

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 18



Defense versus 1NT Openings

There was a time when anyone who opened 1NT could expect to have a nice, quiet, non-competitive auction. Those days are gone, because many players have learned that allowing the opponents to have a nice, quiet, non-competitive auction after a 1NT opening makes matters too easy for the opening side. With a shapely hand and adequate values, therefore, many players are jumping into the bidding not only to describe their own hand, but to throw a monkeywrench into the opponents' methods such as Stayman and transfers. There are many ways to compete after a 1NT opening. It's possible to play that all two-level actions are natural, or you can assign much more complicated meanings to 2♣, 2♦, 2♥, 2♠ and, of course, double. The purpose of this discussion is not to suggest a particular method, but rather outline the proper way to mark your convention card regardless of what your methods may be.

Vs:

The "Defense Vs. Notrump" section of the convention card is arranged in two columns. This is to accommodate pairs who employ different methods depending upon factors such as whether the opponents are using a strong or a weak 1NT opening or to distinguish between direct overcalls and balancing actions.

For example, if the opponents open a 15–17 1NT, you and your partner might agree to play a system in which double shows a hand containing an unspecified long suit. Against a weak notrump opening (anything in the 10–14 HCP range), however, you might have agreed to play double as penalty or as showing values. The two columns allow you to describe your methods in both situations.

Alternatively, some pairs distinguish between a direct overcall, *e.g.*,

<i>RHO</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>
1NT	2♥		

and a balancing (or pass-out) action, *e.g.*,

<i>RHO</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>
		1NT	Pass

Pass	2♥
------	----

If the meaning for 2♥ is different in these two cases, the two-column format allows you to describe both.

DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP

Vs:

2♣ _____

2♦ _____

2♥ _____

2♠ _____

Dbt: _____

Other _____

Other

If there are other bids that are part of your conventional defense to 1NT (*e.g.*, What does 2NT mean? What about three-level bids?), describe them here and Alert them when they occur.

2♣, 2♦, 2♥, 2♠, Dbt

For each of these calls, write a brief description of what each means. If 2♣ is natural showing clubs, write "clubs" or "natural" in the blank provided. If 2♣ instead shows, say, clubs and hearts, write "clubs and hearts" (or the suit symbols, "♣ + ♥") in the blank. Do this for each of the calls, unless they are all natural in which case you may write "Natural" across the entire section.

Note: If you play a convention such as Cappelletti, DONT, Hello, Brozel or any other of the popular treatments, do not simply write the name of the convention across this section. It's not the job of your opponents to be familiar with your convention. Furthermore, the opponents may want to find out what your methods are by glancing at your convention card rather than by asking you. As a courtesy to the opponents, and in the interests of full disclosure, describe each call on the line provided.

ALERT

If your defense to a 1NT opening by the opponents is anything other than natural, Alert and explain upon request.

