

### OFFENSIVE PEGGING/DEFENSIVE PEGGING

There are several ways to play each hand. Basically there is a correct way and an incorrect way. Offensive pegging should be the choice when you don't like where you are on the board. Board position tells you to go for it! Defensive pegging should be the choice when board position is good and extra pegs are not essential. In defensive pegging, you are playing the card that offers the least chance for your opponent to score. You might also play the card that represents the greatest danger to you in the pegging game. In defensive pegging, you play the middle card of a sequence early. In offensive pegging, you would hold cards of sequence together. Small cards are of high value in this respect.

HAND                      OFFENSIVE                      DEFENSIVE

A-2-3-9                      9                      3

Opponent might make count 12 on 9 lead or you may score a three card run at end of play. With the defensive lead, there is some chance you will score 15-2 if either three is paired or 10-pointer is played on trey. Play hand same way if holding A-2-3-X. Offensive lead is ten-pointer and defensive lead is 3.

A-2-4-8                      8                      4

Offensive possibilities are ten-point play on eight lead to which you make count 22 with four spot. If you catch the trey on the count of 22, you will score a run of three for count of 27 with the play of the deuce. If you get a go at this point, you Ace will make a run of four and close the count at 28. If playing defense hope for 15-2 with the play of a 10-pointer or the play of nine on your four lead.

2-3-4-8                      8                      3/4  
3-4-5-8

If ten-pointer is played on your eight lead, make count 22 with play of the four spot. Good chance that opponent has a five with ten-point cards as you have already seen one X. The five will make the count 27. You drop the 3 for a count of thirty and run of three plus a go. This also works if dealer is holding double run of face cards. You provide your own five at the count of 22 and proceed to score the run and go as indicated.

2-3-4-9                      9                      3

This one is even better as an offensive pegging ploy. With the lead of the 9 and the play of a ten-pointer by your opponent, you have created a likely situation where you will score 31 for 5. You play the three for 22. If opponent drops five on your 22 play, the four spot closes the count for run of three and two points for 31.

Defensively the trey is the lead since it provides opportunity to score 15 on the play of a three, 8 spot, or X-pointer. And you have also broken the three-card sequence with your opening lead.

3-3-3-9                      9                      3

This hand played backwards scores real big against double run of face cards or the remaining trey with three face cards (3-J-Q-K). In the case of XXXX, by leading the nine you play your first three for count of 22 and receive a go. So you score the pair for two, and the triple for seven points. In the event that your opponent has that fourth trey with face cards, you make count 22, opponent pairs your three for 22, and you follow with triple for 25 for six pegs, and the fourth trey for 31 for 14. That's 20 points of pegging and you only gave up two pegs.

3-4-5-7                      7                      4

Not as good as 3-4-5-8 offensively and still enough potential to go for it if needing pegs. If your opponent is holding a six spot, the seven will force it off the play. If your opponent is holding a small card they are not likely to play it on the 7 lead. They will more likely score 15 or put the count over 15. In both cases, you have the cards remaining to score runs. The defensive lead of the four offers a 15-2 on the pair of your four or the play of an 8 spot. There's a remote chance to score 15-5 if opponent makes the count 10 on your four lead.

Although the above hands have been displayed as held by non-dealer, the dealer should also recognize values of cards in pegging game. Will list a few of benefit to dealer to consider offensive or defensive play.

HAND	LEAD	OFFENSIVE	DEFENSIVE
4-5-6-6	8	6	5

By playing six on eight lead, you create situation where opponent may play the seven to take the run of three. The play of the six causes opponent to think of the nine spot. Giving up four points to take three might be best way out. When you drop the five for count of 26, you will most likely also get a go to which you drop the 4 for a run of five and close the count for 30. This works with a single six although not quite as well. You see some folks will get cute and pair the six to make the count 20 and you triple the six for six points and a likely go which allows you to play the five-spot to close the count at 31. The five is slightly better as defensive play in this case as it breaks your sequence and gets rid of the card most likely to be trapped in cribbage.

4-5-6-7	2	4	7
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Several run opportunities exist for dealer when playing the four on a deuce lead. Opponent often will have cards around the deuce. Remember you will give up some runs doing the offensive play. Let board position dictate your course. Dealer has pegging advantage since sees first card and plays last card. If you should play it safe, put the 7 on the deuce lead.

2-3-4-4	X-pointer	3/4	3
2-2-3-4			

If playing offense, engage in play of 3 or 4 on a ten-point lead. By making the count 13 or 14, you force the five off the play and increase the chances your opponent will make count 23/24 to which you respond with the play of the card to put count to 27. Your pair follows for 31 for four points. The three is the preferred defensive play as it breaks your sequence and minimizes chances of giving up runs later in play.

In other cases where you are holding 4/7 or 3/9 with two other cards, offensive play is to lead the larger card. On the lead of the seven, opponent will often make count 11 with the play of a four spot. You take the 15-4. With the lead of the nine, many will make count 12, thinking if you had three you would have led it in preference to nine spot. You take 15-4. In either case, the defensive lead is the small card. If paired, you score 15-2.

If playing a 5-6, as dealer with two other cards and the lead is X-pointer, the offensive play is to play the 5 and take 15-2 and hope opponent makes count 25 so that you will also score 31-2. If playing defensively, put the six on the X and close the count at 31 with the play of the five.

The challenge of dealer or non-dealer is to recognize the pegging potential of a hand where defensive or offensive play as indicated by board position. The initial play is the key to success in either offensive or defensive pegging strategies.