5 – Game Bonus and vulnerability – Teachers' notes

Objectives

Extending the scoring system to include the game bonus and vulnerability.
Searching for the game bonus.
When and how to show additional strength.

You should also take the opportunity to reinforce opening leads, planning the play, and leading towards high cards (finessing), although taking a finesse should never be a knee-jerk reaction.

Scoring

The following is written in the context of duplicate scoring, introducing the game bonus, the part-score bonus and vulnerability.
(You might prefer to ignore vulnerability and part-scores for the moment, concentrating just on a game bonus of 300 and a loss of 50 per undertrick.)
Alternatively, you might choose to teach rubber bridge scoring or Chicago – your choice.
Such decisions will affect your teaching and parts of the hand commentary but should not affect the suitability of the example hands.

Searching for game

25 points is taken as the guideline for combined game-going values except when dealing with extreme shape.
This consideration does not affect opener's first bid, nor responder's first bid except when making an immediate raise of partner's suit - the first priority is to describe the shape of the hands as you set out to locate an 8-card fit.
Additional strength may then be shown by either partner on their second bid.
For the moment the decisions are totally points based, although you might choose to point out other features of a hand which improve or detract from the hand.

Opener

On hands which are single-suited in a major opener is encouraged to jump rebid at the three-level on 16-18 points, and to jump to game on 19+. He should bid in a similar manner when raising partner's major suit response with a known 8-card fit.
With 5-4 shape he should rebid in his second suit at the lowest level on anything up to 18 points, and jump in the second suit (game force) on 19+.
(Reverse bidding does not feature at this point.)

Responder

With 5-9 points responder on his rebid will either pass (rare), show a 'mere preference' to opener's first suit, rebid his own 6-card suit at the two-level or rebid 1NT.
With 10-12 points responder should jump to three of partner's opening major with 3-card support, jump to three of his own 6-card suit, rebid three of partner's second suit with 4-card support, or bid 2NT (ideally with a stop in the fourth suit).
With 13+ he will usually bid game (4♥ or 4♠ with a known 8-card fit, or 3NT. Very occasionally 5♣ or 5♦.)