



Conventional Wisdom - part 1

Each of the next several months we break down a section of the new ACBL convention card. See pages 18-19 of the March issue for the complete card and a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

OVERVIEW

The very first box is for the pair's general approach (Standard American, 2/1, Precision etc.), which is similar to the old card, but features a new line: **Min Expected HCP when Balanced**, with spaces to enter numbers for **Opening** and **Responding**. For example, if in your partnership you agree to open all balanced 12-counts and respond with a balanced hand with 6 HCP, then you would write 12 and 6 in the lines provided.

Notrump ranges considered "weak" can range anywhere from as few as 10 up to 15 HCP. Is 13-15 a weak notrump? That is up to your partnership as defenders to decide.

Some partnerships play weak notrump when nonvulnerable and strong when vulnerable, or in different seats (weak in first or second, strong in third and fourth). Checking this box is not meant to describe the variability, just to alert the opponents of its existence.

OVERVIEW

General Approach _____

Min Expected HCP when Balanced: Opening _____ Responding _____

Forcing Open: 1♣ 2♣ Other _____ 1NT Open: Str Wk Variable

Bids That May Require Preparation _____

Next, we have **Forcing Open**, with the normal 1♣ and 2♣ options, plus **Other**.

There are boxes to check whether your 1NT openings are strong, weak or variable.

Strong generally includes any notrump range with 14 as its lowest possible.

Bids That May Require Preparation. Kind of like a "pre-Alert," this space is available for you to include artificial bids that your opponents may want to discuss their defense to in advance. A good example is Flannery, an opening bid of 2♦ which shows 11-15 HCP with five hearts and four spades. Again, there is room below to articulate your methods. This is just to summarize your system.

Indicate your agreed-upon **Minimum Length** by checking the appropriate box in the top row.

The area for **Responses** has been expanded for you to detail your methods. The 1♦/1NT/2NT section is very similar to the old card.

MINORS

The areas for 1♣ and 1♦ have been separated. For most players, there may be no need to differentiate between their responses to 1♣ and 1♦. If that is the case, you can simply check the "Same as over 1♣" box in the 1♦ area.

With the popularity of strong club systems and "could be short" club openings, with or without transfer responses, the section for 1♣ opening bids has been expanded. There are several options to check to indicate your agreement about minimum expected length. As with the old card, bids in blue require an Announcement, bids in red require an Alert.

MINORS

1♣ Min Length: 5 4 3 NF 2 (4432 only) NF 1 NF 0 Art F Resp _____ Transfer Resp

1♦ _____ Bypass 5+ Raises: Single: NF Inv+ GF Jump: Wk Mixed Inv After Overcall: Wk Mixed Inv

1♦ Min Length: 5 4 3 Unbal NF 2 NF 1 NF 0 Art F Resp _____ Same as over 1♣

Raises: Single: NF Inv+ GF Jump: Wk Mixed Inv After Overcall: Wk Mixed Inv

How does your partnership raise 1♣/1♦? Is a single raise invitational or better? Is it game forcing? What about jump raises? It is here that a new option for a jump raise of a suit debuts: the "mixed" raise. What is a mixed raise? It might be described as "single raise values with extra trump." Distribution is subjective, depending on a player's evaluation. For example, if balanced, they might have more toward the upper range of high-card points. If the hand contains shortness, perhaps fewer high-card points.

Lastly, there are three options for what a jump raise means after the opponents overcall.

In the 1♦ section, in addition to the various options for minimum length, there is also an option to check that your 1♦ opening promises an unbalanced hand.



Conventional Wisdom - part 2

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MAJORS

The first boxes are for the normal expected length when your side opens one of a major. This is divided into 1st/2nd and 3rd/4th (to indicate which position you might open a four-card major).

The next line covers 1NT responses. **F** is for Forcing 1NT; responder expects opener to bid practically 100% of the time. **Semi-F** is for Semi-Forcing. This means responder can have up to invitational values, but opener is allowed to pass, usually with a balanced minimum. The **Bypass** ♠ box is checked if responder routinely bids 1NT with four spades; usually because the pair plays Flannery. If you respond 1NT with four spades and three hearts in a normal context, do not check the **Bypass** ♠ box.

MAJORS	1♥/♠	Art Raises: 2NT <input type="checkbox"/> 3NT <input type="checkbox"/> Splinter <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 st /2 nd Length: 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____
	3 rd /4 th Length: 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	Drury: 2♣ <input type="checkbox"/> 2♦ <input type="checkbox"/> In Comp <input type="checkbox"/> _____
	1NT: F <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-F <input type="checkbox"/> Bypass ♠ <input type="checkbox"/>	Jump Raise: Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Inv <input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	After Overcall: Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Inv <input type="checkbox"/>	

On the right, describe any artificial raises. In addition to the 2NT/3NT/Splinter check boxes, you can indicate conventions like Bergen raises in the **Other** area.

