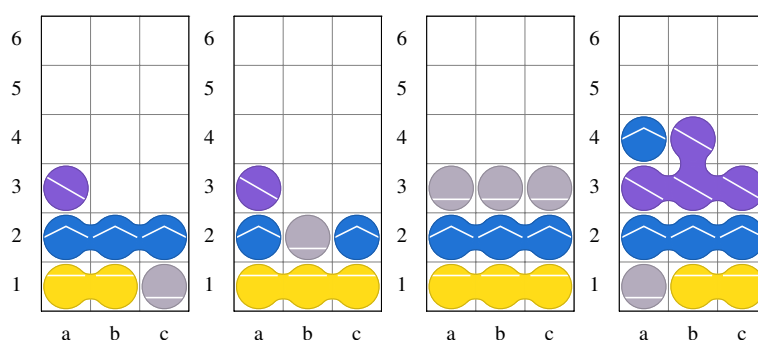

What if you received a sequence such as $YB \rightarrow PY \rightarrow BP \rightarrow BY \rightarrow BY \rightarrow PP$? Then you'd have to build the chain like this.

Looks awkward? That's because it is. Once we start discussing ways to build reliable chains, you'll realize that there are certain sequences of pieces that fit comfortably into your chain; and then there are sequences that you struggle to put together. Generally, you want to avoid the latter. If a sequence doesn't work well for a certain chain pattern, it'll probably be good for a different pattern. Flexibility is key.

1.1.6.4 Roadblock 4: Garbage

If your opponent gets enough score very early on in the match, they can use it to pop a quick 1- or 2-chain that sends very little garbage to your board. Depending on where the garbage falls (which depends on RNG!) your life might become hell all of a sudden. Look at these examples of what could happen.

All of these examples force you to deviate from your original chaining plan. Of course, you can always try to clear the garbage to rebuild the chain you envisioned at the start, but that takes too much time, and it only gets worse thanks to the other roadblocks. Thankfully, this is a rather rare roadblock; but certain opponents exploit this rarity really well!

1.1.7 Conclusion

If you made it this far, you now understand that Puyo is a puzzle fighting game with simple, yet challenging mechanics, and plenty of things to consider, even at the most basic level.

Most importantly, you're now aware that it's definitely not Candy Crush.

    If this introduction felt like information overload, don't worry! Take it easy. My goal here was to introduce a bunch of concepts to you, and some of them are hard to grasp at first. The next chapters will focus on specific topics, and hopefully you won't find my logic hard to follow.
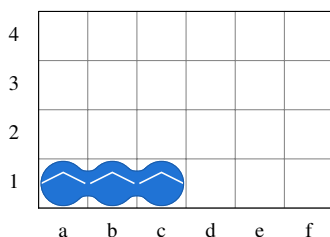
2. Chaining basics

In the previous chapter, I showed you a few different chains, but I didn't take the time to explain much about them. That's because I wanted you to focus on game mechanics such as gravity and garbage. In this chapter, we'll actually focus on the rationale behind chains, and how to build them consistently.
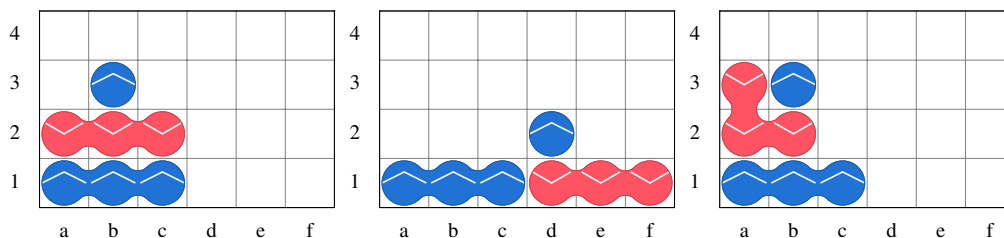
2.1 Blocking method

