**(40) Competitive Bidding: *Unusual vs. Unusual* and *Unusual vs. Michaels***

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*Level: Advanced* [*robert@advinbridge.com*](mailto:robert@advinbridge.com)

**General**

After we play the *Unusual Notrump* and *Michaels* conventions for a while we realize how effective they can be in making the auction difficult on the opponents. This makes it important for us to develop our own set of agreements for dealing with the opponents’ use of these gadgets against us. These sets of agreements (called defenses) are called *Unusual vs. Unusual* and *Unusual vs. Michaels*, respectively.

We construct these defenses based on two general ideas:

* Q = LR+ -- A cuebid of the opponents’ suit, shows a good hand with support for partner’s suit.
* Lower for Lower, Higher for Higher -- Suit correspondence.

We will explain more about these ideas as we work through the examples below.

**Unusual vs. Michaels *-- called UvM***

Let’s start our discussion with Michaels auctions that show only one suit. These are the simplest auctions because we can treat them just as if the opponents have overcalled one suit – the suit that they explicitly showed.

*Examples*

* 1♥ (2♥) Treat this like the opponent overcalled 1♠. So we bid 2♠ as a “cuebid” of their suit.
  + 1♥ (2♥) 2♠ shows 3+♥, 10+ pts.
* 1♠ (2♠) Treat this like the opponent overcalled 2♥. So we bid 3♥ as a “cuebid” of their suit.
  + 1♠ (2♠) 3♥ shows 3+♠, 10+ pts.

For completeness let’s list the meaning of all the bids in these auctions.

1♥ (2♥)

* 2♠ 3+♥, 10+ pts, *Q=LR+, Forcing for 1 round (1F)*
* 2N Natural, 10 to 12- pts, ♠ stopper, invitational
* 3♣ 5+♣, Game Forcing
* 3♦ 5+♦, Game Forcing
* 3♥ Natural, 3-4♥, 7-9 pts, competitive
* 3♠ Splinter, 4+♥, 0-1♠, 12-14 pts, GF
* 3N Natural, 12 to 15 pts, stopper in ♠

1♠ (2♠)

* 2N Natural, 10 to 12- pts, ♥ stopper, Invitational
* 3♣ 5+♣, Game Forcing
* 3♦ 5+♦, Game Forcing
* 3♥ 3+♠, 10+ pts, *Q=LR+*
* 3♠ Natural, 3-4♠, 7-9 pts, competitive
* 3N Natural, 12 to 15 pts, stopper in ♥

You may notice that we have not discussed what Double would mean. This is always an important discussion. In these auctions double is similar to a double of a notrump bid. It is penalty oriented. Specifically, it promises a penalty double of at least one of the opponents’ 2-suits. After this first penalty double, a subsequent double by either partner is penalty. Thus, Double shows at least 10 HCP and no fit for partner.

*Advanced Note: Forcing Passes are generally on for one round of bidding.*

**More Michaels Auctions**

Now let us look at the more complex *Unusual vs. Michaels* auctions. In auctions where the opponents have shown 2-suits we will generally approach the auction with the idea that *they have two suits and we have 2-suits.* Once we accept this idea then we have two cuebids available (bidding either of the two suits that they have shown.) We will use biding our suits as natural, competitive, and non-forcing. We use cuebids of the opponents’ suits as artificial bids that show *our suits* in a strong way. We use the general idea of corresponding suits -- *“lower for lower and higher for higher.”*

Here are some detailed examples.

1♣ (2♣) – (We have minors, they have Majors.)

