



# South African Quilters' Guild

Promoting Quilting in South Africa

## National Quilting Day Quilt South Africa 2024 Dolos Quilt Block

by Dewald Compion



*Photo by Dawie van Niekerk*

Quilting inspiration is everywhere. If you don't see it, you're probably just not looking carefully. Whether it's colour, texture, form, or shape, we only must look AND see. In nature, architecture, art, and fabric. It's all around us to use, free of charge!

I have always found the dolosse around our coastline very intriguing. Their odd 3D shapes intertwined, almost crushed against the coast, reminds me of a massive art installation. Their grey concrete edges in sharp contrast with the soft blue ocean, almost demanding attention. And so, the Dolos Quilt Block was born.

***Dolos*** (pronounced *dh-AW-l-aw-s*): A large concrete anchor block which, when interlocked with other identical blocks, prevents erosion of the coastline and of harbour walls.

The dolos was invented in 1963 in East London, South Africa, by 28-year-old Aubrey Kruger. Eric Merrifield (the harbour engineer at the time), wished to design a concrete barrier to protect the harbour from the battering waves after a storm in 1963. He discussed this with draughtsman Kruger, who went home that afternoon for lunch and cut 3 sections of wood from his wife Daphne's broomstick, which he nailed together in the shape of an "H" with one leg twisted 90°. The inspiration was apparently based on a dubbeltjie thorn.

The idea was that these dolosse, made from unreinforced concrete poured into steel moulds, would be placed in front and on top of each other and would interlock as the waves crashed against them to dissipate, rather than block, the energy of the waves.

Apparently, the name dolos came from Kruger's father, who was a carpenter at the harbour. He saw his son and others in the office testing small models of this invention and asked: "Why are you playing with those dolosse?" Dolos being the Afrikaans word for ox knucklebones which children used to play with, or sangomas and traditional healers used in divination practices.

This design went on to win the Shell Design Award and the Associated Science and Technology Societies of South Africa's Gold Medal in 1972. Today, dolosse can be seen worldwide as wave-dissipating structures along coastlines. They are even used in Dania Beach, Florida, as an artificial reef, known as the Dania Beach Erojacks.

For many of us, quilting is our dolosse. Dissipating the troubles and worries of everyday life, unable to completely block the challenges, but softening the blows and protecting our hearts. A kind of escape from the harshness life sometimes throws at us. Or it is the beautiful reef where we can flourish and be happy. The quilts we make also serve as dolosse to the loved ones we give them to. With every stitch a symbol of the love that went into the making, intended not only to be a gift of warmth and comfort, but also a gift of protection, care, and love!

May the Dolos Block be a symbol to all quilters worldwide of the strength and power you can achieve when multiple odd-shaped blocks form a unity.

*The Dolos Block is a variation of the Jewel Star Block available on Electric Quilt 8 (EQ8). With further investigation, I discovered that the block was designed by Aunt Kate, very fittingly in 1963, the same year Aubrey Kruger designed the dolos. How's that for a coincidence!*

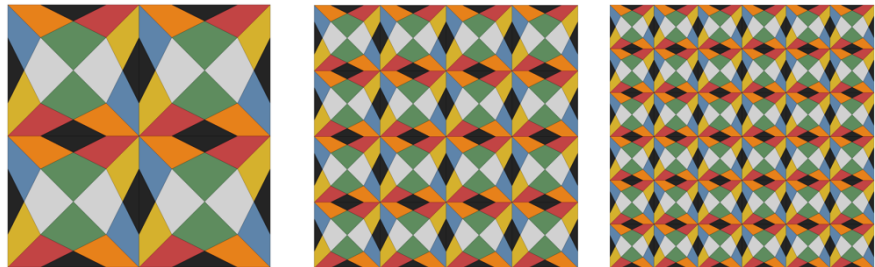
# The Dolos Block Pattern



## BLOCK SIZES

6" x 6" finished (6½" x 6½" unfinished) **OR** 12" x 12" finished (12½" x 12½" unfinished)

## QUILT SIZES



	4 blocks (2 x 2)	16 blocks (4 x 4)	36 blocks (6 x 6)
6" x 6" blocks	12" x 12"	24" x 24"	36" x 36"
12" x 12" blocks	24" x 24"	48" x 48"	72" x 72"

This is a **Foundation Paper Piecing (FPP)** project. Printable FPP Patterns and templates for cutting the fabric are included for both block sizes.

## MATERIALS

You can really have fun with this project! Use solids or prints. Go traditional or celebrate local with proudly South African shweshwe or African wax prints. Go bold and colourful or use different shades of the same colour to enhance the 3D effect of the design. It's an ideal project to use your scraps, especially if you plan to make the 6" blocks.

### 6" X 6" BLOCKS

	4 blocks	16 blocks	36 blocks
Fabric 1 (orange)	$\frac{1}{8}$ m	$\frac{1}{4}$ m	$\frac{1}{2}$ m
Fabric 2 (yellow)	$\frac{1}{8}$ m	$\frac{1}{4}$ m	$\frac{1}{2}$ m
Fabric 3 (black)	$\frac{1}{8}$ m	$\frac{1}{4}$ m	$\frac{1}{2}$ m
Fabric 4 (red)	$\frac{1}{8}$ m	$\frac{1}{4}$ m	$\frac{1}{2}$ m
Fabric 5 (blue)	$\frac{1}{8}$ m	$\frac{1}{4}$ m	$\frac{1}{2}$ m
Fabric 6 (green)	$\frac{1}{8}$ m	$\frac{1}{4}$ m	$\frac{1}{2}$ m
Fabric 7 (grey)	$\frac{1}{8}$ m	$\frac{1}{4}$ m	$\frac{1}{2}$ m

### 12" x 12" BLOCKS

	4 blocks	16 blocks	36 blocks
Fabric 1 (orange)	$\frac{1}{4}$ m	$\frac{5}{8}$ m	$1\frac{1}{4}$ m
Fabric 2 (yellow)	$\frac{1}{4}$ m	$\frac{5}{8}$ m	$1\frac{1}{4}$ m
Fabric 3 (black)	$\frac{1}{8}$ m	$\frac{1}{2}$ m	$\frac{7}{8}$ m
Fabric 4 (red)	$\frac{1}{4}$ m	$\frac{5}{8}$ m	$1\frac{1}{4}$ m
Fabric 5 (blue)	$\frac{1}{4}$ m	$\frac{5}{8}$ m	$1\frac{1}{4}$ m
Fabric 6 (green)	$\frac{3}{8}$ m	$\frac{7}{8}$ m	$1\frac{3}{4}$ m
Fabric 7 (grey)	$\frac{3}{8}$ m	$\frac{7}{8}$ m	$1\frac{3}{4}$ m

