

## ***Unassuming Cue-bid***

### **First, a note about cue bids in general**

In general, bidding the opponents' suit is a useful bid. It's an indication that you are strong and you'd like your partner to continue describing his hand. Such bids are known as "cue bids".

### ***The unassuming cue bid (UCB)***

Your partner has overcalled. He might have as few as 8 points or as many as 18 - you have no idea.

But let's say **you** are reasonably strong.

Partner's overcall often implies a weakish hand (8-11), with only *one* biddable 5-card suit. If you support that suit, you are not really telling your partner how strong you are - all you are doing is telling your partner how many cards you have in his suit (see Overcalls). If your partner turns out to have a stronger hand (12-15), you could easily miss a game. That would be a pity.

So, to make sure you don't miss the chance of game, bid the suit that was bid by your LHO enemy in order to tell partner that you **have support** for partner's suit (3+ cards), good points (10+), and to **force him** to tell you if his hand is weak or strong; in other words to keep describing his hand. Effectively you are saying that you have the values to compete at the 3-level in his/her suit.

e.g. (1 ♥) – 1 ♠ – (Pass) – 2 ♥\*

(It's called "unassuming" because your cue bid says nothing about which suits you are strong in. However, you do need 3-card support for your partner's suit: an 8-card fit is thus assured).

### ***Responses to an unassuming cue bid from your partner***

Remember that your original overcall shows a 5+ card, suit with anything from 8-15 HCP, or even 18. But normally you would double first then bid your suit if 16+ HCPs.

As Overcaller, after your partner follows your overcall with an "unassuming cue bid", asking you to describe your hand further, your rebids should be quite natural, in the knowledge of an 8-card fit and 10 HCP support (around 7.5 losing tricks). You can bid a second suit to describe a 54xx distribution hand, or bid a NT to show a stopper in the enemy suit, or make a simple rebid of the overcall suit.

But you **must** respond to this forcing bid (or you'll end up playing in your enemy's suit, and almost certain disaster!) and you do need to show our strength somehow:

- *weak* (8-11)  
bid at the lowest level in your overcall suit (unless you have a second 4-card suit that can be bid *below* the overcall suit).

- *strong* (12-15)
  - with a second 4-card suit, jump bid the new 4-card suit;
  - with **no** second 4-card suit, and **with** stop(s) in the openers suit, bid NTs at the lowest level;
  - with **no** second 4-card suit **but no stops** in the openers suit, jump bid in the overcall suit.

Example:

The dealer on your left opens with 1♣.

Partner overcalls 1♥: Any of the following 3 hands could have resulted in such an overcall:

1. ♠ J83 ♥ AQ865 ♦ J10954 ♣ 2 (8 HCP)
2. ♠ AJ2 ♥ KQJ93 ♦ K3 ♣ 853 (14 HCP)
3. ♠ 8 ♥ KQJ52 ♦ K964 ♣ A52 (13 HCP)

The first hand is a typical overcall. It has good suit quality for a 1-level overcall in ♥s. The 2nd and 3rd are nice hands where you have to overcall because they are the wrong shape for a takeout double.

Suppose we hold the following responding hand:

♠ A1075 ♥ Q74 ♦ AJ973 ♣ 74

We do have 3-card support for partner's suit, and 10 HCP. So rather than simply raising to 2♥, which although promising 3 cards in ♥ does not show any strength, we can show our 10+ HCP to partner by using an UCB - bidding the enemy suit, 2♣. This will ask our obliging partner to further describe their hand. Partner can reply in the following ways as follows:

1. 2♦ (5,4 pattern, weak). We can then either pass or "sign off" in 2♥.
2. 2♥ (5 cards, no second suit, weak). We can pass: partner might only have 8HCP
3. 3♥ (5 cards, no second suit, strong). We can risk 4♥.
4. Jump to 3♦ (5, 4 and strong). We can sign-off in 4♥.

So playing the Unassuming Cue Bid we can stop at the 2-level if partner has a minimal overcall. And playing this treatment has additional advantages in that direct raises of partner's overcall are pre-emptive.

A few examples, LHO has opened 1♦ and partner overcalls 1♠ and PASS from RHO:

Hand 1	Hand2	Hand3	Hand4	Hand5	Hand6
♠ KJ7	♠ KJ7	♠ KJ73	♠ KJ763	♠ KQ76	♠ AK762
♥ KJ32	♥ 643	♥ 853	♥ 3	♥ Q32	♥ 2
♦ 64	♦ 64	♦ 3	♦ 532	♦ 85	♦ 82
♣ QJ52	♣ Q8532	♣ 85432	♣ Q854	♣ AKQ7	♣ AQ732

- Hand 1: Bid 2♦ showing a limit raise and pass if partner retreats into 2♠.  
 Hand 2: Bid 2♠ with 3-card support and weak  
 Hand 3: Bid 3♠. This is pre-emptive with normally 4 card support.  
 Hand 4: Bid 4♠. This is pre-emptive with normally 5 card support.  
 Hand 5: Bid 2♦, but see This is a sound raise to 4♠ even opposite a minimal overcall and we show the sound raise by cue bidding and then by bidding 4♠ if partner attempts to sign off.  
 Hand 6: Here you have options. You can do the same as hand 5; or you can splinter with 3♥ if you play that as a splinter; or you can bid 3♣ if you play that as a fit-showing jump, or you can use the Jump fit Unassuming Cue Bid to show 4 trumps and a good side suit.

