

CUEBIDDING THE OPPONENTS' SUIT

When in doubt, DO NOT PASS



These slides and a longer handout will be available on the PABC website.

The goal for today is to provide an overview of various cuebidding situations. There will not be time to go into much depth.

Note that today's topic is not about "control-bidding" for slam, also commonly called cuebidding!

MICHAELS

Direct cuebid of the opponent's opening

- (1♣) 2♣ = Both Majors – at least 5-5
- (1♦) 2♦ = Both Majors – at least 5-5
- (1♥) 2♥ = 5-card ♠'s + 5-cards in an unspecified minor
- (1♠) 2♠ = 5-card ♥'s + 5-cards in an unspecified minor

- Note: After the auction starts (1x) – P – (1NT) – 2x should still be Michaels.

Cuebid = STAYMAN

Opener

1NT

(2♦)

Responder

3♦

Example

♠AK42

♥Q4

♦J3

♣J9764

When the opponents overcall with 2-of a suit after your 1NT opening, a cuebid by responder is used as Stayman, asking partner for a four-card major.

Cuebid = LIMIT RAISE OR BETTER by responder to opening bid

Opener

1 ♥

(1 ♠) -

Responder

3 ♥ = Preemptive Jump Raise

2 ♠ = Limit Raise or better in ♥'s

When the opening bid is a *major*, responder's cuebid may be made with 3-card support or better.

When the opening bid is a *minor*, the cuebidder would ideally have at least 5-card support but may sometimes have only 4 and no better descriptive bid.

Cuebid by ADVANCER (in response to partner's overcall)

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Overcaller</u>	<u>Resp</u>	<u>Advancer</u>
(1♣)	1♥	(P)	<u>2♣</u>

- USUALLY 10+ and heart support

When partner overcalls a one-level opening, a new suit is NOT forcing, and no double is available if responder passes.

Therefore, while the cuebidder *usually* has a limit raise or better in partner's suit, they may, rarely, have a very strong hand that wants to force partner to bid.

Cuebid by ADVANCER after a Takeout Double

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Doubler</u>	<u>Resp</u>	<u>Advancer</u>
(1♦)	X	(P)	<u>2♦</u>

Example

♠K42

♥AQ87

♦AT3

♣J76

- When partner makes a Takeout Double a cuebid is the *only* forcing response. A jump in a new suit would be *invitational, not forcing*.
- The cuebid in response to the Takeout Double does not promise anything specific, but is always a good hand (at least game-invitational), and usually unsure as to what strain the partnership belongs in.

Cuebidding to ASK for a stopper

- In many situations, a cuebid of the opponent's suit is an attempt to get to 3NT if partner has a stopper. Even if you are not sure this is the cuebidder's intention, it is often best to bid 3NT with a stopper.

Opener

1 ♥

3 ♣

Responder

2 ♣

3 ♠

Responder probably wants opener to bid 3NT with a spade stopper.

Cuebidding to SHOW a Stopper

When the opponents have bid TWO suits, and you are looking for Notrump, a cuebid SHOWS a stopper in the suit bid.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1♣ (1♦)	1♠ (2♥)
3♣ (P)	<u>3♥</u>

This 3♥ bid is presumed to **show** something in hearts and ask partner to bid 3NT with diamonds covered.

However, it's possible the 3♥ bidder has no intention of passing 3NT and is just using the cuebid to make a forcing bid.

ADDITIONAL CUEBIDDING SEQUENCES



MIXED RAISE after partner's 1 level overcall

(1♦)

1♥

(X)

3♦

♠A2

♥Q432

♦J3

♣J8765

The JUMP cuebid of opener's suit shows 4-cd support and 7-9 support points. This a common hand type which is important to describe.

A jump to 3♥ instead would be weaker.

In many other situations a Jump Cuebid is used as a Splinter.

Cuebid by the opening bidder

A cuebid by the opening bidder does NOT promise support for responder's suit.

1 ♣

(P)

1 ♠

(2 ♥)

3 ♥

It is likely that opener has a strong hand with long clubs and wants partner to bid 3NT with a heart stopper.

♠A2

♥32

♦K3

♣AKQJ876

A jump to 3♠ by opener would not be weak, so opener does not need the cuebid to show support as responder does on an auction such as 1♠ - (2 ♥) - 3 ♥.

NATURAL “Cuebids”

A “cuebid” should be *NATURAL* if the bidder passed originally over an opponent’s bid of a suit, then bids that suit later, **without partner having acted (bid or double)**.

1 ♣	(P)	(1 ♠)	(P)
(2 ♠)	<u>3♣</u>		

♠2
♥QJ3
♦AT3
♣KQJ987

Context is everything

NATURAL Direct “Cuebids”

Our earlier discussion of Michaels assumed that the opponent’s opening bid was natural.

Sometimes the opening bid is alerted. I then recommend:

- If their opening bid is **completely artificial** (e.g., a Precision 1♣ opening), your “cuebid” of their suit (2♣, in this case) should be NATURAL - showing a club suit.
- If they alert the opening bid, and announce “could be short”, yet the bid promises at least two cards in that suit, treat it as a natural bid. This means that your cuebid would still be Michaels.

“SANDWICH” Cuebids

“Sandwich seat” means that you are in fourth position, and the opponents have both bid. For example:

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>Responder</u>	<u>You</u>
(1♦)	P	(1♠)	<u>2♦</u> or <u>2♠</u> ?

CAUTION: DO NOT MAKE THESE BIDS WITHOUT AN AGREEMENT

Most experts agree that responder’s suit is natural. Some also treat opener’s suit as natural, while others prefer that to be “Michaels.”

SUMMARY

- Whenever you want to force partner to bid, but are not sure how to do so, consider a cuebid- provided the opponents have bid a suit, of course ☺. That said, often a double when available is a better choice, so consider that too!
- When in doubt as to the meaning of partner's cuebid, assume she wants more information from you and make your most natural bid. This will often, but not always, be to bid Notrump with a stopper in the opponent's suit.
- **NEVER PASS A CUEBID BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS!** Only pass if you are confident that you are in one of the situations where a cuebid is NATURAL.