## FABRIC CUTTING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Print the fabric cutting templates. Make sure the printer setting is on "Actual Size" or "Scale: 100%". After printing, use the 1" square to test that your size is correct.
2. I recommend cutting your fabric an  $\frac{1}{8}$ " wider than the templates to allow for easy fabric placement, without excessive fabric wastage when trimming the units.
3. To make (1) Dolos Block cut:

Template A	Fabric 1 (2), Fabric 2 (2)
Template B	Fabric 3 (4)
Template C	Fabric 4 (2), Fabric 5 (2)
Template D	Fabric 6 (2), Fabric 7 (2)

## PIECING

### Some Basic Tips for FPP:

- Shorten the sewing machine stitch length to about 1.5 when sewing FPP. The shorter stitch length will allow for easy removal of the paper, without distorting the stitches.
- Use a standard presser foot without a guide.
- Use a sharp new needle at the beginning of each FPP project.
- Always follow the numbering on the pattern pieces as the order for stitching the seams.
- Stitch on the solid lines.

### Basic FPP Instructions:

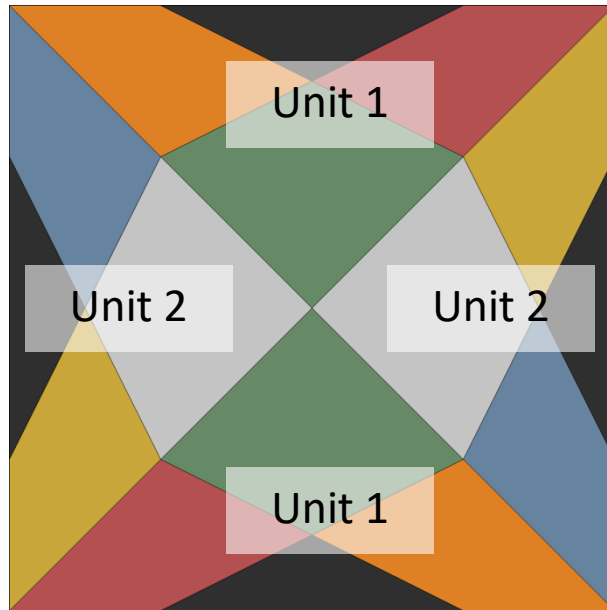
1. Print the correct number of copies of the FPP patterns as indicated on the patterns. Make sure the printer setting is on “Actual Size” or “Scale: 100%”. After printing, use the 1” square to test that your size is correct.
2. Cut out the FPP pattern about ¼” from the final cutting line. Fold along each sewing line. This provides a visual guide for fabric placement, and this also helps when trimming the fabric.
3. With the FPP pattern wrong side up (unprinted side of the paper), pin the fabric right side up to the pattern, using the numbering on the patterns as the order of sewing. I use the light on my sewing machine to see the lines on the reverse of the pattern. Make sure the pin is not on the sewing line. Since there is a lot of repetition in this quilt, I recommend prepping all the units. This way you can chain-stitch and chain-trim to speed up the process.
4. After you have pinned a piece of fabric, fold back the paper and trim the seam allowance ¼” from the folded edge.
5. Unfold the paper and align the edges of the next fabric, right sides together. Pin the fabric a good distance from the sewing line.

*TIP: Since FPP doesn't always allow for pressing your seams to the Dark Fabric, always align the Light Fabric a thread's width beyond the Dark Fabric, and the Dark Fabric a thread's width inside the Light Fabric. This way there won't be any dark seams shadowing to the front.*

6. Start sewing outside the seam allowance (the dotted lines) of the pattern.
7. Press your seams and repeat the process for the other fabric.
8. Once all your units have been completed, trim along the outside cutting lines.
9. You can remove the paper at this point, or at the end when the quilt top is completed. If you choose to remove the paper at this point, be extremely careful and gentle when doing so. It is very important to support the stitch line and always pull towards the edge, rather than from the edge of the unit.

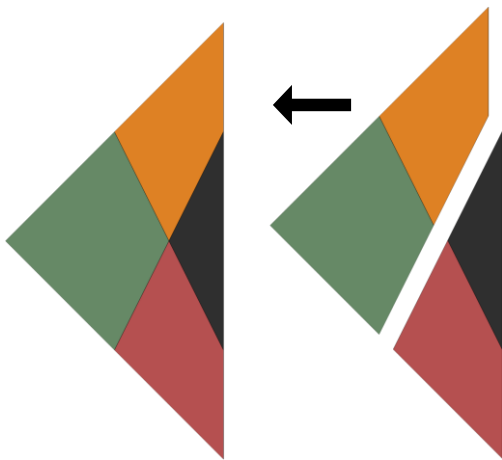
**NOTE: If you are using a different colour palette, we suggest you write on the FPP pattern (and templates, if you are using them) the corresponding colour.**

Each block is made up of 2 sets of 2 units.

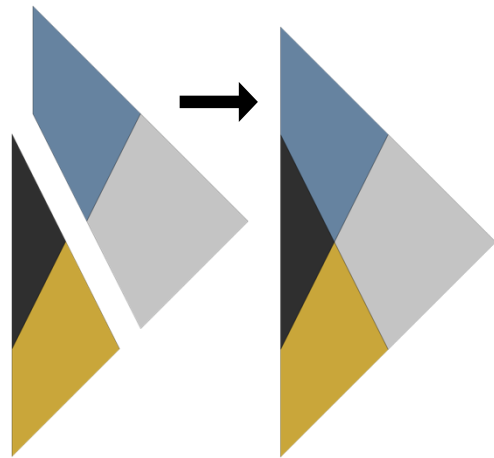


1. Use patterns FPP1 and FPP2 to make a total of (2) identical Unit 1 triangles, and patterns FPP3 and FPP4 to make (2) identical Unit 2 triangles.

