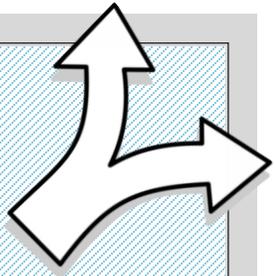




Unusual NT and Michaels

Bids that show 2 suits in one bid

Bids that Show Two Suits

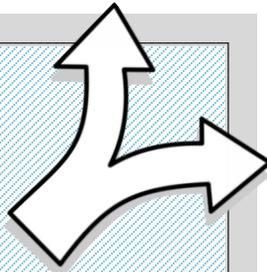


We talked about bids over opponent's NT opening last week, often showing 2 suits (DONT, Meckwell, etc). It's great to have bids that show 2 suits when you have an unbalanced hand.

It serves the purpose of interfering with the opponents and letting your partner know you have two suits.

You can use the bid as preemptive or to show a strong hand, making the bids very flexible. The two we are going to talk about today are **Unusual NT** and **Michaels Cuebid**.

Unusual NT

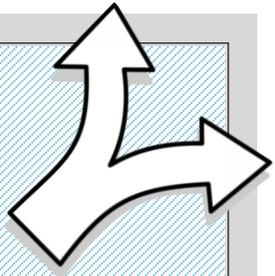


The advantage of being able to show two suits with a single bid is that partner will get a clear picture of our hand right away and may be able to compete even if the opponents take the auction to a high level.

Also, it's safer to offer partner a choice between two suits. We're more likely to land in a suitable trump fit, even when the opponents have the majority of the strength.

Many conventional methods have been developed to show two-suited hands. One of the earliest—and most popular—is the unusual notrump, introduced by Alvin Roth in 1948.

Unusual NT



The Unusual 2NT overcall is used after the opponents open the bidding. A 2NT overcall is artificial, showing the two lowest unbid suits (at least 5-5 shape). There is no point minimum, although obvious factors like vulnerability should be considered.

Unusual 2NT Overcalls

Overcall

A 2NT overcall of 1♣

A 2NT overcall of 1♦

A 2NT overcall of 1♥

A 2NT overcall of 1♠

Meaning

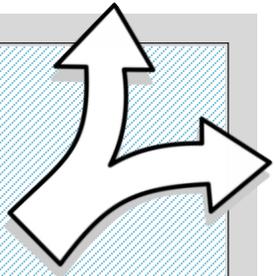
5+ hearts and 5+ diamonds.

5+ hearts and 5+ clubs.

5+ diamonds and 5+ clubs.

5+ diamonds and 5+ clubs.

Unusual NT



The Unusual 2NT shows the 2 lowest unbid suits.

South

♠ 76

♥ KJ982

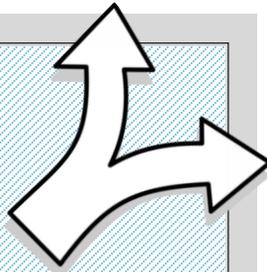
♦ AJT84

♣ 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♣	2NT (1)

(1) 5+ hearts and 5+ diamonds.

Unusual NT



The Unusual 2NT is also possible if both opponents have bid:

South

♠ 76

♥ 9

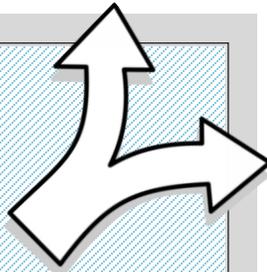
♦ AJT84

♣ KJ982

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	2NT (1)

(1) 5+ clubs and 5+ diamonds.

