

Using a Cue Bid to Respond to Partner's Overcall

Partnership Agreements and
Refinements.

When Partner Makes a Suit Overcall of an Opening Suit Bid

- A raise of partner's suit is weak.
 - Shows 10 or fewer points.
 - You show length by the level of your bid.
- A cue bid of the opponent's suit shows a limit raise or better.
 - We prefer 4-card support.
 - But may be done with 3-card support.
 - Strength depends on how you play a limit raise.

Consider the Following Examples

North	East	South	West
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥	3 ♥

Hand 1

♠ K 4 2

♥ 2

♦ A J 10 5

♣ Q 10 7 4 3

- You would prefer to have 4-card support for a limit raise, but...
- You must play the cards you are dealt.
- Only 10 points
- This hand with a singleton and a good side suit is worth a limit raise.

Consider the Following Examples

North	East	South	West
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥	2 ♠

Hand 2

♠ A 5 4

♥ 7 3 2

♦ K J 7 2

♣ Q J 7

- This hand has 11 points.
- Bad distribution
- A bit quacky
- Really not worth a limit raise

Consider the Following Examples

North	East	South	West
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥	3 ♠

Hand 3

♠ J 8 5 4

♥ 7 2

♦ K J 10 7 2

♣ Q 7

- This hand has 7 points.
- Good distribution
- Outside 5-card suit
- Make a weak-jump raise.

Consider the Following Examples

North	East	South	West
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥	2 ♠
(3 ♥	pass	pass	3 ♠)

Hand 4

♠ 8 6 5 4

♥ 7 2

♦ K 10 7 2

♣ A 7 5

- This hand has 7 points.
- A borderline hand
- Has 4-card support
- Might be worth a jump raise
- A better way to handle this hand is to bid 2♠, then raise to 3♠, if opponents bid 3♥.
- Following the law

Consider the Following Examples

North	East	South	West
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥	3 ♠

Hand 5

♠ Q J 5 4

♥ 7 2

♦ J 10 9 7 5 2

♣ 5

- This hand has 3 points.
- With the right distribution, you don't need many points to make a weak-jump raise.

Consider the Following Examples

North	East	South	West
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥	3 ♥

Hand 6

♠ K J 5 4

♥ 7 2

♦ A 10 9 7

♣ K Q 5

- This hand has 13 points.
- 4-card support
- A pretty good 4-card side suit
- The cue bid shows a limit raise or better.

Responding to Partner's Cue Bid

- When partner makes a cue bid after your overcall:
 - The weakest bid you can make is a rebid of your suit.
 - Any other action, including a pass (if RHO has made a bid) shows more than a minimum strength.

Put Yourself in the East Seat

North	East (you)	South	West
1 ♦	1 ♥	pass	2 ♦
double	??		

- Sitting east, you have a choice of bids.
 - You can bid 2 ♥ (your weakest bid).
 - You can pass (because your partner has another bid). Shows a hand slightly better than a minimum overcall
 - You can bid 4 ♥ (Shows a good hand with opening count).

Here are Some Examples

North	East (you)	South	West
1 ♦	1 ♥	pass	2 ♦
double	??		

Hand 7

♠ J 5 4

♥ A K 9 6 2

♦ 6 3 2

♣ 5 2

- Bid 2 ♥.
- You have a minimum overcall.
- No chance of game, even with partner's limit raise
- You are not interested in going further.

Here are Some Examples

North	East (you)	South	West
1 ♦	1 ♥	pass	2 ♦
double	??		

Hand 8

♠ 9 5 4

♥ A K 9 6 2

♦ 6 2

♣ K Q 2

- 13 points. Pass.
- You have a bit extra.
- Not enough for you to go to game, but enough to make game if partner has anything extra.
- If partner has just a limit raise he will bid 2 ♥.
- If partner has a bit more, she can bid game.

Here are Some Examples

North	East (you)	South	West
1 ♦	1 ♥	pass	2 ♦
double	??		

Hand 9

♠ K 5 4

♥ A K 9 6 2

♦ 6 2

♣ K Q 2

- 15 points. Bid 4 ♥.
- With partner's limit raise, you have enough for game.

Same Idea Applies if the Cue Bid Forces You to the 3-Level

North	East (you)	South	West
1 ♠	2 ♥	pass	2 ♠
double	??		

Hand 10

♠ A 5 4

♥ A K 9 6 2

♦ 6 2

♣ 10 7 2



- 11 points. Bid 3 ♥. Minimum hand for a 2-level overcall.
- Here, partner's cue bid has forced you to respond at the 3-level.
- A pass would show a bit more.
- With 14+ points you would bid game.

If the Opponents Bid Two Suits

- The advancer has a choice of cue bids.

North East South West

1  1  1  ??

- If west has a limit raise for her partner's hearts, she can bid either diamonds or spades.
- 2  shows 3-card support.
- 2  shows 4-card support.
- Either bid shows a limit raise or better.

Same Examples

North	East	South	West
1 ♦	1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♦

Hand 11

West

♠ A 5 4

♥ Q 6 2

♦ 6 2

♣ A J 9 7 2

- 11 points with 3-card support
- Cue bid the lower ranking of the opponents' suits.
- Also note that in the bidding shown, south will have 5 spades.

Same Examples

North	East	South	West	*negative
1 ♦	1 ♥	dbld*	2 ♠	

Hand 11

West

♠ A 5 4

♥ Q J 6 2

♦ 6 2

♣ A J 7 2

- 12 points with 4-cards support
- Cue bid the lower ranking of the opponents' suits.
- Also note south's double shows 4 spades.

Final Points

- I always like it when I can use my opponent's bids to more specifically define my hand.
- Requires full concentration on the bidding.
- Don't try this at home – unless you have discussed it fully with your partner.