

MICHAELS CUE BID & THE UNUSUAL NOTRUMP

In bridge, it can be difficult to show two-suiter hands. e.g. you have

S Axxxx
H KJxxx
D x
C xx

Your RHO (Right hand opponent) bids 1D and you bid 1S, intending later to show your Heart suit. Your LHO, however, now bids 3D and it goes Pass - Pass back to you. You really don't have a good enough hand to now bid 3H when you have heard nothing from Partner.

Enter MICHAELS CUEBID

Invented by Michael Michaels of Miami, FL.

Michaels allows you to bid 1D - **2D** to show 5-5 or better in the major suits. This translates to partner as "Spades and Hearts" all in one breath.

1C -

2C would show the same hand.

1H -

2H

however is still Michaels but promises five spades (at least) and a 5 card minor. Partner will not know which minor it is.

Same idea with 1S - **2S**. This shows five hearts (at least) and a 5 card minor.

If partner wishes to find out which minor it is, he must bid 2NT so that the Michaels bidder will now reveal which minor he has. This is **ONLY** if responder to Michaels has two or fewer in partner's advertised major but at least 3-3 in both minors.

Those who play Michaels Cuebid usually also play the Unusual No Trump (abbreviated here as UNT)

With Michaels, think HIGHER suits...MAJORS...Capital M for Michaels!!!

But with Unusual NoTrump, think LOWER UNBID SUITS...minors.

1H by RHO - **2NT** by you shows 5-5 (at least) in the minors.

1S by RHO - **2NT** by you shows 5-5 at least in the minors.

BUT 1 of a minor by RHO and **2NT** by you shows the TWO LOWER UNBID SUITS. i.e. the other minor and HEARTS.

MICHAELS

RHO	YOU	Your bid means	Points	Modern Called Mini-Maxi	With 13-15 The In-Betweeners
1D	2D	5H & 5S at least	8 + incl dist	8-12 or 16+	Overcall higher ranking suit first
1C	2C	5H & 5S at least	8 + incl dist	8-12 or 16+	Overcall higher ranking suit first
1H	2H	5S & 5 of a minor	8 + incl dist	8-12 or 16+	Overcall higher ranking suit first
1S	2S	5H & 5 of a minor	8 + incl dist	8-12 or 16+	Overcall higher ranking suit first

UNUSUAL NT (abbreviated UNT for convenience)

RHO	YOU	Your bid means	Points	Modern Called Mini-Maxi	With 13-15 The In-Betweeners
1S	2NT	5C & 5D at least	8 + incl dist	8-12 or 16 +	Overcall higher ranking suit first
1H	2N	5C & 5D at least	8 + incl dist	8-12 or 16 +	Overcall higher ranking suit first
1C	2NT	5D & 5H at least	8 + incl dist	8-12 or 16+	Overcall higher ranking suit first
1D	2NT	5C & 5H at least	8 + incl dist	8-12 or 16+	Overcall higher ranking suit first

Note that while interfering over a 1NT opener, using DONT, Cappelletti, Landy or Meckwell, you are able to show two suiters that promise maybe only 5-4 or 4-5. This does NOT apply playing Michaels and Unusual NT. You MUST have at least 5-5.

Also, you promise to have some degree of quality in BOTH of your 5 card suits. NOT Jxxxx but rather: KJxxx. Your points must be in your LONG suits, not in your short suits. Not singleton Aces or Kings.

It is best if you make these bids with EITHER weak hands or strong hands.

Weak = up to 12 points including distribution. This is called mini.

Strong = 16 or more points including distribution. This is called maxi.

- With an Intermediate (13 - 15 points) two-suiter, do not use these bids. Instead, overcall in the higher-ranking suit first. (You will plan to bid the 2nd suit at your next opportunity.) This is called the In-Betweeners.

- Partner will wonder why (when you have so clearly shown a 2 suiter, by bidding both suits) you did not use Michaels or Unusual NT. He will now know that you have 13-15 pts, including distribution.
- **If you are really new to these conventions, we suggest not worrying about the mini-maxi concept and just use these bids anytime you have this distribution, provided you have GOOD STUFF (i.e. QUALITY!!) in your long suits.**
- The Partner of the Michaels or Unusual bidder (M or UNT) must always assume that it shows a weak hand (assume it is a Mini). If it was the stronger version (Maxi) then the M or UNT bidder would bid again.
- The M or UNT bidder must remember that their partner is now choosing which suit he prefers of the two advertised suits. i.e. He is NOT showing that he loves that suit, only that he PREFERS that suit.

He may have been forced to bid 2H after 1C - 2C - P - ?
with only

S x
H xx
D Qxxxx
C Kxxxx

Responses to Michaels or to Unusual 2NT

When responder to Michaels or Unusual NT now bids a suit advertised by partner, it merely shows a preference for that suit, it is not forcing and responder shows no interest in game.

