

FIVE TRAP

The following is intended to clarify aspects of the most frequent trap play in cribbage. First let's consider the non-dealer trap of the five spot. A high percentage of possible crib hands will include one or more fives in conjunction with ten-point cards. The key to non-dealer success is to force the count to 27 or more on the play of the second card. Naturally, if the play of your second card as dealer puts the count at 26 or less, the five will be played and the trap averted. The most powerful non-dealer trap of the five is shown as the first example and results in a high percentage 31-for-5 pegging bonanza.

NON DEALER

6-6-4-any card*

LEAD

6

INTENDED RESULT

If dealer has ten-point cards, will make count sixteen to which non-dealer adds six for 22. If dealer has five spot, must drop for count of 27, and non dealer plays four spot to score 31-for-5 (run of 3 and 2 for the 31). If the fourth card in non-dealer hand is a five spot, the trap can be employed even if dealer has no five and is playing double run of 10-point cards. This happens more than one might expect because dealer will dump five-spot to crib on such a hand and you provide the five followed by the four spot. The outcome is the same with a 31-for-five scored.

6-7-7-any ten-point card

7

INTENDED RESULT

If dealer has ten-point cards, will make the count seventeen to which no dealer adds ten spot to make count 27. You might even pair the dealer's ten-pointer at this juncture. A likely "go" at this point is music to your ears. Dealer gets out of trap only by leading the five spot. If dealer leads the 10-point card, your 6-7 will trap the five for a run of three and a go to close the play. If dealer is holding two five-spots, there is no way out.

6-7-8-J

8

6-7-9-J

9

INTENDED RESULT

If dealer makes the count 18 or 19 with the play of ten-point card, you force the county 28 or 29 with the play of your Jack. In the ideal situation, you may pick up two points for a pair at this point. If given a go on the count of 28/29, there is an excellent chance that your trap attempt has succeeded. At this point, the only way dealer can escape is to lead the five. If dealer is holding two fives with two ten point cards, your trap is successful even if one five is led.

Here are a couple of other hands that will work more frequently than you might anticipate and will gain non-dealer pegs either to gain board position or to claim win

NON DEALER

2-3-4-8

2-3-4-9

LEAD

8

9

INTENDED RESULT

If dealer makes count 18/19 with the play of ten-point card, make the count 22. Dealer will often be compelled to play the five spot. This will allow the score of a three card run and a go if playing the 2-3-4-8. If playing the 2-3-4-9, the play of the five by the dealer will allow you to close the count for 31 for five. When holding the 2-3-4-9, the non-dealer may make the count 22 or 23 with the same result. If four or five pegs are not needed, the percentage play in each of these hands is the trey.

These two hands result in the intended trap more than one would expect and the dealer is misled as to hand composition by the opening lead. Generally, the non-dealer leads from small cards. Dealer is highly surprised to see the run of small cards at end of play after having seen a middle card as first offering.

DEALER

The dealer has an increased opportunity to trap the five of the non-dealer as dealer sees lead card and plays last. Two cards are needed to combine with the five to complete the trap (3-4, 4-6, 6-7).

3-6-7-8*

2-6-7-8

A-6-7-8

INTENDED RESULT

If ten-point card is led, dealer plays the small card (3, 2, A). The five is trapped in such case even if opponent drops the five on second card played. Put the count over 21 with the smallest of your middle cards and listen for that go. These hands can be played the other way and result in frequent trap of the five. With more experienced players who will dump their five when they figure it safe to do so, the technique outlined above will work very well. Try it! You'll like it

*Hold this hand when needing six or more pegs and opponent needing eight points or more to gain board position advantage or claim game. The 3/8 combination is very likely to score 31-for-2 and the 6/7 has a high percentage chance to trap a five spot for run of three and go. When opponent needs eight points or more, they will hold their best hand and about 4 of ten hands will be comprised of ten-point cards and a five spot. If opponent needs four points or less, they are likely to hold a variety of cards to avoid pegging situations. We will cover more such hands which allow trap of the five spot in end-of game-pegging where four pegs often can win a game.