

CUE BIDS BY RESPONDER

On the First Round

A first round cue bid response at the two or three level by an unpassed hand is always very strong, game forcing of course. In response to a minor suit opening, it shows excellent trump support and the lack of a suitable alternative bid, and may well lack first-round control of the opposing suit.:

South	West	North
1♣	1♥	2♥

The 2♥ cue bid might be made with ♠KJ3 ♥65 ♦AKJ ♣Q10875. With ♠KJ3 ♥void ♦AKJ2 ♣Q10875 responder should bid either 2♦ or a 3♥ splinter, but a cue bid (intending to rebid the suit later to show first-round control) is probably best.

We must have an exception of course. When a 1♥ bid is overcalled with 1♠, responder has 2♣ and 2♦ available for a forcing bid, so a 2♠ cue bid is of the classic kind: At least four-card support, first and second-round control of the opposing suit (usually a void), and at least some interest in slam.

South	West	North
1♥	1♠	2♠

A typical hand for the 2♠ bid: ♠ void ♥KJ65 ♦AK76 ♣Q987. It is important that opener bid notrump at this point if he has secondary strength that is probably wasted and he would not have opened without that spade strength. All a notrump bid rebid does is to warn of duplication, it does not indicate a desire to play in notrump. A jump to 3NT shows even more serious duplication, e.g., AK of the opposing suit, and a minimum opening bid. With opening bid values outside of any spade strength, an immediate notrump rebid is not in order.

A three-level cue bid does not promise excellent trump support for opener's suit. It is merely game-forcing with no suitable alternative bid available.

South	West	North
1♠	2♣	3♣

The 3♣ bid might be based on ♠K32 ♥KQ104 ♦AJ6 ♣432. With four-card or better support responder can either bid a new suit, perhaps a three-card minor, before raising to game, or respond with a splinter bid if short. Responder can repeat the cue bid when holding first-round control.

A cue bid response at the four level must show first or second round control of the opposing suit, as there is not enough bidding room for a splinter to do that job below game level (except for 1♦-3♣-5♣, which means that 4♣ would not promise shortness in clubs, but that's hard to remember).

See section 3-7, Splinter Response to a Major Opening; section 3-8, Splinter Response to a Minor Opening; and section 3-13, Preemptive Jump Raise to Game.

On the Second Round

When a player cue bids on the second round, after failing to respond on the first round, the bid is natural:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	Pass	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥ - natural bid, non-forcing	

North has hearts that are good enough to play opposite a singleton, despite West's overcall (and West's bid may have been a psych or based on a four-card suit). He was hoping South would reopen with a double, which of course he would have passed. The 2♥ bid is not particularly strong, and South will generally pass.

The same principle applies if the overcall was doubled. A later bid in that suit by either partner is natural, a necessary counter to psychic overcalls.

Other cue bids by responder are discussed in section 10-10, Slam Try Cue Bids, and section 10-12, Probing Cue Bids. Cue bids in response to an opening notrump bid are covered in section 5-3, those in response to a notrump overcall in section 8-4. Cue bids in response to a reopening 1NT overcall have the same meaning as the bid would have if partner had opened 1NT (i.e., the opening bid is ignored).

Passed Hand Cue Bid Response

A passed hand's cue bid response is forcing to a limit situation only. It can be based on various sorts of good hand with which responder doesn't want to risk opener's passing of a new suit response.

South	West	North	East
—	—	Pass	Pass
1♣	1♦	2♦	

North has ♠Q9763 ♥K1032 ♦ void ♣AQ65.

Thanks to the cue bid, his spade bid on the next round will be forcing. North could also have something like ♠Q976 ♥K1032 ♦65 ♣AQ6, since a non-forcing heart or spade bid would be dangerous.