

Reference, and the source upon which these notes are based: **ABF Alerting Regulations** March 2014  
<http://www.abfevents.com.au/events/tournregs/ABFAlertRegs14.pdf> or follow “useful link” on BBC home page.

**Definitions:****1. Natural calls**

A bid is natural if it meets the following criteria:

- Conveys a willingness to play in the denomination named; and
- Shows high card strength or length (3+ cards) in the suit named.

A natural suit bid is one that is not conventional.

**2. Convention**

A call that, by partnership agreement, conveys a meaning other than willingness to play in the denomination named. It does not convey high-card strength or length (3+ cards) in that suit.

**3. Self-alerting calls**

- Doubles
- Redoubles
- Cue bids of an opponent’s suit/denomination
- All calls at the four-level or higher, except conventional opening bids
- Any 2C response to a 1NT opening bid in an uncontested auction (Stayman).

**4. The Principle of Full Disclosure**

*The principle is to disclose, not as little as you can, but as much as you can, and as comprehensively as you can.*

**Familiarising the opponents with your conventions:**

1. **Systems Cards**, which detail your basic system, your conventions and card-play strategies.
2. **Alerting**, to draw the opponents’ attention to any call that has a special meaning, or a meaning that the opponents might not suspect.

**Alert Stages.** There are three stages of the alerting process, and all are important.

1. The pre-alert before bidding starts
2. Alerts and announcements during the auction
3. Delayed alerts by the declarer before the opening lead.

**Announcement:** This is a prescribed statement that the responder is required to make whenever their partner opens either 1C or 1NT.

- **After a 1C opening** by your partner, announce the **length** of the club suit:  
If you say “*Three plus*” this indicates that your partner holds at least 3 clubs.
- **After a 1NT opening** by your partner, announce the **strength** of the hand:  
Saying “*16-18*” indicates the point count of your partner’s 1NT opening bid.
- **Alert:** Any call by partner that the opponents could reasonably misunderstand must be alerted. (This is true even though the convention has been described in the systems card, but excludes any self-alerting calls).
  - Say “*Alert*”, and circle the bid. Do not add any other information – unless you are asked!
  - If you are asked to explain the bid, it is not acceptable to just name the convention – it should be comprehensively described.

**Common Conventions:**

- Stayman:** 2C in response to partner's 1NT opening.
  - No need to alert this convention, as it is so commonly used.
- 2D as the opener's second bid after a Stayman 2C response, denying a 4-card major.  
This must be alerted: 1NT / 2C / 2D
- 2C opening**, showing a strong hand (often 20+). This must be alerted.
- 2D in response to a 2C opening, showing a weak hand. This must be alerted:  
2C / 2D
- Transfers** in response to partner's NT opening bid.  
The transfer bid is must be alerted. eg  
1NT / 2D Shows 5 hearts, and directs partner to bid hearts.  
1NT / 2H Shows 5 spades and directs partner to bid spades.
- Unusual 2NT**, showing a 2 suited hand.
- Inverted minors** – when a natural call is forcing or non-forcing in a way that the opponents might not expect.  
1D / 2D when this is a forcing bid, indicating that the responder has points.  
1D / 3D when this is a weak bid.
- Forcing 1NT response** – when the opponents play the 2/1 system  
1H / 1NT showing 6-12 HCP  
1S / 1NT showing 6-12 HCP
- Jacoby 2NT**  
1H / 2NT shows 4 hearts and 13+ TP  
1S / 2NT shows 4 spades and 13+TP.
- Fourth suit forcing**  
In an uncontested auction, when the bidding of the fourth suit says nothing about the holding in that suit, but serves to indicate to partner that bidding should proceed to "game".  
1H / 1S /  
2C / 2D In this scenario the 2D bid is forcing to game and does not necessarily show diamonds.
- Help bids / Trial Bids**  
1H / 2H  
3C asking for help within two tricks in clubs. ie does partner hold the Ace or Kx in clubs?