* X Penalty Oriented, penalty of at least one of the opponents’ 2-suits (at least one Major.)
* 2♦ 5+♦, 5-9 pts, Non-Forcing (NF)
* 2♥\* 5+♣, 10+ pts, 1F
* 2♠\* 5+♦, 10+ pts, 1F
* 2N Natural, 10 to 12- pts, Stoppers in both Majors
* 3♣ Raise, 5+♣, 5-9 pts, NF
* 3♦ Weak Jump Shift, 6+♦, 0-5 pts
* 3♥\* *Splinter*, 5+♣, 0-1♥, 12-14 pts, GF
* 3♠\* *Splinter*, 5+♣, 0-1♠, 12-14 pts, GF
* 3N Natural, 12-15 pts, Stoppers in both Majors

1♦ (2♦) – (We have minors, they have Majors.)

* X Penalty Oriented, penalty of at least one of the opponents’ 2-suits (at least one Major.)
* 2♥\* 5+♣, 10+ pts, 1F
* 2♠\* 4+♦, 10+ pts, 1F
* 2N Natural, 10 to 12- pts, stoppers in both Majors
* 3♣\* 5+♣, 5-9 pts, NF
* 3♦ Raise, 4+♦, 5-9 pts, NF
* 3♥\* *Splinter*, 5+♦, 0-1♥, 12-14 pts, GF
* 3♠\* *Splinter*, 5+♦, 0-1♠, 12-14 pts, GF
* 3N Natural, 12-15 pts, stoppers in both Majors

When Responder makes one of these artificial invitational+ bids it forces partner (the Opener) to bid and describe their hand. With a minimum hand (12 to 13- pts) Opener signs off somewhere non-forcing. When Opener has a better hand (enough to accept our invite - at least a good 13 points) they do something strong - bid game or cuebid one of the opponents’ suits.

**Unusual vs. Unusual -- *called UvU***

We will apply the same *lower for lower and higher for higher* cuebidding structure when the opponents bid Unusual Notrump.

1♠ (2N) – (We have Majors, they have minors.)

* X Penalty Oriented, penalty of at least one of the opponents’ 2-suits (at least one minor.)
* 3♣\* 5+♥, 10+ pts, 1F
* 3♦\* 3+♠, 10+ pts, 1F
* 3♥ 5+♥, 5-9 pts, NF, competitive
* 3♠ Raise, 3-4♠, 6-9 pts, NF, competitive
* 3N Natural, 12 to 15 pts, stoppers in both minors

1♥ (2N) – (We have Majors, they have minors.)

* X Penalty Oriented, penalty of at least one of the opponents’ 2-suits (at least one minor.)
* 3♣\* 3+♥, 10+ pts, 1F
* 3♦\* 5+♠, 10+ pts, 1F
* 3♥ Raise, 3-4♥, 6-9 pts, NF, competitive
* 3♠ 5+♠, 5-9 pts, NF, competitive
* 3N Natural, 12 to 15 pts, stoppers in both minors

1♦ (2N) – (We have ♦ and ♠, they have ♣ and ♥.)

* X Penalty Oriented, penalty of at least one of the opponents’ 2-suits
* 3♣\* 4+♦, 10+ pts, 1F
* 3♦\* Raise, 4+♦, 6-9+ pts, NF
* 3♥\* 5+♠, 10+ pts, 1F, competitive
* 3♠ 5+♠, 6-9 pts, NF, competitive
* 3N Natural, 12 to 15 pts, stoppers in both their 2-suits

1♣ (2N) – (We have ♣ and ♠, they have ♦ and ♥.)

* X Penalty Oriented, penalty of at least one of the opponents’ 2-suits
* 3♣ Raise, 5+♣, 7-10 pts, NF
* 3♦\* 3+♣, 11+ pts, 1F
* 3♥\* 5+♠, 10+ pts, 1F
* 3♠\* 5+♠, 6-9 pts, NF, competitive
* 3N Natural, 12 to 15 pts, stoppers in both their 2-suits

**Conclusion**

This is not a simple idea. It is a complex solution to a difficult problem. But once you practice and get a feel for this correspondence *(lower for lower, higher for higher)* the bidding leads to an effective way of showing values or just competing in the bidding with many different types of hands.