Next is **Drury**. This is an artificial raise by a passed hand. You can choose 2♣ or 2♦ (or both) and indicate if you use these bids **In competition**; for example, over doubles but not after an overcall.

The **Other** section is for agreements not covered by the boxes. Some examples might be: 3/1 invitational, game-try agreements, or perhaps follow-up bids after 1NT responses.

Jump Raise describes your agreements about 1M-3M.

Weak implies less than a constructive raise with four trumps.

Mixed can be described as "single raise values with extra trump." Distribution is subjective, depending on a player's evaluation. For example, if balanced, they might have the upper range of high-card points. If the hand contains shortness, perhaps fewer.

Invitational is a raise that isn't forcing to game.



Conventional Wisdom - part 3

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1NT opening bids

If you play a variable notrump, there is space for two different ranges; use both areas if you vary your range either by seat or vulnerability. You can indicate how you vary in the area that says **Seat/Vul**.

If you use two different sets of responses to your variable 1NT ranges, check the Same Resp No, otherwise, check Yes.

5-Card Major: Check this box if you might have a five-card major when you open 1NT.

Sys On vs: How does your partnership handle interference? It is common to play "systems on" versus a double and 2♣; you can write your agreement here.

2♣ Stayman: Most will check this box; if you play some version of 2♣ puppet or something else, check the appropriate box.

2♦/2♥/2♠/2NT: You have the choices of Natural, Transfer or Other. If 2♠ is minor suit Stayman or anything other than natural or a transfer, indicate that in 'other.' A transfer shows a specific suit; if 2♠ could be either minor, that is 'other.'

Smolen: Smolen is a conventional bid that allows responder to show both majors after opener's 2♦ answer to Stayman.

Transfer 4♣/4♦/4♥: If you play these calls as transfers, check the appropriate box.

Dbl: If the opponents overall, indicate whether a double is negative or penalty. You can also indicate the level through which the negative double applies, or other treatments for double (like stolen bid, for example, where a double means you would have made the bid your opponent did).

NOTRUMP	1NT ___ to ___ (Seat/Vul ___)	1NT ___ to ___ (Same Resp: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>)
	5-Card Major <input type="checkbox"/> Sys On vs _____	3♣ _____
	2♣ Stayman <input type="checkbox"/> Puppet <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	3♦ _____
	2♦: Nat <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	3♥ _____
2♥: Nat <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	3♠ _____	
2♠: Nat <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Other _____	
2NT: Nat <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
Smolen <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr: 4♣ <input type="checkbox"/> 4♦ <input type="checkbox"/> 4♥ <input type="checkbox"/>		
Dbl: Neg <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Pen <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Lebensohl <input type="checkbox"/>		
2NT ___ to ___ Puppet <input type="checkbox"/> 3♠ <input type="checkbox"/>		
Conv <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Tfr: 3Lvl <input type="checkbox"/> 4Lvl <input type="checkbox"/> Neg Dbl <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
3NT ___ to ___ One Suit <input type="checkbox"/>		

2NT
Similar to the 1NT section, there is space for your range and a box to check (**Conv** in red) if your 2NT opening bid is conventional (outside of the expected strong, balanced hand).

3NT
If you play an opening bid of 3NT as strong and balanced, just write your range in the lines. Any conventional 3NT opening bid can still use the lines for a point-count range, but indicate whether it is **One Suit** or something else in the space provided.

Puppet: Check this box if your partnership plays any variation of puppet Stayman (a method of finding out if opener has a five-card major suit).
3♠: Unless you play 3♠ as natural, check this box and indicate your agreement in the space provided. Minor suit Stayman or an artificial relay to 3NT (with follow-ups to describe various distributional hands) are the most common treatments.
Tfr: If your three- and/or four-level responses are transfers, check these boxes.
Neg Dbl: Should the opponents interfere after a 2NT opening bid, you can indicate how you handle it.



Conventional Wisdom - part 4

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Two-level opening bids

The 2♣ box has something new that is important: **Very Strong vs Strong**. Some extra terms and options have been added to the new card to reflect this. The old card simply had options for 2♣ as "strong" and "other." There are now restrictions on 2♣ openers that didn't exist before. Not all events allow a **Strong** artificial 2♣ opening bid. If it is allowed, it must be Alerted.

Very Strong: A hand that contains: at least 20 HCP, or at least 14 HCP and is within one trick of game, assuming suits break evenly among the other hands, or at least 5 Control Points (Ace = 2 points, King = 1 point) and is within one trick of game, assuming suits break evenly among the other hands.

