



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(510) Western Cuebids**

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Level: 4 of 10 (1 of 6)

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#### **General**

When the opponents bid a suit, our bid of their suit is called a *cuebid*. Generally a cuebid is not a natural bid. On the first round of the bidding, cuebids are highly defined bids, while later in the bidding these cuebids are more flexible calls – often called *Western Cuebids*. Let's look at some of these cuebid auctions.

#### **Cuebids Early in the Auction – Well Defined**

*Example 1*

1♦    2♦

Michaels Cuebid, showing at least 5-5 in the Majors.

*Example 2*

1♥    1♠    2♠

Limit raise or better in support of Opener's suit – 10+ points, 3+card ♥. Often denoted Q=LR+.

*Example 3*

1♦    1♠    P    2♦

Limit raise or better in support of partner's suit – 10+ points, 3+card ♠. Often denoted Q=LR+.

These basic cuebids are either Michaels Cuebids or limit raise plus cuebids in support of partner.

#### **Western Cuebids**

Later cuebids are generally used to look for notrump contacts. When an opponent has bid a suit, we have enough values to bid game, and we have a stopper in the opponent's suit, then we generally know what to bid – 3NT. But when we have enough values for game but no stopper in the opponent's suit, we need a way to find out if partner has a stopper in the opponent's suit. We do this by cuebidding the opponent's suit, which is called a Western Cuebid.

A Western Cuebid asks partner to bid notrump with a stopper in the opponent's suit; or without a stopper, to make a natural descriptive bid.



## Western vs. Eastern Cuebids (History of the Name)

This approach to asking for a stopper was originally developed on the West Coast of the United States. Many years ago, on the East Coast, a cuebid of the opponent's suit was often used to show a stopper, not ask for one. This showing approach is no longer common, so the name has remained Western Cuebid, meaning to ask for a stopper.

## Some Western Cuebid Auctions

These auctions are all examples of Western Cuebids, asking partner to bid 3NT with a stopper in the opponent's suit. The first two are the less common Western Cuebids on the first round of the auction, where the others are examples of the more common Western Cuebids that occur later in the auction.

### Example 4

1♥ 3♥

Asks partner to bid 3NT with a ♥ stopper. Usually a hand with a long strong minor suit.

### Example 5

2♥ 3♥

Asks partner to bid 3NT with a ♥ stopper. This is not a Michaels Cuebid. Usually a hand with a long strong minor suit.

### Example 6

2♥ X P 3♣  
P 3♥

Interferer has extra values and no ♥ stopper. They are trying to play 3NT if advancer has a stopper.

### Example 7

1♠ 2♣ 2♦ P  
3♣

This cuebid shows extra values and no ♣ stopper -- asking partner to bid 3NT if they have one.

### Example 8

1♠ 2♣ 2♦ P  
2♠ P 3♣

Responder has enough values for game and no ♣ stopper, hoping Opener can bid 3NT.



## Conclusion

In a competitive auction when we have a good hand and no Major suit fit, we are often looking to play in notrump. With a stopper in the opponent's suit then we can happily bid 3NT. But without a stopper in the opponent's suit, we need a forcing bid, and that bid is a Western Cuebid – showing a good hand and asking partner if they would bid notrump with a stopper in the opponent's suit. This is a flexible bid that applies and is useful in many auctions. Give it a try!