After 1H - 2H or 1S - 2S, 2NT by partner requests partner to state which minor suit she has.

A jump bid in a suit advertised by partner shows good support for that suit and invites partner to bid game with a maximum for her lower range or bid game if she had 16 +.

New suits by partner (that are not one that M or UNT bidder has shown) are non-forcing and show a good suit of his own.

3NT by partner says he wishes to play the hand in 3NT.

THE FOLLOWING HAND IS BY EDDIE KANTAR

				984	
				8	
				AK863	
				AJ94	
A10					KQJ65
AQ43					K10652
QJ74					52
Q86					10
N	E	S	W	732	
1D	2D	P	4H	J97	
				109	
Opening lead: D Ace				K7532	

Bidding Commentary: The 2D overcall is 'Michaels' showing 5-5 or possibly 6-5 (either way) in the majors. Assume a weaker hand. If partner has a stronger hand, he bids again. As West with a double fit in both suits, the sky's the limit. Give yourself two extra points for each A, K, or Q in partner's suits and a bonus point holding three honors in partner's two suits. Your hand has zoomed to 17 points!
P.S. Forget the minor suit honors.

Defensive Commentary: As North, after the high-low in diamonds, indicating a doubleton, cash the CA before leading a third diamond. If you don't, declarer can discard dummy's club perhaps costing partner a trump trick. If you do this right, DAK, CA, then a diamond, down one.

Play Commentary: If North plays the ace-king and a diamond, discard a club from dummy forcing South to trump. If North cashes the CA and then leads a third diamond, your best shot is to ruff with the king and hope hearts are 2-2 or the jack is singleton. Good luck.

Quotable Quote by Marc Levy

"Imagine there is a bank account that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening the bank deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course?"

Each of us has such a bank, its name is time. Every morning, it credits you 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off at a loss, whatever of this you failed to invest to a good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no drawing against "tomorrow". You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and health. The clock is running. Make the most of today."

BRIDGE CHALLENGE

This hand came up at the bridge club today.

1. Would you bid it this way?
2. Would you make this contract on the opening lead of Heart King?

Everyone vulnerable.

	43		
	AJ97		
	KQJ		
	AK83		
A7			J
KQ863			4
8532			A109764
64			Q10952
E S W N	KQ1098652		
	1052		
P 4S P 6S	---		
	J7		

Opening lead: H King

The 4S opener announced a good 8 card suit. The hand should have been a bit better, being vulnerable, but sometimes the bridge Gods just don't deal you quite the right cards.

North gambled and bid 6S. You are worried when West leads the Heart King as now you have quick losers AND you are missing the Ace of Spades. Troubling. If you win the Heart Ace and drive out the Spade Ace, back will come the H Queen for down 1.

You search frantically for a way to discard your two small Hearts before pulling trump. **RULE:** With quick losers and no Ace of trump, do not pull trump yet.

Win Heart Ace and lead the D King, praying fervently that East owns the D Ace. If East covers with the Ace, you trump it in your hand and cross to dummy on the high Club. Now lead the Diamond Q and J and discard your two losing Hearts. NOW pull trump. If East does not cover the D King, you discard a Heart and now do it again.

This is called a Ruffing Finesse. Most of the time, it does not matter which opponent has the missing Ace in a ruffing finesse. If your RHO (Right Hand Opponent) covers, you ruff and if she does not cover, you discard a H. BUT, on this hand if LHO wins the Ace, while you have discarded...unlucky, he still gets to cash his high Heart Queen and ALSO the Spade Ace...Down 3, because East now gets a H ruff.

But if you live right, East will have the D Ace and since this is THE only way to make the hand, this is how you must play it.

Take your time at trick one and count your losers, then make a plan before rushing to play the hand.

**BARBARA'S NEW BOOK (her 26th) NOW OUT
PLANNING THE PLAY: THE NEXT LEVEL**

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Barbara's first book in this series (also co-authored by David Bird) won Book of the Year Award by the American Bridge Teachers' Association: Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand.

That first book introduced the basic concepts of how to go about making a plan as declarer for beginning and improving players, and is a popular text for bridge teachers. This sequel extends the plan to more complex situations, and covers ideas such as safety plays, avoidance play, trump control, dummy reversal, and endplays. It will appeal to players who have a good grasp of the basics of declarer play, and are looking to improve from there.

Books are available from Lee or Wayne at their excellent Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon and evening games at Temple Sinai Synagogue @ 210 Wilson Ave.

