



Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 9

The 24-part *Conventional Wisdom* series is available online at www.acbl.org/play/conventionwisdom.html.

2♦, 2♥, 2♠ For each of these opening two-bids, write the high-card range in the spaces provided. Be sure to check the appropriate box to indicate the type of hand these bids describe. For example, if you play 2♥ as a weak two-bid, check the “Weak” box. If you like strong two-bids, check the “Strong” box. If you play 2♦ as Flannery, however, showing the majors, check the “Conv.” (conventional) box.

ALERT

If you assign these two-bids any meaning other than natural and weak, you must Alert the opponents. The Alert is required even for strong two-bids.

DESCRIBE Anything of relevance regarding your style for these opening bids goes here. For example, if you frequently open a weak two-bid with a five-card suit, make a note of it here.

RESPONSES/REBIDS There are many ways to respond to an opening two-bid. Briefly describe what the responses mean in this space.

NOTE: Regardless of its meaning, a 2NT response to an opening bid of 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ does not require an Alert. Many of opener’s rebids following a 2NT response, however, are Alertable.



Consider these auctions:

| | |
|------------|----------------|
| <i>You</i> | <i>Partner</i> |
| 2♦ | 3♣ |
| or | |
| 2♥ | 2♠ |

In both cases, you have opened with a weak two-bid. Partner, who is not a passed hand, responds in a new suit. Most play that a new suit is forcing, but if you and your partner agree that opener may pass, you must Alert the opponents and check the **RED** New Suit NF (non-forcing) box.

2♣ Many players — especially those who employ “standard” or two-over-one systems — use 2♣ to show any hand that is very strong: everything from big, balanced hands to powerful one-, two- or three-suiters. If you play it this way, check the “Strong” box.

In the spaces provided to indicate the high-card strength of the bid, many players simply indicate the minimum number of points needed to open 2♣. For example, it’s common to see players write “22 +” in the high-card range spaces.

RULE

ACBL regulations and the General Convention Chart do not permit players to use a 2♣ opening with hands that contain long, strong suit(s), but that have little outside strength if the bidder’s intention is to confuse or deceive the opponents.

| | DESCRIBE | RESPONSES/REBIDS |
|--|----------|---|
| 2♣ _____ to _____ HCP Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| 2♦ Resp: Neg <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| 2♦ _____ to _____ HCP Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/> | | 2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2♥ _____ to _____ HCP Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/> | | 2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2♠ _____ to _____ HCP Natural: Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Conv. <input type="checkbox"/> | | 2NT Force <input type="checkbox"/> New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/> |

ALERT

Players who use a big-club system such as Precision typically define 2♣ as a limited opening hand with a long club suit. If this is your approach, check the **RED** “Other” box, and Alert the opponents. If 2♣ shows, for example, 11 to 15 HCP, write the range in the spaces provided.

2♦ Resp: When your partner opens 2♣ (strong), what does 2♦ mean? Does it show a bad hand? If so, check the Neg (negative) box. If 2♦, however, is simply a waiting bid to allow opener to describe his hand, check the Waiting box. Neither treatment is Alertable.

DESCRIBE Anything else of relevance regarding your 2♣ openings goes in this space.

RESPONSES/REBIDS Use this space to briefly outline other responses to 2♣. If, for example, your responses show number of high-card points or controls, write it here.



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OTHER CONVENTIONAL CALLS

This section of the convention card serves as a catchall for treatments that don't have a home anywhere else on the card. While several common conventional gadgets are specifically mentioned here, there are extra lines provided at the end for partnerships to write in other treatments that they employ.

**A
L
E
R
T**

Most of the treatments in this section are Alertable. Items in RED on the convention card must be Alerted and explained to the opponents upon request.

OTHER CONV. CALLS: New Minor Forcing: 2-Way NMF
 Weak Jump Shifts: In Comp. Not in Comp.
 4th Suit Forcing: 1 Rd. Game

Weak Jump Shifts

In a competitive auction such as:

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1♣ | 1♥ | 2♠ | |

it's popular to play the 2♠ jump shift as weak. This approach is not Alertable in competition. If, however, you play weak jump shifts even when the opponents are silent, *e.g.*,

| Partner | You |
|---------|-----|
| 1♣ | 2♠ |

check the RED "Not in Comp." box and Alert the opponents.