When 2NT Not Unusual NT



South

♠ AQ63

♥ KJ3

♦ K32

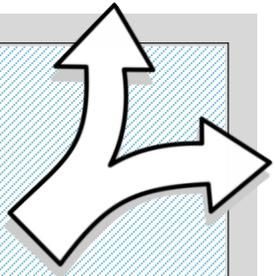
♣ AT9

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	2♥ (1)	2NT (2)

1. Weak

2. This is not the Unusual 2NT, because 2♥ is preemptive, not constructive. 2NT shows a balanced, natural ~16-19 HCP.

Partner's Responses to Unusual 2NT

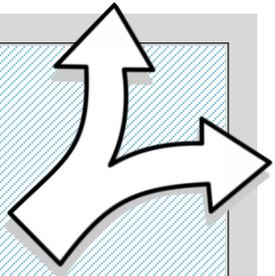


- Partner usually bids the suit that he has the most tolerance for.
- With equal length in both suits, bid the lower suit.
- With two doubletons, bid the lower suit.

Examples:

West	North	East	South	♠ K87	♥ 5432	♦ K42	♣ 654
1♥	2NT	P	3♣	or			
				♠ K8762	♥ 5432	♦ K4	♣ 65

Partner's Responses to Unusual 2NT

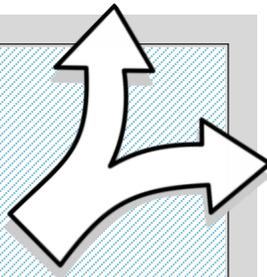


If partner has a weak hand with at least 4-card support, he can consider making a preemptive jump bid:

West	North	East	South
1♥	2NT	P	4♣

- 4♣ is preemptive and non-forcing, promising at least 4 clubs.
- With a good hand, partner can cue bid the opponents' suit. This typically shows support for at least one of partner's suits, and interest in game or slam. A cue bid is forcing for one round and asks the 2NT bidder to bid his cheapest suit at the cheapest level with a weak hand (around 0-10 points), or to make any other bid with a "fair" hand (around 10+ points).
- If partner bids the "fourth suit," i.e. the suit not bid by the opponents or shown by partner, that bid is natural and nonforcing, showing a very good suit (usually 6+ cards), a decent hand, and no support for either of the 2NT bidder's suits. 1♥-2NT-P-3♠

What Strength?



Usually, the Unusual 2NT is made with a preemptive (weakish hand, such as):

♠ 8 5 ♥ 2 ♦ K J 9 4 3 ♣ Q J 10 5 2

Not vulnerable, after the opponent's 1-of-a-major opening, bid 2NT with this hand (planning to accept whatever decision partner makes).

However, you could make an Unusual 2NT bid with a super hand such as :

♠ 5 ♥ 4 ♦ A K Q J 2 ♣ A Q J 9 8 2

This time the plan is to bid again after my partner chooses a minor.

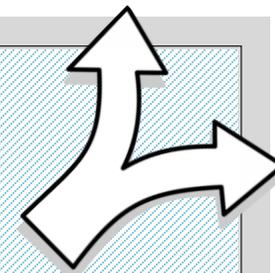
There is a school of thought that Unusual Notrump bids should be avoided with a medium hand such as:

♠ 4 ♥ Q 6 ♦ A K 7 5 4 ♣ K Q 10 9 2

The thinking is that when partner chooses a minor, you won't know whether game is in the picture. For that reason, many players choose to define the Unusual 2NT as weak/preemptive or very strong--not in-between.

For this lesson, we will assume you will take that advice, but you and your partner need to discuss if in-between hands (12-15) should use unusual NT. It is a good practice use unusual NT with an in-between hand if your partner has already passed.

Other Suggestions by Cohen



Just as with any convention, you need to make sure if it is on:

- By a Passed Hand (Cohen recommends YES)

West	North	East	South
P	P	P	1♠
2NT			

- In balancing seat (Cohen recommends NO -- a jump to 2NT in balancing seat should show 18-20 balanced)

West	North	East	South
1♣	P	P	2NT

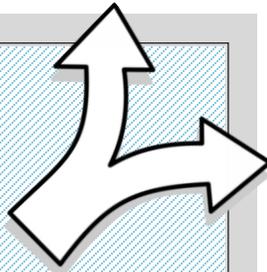
- After opponents bid 1 any--Pass--1 any (Cohen recommends YES)

West	North	East	South
1♣	P	1♠	2NT

- After the opponents bid and raise; for example 1 -Pass-2 -- (Cohen recommends YES).

