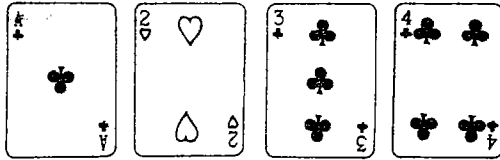
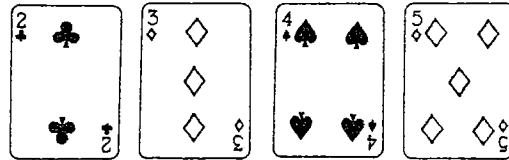


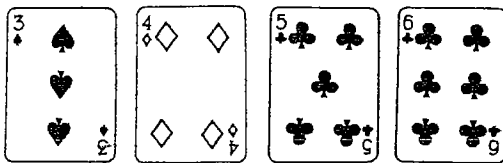
The Percentage Play: the Four-Card Run



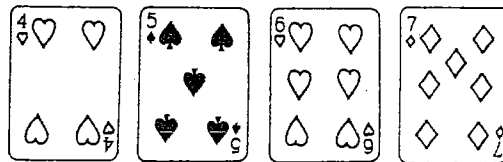
As a general rule do not hold this four-card run. Hold the ace-2-3 with a lone 9, 10, jack, queen or king if you need a 14-point hand. However, a 2-3-4 combination will escape Jake's "31" play if you are the non-dealer and making the first lead (with a 3) and Jake is holding "ten's"-5's. Also hold the 2-3-4 with a lone 6 or 8. A favorable starter card can result in a 14-point hand. In addition, keeping a "Magic Eleven" and a "sleeper" will improve your pegging score. Your lead? The 3 is the percentage play.



This four-card run must be played with discretion. If it's your crib, discarding a 5 with a "ten" card may be your percentage play. Jake's lead? Keep the four-card run, especially if you're playing offense. Keep the 3-4-5 in combination with a 7 or 8, however, as this hand will score 14 points with the right starter. Check the board before making your discard decision.

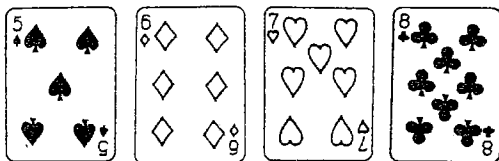


The 3-4-5-6 run is usually held as it can score 16 points (with a 6 starter). And with a 3-4-5 starter the hand will score 14. You must consider your discards if it's Jake's crib. For example, a 3-4-5-6-10-10 hand, the proper discard would be a 3-10 (Jake's crib). And if Jake will be playing defense, keep the 4-5-6-"ten" and lead the "ten." Your pegging chances are much improved with the 4-5-6-"ten" rather than the 3-4-5-6 (a tough hand to lead from when you are the non-dealer).

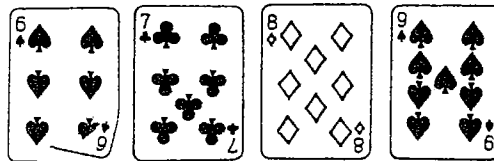


The 4-5-6-7 run is usually held as it also can score 16 points (with a 4 starter). But board position and discarding to Jake's crib may force the four-card run to be abandoned.

Two 11 point combos

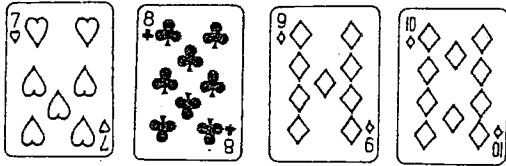


If it's your crib, break up this four-card run if you can discard the 5 with a "ten" card. The 6-7-8 held in combination with an ace or 2 is especially desirable. The 5 in your crib is the percentage play. Jake's crib? Hold the four-card run. Again, check the board and your discards.

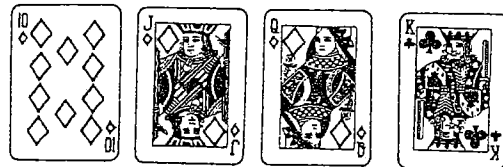
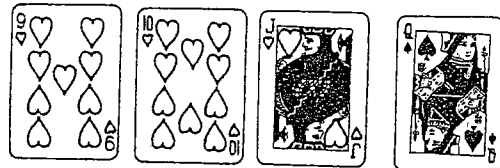
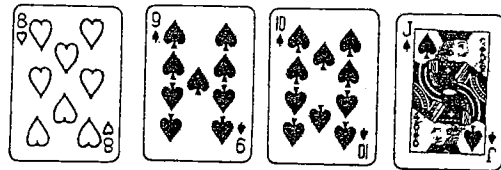


The 6-7-8-9 is usually left intact. A helping starter card will score 16 points. Your lead? The 8 is the percentage play, keeping the 6-7 for a possible 5-trap. Also, if Jake pairs your 8 lead, you can escape with your 9. A 6 or 7 lead, if paired, puts you in a very bad position, with no "out" (or escape) card. And a 9 lead will likely draw a 6 for "15-2", leaving you with an untenable 7 or 8 response, or pairing the 6 for "21" (and an awkward, losing situation).

The Percentage Play: The Four-Card Run (con't.)

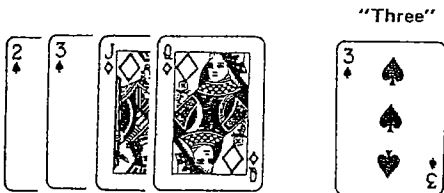


The 7-8-9-10 run is played with discretion. The 10 is discarded in many cases (for example, it's Jake's crib and you hold 2-7-8-9-10-king. Discard the 10-king). Hold the basic 7-8-9 in combinations with the "Magic Eleven" (2-9).



The percentage play for these combinations (if they are helped with a 5-6) is to discard the high end of the run to Jake's crib, and the low end of the run to your crib. Try to hold a "Magic Eleven" combination. Of course, if the remaining two cards do not help your hand, then hold the four-card run (example: 6-8-10-jack-queen-king, discard the 6-8). And as usual, board position plays a key role in making discarding decisions. You may want to discard defensively (8-king, for example).

Do I play "15-2" or pair for two?



Do I pair the queen or play "15-2"?



"Thirteen"

The percentage play is "15-2." Jake probably holds "tens" and a 5 or 5's. By playing "15-2," Jake will probably play another "ten" card for "25." This will be a "go" and Jake will be forced to play a 5 if he has one. You then respond by leading your percentage queen. An excellent chance exists of a trap for a run of three. If you pair the queen on your second play, you stand the chance of having your jack (and 2) trapped. Think ahead. Avoid traps and play the percentage play!