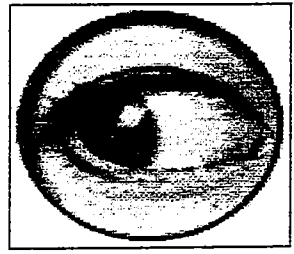


The following article was written by Dan Barlow, author of "Cribbage For Experts"



PEGGING POINTERS

#4

Watching your opponent's cards during the play is a good strategy. Often you can base a key decision on an educated guess about his/her holding. For instance, opponent plays two Kings and a 4, and you must lead either a 7 or an Ace. You obviously choose the 7. Opponent is more likely to be holding an Ace than a 7 or 8. Don't get carried away with this strategy. Your decision is seldom so clearcut. In fact, in most cases, when trying to determine your opponent's remaining card or cards, there will be several strong possibilities and even more not-so-strong possibilities. If opponent has shown up with a 5,6, and 7, his/her fourth card could easily be any card in the deck, with the exception of an Ace.

In short, figuring out what your opponent has is strictly guesswork. But there is a closely related strategy that involves very little guesswork: figuring out what your opponent doesn't have. Say you hold 5-9-10-J. You lead the 10 and you opponent plays a 7. You should now play your 9, making the count 26. Why? Because if your opponent had the 5 needed for 31, he/she presumably would have used it earlier to score a 15-2.

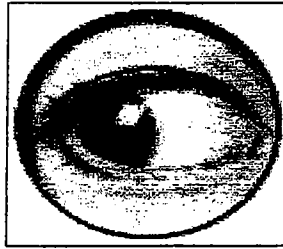
Here's another example. Holding a 3-8-10-10, you lead the 8. Your opponent plays a King; you play a 10 for 28; and he/she plays a 2 for 30 and a go. You note that opponent has played a King and a 2. It looks like he/she might have a 3 to go along with those two cards, so you start to lead your 10. But wait. If opponent had a 3, surely he/she would have played it back when the count was 28. So the 3 is your safest lead. Whenever your opponent fails to peg, make a mental note of the card he/she obviously does not have and use this info to your advantage.



Return to American Cribbage Congress Home Page

SPS 6 16 97

The text that follows was written by Dan Barlow, author of CRIBBAGE FOR EXPERTS



"PEGGING POINTERS"

#1

Here's a play you will be able to make once in a blue moon, but if you are not alert when your chance comes, it could cost you a game. Say you are 16 holes away from going out and your opponent is ten away. You are the dealer, you hold A679 and an 8 has been cut. Pone leads out with a 6. You play your 9, 15 for 2 points. He plays a 5, you play a 7, and he plays a 4 for 31...

Now you are trying to decided what to lead, your 6 or your Ace. Like all good cribbage players, you know the advantage of watching your opponent's cards. He has already played a 4, 5 and a 6 so you decide that he is much more likely to have a 6 than an Ace. Thus you decide to lead the Ace. But not so fast!!!

If this were any other time in the game, the Ace would be the better lead. But not here. If your opponent has a 6, he has a 12hand and enough to put him out (you are not worried that he has a 9 since he would have used it to peg on your 9). But if he happens to have an Ace, he has only 7 points in his hand and he is still eight holes away from winning. By leading your Ace, you could be giving the game away; leading the 6 will cost you nothing. True, your opponent will seldom be holding the Ace, so the correct play will seldom pay off, but remember, the correct play can never hurt.

By watching your opponent's cards, you can often obtain valuable information. Just make sure you put that information to its proper use.



Return to American Cribbage Congress Home Page

SPS 6/16/97