Strong: A hand that contains: at least 15 HCP, or at least 14 HCP and meets the Rule of 24 (number of cards in two longest suits plus number of high-card points must be at least 24), or at least 5 Control Points and is within one trick of game, assuming suits break evenly among the other hands.

Natural: Many strong-club systems such as Precision use a 2♣ opening bid to show a limited hand with a five-card or longer club suit.

Conventional: If your 2♣ opening bid is anything other than **Very Strong**, it must be Alerted and fully explained.

Responses to 2♣

2♦ Neg or Waiting: No Alert required.

Steps: There is a line next to the Steps box to indicate if you play steps showing levels of high card points or Control Points-showing steps.

2♥ Neg: If you play 2♥ as an artificial negative bid, then you must Alert.

Other Use this space for a general explanation of conventional responses to a natural or conventional 2♣ opening bid.

Weak two-bids

Weak two-bids do not require an Alert. **Intermediate** or **Strong** two-bids do.

2♦ Any conventional agreements such as showing an opening hand with both majors (Flannery) or opening strength with a three-suited hand (Mini-Roman).

2♥/2♠

There is an additional option to check if your 2♥/2♠ bid shows **two suits**.

2 LEVEL	2♣ ___ to ___	2♦ Neg <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting <input type="checkbox"/>
	Very Str <input type="checkbox"/> Str <input type="checkbox"/> Nat <input type="checkbox"/> Conv <input type="checkbox"/>	Steps <input type="checkbox"/> ___ 2♥ Neg <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other _____	
	2♦ ___ to ___	New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/>
Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Int <input type="checkbox"/> Str <input type="checkbox"/> Conv <input type="checkbox"/>	Rebids over 2NT: _____ Other _____	
2♥ ___ to ___	New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/>	
Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Int <input type="checkbox"/> Str <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Suits <input type="checkbox"/>	Rebids over 2NT: _____ Other _____	
2♠ ___ to ___	New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/>	
Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Int <input type="checkbox"/> Str <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Suits <input type="checkbox"/>	Rebids over 2NT: _____ Other _____	

Rebids over 2NT

This space is to summarize your agreements about opener's rebid after a 2NT "asking" bid.

Responses to two-level opening bids vary. Over weak two-bids, many play 2NT as asking for a feature or Ogust (a method of describing opener's suit and hand quality which employs artificial step responses). If a **New Suit** by responder is non-forcing, that is an Alert and the box should be checked if that is your partnership agreement. **Other** is for any conventional response to a two-level opening bid.



Conventional Wisdom - part 5

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What used to be called OTHER CONVENTIONAL CALLS is now just OTHER. While several common conventional gadgets are specifically mentioned, there are extra lines provided at the bottom for partnerships to write in additional treatments they employ.

Jump Shift Resp The old card had only two options: Weak Jump Shifts In Comp and Not in Comp. There are also fit-showing jumps, artificial raises, mini-splinters and differences as to whether responder or advancer is an unpassed hand or a passed hand. (Another common abbreviation you might see on a card is BPH or BUPH – by passed hand or by unpassed hand.) Conventions are sometimes “off” in competition. There is a lot of room to explain your Jump Shift Responses (and advances), but weak jumpshift responses not in competition no longer require an Alert.

NMF (New Minor Forcing) After any auction that begins 1m–1M; 1NT, responder bids two of the other minor to ask opener to clarify their major-suit holdings. It is an artificial call, requiring an Alert. Opener can show three-card support for responder’s major, or four of the other major, or deny either by bidding 2NT or (re)bidding a minor suit. Typically, responder will have invitational (or better) values to use NMF.

2Way NMF (Two-Way New Minor Forcing) Similar to NMF, this refinement allows responder to initiate invitational or game-forcing sequences – regardless of which minor was opened – by utilizing 2♣ as an artificial relay to 2♦ to show an invitational hand, and 2♦ as an artificial game-forcing bid. Both bids require an Alert.

OTHER	Jump Shift Resp _____
	Vs (Very)Str Open _____ NMF <input type="checkbox"/> 2Way NMF <input type="checkbox"/> XYZ <input type="checkbox"/> 4 th SF: 1Rnd <input type="checkbox"/> GF <input type="checkbox"/>

Vs (Very) Str Open There are many conventional ways to interfere with the opponents’ auctions, even if they are showing a Strong or Very Strong opening bid, such as Mathe (double for the majors, notrump for the minors), transfers, CRASH (step-bids which show a two-suiter of the same Color, RAnk or SHape), or suction. There is plenty of room to describe your partnership’s agreements, if any.

