

Cue Bidding

A cue bid is a **forcing bid** in a suit the bidder doesn't actually want to play in. There are two common types of cue bids: conventional bids and control bids.

Conventional Cue Bids

The most common conventional cue bids are:

- Limit raise or better: a bid of an opponent's suit made after partner has bid a suit. For example, in the auction 1♠ - 2♥ - 3♥, 3♥ shows a limit raise or better in spades. (Remember from last week's lesson on jump raises, a bid of 3♠ after RHO's 2♥ bid, would be weak.)
- Western cue bid: a bid of an opponent's suit asking partner to bid NT with a stopper in that suit. For example, in the auction, 1♦ - 1♥ - 1♠ - Pass - 3♣ - Pass - 3♥, 3♥ asks partner to bid 3NT with a heart stopper. (This bid usually shows support for one of opener's minors.)
- Michael's Cue Bid: a bid of opponent's suit showing a two-suited hand (usually at least 5-5). For example, in the auction 1♣ - 2♣, 2♣ shows both majors; 1♦ - 2♦, 2♦ shows both majors; in the auction 1♥ - 2♥, 2♥ shows spades and a minor; in the auction 1♠ - 2♠, 2♠ shows hearts and a minor.
- Splinter: a double jump in an unbid suit showing shortness in that suit. For example, in the auction 1♠ - Pass - 4♦, 4♦ shows spade support and a singleton or void in diamonds.

Control Cue Bids

Control cue bids are used when a partnership has agreed on a trump suit and is looking for slam. Control bids are more useful than Ace-asking bids (such as Blackwood or Roman Key Card) in situations in which the slam seeker has either a void or a side suit that's off two quick tricks and wants to know **which** Aces and/or Kings partner has, not just how many.

A control bid shows an Ace or King (or in a suit contract, a void or a singleton) that will prevent the opponents from taking the first 2 tricks in that suit. Typically, the first-bid suit shows first-round control in a suit and the second-bid suit shows second-round control in a suit (although both bids can show first-round control).

When making a cue bid, you bid your **lowest possible** Ace first (not necessarily your lowest Ace), and then you cue-bid any other Aces before you start cue-bidding Kings. For example, if the previous bid was 4♦ and you have the ♣A, the ♣K, and the ♥A, you cue-bid the ♥A first (the **lowest possible** Ace), and then the ♣A, and then (in the unlikely event you're still cue-bidding) the ♣K. But if the previous bid was 4♣, and you have the ♣A, the ♣K, and the ♥A, you cue-bid the ♣A first and then the ♥A, and then the ♣K.

So, in the auction 1♦ - Pass - 1♠ - Pass - 3♠ - Pass - 4♥ - Pass - 5♣ - Pass - 5♦, 4♥ shows ♥A; 5♣ shows the ♣A; and 5♦ shows the ♦K. (With both the ♥A and the ♦A, you would have cue bid the ♦A first.)

How do I know if I should cue bid - or if my partner is cue-bidding?

- Control cue bids are used only after you've established a fit (a suit has been bid and raised).
- You must be in a game-forcing auction. So, in the auction 1♥ - Pass - 2♥ - Pass - 3♣, 3♣ does not show a control.
- Slam must be a serious possibility.
- Bidding must be at the 4-level or above. So, in the auction 1♥ - Pass - 3♥ - Pass - 4♣, 4♣ shows a control.

More to know:

- Cue bids are NOT alertable.
- Cue bids are absolutely forcing.
- Don't cue-bid the A or K of trump.

Quick Quiz

What's your bid?

As South, you hold ♠8 6 5 3 ♥A 4 ♦Q 5 3 ♣8 7 5 4

The bidding has gone:

N	E	S	W
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	?	

As South, you hold ♠Q653 ♥AQ ♦1053 ♣KJ54

The bidding has gone:

N	E	S	W
1♠	2♦	?	

As South, you hold ♠Q10653 ♥A75 ♦109 ♣AQJ

The bidding has gone:

N	E	S	W
1♠	3♦	?	Pass
5♦	Pass	?	

As West, you hold ♠8653 ♥K54 ♦53 ♣8754

The bidding has gone:

N	E	S	W
1♠	2♠	Pass	?

As North, you hold ♠AKJ76 ♥J104 ♦AQ65 ♣Q

The bidding has gone

N	E	S	W
1♠	Pass	4♥	Pass
?			

As South, you hold ♠K63 ♥AJ104 ♦QJ53 ♣84

The bidding has gone

N	E	S	W
1♣	1♠	X	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	?	

Cue Bids Answer Sheet

What's your bid?

As South, you hold ♠8 6 5 3 ♥A 4 ♦Q 5 3 ♣8 7 5 4

The bidding has gone:

N	E	S	W
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	

As South, you hold ♠Q653 ♥AQ ♦1053 ♣KJ54

The bidding has gone:

N	E	S	W
1♠	2♦	3♦	

As South, you hold ♠Q10653 ♥A75 ♦109 ♣AQJ

The bidding has gone:

N	E	S	W
1♠	3♦	4♦	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♥	

As West, you hold ♠8653 ♥K54 ♦53 ♣8754

The bidding has gone:

N	E	S	W
1♠	2♠	Pass	3♥

As North, you hold ♠AKJ76 ♥J104 ♦AQ65 ♣Q

The bidding has gone

N	E	S	W
1♠	Pass	4♥	Pass
5♦			

As South, you hold ♠K63 ♥AJ104 ♦QJ53 ♣84

The bidding has gone

N	E	S	W
1♣	1♠	X	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	