

Cue Raise

Rationale

When partner makes an overcall at the one level, it can cover a wide range of High Card Points (HCP). Many pairs play it as 8 – 15 HCP. At the lower end of the range, it should be a goodish five card suit, headed by the Ace or King and another high honour. To use a chess analogy, such bids are often called “the pawns of bridge”. Their goal is to disturb the opposition bidding sequences. There is little chance of the opposition collecting a hefty penalty against you at the one level. If they chase such a low level penalty, they will frequently be missing a game score. Continuing the destructive action by raising partner’s one level overcall is an attractive proposition when we have an eight card or better fit. Having a fit with partner again protects us from large penalties and makes it difficult for the opposition to judge how high they should be bidding.

- With about 5 -9 HCP, raise partner according to the Total Number of Trumps (TNT). Alert!
- With three trumps, raise to the *two* level. We have 8 trumps, bid to make 8 tricks.
- With four trumps, raise to the *three* level. However, when vulnerable, it’s ok to be a bit cautious!
- With five trumps, bid to the *four* level.

FAQ: How can partner tell when you have a good hand to raise him, as opposed to TNT?

ANS: With 10+ HCP and a fit with partner, we make a “*Cue Raise*”. i.e.

- We bid the opposition suit. This asks the overcaller whether he has an opening hand or just a one level overcall.
- To show the weaker hand, the overcaller simply rebids his suit.
- To show the stronger hand, he changes suit or does something else. Hopefully, the partnership can then have a constructive approach towards a game contract.
- If the opponent raises opener’s bid, *double* replaces the cue raise
- Cue Raise is also known as “Unassuming Cue Bid”

Here are bidding sequences to show the cue raise:-

(1C) 1H (P) 2H shows 3 hearts, weak
 (1C) 1H (P) 3H shows 4 hearts, weak
 (1C) 1H (P) 4H shows 5 heart pre-emptive or may be a rich hand! Next...

(1C) 1H (P) 2C
 (P) 2D (P) 2H
 (P) 3H (P) P

2C is the cue raise showing a limit raise or better
 The 2D bid shows the overcall is an opening hand
 2H bid shows that the heart game is not certain
 3H bid is invitational. Partner is only 10-11 HCP.

(1C) 1H (P) 2C
 (P) 2H (P) P

2C is the cue raise showing a limit raise or better
 2H, simply rebidding the suit shows less than an opening hand. Partner subsides quietly.

Older bidding systems may bid 3H immediately and may be set by one trick.

(1C) 1H (P) 2C
 X P Pass confirms weaker overcall

To the contrary, when we have little fit with partner’s overcall, passing is frequently the best bet, even when we hold a light opening hand. Aim to get a plus score on the board.

By contrast, our two level overcalls should be the equivalent of an opening hand. Chasing a penalty will be attractive to the opponents since fewer tricks are required and they are less likely to be missing game. Cue raise is not needed. Instead, it can be asking partner to bid No Trumps with a stopper.

Dir: W ♠AQT62

Nil Vul ♥K43

♦753

♣T6

♠74

♥A962

♦AKT4

♣K95

♠K83

♥J5

♦QJ6

♣Q8743

♠J95

♥QT87

♦982

♣AJ2

(1D) 1S (1NT) 2S all pass

2S will probably go one off (-50) while 1NT or 2C makes in some comfort (+90)

Dir: W ♠AQT62

Nil Vul ♥K43

♦753

♣96

♠74

♥A962

♦AKT4

♣KT5

♠K8

♥QJT8

♦QJ6

♣Q874

♠J953

♥75

♦982

♣AJ32

(1D) 1S (X) 3S! !pre-emptive

?? Will he or won’t he? West knows there is a fit but East could be weaker. 4H makes. Swap CT & C9 and it is one off. 3S is two off but hard to double

Dir: W ♠AQT62

Nil Vul ♥K43

♦753

♣96

♠74

♥A962

♦AKT4

♣KT5

♠K8

♥T8

♦862

♣Q87432

♠J953

♥QJ75

♦QJ9

♣AJ

(1D) 1S (P) 2D

(P) 2S all pass. South gives up opposite the weak overcall. Note 3S is one off, so 2S is a great sign-off. EW make 3C (110) at least.