



Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 5

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

MAJOR OPENING

Expected Min. Length: Check the appropriate box(es) to indicate the minimum number of cards that you expect when partner opens 1♥ or 1♠. Although most North American players prefer using five-card majors, some will vary this approach in third or fourth seat where only four cards are promised.

If you expect a five-card suit regardless of which position opener is in, check the boxes in the “5” column. If you are a four-card major enthusiast instead, check the boxes in the “4” column. And if you expect five cards in the major in first or second seat, but only four after a third- or fourth-seat opening, check the box under the “5” column for the row labeled “1st/2nd” and check the box in the “4” column for the row labeled “3rd/4th.”

MAJOR OPENING		
Expected Min. Length	4	5
1st/2nd	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3rd/4th	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES		
Double Raise: Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
After Overcall: Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
Conv. Raise: 2NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	3NT <input type="checkbox"/> Splinter <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	_____	
1NT: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Semi-forcing <input type="checkbox"/>
2NT: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____
3NT:	_____ to _____	
Drury	<input type="checkbox"/>	: Reverse <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Way <input type="checkbox"/> Fit <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	_____	

RESPONSES

After Overcall: You and your partner might decide the double-raise sequences have the same meaning even if the opponents interfere. Or you might decide to change your agreements after an overcall. For example, after

You	Opp.	Partner	Opp.
1♥	2♣	3♥	Pass
?			

what does partner’s 3♥ mean? Is it the same as when the opponents were silent? Or is it different? Check the appropriate box to match your agreements.

Note that the preemptive jump is not Alertable when the opponents interfere.

Conv. Raise: Many pairs use conventional forcing raises after a major-suit opening. Common treatments are listed here. If you play any of the following methods, check the appropriate RED boxes on this line and Alert the opponents.

2NT: Many pairs use the auction

You	Partner
1♥ or 1♠	2NT

to show a game-forcing raise in the major with four-card or longer trump support. The convention called Jacoby 2NT is the most common example.

3NT: After you open one of a major, say partner jumps to 3NT. Without an agreement, the default position is that 3NT is natural, showing a balanced hand with game-going values. Some partnerships prefer, however, to use 3NT to show a specific hand type. A common treatment is that 3NT shows a 4–3–3–3 pattern with opening values. Opener may pass or correct to four of the major or even search for slam. There are other possible variations, as well.

Splinter: Another popular treatment is that a double jump into a new suit shows a game-going or better hand with four-card or longer support for opener’s suit and shortness in the suit bid. This treatment is called a splinter. For example:

You	Partner
1♠	4♣

Playing splinters, partner’s 4♣ would show club shortness, good spade support and a good hand.

Other: Any other conventional major-suit raises may be listed here. The popular Bergen raises, for example, would be listed on this line. Note that any treatment listed here must be Alerted.

RESPONSES

Double Raise

How does your partnership treat these sequences:

You	Opp.	Partner	Opp.
1♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
?			

or

You	Opp.	Partner	Opp.
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
?			

Are they forcing to game? Invitational? Preemptive (weak)? Whatever your agreements, check the appropriate box.

If you play a double raise as preemptive (weak) in a non-competitive auction, you should check the RED box and Alert the opponents.

ALERT

ALERT

ALERT



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1NT: Forcing In standard bidding, a 1NT response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening is non-forcing, showing a limited hand, meaning it has less than invitational strength. Many pairs, however (especially those who play the popular system called Two-over-One Game Force), define their 1NT response as forcing for one round, hence the name “1NT forcing.” Opener must bid again, even if it means bidding a three-card suit at the two level, to allow responder an opportunity to finish describing her hand.

For example, opener holds:

♠A9543 ♥743 ♦AQ7 ♣K6.

After opening 1♠ (the opponents are silent), responder bids 1NT (forcing). If a convenient rebid is available, opener would choose it. Here, however, she rebids 2♦. Since the 1NT response is frequently played as denying game-forcing values (note that there are many ways to play this, however), responder can now make a non-forcing correction to her suit, such as 2♥ or 3♣, with the appropriate hand. Alternatively, responder may pass (with a diamond fit) or take a preference to 2♠, which typically shows a doubleton. There are other possibilities as well, but this outlines the general structure.

Semi-forcing Other pairs, even Two-over-One fans, allow opener to pass 1NT with a balanced minimum, such as the example hand above. This approach is referred to as “1NT semi-forcing.” If you play 1NT Forcing or Semi-forcing, check the appropriate box.

