



# Conventional Wisdom Lite

## Filling out a basic 2/1 convention card – part 4

BY LARRY COHEN

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### SPECIAL DOUBLES

A good understanding of negative doubles is very important. This “convention” is used when your partner opens one of a suit and the opponents overcall in a suit. Responder’s double is not penalty. If double were penalty (ugh!), you would check the box in red. Instead, “After Overcall,” please check the box that says “Negative.”

Through what level? This is a matter of partnership agreement. After a high-level jump overcall, it is unlikely responder will want to make a penalty double. The opponent who jump-overcalls will have a very long suit – the higher he bids, the longer the suit. The responder will usually be short in the opponent’s suit. Accordingly, I recommend negative doubles be used on any level. You could mark “thru 7♠” or “thru ∞” (infinity). This means negative doubles are played on any level.

After a low-level negative double, the opener will almost always take it out. After a high-level negative double, the opener will usually leave it in and try to set the opponents. If any of this isn’t clear, please do an online search from a trusted source and read about negative doubles.

Any other doubles in this section can be added later down the road, so leave them all blank. Responsive and Support Doubles are indeed popular with tournament players, but in my experience, newer players get confused and often forget them.

### NOTRUMP OVERCALLS

This is an easy one. Mark the range as 15 to 18 (even though a 1NT opening is a tighter 15–17 range) and check the box that says “Systems on.” This means that after your side overcalls with 1NT, that the 1NT bidder’s partner uses Stayman and Transfers.

For “Balancing” you can mark a different range – about 12–15 would be standard. But if this is confusing, you can keep it the same as direct and mark it as 15 to 18 for now.

Assuming you are playing the Unusual 2NT convention, you can mark “2 Lowest” next to “Jump to 2NT”; notice that this is in black, so not Alertable.

<p><b>SPECIAL DOUBLES</b></p> <p>After Overcall: Penalty <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Negative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> thru <input type="checkbox"/> ∞</p> <p>Responsive <input type="checkbox"/> : thru _____ Maximal <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Support: Dbl. <input type="checkbox"/> thru _____ Redbl <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Card-showing <input type="checkbox"/> Min. Offshape T/O <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>NOTRUMP OVERCALLS</b></p> <p>Direct: <u>15 to 18</u> Systems on <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Conv. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Balancing: <u>12 to 15</u></p> <p>Jump to 2NT: Minors <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Lowest <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Conv. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>SIMPLE OVERCALL</b></p> <p>1 level <u>8 to 17</u> HCP (usually)</p> <p>often 4 cards <input type="checkbox"/> very light style <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Responses</b></p> <p>New Suit: Forcing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NFConst <input type="checkbox"/> NF <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Jump Raise: Forcing <input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP</b></p> <p>vs: _____</p> <p>2♣ _____</p> <p>2♦ _____</p> <p>2♥ _____</p> <p>2♠ _____</p> <p>Dbl: _____</p> <p>Other _____</p>

Note: All the lines are red, but your bid is not Alertable if it is natural.

### SIMPLE OVERCALL

On the 1 level, mark something like 8 to 17 HCP. As to “Responses,” this is a tough area, because there is no standard way to play. Though possibly not best, I’d say the simplest way to mark these boxes would be as shown. Down the road, the Jump Raise can be changed to Weak and you can use a cuebid of the opponents’ suit to show an invitational or better raise.

### DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP

There are about 50 conventions that can be used here! Choose something simple – or even Natural – and fill in the boxes accordingly. Most popular are Cappelletti/Hamilton, DONT or Landy. All can be Googled.

I strongly suggest you play the same system in direct seat (immediately after 1NT) as in the balancing seat (after 1NT–Pass–Pass–?). There are two sets of lines to cover the possibility that you might face opponents who use a weak notrump, such as 12–14. It is too much memory drain at this stage to play two systems. So, just choose one method against all 1NT openers and use only the first set of lines.

Be sure to thoroughly understand any convention you choose here and the follow-ups by the partner of the overcaller. Be sure you and your partner know what double means: Is it natural/strong, or part of a convention?