At the heart of Puyo lies the **blocking method**. This is what you'll rely on as you're learning how to play, but it's also the guiding principle for any kind of chain you can build.
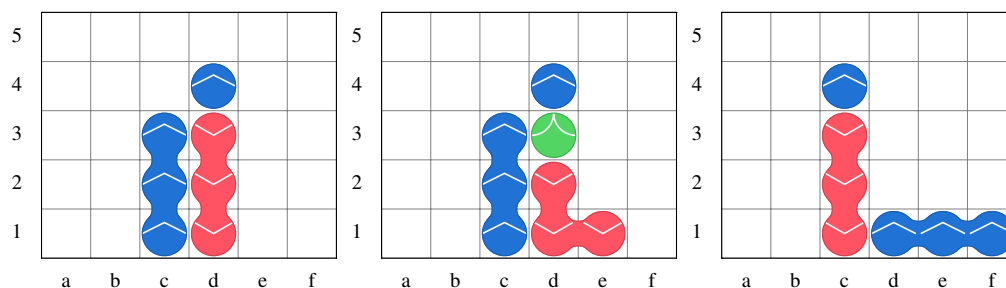
Here's what the blocking method is all about. Suppose you have a group of puyos like the blues on the left. If you want to build a 2-chain with it, you need another group to act as a trigger. After you pop the trigger, *gravity* comes into play, and the blues are supposed to pop in the second link. Gravity implies that something must fall, and that something is *another blue*.

So, if we want to pop the blues in the second link, we need to *block a fourth blue* with our trigger. Here are a few ways to do this, with the reds acting as the trigger.
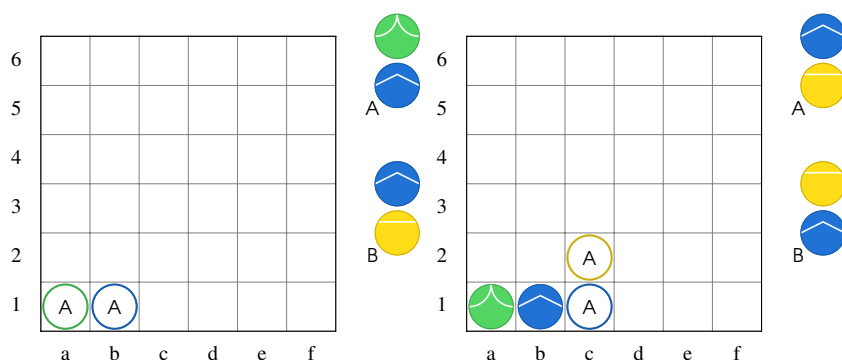
In other words, the blocking method is all about blocking the connection between puyos in a group, using puyos from another group. Here's another example, using pillars this time. In all of these cases, popping the reds results in a 2-chain.
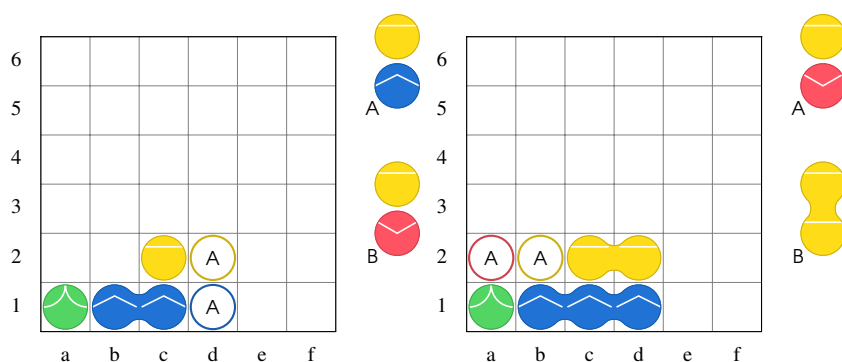

In the context of the blocking method, the lonely blue that falls to complete our chain is called **key puyo**. It's very important to keep track of your key puyos, otherwise your chains won't work as intended. For now, I recommend that you always try to place the key puyo as soon as you can, and don't do anything to it afterwards. This will help you develop the muscle memory needed to make bigger chains.
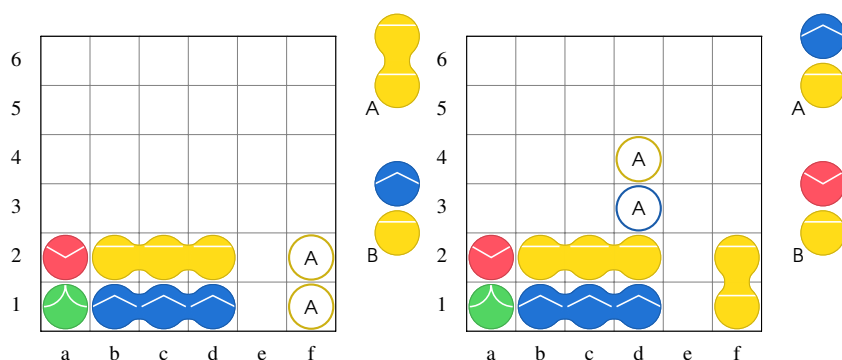
2.1.1 Example: 3-chain