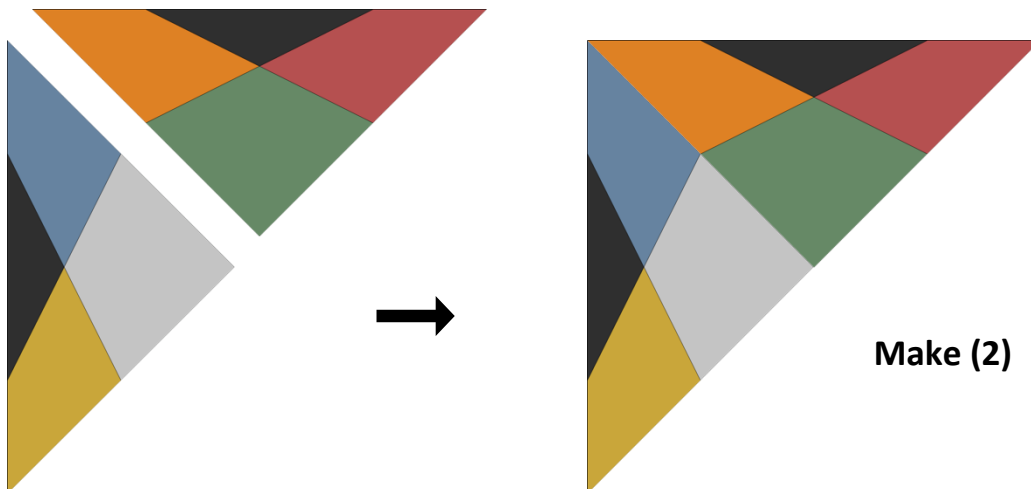
**Unit 1: Make (2)**



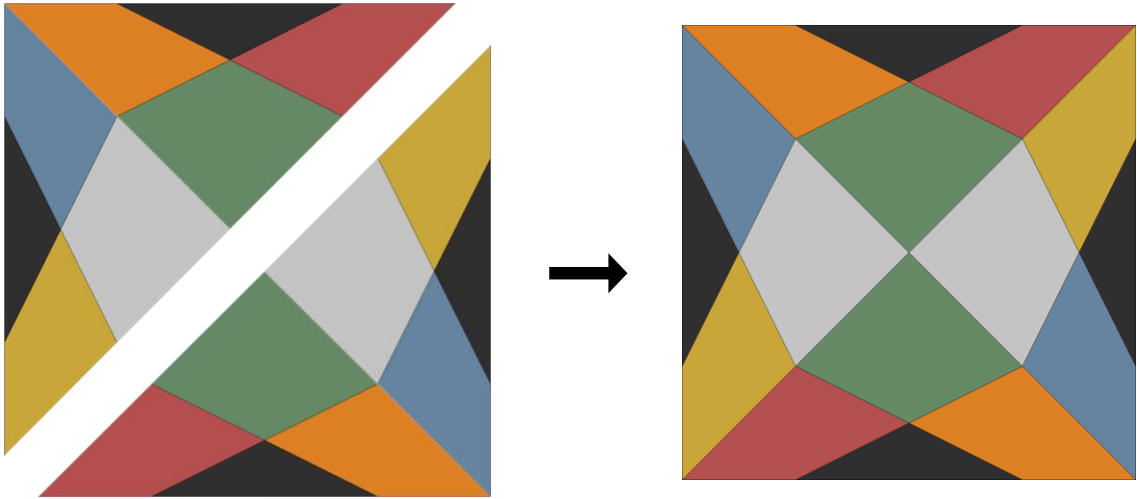
**Unit 2: Make (2)**



2. Combine Units 1 and 2 in pairs to make (2) identical bigger triangles.



3. Set the stitching by pressing the seams and then press the seams open or towards the darker fabric.
4. Combine these bigger triangles to make a block.



5. Set the stitching and press the seams open or towards the darker fabric, to complete the Dolos Block.

I hope you'll enjoy making this pattern.  
Please share photos of your blocks on the socials. We would love to see how you plan your quilts and your version of the Dolos Blocks.

*Instagram: @quiltsouthafrica @compiodl #quiltsouthafrica2024 #dolosblock*

*Facebook: SouthAfricanQuiltersGuild*

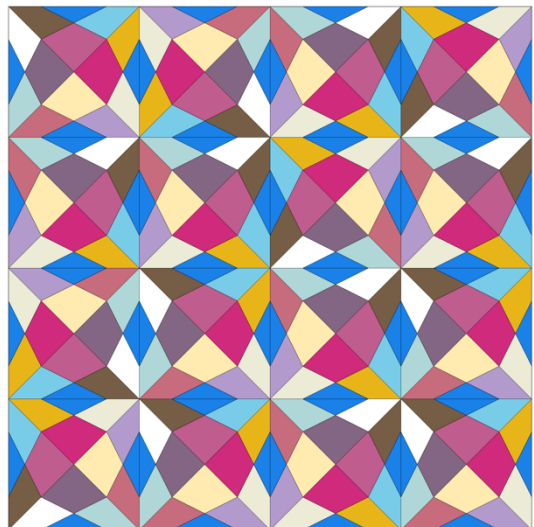
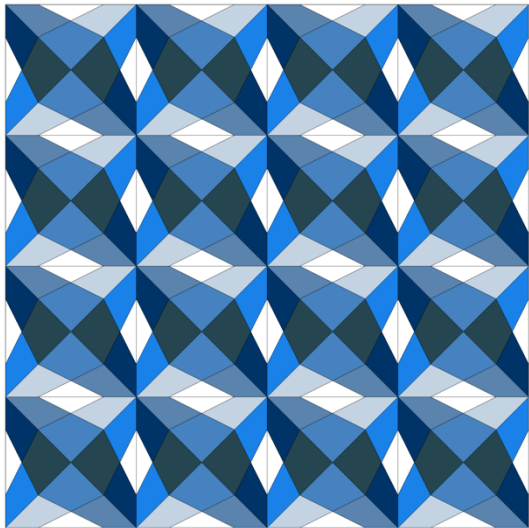
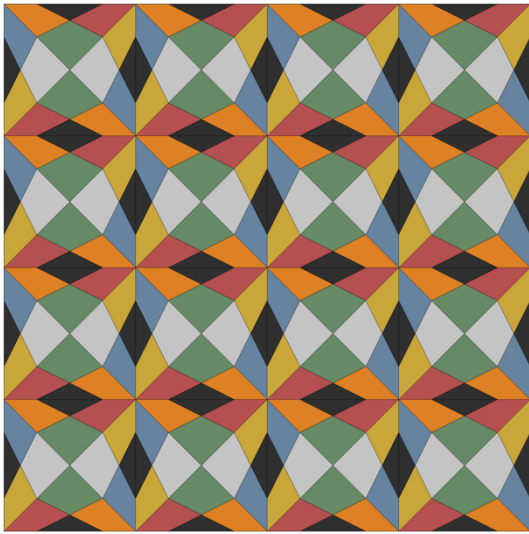
*If you have any questions please contact me, email: dlcompion@gmail.com*

