



Ask Jerry

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Dear Jerry,

My partner and I each have over 800 masterpoints yet continue to have disagreements on cuebids. I held:

♠A764 ♥KQ63 ♦983 ♣102.

The auction went 1♣ on my left, double by partner, pass on my right. I was taught to bid 2♣ to show both majors. My partner insisted I should have responded 1♥. Who is right? Help!

Farmer Bob

Hi FB,

A cuebid by advancer (the partner of the takeout doubler) should be used to describe one of two possible holdings:

- 1 A hand of at least game-invitational strength with more than one place to play.
- 2 A hand with game-forcing values, either with clear sense of direction, or slam interest.

Very important: If advancer cuebids, he promises a second bid to define which of the two possible hands he actually holds.

I would consider your hand slightly under-strength for an immediate cuebid, because your planned second action was to raise partner's suit, inviting game. You *were* planning on bidding again, right? A more appropriate hand would have only needed a little extra strength. Add a useful queen in any of

the unbid suits and you have a clear cuebid.

A cuebid followed by a new suit or notrump is 100% game forcing. On the same auction, holding any of these hands, you should cuebid:

1. ♠AK76 ♥AQ63 ♦983 ♣94
2. ♠A76 ♥Q6 ♦AKJ93 ♣943
3. ♠AK7654 ♥K63 ♦Q1083 ♣—

On No. 1, you hope that partner holds at least four cards in one of the majors, and you are seeking the right one, planning on raising to game.

On No. 2, your plan should be to cuebid, followed by bidding diamonds to continue the search for the best game.

On No. 3, cuebid, then bid spades unless partner does first! Your intent should be to show game-forcing strength with possible slam interest in spades. With a more mundane holding such as:

♠KJ7654 ♥A6 ♦983 ♣94,

you should jump to a spade game immediately.

Considering the above, your cuebid overstated your values. Now on to your partner.

I think your partner was confusing responding to an opening bid with advancing a takeout double. Responding to an opening minor-suit bid, it is

correct to bid “up the line” holding four hearts and four spades. This is not the same after a takeout double.

Holding 9 HCP as you did, opposite ostensibly 13 or more points, you should plan on competing to at least the two level. Suppose the auction developed as follows:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♥
2♣	Pass	Pass	?

Your non-jump advance describes anywhere from zero to a poor 9 points. If the doubler holds minimum values, especially with three hearts and four spades, he would surely pass. Now what? A better auction would be:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♠
2♣	Pass	Pass	2♥

Clearly you have some values, and this thoughtful sequence will allow you to reach your longest combined trump fit. As always, plan a second bid before you choose a first. ■