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Pegging Pointer #4

by Dan Barlow

Learning from your mistakes is a good way to improve your cribbage game. But it can also be expensive. Here's a better way to improve: learning from my mistakes.

Here's a hand I choked on in a tournament a few years ago. I needed eleven holes; my opponent needed nine. I saved 5-9-10-J of Hearts. I had first count and I felt great, because I didn't even need a cut. I felt even better when the cut wasn't a Jack.

I led my 10 and opponent scored 15-2. I played the Jack, and she got a Go with her 4. Now I played my 9, and she scored another 15-2. My 5 made the count 20, and she had a 7 for a run of three plus a Go. She pegged out. Stunned, I tossed my lucky pegs into the trash can.

But, of course, it wasn't bad luck that cost me the game. Holding 5-9, with my opponent needing to peg six more holes, I should have played the 5. There are no two cards in the deck that would allow her to peg six holes, had I played the 5. By playing the 9, I allowed her to win if she held 6-7 or 6-4.

For some of you, this is a lesson in pegging strategy. Figure out the worst that can happen, and play to avoid it. For the rest of you, including myself, the lesson is -- it's not over till it's over, so stay on your toes until your peg is in the game hole.



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