



## GBC Online Lessons

### Distributional Hands – Michaels Cue Bid<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

When RHO opens the bidding with a suit bid at the 1-level (1♣, 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠), you may be able to compete in the bidding with one long suit by making a simple overcall or preemptive jump overcall. There are bids available that will allow you to compete in the bidding showing two suits with just one bid. These bids are the *Michaels Cuebid and Unusual 2NT*. These are powerful competitive bidding tools. They allow you to take away some of the opponents' valuable bidding space by preempting the auction, and showing your partner two 5+card suits.

This week, we will look at the Michaels Cue Bid.

*Note: A cue bid is a bid of the opponents' suit. People often confuse that term with a control bid. A control bid is just that: first (or, with partnership agreement second) round control of the bid suit.*

#### Michaels Cue Bid

When RHO opens the bidding with a suit at the 1-level, an immediate bid of that suit is not natural but is used as a conventional call called a *Michaels Cuebid*. You use this cuebid to show two 5+card suits, either both Majors (if neither Major has been bid) or a Major and a minor (if a Major is bid).

These bids usually show 2-suited preemptive strength bids, normally about 5-11 HCP. It does not have to be alerted.

#### Michaels Auctions

1♣	2♣	5+/5+ in the Majors
1♦	2♦	5+/5+ in the Majors
1♥	2♥	5+♠ and a 5+ card minor
1♠	2♠	5+♥ and a 5+ card minor

#### Example 1

♠ KQ843

♥ KQ532

♦ 93

♣ 5

After a 1♣ opening bid, we make a Michaels Cuebid of 2♣ with this hand.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Todd, Audrey Grant, Larry Cohen, Bridgebum, Jim Ricker, Barbara Seagram



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### Distributional Hands – Michaels Cue Bid<sup>2</sup>

#### Michaels Cue Bid Continued

You MUST have at least 5-5 in your two suits. Never use Michaels with 5-4 or 4-5 shape. Partner expects two 5-card suits. Using Michaels with a 5-4 or 4-5 shape is a surefire way to lose 1100 when all the opponents can make is a game. For the same reason, i.e. you are misleading partner, do not persuade yourself that it is alright to use Michaels with a 6-4 shape just because you have 10 cards in your two suits. It is not.

As with other conventions, take care to note your vulnerability and the skill level of your opponents. Use caution if you are vulnerable and the opponents are not vulnerable.

#### Distributional Hands with Opening Strength or Better

With 12-15 pts, overcall your suits naturally. You start by bidding your higher-ranking suit first and bid your lower-ranking suit next if you get a chance. You rebid your lower-ranking suit to show at least 5/5 distribution.

#### Responding to a Michaels Cue Bid

First and foremost, a Michaels Cue Bid is FORCING, if there is no intervening bid. With a fit for one of partner's known suits, raise to the appropriate level. Assume partner has a weak hand. If partner had opening or better points, partner would have overcalled.

When partner's bid shows a major and an undisclosed minor and you do not have a fit in the major suit, bid 2NT. This is artificial so must be alerted. It tells partner you do not like her major suit and asks partner to show her minor suit.

#### Other Considerations

1. Is Michaels "on" for a passed hand? Recommend: Yes
2. Is Michaels "on" in balancing seat? Recommend: Yes
3. Is Michaels "on" after opponents bid 1 of something, partner passes, responder bids 1NT?  
Recommend: Yes

#### Interference

There are complicated systems to interfere with Michaels. If opponents bid over Michaels, it is often best to stop bidding. Your partner – and the opponents – know your distribution. Unless you hold a strong hand, continuing the auction is dangerous.

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Todd, Audrey Grant, Larry Cohen, Bridgebum, Jim Ricker



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**Conclusion**

When the opponents open the bidding and you have a shapely hand, it is important for you to compete in the auction immediately. You want to show partner as much information about the hand as possible on the first round of the bidding.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Todd, Audrey Grant, Larry Cohen, Bridgebum, Jim Ricker, Barbara Seagram