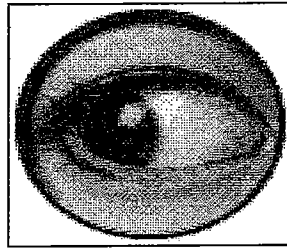


The following article was written by Dan Barlow, author of "Cribbage For Experts"



PEGGING POINTERS

#9

Some players never pair an opponent's lead. The two holes they score just aren't worth the risk. The "risk" of course, is the net loss of four points if the opponent was leading from a pair. This is a good policy when the game situation demands that you keep the opponent's pegging to a bare minimum, but is it always a good policy.

The answer is "NO". If you will examine your cribbage hands more closely, you will see that the risk is not always four holes!!! Look at these two hands:

a. 10-9-8-5

b. 9-4-4-2

Your opponent leads a 9. In hand "a", if you play an 18 for two and your opponent has the third nine, he or she scores a 27 for six, plus a go. You lost five holes. But look at hand "b". If your opponent plays 27 for six here, you play your four; 31 for two. Total loss is only two holes. Since you cannot lose more than two holes by pairing the nine in hand "b", your opponent must hold the third nine 50% of the time just to break even. You don't need a computer to tell you he or she won't hold the third nine that often.

Suppose you hold hand "b" and your opponent leads a 2. Should you play your 2? Yes, because he does have the third 2, you can play your nine; 15 for two. Again, you have lost only two holes. Remember, when two holes are all you can lose, that's no great risk at all. After all, risk losing two holes almost any time you lay down a card, right?!!!!

In short, if you pair up only when the danger is least, you will make a steady profit in the long run.