OR

from Josee at Trinity Presbyterian Church at 2737 Bayview Ave on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

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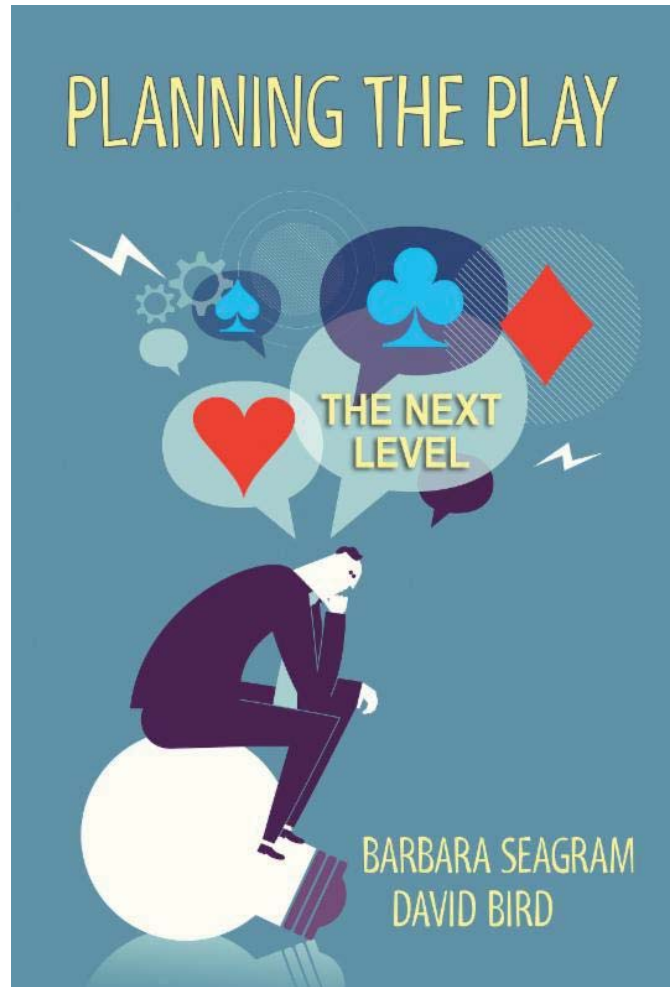
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TAKING PREFERENCE

A7642
J5
Q853
87

S	W	N	E	3
				AK1098
1H	P	1S	P	J94
2C	P	?		AQ54

You are North. Partner (S) has opened the bidding. You have 6-9 points. Most of the time, you are only entitled to bid once. You are sorry you came out to play today. When you are responder with 6-9 points, you are low man on totem pole. All so sad.

While, you will often only bid once with 6-9 points; when opener offers you a choice of two suits, you **MUST** choose.

He promised at least five hearts and at least four clubs, so you choose his first bid suit, even when your choices are less than wonderful in your eyes. **Bid 2H**. This is called **SIMPLE** preference as you have not jumped. South should **NOT** get excited and should just pass.

Note that S knows that you only have **TWO** Hearts as, with 6-9 points and three card support, you would have bid 2H immediately on round one of the bidding.

IF North had three Clubs and only one Heart, he would have passed the 2C bid. You can **CHOOSE** by Passing. Also called Simple Preference.

Let's have a look at another scenario:

A7642
Q53
A87
87

S	W	N	E	3
				AK1098
1H	P	1S	P	1094
2C	P	?		AK54

North now has an invitational hand. If his second bid is now 2H, then he has behaved the same way as if he had the first hand in the first example above. S will think partner has only 6-9 points as he has taken simple preference.

North must now jump to 3H on his second bid. Partner will know that he has 10-12 points and only **THREE** card support or he would have made a limit raise on his very first bid, showing four. **AND** he will know that North has 10-12 points. This is called **JUMP** preference.

DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

		A54		
		A65		
		1098765		
		2		
Q1072				KJ983
87				109
AK				QJ
AKQ87				10965
		6		
S	W	N	E	KQJ432
				432
2H	DbI	3H	3S	J43
P	4S	All	Pass	

East does not HAVE to respond to partner's takeout double, when N competes (bidding 3H) so his response shows 8 or more points. West adds his points to that and happily bids 4S.

South leads Heart King. North looks at his hand, calculating how on earth they can beat this contract.

S has bid 2H, thus N knows that declarer must have two Hearts as S guaranteed to have precisely a 6 card suit.

So N knows that NS can score two H tricks as well as the Spade Ace. Does that beat the contract? No.

When you have CONTROL of trumps (Ax or Kxx of trump is called control of trump, because you will "get in" quickly on a trump lead by declarer), THINK SHORT SUIT leads.

So how can North get South to shift to a Club???? You can't. So North has to take the bull by the horns and take over. N must overtake H K with Ace at trick one and lead a Club.

When declarer wins and leads trump, N must win Spade Ace immediately and lead a H to S to win. If S does not now lead back a C, you simply get a new partner. North now ruffs South's C return. Down one!

The brain is the most amazing organ.
It works 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year from birth until you fall in love.