

The Unassuming Cue Bid (UCB) response to partner's overcall

NG34Bridge

The auction has begun (1♥)-1♠-(P)-? Your partner has overcalled 1♠ and you have a fit. As we have seen, you should bid to the level of your spade fit (on pre-emptive grounds), even with virtually nothing. So the question arises: what do you do when you have a genuinely good hand with spade support?

The answer is to use a redundant bid, that of opener's suit, at the lowest level, to show 10+ points and three+ cards in support: 2♥ in the above auction. Or 2♦ in this auction: (1♦) - 1♠ - (2♣) - ? This is termed an Unassuming Cue Bid (UCB).

What would you bid in response to your partner's 1♥ overcall in this auction: (1♠) - 1♥ - (1♠) - ?

| Hand A | Hand B | Hand C |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| ♠ A Q 6 4 2 | ♠ 8 3 | ♠ A Q 10 |
| ♥ Q 4 2 | ♥ Q 9 6 2 | ♥ Q J 10 |
| ♦ Q 4 2 | ♦ 7 4 | ♦ 10 9 7 4 2 |
| ♣ J 6 | ♣ K 10 8 4 2 | ♣ 8 7 |

(A). 2♣. (B). 3♥. (C). 2♣.

- Hand (A) is a perfect UCB: 10+ pts and three+ hearts. Partner can retreat to 2♥ with no game interest, or make another (descriptive) bid to look for game.
- With Hand (B) you should bid 3♥ – to the level of the fit, showing four hearts and 0-9 points.
- Hand (C) may not (quite) have 10 points, but those majors look fabulous, the spade honours sitting over the opposing spade bidder. Upgrade to a UCB. As usual, high card point ranges are guidelines, not fixed rules.

Overcaller's Response to partner's Unassuming Cue Bid (UCB)

Overcaller knows that partner (the advancer) has 3+ card support and 10+ HCP. From now on, the Losing Trick Count is used to control the level that the auction can safely go to.

Given the wide range of the overcall, a 1 level overcall could (rarely) be made with as many as 9 losers, or with as few as 5 losers (e.g. with a 16 HCP hand and a void). It is reasonable to assume initially that a 2-level overcaller has 8 losers.

If the overcall was made at the 2 level (e.g. the opponents open 1♠ and partner overcalls 2♥), advancer should initially assume that that partner has overcalled with 7 losers.

Note: The UCB is almost always used in response to partner's overcall **in a major**. Most bidding below 3NT when a minor is agreed is investigating the possibility of 3NT. So after (1♥) 2♣ (P) 2♥ (P) 2♠ would suggest values in spades (though not necessarily better than minimum because it is still possible to stop in 3♣, whereas (1♥) 2♣ (P) 2♥ (P) 3♦ would suggest values in diamonds and above minimum. These sequences are rare because for NT purposes the overcall will concentrate on stoppers in hearts (the suit they have bid). If he hasn't got values in hearts then 3NT is a bit unlikely because if partner had heart values the bidding would probably have gone (1♥) 2♣ (P) 2NT.

You can test your understanding to the UCB and responses by using the **'Practise your UCB Bids'** exercise located in the NG34Bridge Reference Library:

https://98df24e2-0a8d-40e9-8b52-336e46edc803.filesusr.com/ugd/15ed9f_82faab9ed1f24da28f3d14d505ee64b3.pdf