

8-6

SUPPLEMENT TO LESSON 6 - PLAYING POSITION ZONES

Now that we've studied the premises of board position zones, let's look at a number of actual game situations and offer some analysis in each.

1. Own position hole 57/opponent position 67 - You need 12 points to reach critical position zone (holes 69-73). Since the dealer is a few holes short, you can change the outcome of this game and give yourself an advantage by counting twelve points or more. Your hand is comprised of 2-A-A-2-K-5. Discard the A-5 to opponent in this case and retain 2-A-2-K. A three cut will give you 14 points or the deuce will give you twelve points. Your A-5 discard is more defensive than the K-5. You cannot win this game unless you attain your position. If the dealer has a sixteen hand, the normal number of pegs, and a four-point crib your correct strategy will not likely change the outcome of the game.
2. Own position hole 69/opponent position 49 - You have great advantage in this game and it is not your deal. Your hand is comprised of 7-5-J-K-5-8. Discard the 8-K to pone. Although you can count ten as a minimum holding the 5-5-J-K, the 7-8 discard to the dealer might erase your twenty-point lead. YOU DON'T NEED ANY POINTS TO DEAL! You might argue going for the skunk in this case if it appears you need a skunk to qualify. Position after this hand and opponent tallied two points in the crib (opponent discard to crib was 8-9) and position on board was 82 vs. dealer 62. The starter card was a 3; you saved ten points in the crib by your defensive discard, and still counted ten points in your hand. The twenty-point lead was retained as non-dealer. Our first objective without consideration of other factors is to win the game.
3. Own position hole 73/opponent position 74 - Both players in critical position zone (69-73) or beyond. You are not the dealer. YOUR ONLY HOPE IN THIS GAME IS TO PLAY ULTRA DEFENSIVELY, AVOID PEGS, AND GIVE UP A SMALL CRIB. Your cards are K-5-A-A-3-5. Toss the A-K; that's the most defensive discard you have. Lead from the 3 so as to give some distance between your cards. Your strategy worked as position after this hand is 83/85 and your discard resulted in a two-point crib. You're not in the driver's seat yet. You'll be dealing the next hand and want to keep your opponent from scoring ten points. Non-dealer average is 8.1 in hand and 2.1 in pegs.
4. Own position 116/opponent 109 - You are dealt Q-6-K-8-Q-3. GO FOR THE GAME! Discard the 6-8; retain the three spot with your face cards. The following cards will put you out: 2, 5, J, or Q. Dealer is too close to winning game to play defensively. Your most defensive discard is the 6-K and that would leave you Q-Q-8-3. In that case only the 2, 5, or Q would put you out. You may lose this game anyway. The cut was a Jack and put a win on your scorecard. Had you played defensively, you would have had a two-point hand and the dealer gained another two points on the turn of the jack.
5. Own position 98/opponent 112 - Your hand is 7-8-5-9-10-A. Discard the A-5 to dealer. CUT THE SPREAD! You cannot get out on your hand and the dealer needs only nine points in hand, pegs and crib to claim game. Dealer averages 3.5 pegging, 7.9 on hand, and 4.8 on crib for a combined total of 16.2. Cut the 7 or 8 and you have fourteen points.
6. Own position 117/opponent 115 and you are dealing. Most likely you can win this game only by pegging out. Even so, make your opponent show six points. You hand is 2-J-A-6-9-7. KEEP YOUR BEST PEGGERS AND FOUR DIFFERENT CARDS. Discard the A-J and retain the 2-6-7-9. Retention of A-2-6-7 is almost as good. Your strategy almost works. You get three pegs and game is won by opponent 121 to 120.
7. Own position 54/opponent 45 and you have the deal. Your cards are 4-7-7-9-10-Q. Discard 7-7 since you do not have a touching card and the sevens don't combine with any other cards for fifteens. Of course, if you had a 6 or 8, you would retain the sevens in your hand. The cut is a six and your opponent discarded an 8-K. You extend your lead on a lousy hand and board position after this hand is 70/56. Good idea if holding a pair which has neither a touching card nor adds up to fifteen in your hand to put that pair in the crib. You have three cards to make it work in the crib (the cut and the two cards discarded by your opponent. If retained in the hand, only the starter card can help.