

LIMIT RAISES IN COMPETITIVE AUCTIONS (and Jordan 2NT)

A jump raise (e.g., 1S-P-3S) when the opponents are **not** in your auction, promises a good 10 to 12 HCP and at least 3-card support for a major-suit opening, 4 or 5-card support for a minor-suit opening (with the latter denying any 4-card major).

However, when the opponents are in the auction, the rules change. Modern style is that, if an opponent has overcalled OR if an opponent has opened and your partner has overcalled (thus promising a 5-card or longer suit), a jump raise by you is **preemptive** (weak). It shows lots of trumps, but not many high card points—usually 5-7 HCP, but could be up to 9 HCP.

A **simple raise** (1S followed by 2S) still shows 6-10 HCP and (usually) a minimum number of trumps.

To show the limit raise in a competitive auction, you must **cue-bid** the opponent's suit. A cue-bid is the only bid that is unilaterally forcing. Partner **cannot** pass. The vast majority of the time, a cue-bid by you shows a limit raise (or better) for partner's suit. Occasionally, you will cue-bid looking for a stopper for no trump. Once in a great while, you will cue-bid with a very powerful hand in order to create a forcing auction. (**If you bid a new suit after cue-bidding, partner cannot pass.**)

Suppose partner opens 1H and RHO overcalls one spade.

With: Ax Kxx xxxx xxxx, you have 3 trumps and 7 HCP, bid 2H.

With: Ax Kxxxx xxx xxx, you have 5 trumps & 7 HCP, bid 3H (preemptive).

With: Ax Kxx KQxx xxxx, you have 3 trumps & 12 HCP, bid 2S (cue-bid), showing a limit raise or better. If partner makes a help-suit game try in diamonds, accept. In clubs, decline.

With: xxx Kx AKxx KQxx, you have only 2 trumps but 15 HCP. You want to force to game. Make a negative double. If partner has a spade stopper, s/he should bid 2NT and you will happily raise to 3. If partner rebids hearts, raise to game. If partner bids a minor, go to game in the minor and hope partner has only 2 spades.

With: ---- Kx AKQxxxx Kxxx, you have only 2-card support for partner, but you have a hand with only about 3 losers. If partner has 2 or 3 diamonds, the AQxxx of hearts and AQ of clubs, you can make 7 diamonds! Bid 2D (forcing) and cue-bid spades at your first opportunity. [Some players will cue-bid spades first and bid diamonds over a heart rebid. This is forcing at least to game and shows GOOD hand]

Remember, the same rules apply when the opponents open and you (or your partner) overcalls. Thus, 1H (by LHO), 1S (by partner), Pass (by RHO) and 2H by you is unilaterally forcing and—95% of the time you will have a limit raise (or better) in spades. Occasionally, you have game values, but are looking for a NT stopper, so partner should show a stopper (by bidding NT) if s/he has one. CanNOT assume that cue bid is ALWAYS a LR.

If your partner opens, and RHO doubles, a jump raise by you is **still preemptive!** A new suit is forcing at the one level and weak at the two level. A bid of **2NT (called Jordan 2NT)** shows a limit raise or better of your partner's suit. E.g., partner opens 1S, RHO doubles, you bid 2NT (Jordan) with Kxx KJx Ax xxxxx.

Examples: Suppose partner opens 1H and RHO doubles (for take-out):

With: KQJx xx xxx xxxx, bid 1S (just as you would have bid over 1H). Yes, RHO should have 4 spades on this auction, but s/he won't always, and your spade bid may allow partner to bid 1NT.

With: xx xx KQxxxx xxx, bid 2D. (This does NOT show 10 points—just long diamonds. With 10 or more HCP and no fit, you should redouble first.)

With: KQx Jx Qxxx Jxxx, bid 1NT. In competitive auctions, the side that gets to 1NT first often wins the auction. You expect to have a double stopper in spades. 1NT in competition shows 8-10 (or bad 11) HCP.

With KQJx x Kxxx Kxxx, redouble! This tells partner that you have 10 or more HCP and do NOT have a fit with his/her suit. You are telling partner you are willing to double for penalty at least one of the suits that they might bid. Depending on the vulnerability, you may end up doubling the opponents, or playing 3NT your way.