XYZ This refers to any three one-level bids made by the partnership (1X–1Y; 1Z). The concept of 2Way NMF now applies, where 2♣ would relay 2♦ to begin an invitational sequence, and 2♦ is an artificial game force.

4thSF (Fourth Suit Forcing) This is a common bidding tactic by responder to force opener to keep bidding. After three suits have been bid naturally, the “fourth suit” is now a (possibly) artificial (Alertable) call that is forcing. Depending on your agreement, it can be forcing for one round or to game (1Rnd or GF).

Common treatments you might describe in the lines at the bottom include defenses to the opponent’s “unusual” bids, such as 2NT showing a two-suited hand. Methods or agreements after reverses and 2NT rebids are often listed here. Any other general agreements that do not fit into other boxes, or clarifications, can go in this space.



Conventional Wisdom - part 6

In each of the next several issues, we'll break down a section of the new ACBL convention card. See pages 18-19 of the March issue for the complete card and a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

Bridge is very competitive. Uncontested auctions are increasingly uncommon as players often enter the bidding with very few high-card points. Yet, for all the bidding that can occur at low levels, many doubles there are played as something other than penalty. There are more opportunities to use these versatile doubles as showing the unbid suits or support for partner than a desire to defend. Negative and responsive doubles tend to show support for the unbid suits. For exam-

ple, if partner opens the bidding 1♠ and your RHO overcalls 2♦, a double by you shows length in hearts and clubs. A typical responsive double is when your partner makes a negative double (showing length in the unbid suits), and you would like to compete but have no clear direction, so you double. Support doubles occur when partner opens the bidding, you respond in a suit and there is competition. Your partner, the opener, can double or redouble to show exactly three-card support for the suit you bid.

<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>
1♥	1♠	1♣	Pass
		Dbf	

Most partnerships play support doubles through to a lower level because it could be that you have a seven-card fit. For example, if the intervening bid had been 2♠, you and your partner need to discuss whether the double would still be support.

For **Negative, Responsive and Support** doubles, check the box and indicate how high you play that type of double. For example, if you play Responsive doubles through 4♦, check the box and write 4♦ in the line next to "Thru." Note that Support doubles and redoubles (**Rdbl**) are not in red and no longer require an Alert.

Immediate **Penalty** doubles at low levels are so rare that they do require an Alert.

Maximal doubles occur in competitive auctions, typically after the opponents interfere and take up bidding room. In certain situations (usually at the three level), a double of the opponents' suit becomes a game try. A classic example:

<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥
Dbf			

Some pairs define a double by opener as a hand with game interest.

DOUBLES

Negative Thru _____ Penalty

Responsive Thru _____ Maximal

Support Thru _____ Rdbl

T/O Style _____

Other _____

T/O Style This line isn't to let the opponents know if you prefer Chinese or Thai food, it's your "takeout double style." Some partnership agreements on takeout doubles include off-shape hands, balanced hands, "card-showing" doubles or takeout doubles with hands that are less than opening strength. Your partnership's general approach to takeout doubles can be noted on this line.

Other Any other type of conventional double in your partnership agreements can be written in this line.



Conventional Wisdom - part 7

In each of the next several issues, we'll break down a section of the new ACBL convention card. See pages 18-19 of the March issue for the complete card and a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

The **OVERCALLS** box on the new convention card has several additions and now incorporates **Jump Overcalls**, which used to have its own section. Note that this section is for overcalls in a suit; notrump overcalls still has its own section.

The first line is for "one over one" overcalls; the two blank lines are for your high-card point range for making a one-level overcall; if you routinely might have a four-card suit, check the **Often 4 Cards** box.

Jump Overcalls

If your RHO opens the bidding 1♥ and you overcall 2♠, what kind of hand are you showing? Most pairs play this as weak (**Wk**), similar to preemptive bids at the two or three level. Other options, which require an Alert, include intermediate (**Int**) or strong (**Str**), showing opening-hand values or better with a long suit.

The next line is for overcalls at the two level; indicate your high-card point range in the lines provided.

OVERCALLS

1-Lvl ____ to ____ Often 4 Cards

2-Lvl ____ to ____

Jump Overcalls: Wk Int Str

Conv _____

Responses

New Suit: F NFConst NF Tfr

Jump Raise: Wk Mixed Inv

Cuebids _____ Support

Other _____

Any artificial treatments to jump overcalls can be described in the **Conv** (Conventional) line.

New Suit

After you overcall, what are partner's responses?

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
1♦	1♥	Pass	?

Is a new suit **Forcing, Non-forcing Constructive** or **Non-Forcing**? Check the boxes that correspond to your agreements. Some partnerships play **Transfers**, which require an Announcement.

