

Competitive Bidding—Part XI (November 22, 2021)

Michaels Cuebids

In the previous lesson, we studied the Unusual 2NT bid—a bid which shows a two-suited hand. Michael's Cuebids is another convention for showing a two-suited hand. There is no point minimum for making a Michaels overcall; but, factors such as vulnerability should be considered. Normally, these types of bids do not have to be alerted. See Convention Card. The following are the most often used Michaels Cuebids:

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
(1C)	2C	5+ hearts and 5+ spades
(1D)	2D	5+ hearts and 5+ spades
(1H)	2H	5+ spades and an unspecified minor (5+ C or D)
(1S)	2S	5+ hearts and an unspecified minor (5+ C or D)

Example 1. **WEST** **NORTH** **EAST** **SOUTH**
 (1C) 2C

North's Hand: A10985 KQ432 4 82

Example 2. **WEST** **NORTH** **EAST** **SOUTH**
 (1D) 2D

North's Hand: AJ1075 KQ985 42 3

Example 3. **WEST** **NORTH** **EAST** **SOUTH**
 (1H) 2H

North's Hand: AJ1075 3 42 KQ985

Example 4. **WEST** **NORTH** **EAST** **SOUTH**
 (1S) 2S

North's Hand: VOID K108654 QJ8763 4

The advantage of showing two suits at once is that we have a better chance of getting to a reasonable contract. Partner likely has a fit for at least one of our suits. Knowing we have a distributional hand might help partner to compete, even making a sacrifice against the opponents' contract. The cuebid takes more bidding room away from the opponents.

The disadvantage to using these types of cuebids is that we risk getting the partnership overboard when we don't have a fit. The opponents might then double our contract for penalty. Also, such bids may aid the declarer in planning how to play the contract. However, the Michaels Convention has proved so popular that it is used by almost all club and tournament players.

Advancer's Responses

Responses to a 2C Cuebid (Hearts and Spades) (1C) 2C

2D = Natural, showing a good diamond suit (usually 6+); usually denies 3+ card support for either major. Non-forcing.

2H = Signoff. Advancer may have 0 points, since the Michaels overcall is a forcing bid. With support for both majors (e.g., xxx xxx), bid the hearts first.

2S = Signoff. See above.

2N = Natural and invites partner to bid 3N.

*3C = Artificial, showing game or slam interest in hearts or spades. Forcing.

3H = Preemptive, usually with 4 hearts in accordance with Law of Total Tricks. Non-forcing.

3S = Preemptive. See above.

3N = Natural, signoff with no interest in major-suit game.

4H/4S = Signoff.

Responses to 2D Cuebid (Hearts and Spades) (1D) 2D

The bids are similar to those above except that 3C is natural, showing a good club suit. A bid of *3D is artificial and shows game or slam interest in hearts or spades.

Responses to 2H Cuebid (Spades and a Minor)**(1H) 2H**

2S = Signoff.

2N = Asks overcaller to bid his minor suit at the 3-level.

3C = Natural, showing a good club suit (usually 6+). The Michaels cuebidder will usually hold 5+ diamonds, not clubs. Non-forcing.

3D = Natural, showing a good diamond suit (6+). The Michaels cuebidder will usually hold 5+ clubs, not diamonds. Non-forcing.

*3H = Artificial, showing game or slam interest in spades or a minor. Forcing

3S = Preemptive, usually with 4 spades in accordance with the Law of Total Tricks. Non-forcing.

3N = A natural signoff.

4S = To Play.

4N = Keycard checkup for a slam in spades

Responses to a 2S Cuebid (Hearts and a Minor)**(1S) 2S**

2N = Asks the overcaller to bid his minor suit at the 3-level.

3C = Natural, showing a very good club suit (usually 6+) since the Michaels cuebidder will usually hold 5+ diamonds, not clubs. Non-forcing.

3D = Natural, showing a good diamond suit (usually 6+) since the Michaels cuebidder will usually hold 5+ clubs, not diamonds. Non-forcing.

3H = Natural, signoff.

*3S = Artificial, showing game or SI in hearts or a minor. Forcing

3N = Signoff.

4H = To Play.

4S = Kickback checkup for slam in hearts

Let's look at some examples of the types of hands the Advancer might hold.

Example 5.	West	North	East	South
	(1C)	2C*	(P)	???

*Michaels cuebid showing at least 5/5 in majors

Your Hand: Q1075 K96 74 8642

Bid 2S initially. It is better to be in a 5/4 spade fit than a 5/3 heart fit.

Example 6.	West	North	East	South
	(1H)	2H*	(P)	???

*Michaels cuebid showing at least 5/5 in spades and a minor.

Your Hand: 4 Q973 K9642 Q83

Bid 2NT asking partner to bid his minor. If he bids 3C, you should pass; if he bids 3D, you might consider making another bid especially if the opponents make another bid.

Example 7.	West	North	East	South
	(1C)	2C*	(2H)**	???

*Michaels cuebid showing at least 5/5 in the majors.