ANNOUNCEMENT If you play either of these methods, you must Announce “forcing” or “semi-forcing” when your partner responds 1NT to your major-suit opening. **BLUE** items on the convention card require an Announcement.

Note that you should discuss with your partner whether these treatments are in effect after interference or by a passed hand.

MAJOR OPENING	
Expected Min. Length:	4 5
1st/2nd:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3rd/4th:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES	
Double Raise: Force	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
After Overcall: Force	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
Conv. Raise: 2NT	<input type="checkbox"/> 3NT <input type="checkbox"/> Splitter <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	_____
1NT: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/> Semi-forcing <input type="checkbox"/>
2NT: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____
3NT:	_____ to _____
Drury	<input type="checkbox"/> : Reverse <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Way <input type="checkbox"/> Fit <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	_____

2NT: Forcing If you play that a 2NT response to 1♥ or 1♠ shows a balanced hand with game-forcing strength, check the box.

Invitational If a 2NT response to a one-of-a-major opening shows a balanced invitational hand, check the box and indicate the high-card point range (11 to 12 is usual) for this bid. Neither of these treatments is Alertable.

3NT If you play that a 3NT response to 1♥ or 1♠ shows a balanced hand with a defined point range, check the box and write the point range in the blanks provided.

Drury Many pairs believe that it's advantageous to be allowed to open light in third (or even fourth) seat. To prevent their passed-hand partner (responder) from getting overboard with an invitational hand, the Drury convention allows responder to inquire whether the opening hand is light or full strength. Drury works like this: After a 1♥ or 1♠ opening in third seat, a 2♣ response asks opener to clarify how good (or bad) her hand is. Rebidding the major shows a full-strength opener, while a 2♦ rebid shows a sub-minimum hand. The 2♦ rebid warns responder to “take it easy.”

Reverse Reverse Drury is considered to be an improvement over the original Drury convention. For example, after this auction:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	?	

East may show a poor opening hand by rebidding his major (2♥). With full values, East could instead bid 2♦ to show a full opener. Since the meanings of these responses are the opposite of Drury, this treatment is called “reverse Drury.” Experienced players usually prefer the reverse variation.

2-Way As a further refinement to the Drury idea, some pairs allow responder to differentiate between three- and four-card support. The 2♣ response shows three-card support for opener's major, while 2♦ shows four. Since the 2♦ response is needed for the four-card raise, this method requires that the partnership play reverse Drury.

Examples:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣ ⁽¹⁾			

(1) I have an invitational hand with three-card spade support.

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦ ⁽¹⁾			

(1) I have an invitational hand with four-card spade support.

Fit If your version of Drury guarantees a fit (at least three cards) for opener's major, check the box. Some players employ a variation which does not promise a fit. The pairs would leave this box blank.

**A
L
E
R
T**

Note that all of these Drury variations are in **RED**, requiring you to Alert when your partnership employs these methods.

Other Other specialized agreements to a one-of-a-major opening may be listed here. These treatments require an Alert.





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MINOR OPENING

1♣, 1♦ : Expected Minimum Length

When you or your partner opens 1♣ or 1♦, how many cards do you promise in each suit? More precisely, what's the least number of cards you promise in each suit?

The answers to these questions depend to a large extent on your system. Standard American practitioners and Precision fans will, of course, have very different answers. But even among Standard bidders, the answer can still vary greatly depending on your partnership style.

It's a simple matter to check the appropriate box on the convention card. Note that it's common for Standard bidders who use five-card majors (this includes those who would typically describe their methods as Standard American as well as two-over-one players), to check the "3" box for both clubs and diamonds.

Some partnerships, however, like to promise four or more diamonds with their 1♦ opening. This means that with a minimum opening hand that has 4=4=3=2 pattern, such as ♠A J 5 4 ♥K Q 7 3 ♦K 9 6 ♣10 5,

they agree to open 1♣ even with a two-card suit. Pairs who employ this method must check the **BLUE** box in the "NF 0-2 column" and make an Announcement with their 1♣ opening such as "Could be short." ("NF" means non-forcing; responder may pass with a weak hand and long clubs.)



BLUE items on the convention card require an Announcement.

Partnerships who play a big-club system, such as Precision, must check the **RED** box in the "Conv." column since their 1♣ opening is conventional: it doesn't say anything about club length (indeed, opener could be void) and it is forcing (responder may not pass). This must be Alerted.

**A
L
E
R
T**

RED items on the convention card require you to Alert when your partnership employs these methods.

MINOR OPENING

Expected Min. Length 4 3 ^{NF} 0-2 Conv.