**HAPPY STITCHING!**

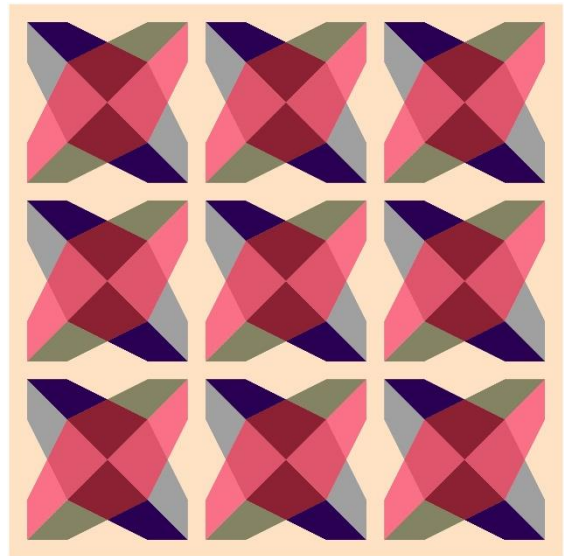
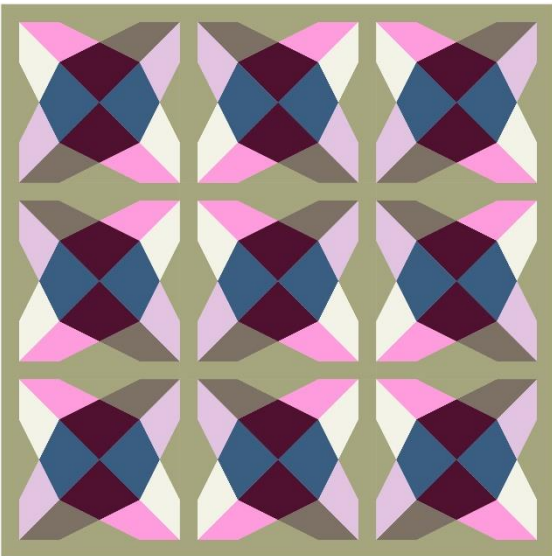
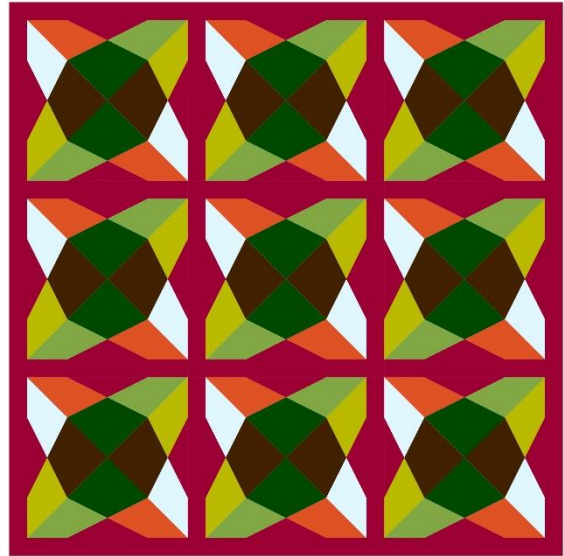
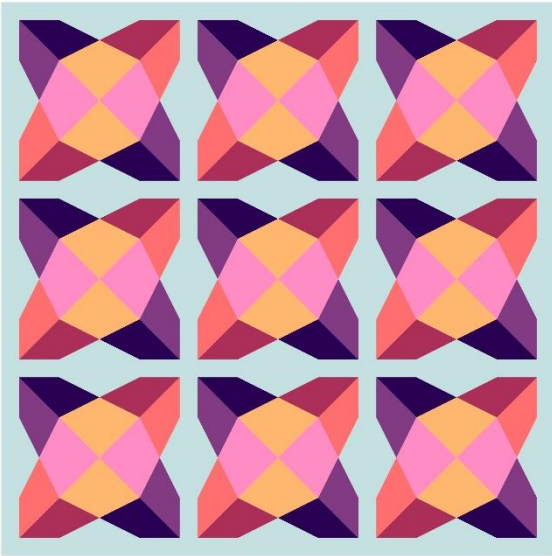
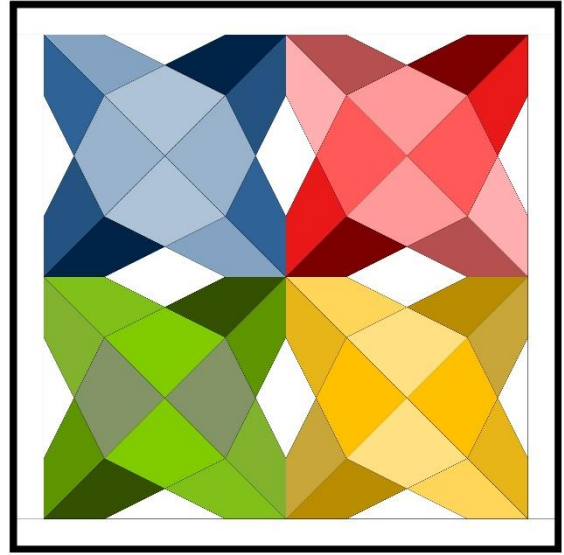
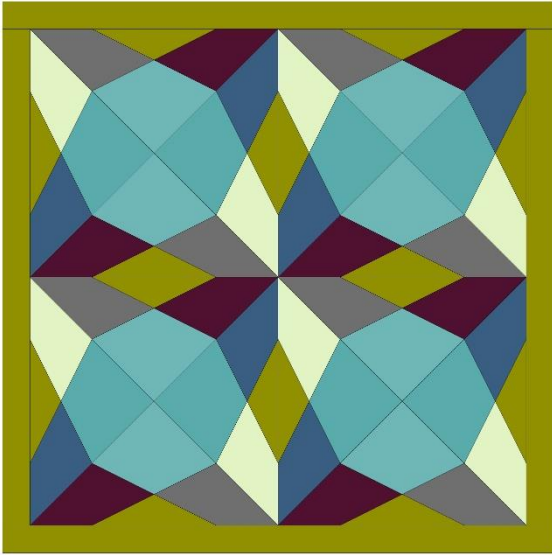