**You should find out what East's 2H bid means in this type of auction.

Most players would treat the heart bid as the unusual v. unusual bid (see November 15th lesson). Thus, 2H shows support for the fourth, unbid suit (diamonds); and, 2S shows game invitation in partner's club suit.

Your Hand: A103 J1086 K32 965

Bid 3H to show preference for hearts. This is preferable to play in the 5/4 fit instead of the 5/3 fit in spades. See Example 5 above.

Example 8.	West	North	East	South
	(1S)	2N*	(2S)	???

*The Unusual 2NT bid showing at least 5/5 in the minors.

Your Hand: 9 932 864 KQJ985

Bid 5C, preempting the opponents who surely have a game in 4S.

Your partner has 5+ clubs and you have 6 for a total of 11+ clubs.

The Law of Total Tricks and the level of vulnerability should factor into your decision to bid 5C

Overcaller's (Michaels Cuebidder) Rebids

- If partner raised the cuebid, the Michaels cuebidder is expected to bid his suit at the cheapest level with a weak hand of around 0-10 HCP. All other bids show at least 10+ HCP and are game forcing. (See Examples 9A and 9B below.)

Example 9.	West	North	East	South
	(1H)	2H	(P)	3H*
	(P)	???		

*Artificial, showing game or slam interest. Forcing

Hand A: QJ1098 54 AJ1054 3

Bid 3S, which shows a weak hand with less than 10 HCP.

Hand B: KQJ98 54 5 AQJ105

Bid 4C to show at least 10HCP. Your partner becomes the captain to place the final contract.

- If partner has bid 2NT asking for the Michaels cuebidder's minor suit, he is expected to bid his minor, either 3C or 3D. (See Example 10 below.)

Example 10.	West	North	East	South
	(1S)	2S	(P)	2NT*

*Asking partner to bid his minor suit

Your Hand: 53 AQJ54 KQ982 9

Bid 3D to show your minor suit. Your partner becomes the captain to place the final contract.

Summary of Two-Suited Cuebids

Cuebids of One-Level Openings

(1C)	2C	5/5 in majors
(1C)	2N	5H/5D
(1D)	2D	5/5 in majors
(1D)	2N	5H/5C
(1H)	2H	5S/5m
(1H)	2N	5/5 in minors
(1S)	2S	5H/5m
(1S)	2N	5/5 in minors

Jump Cuebids of One-Level Openings

(1C)	3C	7 solid diamonds (no club stopper)
(1D)	3D	7 solid clubs (no diamond stopper)
(1H)	3H	7 solid minor (no heart stopper)
(1S)	3S	7 solid minor (no spade stopper)

NOTE: A bid of 3NT would indicate a solid minor suit and a stopper in the opponent's suit.

Cuebids of Two-Level Openings

(2D)	3D	7 solid clubs (no diamond stopper)
(2H)	3H	7 solid minor (no heart stopper)
(2S)	3S	7 solid minor (no spade stopper)

NOTE: A bid of 3NT would indicate a solid minor suit and a stopper in the opponent's suit.

Jump Cuebids of Two-Level Openings

(2D)	4D	5/5 in majors
(2H)	4H	5/5 in minors, very strong
(2S)	4S	5/5 in minors, very strong

Cuebids of Three-Level Openings

(3C)	4C	5/5 in majors
(3D)	4D	5/5 in majors
(3H)	4H	5/5 in minors, very strong hand
(3S)	4S	5/5 in minors, very strong hand

Leaping Michaels Cuebids * (very good hand unless noted)

(2D)	4C	5M/5C	4D = Major suit ask bid
(2D)	4D	5/5 in majors	
(2H)	4C	5S/5C	
(2H)	4D	5S/5D	
(2S)	4C	5H/5C	
(2S)	4D	5H/5D	
(2H)	4H	5/5 in minors (strong)	
(2H)	4N	5/5 in minors (weak)	
(2S)	4S	5/5 in minors (strong)	
(2S)	4N	5/5 in minors (weak)	

***Leaping Michaels** is a conventional overcall made at the four level when an opponent has opened either a two- or three-level preemptive bid. It is a variation of the Michaels cuebid used to show a strong two-suited hand (5-5 or longer) that is less suitable for a takeout double. It is a game forcing bid.

Example 11. **West** **North** **East** **South**
 (2H) 4C*

Your Hand: AK1098 Void A10 KQJ1052

*Leaping Michaels, showing clubs and spades (the other major)

Example 12. **West** **North** **East** **South**
 (2S) P (P) 4D*

Your Hand: A10 AQJ53 AJ1085 7

*Leaping Michaels, showing diamonds and hearts (the other major).

Assignment: The bidding:	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	Both sides vul.
	(1D)	2D	(2H)*	4H	
	(P)	P	(5C)	???	

*shows support for 4th suit (clubs)

You are South: AQ Q109874 A943 9

What do you do? pass/double/bid 5H

Next Week: Conclusion of Competitive Bidding (Preemptive Overcalls;
 Who gets to play the 5-level contract?)

