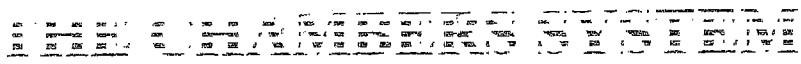


The text that follows was taken from the book "Cribbage: A new Concept" by John Chambers.



PLAYING YOUR POSITION/PLAYING THE ODDS

Before getting into the different board situations a mention will be made about two strategically important concepts. The first one is playing your position. The second one is playing the odds.

"Playing your position" means that if you know the averages in regard to the Play, Hand and Crib and you know what you need to get into position, then you can determine your strategy. For example, you are the dealer at hole 100 and your opponent is at hole 104. Your opponent is the nondealer, has first count and needs 18 holes to go out. If you are holding an average hand and your opponent led with a card which you also have, would you pair him? Of course not! If your opponent came back with a third card, it could give him the points he needs to go out. By playing your position, you would think "I've got three hands, that's 7 holes a hand including the pegging. My opponent has only one hand and needs 18 holes to win the game. I'll try to keep his pegging down and force him to have an exceptional hand if he wants to win the game. I won't make it easier for him by pairing."

"Playing the odds" means that you logically calculate the risks involved, which may at times help your opponent. If you feel that you can't win or get into position without taking the risk, then by all means do it.

For example, you are the nondealer at hole 106 and the dealer is at 113. During the Play, the count has reached 15 which the dealer made with a deuce. The dealer is now at 115 and you are still at hole 106. You have twelve points in your hand which means you need to peg three. You have a deuce and could pair your opponent. What should you do? You then realize that the starter card is also a deuce. You take the risk, pair the deuce and it works. He doesn't have another deuce. You peg one more hole and count twelve and out, winning the game because you played the odds.

*****Cribbage Tip*****

In determining you strategy, play your position first. If you don't have position, then play the odds.



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Many people, including experienced players, do not understand the significance of the start of the game. It can effect your strategy and which player gets control of the game. It may also have an effect on the number of options available to you.

Let's examine the very first hand of the game. On the average, the dealer will get 3.5 points in the play, 8 points in their hand and 4.5 points in the crib for an average of 16 points.

The non-dealer will average 2 points in the play and 8 points in their hand for a total of 10 points.

With this in mind, on the average, the dealer should have a small advantage having the first deal. Many people may say it is not much of an advantage to deal first and they are right. But don't give up that advantage, no matter how small.

On the first hand, on the average, it is more advantageous for the non-dealer to play on than for the dealer. Why? Because if the non-dealer reaches approximately hole 17 on the first hand, with the dealer not too far behind, the non-dealer has actually gained the advantage which the dealer had by dealing first, regardless of the minuteness of that advantage. It is still an advantage.

The dealer, on the average, has three counts to get to hole 17, so why peg in the play if it will only help the non-dealer more.



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SPS 6/16/97