Cuebids

Cuebids can mean different things depending on the level, for example a "jump cuebid."

RHO	Partner	LHO	You
1♦	1♥	Pass	3♦

Explain how your partnership differentiates between cuebids in the line provided, and if they generally indicate support.

Jump Raise

What is a **Jump Raise** in your partnership? Some play it **Weak** (preemptive), **Mixed** (four trump, not weak but not a limit raise) or **Invitational** (such as a limit raise).

Other

There is a line provided for other agreements not listed.



Conventional Wisdom - part 8

In each of the next several issues, we'll break down a section of the new ACBL convention card. See pages 18-19 of the March issue for the complete card and a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

When your LHO opens one of a suit, and your partner bids two of the same suit, that is a direct cuebid. What does it mean? With the proliferation of "could be short" and artificial minor-suit opening bids, the new card has more options for your partnership to indicate if you have different agreements depending on your opponent's opening bid. Note that 1♥ and 1♠ opening bids are always treated as natural.

The first column is for Artificial ("Art") openings of 1♣ and 1♦. Does a direct cuebid by your side show length in both majors? Then you would check the **Michaels** box. What is Michaels? It is a way to show a two-suited hand: A direct cuebid of a minor-suit opening bid shows a major two-suiter. So, the auction 1♣-(2♣) or 1♦-(2♦) shows a hand with length in hearts and spades. The strength requirements vary depending on partnership preferences. After a major-suit opening, a direct cuebid shows length in both the other major and a minor. The sequence 1♠-(2♠), therefore, shows length in both hearts and an undisclosed minor.

The next column is for Quasi-Natural ("Quasi") 1♣ or 1♦ opening bids, which could be balanced hands with two or more of the bid suit or natural length. Opponents who play a quasi-natural opening bid are required to pre-Alert along with announcing, "could be short as X." Again, you have the option of Michaels, Natural or Other for your direct cuebids.

The third and fourth columns are for Natural ("Nat") opening bids. If an opponent's 1♣ opening bid is two only if 4=4=3=2, it is deemed Natural. Note that if your direct cuebid is *not* Michaels, it requires an Alert. There is a line for you to describe your agreements.

If your opponent opens a "could be as short as zero" 1♦, does 2♦ by you show diamonds? Then you would check the **Natural** box. If a direct cuebid is something other than Michaels or Natural, you would check the **Other** box.

		Vs:			
		Art	Quasi	Nat	Nat
		♣♦	♣♦	♣♦	♥♠
DIRECT CUEBIDS	Michaels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Natural	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe _____					
3-Level Style (Seat/Vul) _____					
PREEMPTS	Resp _____				
	4-Level Style _____				
	Resp _____				
♠ 4♣/4♦ Tfr <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____					

Some partnerships play that opening bids of 4♣ and 4♦ are transfers to 4♥ and 4♠, respectively. This convention is called **Namyats**; check the **Tfr** (transfer) box if that is your agreement. If those opening bids are something else besides a preempt, write it in the **Other** line.

This section is to indicate your partnership style when making a preemptive opening bid at the three or four level. Typically, these bids promise a hand below opening strength with a seven-card or longer suit. Suit quality and length can depend on seat and vulnerability. There is space to note your general preempting philosophy at these levels. How do you respond to such opening bids? For example, a new suit could be natural and forcing, a control bid in support or even ace- or key card-asking. A new-suit, below-game response that is non-forcing is Alertable.



Conventional Wisdom - part 9

In each of the next several issues, we'll break down a section of the new ACBL convention card. See pages 18-19 of the March issue for the complete card and a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

This section allows you to briefly describe your conventional slam methods. Almost all of these treatments are Alertable, but they are "Delayed Alerts." All Delayed Alerts must be explained before the opening lead by either the defending or declaring side.

What is a Delayed Alert and why?

In any case where a bid is Alertable, but the bid is 3NT or higher, and the auction is at or beyond opener's rebid, delay the Alert until the end of the auction. Additionally, Control Bids should be Alerted at the end of the auction even if they are below 3NT. Alerts of passes, doubles and redoubles are not delayed regardless of the level of the auction. When behind screens or online, do not delay any Alerts. Because most artificial calls at high levels indicate some slam interest, immediate Alerts (or lack thereof) could potentially benefit the Alerting side more than the non-Alerting side.

4♣ Gerber

The Gerber convention is an ace-asking bid. Typically, it's a jump to 4♣ after an opening notrump sequence or after a notrump rebid. Some use it after a fit in a suit has been found. All three options are available for you on the new card:

Directly Over NT such as: 1NT-4♣ or 2♣-2♦; 2NT-4♣.