West	North	East	South
1♥	P	2♥	2NT

Unusual NT on Convention Card



You check the box next to 2 Lowest for Unusual NT. Note that the words “Unusual NT” are not on the card at all, but that jump to 2NT is Unusual NT.’

If you play it weak or strong you can write wk/str on the red line, even though they are not alertable. It’s just the only place you can write it.

If you play that 2NT is not unusual in balancing seat unless you are a passed hand, you could write Bal=19-21 on that red line. This is also not alertable, but it is polite to let opponents know it is 19-21 and not Unusual. Best to err on the side of telling your opponents what your bids mean.

NOTRUMP OVERCALLS

Direct: _____ to _____ Systems on

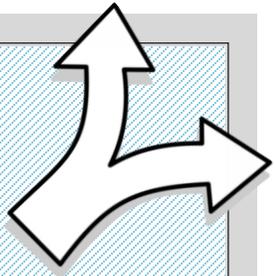
Conv. _____

Balancing: _____ to _____

Jump to 2NT: Minors 2 Lowest

Conv. _____

Michaels Cuebid Origins

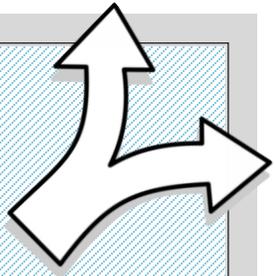


The Michaels convention is named for its inventor, Mike Michaels (1924-1966) of Miami Beach, FL. In their book *Modern Bridge Conventions*, Bill Root and Richard Pavlicek list Michaels as a "bridge writer, lecturer and prominent player."

Charles Goren and he were partners, and he ghost wrote for Charles Goren in the newspaper.

He died in 1966 at the age of 42.

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 (weak/strong as suggested above for Unusual NT.)
- Michaels works well in conjunction with the Unusual 2NT, which is another convention for two-suited overcalls.

Overcall

2♣ over 1♣

2♦ over 1♦

2♥ over 1♥

2♠ over 1♠

Meaning

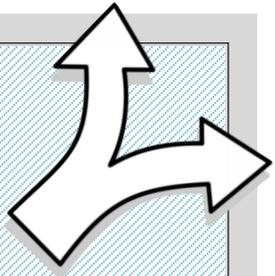
5+ hearts and 5+ spades.

5+ hearts and 5+ spades.

5+ spades and an unspecified minor (5+ clubs OR diamonds)

5+ hearts and an unspecified minor (5+ clubs OR diamonds)

Michaels Cuebid

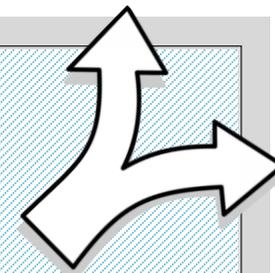


As a simple example, consider the following auction:

South	West	North	East	South
♠ AT985	Pass	Pass	1♣	2♣
♥ KQ432				
♦ 4				
♣ 82				

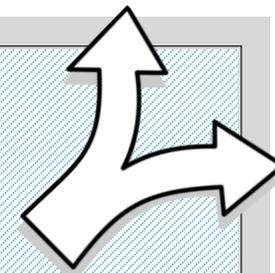
2♣ is Michaels, showing 5+ hearts and 5+ spades. The Michaels cuebid is forcing. Partner is asked to bid one of the two suits advertised.

