

## Sacrifices

Today we talk about what sacrifices are and some common sacrifices you should be considering in your games. Making good sacrifices will absolutely improve your club game scores and frustrate your opponents!

A sacrifice as an intermediate level concept. It is making a bid that you expect will not make, often expecting to be doubled as well, but you believe the negative score you get for not making will be better than the negative score you will get allowing the opponents to make their contract. Club level players often over-sacrifice or are making their sacrifice at the wrong time. This lesson will help when to make the right sacrifice and also should help you identify when the opponents are sacrificing against you. Sacrificing can appear to be hogging and frustrating but it is acceptable and an encouraged part of the game.

Before you sacrifice you need to know the scoring. The most common results are in the table below and you should know these scores. Notice that **vulnerability** makes a difference for **games, slams, doubles and going down**, but not for part scores.

Type of contract	Contract	Result	Non-vulnerable score	Vulnerable score
Making part-score	1NT, 2♣ or 2♦	✓	90	90
	2♥, 2♠, 3♣ or 3♦	✓	110	110
	1NT	+1	120	120
	2♥ or 2♠	+1	140	140
	3♣ or 3♦	+1	130	130
	1NT, 3♣ or 3♦	+2	150	150
	2♥ or 2♠	+2	170	170
Making game	3NT, 5♣ or 5♦	✓	400	600
	4♥ or 4♠	✓	420	620
Going down (at any level)	Any (undoubled)	-1	-50	-100
	Any (undoubled)	-2	-100	-200
	Any (doubled)	-1	-100	-200
	Any (doubled)	-2	-300	-500
	Any (doubled)	-3	-500	-800
	Any (doubled)	-4	-800	-1100

Types of sacrifices

- **Game sacrifices (common)**
- Slam sacrifices (rare and advanced)
- Part score sacrifices (competing to a safe level)

When is a good time to sacrifice against game

- You are confident opponents are bidding and making their contract
- You have a good fit (or very long suit yourself) and good hand shape (shortage)
- When you are not vulnerable (see scoring)
- When the opponents are vulnerable (see scoring)

Quintessential sacrifice is 4S over 4H. Also 5-over-4 of a major is very common. 5-over-5 is less common of a sacrifice because there is often a much better chance you can beat their contract at the 5 level. When bidding 5 over 5 is normally for wildly distributional hands where you are not sure if they are making or if you might even make at the 5 level.

You normally want to make your sacrifice as quickly as possible (advance sacrifice) before the opponents have agreed their fit or shown their strength. Preempts should often be used as a way of suggesting a sacrifice as they suggest very little defence but show a good suit to play in. e.g. 3D-(3S)-5D

If the opponents bid on to the 5 level, you have done your job and now you have a chance to take them down and get a top result. There is also the chance the opponents do not double. Both of these are more likely with an advance sacrifice.

Sometimes you need to be careful with sacrifices as you are showing weakness

- Do not want to push opponents into a game they might not have bid. Do not bid like this 3D-(3S)-4D-(4S)-P-5D. This is taking “two bites at the cherry” and lets the opponents bid their hands out. Either pass the 3S (hoping they do not bid their game) and sacrifice after they bid game (late sacrifice) 3D-(3S)-**P**-(4S)-P-**5D**, or immediately sacrifice over their intended game (advance sacrifice) 3D-(3S)-**5D**.
- Do not want to push opponents into a slam they would not have bid. 4D-(4S)-5D can be a bad bid if you have absolutely no defence as you will now make it easier for the opponents to judge slam. Better to be quiet, partners preempt has done the job of making it hard for them to find the correct level.

Sacrifice vs VUL game

- VUL (doubled) = 2 down is good, 3 down is bad
- NV (doubled) = 3 down is good, 4 down is bad

**NV vs VUL - green vs red - is the BEST TIME FOR SACRIFICES**

Sacrifice vs NV game

- VUL (doubled) = 1 down is good, 2 down is bad
- **VUL vs NV - red vs green - is the WORST TIME FOR SACRIFICES**
- NV (doubled) = 2 down is good, 3 down is bad

In part scores, when opposition has a fit, you should be competing up to the 3 level whenever you can when you are not vulnerable. Be pushy in part scores when not vulnerable. The opponents will need to beat you 3 tricks undoubled for a good result, or 2 tricks doubled. They will often take the push to the 3 level which gives you a much better chance to set them. When vulnerable you should compete to the 3 level with a 9 card fit (no extra values required). Be careful in part scores when vulnerable as getting doubled and going down only one (or going down 2 undoubled) is -200 and that is a terrible score.

# Sacrifice

*Exercise:* Here are three auctions. Give a mark out of ten for the tactical nous of West's 5♦ bid in the following auctions:

## Auction one

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♥	2♦	2♥
3♦	4♥	Pass	Pass
5♦			

Zero. You have taken the dreaded two bites of the cherry. If you intended bidding to 5♦, you should have bid it first time.