*Photo by Dawie van Niekerk*

COLOURWAYS



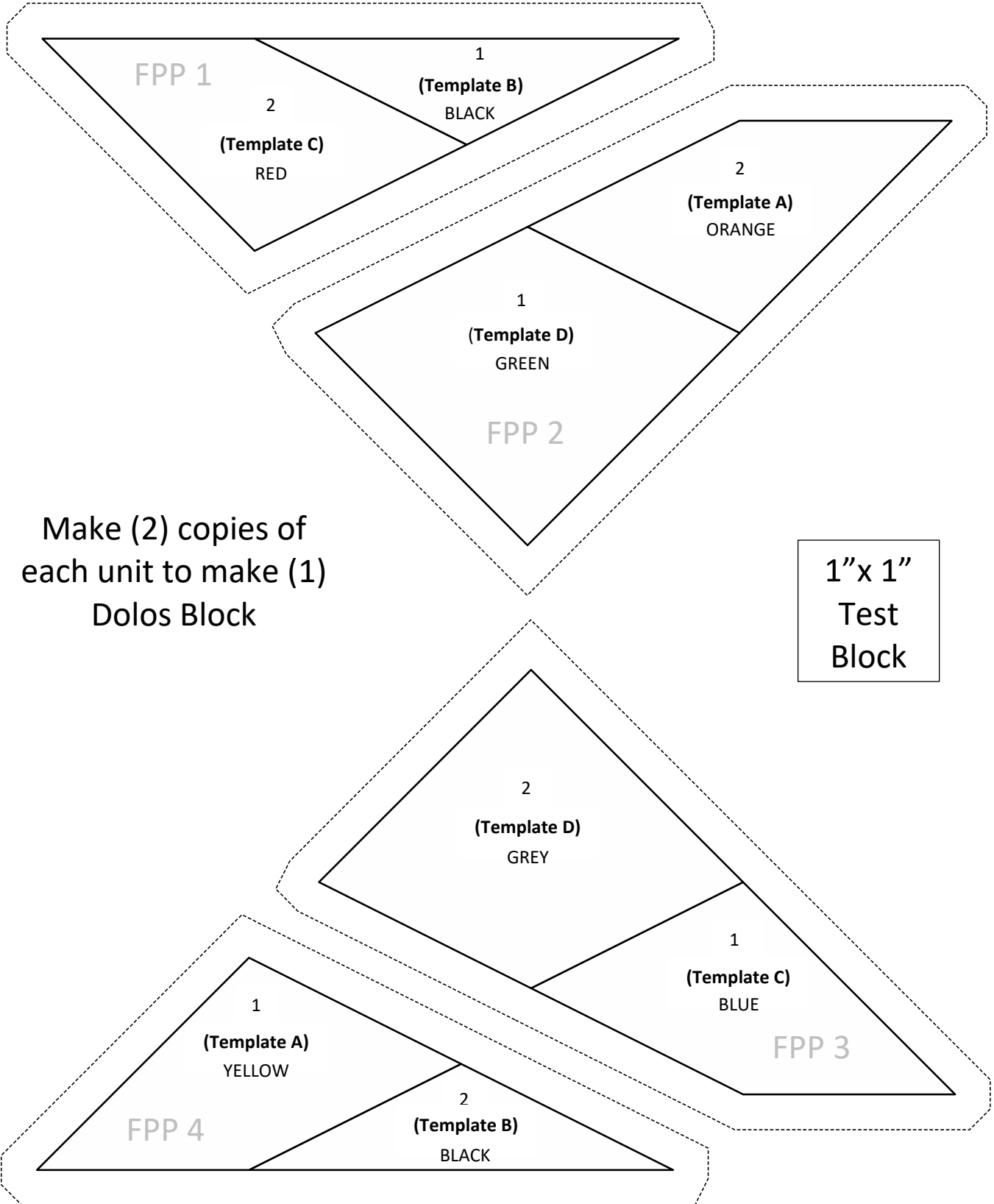




# The Dolos Quilt Block

## FPP Patterns 1, 2, 3, 4

### 6" x 6" Block

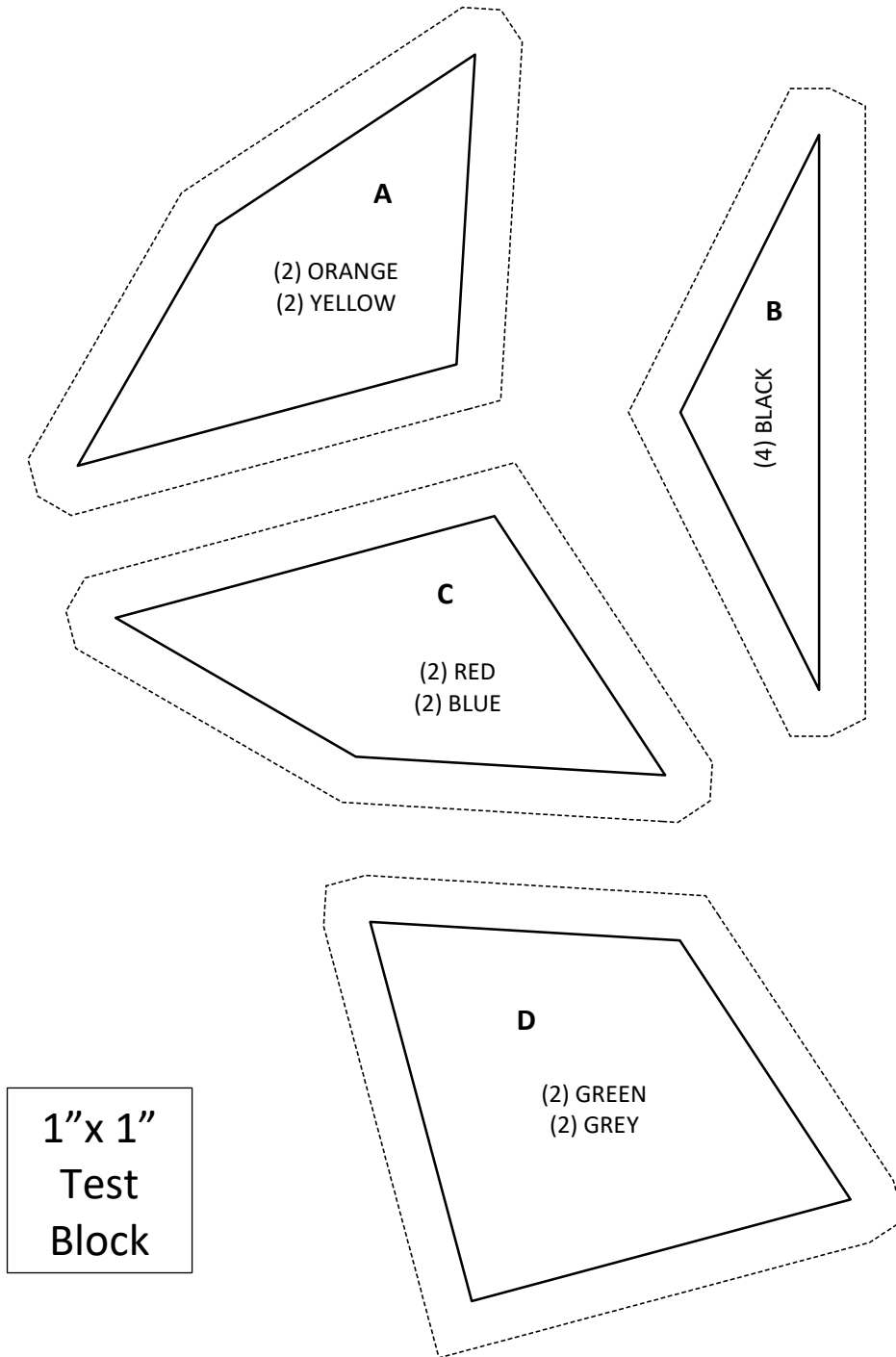


Make (2) copies of each unit to make (1) Dolos Block

