

END OF GAME PEGGING

Each player needs 3-5 points to win the game. Let's assume, in this case, that dealer can only win by pegging out. Non-dealer does not need to peg out, as first count will likely claim the game.

BASIC PREMISES - (Non-dealer)

1. Hold enough points to win the game. Play it safe on pegging unless it appears that you must peg to win.
2. Non-dealer pegging average is low and you may not get out through pegging regardless of the type cards retained. Non dealer pegging averages look like these (1.88, 1.68, 1.90, 1.71, 1.74, 1.96, 2.16, 2.12, 1.97, 1.84, 1.89, 1.89, 1.93, 1.67, 2.18, 1.81, 1.90, 1.70, 1.85, 1.42).
3. Holding a large hand with tightly grouped cards is generally unwise. Exception (8-8-7-6) is good hand to lead from if needing three pegs to win. Lead the 8.
4. Lead a small card (4 or less) if possible. This card can only be paired. Other leads may result in fifteen-for-two or be paired. Limit dealer options.
5. If available, lead from a small pair or triplet.
6. **Remember your discards** to crib and note starter card. Either may give you a mathematical edge on opening lead and subsequent play.
7. **Faking a flush** here may give you the needed edge.
8. Be reluctant to lead a ten-point card, as dealer is likely to retain a five spot to cover any ten-point card played. A five is not a bad lead in this case because of dealer bias against ten-point cards. By leading the five, non-dealer also avoids possible five-trap play and loss of game. If dealer needs two or three points only to peg out, the five is not advisable.
9. Don't be fooled by composition of dealer hand. Most likely situation is for dealer to hold four different cards with as wide a range as possible not to include "ten-pointers" (A-2-4-8 or 2-3-6-7). Don't look for logical choices at end of game.
10. If you and dealer are within three holes of victory, there is a strong possibility that dealer will peg out and win game. In such case, non-dealer should retain cards with pegging potential and attempt to win game by pegging. Remember dealer pegs average (3.52, 3.49, 3.59, 3.47, 3.49, 3.57, 3.73, 3.55, 3.49, 3.63, 3.58, 3.33, 3.62, 3.28, 3.38, 3.37, 3.40, 3.26, 3.51).

Remember there are several cards that are dangerous to hold until the end of the play in end of game situations (5, A, or 2). If lone ace or deuce, consider discarding to crib. If unable to discard, why not lead? If not discarded or led, try to dump at a safe place in play. The last choice is the least desirable of those options.

BASIC PREMISES - (Dealer)

1. That non-dealer will count out if within five points of game-hole.
2. That non-dealer will retain the count rather than attempt to peg out.
3. Dealer is assured of only one point in pegging. If dealer needs three or more points to win, taking first two pegs available is often only chance to win game. Another opportunity to score two points in play may not present itself.
4. Safer to pair than to make fifteen on a middle card lead. Also is safer to pair a ten-point card than take 15-2 as pairs of X-point cards are seldom retained in end-of game situations. Both factors apply to close end-of-game situations.
5. If pegging cards are not available to dealer (8-8-10-Q-K-K) two pairs will be retained hoping to drop a large pair on end of play for three points. There is no advantage in holding four different cards if they look like those above.
6. "Eleven from heaven" combinations favor dealer as do most pegging prospects. Two card elevens (A-10, 2-9, 3-8, 4-7, and 5-6) offer little pegging potential to non-dealer. Three card elevens can be of benefit to non-dealer (A-A-9, 2-2-7, 3-3-5, 4-4-3, 5-5-A) in pegging. The value of either is diminished in end-of-game situations since ten cards are infrequently retained. When retained they are more likely to be held by non-dealer.
7. If pegging does not develop, dealer must retain a pair and preferable if pair are 7-7 or less, cards that total 15, touching cards, or cards with a space between (A-3, 2-4, 3-5, 4-6, 5-7, 6-8, 7-9, etc.) in hopes of scoring well on end of play. You need a break for opponent to have the essential card. If you play this strategy, you will be surprised at the number of times your opponent will have the card which will allow you to score.