

The Unassuming Cue Bid

A Limit Raise or Better when Partner Overcalls

Let's start with the situation where partner opens the bidding (no intervention). You are West and partner opens 1♠. You clearly have a sound raise to 3♠ and so that's what you bid (either directly or via a forcing NoTrump or whatever treatment you use to show a sound raise to the three level with 3 trumps) opposite an opening hand.

| West | East | West | North | East | South |
|---------|---------|------|-------|------|----------|
| ♠ KJ7 | ♠ AQ642 | - | pass | 1♠ | pass |
| ♥ KJ3 | ♥ Q8 | 3♠ | pass | 4♠ | all pass |
| ♦ 64 | ♦ 752 | | | | |
| ♣ QJ852 | ♣ AK6 | | | | |

East has a good opener and 4♠ is an excellent contract. West can afford to invite at the three level because he knows that partner has opening values, so 12+ point (or equivalent with distribution).

But it's different when partner has overcalled. You have this same West hand and the bidding goes: -

| West | East | West | North | East | South |
|---------|---------|------|-------|------|-------|
| ♠ KJ7 | ♠ AQ642 | - | 1♦ | 1♠ | pass |
| ♥ KJ3 | ♥ Q8 | ? | | | |
| ♦ 64 | ♦ 752 | | | | |
| ♣ QJ852 | ♣ J106 | | | | |

This time West has simply overcalled and does not promise an opening hand. In fact he could have anything from 7 to 16 points. With this actual East holding (a decent 1-level overcall) a 3♠ contract would be too high.

So if West cannot bid 3♠ then how does he show the values for a 3♠ raise should partner have a good overcall? The answer is the Unassuming Cue Bid. Playing this convention West cue bids the opener's suit to show a sound raise to 3♠ (or better). With this actual East hand East would simply bid 2♠, and if he had the 15 pointer above he would bid 4♠.

So playing the Unassuming Cue Bid we can stop at the two level if partner has a minimal overcall. And playing this treatment has additional advantages in that direct raises of partner's overcall are pre-emptive.

Let's have a few examples, LHO has opened 1♦ and partner overcalls 1♠:-

| Hand 1 | Hand 2 | Hand 3 | Hand 4 | Hand 5 | Hand 6 |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| ♠ KJ7 | ♠ KJ7 | ♠ KJ73 | ♠ KJ763 | ♠ KQ6 | ♠ AK763 |
| ♥ KJ32 | ♥ 643 | ♥ 853 | ♥ 3 | ♥ Q932 | ♥ 2 |
| ♦ 64 | ♦ 64 | ♦ 3 | ♦ 532 | ♦ 85 | ♦ 82 |
| ♣ QJ52 | ♣ Q8532 | ♣ 85432 | ♣ Q854 | ♣ AKQ7 | ♣ AQ732 |

Hand 1: Bid 2♦ showing a limit raise and pass if partner retreats into 2♠.

Hand 2: Bid 2♠ of course.

Hand 3: Bid 3♠. This is pre-emptive with normally 4 card support.

Hand 4: Bid 4♠. This is pre-emptive with normally 5 card support.

Hand 5: Bid 2♦ This is a sound raise to 4♠ even opposite a minimal overcall and we show the sound raise by cue bidding and then by bidding 4♠ if partner attempts to sign off better.

Hand 6: Here you have options. You can do the same as hand 5; or you can splinter with 3♥ if you play that as a splinter; or you can bid 3♣ if you play that as a fit-showing jump or you can use the Jump Unassuming Cue Bid to show 4 trumps.

Note that the unassuming cue bid still applies if RHO bids over partner's overcall. So after -

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| - | 1♦ | 1♠ | 2♥ |

a 2♠ bid by West would simply be competitive, 3♠ or 4♠ would be pre-emptive and 3♦ would show the limit raise or better. You would have to agree what 3♥ means, it's probably best to use it to show 4 card trump support.

The Jump Unassuming Cue Bid

Hand 7 This hand is very similar to hand 1 and many would bid 2♦, an Unassuming Cue Bid, showing a sound raise to 3♠.

♠ KJ73 The 4th trump, however, is very important – especially in a competitive situation (partner needs to know how many trumps you have).

♥ KJ3 So most experienced players now bid 3♦ - a jump unassuming cue bid –

♦ 64 to show a sound raise to the three level or better. But you need to agree this as otherwise partner may take it as a splinter.

♣ Q985 Note that the Jump Unassuming Cue Bid forces the partnership to the three level, but that is a sound prospect even if partner has a minimum as there is a total of nine trumps and the Law of Total tricks applies.