



Cuebidding

The Opponent's Suit

Cuebid

The term cuebid in bridge can be confusing. There are two different meanings:

In contract **bridge**, a **cue bid** (also, **cuebid** or **cue-bid**) is either a **bid** of the opponents' suit, or "slam seeking": a slam-investigating **bid** made during an auction's later rounds that shows control of a suit. (Wikipedia)

We are concerning ourselves today with only the first definition, the bid of an opponent's suit.



Cuebidding the Opponent's Suit

In this lesson, we are going to explore cuebidding the opponent's suit. Here are some basic facts:

- Bidding the opponent's suit is not (usually) a natural bid.
- Cuebids are not alertable (except when a direct cuebid is natural, such as 1c-2c when 2c means clubs).
- A cuebid sometimes tells partner what you have.
- A cuebid sometimes asks your partner what he has.

We are going to look at 7 different kinds of cuebids because they are used often and are almost universally accepted as standard bidding.



Michaels Cuebid

Michaels is a cuebid that promises a two-suited hand, with at least five cards in each suit. There is no point minimum for making a Michaels overcall, although obvious factors like vulnerability should be considered. Some partnerships also agree to specific ranges.

North	East	Meaning
1♣	2♣	= Both Majors – at least 5-5
1♦	2♦	= Both Majors – at least 5-5
1♥	2♥	= 5+ spades + 5+ cards in an unspecified minor
1♠	2♠	= 5+ hearts + 5+ cards in an unspecified minor

A DIRECT CUEBID of the opponent's one-level opening bid should be Michaels. While this is a convention you should discuss with your partner, it is fairly “Standard”, and is NOT alertable. More specific requirements, as well as follow-up bidding can be covered in a future lesson.

Note: If the auction starts 1♣ – P – 1NT – 2♣ should still be Michaels. The same is true regardless of which suit is opened.



Michaels Cuebid: A Simple Example

As a simple example, consider the following auction:

South

♠ A T 9 8 5

♥ K Q 4 3 2

♦ 4

♣ 8 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♣	2♣

2♣ is Michaels, showing 5+ hearts and 5+ spades. The Michaels cuebid is forcing. Partner is asked to bid one of the two suits advertised.

There are other responses that we can explore in a future lesson about the Michaels Cuebid.



Michaels Cuebid: On the Convention Card

DIRECT CUEBID		
OVER:	Minor	Major
Natural	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strong T/O	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michaels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Cuebid Stayman

West	North	East
1NT	2♦	3♦

When the opponent overcalls with 2-of a suit after your partner's 1NT opening, a cuebid is the equivalent of Stayman, asking partner for a four-card major.

This is a standard bid and is not alertable. The 3-level bidder must have 10+ points and a 4-card major to make this bid.

Cuebid Stayman is not on the convention card because it is part of Stayman.

3♣ in this auction is natural, showing clubs with 10+ points.



Example of Cuebid Stayman

Let's bid these hands:

West

♠ A Q 9 8
♥ K Q 9 8
♦ K 7 6
♣ K 4

East

♠ K 10 7 6
♥ J 10 5
♦ A 9 6 5
♣ Q 6

West

1NT
3♥ (2)
4♠ (4)

North

2♦
Pass
All Pass

East

3♦ (1)
3NT (3)

South

Pass
Pass

1. Cuebid Stayman (I have at least one 4-card major and 10+ points.)
2. I have four hearts (bidding up the line)
3. I don't have four hearts
4. Then you must have four spades



Cuebid to Show Limit Raise or Better

When partner opens with One-of-a-Suit and the next hand overcalls, a cuebid promises a limit raise or better in support of the suit opened (10+ support points). This is in keeping with the modern style of preemptive jumps in competition. For example:

West	North	East
1♦	1♠	3♦ = Preemptive Jump Raise 2♠ = Limit Raise or better in diamonds

or

West	North	East
1♥	2♣	3♥ = Preemptive Jump Raise 3♣ = Limit Raise or better in hearts

When partner's opening bid is a major, responder's cuebid may be made with three-card support or better (unlike limit raises without interference, which promise at least four-card support).

When partner's opening bid is a minor, the cuebidder would ideally have at least five-card support but may sometimes have only four and no other descriptive bid.



Example of Cuebid to Show Limit+ Raise

Bidding

West
1 ♥

North
2 ♣

East
3 ♣

Responder's Hand

♠ A 2

♥ K 7 5 3

♦ J 10 8 3

♣ K 9 6

This hand is too strong to bid 2♥, and 3♥ would show a preemptive weak hand with long hearts over an overcall. Had there been no overcall, East would have bid 3♥, but he can no longer do that to show the strength of the hand. He must use a cuebid which can be bid with either 3 or 4-card support and 10+ points.



