

## UNUSUAL v. UNUSUAL

When an opponent makes a Michaels Cue Bid against you, you have some extra bids available, and you should incorporate these 'extra bids' into your defensive structure to MCB and U2NT. For instance, if they cue bid your Major suit opening bid, you can use 'their known suit' (the other Major) as your cue raise, so that you can raise partner's Major at the 3-level on a reasonable hand for a 2-level raise and you put all your limit raise (or better hands) through the cue raise.

When an opponent makes a two-suited overcall where you know both their suits, you have even more cue bids available to your side! This occurs when there is an Unusual 2NT overcall (and you know they have both minors, for instance) or when they cue bid your minor suit opening (showing both Majors, or perhaps two specific suits).

Here's an example:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♦	2♦	?	

2♦ showed both Majors. East held:

♠ 7 6  
 ♥ J  
 ♦ Q 7 3  
 ♣ A K 9 8 6 5 2

East now has two cue bids available – 2♥ and 2♠ - but can also bid 3♣ and 3♦.

Top bridge players utilise these extra bids to show different hands. They also equate the higher cue bid with the higher suit (that their side may have) and the lower cue bid with the lower suit. So, in the auction above, hearts relates to clubs and spades relates to diamonds:

2♥	forcing bid with clubs
2♠	limit raise or better with diamonds
3♣	non-forcing (!) with clubs
3♦	less than the limit raise in diamonds

On the above hand, East bid 2♥ to show a good hand with clubs. However, remove the ♦Q from East's hand and he is still able to bid 3♣, non-forcing.

In essence, this structure becomes your consistent method:

BID	MEANING
Double	Interest in penalising at least one of their suits (now all doubles are penalty). Forcing for at least one round
Lower cue bid (lower of their 2 suits)	FORCING in the lower (NOT their 2 suits)
3-opener's suit	Natural, NON-FORCING raise
Higher cue bid (higher of their suits)	FORCING in the higher suit (NOT their 2 suits)
Unbid suit	Natural, NON-FORCING, usually 6+ card suit

And, last night, I realised that after 1-Major – (2NT) – 3NT shows a game forcing raise (and cue bids follow).

The benefits of using Unusual v. Unusual are:

- You can now compete for part-scores (being able to introduce your own long suit on a weakish hand)
- You are able to differentiate between simple raises, limit raises and game raises
- You can create game forcing auctions, even in a new suit

Basically, it gives you the capacity to differentiate between forcing hands and weak or limited hands.

EXAMPLE:

Opener holds:

♠ K 8

♥ A 10 5 4

♦ A 10 6 5 3

♣ A K

1♦                    2NT                    3♠                    Pass  
?

2NT showed both clubs and hearts. If playing Unusual v. Unusual, 3♠ is a long spade suit but non-forcing, so you would just raise to 4♠. If partner wanted to show a game forcing hand with spades, they bid 3♥ (higher suit => higher suit), and then you would explore for slam.

On this particular example, partner held:

♠ Q 10 9 7 6 5

♥ 2

♦ K J 9 8

♣ 6 5

and wanted to compete, knowing there was also a diamond fit to fall back on. Without any agreements, he would have had to pass.

One more thing, if the auction starts with

1-Major            (2-Major)

you can still use 2NT as a Jacoby 2NT bid – 4 card support and game forcing – when using this structure. It fits the structure perfectly.

(On the next two pages, there is a table of the different bids and their meanings when playing Unusual v. Unusual.)

### **UNUSUAL v. UNUSUAL (summarised)**

When the opponents make an Unusual 2NT overcall, you now have 2 cue bids available (clubs = hearts; diamonds = spades etc.) Essentially, we match up the lower cue bid to the 'lower suit' and the higher cue bid to the 'higher suit'.

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Overcall</b>	<b>YOU</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
1S	2NT	X	Interest in penalising at least 1 of their suits (all doubles now penalties)
	(minors)	3C	5+ hearts, FORCING (i.e. good hand)
		3D	Cue raise or better in spades: 10+ HCP, 3+ spades (i.e. good hand)
		3H	(probably 6+) Good hearts, NON-FORCING (i.e. not as good a hand)
		3S	Like a 2S or 2½S raise
		3NT	To play (rare – usually double!)
		4m	Splinter
1H	2NT	X	Interest in penalising at least 1 of their suits (all doubles now penalties)
	(minors)	3C	Cue raise or better in hearts: 10+ HCP, 3+ hearts (i.e. good hand)
		3D	5+ spades, FORCING (i.e. good hand)
		3H	Like a 2H or 2½H raise
		3S	(probably 6+) Good spades, NON-FORCING (i.e. not as good a hand)
		3NT	To play (rare – usually double!)
		4m	Splinter
1D	2NT	X	Interest in penalising at least 1 of their suits (all doubles now penalties)
	(C + H)	3C	Cue raise or better in diamonds: 10+ HCP, diamonds (i.e. good hand)
		3D	Like a 2D or 2½D raise
		3H	5+ spades, FORCING (i.e. good hand)
		3S	(probably 6+) Good spades, NON-FORCING (i.e. not as good a hand)
		3NT	To play
		4C/H	Splinters
		4D	Pre-emptive
		4S	To play
1C	2NT	X	Interest in penalising at least 1 of their suits (all doubles now penalties)
	(D + H)	3C	Like a 2C or 2½C raise
		3D	Cue raise or better in clubs: 10+ HCP, clubs (i.e. good hand)
		3H	5+ spades, FORCING (i.e. good hand)
		3S	(probably 6+) Good spades, NON-FORCING (i.e. not as good a hand)
		3NT	To play
		4C	Pre-emptive
		4D/H	Splinters
		4S	To play

Defending against 1m – 2m Michaels should be different when the 2m bid shows BOTH MAJORS, because now you have 2 cue bids available again – so it's more like Unusual v. Unusual:

Partner	Overcall	YOU	Meaning
1D	2D	X	Interest in penalising at least 1 of their suits (all doubles now penalties)
	<i>(Majors)</i>	2H	5+ clubs, FORCING (i.e. good hand)
		2S	Cue raise or better in diamonds: 10+ HCP (i.e. good hand)
		2NT	<i>(resolve with your partner)</i>
		3C	Natural, NON-FORCING
		3D	Like a 2 or 2½D raise
		3H/S	Splinter
		3NT	To play
1C	2C	X	Interest in penalising at least 1 of their suits (all doubles now penalties)
	<i>(Majors)</i>	2D	Natural, NON-FORCING
		2H	Cue raise or better in clubs (i.e. good hand)
		2S	5+ diamonds, FORCING (i.e. good hand)
		2NT	<i>(resolve with your partner)</i>
		3C	Like a 2 or 2½C raise
		3D	Splinter
		3H/S	Splinter
		3NT	To play

These defences work against any 2-suited bid where BOTH SUITS are known. You just have to adjust for which suits are known. **Lower = matches to the lower suit, Higher = matches to the higher suit.**

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