



Reminder

When the opponents open 1 of a suit and you have a hand with values worth showing...

Simple Suit Overcall

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1♥	1♠

Example West

♠	K Q 9 5 4
♥	9 5
♦	K J 9
♣	7 4 3

A "simple" suit overcall shows at least five cards in a quality suit and can be anything from 8-14HCP or 9-7 losers.

It's not forcing, isn't alerted and is not announced.

Jump Suit Overcall

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1♥	2♠

A single jump suit overcall

Example West

♠	K Q 9 5 4 3
♥	9 5
♦	K J
♣	A 4 3

shows at least six cards in a quality suit, some players will play it as "weak", something like a weak two opener, and other players will play it as "intermediate" – 11-15 HCPs, 7 or less losers. It is not forcing, is not alerted, and is not announced.

1NT Overcall

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1♥	1NT

Example West

♠	K Q 9
♥	K J 9 5
♦	K J 6
♣	A 4 3

A 1NT overcall promises a balanced hand with at least one stop in the opening suit and 16-18HCPs. It is likely to be 6 or 5 losers. It is not forcing, isn't alerted and is not announced.

Double

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1♥	X

West

♠	K Q 9 5
♥	
♦	K J 3 2
♣	A 7 4 3 2

Double of an opening suit call shows a shortage in the bid suit, but support for any other suit. It shows an opening quality hand, at least 11HCPs or 7+ losers. It is forcing, is not alerted and is not announced.

The double bid is also used for extraordinarily strong hands, or even highly distributional hands as the player doubling will always get another bid.



But there's more....

This tool kit can get you a long way. However, players have added conventions for the situation where West is holding a two-suited hand (at least 5:5) and wishes to tell partner that the hand is two suited, and to give partner as much information as possible about the two suits in one bid.

A Michaels cue bid

is a conventional (artificial) overcall that shows certain other combinations of two-suited hand. It was first devised by Mike Michaels. It is alerted.

The basic requirement for a Michaels cue bid is:

a two-suited hand with at least 5 cards in each suit and typically, (see below) 8-16 high-card points (HCP).

Responding (Advancing) to Michaels Cue Bid

It is forcing.

Partner doesn't want to play in the opponents' suit. If you have a fit in the un-bid major, "raise" it on an assumption of 7 losers in partner's hand.

When opponents have opened a Minor Suit

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♦	2♦		

Over an opponent's minor opening the cue-bid shows both majors.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♦	2♦	Pass	4♠

With an eight-card fit and seven losers, West raises to game.

(1♣-2♣ also shows hearts & spades.)

East

♠ K Q J 10 9
 ♥ A 9 8 7 6
 ♦
 ♣ 7 6 5

West

♠ A 8 4
 ♥ 6 5
 ♦ K Q 9
 ♣ Q J 10 5 2

When opponents have opened a Major Suit

Over an opponent's major opening a cue-bid shows the other major and an unspecified minor suit. For example, 1♠-2♠ shows hearts and either clubs or diamonds.

Michaels does not come up very often, but it is so useful when it does that it's worth adopting. It is typically easy to spot as well so there is less chance than with some conventional bids of partner failing to alert and follow up!

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♥	2♥		

East

♠ K Q J 10 9

♥

♦ A 9 8 7 6

♣ 7 6 5

Over an opponent's minor opening the cue-bid shows the other major and a five card+ minor suit.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♥	2♥	Pass	4♠

West

♠ A 8 4

♥ 6 5

♦ K Q 9

♣ Q J 10 5 2

With an eight-card fit and seven losers, West raises to game.



If the cue-bid shows a major you cannot support, make a 2NT (alerted) enquiry about the minor suit. Then pass or correct.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♥	2♥		

Over an opponent's minor opening the cue-bid shows the other major and a five card+ minor suit.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♥	2♥	Pass	2NT
			
	3♣	Pass	Pass

West

♠	10
♥	7 6 5
♦	A 9 8 7 6
♣	K Q J 9

West

♠	A 8 4
♥	6 5
♦	K Q 9
♣	Q J 10 5 2



Strength of the Michaels Hand....

