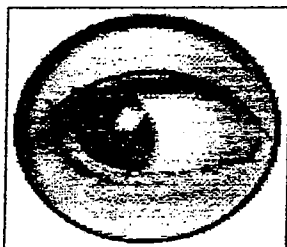


The following article was written by Dan Barlow, author of "Cribbage For Experts"



PEGGING POINTERS

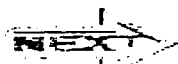
#15

When your opponent is one or two holes from victory, you can safely throw certain cautions to the wind. A play which could give up three, four, or even five holes in the pegging is no longer more dangerous than a play which can give up only two holes. You would never play a 6 on your opponent's lead of a 4 under normal circumstances, but the truth is, he/she can peg on your 6 only with a 5 or 6. If your hand happens to be 2-5-5-6, don't automatically reach for the 2 when opponent leads a 4. There are eleven cards in the deck which would allow opponent to peg on your 2 (three 2s, four 3s and four 9s). There are but five cards (two 5s and three 6s) which would allow opponent to peg on your 6. And, don't forget to look at the cut. If the cut was a 5 or a 6, your odds are even better playing the 6.

Normally, you wouldn't play a 6 when opponent leads a 3, for fear of giving up 15 for 4. But if opponent needs only two holes to win, what's the danger? Opponent can peg on your 6 only with a 6. Play anything else, and opponent has at least two different possible pegging cards. So the 6 is actually your best play.

Suppose you hold A-A-5-9. Both you and opponent need two holes to go out. Opponent leads a 3. Don't do what you would automatically do any other time in the game; namely, reach for the 9 to prevent opponent from scoring a run. While it's true that opponent can score a run if you play an Ace, it's also true that he/she cannot score a 15-2. Opponent is no more likely to peg at least two holes on your Ace than on your 9. But if your opponent does NOT peg on your card, you are more likely to peg on his/her next card if you played the Ace. Why? Because he/she cannot put the count over 15. You will have a shot at a pair OR a 15-2. You will peg not only if opponent plays a 5 or a 9, but also if he/she plays a 6, 10, J, Q, or K. Playing your 9 on opponent's 3 allows him/her to put the count over 15, so that you can peg only by pairing.

To summarize, when your opponent needs fewer than three holes to win, play so that he/she is least likely to peg, not so that he/she is likely to peg the least. An if your choices are equal, make the play which gives you the best chance of later pegging on opponent.



In short, when both players are within a hole or two of victory, the cards 6 through 9 tend to be more valuable to the dealer than are the cards 10-King. The high cards are more likely to be pitched into the crib. Therefore, face cards and 10s are normally the safest leads when no low card is available.



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