Let's go through an example together. I used puyo.gg to get a random sequence of pieces. We start with $BG \rightarrow BY$ on our piece preview. I'll describe my actions step by step below.
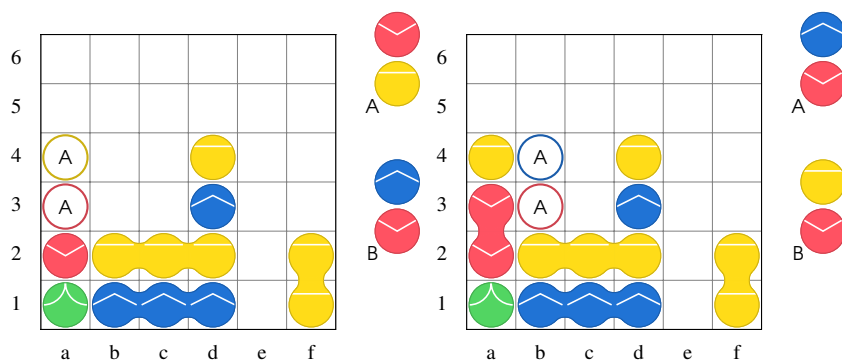

1. I notice that there are *two blues* coming. I will take advantage of this to start grouping them together. For now, let's not worry about where I place the first piece, and let's put green on 1a, blue on 1b.
2. There's yet another blue! This is great, because we will be able to complete a group of 3 blues. This will be our priority for now. I decided to place blue on 1c, yellow on 2c.

3. Notice that we're now getting plenty of yellows. It's probably a good idea to group them, too. I'll place blue on 1d and yellow on 2d, which completes our group of blues.

4. Let's complete our group of yellows with the yellow-red. We can put it in many places; I choose red on 2a and yellow on 2b, just to keep our stack nice.
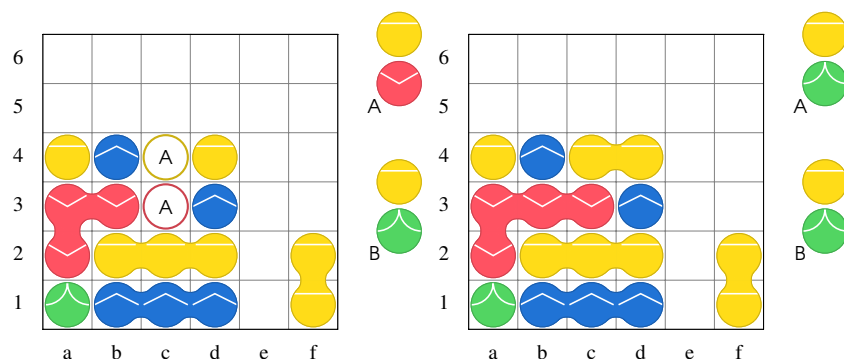

5. This double yellow doesn't help us. If we pop the yellows right now, that'll only be a 1-chain. Remember: we still need a blue key puyo on top of the yellows! Let's put the yellows somewhere where they won't ruin our chain, like column 6.

6. Now we get exactly the piece we need to trigger our chain! We can place the yellow-blue on columns 2, 3 or 4, without rotating it, and that'll give us a 2-chain. While that's great, I'll be greedy and aim for a 3-chain instead. Notice that there's a red-yellow coming. We will use the yellow as a key puyo, and block it with the reds! But first, let's flip the blue-yellow and place it on column 4.