## Auction two

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		4♦	Pass
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
5♦			

Three. Understandable (you hoped 4 might buy the contract), but you're now regretting that you didn't raise to 5 immediately, cutting out North's 4♠ bid.

## Auction three

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♥	2♦	2♠
5♦			

Auction three: Ten. Classic advance sacrifice, hoping North, with as yet undisclosed spade support will go 5♠. Now your 5♦ bid can't lose.

Dlr: North  
Vul: None

♠ Q 7 6 3  
♥ A 9 7 6 3  
♦ A 5  
♣ Q 2

♠ J 9 8 5  
♥ Q J 8  
♦ 7 3  
♣ A K 9 6

NORTH  
WEST 1 EAST  
SOUTH

♠ 10  
♥ 4  
♦ K Q J 10 6 4 2  
♣ 10 8 7 5

12  
11 6  
11

♠ A K 4 2  
♥ K 10 5 2  
♦ 9 8  
♣ J 4 3

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	3	2	2
S	-	-	3	2	2
E	2	3	-	-	-
W	2	3	-	-	-

From a Friday. A phantom sacrifice!  
You want to be confident the opponents are going down. Here West likely has 3 defensive tricks and their partner may have a trick. (1H)-3D-(4H)-P is correct bidding, although West should have been considering a 5D sacrifice. Making a sacrifice over a losing contract is called a phantom sacrifice... these are bad for business!

Dlr: South  
Vul: None

♠ A 2  
♥ J 5 4  
♦ Q 9 8 6 3  
♣ K J 10

♠ K Q 10 8 3  
♥ K Q 9 8 6 2  
♦ - -  
♣ 9 5

NORTH  
WEST 11 EAST  
SOUTH

♠ J 9 7 6 4  
♥ A 10 3  
♦ 7  
♣ A 4 3 2

11  
10 9  
10

♠ 5  
♥ 7  
♦ A K J 10 5 4 2  
♣ Q 8 7 6

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	1	5	-	-	-
S	1	5	-	-	-
E	-	-	4	5	-
W	-	-	4	5	-

From a Friday. Only wild distribution calls for 5-over-5 bidding. Both teams can make it at the 5 level but it is not recommended to sacrifice 6-over-5. Bidding could go a bunch of different ways, lets say south opens 1D it could continue like this. (1D)-1S-(2S)-4S-(5D)-5S-(X). A better bid from South would have been to open 5D which is like an advance sacrifice (that may make).

Dlr: East  
Vul: None

♠ 10  
♥ A 6 4 3 2  
♦ 9  
♣ A Q 10 8 6 2

♠ A K J 9 7 6  
♥ 7  
♦ Q 8 6 3  
♣ J 7

NORTH  
WEST 30 EAST  
SOUTH

♠ Q 8 5  
♥ K 10  
♦ A J 10 7 2  
♣ K 4 3

10  
11 13  
6

♠ 4 3 2  
♥ Q J 9 8 5  
♦ K 5 4  
♣ 9 5

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	3	-	3	-	-
S	3	-	3	-	-
E	-	4	-	4	2
W	-	4	-	4	2

From a Monday. Good shape is a great time to sacrifice. Look at how the unusual 2NT bid offers partner 2 suits to make a winning sacrifice in. The opposition will take the push to 5S and you will be rewarded as there are 3 tricks for the defence. The correct bidding on this hand is (1D)-(1S)-2NT\*-(3S?)-5H-(5S).

Dlr: North  
Vul: All

♠ Q J 10 6  
♥ 4 3  
♦ Q 4 3 2  
♣ K Q 4

♠ - -  
♥ Q J 8 6 5 2  
♦ A J 8 7  
♣ 6 5 3

NORTH  
WEST 13 EAST  
SOUTH

♠ K 8 7 5  
♥ A K 10 7  
♦ 10 9 5  
♣ A J

10  
8 15  
7

♠ A 9 4 3 2  
♥ 9  
♦ K 6  
♣ 10 9 8 7 2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	2	-	-	3	-
S	2	-	-	3	-
E	-	2	5	-	2
W	-	2	5	-	2

From a Monday. Watch the vulnerability. If you were NV you could be aggressive on this hand but would not recommend this bidding vulnerable, even though it works on this hand.  
(1NT)-2S-(4H)-4S-(?) This would put east in an awkward spot should they double or bid 5H?