# The Dolos Quilt Block

## Templates A, B, C and D for Cutting Fabric

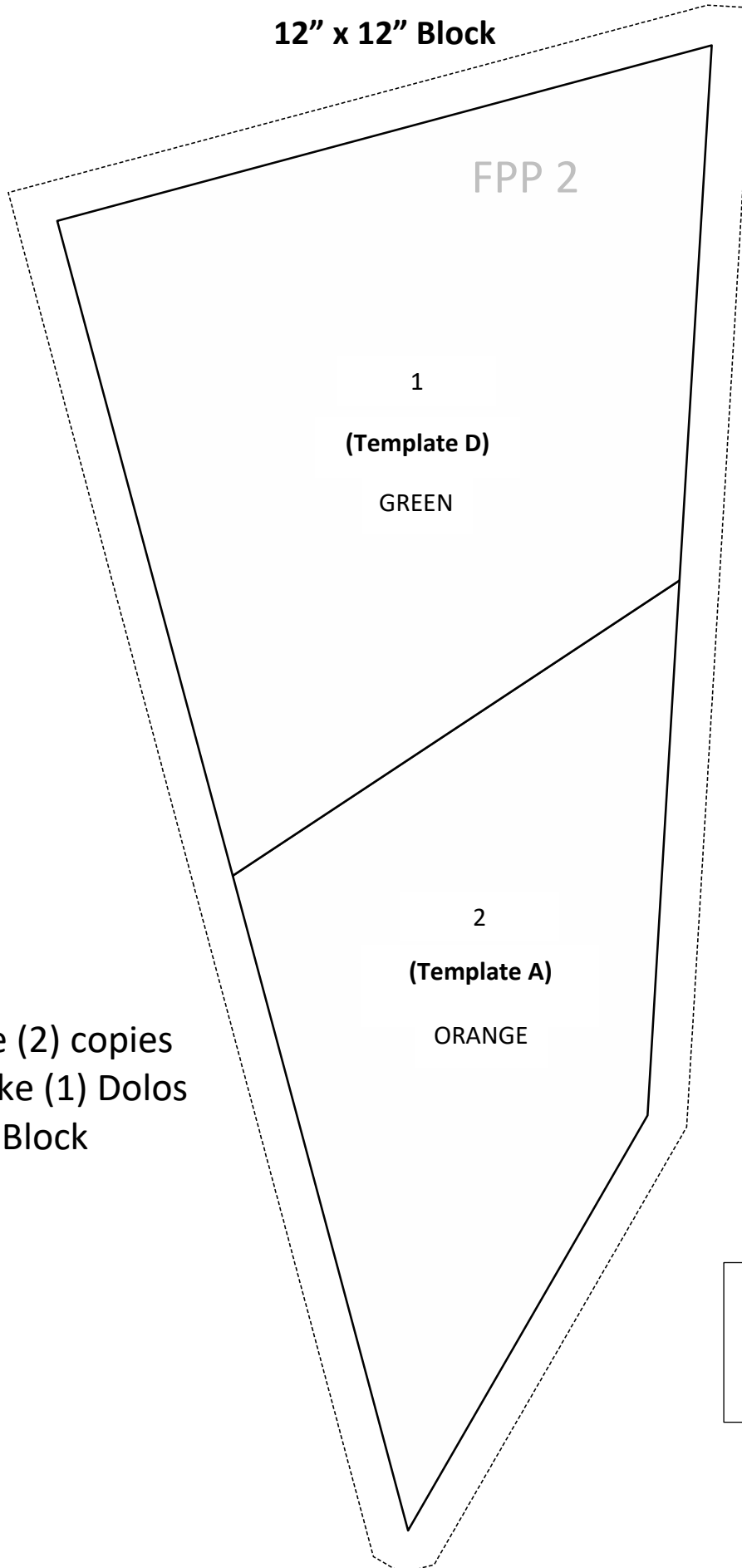
### 6" x 6" Block



# The Dolos Quilt Block

## FPP Pattern 2

12" x 12" Block



Make (2) copies  
to make (1) Dolos  
Block

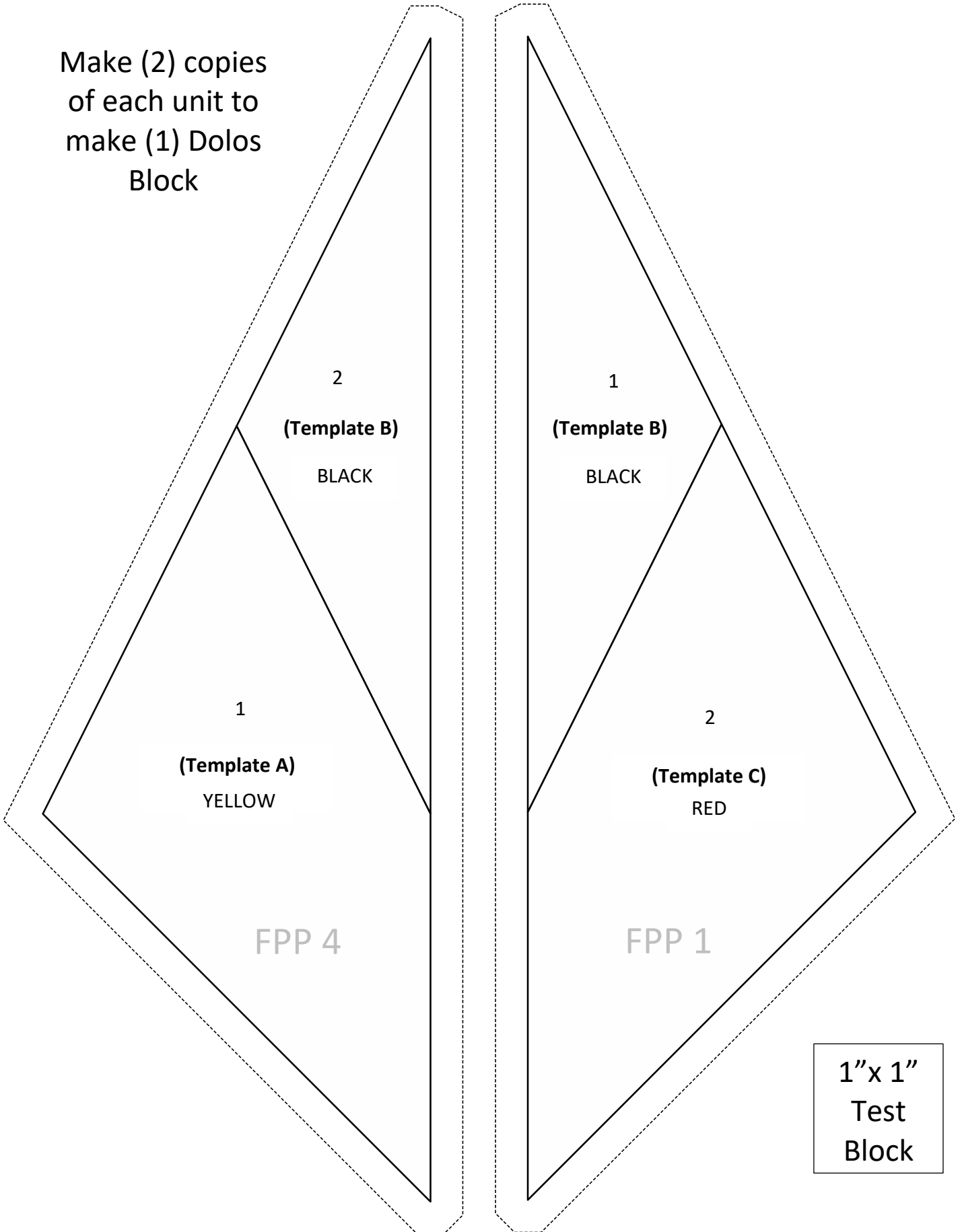