1♣
1♦

RESPONSES

Double Raise: Force Inv. Weak

After Overcall: Force Inv. Weak

Forcing Raise: J/S in other minor

Single raise Other: _____

Frequently bypass 4+♦

1NT/1♣ _____ to _____

2NT Forcing Inv. _____ to _____

3NT: _____ to _____

Other: _____

RESPONSES

Double Raise: Force, Invitational, Weak

What does this auction mean in your partnership?

<i>Opener</i>	<i>Responder</i>
1♦	3♦

If strong and game forcing, check the "Force" box. If invitational instead, check the corresponding box. If it's preemptive, check the "Weak" box. Note that this last treatment must be Alerted.

After Overcall

Let's change the auction given above to this:

<i>You</i>	<i>Opp.</i>	<i>Partner</i>
1♦	1♠	3♦

When the opponents interfere, your partnership may assign a different meaning to the double raise. Check the appropriate box to match the meaning that you and your partner agree to play.

Note that the weak interpretation does not require an Alert when the opponents intervene.



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J/S in other minor
 One way that you and your partner could decide to show an invitational or better hand after a 1♣ or 1♦ opening is to use a jump shift (J/S) in the other minor. These auctions (1♣–2♦ or 1♦–3♣) are rarely used in a natural sense anyway, so you can use them to show hands with a fit for partner's minor, no four-card major and invitational or better strength.

Single raise
 Other partnerships like to use the single raise, 1♣–2♣ or 1♦–2♦, to show an invitational or better hand, no four-card major and a fit for partner's minor. This treatment is frequently referred to as "inverted minors." Like the jump shift in the other minor, these bids are forcing for at least one round and (depending on your agreements) possibly forcing to game.
 If, for example, you agree that a single raise of a minor is invitational or better, you could raise 1♣ to 2♣ with:
 ♠A 7 ♥8 6 4 ♦K J 3 ♣K 10 8 7 2.
 This 11-count is good enough to invite, but not force to game. After your 2♣ raise, your next bid will clarify your strength.

ALERT Note that if you decide to play either of the above methods, you should discuss what continuations mean. You must also Alert the opponents.

MINOR OPENING — Responses

Forcing Raise: It's surprising how many pairs don't use some sort of conventional forcing raise after a 1♣ or 1♦ opening. The ability to show an invitational or better hand in response to a minor-suit opening, however, is important. For example, after a 1♣ opening by partner, what would you bid holding:

♠9 7 ♥A K ♦Q 8 6 2 ♣A J 7 3 2?

True, you could shoot out 3NT, but you'd feel silly if the opponents ran off the first umpteen spade tricks. 1♦ is another possibility, but it doesn't seem quite right, does it? If 3♣ is forcing in your partnership you could use that, but many pairs prefer the double jump to show a weak hand because preemptive raises occur with greater frequency than the strong variety.

Therefore, conventional approaches have been invented to handle this type of problem. The most common of these is a jump shift in the other minor (e.g., 1♣–2♦ or 1♦–3♣) and a single raise (e.g., 1♣–2♣ or 1♦–2♦).

MINOR OPENING	
Expected Min. Length	4 3 0–2 Conv.
1♣	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1♦	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES	
Double Raise: Force	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
After Overcall: Force	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
Forcing Raise:	J/S in other minor <input type="checkbox"/>
Single raise	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Frequently bypass 4+	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1NT/1♣	_____ to _____
2NT Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____
3NT:	_____ to _____
Other	_____

Frequently bypass four or more diamonds: It's a bridge fact that major suits outscore minor suits, so many pairs, in response to a 1♣ opening, will respond by bidding a four-card major suit instead of a four-card (or longer) diamond suit. For example, if partner opens 1♣, what do you respond holding:
 ♠Q 9 8 4 ♥10 2 ♦A 6 5 4 3 ♣Q 7?
 If your style is to ignore the diamonds and bid 1♠ instead, that's fine. This is a popular approach, but if you play this way, check the box so that the opponents know about your style, too. This is not, however, an Alertable treatment.
 If you prefer to respond 1♦ instead, leave the box blank.

1NT/1♣: How many high-card points are you promising when you respond 1NT to a 1♣ opening? Write your range in the spaces provided.
2NT: After a 1♣ or 1♦ opening, what does 2NT show? It typically denies a four-card major, but the range may vary. If it's game forcing, check the appropriate box. If it's invitational instead, check the other box and write in the point-count range in the spaces provided.
3NT: Write in the appropriate range.

ALERT Other: Any other conventional treatments should be listed here and Alerted if used.

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