Responses to a 2♣ Cuebid (Hearts and Spades)



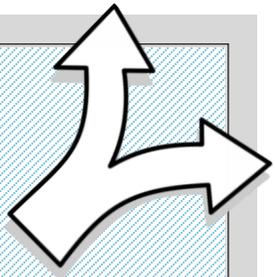
Response	Meaning
2♦	Natural, showing a very good diamond suit (usually 6+) since the Michaels cue-bidder usually has only 0-2 diamonds. Tends to deny 3+ card support for either suit. Non-forcing.
2♥	A non-forcing sign-off. May have 0 points, since the Michaels overcall is a forcing bid. Note that with equal support for both majors (e.g. xxx xxx), the cheaper suit (hearts) should be bid.
2♠	A non-forcing sign-off.
2NT	Natural and invites partner to bid 3NT IF the partnership has agreed to a specific point range for the Michaels overcall.
3♣	Artificial and shows game or slam interest in hearts or spades. Forcing.
3♦	A very strong diamond suit (6+ cards). Forcing (and rare).
3♥	Preemptive, usually with 4 hearts in accordance with the Law of Total Tricks. Non-forcing, invitational.
3♠	Preemptive, usually with 4 spades in accordance with the Law of Total Tricks. Non-forcing, invitational.

Responses to a 2♦ Cuebid (Hearts and Spades)



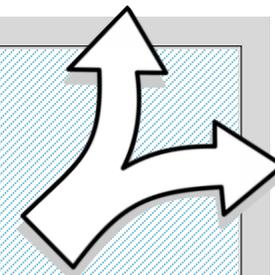
Response	Meaning
2♥	A non-forcing sign-off.
2♠	A non-forcing sign-off.
2NT	Natural and invites partner to bid 3NT IF the partnership has agreed to a specific point range for the Michaels overcall.
3♣	Natural, showing a very good club suit (usually 6+) since the Michaels cue-bidder usually has only 0-2 clubs. Non-forcing.
3♦	Artificial and shows game or slam interest in hearts or spades. Forcing.
3♥	Preemptive, usually with 4 hearts in accordance with the Law of Total Tricks. Non-forcing and invitational.
3♠	Preemptive, usually with 4 spades in accordance with the Law of Total Tricks. Non-forcing and invitational.
3NT	A natural sign-off.

Responses to a 2♥ Cuebid (Spades and a Minor)



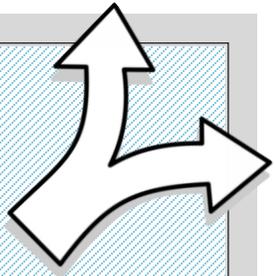
Response	Meaning
2♠	A non-forcing sign-off.
2NT	Asks the overcaller to bid his minor suit at the 3-level. 2NT may be bid on a variety of hands but is most commonly used to try signing off in 3♣/♦. Holding xx xx Qxxx Jxxxx, bid 2NT to identify the minor suit fit.
3♣	Natural, showing a very good club suit (usually 6+) since the Michaels cue-bidder usually hold 5+ diamonds, not clubs. Non-forcing.
3♦	Natural, showing a very good diamond suit (usually 6+) since the Michaels cue-bidder usually hold 5+ clubs, not diamonds. Non-forcing.
3♥	Artificial and shows game or slam interest in spades or a minor. Forcing.
3♠	Preemptive, usually with 4 spades in accordance with the Law of Total Tricks. Non-forcing, invitational
3NT	A natural sign-off.

Responses to a 2♠ Cuebid (Hearts and a Minor)



Response	Meaning
2NT	Asks the overcaller to bid his minor suit at the 3-level.
3♣	Natural, showing a very good club suit (usually 6+) since the Michaels cue-bidder will usually hold 5+ diamonds, not clubs. Non-forcing.
3♦	Natural, showing a very good diamond suit (usually 6+) since the Michaels cue-bidder will usually hold 5+ clubs, not diamonds. Non-forcing.
3♥	A natural sign-off.
3♠	Artificial and shows game or slam interest in hearts or a minor. Forcing.
3NT	A natural sign-off.

