

WINNING BRIDGE CONVENTIONS

CUEBIDDING CONTROLS

Patty Tucker



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eBooklets on Conventions Useful with Strong Hands

2NT Rebid by Opener

Jump Shift

Reverses

Strong 2♣ Convention and 2♦ Waiting

Cuebidding Controls

Gerber and Blackwood

These booklets may be purchased as a single volume in digital or paper format under the title *Conventions Useful with Strong Hands*, one of eight books in Patty Tucker's Winning Bridge Conventions Series.

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Strong Hands

Strong Hands

Introduction

One of the most common difficulties new players face is in bidding strong hands. 17+ HCP hands occur less than 10% of the time, so new players don't have the opportunity to bid and practice them very often.

In these pages we will be considering not only the technical aspects of the bids but which bid should be chosen to achieve the best result.

An Overview

Standard American bidding uses an opening bid of 2♣ to show one of three hands:

- A balanced hand with 22+ points;
- A suited hand with 21+ points; or
- A one-suited or two-suited hand with 8 ½ to 9 (or more) “playing tricks”.

Other hands opener might have are reasonably strong hands which are not strong enough to open 2♣, but which can be shown by a different opening bid or at opener's rebid:

- A balanced hand with 20-21 HCPs in which case opener will open 2NT; or
- A balanced hand with 18-19 HCPs in which case opener will *rebid* 2NT; or
- A five-card or longer suit and 19 HCPs, in which case opener will *rebid* 3NT; or
- A two-suited (or three suited hand) of 17+ HCPs in which opener's long suit is of lower rank in than his second suit in which case opener will make a "Reverse" at his first rebid; or
- A two-suited (or three suited hand) or 18+ HCPs in which opener's higher ranking suit is longer or equal in length to his second suit in which case opener will make a "Jump Shift" at his first rebid.

In every case opener must think carefully about how the auction might develop, before he makes his opening bid. When you open 2♣ you start your auction a full level higher. Sometimes you run into difficulty describing your hand to your partner or eliciting the information you need in order to make an informed decision as to where you might want to play the contract.

The balanced hands are very straightforward. With Stayman and Jacoby Transfers available you almost never have difficulty getting to the optimum contract

when you open 2NT or when you open 2♣ and rebid 2NT. Also the jump to 2NT showing the 18-19 point hand holds few traps.

Distributional hands are another matter. Two-suited hands are generally easier to describe if you can start at the one level. Three-suited hands are almost impossible to describe if you start the bidding with 2♣.

As we look at each of these strong bids in the following chapters keep these thoughts in mind and think not only of what the opening bid might be, but also what the rebid will be; how you think the auction will develop. These are the questions you should ask yourself:

- What do I need from responder in order to make game?
- Is it likely that an opponent will overcall or double if I open at the one level?
- Am I the first person to bid or is partner a passed hand?
- If I open 2♣ will I be able to easily describe my hand to partner?

Cuebidding Controls

Cuebidding Controls

Introduction

How many times have you been interested in bidding a slam, but weren't sure if it would make or not? How many times have you bid Blackwood and, after the answer, realized you still didn't know whether or not to bid slam? Cuebidding Controls will allow you to investigate slam, without bidding past game, show extra values or find out **which** Ace partner holds instead of **how many**. The true value of learning this bid is not the ability to bid slam, but the ability to stay below the five-level on hands that cannot make a slam.

A control is typically an Ace or King but can also be a void or a singleton. I suggest you practice cuebidding for several months before you venture into cuebidding shortness as even some of the best partnerships have occasional "whoops" when cuebidding shortness. Cuebid Controls only after you have bid and raised a major suit for the first year or so and then you can tackle cuebidding controls in support of minor suits. Whenever you learn a new convention or a new concept, use it in some very

clear, easy bidding sequences before you tackle those that are more complicated.

Cuebidding Controls

There are some hands in which Blackwood will not be a useful tool to find out how many controls are held between your partnership because you have:

- A weak holding in a suit (two or more small cards with no Ace or King); or
- A borderline hand to consider slam and are afraid that partner's answer to Blackwood might put you to a level high enough that you would be in danger of being set; or
- A void in a suit and partner's answer to Blackwood would not necessarily give you the information you need; or
- A hand in which you need to know which Aces partner holds instead of how many Aces partner holds; or
- A hand in which you need to know if partner holds a specific king in a suit outside the trump suit; or
- A hand in which, if partner holds a void in a specific suit, you would be interested in attempting slam.

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Cuebidding Controls

Bridge students quickly discover that ‘basic’ bidding’ will only get them so far. If they really want to improve, it is necessary to master a certain number of bidding conventions, and be prepared both to play them and play against them. This ebooklet covers the Cuebidding Controls convention.



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is an ABTA Master Bridge Teacher and cofounder of Whirlwind Bridge and Atlanta Junior Bridge. Her success at the bridge table culminated in her victory in the 2000 Baldwin Flight A North American Open Pairs with long-time bridge partner Kevin Collins. Patty and Kevin were married in 2006.