Over NT Seq such as: 1♦-1♥; 2NT-4♣

Non-NT Seq such as: 1♠-3♠; 4♣

Note that the first two examples are not Delayed Alerts, but the third one is.

A "Control Bid" is an ace or a king (or, if in a suit contract, a void or singleton). An ace or void is a first-round control, a king or singleton is a second-round control. Indicate your partnership style in the line provided.

Vs Interference When the opponents interfere with your ace- or key card-asking auction, there are conventional methods available to handle the interference. Use this line to describe your agreements, such as DOP1 (Double with zero, Pass with one) or DEPO (Double with Even, Pass with Odd).

SLAMS	4♣ Gerber: Directly Over NT <input type="checkbox"/> Over NT Seq <input type="checkbox"/> Non-NT Seq <input type="checkbox"/> _____
	4NT: Blackwood <input type="checkbox"/> RKC 0314 <input type="checkbox"/> RKC 1430 <input type="checkbox"/>
	Control Bids _____
	Vs Interference _____
	Other _____

4NT There are many ways to ask for aces and other high cards. Check the box that applies. Note that 4NT is not a Delayed Alert, but the responses are.

Blackwood Traditional Blackwood is one of the oldest conventional treatments. It asks specifically for aces only. After the 4NT asking bid, the responses are: 5♣ shows zero or four aces; 5♦ shows one; 5♥ shows two and 5♠ shows three.

RKC 0314 Roman key card Blackwood is a variation that asks not only about aces, but also the king of a specified suit. These five cards are referred to as "key cards." The 0314 responses are: 5♣ zero or three, 5♦ one or four; 5♥ two or five key cards without the queen of trump; 5♠ two or five key cards with the queen of trump.

RKC 1430 The same as above except the first two bids are reversed: 5♣ shows one or four; 5♦ shows three or zero.

Other Use this line to indicate other partnership agreements for slam bidding, such as "serious" or "non-serious 3NT," which is a Delayed Alert.



Conventional Wisdom - part 10

In each of the next several issues, we'll break down a section of the new ACBL convention card. See pages 18-19 of the March 2022 issue for the complete card and a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

When your RHO has opened the bidding, you are now in the "direct seat" in terms of overcalling. If RHO opens at the one level in a suit, you have a **Direct 1NT** bid available to you. Most people play that a direct seat overcall of 1NT shows just what it would if you opened a strong notrump – maybe even a little better – 15–18 HCP. Notrump overcalls do not require an Announcement of your high-card point range. If a partnership agreement allows for "ostensibly natural" notrump overcalls that do not meet the definition of Natural (hands which contain a small singleton or 10 cards in two suits), it is both permitted and Alertable. The call is also Alertable if it does not show at least 14 HCP.

When your LHO opens the bidding followed by two passes, you are now in the balancing seat. Because it's more likely that partner has some values, some agree to lower the necessary high-card point requirement to **Balance 1NT**. Again, this does not require an Announcement.

If you play **Systems On**, for example Stayman and transfers, check the box.

Conv There are conventional treatments of a 1NT overcall; for example, "sandwich no-trump" is often used to show a two-suited hand. If you play sandwich or anything else that doesn't mean a balanced hand with at least 14 HCP, check the box and describe in the line provided.

NT OVERCALLS	Direct 1NT ____ to ____ Systems On <input type="checkbox"/>
	Balance 1NT ____ to ____ Systems On <input type="checkbox"/>
	Conv <input type="checkbox"/>
	Jump to 2NT: 2 Lowest Unbid <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other _____

Other There is space for you to indicate other special agreements.

Jump to 2NT: 2 Lowest Unbid A jump to 2NT can be used to show the two lowest unbid suits, for example, 1♣–2NT to show diamonds and hearts. This can still apply after the opponents have bid two suits, such as 1♥–Pass–1♠–2NT would be for both minors.

A jump to 2NT that shows the minors when a natural minor suit has been opened is Alertable. This includes if the opponents open 1♣ with a two-card suit only if 4=4=3=2 (which is considered a natural call for these purposes). This is new. If the opening is quasi-natural or artificial, any artificial two-suited 2NT is not Alertable.

A jump to 2NT in direct seat that is Strong is Alertable.



Conventional Wisdom - part 11

In each of the next several issues, we'll break down a section of the new ACBL convention card. See pages 18-19 of the March 2022 issue for the complete card and a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

Previously called "Defense vs Notrump," this is one of the boxes on the new card that is virtually identical to the box on the old card. A handy new element is a line for 2NT. Because many partnerships like to play different systems depending on the strength of the 1NT opening bid (or overcall), there are two columns provided. On the top two "Vs" lines, you might indicate the point-count range that your system defends against, or if you differentiate between direct or balancing seat actions.

