



Sacrifice Bidding

At bridge the aim of each partnership is to score as many points as possible.

However, it is obvious that both partnerships cannot achieve plus scores on the same board!

When the other side has the balance of power you can try to achieve as small a minus score as possible.

This may involve deliberately bidding a contract that you expect not to make, when you assume that you will lose fewer points that way than defending opponents' contract.

Such bids are called *sacrifices*

They are a perfectly legitimate tactic - do not feel that it is somehow unfair to steal opponents' big hands!

EW Vul	♠9765		
Dlr West	♥75		
	♦KJ7643		
	♣8		
♠A10432		♠J8	
♥AQ1094		♥K632	
♦-		♦9	
♣Q102		♣AK9653	
	♠KQ		
	♥J8		
	♦AQ10852		
	♣J74		

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	2♦
2♥	5♦	Dbl	All Pass

On this hand East-West can make 12 tricks in hearts or clubs, but it will be difficult to bid slam if North-South leap to 5♦!

North-South have just one loser in spades, two in hearts and one in clubs, and can make nine tricks in diamonds.

If East-West play in 4♥ North-South lose 680 points

If North-South play in 5♦ they lose just 300 points

5♦ is a good sacrifice against 4♥.

If East-West reach 6♥ they will score 1430 points

North-South could bid 7♦, four down for -800

7♦ is a good sacrifice against 6♥.

The importance of vulnerability

Sacrificing is very like overcalling and pre-empting in that it is important not to lose too many points if you are doubled. **Remember the rule of 500:** that is three down nonvulnerable, two down vulnerable.

A sacrifice must cost less than the value of opponents' contract:

if they are vulnerable -500 is a save against their game which scores 600 or 620

if they are not vulnerable aim to lose no more than 300, which is a save against 400 or 420.

When should we sacrifice?

Like all aspects of bidding, sacrificing is not an exact science.

We can offer rough guidelines, but no hard and fast rules.

- ♦ Rarely sacrifice at unfavourable vulnerability - ie when you are vulnerable and opponents are not, "Red" v "Green"
- ♦ Look for a sacrifice only when your side has a big trump fit - at least 9 trump between the hands
- ♦ 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 - try to avoid the "*phantom sacrifice*" where you exchange a plus score for a minus



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Advance sacrifices

The most effective sacrifices are those that are made *before* opponents have discovered much about their combined values. *Advance sacrifices* are closely related to pre-emptive opening bids

If partner bids a suit in which you have length it is a good idea to raise as far as you are prepared to go quickly. Do not wait till they have bid their game before sacrificing - this makes it easier for them to take the right decision over your sacrifice

Pre-emptive jump raises compel opponents to guess what to do. Sometimes they will miss their best fit, because you raised the bidding to the 4-level before they have bid that suit. Sometimes they will bid too far and go down.

It is best, once you have put them to a guess, not to sacrifice further.

You have no reason to think they have made the right guess.

The five-level belongs to the opposition - if you have pushed them to this uncomfortably high level let them play there