

COMPETING OVER MICHAELS

There are several different approaches to competing after the opponents have made a Michaels cue bid.

Standard treatment is that a **double** shows a desire to punish at least one of their suits. You should have a defensively oriented hand with length in at least one of the suits.

Bridge World Standard has the following:

If your partner opens a minor and an opponent bids Michaels, if you jump in the unbid suit, it is non-forcing. If you cue-bid one of their major suits, it shows a stopper (looking for 3NT). Obviously you should have a good 12+ HCP for this bid.

If your partner opens a major suit and you cue-bid their major, you are showing a limit raise or better. A new suit by you is forcing.

Therefore, if you wish to show a no-trump stopper when your partner opened a major, you would have to double first. Doubling and then bidding their major should show a no-trump stopper.

Mike Lawrence presents a whole, complicated system that he calls **Unusual over the Michaels** cue bid:

When your partner opens a minor & the opponents bid Michaels, bidding 2H shows a club suit (or support) and is game-forcing. Bidding 2S shows a diamond suit (or support) and is game-forcing. Jumping to 3C or to 3D is NOT forcing.

When your partner opens 1H and the opponents bid Michaels, 2S by you shows a club suit and is either competitive or looking for game. (Opener can rebid 2NT to show stopper in other suits or can rebid 3C—which you are allowed to pass if your bid was just competitive—or opener can rebid 2H. Opener might rebid 3D or 3S—both of which show a stopper and invite 3NT.)

After 1H-2H, 2NT by you shows a limit raise or better for your partner's hearts.

After 1H-2H, 3C by you shows a diamond suit—either competitive or inviting game. (Opener can rebid 3H if s/he has no interest in diamonds.)

After 1H-2H, 3D by you is competitive. (Partner can return to 3H if desired.)

After 1H-2H, 3H is purely competitive (NOT game-going).

When your partner opens 1S and the opponents bid Michaels, 2NT by you shows a club suit (either competitive or game going). Partner can bid 2NT (showing stoppers in other suits) or bid 3C (inviting you to pass if your bid was only competitive). Partner can rebid 3S showing no interest in clubs. Partner can cue bid 3D or 3H to show stopper, inviting 3NT.

After 1S-2S, 3C by you shows a diamond suit and is game-going. (If partner rebids 3S, no interest in diamonds, but a constructive bid.)

After 1S-2S, 3D is a diamond suit, just a competitive bid. (Opener can rebid 3S with no interest in diamonds.)

After 1S-2S, 3H by you shows a limit raise or better of your partner's spades. (Partner can sign off at 3S or bid game.)

After 1S-2S, 3S by you is purely competitive (NOT forward-going).

Many times, the hands involved are very distributional and you'll just have to guess ("Take your best shot") as to what will work out most favorably for you and your partner.