Dlr: North  
Vul: None

♠ A K 9 7  
♥ 9 8 7  
♦ J 2  
♣ A Q 10 2

♠ J 5 4 2  
♥ J 6 5  
♦ A Q 7  
♣ 9 7 5

NORTH  
WEST 1 EAST  
SOUTH

♠ 10 6 3  
♥ A K Q 4 3  
♦ K 10 6  
♣ 8 6

14  
8 12  
6

♠ Q 8  
♥ 10 2  
♦ 9 8 5 4 3  
♣ K J 4 3

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	3	1	-	1	-
S	3	1	-	1	-
E	-	-	2	-	-
W	-	-	2	-	-

From a Monday. Be very aggressive in part scores when not vulnerable and the opponents have a fit. Bidding should go 1C-(1H)-2C-(2H)-3C-(3H)-P-X. North had a little bit extra so pushed to 3C immediately, but if north passed south should also push to 3C if they try to play in 2H. This forces E/W to play in 3H where they will go down. If you want to maximise your score you should double them in 3H if you think there is a decent chance they might not make. Here north has good defensive values and can double.

Dlr: North  
Vul: E/W

♠ 10  
♥ K Q 10 7 4  
♦ 9 5 3  
♣ 9 8 5 2

♠ Q 5 4  
♥ A J 2  
♦ 8 7 4 2  
♣ A Q 6

NORTH  
WEST 9 EAST  
SOUTH

♠ A K J 9 8 6  
♥ 8  
♦ A K J 10  
♣ K 3

5  
13 19  
3

♠ 7 3 2  
♥ 9 6 5 3  
♦ Q 6  
♣ J 10 7 4

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	7	1	7	7
W	3	7	1	7	7

From a Wednesday. North preempts 2H with a 5 card suit at favourable vulnerability. Bidding continued 2H-(2S)-(4S). South should not bid or sacrifice as there is a good possibility the opponents will take the push to a making slam. The preempt made it hard for opponents to judge their values.

Dlr: North  
Vul: N/S

♠ A Q J 10 7 4  
♥ 6 5  
♦ A Q 9 4  
♣ J

♠ 9 5 2  
♥ 9 8 7 4  
♦ 8  
♣ A 10 6 5 3

WEST NORTH EAST  
21 SOUTH

♠ 8  
♥ A K Q J 2  
♦ 5 3 2  
♣ 8 7 4 2

14  
4 10  
12

♠ K 6 3  
♥ 10 3  
♦ K J 10 7 6  
♣ K Q 9

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	4	-	4	1
S	-	4	-	4	1
E	3	-	3	-	-
W	3	-	3	-	-

From a Monday session. Remember when you are NV against VUL is the prime time for sacrifices. Bid aggressively, here east should make a 2H overall without question. (1S)-2H-(3H)-X-(4S)-5H-(X) or (1S)-2H-(4S)-5H-(?) should be the bidding. It is possible 4S was not making, but unlikely with all east values in hearts that is probably only one trick on defence, make the sacrifice they might go to 5S and give you a great board.

Dlr: North  
Vul: E/W

♠ 6  
♥ Q 9  
♦ A Q 10 8 7 6 3  
♣ 10 4 2

♠ K 8 7 3  
♥ K 7 4 2  
♦ 9  
♣ J 8 7 5

WEST NORTH EAST  
25 SOUTH

♠ A Q J 10 5 2  
♥ A 5  
♦ K  
♣ K Q 9 6

8  
7 19  
6

♠ 9 4  
♥ J 10 8 6 3  
♦ J 5 4 2  
♣ A 3

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	3	-	-	-
S	-	3	-	-	-
E	4	-	-	5	-
W	4	-	-	5	-

From a Monday session. Again vulnerability is right. Preempts are the easiest way to find confident sacrifices. 3D-(4S)-5D-(5S) is correct bidding. South should further the preempt here with diamonds and an ace. The opponents now will be unsure if the correct action is to double, play 5S or 6S. If they do not choose the right bid it will be a good board for you. Without the ace south has no defence and should be quiet.

Dlr: South  
Vul: None

♠ 8 3 2  
♥ A J 2  
♦ K 5  
♣ A Q J 10 6

♠ J 10 7 5  
♥ 8 7 6  
♦ A Q 8 3  
♣ K 4

WEST NORTH EAST  
27 SOUTH

♠ 6  
♥ K Q 4 3  
♦ J 10 9 7 6 4 2  
♣ 3

15  
10 6  
9

♠ A K Q 9 4  
♥ 10 9 5  
♦ - -  
♣ 9 8 7 5 2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	6	-	2	4	4
S	6	-	2	4	4
E	-	3	-	-	-
W	-	3	-	-	-

From Monday. Watching the vulnerability. At equal vulnerability down 2 tricks is the limit of a game level sacrifice. A good aggressive example of auction is (1S)-P-(2C)-X-(3C)-3D-(4S)-5D-(P)-(X) where east after getting a diamond raise from partner and being distributional and weak goes for the sacrifice expecting to make 9 tricks.