7. Let's block the yellows with the reds, as I said previously.

8. Now we see the two reds we need to trigger our chain. From here, I think it's pretty clear what we have to do!
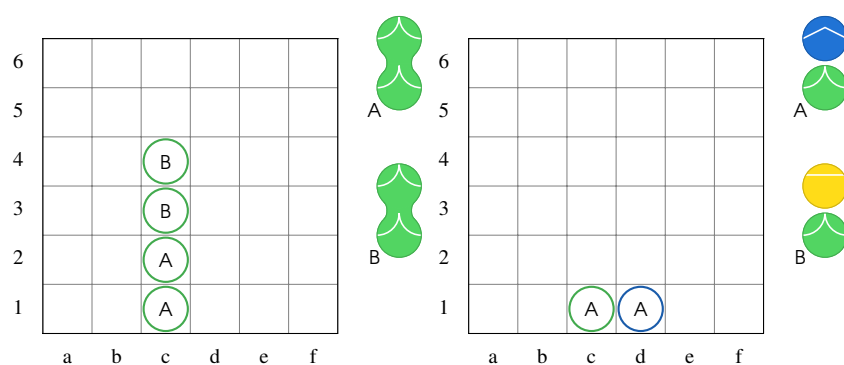
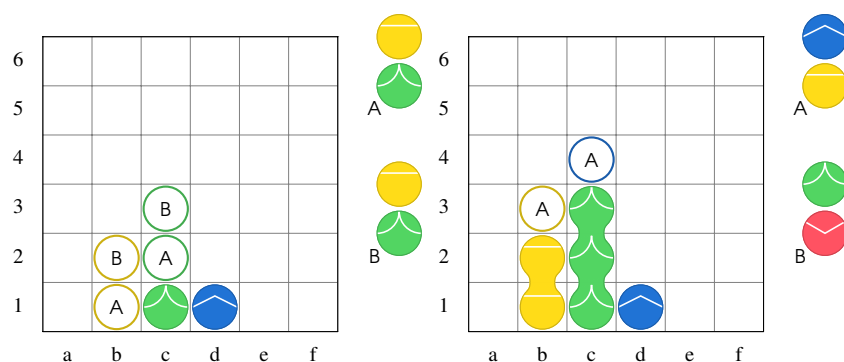Voila! We have a 3-chain. The pop order is $R \to Y \to B$.

I'd like to stress that, in a real match, you have a limited amount of time to make these decisions, so it's harder to get things right. At first, I recommend trying to build as many groups as you can, even if it's hard to visualize what chains you can make. You might make chains on accident, which can actually help you learn how to chain!
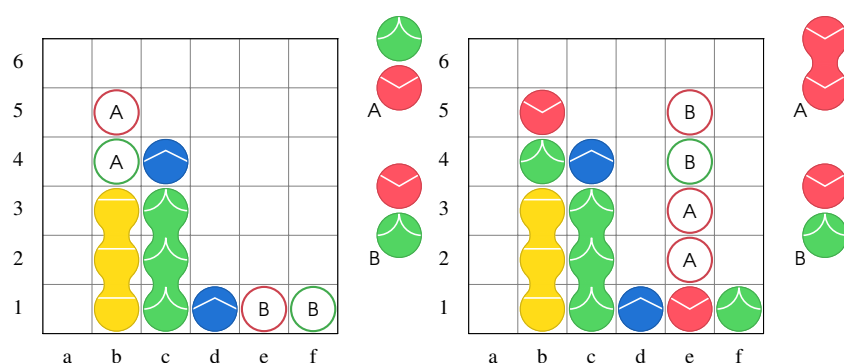
2.1.2 Example: Pillars into stairs

Let's look at another example. This time, we have an All Clear start! There's no point in trying to use these greens for anything else – let's get that AC!