Overcaller's Rebids

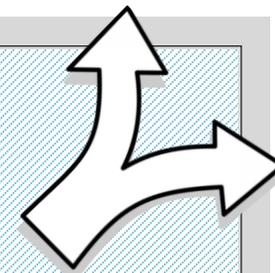


If partner raised the cue-bid, e.g. (1♥) 2♥ : 3♥, the Michaels cue-bidder is expected to bid his cheapest suit at the cheapest level (in this case, 3♠) with a weak hand of around 0-10 points. All other bids show at least 11 points and are game forcing.

If partner has bid 2NT asking for overcaller's minor suit, e.g. (1♥) 2♥ : 2NT, the Michaels cue-bidder is expected to bid his minor.

If he has clubs, he bids 3♣ ; if he has diamonds, he bids 3♦ .

Other Considerations



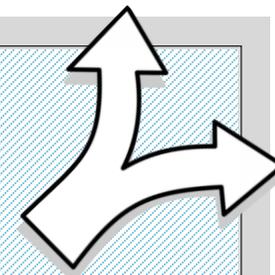
When responding to Michaels with equal length in both of the cue-bidder's suits, bid the cheapest suit first, especially when holding only two doubletons. If partner shows hearts and spades and you hold Kx xx, do not make the mistake of bidding spades, thinking that your king will make spades a better trump suit. If you get doubled in 3♠, there is no turning back, whereas if you bid 3♥, you can run to spades if necessary.

Some players only use Michaels on weak hands (around 0-10) and strong hands (around 16+). With the intermediate two-suiters of 11-15 points, they bid the higher-ranking suit first and hope they can rebid the other suit at their next turn.

Other players simply use Michaels on hands of all point ranges, believing that it is more important to immediately show shape than to only show one suit first and then hope the auction allows them to show the other suit and their 11-15 point range.

It is always best to bid your intermediate strength hand if your partner is a passed hand.

Use Your Judgment

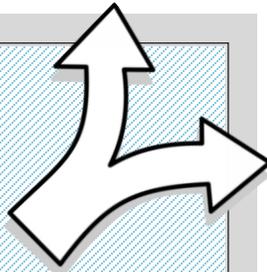


Like all bids, these overcalls (Unusual NT and Michaels) give information to both your partner and the opponents. If you don't buy the contract, your bid may work against you because it gives declarer an almost perfect picture of your distribution. For this reason, you should only use these bids when your hand meets all the requirements for suit length and playing strength.

Be careful if your high-card strength is outside your suits. With a hand such as:
♠K ♥A6 ♦J9853 ♣Q7632 , your suits are too weak for a 2NT overcall.

Vulnerability should also affect your decision. Since partner is often forced to bid at the 3-level (sometimes with only 2-card support), a vulnerable Michaels or Unusual 2NT should promise more playing strength-- ♠AQJ97 ♥KQ1082 ♦42 ♣4 or ♠Void ♥KQ1084 ♦65 ♣A98732 .

Other Uses



These conventions are most commonly used in direct seat over an opponent's opening bid, but can apply in other types of auctions, too.

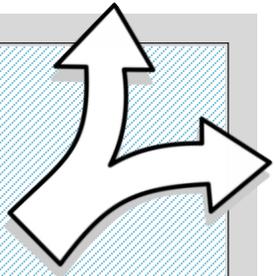
If an opening bid is passed around to you, you can balance with a Michaels Cuebid or Unusual 2NT.

For example, after 1♣ by LHO-Pass-Pass, 2♣ by you would be Michaels, showing both majors.

After 1♥-Pass-Pass, a bid of 2NT might be Unusual*, showing both minors.

*Discuss with partner. (See Cohen's advice above.)

Michaels on Convention Card

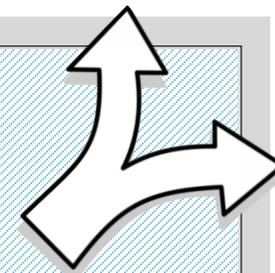


You check both boxes for Minor and Major next to Michaels.

