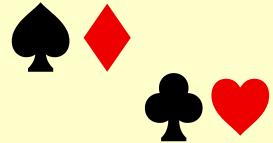


Bridge on Sundays



Suit Trial bids and Cue Bids

Trial bids are made when you have support for your suit and wish to determine whether game is on. Trial bids are usually restricted to major suit fits and should not be confused with cue bids.

A trial bid does not commit the partnership to game whereas a cue bid automatically does so. A trial bid in a major suit is normally made at the three level, such that the partnership can sign off in three of the major, whereas a cue bid takes the partnership to game and is used to determine whether a slam is on, as an alternative to asking for aces.

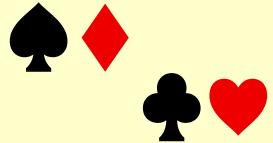
To make a trial bid you, as opener, would normally hold 16 or so points or a 6 loser hand. If you held better values, you should bid direct to game.

A simple trial bid is to repeat the agreed major suit at the three level. $1\heartsuit$ by you, $2\heartsuit$ by partner and you bid $3\heartsuit$ which is asking partner are you a maximum for your response of $2\heartsuit$ (and do you hold four cards in \heartsuit s? (You may occasionally have to support partner holding only three of partner's suit)

A more useful trial bid is asking partner for help in a new suit. You open $1\heartsuit$ and partner responds $2\heartsuit$. Bid $3\clubsuit$ to ask partner *can you help me in \clubsuit s?* If you can bid, then bid $4\heartsuit$, else sign off in $3\heartsuit$. Help can be in the form of a shortage or useful honour card in the suit. Normally you would refuse the trial if you only held three cards in \heartsuit s. If you cannot help partner in the trial suit, but hold an ace in a suit below the agreed major, you can bid that suit to see if that helps partner. You open $1\heartsuit$, partner responds $2\heartsuit$, you bid $3\clubsuit$ (a trial bid). Partner has three small cards in \clubsuit s so cannot help. However holding the $A\spadesuit$, partner bids $3\spadesuit$ to see whether this helps you. The partnership is not committed to game and can sign off in $3\heartsuit$.

Cue bids can be made in any auction when partnership has agreed the suit or plan to play in no-trumps, as an alternative to asking for aces. You must be seeking to play in a slam. A simple situation is: You open $1\heartsuit$ and partner responds $4\heartsuit$. Any further bidding takes the partnership beyond the game and must be an invitation to a slam. Bidding a new suit shows first round control in that suit (ace or void) and asks partner to bid first round controls in the most economical order. If partner has no further first round control, he can

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sign off in the agreed suit. Later in a cue bidding sequence, partner can show a second round control in a suit already bid as a cue bid.

You open 1♥ and partner responds 3♥. You now bid 3♠. This must be a cue bid because it commits the partnership to 4♥. If partner holds either the ace of ♣s or ♦s, he would now bid 4 in that suit. If both aces were held partner would bid 4♣, then bid the second ace (♦) later, even if you signed off in 4♥.

Cue bidding can be more specific than bidding *Blackwood* to ask for aces, especially as it can show voids.

Remember using Blackwood can determine how many aces the partnership holds, whereas cue bidding can determine which controls the partnership holds