

# ACBL Debuts New Convention Card

With the new Alert procedures implemented last year, it was time for the convention card to be overhauled as well. A committee consisting of Danny Sprung, Chris Weigand, Linda Trent, Tom Dressing and Tom Carmichael was appointed to redesign the card. The product of their work is the new card you see here, which the Board approved during their meetings at the Austin NABC.

You may start seeing the new card as soon as now, although it could take several months for the existing cards in circulation to be replaced with the new one. During the transition, either card will be acceptable.

Much of the card should look familiar to those already using an ACBL convention card. The use of names for conventions has been limited where possible. Common abbreviations and terms used on the card are explained in the glossary on the facing page.

We will explain each section in detail over the next few months.

Note that each section is now separated with vertically shaded columns: Overview, Minors, Majors, Notrump, and 2 Level.

Rather than starting with notrump openings, the new card arranges opening bids in ascending order.

There are now separate areas for 1♣ and 1♦ opening bids. Those who treat these bids the same, opening the “better minor,” don’t need to fill out the minor sections twice; there is a check box which indicates “same as over 1♣.”

The section on defensive carding methods has been greatly expanded with separate areas for leads against suits and notrump, carding and signals.

More room is given to explain general style for preempts and what is to be expected from a balanced opening bid.

The new Alert procedures have been incorporated with the same color coding: red = Alert, blue = Announce.

The new card contains many improvements designed to help opponents locate desired information efficiently and help partnerships with their own agreements. While it may seem like a lot of information – especially at first – it’s perfectly fine to only fill out the areas that apply to your partnership.

DOUBLES	Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Thru _____ Penalty <input type="checkbox"/>	Direct 1NT _____ to _____ Systems On <input type="checkbox"/>
	Responsive <input type="checkbox"/> Thru _____ Maximal <input type="checkbox"/>	Balance 1NT _____ to _____ Systems On <input type="checkbox"/>
OVERCALLS	Support <input type="checkbox"/> Thru _____ Rdbl <input type="checkbox"/>	Conv <input type="checkbox"/>
	T/O Style _____	Jump to 2NT: 2 Lowest Unbid <input type="checkbox"/>
DIRECT CUEBIDS	Other _____	Other _____
	1-Lvl _____ to _____ Often 4 Cards <input type="checkbox"/>	Vs _____ Vs _____
PREEMPTS	2-Lvl _____ to _____	Dbl _____ Dbl _____
	Jump Overcalls: Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Int <input type="checkbox"/> Str <input type="checkbox"/>	2♣ _____ 2♣ _____
SLAMS	Conv <input type="checkbox"/>	2♦ _____ 2♦ _____
	Responses	2♥ _____ 2♥ _____
CARDING	New Suit: F <input type="checkbox"/> NFOConst <input type="checkbox"/> NF <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr <input type="checkbox"/>	2♠ _____ 2♠ _____
	Jump Raise: Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Inv <input type="checkbox"/>	2NT _____ 2NT _____
LEADS vs SUITS	Ouebids _____ Support <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____
	Other _____	Other _____
NOTRUMP	Vs: Art <input type="checkbox"/> Quasi <input type="checkbox"/> Nat <input type="checkbox"/> Nat <input type="checkbox"/>	New Suit F: 2 Lvl <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr <input type="checkbox"/>
	Michaels <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Jump Shift: Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Inv <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> Fit <input type="checkbox"/>
MAJORS	Natural <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Rdbl 10+ <input type="checkbox"/> Conv <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	2NT Over: Nat _____ Raise _____ Range _____
OVERVIEW	Describe _____	♣♦ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____
	3-Level Style (Seat/Vul) _____	Other _____
MINORS	Resp _____	2NT Overcall _____
	4-Level Style _____	T/O Dbl Thru _____ Penalty <input type="checkbox"/>
2 LEVEL	Resp _____	2NT Lebenschli Resp <input type="checkbox"/>
	4♣/4♦ Tfr <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Ouebid _____
OTHER	4♣ Gerber: Directly Over NT <input type="checkbox"/> Over NT Seq <input type="checkbox"/> Non-NT Seq <input type="checkbox"/>	Jump Overcalls _____
	4NT: Blackwood <input type="checkbox"/> RKO 0314 <input type="checkbox"/> RKO 1430 <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____
SIGNALS	Control Bids _____	Primary Signals to:
	Vs Interference _____	Declarer's Lead _____ Partner's Lead _____
OTHER	Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Attitude <input type="checkbox"/>
	Suits <input type="checkbox"/> Standard - Attitude <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Count <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/> Standard - Count <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Suit Preference <input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Upside Down - Attitude <input type="checkbox"/>	Exceptions _____
OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/> Upside Down - Count <input type="checkbox"/>	First Discard: Std <input type="checkbox"/> Upside Down <input type="checkbox"/>
	Exceptions _____	Lavinthal <input type="checkbox"/> Odd/Even <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	Other Carding: _____	CIRCLE CARD LED (if not bold):
	Smith Echo: Suits <input type="checkbox"/> NT <input type="checkbox"/> Reverse <input type="checkbox"/>	Length Leads: 4* <input type="checkbox"/> 3*/5* <input type="checkbox"/> 3*/Low <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	Trump Signals _____	Attitude <input type="checkbox"/> 2+ from xxxx(+) <input type="checkbox"/>
	CIRCLE CARD LED (if not bold):	xx xxx xxxxx xxxxxx
OTHER	Length Leads: 4* <input type="checkbox"/> 3*/5* <input type="checkbox"/> 3*/Low <input type="checkbox"/>	Hxx Hxxx Hxxxx
	Attitude <input type="checkbox"/> Small from xxx <input type="checkbox"/>	xx xxx xxxxx xxxxxx
OTHER	xx xxx xxxxx xxxxxx	Hxx Hxxx Hxxxx
	Hxx Hxxx Hxxxx	xx xxx xxxxx xxxxxx
OTHER	After 1 <sup>st</sup> Trick _____	After 1 <sup>st</sup> Trick _____
	Honor Leads: _____	Honor Leads: _____
OTHER	A Kxx(+) Varies <input type="checkbox"/>	A Kxx(+) Varies <input type="checkbox"/>
	K Qx Q Jx J Tx T 9x	K Qx K Q T 9 Q J T x J T 9 x
OTHER	Interior Seq: _____	Interior Seq: _____
	K J T x K T 9 x Q T 9 x	A Q J x A J T x K T 9 x Q T 9 x
OTHER	Exceptions _____	Exceptions _____
	Exceptions _____	Exceptions _____