Others

Common treatments you might describe in the lines at the bottom include defenses to artificial and strong 1♣ or 2♣ openings, defenses to the opponents' "unusual" bids such as 2NT showing the minors or Michaels cuebids, or perhaps special constructive agreements such as fit-showing jumps.

4th Suit Forcing

A common bidding tactic by responder to force opener to keep bidding is the convention known as 4th Suit Forcing (4SF). For example, after an auction that begins:

| Partner | You |
|---------|-----|
| 1♦ | 1♠ |
| 2♣ | ? |

you could bid 2♥ (the fourth suit) to force opener to make another call. 2♥ in this case would not necessarily promise a true heart holding. It is simply a way to extract more information out of opener. On this auction, responder might have a hand such as:

♠A K 7 6 2 ♥9 8 6 ♦K Q 5 ♣J 9.

Opener may have three-card spade support or, failing that, a stopper in hearts for 3NT. 4SF allows responder to find out. The only choice your partnership needs to make is whether this treatment is forcing for one round only (check the "1 Rd." box) or forcing to game (check the "Game" box).

New Minor Forcing

After the auction:

| Partner | You |
|---------|-----|
| 1♣ | 1♠ |
| 1NT | ? |



what would you bid holding:

♠K Q 7 6 4 ♥A J 9 6 ♦A 8 ♣5 2?

There are sufficient values for game, but which one? 3NT, 4♥ and 4♠ are all possibilities, but you need to know more about partner's shape to make an intelligent decision. To help with situations such as this, many pairs use the treatment called **New Minor Forcing (NMF)**. After any auction that begins

| Opener | Responder |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1 of a minor | 1 of a major |
| 1NT | |

responder bids two of the *other* minor to ask opener to clarify his major-suit holdings. In the example auction, therefore, you would bid 2♦. This bid is conventional. Partner can then show three-card spade support (2♠), four hearts (2♥) or neither (2NT), allowing you to make a good guess as to what the final contract should be. If partner had opened 1♦ instead, your NMF bid would be 2♣.

2-Way NMF A refinement to regular NMF is the treatment called 2-Way NMF. After the "platform" of

| Opener | Responder |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1 of a minor | 1 of a major |
| 1NT | |

responder announces an invitational hand by rebidding 2♣, while a 2♦ rebid is a game force. These rebids are used regardless of the minor opener bid first. After the 2♣ rebid, opener is usually required to bid 2♦. Rarely, responder will pass this with a weak hand that has a four-card major and six-plus diamonds, but typically responder completes the description of his invitational hand. After responder's game-forcing 2♦ rebid, however, opener makes the first move in describing his major-suit holdings.



Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 11

Anyone who has played tournament bridge for even a short period of time knows that many low-level doubles are commonly played as something other than penalty. Why? It's because the opportunities to really nail the opponents with a penalty double at a low level are rare. Therefore, more practical uses for the double have been developed.

After Overall

If partner opens (say) 1♥, and right-hand opponent overcalls 2♣, what does a double by you mean? If this is a penalty double, check the RED box and Alert the opponents. The Alert is required because this is an unusual treatment in duplicate bridge.

Most pairs play that the double in this situation shows length in the unbid suits, a treatment commonly referred to as a negative double. Negative doubles are popular for a good reason: the opportunities to use them are frequent. Check the Negative box if you play this way, and indicate in the space next to it (labeled "thru") the highest level you play negative doubles.

Responsive

The negative double concept can be applied to many other situations. Another common one is this: LHO opens the bidding, partner doubles and RHO raises his partner's suit, e.g., (1♦)-Dbl-(2♦). What would a double mean? Many pairs have agreed to play this as showing a hand with values, but without clear direction. This type of double is called a responsive double. In the example auction, for example, what would you do with a hand such as:

♠Q 9 2 ♥K 4 3 ♦10 5 ♣A 7 6 4 2? The responsive double is useful in this case.