### **UCB after we open the bidding**

Although UCBs are used after Partner overcalls, they can be modified to describe hands after we open:

1♥ – (2♦)-?

2NT = natural (I use this bid to show 4-card support with values for *at least* the 3-level)

3♦ = a limit raise to at least the 3-level, in Pard's suit, or stronger

3♥ = pre-emptive, law of total trumps, 9 card fit (maybe more if vul).

Typical examples:

1H - (1S) - 2H	Shows a minimum hand – 3-card support
1H - (1S) - 2S	Shows 3+ Heart support, with values to make at least a 3 Heart contract
1H - (1S) - 3H	Shows a minimum hand with 4+ Hearts, useful as a pre-emptive bid

### **UCB and Opener rebidding NTs**

As I mentioned earlier, in the Acol based system we open on 4-card majors, so making a UCB with only 3 cards in Pard's suit AND with 11+ high card points can cause problems, so:

How often do you want to make a natural 2NT bid after:

**1H - (1S) - ?**

If you use my methods of Responder making a UCB on 3-cards and bid 2NT with 4, then we could then use the following:

1H – (1S) – 2S* – P ?	Bid 2NT showing only 4-card suit and 15-16 (or whatever your usual 1NT rebid is). You could modify this to 15-17.  If you have a 5-card suit you know of the 8-card fit so wouldn't bid 2NT now.
1H – (1S) – 2S* – P ?	Bid 3NT showing only 4-card suit and 17-18 (or whatever your usual 2NT rebid is). You could modify this to 18-19.  If you have a 5-card suit you know of the 8-card fit so wouldn't bid NTs now.

### UCB after they open

(1♦) – 1♥ – (P) – ?

- 2♦\* = A good raise to 3 so 10+ or 8 losers, see \*\* below
- 2♥/3♥/4♥ = pre-emptive on LTT basis of bid to the level of the fit (care when vul)
- 4♥ = to play, may be an advance sacrifice based on 10-card fit

\*\* The raise to 3 is basically on the hypothetical scenario **IF** partner has an opening hand i.e. the UCB shows a hand that would raise an **opening bid** of 1X to 3X. Therefore we can apply the LTC (to unbalanced hands) here, following the same rules as if partner had opened 1♥.

Note that in some cases we are pushing the auction to the 3 level whereas most of these auctions are an overcall of 1M so the UCB only forces the auction to 2M when overcaller is minimum. So if, for example, they open 1♥ and we overcall 2♦, then a UCB of 2♥\* will push us to 3♦, so we have 10+ (2-level overcall) and 10+ (for UCB) with some shape, we should be ok.

When close to the limit (8-9 hcp hands in support of a major) we may need to bid these up and show as a UCB.

One other point is that where the auction goes:

(1♦)-1♠-(P)-2♦\*

We know that simply rebidding 2♠ by Overcaller shows a hand that is minimum – certainly not the opening strength discussed above, and bids such as 3♣ would be a new suit at the 3-level so that would be natural and forcing, showing a better hand for the overcall.

What about 2♥? It's below 2♠, so some play this as potentially as weak as 2♠ would be but simply taking the opportunity to bid out the hand type/shape. Overcaller will have another bid anyway so they can bid 2♥ even with extra strength.

A jump to 3♠ over the UCB shows a hand that IS opening strength but would have passed an invitational 3♠.

## Other kinds of cue bid

1. **Two-suited overcall.** An *immediate* cue bid (a bid of the suit just opened by your opponent) has changed its meaning in recent times. It *used to be* used to indicate a very strong hand, now more usually described by a two suited (5-card suits), at least one being a Major.
2. **Have you got a stopper in their suit?** Bidding the opponent's suit can also be used after *the enemy have overcalled* your bid, or they have opened the bidding and you, being strong, would like to know if your partner has a stopper in the enemy suit, since you know that game might be possible in NT. By bidding your opponents' suit, possibly at the 3 level, you are telling your partner that you are strong AND asking your partner "Have you got a stopper in the enemy suit?" You are trying of course to get into No Trumps, which partner will bid if he does have the magic missing stopper. If he doesn't, he'll describe his hand further - not wanting to leave your contract in the enemy's suit!

Example:

If you have a great source of tricks and stoppers in every suit but the suit opened you might consider 3NT as an option if partner has stopper in the opener's suit so you immediately Jump cue bid their suit and this says to partner please bid 3NT if you have a stopper in their suit

so if you were to pick up :- you could certainly use the convention immediately if they open 1♥:

♠ A2

♥ 54

♦ AKQJ765

♣ A4

you immediately bid 3♥ asking for stopper for 3NT

### 3. Looking for slam after locating a fit

Once a suit fit has been found and the partnership have shown GF values then cue-bidding side suits show a control in that suit – some play either 1<sup>st</sup> round control only (A or void) and others 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> round control (K or singleton). This helps the partnership to ensure that the defence can't immediately take two tricks to defeat the contract.