

CUE RAISES

Raising Partner's Suit in Competition

One of the things that makes Bridge a challenging pastime is that, unlike games like Chess and Solitaire to name just a couple, you have a partner that you should keep informed of what you are doing especially in the bidding

There are some hands where, as an individual, you have to take the initiative and take a more or less 'unilateral' decision for the partnership. By this I mean, you take an action that does not directly include partner in the discussion. These type of bids generally are things like preempts but even then you must try and be reasonably consistent in what a preempt is so that partner can act accordingly.

HOWEVER, THESE 'UNILATERAL' DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE THE RULE OR ELSE YOU MAY NEED TO TAKE UP A GAME THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE A PARTNERSHIP ASPECT

THE OPPONENTS BLESS THEIR SOULS REMAIN SILENT IN THE AUCTION



Partner and I have a free run to bid in our favourite style (Standard, Acol, Precision etc.) using our favourite conventions (eg Jacoby raises, Bergen, Splinters, Inverted Minor Suit raises, Limit raises etc. etc. plus any other gadgets that we have developed) to reach a hopefully satisfactory contract

HOWEVER, OPPONENTS ARE THERE NOT JUST TO MAKE UP THE NUMBERS BUT TO TRY AND COMPETE FOR THEIR OWN CONTRACTS SO WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY BID





PARTNER OPENS THE BIDDING AND THEY OVERCALL

The first situation we shall explain is where partner opens the bidding and the next opponent overcalls a suit. For our example, we shall assume that partner opens one heart (promising at least 5) and the next opponent overcalls one spade

Auction

OPPONENT	PARTNER	OPPONENT	YOU
Pass	1 	1 	?

Your Hand is

	XXXX
	XXXX
	XXXX
	XXXX

What do you bid (what are the options)?

Cue Raises

You can bid a new suit as forcing (or some people play it as non-forcing) or you can double for take out or bid some level of No Trumps with stopper(s) but how can we raise partner's suit?

We can bid 2 , 3 , 4  and even 'old black' 4NT.

They have given us other options to raise 

We can bid their suit  to show a raise as well.

This is called a CUE RAISE – eg 2  and 3 

Other bids stay and bidding NT clearly now shows

a  stopper without primary support for 

Cue Raise Options

We can assign various meanings to each bid and try and show how good or bad our support is to partner so that they can have a reasonable idea of what to do if the opponents' get active in the bidding

Let us look at assigning the bids as an example

2  = (6-9 with 3/4 card support)

3  = (6-9 with 4 card support + distribution)

3  = (10-11 with 4 card support + distribution)

4  = (6-9 with at least 5 spades + good distribution).

2  = (10/11+ good points and good support)

3  = (a splinter in spades with only game values)



Raising Partner

You can decide on your preferred meaning for the bids but an immediate cue of their suit (ie in this case bidding two spades) is the strong unlimited option. It does not necessarily mean that you have anything particular in spades

OPPONENT OPENS THE BIDDING AND PARTNER OVERCALLS

The second situation we shall explain is where the opponent opens the bidding and your partner overcalls a suit. For our example, we shall assume that the opponent opens one heart (promising at least 5) and your partner overcalls one spade

Auction

OPPONENT	PARTNER	OPPONENT	YOU
1 	1 	Pass	?

Your Hand is

 XXXX

 XXXX

 XXXX

 XXXX

What do you bid (what are the options)?

Cue Raises

You can bid a new suit as forcing (or some people play it as non-forcing) or you can double for take out or bid some level of No Trumps with stopper(s) or Pass without a good hand as partner could be weak but how can we raise partner's suit?

We can bid 2♣, 3♣, 4♣ and even 'old black' 4NT.

They have given us other options to raise ♣

We can bid their suit ♥ to show a raise as well.

This is called a CUE RAISE – eg 2♥ and 3♥

Other bids stay and bidding NT clearly now shows

a ♣ stopper without primary support for ♥

Cue Raises

You can bid a new suit as forcing (or some people play it as non-forcing) or you can double for take out or bid some level of No Trumps with stopper(s) but how can we raise partner's suit?

Let us look at assigning the bids as an example

2 ♠ = (6-9 with 3/4 card support)

3 ♠ = (6-9 with 4 card support + distribution)

3 ♠ = (10-11 with 4 card support + distribution)

4 ♠ = (6-9 with at least 5 spades + good distribution).

2 ♥ = (10/11+ good points and good support)

3 ♥ = (a splinter in hearts invitational)

4 ♥ = (a splinter in hearts good hand for game)

Raising Partner

You can decide on your preferred meaning for the bids but an immediate cue of their suit (ie in this case bidding two heart) is the strong unlimited option. It does not necessarily mean that you have anything particular in hearts

Cue Raises - Summary



Cue Raises – what are they?

They are a cue bid of the opponent's suit (whether partner opened or overcalled) to show an unspecified good raise of partner's suit



You should be mindful that partner's overcall (especially non vulnerable) maybe weak, so your definition of a good raise may well have to have a higher minimum limit to cater for this.

Cue Raises – why are they useful?




1. Partner's next bid might be awkward especially if your other opponent jumps in their suit but if partner knows roughly what you have, then the decision might be easier
2. It is especially of benefit if partner must decide whether to bid on as a save to their game or to defend
3. It is equally important if they save against your game as whether to double and defend or bid on

This theme along with the Law of Total Tricks may well assist in high level decisions. **YOU WILL NOT GET THEM ALL RIGHT** but it should help.





Auction

OPPONENT	PARTNER	OPPONENT	YOU
Pass	1 	1 	?

Your Hand is

	X
	A32
	KXXXXX
	KX



Your Hand is

	AQ32
	A32
	KQXX
	KX

Cue Raises

This hand on the left is worth a cue raise – it is 3 card support with top cards and some distribution - it could be much better than this as well as shown by the hand on the right





Auction

OPPONENT	PARTNER	OPPONENT	YOU
Pass	1 	1 	?

Your Hand is

	QXX
	JXX
	QJX
	KJXX



Your Hand is

	32
	A3
	AKQJXX
	K32



Cue Raises

Neither of these hands are cue raise material – the hand on the left is flat and more a defensive type of hand – yes raise hearts and the hand on the right is strong but without heart support

Auction

OPPONENT	PARTNER	OPPONENT	YOU
1 	1 	Pass	?

Your Hand is

	K32
	AXX
	KXXX
	XXX

Your Hand is

	XXXX
	AXX
	AQXXX
	X

Cue Raises

With the hand on the left do not punish partner who has made a simple overcall with the hand on the right this is a much better hand and you should take more aggressive action