The Losing Trick Count of 5:5 hands is usually seven. This doesn't help too much unless you and partner have agreement about the High Card Point count. Aceless hands often have similar LCT to hands with Aces, but very different potential.



High Card Points (and Losers)

Point count agreements vary, so you should discuss the method with your partner. It is commonly agreed that a Michaels cue bid is constructive and should be made on hands that hold the prospect of winning the auction.

Many pairs agree the simple 8-16 HCP range. However, others may choose not to use Michaels with a 13-15HCP:

To use the convention, when the opponents make a one level suit opening, bid the same suit at the two level.

0-8HCP When made on very weak hands, the chances are the opponents will win the auction and will have been warned about the unbalanced holding of the Michaels bidder.

8-12HCP Use Michaels, passing partner's response, (except 2NT).

13-15HCP Bid the higher suit, followed by the lower suit

16+HCP Use Michaels, re-bidding as necessary



Summary Michaels Cue Bid with Unusual 2NT

<u>Opponents</u> <u>Open</u>	<u>You Hold</u> <u>five+</u>	<u>And</u> <u>five+</u>	<u>Bid</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1♣	♦	♥	2NT	Showing Diamonds and Hearts
1♣	♦	♠	1♠	There's no 2-suited bid for this. Re-bid Diamonds if necessary.
1♣	♥	♠	2♣	Shows both majors.
1♦	♣	♥	2NT	Showing Clubs and Hearts
1♦	♣	♠	1♠	There's no 2-suited bid for this. Re-bid Diamonds if necessary.
1♦	♥	♠	2♦	Shows both majors.
1♥	♣	♦	2NT	Showing Diamonds and Clubs
1♥	♣	♠	2♥	Showing Spades and a minor.
1♥	♦	♠	2♥	Showing Spades and a minor.
1♠	♣	♦	2NT	Showing Clubs and Diamonds
1♠	♣	♥	2♠	Showing Hearts and a minor.
1♠	♦	♥	2♠	Showing Hearts and a minor.



Ghestem. (TD's don't like it!)

The table above has 2 cases with no two-suited overcall & 4 cases showing a long minor, but not which. Ghestem is more "complete":

<u>Opponents</u> <u>Open</u>	<u>You Hold</u> <u>five+</u>	<u>And</u> <u>five+</u>	<u>Bid</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1♣	♦	♥	2NT	Showing Diamonds and Hearts
1♣	♦	♠	3♣	3♣ shows that the two long suits are the top and bottom rank.
1♣	♥	♠	2♣	Shows both majors.
1♦	♣	♥	2NT	Showing Clubs and Hearts
1♦	♣	♠	3♣	3♣ shows that the two long suits are the top and bottom ranking of those not bid so far.
1♦	♥	♠	2♦	Shows both majors.
1♥	♣	♦	2NT	Showing Diamonds and Hearts
1♥	♣	♠	3♣	3♣ shows that the two long suits are the top and bottom ranking of unbid.
1♥	♦	♠	2♥	Showing Spades and Diamonds .
1♠	♣	♦	2NT	Showing Clubs and Diamonds
1♠	♣	♥	3♣	3♣ shows that the two long suits are the top and bottom ranking of unbid.
1♠	♦	♥	2♠	Showing Hearts and Diamonds .



There's a small problem with Ghestem, and a big one.

Ghestem uses the bid 3♣ to show two long suits of the lowest and highest ranking unbid so far. This sacrifices 3♣ (as well as 2♣ over 1♣) from your natural overcalling bids.

That contributes to the bigger problem.

Players using Ghestem tend to forget that the 3♣ bid is now unnatural. They sometimes use it meaning it to be natural, partner alerts, and a world of mis-bidding/misinformation arises.

Alternatively, one player bids it correctly and the other fails to alert, or interpret, it correctly and we are back in an awkward situation. I've been in senior tournaments where half the calls for the TD were Ghestem mistakes.

So, adopt it if your memory and your partner's memory for such things is particularly good!

Otherwise it is worth being aware of it. If opponents alert an overcall, ask what it means, and if they name Ghestem or any other convention, just ask what suits it is showing.