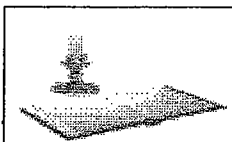


# Discarding Tips

## #6



*George "Ras" Rasmussen*

In general, the dealer wants to have a strong crib and puts the best two cards on dealer-side of the board without excessive sacrifice to hand potential. The non-dealer selects the two cards believed to be have low scoring potential without excessive sacrifice to potential hand score.

For most cribbage players, their discards to the dealer will result in cribs which average 5.0 - 5.5 points. Discards to own crib will produce cribs which average about 4.5. So it would appear that we do not "load" our own crib as often as possible and we do not "balk" the opponent's crib effectively. Reversing those averages can change the outcome of 60 - 70% of the games played. Inexperienced players who play experienced players can expect to win 3 of each ten games played with no apparent discarding strategy. Our goal is to equalize play so that the better players win 57% of their games and the lower level players are nearing 50%. This creates an environment in which lower level players find themselves in the prize money more often and those at the upper end of this spectrum have to improve play to maintain a quality performance.

Some players break up their hand when they should not. Others don't break up the hand when they should. Ask yourself these questions prior to discarding:

Who has the crib?

Where am I on the board and where do I need to be?

Where is my opponent on the board and does opponent have desired board position?

**THE ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS SHOULD PROVIDE THE FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE DISCARDING.**

"Keep the points in your hand" is often the advice given among cribbage players. Sometimes this is the best advice possible. I believe that is true on the opening hand of the game for the nondealer. It may also be true on the closing hand of the game if you have potential and first count. The rest of the game, that advice might not be so valid!

Now, let's review the concept of loading own crib.

**HOW DO I LOAD MY CRIB AND INCREASE THE POINT POTENTIAL WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE TO THE COUNT IN HAND? IN THE CASE OF A GOOD HAND, CAN I RETAIN HAND POTENTIAL FOR TWELVE POINTS OR MORE AND**

**LOAD MY CRIB? IN THE EVENT OF A POOR HAND (2-3-6-8-9-K), CAN I LOAD MY CRIB AND NOT GIVE UP POINTS?**

The first concept to understand is that the deck of 52 cards has sixteen 10-point cards; so nearly one-third of the cribbage deck works very nicely with a five spot or a combination which totals or includes a 5.

**SO WHAT ARE THE BEST DISCARDS THAT CAN BE MADE TO OWN CRIB AND HOW MANY POINTS DO THEY AVERAGE? WE'LL GROUP THEM IN LOTS OF TEN FOR THE PURPOSES OF DEMONSTRATION AND COMPARISON.**

5-5***	8.821	5-10**	6.654
2-3**	7.169	5-Q**	6.571
5-J**	7.088	4-5**	6.569
5-6**	6.805	7-8*	6.424
5-K**	6.719	3-3*	6.058

**NOTE THAT ALL CHOICES IN THIS FIRST GROUP OF TEN AVERAGE 6.0 OR BETTER**

5-7*	5.996	2-5*	5.581
3-5*	5.983	5-8*	5.558
7-7*	5.887	4-4*	5.538
2-2*	5.832	A-A*	5.513
6-6*	5.756	8-8*	5.512

**ALL CHOICES IN THIS SECOND GROUP OF TEN AVERAGE AT LEAST 5.5 AND LESS THAN 6.0**

5-9*	5.429	6-7	5.128
A-4*	5.418	3-4	5.126
A-5*	5.402	6-9	5.081
J-J	5.288	Q-Q	4.958
9-9	5.245	J-Q	4.813

\*\*\*Only the 5-5 to own crib is worth a sacrifice in the hand of up to four points if retaining hand potential for 12 points or more. Notice that the 5-5 averages nearly nine points to own crib. It is wise to sacrifice up to two points in the hand to discard any of those choices with\*\*. A sacrifice of one point in the hand may be made with good effect to discard those choices with a single\*

**OF COURSE, YOU OFTEN CAN MAKE AN EXCELLENT DISCARD SELECTION TO YOUR CRIB WITH NO SACRIFICE IN POINTS IF YOU REMEMBER THAT ANY FIVE OR FIVE POINT COMBINATION TO THE CRIB IS WORTH A MINIMUM OF TWO POINTS. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO GET A ZERO CRIB IF YOU DISCARD A FIVE OR FIVE**

**POINT COMBINATION TO YOUR CRIB. THE SAME CAN BE SAID FOR A PAIR EXCEPT THE PAIR IS LESS LIKELY TO WORK WITH THE STARTER CARD OR YOUR OPPONENT'S DISCARDS.**

The discards which have no asterisk are reasonably good discards to own crib although they are not worth a sacrifice of points in the hand. You'll do lots better playing mathematical probabilities rather than playing hunches or chasing figments of the imagination.

**REMEMBER WHEN DEALING TO FOCUS ON POTENTIAL COMBINED COUNT OF HAND AND CRIB. SUCH THINKING WILL MAXIMIZE NUMBER OF COMBINED POINTS GAINED.**



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SPS 10/17/97