Cuebid as Limit Raise on Convention Card

Cuebidding to show a Limit Raise+ is not on the convention card. It is part of standard bidding, but you can put it on your card here if it will help you and your partner to remember it:

MAJOR OPENING		MINOR OPENING			
Expected Min. Length	4 5	Expected Min. Length	4 3	^{NF} 0-2	Conv.
1st/2nd	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1♣	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3rd/4th	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1♦	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES		RESPONSES			
Double Raise: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>		Double Raise: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>			
After Overcall: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>		After Overcall: Force <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>			
Conv. Raise: 2NT <input type="checkbox"/> 3NT <input type="checkbox"/> Splinter <input type="checkbox"/>		Forcing Raise: J/S in other minor <input type="checkbox"/>			
Other: <u>cuebid = limit+</u>		Single raise <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
1NT: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-forcing <input type="checkbox"/>		Frequently bypass 4+♦ <input type="checkbox"/>			
2NT: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____		1NT/1♣ _____ to _____			
3NT: _____ to _____		2NT Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____			
Drury <input type="checkbox"/> : Reverse <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Way <input type="checkbox"/> Fit <input type="checkbox"/>		3NT: _____ to _____			
Other: _____		Other <u>cuebid = limit+</u>			



Cuebidding After a Takeout Double

South	West	North	East
1♦	X	P	2♦

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 it is usually a good hand (at least game-invitational), and bidder is unsure as to what strain the partnership belongs in. The doubler is expected to bid her cheapest four-card suit, unless she has a five-card suit to bid.

This type of cuebid is common at higher levels of bidding as well; e.g. 3♣ - X - P - 4♣.



Takeout Double Overview

Cuebidding after a takeout double is not on the convention card because it is part of standard bidding.

Responses to Partner's Takeout Double

- Non-jump in your suit (0-8 high card points)
- Jump in your suit (9-11 high card points)
- 1NT (6-10 high card points with opponent's suit stopped)
- 2NT (11-12 high card points with opponent's suit stopped)
- 3NT (13-15 high card points with opponent's suit stopped)
- Cuebid (12+ high card points, unsure of where you are heading)



Example of Cuebid over Takeout Double

Bidding

West

1♦

North

X

East

Pass

South

2♦

South's Hand

♠ A Q 7 6

♥ K J 6 5

♦ 3 2

♣ A 10 6



Cuebidding in Support of Partner's Overcall

South
1♣

West
1♥

North
P

East
2♣

Cuebid to show a limit raise or better in partner's overcalled suit, or the cuebidder may have a very strong hand and wants to force partner to bid again. This is also not specifically on the convention card, but it is a part of standard bidding. You can write it here if you would like:

SIMPLE OVERCALL

1 level _____ to _____ HCP (usually)
often 4 cards very light style

Responses

New Suit: Forcing NFConst NF

Jump Raise: Forcing Inv. Weak

cuebid = limit +



Overview of Responding to Partner's Overcall

Your partner overcalls and you have at least three-card support. How should you proceed? Raising partner is the first priority. Here are some guidelines:

1. Make a simple raise with 6 to 10 support points. Support points refer to high-card points plus points added for distribution.
2. With 4 to 6 support points and four or more trumps, make a preemptive jump raise.
3. With 11+ support points, cuebid the suit the opponent opened.



Example of Cuebid to Support Partner's Overcall

South's Hand

♠ K 6 4 2

♥ K 10 6

♦ A 9 4 2

♣ 4 3

West

North

East

South

1♦

1♠

Pass

2♦

South has 10 HCP plus one point for the doubleton club. The diamond cuebid is a limit+ raise in spades.



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. This bid is made at the 3-level. Even if you are not sure this is the cuebidder's intention, it is usually best to bid 3NT with a stopper.

Essentially, this is simply making the most natural bid you can, when partner's cuebid is not specifically defined. For example:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	2♣	P
3♣	P	3♠	

The 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 presumably SHOWS a stopper in the suit bid. For example:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	1♠	2♥
3♣	P	3♥	

The 3♥ bid would be presumed to show something in hearts and is asking partner to bid 3NT with diamonds covered.

It is also possible that the 3♥ bidder has no intention of playing in 3NT, and is just using 3♥ as a forcing bid, to elicit more information.



Summary

Whenever you are in a situation in which you want to force partner to bid, but are not sure how to do so, consider a cuebid if opponents have bid a suit.

Cuebids can be made in many additional auctions, which have not covered in this lesson.

When in doubt as to the meaning of partner's cuebid, assume she wants more information from you and make your most natural bid.

CUEBIDS ARE NOT ALERTABLE.

NEVER PASS A CUEBID BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS!



New Topics?

There was no attempt in this lesson to go into detail on these examples of cuebidding the opponent's suit. Many of the examples would make excellent topics for detailed lessons:

- Michaels Cuebid (Showing 2 Suits in an Overcall)
- Cuebid Stayman
- Responding to Partner after an Overcall
- Takeout Doubles and Responses
- Responding to Partner's Overcall
- Asking or Showing a Stopper
- Cuebidding to Show Controls in Slam-Seeking



Quizzes

<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-quiz/detail/81>

<https://bridgefeed.acbl.org/mikes-bidding-quiz-28/>



Resources

[https://www.santacruzbridge.org/info/learn/Cuebids%20\(Seminar%20Notes\).pdf](https://www.santacruzbridge.org/info/learn/Cuebids%20(Seminar%20Notes).pdf)

https://www.bridgebum.com/michaels_cuebid.php

<https://www.betterbridge.com/misc/StandardArticles/Standard200805.pdf>

<http://www.bridgebears.com/bridge-card-game/bidding/overcallresponses.html>

http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/Commonly_Used_Conventions/takeoutdouble.pdf

http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/Commonly_Used_Conventions/overcallspt2.pdf

<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-quiz/detail/81>

<https://bridgefeed.acbl.org/mikes-bidding-quiz-28/>

