

ELEVEN FROM HEAVEN SUPPLEMENT  
EFFECTIVE PEGGING - Lesson 4

Some call it the magic eleven. In craps, players say, "seven come eleven." Eleven in cribbage as the combined value of cards offer increased opportunities for scoring in the pegging process. The dealer has the greatest advantage with such cards especially with the two card "elevens from heaven". Those eleven point combinations formed by two cards are as follows:

- 5-6
- 4-7
- 3-8
- 2-9
- 1-10 pointer

(These have greater value the closer the cards. They are arranged as to strongest combinations with the 5-6 being the best 1-10 the weakest.)

Eleven point combinations are real tools in either offensive or defensive pegging strategies. If you are the dealer and need two or more peg points to attain desired board position, score a skunk, or for win; retain cards that total eleven. If your discard is difficult to figure, let the understanding of "elevens from heaven" determine the cards to retain. If this is only facet that you incorporate into your pegging strategies, you will win an increased percentage of your games.

- 5-3-3
- 9-1-1
- 6-3-2
- 7-3-1
- 8-2-1
- 7-2-2
- 5-5-1
- 4-4-3

You are dealer with 1-2-6-9-J-K. Normal discard from this hand to own crib would be 6-9. If pegs are essential hold 1-2-6-9 and discard J-K. If your opponent leads with 10 or jack, play the deuce for count of 12. If opponent lead is Q or K, play the nine. Avoid obvious run situations. If you are not highly familiar with this pegging strategy, play the larger card so that count is over 15 which deprives your opponent of scoring those two points. As you become more familiar with this strategy, there are some hands which suggest playing the lower card as you may be able to retain cards for a five card trap or another strategy.

Some hands will contain two eleven point combinations. These work well for the dealer to close count at 31. In the hands of the non-dealer, a 15-2 is more likely the score. Recognize the pegging potential of these common hands in cribbage.

- 3-4-8-7
- 4-5-6-7
- ~~4-4-7-7~~

- More unlikely are:
- 2-2-9-9
- 3-3-8-8
- 5-5-6-6
- 1-1-J-J

If you do not have a better four points to retain, as dealer the pegging potential should be a major consideration in the retention of these cards. Of course there are other 11-point combinations as well. The two and three card combinations are more readily seen. The magic eleven may also appear in 4-card combinations. Some of these represent tremendous pegging potential.

- 1-2-3-5
- 1-1-4-5
- 1-1-1-8
- 2-2-2-5
- 2-2-3-4
- 1-3-3-4
- 2-3-3-3

The 1-1-1-8 or 2-2-2-5 become very strong when opponent leads a 10-pt card. In either case, play the larger card as the opening play. Play the 8 on a 10 pt lead regardless if the card is 10-J-Q-K. You want a count of 28. Even if your opponent has a five to go with the ten-point cards, you will get your aces in for a minimum of 9 unanswered pegs. Since your opponent has led from a ten point card, there is an excellent chance that no small cards are available to lead. In the case of the 1-1-1-8 following a 10-pt lead, a go is frequently stated on the count of 28. You play an ace for 29, pair the ace for 30, triple the ace for 31. That's 10 unanswered pegs.

In the case of the 2-2-2-5, you nail the fifteen for two, play a deuce for 27, pair the deuce for 29, and triple the deuce for 31. If your opponent has a five and drops it to make the count 20, your deuces are still likely to score the pair plus the triple on a count of 22 with the play of the first deuce. These hands do not represent unusual pegging opportunities if leading from them.

However some of these hands have good pegging potential whether dealer or non-dealer. Let's look at the 2-2-3-4. Lead the four if you need pegs as non dealer hoping that your opponent will play a ten-pointer, drop the three to make a count of 17. It is likely that another ten point card will be played for a count of 27 and you get those deuces in back to back for 4 peg points. And you still have a good hand to peg from if your opponent plays an 8 or 9 on your 4 lead. You can take the fifteen for two and still have two small cards for end of play. Could conceivably catch a lone small card that was retained by your opponent.