If you play it weak or strong you can write wk/str on the red line, even though that is not alertable. It's just the only place you can write it.

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"/>

Bidding Unusual NT



North East South West

1♥ ??

♠ 7 3

♥ 8

♦ A J 8 4 2

♣ K 10 9 7 4

♠ 7 3

♥ 8

♦ A K Q 4 2

♣ A K J 9 4

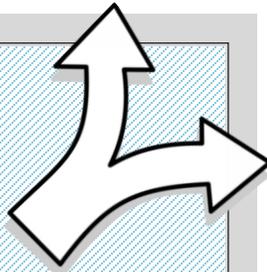
♠ 7 3

♥ 8

♦ A Q 8 4 2

♣ K Q 9 7 4

Bidding Unusual NT



North	East	South	West
1♥	??		

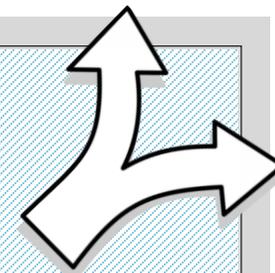
♠ 7 3
♥ 8
♦ A J 8 4 2
♣ K 10 9 7 4

♠ 7 3
♥ 8
♦ A K Q 4 2
♣ A K J 9 4

♠ 7 3
♥ 8
♦ A Q 8 4 2
♣ K Q 9 7 4

Overcall 2NT. You have the right distribution in both minors and a weak hand

Bidding Unusual NT



North East South West

1♥ ??

♠ 7 3
♥ 8
♦ A J 8 4 2
♣ K 10 9 7 4

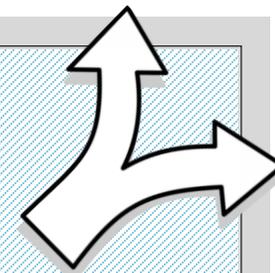
Overcall 2NT. You have the right distribution in both minors and a weak hand

♠ 7 3
♥ 8
♦ A K Q 4 2
♣ A K J 9 4

Overcall 2NT. You have the right distribution in both minors and a strong hand

♠ 7 3
♥ 8
♦ A Q 8 4 2
♣ K Q 9 7 4

Bidding Unusual NT



North	East	South	West
1♥	??		

♠ 7 3
♥ 8
♦ A J 8 4 2
♣ K 10 9 7 4

Overcall 2NT. You have the right distribution in both minors and a weak hand

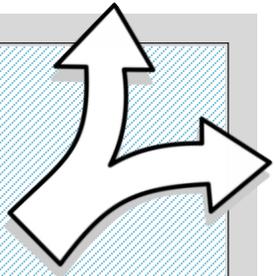
♠ 7 3
♥ 8
♦ A K Q 4 2
♣ A K J 9 4

Overcall 2NT. You have the right distribution in both minors and a strong hand

♠ 7 3
♥ 8
♦ A Q 8 4 2
♣ K Q 9 7 4

Overcall 2♦. You have the right distribution in both minors, but this is an intermediate hand. Bid your higher-ranking suit and then plan to bid your clubs later.

Bidding Unusual NT



North	East	South	West
1♦	??		

♠ 7 3

♥ K 10 9 7 4

♦ 8

♣ A J 8 4 2

North	East	South	West
1♣	??		

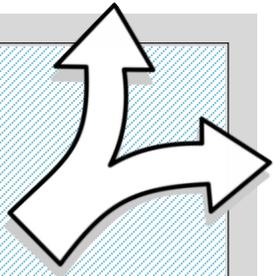
♠ 7 3

♥ K 10 9 7 4

♦ A J 8 4 2

♣ 8

Bidding Unusual NT



North	East	South	West
1♦	??		

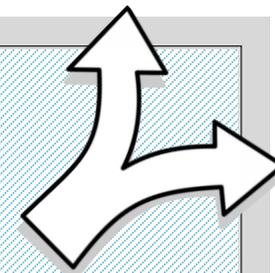
♠ 7 3
♥ K 10 9 7 4
♦ 8
♣ A J 8 4 2

Overall 2NT. You have the right distribution in the two lower-ranking suits and a weak hand.

