

THE MICHAELS CUE-BID CONVENTION

Two- Suited Overcalls

A. Background: Two-suited hands are generally difficult to describe after the bidding has been opened by the opponents, especially if the hand is very weak. Often, the opponents bid too much, too soon, for both of the suits to be safely shown, or the bidding dies too soon for both suits to be introduced. The Michaels Cue-Bid describes such a two-suited hand by means of a simple artificial cue-bid overcall. It is both a defensive obstructive call, either in an attempt to pre-empt the opponent's bidding space, or to lead to a profitable sacrifice against their eventual contract, or else an offensive weapon used to seek the best suit for a sought-after, makeable contract by the invoking partnership. The Michaels Cue-bid Convention serves as a valuable weapon in one's competitive bidding arsenal.

B. Definition: The Michaels Cue-bid uses a direct cue-bid of the opponent's suit as a two-suited take-out bid. It promises at least a 5-5 or better distribution in each of two suits (With a 6-4 distribution, one is best advised against invoking Michaels).

Michaels Cue-Bids

1. 1C **"2C"** = BOTH MAJORS (At least 5 Hearts and 5 Spades, or better)
2. 1D **"2D"** = BOTH MAJORS (At least 5 Hearts and 5 Spades or better)
3. 1H **"2H"** = THE OTHER MAJOR + AN UNSPECIFIED MINOR
(Either 5 Spades and 5 Clubs, or 5 Spades and 5 Diamonds, or better)
4. 1S **"2S"** = THE OTHER MAJOR + AN UNSPECIFIED MINOR
(Either 5 Hearts and 5 Clubs, or 5 Hearts and 5 Diamonds, or better)

"The Unusual NT" Convention

5. 1B **"2NT"** = THE TWO LOWER UN-BID SUITS, 5-5 or better in length

Examples:

- a. 1C **"2NT"** = Diamonds and Hearts, 5-5 or longer
- b. 1D **"2NT"** = Clubs and Hearts, 5-5 or longer
- c. 1H/1S **"2NT"** = Clubs and Diamonds, 5-5 or longer

C: Requirements for use of Michaels Cue-bids or the "Unusual NT" Conventions:

- 1. Distribution:** - At least a 5-card or better holding in each of two un-bid suits.
- 2. Strength:** -The strength of the hand when Michael's cue-bid is used falls into one of two types: (a) a hand that is very weak, 0-10 HCP's; else (b), a hand that that is very strong, 16 HCP's or more. When the hand is of moderate value, 11-15 HCP's, one should bid both suits oneself; i.e., not use the Michaels Convention; rather bid the higher-ranking suit first, followed by a re-bid of the lower-ranking suit on the next bidding turn. In this way, responder can differentiate the point count of the invoking Michaels cue-bid user.

(See the following Examples)

Examples: The opponents have opened 1C and you hold the following:

QJ109X KXXXX XX X

(bid "2C" and then pass partner's 2H or 2S response)

AK109X AKJXX KX X

(bid "2C" and then "3C" over partner's 2H or 2S response)

AQ109X KJXXX AX X

(Do Not Use Michaels. Bid 1S and then re-bid 2H at your next bidding opportunity)

3. Vulnerability and Level: – When Vulnerable or at higher bidding levels, it is more desirable to have either greater strength, or a greater distributional holding, or both.

D. Responses To Michael's Cue-Bids: The partner of the Michaels Cue-bid should, if at all possible, when the bidding permits, take a preference for one of the suits shown by the cue-bidder. Since partner will have as few as five in each of his/her suits, a 3-card support is all that is adequate. A preference on a doubleton, however, will sometimes be necessary, unless responding partner has a 6-card or better fourth suit or his/her own.

Examples:

(a) 1C "2C" P 2H (A preference for Hearts)

(b) 1D "2D" P 2S (A preference for Spades)

1H "2H" P 2S (A preference for Spades)

(d) 1S "2S" P 3H (A preference for Hearts)

(e) 1H "2H" P "2NT" (A preference for the as-yet-un-

opposed to the Spade Suit) (The unspecified Minor is then revealed by the Michaels bidder)

(f) 1S "2NT" P 3C/3D
(A Minor suit preference is chosen)

(g) 1S "2NT" P 3H (Responder denies request to choose Clubs or Diamonds and, instead chooses his/her 6-card Heart suit.)

E. Re-bids By The Original Cue-Bidder:

(a) (With 0-10 HCP's) – Pass the Chosen Suit by the Responder.

(b) (With 16+ HCP's) – Cue-Bid the Opponent's Suit once again.