

A CALCULATED SACRIFICE

Nobody's vulnerable and your partner deals and opens 2♥. West, your RHO passes and it's up to you.

N	North
♠	Q
♥	9872
♦	1095
♣	AQ982

You have only 10 points and 4 hearts, which probably leads you to think a pass would be the most prudent course of action. You'd love to play in a nice 2♥ contract. But look at your spade suit. Your partner doesn't have 4 spades because it is not a good idea to pre-empt with a 4-card major. So if he has only 3 spades, the opponents have a minimum of 9 spades between them. They will certainly find their game in 4♠. This would be a good time to take away their bidding room. Raise partner's weak-two to 4♥. This is called "increasing the pre-empt."

East now doubles for takeout, and over South's pass, West bids 4♠. Now what do you do?

You are sure that you cannot make 5♥, but there is the vulnerability to consider. Since nobody is vulnerable, you can afford to be set 2 tricks because the penalty would only be -300 and a non vulnerable game in spades would give you a -420 score. The other consideration is whether you think they can make 4♠. You have no defense against the contract. Your only sure trick is the ♣A. Most of partner's points are probably in the heart suit since you have no honors yourself. You cannot expect more than 1 heart trick. You should assume they can take 10 tricks. If you decide to go to 5♥ your LHO will double and that will be the final contract. This is a calculated sacrifice bid.

West leads the ♠J. Take over for South and plan the play:

N	North
♠	Q
♥	9872
♦	1095
♣	AQ982

West leads ♠J

S	South
♠	A83
♥	QJ10654
♦	QJ3
♣	J

South's hand is a little too strong for a weak-two opening. He had 11 HCP. The usual upper limit is 10 HCP. Perhaps he downgraded the hand because of the singleton ♣J. But you must concentrate on making your 4♥ contract. You play dummy's ♠Q and East covers with the ♠K, won by your ♠A.

You have 2 sure heart losers and 2 sure diamond losers. You can cross ruff your losing spades and clubs, but there is no way to lose more than 4 tricks. Your score is -300.

This is the entire deal:

11	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ Q ♥ 9872 ♦ 1095 ♣ AQ982	P	4♥	X	2♥
W West		4♠	5♥	X	P
♠ J10754 ♥ K3 ♦ K2 ♣ 7543		P	P		
	E East				
	♠ K962 ♥ A ♦ A8764 ♣ K106				
	S South				
	♠ A83 ♥ QJ10654 ♦ QJ3 ♣ J				
		5♥ S			NS: 0 EW: 0

Notice that West can make 4♠. He only loses 1 spade and 2 clubs. He was correct in not bidding 5♠. There is an adage in bridge that says, the 5-level belongs to the opponents. That means you shouldn't chase the opponents once they bid to the 5-level; either pass or double for penalty. Doubling their 5♠ contract would have given you a positive score of +100. But your -300

sacrifice is better than the -420 they would have received if you let them play in 4♠.

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/mnvogtl> , or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own. If you click on GIB, the software will analyze the hand and show the result for each opening lead.

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