

# THE “MICHAELS CUE-BID” AND THE “UNUSUAL 2-NO-TRUMP” CONVENTIONS

## Two- Suited Overcalls

**A. Background:** Two-suited hands are generally difficult to describe after the bidding has been opened by the Opponents, especially if the hand requiring description is very weak. Often, the Opponents bid too much, too soon, for both of the suits to be safely shown, or the bidding dies too soon for both suits to be introduced. The “**Michaels Cue-Bid**” and the “**Unusual 2-No-Trump**” Conventions describe such two-suited hands by means of an overcall, using a simple *artificial cue-bid*. Both conventions act as a defensive, obstructive call, either in an attempt to pre-empt the Opponent’s bidding space or to lead to a profitable sacrifice against their eventual contract; or else as offensive weapons used to seek the best suit for a sought-after, makeable contract by the invoking Partnership. These two conventions serve as valuable weapons in one’s competitive bidding arsenal.

**B. Definition:** The “**Michaels Cue-Bid**” uses a direct cue-bid of the Opponent’s suit as a two-suited, take-out bid. It usually promises at least a 5-5 or better distribution in each of two suits (With a 6-4 distribution, one is best advised against invoking Michaels).

### “Michaels Cue-Bids”

#### (Applicable in both the Direct {2<sup>nd</sup>} Seat or in the Balancing {4<sup>th</sup>} Seat)

1. **1C**    “2C” = **BOTH MAJORS** (At least 5 Hearts and 5 Spades, or better)
2. **1D**    “2D” = **BOTH MAJORS** (At least 5 Hearts and 5 Spades or better)
3. **1H**    “2H” = **THE OTHER MAJOR + AN UNSPECIFIED MINOR**  
(Either 5 Spades and 5 Clubs, or 5 Spades and 5 Diamonds, or better)
4. **1S**    “2S” = **THE OTHER MAJOR + AN UNSPECIFIED MINOR**  
(Either 5 Hearts and 5 Clubs, or 5 Hearts and 5 Diamonds, or better)

### The “Unusual 2-NT” Convention

#### (Applicable **ONLY** in the Direct {2<sup>nd</sup>} Seat)

**1C/1D/1H/1S**    “2-NT” = **THE TWO LOWER, AS-YET, UN-BID SUITS**, 5-5 or better in length

Examples:    **1C**    “2-NT” = Diamonds and Hearts, 5-5 or longer

**1D**    “2-NT” = Clubs and Hearts, 5-5 or longer

**1H/1S**    “2-NT” = Clubs and Diamonds, 5-5 or longer

#### A 2-NT Overcall in the Balancing (4<sup>th</sup>) Seat) is Natural

<u>Background:</u>	<b>1B</b>	Pass	Pass	1-NT = 10-14 HCP’s
	<b>1A</b>	Pass	Pass	“Double”
	Pass	<b>1B</b>	Pass	1-NT = 15-17 HCP’s
	<b>1B</b>	Pass	Pass	<u>2-NT</u> = 18-20 HCP’s

#### **C: Requirements for using “Michaels Cue-Bids” or the “Unusual 2-NT”**

1. **Distribution:** - At least a 5-card or better holding in each of two referenced suits.

2. **Strength:** - The strength of the hand when these Conventions are used falls into one of two types: (a) a hand that is very weak, 5-10 HCP's; else (b), a hand that that is very strong, 16 HCP's or more. When the hand is of moderate value, 11-15 HCP's, one should attempt to bid both suits oneself; i.e., not use either of these Conventions; rather bid the higher-ranking suit first, followed by a re-bid of the lower-ranking suit on the next bidding turn. In this way, Responder can differentiate the point count of Partner's holdings.
3. **Vulnerability and Level:** – When Vulnerable or at higher bidding levels, it is more desirable to have either greater strength, or a greater distributional holding, or both.

**D. Responses To “Michael’s Cue-Bids”:** The Partner of the “Michaels Cue-Bid” should, if at all possible, when the bidding permits, take a preference for one of the suits referenced by the Cue-Bidder. Since Partner will usually have as few as five in each of his/her referenced suits, a 3-card support is all that is necessary. A preference on a doubleton, however, will sometimes be necessary, unless responding Partner has a 6-card or longer fourth suit of his/her own.

Examples:

1C	"2C"	P	<u>2H</u>	(A preference for Hearts)
1D	"2D"	P	<u>2S</u>	(A preference for Spades)
1H	"2H"	P	<u>2S</u>	(A preference for Spades)
1S	"2S"	P	<u>3H</u>	(A preference for Hearts)
1H/1S P	"2H"/"2S" 3C/3D	P	"2-NT"	(A preference for the as-yet-un-specified Minor suit as opposed to the Spade Suit) (The unspecified Minor is then revealed by the Michaels bidder)
1S	"2-NT"	P	<u>3C/3D</u>	(A Minor suit preference is chosen)
1S	"2-NT"	P	<u>3H</u>	(Responder denies request to choose Clubs or Diamonds and, instead chooses his/her 6-card Heart suit.)

**E. Re-bids By The Original Cue-Bidder:**

- (a) (With 0-10 HCP's) – “**Pass**” the Chosen Suit by the Responder, and do not bid again unless requested by Partner to do so,
- (b) (With 16-18 HCP's) – Re-bid by Raising Partner's chosen selection from the two suits originally set forth by the cue-bidder.
- (c) (With 19{+} HCP's) – Cue-bid Opener's suit, once again.

Examples: The Opponents have opened 1C and you hold the following:

1. QJ109X KXXXX XX X  
(Bid "2C" and then "Pass" Partner's 2H or 2S response)
2. AK109X AQJXX KX X  
(Bid "2C" and then 3H or 3S over Partner's 2H or 2S response)
3. AK109X AKQXX KX X  
(Bid "2C" and then "3C" over Partner's 2H or 2S response)
4. AQ109X KJXXX AX X  
(Do Not Use Michaels with 11-15 HCP's. Bid 1S and then re-bid 2H at your next bidding opportunity if doing so becomes available)