Another situation for the responsive double would be this: LHO opens, partner overcalls and RHO raises opener's suit, e.g., (1♦)-1♠-(2♦). Some play that a double here would be responsive showing the other major (hearts) and some values.

As with negative doubles, indicate how high you play responsive doubles on the "thru" line.

Maximal

Say you open 1♠ and partner raises to 2♠. With a hand that has game interest, you could make a game try by bidding a suit at the three level to ask partner for her input. Depending on whether the game try shows length or shortness, she could look at her holding in that suit to gauge game prospects. For example, you could bid 3♥ next to ask partner if she has a useful holding in hearts.

If the opponents interfere, however, you may not have space to make a game try. Say the auction is this:

| | | | |
|-----|-----|---------|-----|
| You | LHO | Partner | RHO |
| 1♠ | 2♥ | 2♠ | 3♥ |

If you wanted to make a game try here, you're out of luck — there's no room. That's why some pairs define a double here to show a hand with game interest. This type of double is called a maximal double. Check the box if you play this.

SPECIAL DOUBLES

After Overall: Penalty _____

Negative thru _____

Responsive : thru _____ Maximal

Support: Dbl. thru _____ Redb.

Card-showing Min. Offshape T/O





Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 12

As we continue to discuss the section of the convention card devoted to doubles, we recall that many low-level doubles are commonly played as something other than penalty. This is because the opportunities to inflict a large penalty on the opponents at a low level are rare. Therefore, more practical uses for the double have been developed.

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Support

In competitive auctions, support doubles and redoubles are used to tell responder that you (as a 1♣ or 1♦ opener) have three-card support for responder's major. For example:

| You | LHO | Partner | RHO |
|-----|------|---------|-----|
| 1♣ | Pass | 1♠ | 2♥ |
| ? | | | |

In this auction, you could show three-card spade support by doubling with a hand such as: ♠K 8 5 ♥A 7 ♦J 5 2 ♣K Q 9 8 6

Why do this? It allows you to differentiate between three-card support (double) and four-card support (2♠). This can be valuable information for partner in deciding how high to compete, whether to bid a game or even what denomination to bid.

Change your hand slightly to

♠K 8 6 5 ♥A 7 ♦J 5 2 ♣K Q 9 8,

and you would rebid 2♠ to indicate four-card spade support.

Indicate how high the support double agreement is in effect on the "thru" line (2♥ is popular).

SPECIAL DOUBLES

After Overcall: Penalty _____

Negative thru _____

Responsive : thru _____ Maximal

Support: Dbl. thru _____ Redbl

Card-showing Min. Offshape T/O

Redouble

The support redouble occurs on this type of auction:

| You | LHO | Partner | RHO |
|-----|------|---------|-----|
| 1♣ | Pass | 1♠ | Dbl |
| ? | | | |

Playing this method, a redouble would show three spades while a raise (2♠) would promise four. If you play this method, check the appropriate boxes, decide how high the agreement applies and be sure to Alert the opponents.

Items in **RED** on the convention card must be Alerted and explained to the opponents upon request.

ALERT

Minimum Offshape Takeout

A takeout double of an opening bid usually shows a hand with opening values and shortness in the opener's suit. It also suggests support for the unbid suits. Some players, however, will make a takeout double on any hand with minimal opening values (the 12 to 14 HCP range) even if the pattern isn't classic. If, after RHO's 1♥ opening, you would double with a hand such as:

♠A 5 ♥K 8 7 3 ♦K J 6 4 ♣Q 8 5,
check the box.

Card-showing

If your low-level competitive doubles show values without being strictly penalty or negative in nature, check this box. For example, if partner opens 1♣, RHO bids 1♥ and you double simply to show a good hand regardless of the pattern, this would be a card-showing double.



Tip: Experienced players consider this type of double to be poor. Partner will have a difficult time trying to figure out your pattern if you double with a hand such as this.