North	East	South	West
1♣	??		

♠ 7 3
♥ K 10 9 7 4
♦ A J 8 4 2
♣ 8

Bidding Unusual NT



North	East	South	West
1♦	??		

♠ 7 3
♥ K 10 9 7 4
♦ 8
♣ A J 8 4 2

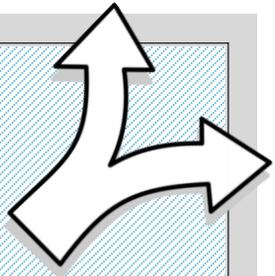
Overall 2NT. You have the right distribution in the two lower-ranking suits and a weak hand.

North	East	South	West
1♣	??		

♠ 7 3
♥ K 10 9 7 4
♦ A J 8 4 2
♣ 8

Overall 2NT. You have the right distribution in the two lower-ranking suits and a weak hand.

Bidding Michaels



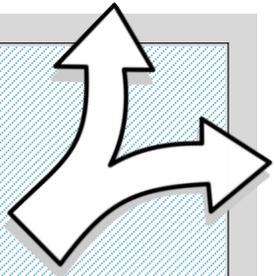
North	East	South	West
1♣	??		

♠ Q J 9 7 3
♥ A J 8 4 3
♦ 4 3
♣ 4

♠ A K 9 7 3
♥ A K J 4 3
♦ K 3
♣ 4

♠ A 10 8 7 3
♥ A K 8 4 3
♦ Q 3
♣ 4

Bidding Michaels



North East South West
1♣ ??

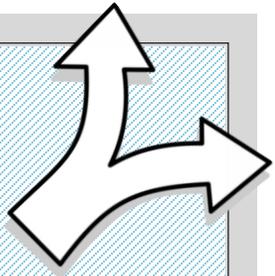
♠ Q J 9 7 3
♥ A J 8 4 3
♦ 4 3
♣ 4

♠ A K 9 7 3
♥ A K J 4 3
♦ K 3
♣ 4

♠ A 10 8 7 3
♥ A K 8 4 3
♦ Q 3
♣ 4

Cuebid 2♣. You have the right distribution with both majors and a weak hand.

Bidding Michaels



North	East	South	West
1♣	??		

♠ Q J 9 7 3
♥ A J 8 4 3
♦ 4 3
♣ 4

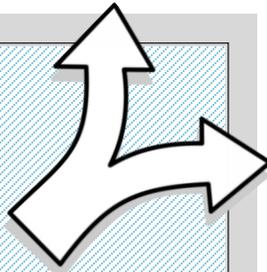
Cuebid 2♣. You have the right distribution with both majors and a weak hand.

♠ A K 9 7 3
♥ A K J 4 3
♦ K 3
♣ 4

Cuebid 2♣. You have the right distribution with both majors and a strong hand.

♠ A 10 8 7 3
♥ A K 8 4 3
♦ Q 3
♣ 4

Bidding Michaels



North	East	South	West
1♣	??		

♠ Q J 9 7 3
♥ A J 8 4 3
♦ 4 3
♣ 4

Cuebid 2♣. You have the right distribution with both majors and a weak hand.

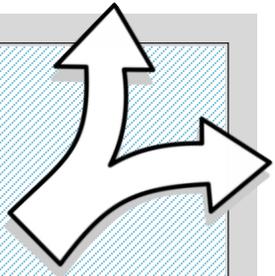
♠ A K 9 7 3
♥ A K J 4 3
♦ K 3
♣ 4

Cuebid 2♣. You have the right distribution with both majors and a strong hand.

♠ A 10 8 7 3
♥ A K 8 4 3
♦ Q 3
♣ 4

Overcall 1♠. Although some will play Michaels with an intermediate hand, many advocate to just overcall your higher suit and plan to rebid hearts later in the auction

Bidding Michaels



North East South West

1♥ ??

