

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 7



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.

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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♣	<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 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?

Opener	Responder
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:

You	Opp.	Partner
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.