1. Let's just pop those two greens to get our AC. If this were the actual game, an "All Clear!" text would pop up on the board, and it would stay there until we sent a new chain.
2. Now we notice the presence of two greens on the piece preview. Let's try to group them together. This time, I'll try to build a pillar, so I'll leave empty space on top of the first green.
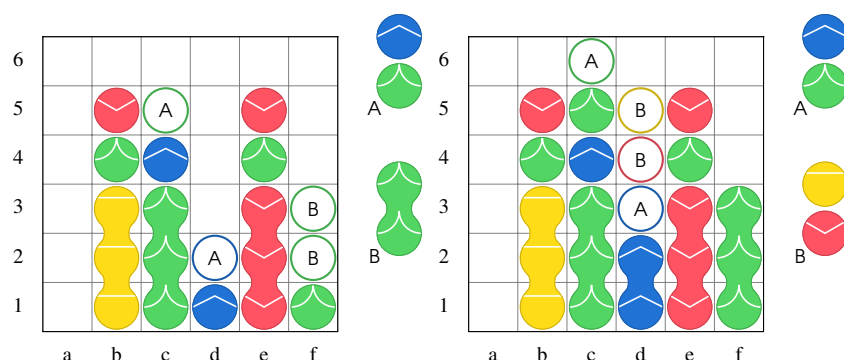
3. We get two green-yellows. We can use the two greens to complete our pillar. We can place the yellow on top of the blues, or leave them in column 2. Let's do the latter.
4. The yellow-blue is a pretty ambiguous piece here. We can use the yellow to complete the yellow group, or we can connect the blues. Let's do the former and place the yellow in column 2. Let's also place the blue in column 3, to serve as a key puyo!
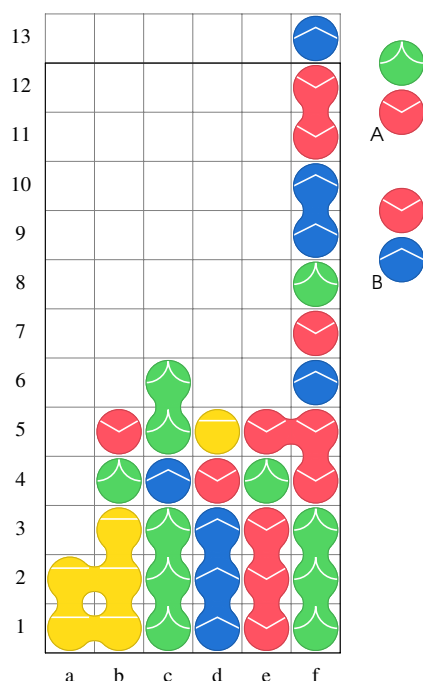

5. We get two red-greens. Since we need a green key puyo, let's put the first piece in column 2. The other piece doesn't seem very useful, so let's put it on the right. Notice how I'm rotating the second piece in order to occupy columns 5 and 6. I'm doing this in case we want to build more pillars!
6. We keep getting reds... This is a bit annoying, but at least we can build another pillar, and then put the following piece in a place where it won't cause harm, such as column 5. Actually, if we get lucky and receive two more greens, we can complete a pillar in column 6, and our green in column 5 will become a key puyo!

Note Remember that this practice started with an AC! In a real match, you might just want to pop the greens on step 5. For absolute beginners, it's safer to just send the AC as soon as possible.   ▪

7. Lucky us! These pieces are pretty good. We really need to finish our blue pillar, so let's do that with the first piece. Let's leave the green on column 3, so it doesn't get in the way of the blues. The double green is a perfect piece to complete the pillar in column 6!

8. We struck gold again. Let's complete our blue pillar with the first piece! With the second piece, we could trigger our chain with the yellow. That would give us a 3-chain, like before. However, that would leave our red and green pillar unused. Let's instead use the yellow-red to create a red key puyo in our chain!

At this point, we have so many puyos on the board that I'll have to increase its vertical size. Anyway, our chain is pretty much complete! Now we just need yellows. I had to fish for yellows, but I won't bore you with the details. While waiting, I threw a bunch of unwanted pieces to the right, and this is the chain I ended up making.

Looks kind of messy, huh? But it's a 5-chain, which is great! Usually, a 5-chain is enough to beat an opponent who doesn't fight back. With the AC we got at the start, this chain is guaranteed to beat anyone who can't muster a strong chain.

If you've read the previous chapter, you might recall that I talked very briefly about stairs. The chain we just built is exactly that! Admittedly, we got pretty lucky with the

RNG – stairs isn't always this simple to build. But hopefully I explained my thought process well enough, and this big chain doesn't seem too intimidating to you.

Index

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A. Appendix Chapter Title

A.1 Appendix Section Title

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B. Appendix Chapter Title

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