Next to each two-level suit bid, indicate what that means in your partnership. For example, if vs a strong 1NT, you play 2♣ as a one-suited hand, write "one suit" in the line. But, if vs a weak 1NT, it's both majors, write "majors" or "hearts and spades" in the line. Or, if it's natural, write "clubs" or "natural." Note that these lines are not in red, but if your bid is conventional, meaning anything but natural, or natural but also indicates a second suit, it requires an Alert.

vs TAKEOUT DBL
Your partner opens the bidding and your RHO makes a takeout double. What do your bids mean?

- New Suit F "F"** stands for Forcing. If a new suit at the two-level by responder is forcing, check the 2 Lvl box.
- If a new suit is a transfer to the next-higher suit, check the Tfr box and mark the lowest call where transfers start (e.g., 1NT is a transfer to clubs) and remember that opener must Announce the transfer suit.

Jump Shift Is a jumpshift by responder weak, invitational, forcing or fit-showing? Check the appropriate box and note that fit-showing jumps are Alertable.

Redouble If redouble has no artificial meaning and is values-showing, check the 10+ box. If you have a specific partnership agreement about redouble, or if it is conventional, check the box next to Conv and explain in the line provided.

vs 1NT OPENING	Vs _____	Vs _____
	Dbl _____	Dbl _____
	2♣ _____	2♣ _____
	2♦ _____	2♦ _____
	2♥ _____	2♥ _____
	2♠ _____	2♠ _____
	2NT _____	2NT _____
Other _____		
vs TAKEOUT DBL	New Suit F: 2 Lvl <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Jump Shift: Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Inv <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> Fit <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Rdbl: 10+ <input type="checkbox"/> Conv <input type="checkbox"/>	
	2NT Over: Nat	Raise Range
	♣♦ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ___ to ___
♥♠ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ___ to ___	
Other _____		

There is an Other line for any other partnership agreements over an opponent's takeout double.

2NT After your RHO doubles, if 2NT is natural (balanced), or a raise (Alertable), indicate your agreement, the high-card point range you are expected to have and note if you play it differently over your opening bids of 1m and 1M.



Conventional Wisdom - part 12

In each of the next several issues, we'll break down a section of the new ACBL convention card. See pages 18-19 of the March 2022 issue for the complete card and a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

When your opponent opens the bidding at the two level or higher, how does your partnership handle it? (Note that "preempt" doesn't necessarily mean "weak." Some systems include two-level or higher bids that are "intermediate" or near-average to average strength.)

T/O Double Thru After the opponents preempt, what does a double mean and through what level? For example, if you play double is takeout through 4♥, write 4♥ in the space provided. If doubles of preempts are for penalty, check the box and Alert.

2NT Lebensohl Resp After an opponent preempts at the two level and your partner makes a takeout double, what does your bid of 2NT mean? If it is an offer to declare a notrump contract, then it's natural and not Alertable. Many partnerships play a convention called Lebensohl, which has many uses. Playing Lebensohl, a bid of 2NT after partner's double is not natural, it is Alertable and asks partner to bid 3♣. There are many different follow-ups and continuations; be aware of the Alert procedures and explain fully when asked about your bids or before the opening lead.

2NT Overcall When they preempt at the two level, what is the high-card point range of your 2NT overcall? There is enough room to indicate if you play "systems on," i.e., Stayman and transfers or natural responses. If you play this is conventional (such as both minors), it is Alertable.

vs PREEMPTS

2NT Overcall _____

T/O Dbl Thru _____ Penalty

2NT Lebensohl Resp

Cuebid _____

Jump Overcalls _____

Other _____

Jump Overcalls How do you play a jump overcall after a preempt? Describe the strength expected.

Cuebid Depending on the level, cuebidding the opponent's suit can have different meanings, such as stopper-asking or showing a two-suited hand. Indicate your agreement if you have one.

Other There are many conventional gadgets one can play after a preempt, often to show two-suited hands. Indicate if you play conventions here.



Conventional Wisdom - part 13

For one more issue, we'll break down a section of the new ACBL convention card. See pages 18-19 of the March 2022 issue for the complete card and a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

CARDING The last four boxes of the new convention card are all about your partnership's defensive play agreements. Defense is 50% of the game; the new card has devoted additional space for your partnership agreements. The first options in the CARDING box refer to your count and attitude methods, and whether they vary if you are defending a suit contract or a notrump contract. It is now easier for a partnership to indicate if they play, for example, upside-down attitude but standard count, and if that changes based on the strain of the contract they are defending.

