



An Introduction to Simple Cue Bids

As well as Blackwood and Gerber to ask for aces, there is another possible method. Cue-bidding. Cue-bidding is used when a partnership knows they are going to game but want to explore the possibility of a small or grand slam.

A bid is a cue-bid **if a trump suit has been explicitly agreed** (both players bidding it) **and the bidding cannot die below game level**. Initially first round controls (aces and voids) are bid.

With two or more 1st round controls, bid the cheapest (next suit up the line) first.

E.g. (Assume the opponents are passing throughout)

You Partner

2♣ 2♥ (a positive bid showing 8+pts and hearts is the longest suit)

3♥ 4♣ (Hearts are agreed, a 2♣ opener with a positive reply is game-force, therefore 4♣ shows either ♣A or a void in clubs. Note: It also denies first round control in spades as controls are bid in the cheapest order possible. If partner had ♠A or a void in spades his first cue-bid would have been 3♠, the cheaper bid).

After partner's cue-bid of 4♣, you would cue-bid the cheapest first round control you have, in this case diamonds or spades. Remember that bidding the agreed trump suit would not be considered a control, but a decision to stop in game rather than try for slam, basically denying first round controls.

Second round controls (kings and singletons) are only bid if one of these circumstances applies:

- (1) You have already shown first-round control in the suit.
- (2) You have already denied first-round control in the suit.
- (3) Your partner has shown first-round control in the suit.

Again, with two or three 2nd round controls bid the cheapest first. Cue-bids show not only first round control in that suit but deny first round control in any suits that have been by-passed.

To locate trump honours use Blackwood 4NT. After a bid of 4NT partner will respond with Blackwood responses, not cue-bids. The ace and king of trumps cannot be cue-bid. If the partnership is not using Blackwood, apply common sense. If, for example, your hand has seven trumps including the ace and partner has supported the suit then it is unlikely there is a loser in the suit. Therefore, with a lot of trumps between the two hands, the holder of the trump ace is more able to bid a slam.

Remember the requirements for a cue-bid. A bidding sequence that might stop below game level is not a cue-bid but a trial bid (dealt with in another sheet),

e.g. 1♥ 2♥
3♣

This bidding sequence is not game force so 3♣ is not a cue-bid. The partnership can close out in 3♥ which is below game. But:

1♥ 3♥
4♣

This time 4♣ commits the partnership to the lowest possible bid in hearts of 4♥ so it would be a cue bid.