

"Support Cuebids"

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A "cue" bid is an *artificial* Overcall bid showing unusual distribution or other Hand features. Perhaps the most commonly-known Cuebid is "Michaels Cuebid"¹, which over a Minor opening by Opponents for most players shows a 5+/5+ distribution in the Majors, and over a Major shows a 5+/5+ distribution in the other Major and either an unspecified Minor, or Clubs, depending upon Partnership agreement. However, other cuebids show "support" for Partner's bid Suit. "Support Cuebids" can be very *useful* because they tend to shut out Opponents bidding in their preferred Suit, while still communicating important information to Partner. There are 2 "Support Cuebids" showing support for Partner's bid Suit: (1) the 3D! Support Overcall of an "Unusual 2NT!" Overcall bid by Opponents, and (2) "Support Cuebids" involving bidding of Opponent's bid Suit.

3D! Cuebid Showing Support for Partner's Bid Major Over an "Unusual 2NT!" Bid by Opponents

An "Unusual 2NT!" (! = "Alert") Overcall by Opponents over Partner's opening bid of a Major shows the Opponent holding 5+ cards in both Minors. This "Unusual 2NT!" bid forces the Opponent's Partner to bid his longest Minor as long as there is no intervening bid.

Example		
Partner	LHO	You
1H	2NT!	3D!

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¹ Within the "Esther Bridge Lessons", see: "Convention #12: '5 Overcall Two-Suited Distribution Cuebid' Systems".

Your 3D! Overcall bid is **totally artificial** and therefore must be **Alerted!** Your 3D! Overcall tells Partner that you have 3+ Hearts. Note that the use of this Cuebid forces the Opener's RHO (your LHO) to bid at the 4 level if he wishes to communicate his longest Minor to his Partner! Thus, this bid both (1) communicates support to your Partner, and (2) really jams your Opponents.

Support Cuebids² for Partner's Bid Suit

1-Level-Up Support Cuebids

"Two-Suited Distribution Cuebids", such as "Michaels Cuebid", are always DIRECT Overcall bids when Partner has either not yet bid, or PASSEd. "**1-Level-Up Support Cuebids**", on the other Hand, occur only when Partner makes a Suit bid, either as Opener or an Overcaller, Opponents then bid a different Suit, and you wish to show support for Partner's Suit by cuebidding the Opponent's bid Suit. Here, for example, you make a "**1-Level-Up Support Cuebid**" sitting SOUTH when Partner NORTH opens 1H:

Example

NORTH: 1H EAST: 1S SOUTH: 2S!

Normally, a 2H response bid by you shows Partner a "constructive" raise with 8–10 HCPs and 3 Hearts. A 3H response by you is "invitational" and shows 11–12 HCPs and usually 4 Hearts. With 13+ HCPs and 3+ Hearts you might instead respond 4H.

Your 2S! "**1-Level-Up Support Cuebid**" "limits" your Hand and provides Partner with specific information. Partner is **forced** to bid at least either 3H or 4H. The advantages of the "**1-Level-Up Support Cuebid**" are that (1) you are keeping the bidding lower within the "bidding space", and (2) you are interfering with Opponents bidding of Spades, by forcing them to either bid Spades at the 3 level, or abandon their pursuit of a Spade contract!

Note that "**1-Level-Up Support Cuebids**" can also be made when the Opponents, and not Partner, open with a Suit bid:

² Because "**Support Cuebids**" are "artificial", because they do not really show holding cards when bidding the Opponent's bid Suit, these Cuebids must be Alerted!

Example

Your LHO: 1**H** Partner: 1**S** Your RHO: PASS YOU: 2**H**!

Jump, Mixed Support Cuebids

When you make a "**1-Level-Up Support Cuebid**", you *always* bid the Opponent's bid Suit at the lowest possible level at which the cuebid is "sufficient". However, by bidding the Opponent's bid Suit at 1 level higher than the minimally "sufficient" level, you can show Partner that you hold a somewhat stronger Hand via a "**Jump, Mixed Support Cuebid**"³.

This "*Mixed*" bid shows Partner (1) 4-card Trump support, and (2) more HCPs than a "preemptive" or a "constructive" raise, but fewer HCPs than a "limit" raise.

Consider the initial phases of an auction proceeding:

LHO	Partner	RHO	YOU
1 D	1 H	PASS	3 D !

You hold: **S**: K J 6 2 **H**: K J 4 2 **D**: 5 3 **C**: 9 5 3. Your "**Jump, Mixed Support Cuebid**" shows Partner that you have fewer than 10 HCPs, but more HCPs than might justify only a "constructive" raise, and 4 Hearts including some Honors!

³ See Larry Cohen's 2004 article, "Jump-Cue Mixed Raise", on his <https://larryco.com> website.