OVERVIEW	Names _____
	General Approach _____
MINORS	Min Expected HOP when Balanced: Opening _____ Responding _____
	Forcing Open: 1♣ <input type="checkbox"/> 2♣ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ 1NT Open: Str <input type="checkbox"/> Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Variable <input type="checkbox"/>
MAJORS	Bids That May Require Preparation _____
	1♣ Min Length: 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> NF 2♣ (4432 only) <input type="checkbox"/> NF 1♣ <input type="checkbox"/> NF 0♣ <input type="checkbox"/> Art F <input type="checkbox"/>
NOTRUMP	Resp _____ Transfer Resp <input type="checkbox"/>
	1♦ _____ Bypass 5+ <input type="checkbox"/> Raises Single: NF <input type="checkbox"/> Inv+ <input type="checkbox"/> GF <input type="checkbox"/>
2 LEVEL	1NT _____ to _____ Jump: Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Inv <input type="checkbox"/>
	2NT _____ to _____ After Overcall: Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Inv <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	1♦ Min Length: 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Unbal <input type="checkbox"/> NF 2♦ <input type="checkbox"/> NF 1♦ <input type="checkbox"/> NF 0♦ <input type="checkbox"/> Art F <input type="checkbox"/>
	Resp _____ Same as over 1♣ <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	1NT _____ to _____ Raises Single: NF <input type="checkbox"/> Inv+ <input type="checkbox"/> GF <input type="checkbox"/>
	2NT _____ to _____ Jump: Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Inv <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	1♥/♠ _____ After Overcall: Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Inv <input type="checkbox"/>
	Art Raises: 2NT <input type="checkbox"/> 3NT <input type="checkbox"/> Splinter <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	1♥/♠ Length: 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
	1♥/♠ Length: 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Drury: 2♣ <input type="checkbox"/> 2♦ <input type="checkbox"/> In Comp <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	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	Other _____ After Overcall: Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Inv <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other _____
OTHER	1NT _____ to _____ (Seat/Vul) _____
	1NT _____ to _____ (Same Resp: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> )
OTHER	5-Card Major <input type="checkbox"/> Sys On vs _____
	2♣ Stayman <input type="checkbox"/> Puppet <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	2♦: Nat <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
	2♥: Nat <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
OTHER	2♠: Nat <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
	2NT: Nat <input type="checkbox"/> Tfr <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
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 _____ Lebenschli <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	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 _____
OTHER	3NT _____ to _____ One Suit <input type="checkbox"/>
	2♣ _____ to _____ 2♦ Neg <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	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	Other _____
	2♦ _____ to _____ New Suit NF <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	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"/>
OTHER	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"/>
OTHER	Wk <input type="checkbox"/> Int <input type="checkbox"/> Str <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Suits <input type="checkbox"/> Rebids over 2NT: _____ Other _____
	Jump Shift Resp _____
OTHER	Vs (Very) Str Open _____ NMF <input type="checkbox"/> 2Way NMF <input type="checkbox"/> XYZ <input type="checkbox"/> 4*SF: 1Rnd <input type="checkbox"/> GF <input type="checkbox"/>
	_____

## Glossary

- 1Rnd . . . . . One round
- 2Way NMF . . . . . Two-way new minor forcing
- 4th SF . . . . . Fourth Suit Forcing
- Art . . . . . Artificial
- Conv . . . . . Conventional
- F . . . . . Forcing
- GF . . . . . Game forcing
- HCP . . . . . High Card Points
- H . . . . . Honor
- Int . . . . . Intermediate
- Inv . . . . . Invitational
- Inv+ . . . . . Invitational or better
- Nat . . . . . Natural
- Neg . . . . . Negative
- NF . . . . . Non-forcing
- NMF . . . . . New minor forcing
- Pen . . . . . Penalty
- Quasi . . . . . Balanced with two or more, or natural length
- Resp . . . . . Response(s)
- Semi-F . . . . . Semi-forcing
- Std . . . . . Standard
- T/O . . . . . Takeout
- Tfr . . . . . Transfer
- Wk . . . . . Weak
- XYZ . . . . . A convention similar to 2Way NMF





# 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.

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.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

**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: NF  Inv+  GF   
 1NT \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Single: Wk  Mixed  Inv   
 2NT \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ 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♣

1♥/♠ \_\_\_\_\_ Raises: NF  Inv+  GF   
 1NT \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Single: Wk  Mixed  Inv   
 2NT \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ 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

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.

## MAJORS

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

MAJORS	1♥/♠	Art Raises: 2NT <input type="checkbox"/> 3NT <input type="checkbox"/> Splinter <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> Length: 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____
	3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> 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"/>	