



Play & Learn

BY PAT HARRINGTON ✉ ppharr@gmail.com

The cuebid raise

Last month, we discussed using preemptive jump raises in competition, which makes any immediate raise of opener's or overcaller's suit – jump or not – a weak bid.

Against “polite” opponents who never interfere in the auction, many partnerships have ways to differentiate between three-card and longer support for opener's major (for example, agreeing that responder's immediate jump raise to three of opener's major is a limit raise showing at least four trumps).

In any competitive auction, however, the sooner you can confirm a fit, the better. An overcall makes it difficult for responder to show extra trump length. With the possibility of more bidding from the opponents, responder immediately shows a good hand with a fit for opener's major. You won't want to suggest playing in overcaller's long suit, so a cuebid of that suit is used to show a limit raise or better: a hand with three or more cards in opener's major, and a good 10 or more total points.

After responder's cuebid, opener is sure of a fit but doesn't know whether the cuebid showed a limit raise or a game-going hand. Opener assumes the cuebid was a limit raise and bids accordingly: the agreed suit at the three level with a minimum opening, and game with a hand that would accept an invitation (a good 14-plus points).

How would you bid each hand below as East in the following auction?

	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♠	2♥	?	
①	♠K97	♥J64	♦A43	♣Q762
②	♠K972	♥643	♦AQ103	♣76
③	♠K97	♥643	♦AQ103	♣KQ2

The first hand comes to 10 points, but it's not a good 10 with only three-card support, the probably useless ♥J and 4-3-3-3 distribution. Make a single raise to 2♠.

Hand 2 also comes to 10 points, counting for the doubleton, but is a better hand and qualifies as a limit raise. Cuebid 3♥, planning to pass if opener rebids 3♠.

A cuebid supports opener's suit as trumps. Because three-card support is adequate opposite a five-card major-suit opening, a cuebid raise of opener's major doesn't require four trumps. With Hand 3, start with a 3♥ cuebid and continue to game if opener rebids only 3♠.

How will each West hand below continue the auction after East makes a cuebid raise?

	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♠	2♥	3♥	Pass
	?			
④	♠AQJ53	♥87	♦KJ7	♣J105
⑤	♠AQJ53	♥87	♦K762	♣A5

Hand 4 isn't enough for game opposite a limit raise. Rebid 3♠. Responder will carry on to game with an opening hand (like Hand 3 above) and pass with a limit raise (like Hand 2 above).

With Hand 5, you want to be in game whether responder has a limit raise or an opening hand. Rebid 4♠.

Talk with your partners about adding the preemptive jump raise and the cuebid as a limit raise or better to your bidding arsenal. Both of these tools apply after a simple non-jump overcall and can be used by either responder or advancer. ■