SIGNALS The first options in the Signals box are your Primary Signals to either declarer's lead or partner's lead. For example, if declarer leads a suit and you agree to give count, you would check the Count box. If your primary signal to partner's lead is attitude, you would check that box. You might even number them in order, for example, Partner's lead: Primary is attitude (1), then count (2), then suit preference (3).

Exceptions An exception to your carding might occur if you agree to give count or attitude when a certain card is led.

Other Carding If you have Exceptions or Other Carding agreements, there is a line to indicate what those might be, such as Foster echo or upside-down suit preference.

Smith Echo Smith Echo is a signal in declarer's first led suit that is about a different suit. There are many different varieties; check the appropriate box if you play this convention and indicate any exceptions or agreements in the line provided.

CARDING	Suits	NT	SIGNALS	Primary Signals to:		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Standard - Attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>		Declarer's Lead	Partner's Lead	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Standard - Count	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Upside Down - Attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Count	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Upside Down - Count	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Suit Preference	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Exceptions _____			Exceptions _____			
Other Carding:			First Discard: Std <input type="checkbox"/> Upside Down <input type="checkbox"/>			
Smith Echo: Suits <input type="checkbox"/> NT <input type="checkbox"/> Reverse <input type="checkbox"/>			Lavinthal <input type="checkbox"/> Odd/Even <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>			
Trump Signals _____			_____			

Exceptions An exception to your primary signal might occur when there is shortness in dummy or an obvious switch situation.

First Discard When you cannot follow suit, your first discard is an opportunity to tell partner something about your hand (or not). If you play Std (standard) or Upside Down, a high or low card is either encouraging or discouraging in that suit. Two other popular carding conventions are Lavinthal (the defender is not interested in the suit discarded; the size of the spot card indicates whether they want the higher or lower of the other two suits) and Odd/Even (an odd card encourages that suit, even discourages and could be a suit preference indicator). There are many Other types of discards and plenty of space to note what you play.

Trump Signals If your partnership has an agreement on certain carding methods when you follow suit to trump, you may indicate it here. One common example is trump suit preference.



Conventional Wisdom - part 14

This is the last installment explaining the new ACBL convention card. See pages 18–19 of the March 2022 issue for the complete card and a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

Length Leads The first options in both boxes (vs suits and vs notrump) refer to your leads from holdings of three or more cards. 4th best, 3rd/5th or 3rd/low are the first options, as are “attitude” leads. Against suit contracts, if you lead small from a doubleton, it no longer requires a pre-Alert but it must be marked on your card and explained if asked about leads and carding. Next there are various card combinations; you can circle the card led (if not in bold) as per your partnership agreements. Note there are fewer card combinations listed; this is to encourage notating on your convention card your methods. “H” means any honor.

Honor Leads Circle which you lead from A–K–x or longer, and if it varies. One example might be if you normally lead ace from A–K, except at the five level or above you lead the king, asking for count. Circle the honor card led (if not in bold).

LEADS The last four boxes of the new convention card are all about your partnership’s defensive play agreements. Defense is 50% of the game; the new card has devoted additional space for your partnership agreements. In this issue, we tackle **Leads Vs Suits** and **Leads Vs NT**.

LEADS vs SUITS	LEADS vs NT
CIRCLE CARD LED (if not bold): Length Leads: 4 th <input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd /5 th <input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd /Low <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude <input type="checkbox"/> Small from xx <input type="checkbox"/> xx xxx xxxx xxxxx Hxx Hxxx Hxxxx	CIRCLE CARD LED (if not bold): Length Leads: 4 th <input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd /5 th <input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd /Low <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude <input type="checkbox"/> 2 nd from xxxx(+) <input type="checkbox"/> xx xxx xxxx xxxxx Hxx Hxxx Hxxxx
After 1 st Trick _____ Honor Leads: AKx (+) Varies <input type="checkbox"/> _____ K Qx Q Jx J Tx T 9x	After 1 st Trick _____ Honor Leads: AKxx (+) Varies <input type="checkbox"/> _____ K Q Jx K Q T 9 Q J T x J T 9 x
Interior Seq: K J T x K T 9 x Q T 9 x	Interior Seq: A Q J x A J T x K T 9 x Q T 9 x
Exceptions _____	Exceptions _____

After 1st Trick If your leads change after the first trick, for example if you play 3rd/5th leads but then 4th best, you can note it here. You can also indicate if you change from a count-based spot card to attitude. This applies to both suits and notrump.

Interior Sequence Circle the honor card led (if not in bold). Note any exceptions.

The options are almost identical for leading against notrump contracts. If you lead second highest from a four- or five-card suit that does not contain an honor card, there is a box for you to note that.