



LESSON 17: **NEGATIVE AND PENALTY X'S** TEACHER NOTES

We're returning to look at some other uses for the **X** card, a bidding card that's greatly underused!



By the end of this lesson the student will

- explain the different meanings of Negative **X** and the Penalty **X**
- Give examples of when to use the Negative **X** and the Penalty **X**

The lesson is in 2 parts

Part 1 - The Negative **X**

Part 2 - The Penalty **X**

4 set hands can be played after each part which show the effective use of the **X** card as a negative **X** and then as a penalty **X**. The extra 4 hands are random.

Use the slides to explain the meaning and use of the Negative **X**

Explain that the Negative **X** is a form of Takeout **X**

Emphasise the usefulness of the Negative **X** to responder, after a suit overcall by the opponents, when otherwise responder would be unable to make a bid.

Emphasise that after a major suit bid, the Negative **X** promises 4 cards in the unbid major

Explain that if opener supports responders shown suit following his Negative **X** that this does not constitute a reverse, nor promise opener had 5 cards in his first bid suit. It may in both cases – but not guaranteed!

Play hands 1-4

Use the slides to explain the meaning and use of the Penalty **X**

Explain that the use of the **X** for penalties is totally different from its use for takeout!

Here the **X** says the opponents will not make their bid contract and I am going to punish them by doubling their penalty score!

Explain how partner can recognise a Penalty **X**!

Firstly, in the context of a 1NT opening bid

X is ALWAYS for Penalties! It says the opponents will not make their 1NT contract!

To use the **X** card in this situation you need to hold a good 16+ HCP hand – stress the ‘good 16’ i.e. with top honours, sequences, or a long strong suit where you will win 5+ tricks when on lead!

However, after a 1NT responder bid (showing a weak 6-9 HCP hand) here the **X** can be used for Takeout!

Escaping the opponent’s **X of partner’s opening 1NT holding a weak hand**

To escape from **1NTX** responder can use a simple ‘wriggle’ technique.

If responder holds a 5+ card suit he can **XX** (redouble) to show this. This is an instruction to Opener to bid 2♣ which responder will pass if his 5+card suit is clubs or correct to his 5+ card suit. Emphasise this is to play and opener must pass! Note, if advancer makes an intervening bid Opener should now pass!

Where responder does not hold a 5+ card suit but has 2 x 4 card suits, after **1NTX** he bids his lower ranking suit first. If opener has 3+ cards in this suit he should pass. If opener has only 2 cards in the suit, opener bids the next suit up by rank. If this is responder's second 4 card suit he will pass. i.e. the partnership is seeking to escape 1NTX by finding a 4:3 minimum suit fit.

Secondly, the use of the X after a game contract has been reached by the opponents. It too says the opponents will not make their contract!

Explain this often occurs in competitive bidding auctions where one side bids on and denies the other side their contract.

E.g. in a hearts vs spades auction the spades will win as the higher ranking suit. Have the spade bidders exceeded their achievable contract?

If so, **X** for Penalties!

If the heart bidders bid onto to 5♥ – ask the same question – have they exceeded their achievable contract?

If so, **X** for Penalties!

Explain how the decision to Pass, **X** for Penalties, or bid on (as a sacrifice) should be made.

Review vulnerability comparing the scoring of

non vulnerable and **vulnerable** game contracts

non vulnerable and **vulnerable** undertricks

non vulnerable and **vulnerable** undertricks when **X**!

illustrating with the slides when it is a 'good to sacrifice' knowing your side will go down but that this will still give you a better score than allowing the opponents to make their game!

As a general rule – good to sacrifice when your side is **non vulnerable** and the opponents are **vulnerable**!

Summarise the lesson as in Student Notes