



Play & Learn

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The cuebid – advancer's limit raise or better

Last month we saw that an immediate raise of overcaller's suit is weak even when advancer jumps. Advancer makes a stronger raise by cuebidding opener's suit. With neither side vulnerable, suppose the auction has proceeded:

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Pass	?

What is your call as advancer (South) holding each of the following hands?

- ① ♠Q 6 3 ♥9 8 6 ♦7 4 2 ♣A 6 5 3
- ② ♠K 9 6 3 ♥9 8 6 ♦7 ♣J 9 8 6 5
- ③ ♠7 6 2 ♥9 8 6 4 ♦7 3 ♣J 8 6 3
- ④ ♠K 6 3 ♥Q 9 8 6 ♦7 4 2 ♣A Q 6
- ⑤ ♠Q 8 6 2 ♥K 10 7 ♦A 4 ♣A 8 6 2
- ⑥ ♠K 9 8 5 ♥J 5 3 ♦A 6 ♣A K 6 3

Advancer raises to 2♠ with No. 1, but the best choice for No. 2 is a preemptive jump raise to 3♠. Immediately compete for as many tricks as your side has trumps with a weak hand. With No. 3, advancer – with too few points to bid 2♠ and too few trumps to bid 3♠ – has to pass.

The remaining three hands are too strong to raise to 2♠ and cannot make a jump raise when we use preemptive jump raises in competition. Use the cuebid advance to show a good hand with a fit – a limit raise or better. After the 1♦ opening bid, a 2♦ cuebid lets advancer find out more about partner's strength. Because a one-level overcall

can be made with as few as 8 points, game isn't certain even when advancer holds hand No. 6.

South's cuebid in this auction would show at least three spades and a limit raise or better.

Assuming no intervening action, here's the suggested approach after a cuebid raise:

- Overcaller bids the agreed suit as cheaply as possible with less than opening strength.
- Overcaller bids game in the agreed suit with a hand that would accept a limit raise.
- Overcaller makes some other descriptive bid with an opening hand that isn't strong enough to be sure of game (jump in the agreed suit, bid a new suit or even 2NT).

Let's look at overcaller's rebid after the auction has proceeded:

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	?		

(1) Cuebid

As overcaller, North applies the above guidelines to help choose the right level for the partnership. Holding: ♠A Q 9 8 5 3 ♥A K 6 ♦7 3 ♣5 2, 15 total points counting length, overcaller can rebid 4♠ expecting to make game opposite a limit raise of about 11 points. With:

♠K Q J 5 3 ♥A 7 ♦7 3 ♣Q 6 5 2,

an opening hand with 13 total points, overcaller isn't strong enough to be sure of game because advancer might have only a limit raise. But overcaller shouldn't want to completely close out the possibility of game either. Bid something other than 2♠ or 4♠. With this hand, a 3♣ game try can help partner decide how well the hands fit.

Both of these hands have less than opening strength and would rebid 2♠:

- (a) ♠A Q J 10 4 ♥7 6 2 ♦7 5 3 ♣J 2
 (b) ♠A Q 10 6 4 ♥A 7 ♦9 8 3 ♣7 5 2

Holding hand No. 6 at the beginning of this article, advancer has 16 support points. Game is possible even if overcaller denies opening strength. When overcaller rebids his suit on the two level as in hands (a) and (b) directly above, advancer doesn't have to pass if game is possible opposite less than a full opening hand. Advancer can make one more move toward game. A raise to 3♠ or a new suit would be game tries. Opposite advancer's game try, overcaller would sign off with hand (a) but would carry on to 4♠ with hand (b).

Bridge is partnership game, so make sure your partner will understand you if you bid this way. There are other alternatives. Using a cuebid raise after an overcall lets us have it all. Because we cuebid with a good raise, we can jump raise with weak hands. Cuebid raises aren't only for overcaller's side. We'll see in the future that opener's side can use them too. ■