1" x 1"  
Test  
Block

# The Dolos Quilt Block

## FPP Patterns 1 and 4

### 12" x 12" Block

Make (2) copies  
of each unit to  
make (1) Dolos  
Block

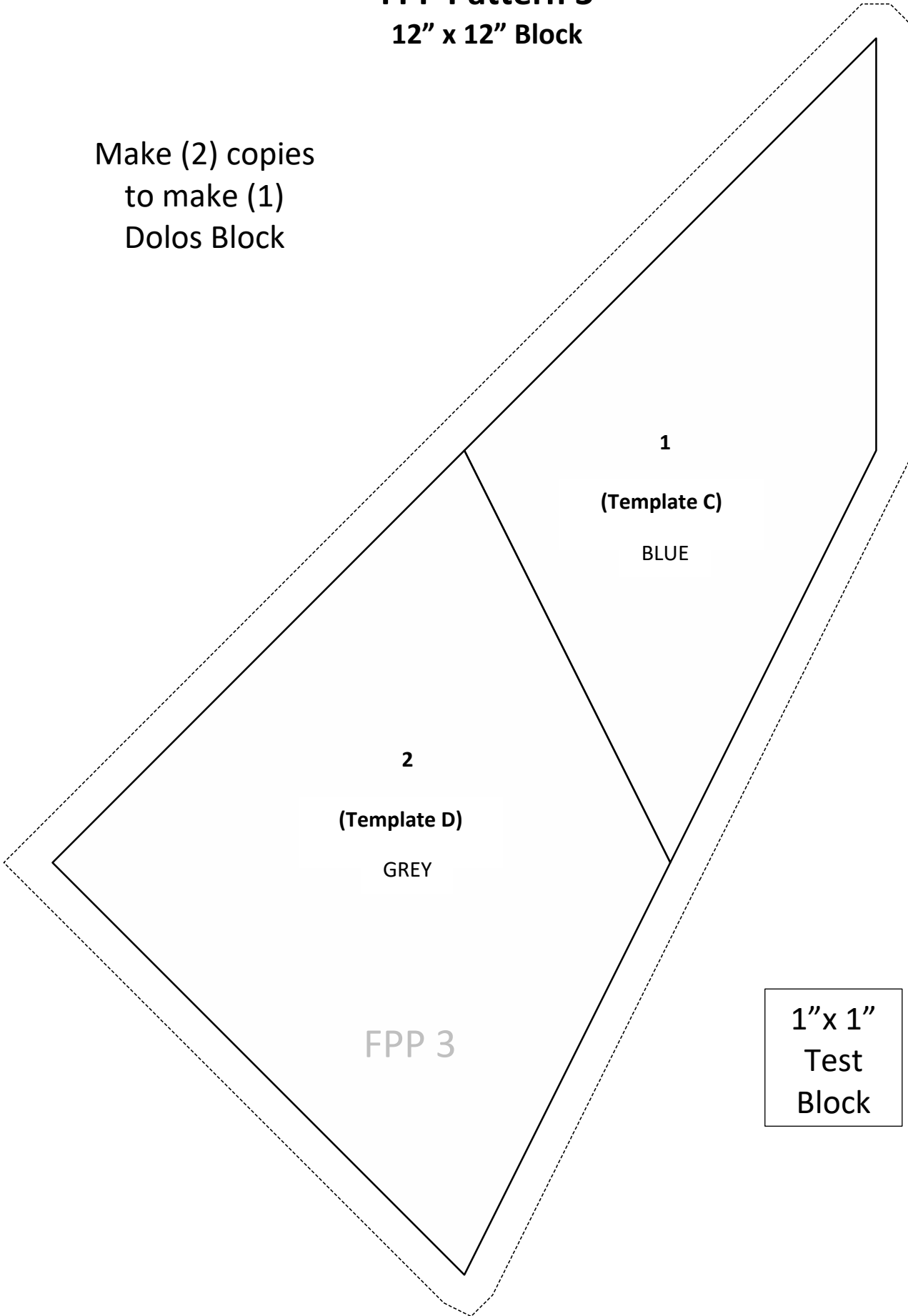


# The Dolos Quilt Block

## FPP Pattern 3

12" x 12" Block

