

Michaels Cuebid

There is an old Bridge adage "5-5, Come Alive". The basis of this statement is the truth in the fact that a 5-5 holding is stronger than what is evident through simply counting HCP's. This is particularly true if it helps the Partnership find an 8-Card fit after an Opponent has bid. As its name implies 'a Michaels' bid requires an opponent to have bid. The meaning of the Cuebid depends on what suit is being "Cue'd", so we need a chart. Looking at the meaning also tells us what you have to have to make the Cuebid.

Opponents Bid	Cue Bid	Meaning (I have ...)
A Major	Repeat the Major	5 in other Major and 5 in an undisclosed Minor
A Minor	Repeat the Minor	5-5 in both Majors

It should go without saying that this Cue Bid is a **Forcing bid**. You might say "you didn't say how many points one needs to bid a Michaels Cuebid." That is because it really is dependent on Partnership agreement.

There are pros and cons to both approaches for required points for Michaels. The two options are:

1. 6+ HCP - Ignore the 5-5 distribution and bid the Stronger suit.
2. A Mini-Max Approach.
 - a) < 11 HCP or > 14 HCP: Cuebid Opponents suit.
 - b) 11–14 HCP: OverCall your Higher ranking suit with the intention of rebidding lower

The rationale behind this approach is this. In (2a) with a Minimum hand you want partner to have an option to choose between the suits. Regardless of the choice you Pass; you have achieved your purpose of finding the Magic-8 fit even with a weak hand. With a strong hand you can show support by bidding 1-level higher, and if Partner has the points, now knowing you have 14+ HCP, she can bid Game. Using this approach Partner knows your point range which is not available under option (1).

In option (2b) by bidding the higher ranking suit and following up with the lower ranking suit shows a 5-Cards in the first (higher ranking) suit and 4-Cards in the second suit. Since it is the lower ranking suit you might have the opportunity to rebid that suit which confirms the 5-5 status of your hand.

Responding to Michaels

With a fit for one of Partners suits simply raise the suit to the appropriate level based on your hand. Partner will carry on if she has a strong hand.

When you Cuebid a Minor, Partner knows you have both Majors. Knowing both your suits he can choose but if you Cuebid a Major, Partner only know that you hold the other Major but can't be sure of the Minor. If Partner cannot tolerate the other Major she can ask which Minor is yours by bidding 2NT. This is artificial and forcing saying "Partner I can't tolerate the Major but I can support either Minor, bid your Minor".