

## Using Cue Bids for Multiple Purposes

You are South and the bidding goes:

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	Pass	2♥!

Your 2♥ bid is called a cue bid. It is a non-jump raise of the suit bid by the opponents. Here are three hands that you might hold that would justify your cue bid - 2♥:

1)	♠K x x	2)	♠x x	3)	♠x x
	♥Q x x x		♥K x		♥x x x
	♦A K x		♦A K Q J x x		♦K Q x x
	♣x x x		♣x x x		♣A K x x

These three hands illustrate the 3 reasons why you would want to cue bid the opponent's suit. What characteristic is found in all three hands?

- 1) This is a hand that has support for partner's spade overcall.
- 2) This hand doesn't have support for spades but has a good suit of its own.
- 3) This hand doesn't have support for spades nor does it have a suit of its own.

These are three vastly different hands: one clearly wants to play in spades; the second wants to be in diamonds; and the third doesn't know where it wants to be. The one thing they all have in common, however, is that they are very interested in being in a game contract. **Hands 1) and 3)** have 12 points, and **hand 2)** has 13 HCP and a six-card suit. The cue bid says to partner just that: "I have 10 or more points and I am interested in going on to game if you have a **full opening** overcall. If you overcalled with a **sub-minimum** hand (7-11 points) we'll probably have to stop short of game."

Without the cue bid, how would we advance the 1♠ overcall? In **hand 1)** we have 3 spades and a known 8-card spade fit. The Law of Total Tricks says we are protected to the 2-level. But a bid of 2♠ shows a hand of 6-9 points. It is weak bid and is non-forcing. We don't want partner passing 2♠ with a hand of 13 or more points, do we?

In **hand 2)** we could bid our diamonds at the 2-level, but that too, is non-forcing. Partner might pass, even with a full opening hand.

In **hand 3)** we could have a play for game in diamonds, clubs, spades or no-trump. It all depends on what is in partner's hand. But a bid of 2♦, 2♣, 2♠ or 1NT are all non-forcing and can be passed by partner with a 13-15 point hand.

The cue bid is used to start of all advances that want to investigate game. The follow-up re-bid clarifies the type of hand we have. To illustrate this, lets give the overcaller two types of hands: One, **subminimum** and the other a **full opening** hand type. Following each example is the bidding that suggests both the type and the strength of the hand.

### Hand 1) – Support for partner's suit.

Partner				Partner			
♠A Q J x x				♠A Q J x x			
♥x x x				♥x			
♦x x x				♦K Q x x			
♣x x				♣K Q x x			
You				You			
♠K x x				♠K x x			
♥Q x x x				♥Q x x x			
♦A K x				♦A K x			
♣x x x				♣x x x			
W    N    E    S				W    N    E    S			
1♥				1♥			
P				P			
2♣				3♣			
P				P			
All Pass				4♠			

Partner shows a **subminimum** hand and no interest in game by returning to his suit at the cheapest level.

By bidding anything other than 2♣, partner is showing a **full opening hand**. Here, he shows the lower of his 2 four-card minors. You jump to 4♠, the contract in which you expect to make game.

## Hand 2) – A Suit of Your Own.

Partner

♠A Q J x x  
♥x x  
♦x x  
♣x x x x

You

♠x x  
♥K x  
♦A K Q J x x  
♣x x x

W	N	E	S
1♥	1♠	P	2♥
P	2♠	P	3♦
All Pass			

You show your long diamond suit after partner makes his discouraging 2♠ rebid. He can now pass you. Your non-jump diamond bid was just an attempt on your part, to improve the contract.

Partner

♠A Q J x x  
♥x x  
♦x x x x  
♣A K

You

♠x x  
♥K x  
♦A K Q J x x  
♣x x x

W	N	E	S
1♥	1♠	P	2♥
P	3♦	P	5♦
P	6♦	All Pass	

To show his **full opening** hand, partner rebids his second suit, diamonds. You jump to game and partner may bid the slam he hopes to make. If partner was hesitant to bid his diamonds, he could have rebid 3♠ instead. Then a rebid of 4♦ by you would have evoked either a 4NT ace-asking rebid by partner or a jump to 6♦.

**Hand 3) You don't know how high or where you want to be.**

Partner  
 ♠A Q J x x  
 ♥x x  
 ♦x x x  
 ♣Q x x

You  
 ♠x x  
 ♥x x x  
 ♦K Q x x  
 ♣A K x x

W	N	E	S
1♥	1♣	P	2♥
P	2♠	All Pass	

True, you're not sure where to play, but when partner shows a **subminimum** hand you pass a low level contract and hope for the best.

Partner  
 ♠A Q J x x  
 ♥A Q x  
 ♦J x x  
 ♣x x

You  
 ♠x x  
 ♥x x x  
 ♦K Q x x  
 ♣A K x x

W	N	E	S
1♥	1♣	P	2♥
P	2NT	P	3NT

Partner want to tell you he has a **full opening** hand, and bidding 2NT gets this fact across, plus he shows a stopper in the opponent's heart suit. This information solves your problem. A game in 3NT is the best possible place to play.

**Use the cue bid to advance partner's overcall with all type hands that are interested in getting to game.**