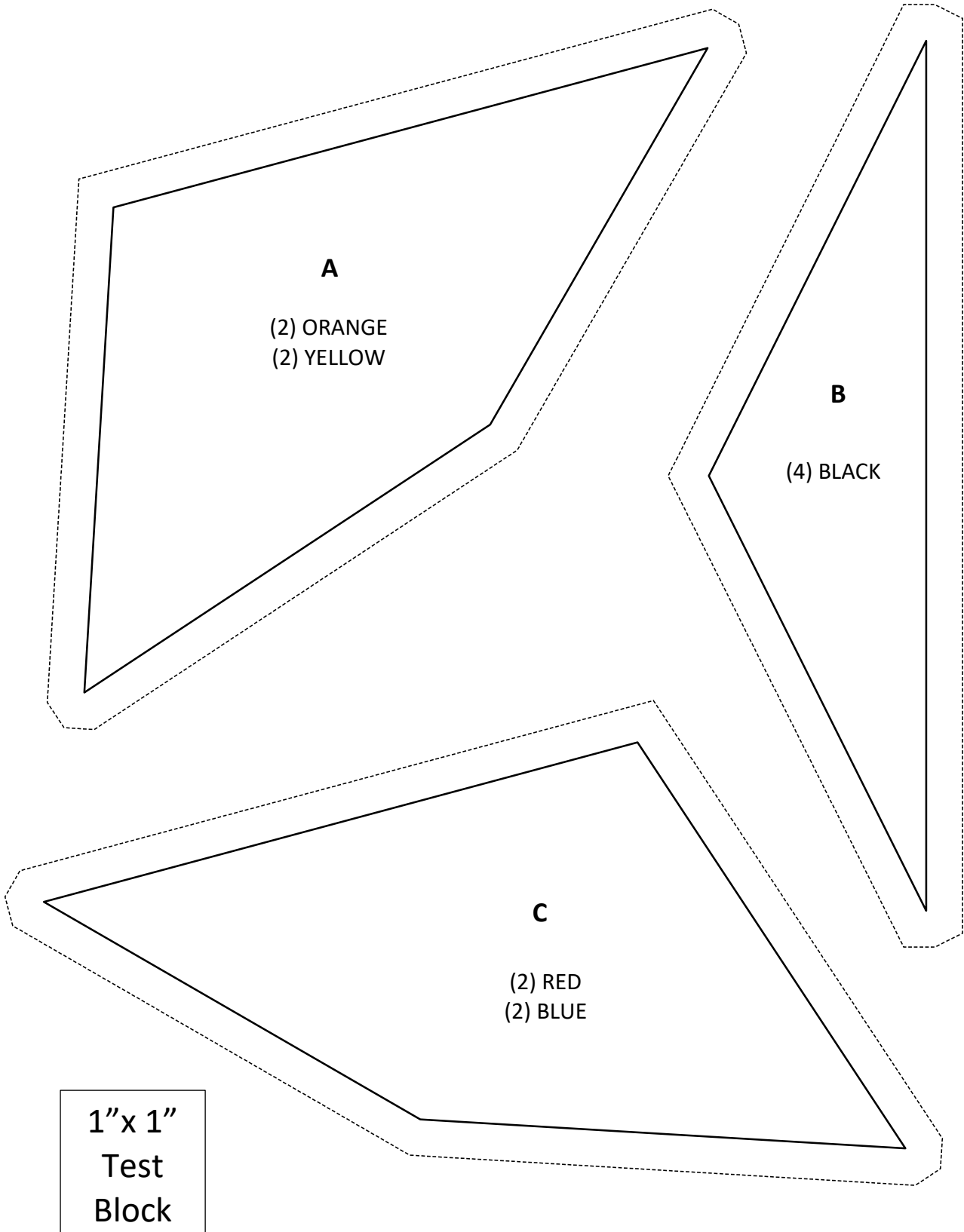
Make (2) copies  
to make (1)  
Dolos Block



# The Dolos Quilt Block

## Templates A, B, C for Cutting Fabric

### 12" x 12" Block



# The Dolos Quilt Block

## Template D for Cutting Fabric

12" x 12" Block

