



Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 2

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



Notice that “1NT” and the lines for the notrump ranges are in **BLUE**. All items in **BLUE** on the convention card require players to describe the meaning of the bid with a word or short phrase. In the case of notrump opening ranges, simply state the numerical range. For example, if your partner opens 1NT and your agreed-upon range is (say) 13–15 HCP, you should verbally Announce “Thirteen to fifteen,” so the opponents will also know the range without having to look at your convention card.

Rule The Announcement rule applies even to the common 15–17 1NT range.

1NT These spaces allow you and your partner to state your point range for an opening 1NT bid. If your 1NT shows 15 to 17 high-card points, write “15” on the top left line and “17” on the top right line. Why are there two sets of lines? It’s because some partnerships have a variable notrump range, which means that the range for their opening 1NT bids may change depending on which seat they open 1NT or what the vulnerability is. Most pairs, however, use just a single range.

NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS			
1NT	_____	_____	_____
_____ to _____	_____	3♣	_____
_____ to _____	_____	3♦	_____
_____ to _____	_____	3♥	_____
_____ to _____	_____	3♠	_____
5-card Major common <input type="checkbox"/>			
System on over _____			
2♣ Stayman <input type="checkbox"/>	Puppet <input type="checkbox"/>		
2♦ Transfer to ♥ <input type="checkbox"/>	4♦, 4♥ Transfer <input type="checkbox"/>		
Forcing Stayman <input type="checkbox"/>	Smolen <input type="checkbox"/>		
2♥ Transfer to ♠ <input type="checkbox"/>	Lebensohl <input type="checkbox"/> (____ denies)		
2♠ _____	Neg. Double <input type="checkbox"/>		
2NT _____	Other _____		

5-card Major common Some partnerships like to open 1NT on most balanced hands in the appropriate high-card range even if they contain a five-card major. If you and your partner play this way, check the box.

2♦ and 2♥ Most duplicate players use the 2♦ and 2♥ responses to 1NT as Jacoby transfers, promising five or more cards in the next higher suit, *i.e.*, 2♦ promises five or more hearts and 2♥ promises five or more spades. Opener is expected to accept the transfer by bidding the indicated suit at his next turn. If you use transfer responses to 1NT, check the appropriate **BLUE** boxes.

2♣ Most players use a 2♣ response to a 1NT opening as Stayman, asking opener if he has a four-card major. Check the black box if you and your partner play this. A few players prefer a variation called “Puppet Stayman,” which asks opener if he has a four- or five-card major. Check the red box if you use this method, and remember that it requires an Alert, as does anything else in **RED** on the convention card.

System on over interference

Occasionally the opponents will interfere when your side opens 1NT. When this happens, you and your partner may agree to ignore their bidding and play your system as if they had not acted. This approach is called “system on.” For example, many players like their system to be “on” if the opponents double since the double takes up no bidding room. This means that Stayman and Jacoby

transfers (see below) would still be “on” so that the conventional message of responder’s 2♣, 2♦ and 2♥ bids would be unchanged.

Other players, however, think it’s too confusing to play systems on if the opponents interfere, so their bids revert to natural meanings. This approach is called “system off.” If you play system on, use the space provided to say which calls by the opponents (such as double and/or 2♣) allow you to still play Stayman, transfers or other conventional calls.

Both the 2♦ and 2♥ transfers require an Announcement. So if you open 1NT and partner bids 2♥, say “Transfer.” Note that there is also a “Forcing Stayman” option in **RED** under 2♦. Some pairs like to play “two-way” Stayman, meaning that 2♣ is used as Stayman with invitational hands, while 2♦ is used as Stayman with game-forcing hands. Check the **RED** box and Alert if you use this approach.



2♠ and 2NT While it is possible to treat these responses as natural, it’s popular to assign conventional meanings to these responses. They might be used to show length in one or both minor suits. For example, some pairs like to play that 2♠ shows clubs (similar to a transfer), while 2NT shows diamonds. There are many variations you may agree to play with your partner, and these spaces allow you to briefly describe your methods. Note that the lines are in **RED**; an Alert is required if the meanings are not natural.