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This Week in Bridge

(432) Cuebidding the Opponent's Suit – More Cuebids

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Level: 6 of 10 (2 of 6)

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General

Cuebidding bidding the opponent's suit cheaply on the first round of the bidding is an effective competitive bidding tool (Michaels or Limit Raise+), but this is not the only time we can use a cuebid of the opponent's suit. When the opponents are bidding it makes the auction more complicated for us. We need to have good agreements about how we use these bids of the opponent's suit in more than just the traditional "early cuebid" auctions. Here we look at some of the less common times that we make a cuebid.

Other Early Cuebids

There are other times, even on the first round of the bidding, where we may bid the opponent's suit. Even though there are not a lot of bids in these auctions, they can be confusing. Let's look at some examples.

Example 1

1♠ 3♠

This jump cuebid of the opponent's 5+card (usually Major) suit is a *Western Cuebid*, asking partner to bid NT with a stopper in opponent's suit. It means we have a "source of tricks", usually a long strong minor.

Example 2

1♣ 3♣

This jump bid of the opponent's 3+card (usually minor) suit is one we need to discuss with partner. Some play this as a natural bid while others play it as a Western Cuebid (just like when they open 1-Major).

Note: I usually like to keep it simple and play this just as I would when the opponents open a Major.



Example 3

1♥ 1♠ 3♠

This “jump cuebid” of the opponent’s suit is a splinter, showing about 11-14 HCP, 4+ ♥, and a singleton or void in the opponent’s suit.

Example 4

1♥ 3♣ 4♣

When the opponents preempt the bidding, the cuebid of the opponent’s suit takes us past the 3-level in our suit (committing us to at least game in our Major). This bid shows 3+card ♥ and a good 14+ points. It does not promise shortness in ♣, nor a control in ♣.

Example 5

1♦ P 1♠ 2♠

When bidding in the sandwich seat there are two cuebids available. The cuebid of Opener’s suit is Michaels (as we discussed last time), but a cuebid of RHO’s suit (the Responder’s suit) is natural. This 2♠ bid shows a good 5+card ♠ suit and at least 12 points.

Second Round Cuebids

Cuebids after the first round of the bidding are less specific in their meaning. These cuebids can be used for a variety of different options, but they are generally strength-showing without any other clear action at the 2-level and Western Cuebids, asking for a stopper, at the 3-level. The cuebid asks Opener to further describe their hand – show a stopper in the opponent’s suit or pattern out in a relevant Major suit.

Second Round Cuebid by Responder

Responder can cuebid the opponent’s suit on the second round of the bidding when they are not sure what to do. This generally is a game-forcing bid and asks Opener to further describe their hand. The most common and useful answer to that cuebid is for Opener to show a stopper in the opponent’s suit.

Example 6

♠ A543

♥ A5

♦ 63

♣ AQJ43

1♣ P 1♠ 2♦

P P 3♦

This cuebid of the opponent’s suit is forcing and shows an offensively-oriented hand (we could double with a more defensively-oriented hand). This generally asks Opener to further describe their hand, often by bidding NT with a stopper in the opponent’s suit.



Second Round Cuebid by Opener

A cuebid by Opener simply shows a strong hand that is game-forcing. It is a general forcing bid and is often also a Western Cuebid, asking Responder for a stopper in the opponent's suit.

Example 7

♠ A5

♥ A3

♦ 832

♣ AKQ932

1♣ P 1♠ 2♦

3♦

This shows a strong hand, usually with no stopper in the opponent's suit. It asks partner to bid NT with a stopper in the opponent's suit.

Opponents Bid Two Suits

When the opponents bid two suits and we have a stopper in both suits, we bid NT. With a stopper in one of the two suits, we bid the stopper in the suit that we have, implying a problem in the other one.

Example 8

♠ A

♥ AJ3

♦ 832

♣ AKQ932

1♣ 1♦ 1♠ 2♥

3♥

This 3♥ bid shows a great hand (lots of tricks) and a stopper in ♥. It implies a that we do not have a ♦ stopper, asking partner to bid NT with a ♦ stopper.

Conclusion

A cuebid of the opponent's suit is a valuable tool for describing your hand. In most cases it will be used to show a strong offensively-oriented hand. This cuebid is frequently highly offensively-oriented because with a more balanced or defensively-oriented hand, we can make a reopening double or bid NT, instead of making a cuebid. This cuebid can be used as our general "catch-all" forcing bid for getting more information about partner's hand. Partner's priority will be to tell us about a stopper in the opponent's suit. With a good hand, especially one with a long suit, make sure you have a cuebid available as part of your partnership agreement.