

Two-suited overcalls

Two conventions allow you to overcall showing two suits:

- Micheals cue bid
- Unusual 2NT.

These conventions are only used:

- when the opponent's opening bid is natural – *so can't use if opps open a strong 1C or where 1C only promises one. Can use over a short club*
- by overcaller
- when it is your side's first bid.

The purpose of these bids is to:

- find a sacrifice
- play in a good part-score or game contract.

Michaels Cue Bid

What is MCB?

MCB is a bid of the opposition's suit that shows a two-suited hand, with an emphasis on the majors.

What suits does MCB show?

The suits shown will depend on the opposition's suit.

For example, where right hand opponent opens:

- (1C) 2C shows both majors
- (1D) 2D shows both majors
- (1H) 2H shows spades and an unspecified minor
- (1S) 2S shows hearts and an unspecified minor.

What shape do you need for MCB?

It is not recommended that you use MCB unless you have 5/5 shape.

Although some experienced players will use it with 5/4. Do not use it when you have a 6/4 shape.

Having two five-card suits increases the likelihood of finding a fit and therefore reduces the risk.

5/5 shaped hands play well, particularly if you have a singleton or void in the suit opened.

Five-five come alive

What strength do you need for MCB?

There are a various options for the strength shown by MCB and it is a matter for partnership agreement.

The most common method is to use MCB on weak pre-emptive hands and on strong hands.

Pre-emptive and weak

If you are not vulnerable and your opponents are vulnerable, you may find a good sacrifice when you have a MBC shape and a weak hand.

At favourable vulnerability can use MCB with about 6-10 HCP.

For example, with a hand like this:

Kxxxx	<i>Over 1C or 1D opening, cue the opposition's suit to show both majors</i>
QJxxx	
Xx	
x	

Note that when the opponents open a minor suit and you use MCB, your partner can choose one of your majors while staying safely at the two level so you can be more aggressive.

If you have a weak hand you MUST NOT BID AGAIN unless forced to do so by partner.

Don't sacrifice at unfavourable vulnerability (particularly if you are forcing your partner to bid at the three level) as if you have a misfit as you are likely to get doubled!

For example, (1S) 2S forces partner to bid at the three level.

Strong hands

With 16+ and a 5/5 shape start with a MCB and then bid again to show a strong hand.

Some experts recommend 18+. It is a matter for partnership agreement.

Responding to a MCB

With a fit in partner's major

With a fit for partner's major suit, raise to the appropriate level.

Bid game with 4 trumps and a singleton (with a 9-card trump fit you will not need much else to make game). *Law of total tricks*

Otherwise, with values and 'sharp' cards bid game. For example:

Axx	<i>Bid game. You have ace, king in an outside suit and a</i>
AKxx	<i>singleton.</i>
x	
Qxxx	

What if I don't like partner's known major suit?

If you have the minors and a weak hand, bid 3C which is pass or correct.

(1S) 2S (P) 3C	<i>Shows no interest in game and asks partner to pass if their minor is clubs or bid 3D</i>
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(1S) 2S (P) 2NT	<i>Shows invitational values and asks for partner's minor</i>
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After (1C) 2C what would you do with a hand like this?

x	<i>You are forced to bid 2H. Don't pass as partner could be void in</i>
xx	<i>clubs</i>
Qxxx	
Kxxxxx	

The Unusual NT

The usual NT shows the two lowest unbid suits and is minor oriented.

For example:

- (1C) 2NT Shows diamonds and hearts
- (1D) 2NT Shows clubs and hearts
- (1H) 2NT Shows clubs and diamonds
- (1S) 2NT Shows clubs and diamonds

Requirements are the same as for MCB.

Always shows 5/5 and never shows spades.

Shows a hand like this after the opps open a major, (1S) 2NT:

x 2NT is *fine at favourable vulnerability but probably pass if vulnerable*
x
Kxxxx
QJxxx

Unlike MCB, you will know both of partner's suits.

Beware using the UNT on marginal hands as there is greater risk because you are always forcing partner to the 3 level and may get doubled.

After (1D) 2NT, what would you bid with this hand?

xxx *You have 10 trumps and the opps have the spade suit. Make it hard*
KJxxx *for them*
x
Axxx