Four-Square Preemie Afghan

Although this pattern is written block-style, since it's square if you really hate to join squares you can just make one big one and add the border. You won't get the cool diagonal grid, but it will work.

The border is also a quick and easy one to add to machine/hand-knit squares (# of stitches on each side must be a multiple of 3). Per these instructions, the finished afghan is approx 20" square.

materials:

3 ½ ounces DK/light worsted weight yarn
crochet hook F (US)

all yarn requirements are approximate

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abbreviations:	sc: single crochet
ch: chain	sl st: slip stitch
dc: double crochet	note: ch 2 at beginning of any
hdc: half double crochet	round will count as an dc

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the square (made granny-square style):

ch 4, join into a circle

rnd 1: sl st into center of ring, ch2 (count as a dc), 2 dc, *ch 2, 3dc (repeat from * two more times).

Sl st into top of ch 2. You should have 4 dc clusters with a ch 2 space between each.

rnd 2: Sl st into the space between last 2 dc from prev round. Ch 2 (counts as a dc), dc in the space between the dc in the prev round. *In ch 2-corner, make 2 dc, ch 2, 2 dc. Dc in the spaces between the next 2 dc. (repeat twice). In last ch 2 corner, make 2 dc, ch 2, 2 dc. Sl st into top of ch 2. (6 dc between each ch-2 space)

Repeat round 2 (continuing to dc in the spaces between the dc from the prev round) until there are a total of 10 rounds completed. At this point, there should be 27 dc between the ch-2 corners.

Joining:

Weave the squares together, being sure to line up the corners and the center.

Border:

rnd 1: Join yarn, just to the left of any corner of the afghan. Ch 1 (counts as first sc), sc in each dc, up to the ch-2 corner , 3 sc in the ch-2 corner.

Sc in each dc, up to the next ch-2 (a join of the blocks). 2 sc in the ch-2 of the first square, 1 sc in the join of the 2 squares, 2 sc in the ch-2 of the 2nd square.

Continue around, joining with a sl st to the first ch 1.

rnd 2: Ch 2 (counts as a dc). Dc in each sc, to the corner of the afghan. In the middle stitch of the corner, 2 dc, ch 2, 2 dc. Continue around, joining with a sl st in the top of the first ch 2.

rnd 3 (the slanted shell): Sl st into the space to the left of the ch 2 where you joined the prev round. *Ch 3, 3 dc in the same space. Sk 3 dc and sl st in the space to the left of the 3rd dc from the stitch where you just worked. Continue to corner.

In corner ch-2 space work the following:

1 sc, 1 hdc, 2 dc, 1 hdc, 1sc, ch3, 3dc. Sk 3 dc and sl st in the space to the left of the 3rd dc from the stitch where you just worked. Continue to corner.

Continue around, joining with a sl st in the first sl st of the round.

Finishing:

Cut 2 lengths of contrasting yarn equal to the perimeter of the blanket + about 12 inches.

Using a crochet hook or upholstery needle, and starting after a corner and leaving a tail of 6", weave the one thread over and under the dcs of the row before the shell edge - end "over" before a corner and go "under" at the same point after the corner.

Take the 2nd thread and weave in the opposite direction (basket weave-style), handling the corners in a similar fashion.

Tie the tails in a bow across the corner where the weaving starts and ends. I usually tack mine with a needle and sewing thread so it doesn't come loose.

I find it easiest to start the weaving at the corner diagonal to the finished corner - doing half each side at a time. You don't have to pull the yarn through as far.