♠ K 10 9 7 4

♥ 7 3

♦ A J 8 4 2

♣ 8

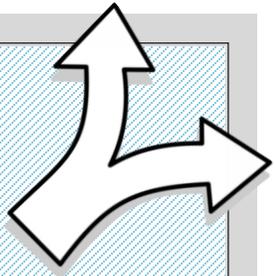
♠ K 10 9 7 4

♥ 7 3

♦ 8

♣ A J 8 4 2

Bidding Michaels



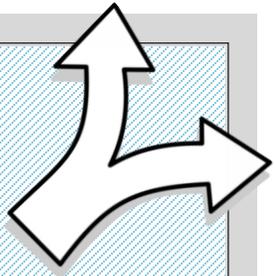
North	East	South	West
1♥	??		

♠ K 10 9 7 4
♥ 7 3
♦ A J 8 4 2
♣ 8

Cuebid 2♥. You have the right distribution with the other major plus a minor and a weak hand. Partner will bid 2NT if he wants to know your minor.

♠ K 10 9 7 4
♥ 7 3
♦ 8
♣ A J 8 4 2

Bidding Michaels



North	East	South	West
1♥	??		

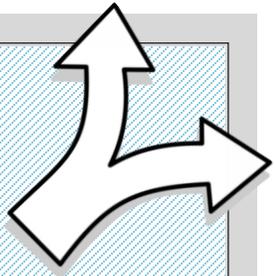
♠ K 10 9 7 4
♥ 7 3
♦ A J 8 4 2
♣ 8

Cuebid 2♥. You have the right distribution with the other major plus a minor and a weak hand. Partner will bid 2NT if he wants to know your minor.

♠ K 10 9 7 4
♥ 7 3
♦ 8
♣ A J 8 4 2

Cuebid 2♥. You have the right distribution with the other major plus a minor and a weak hand. Partner will bid 2NT if he wants to know your minor.

Bidding Michaels

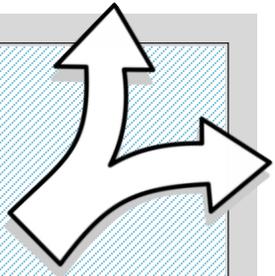


North East South West
1♠ ??

♠ 7 3
♥ K 10 9 7 4
♦ A J 8 4 2
♣ 8

♠ 7 3
♥ K 10 9 7 4
♦ 8
♣ A J 8 4 2

Bidding Michaels



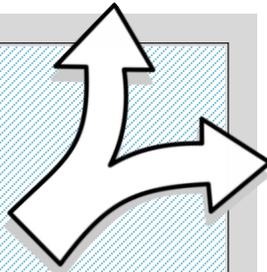
North	East	South	West
1♠	??		

♠ 7 3
♥ K 10 9 7 4
♦ A J 8 4 2
♣ 8

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♠ 7 3
♥ K 10 9 7 4
♦ 8
♣ A J 8 4 2

Bidding Michaels



North	East	South	West
1♠	??		

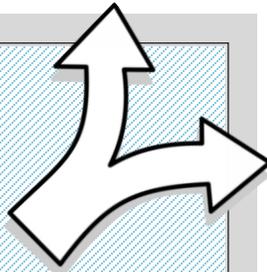
♠ 7 3
♥ K 10 9 7 4
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♠ 7 3
♥ K 10 9 7 4
♦ 8
♣ A J 8 4 2

Cuebid 2♠. You have the right distribution with the other major plus a minor and a weak hand. Partner will bid 2NT if he wants to know your minor.

Resources



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

<http://kwbridge.com/michaels.htm>

https://www.bridgebum.com/unusual_2nt.php

<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/unusual-notrump>

<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/michaels-cue-bid>

<https://www.hamiltonbridge.com/Articles/TwoSuitOvercalls.html>