

Cue Bidding

To cue something means to give a clue that there is something out of the ordinary. In Bridge there are two types of cue bids. First, a cue bid is a bid of a suit that the opponents have already bid, for the same purpose; usually meaning I have an-out-of-the-ordinary hand; an extraordinary hand. Most of the time to execute a cue bid one bids a suit already bid by an opponent. When your Partner bids a suit the Opponents have bid you have to ask yourself why would she want to suggest playing in a suit that an opponent has already indicated having some control in? Rarely is it the case that one wants to play in a suit that the opponents bid; so bidding their suit should be taken as a clue to something – a cue. The meaning of that something, in Bridge, can be different depending on the circumstances but the differences are easy to distinguish. There are 4 types of cue bids that beginning Bridge players can be exposed to: **Michaels**, **Unusual NoTrump**, **Limit Raises**, and **Controls**. The first two are treated in separate sections.

Limit Raise shown by Cue Bid

When an opponent OverCalls it may be done with as little as 6 HCP or as much as a full Opening hand. When the OverCall occurs no one except the OverCaller knows the truth. As we know a limit raise, by a responder, is usually shown by jumping to the 3-level. You can avoid the negative aspects of showing a limit raise in the face of a potential full Opener by OverCaller, showing the limit raise by an immediate bid of the Opponents suit. Here's an example: Partner Opens with 1♥. You have 10+ HCP and 4♥'s and were poised to bid 3♥ when your RHO OverCalls 1♠ or perhaps 2♣. You have been presented an opportunity, rather than having to bid 3♥ to show the **limit raise**. You can now bid 2♣ (or 3♣) to show the **limit raise**. In the later case not much is gained in bidding space but in either case Partner now has the option to bid 3♥ if she holds a minimum hand that won't support going to Game or 4♥ if she does have Game going points. The requirements for **limit raise** doesn't change: 4-Card support and 10-12 PP. Likewise in the following sequence: 1♠ – 2♥ – 3♥ the immediate cue shows a limit raise.

Western Cue – Asking for Help in a Suit Bid by Opponents

Consider the situation where you and your Partner are congenially conversing trying to find a fit and a rogue Opponent throws in a bid, just to disrupt your flow. You would do it if you held the right hand! Wouldn't you? Your Partnership hasn't been able to find a fit and you were thinking ('cause they're not biddin') you should be in NT. Now this rogue has suggested he has control in one suit. Lets say you are holding Qx in the suit. That is not a stopper, so you can't safely bid NT. You need help in the suit that the rogue Opponent suggest he has the upper hand. You can ask your Partner if she can help. You do it by bidding their suit. Here's an example: 1♦ – P – 1♥ – P; 1♠ – 2♣ – P – ? Opponent alleged that ♣'s is their suit but you are holding a stopper ♣Kx but that might not be enough if that Opponent holds... say 6♣'s and a winner in another suit if you want to play in NoTrump. You need a second stopper to play in NT; the likely Contract you want to be in since you can't find a fit. It appears that you have the points but need stoppers. In the example bidding sequence you would bid 3♣ (the Opponents suit) asking Partner to bid 3NT if she has the requisite ♣ stopper. The 3♣ Cue bid is called Western Cue. Another common situation for the Western Cue is: 1♦ – 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♥; 3♦ – P – 3♥ or 1♦ – 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♥; 3♥. Some players require the Cue bidder to have a partial stopper in order to use Western Cue; others think that too stringent a requirement. Sometimes just a single stopper is all that is required. One has to use their own judgment based on the hand they are holding. In either case, Western Cue is a valuable asset to have in your bidding repertoire and it is simple enough that there should be little confusion. We might make note that the Western Cue is particularly valuable when you have a potential running Minor that makes NT an attractive contract. The Western Cue is a special type of Control bid – always at the 3-level – and you are asking Partner if he has control in an Opponent suit. It is opposed to the Eastern Cue which shows a control in an opponents suit. The Eastern cue might not be as useful as the Western since if you have control you can bid 3NT yourself. Eastern cues are better suited to control bids when seeking slams.