



Lesson 40 Teacher's Notes

Sacrifice Bidding

Aims

- To introduce the idea that going down can be a Good Thing
- To emphasise that sacrificing is worthwhile only if they are making their contract.
- To explain that there is nothing 'unsporting' about sacrificing – in bridge each partnership tries to achieve the best score possible and sacrificing is a perfectly legitimate part of the game/

Content.

- 1 In Bridge we aim to score as many points as possible - *or to lose as few as possible*.
When opponents have most of the high cards we do not always have to sit and wait to see how many points we lose. Even an underdog can sometimes profit by entering the bidding!
A *sacrifice* is when we deliberately contract to make more tricks than we expect to take because going one or two down doubled will be cheaper than the value of opponents game.
- 2 Stress **the importance of vulnerability**.
When considering a sacrifice we look carefully at the vulnerability, not just ours, but theirs also. If opponents are vulnerable and they make game they score at least 600 points - so a sacrifice that loses no more than 500 will show a profit - two down if we are vulnerable, three down if we are not. The ideal vulnerability is when we are not vulnerable and they are: "Green against Red". If opponents are not vulnerable they will score 400 or so. Now we will show a profit only if we can escape for one down vulnerable, or two down not vulnerable.
- 3 **When should we sacrifice?** It is, alas, not possible to give exact rules about when to sacrifice. Only the most experienced players have developed the judgment to get it right most of the time. But here are some general principles:
 - Rarely sacrifice at **unfavorable vulnerability** ("Red v Green")
 - Do not sacrifice with balanced hands - there will be too many losers
 - Sacrifice only when you are almost certain that opponents will make their game
- 4 Discuss the concept of the Advance Sacrifice. Explain the close relationship between pre-emptive bidding and sacrifice bidding. The aim is the same: to play in your good suit rather than let opponents play in theirs, and so lose as few points as possible.

The pre-emptive opener is a form of "*advance sacrifice*" where we get our blow in first, before opponents have a chance to describe their hands. This is a tactically sound thing to do. We can do the same thing in other situations - get our sacrifice in *before* they have bid their contract. It is a good idea to use up their space *before they have uncovered their best fit*

If you compel opponents to guess their best contract they will guess wrong some of the time. The best approach is to bid to your limit as quickly as possible, then give up, hoping they will do the wrong thing. If you wait till they have bid game and then sacrifice they will be better able to judge whether to bid on, or take the money by doubling.



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The key questions when considering a sacrifice are :

- How sure am I that opponents will make their contract?
- How much will it cost us if I bid and they double?

Do not sacrifice when

- You have honours in opponents' suit
- You have a balanced hand with lots of three-card holdings and doubletons
- You have slow tricks (queens and jacks) in unbid suits
- You do not have enough trump – 9+card fits are essential