

# Conventional Wisdom

## Filling out the convention card — part 1

Filling out a convention card with a partner is part of the fun of playing duplicate bridge. Whether you prefer a simple approach or a system with lots of bells and whistles, the convention card is a great way to keep you and your partner on the same wavelength.

Many clubs require both members of a partnership to have completed convention cards available as a courtesy to the opponents. Your convention card allows other players to get an overview of your methods at a glance.

The *Conventional Wisdom* series will focus on assisting new players (and even some experienced ones!) with the proper use of the ACBL convention card.

Let's begin with the most important part of the card: the space for you and your partner's names.

**NAMES** One of the easiest ways to create a pleasant playing environment — and to make new friends — is to introduce yourself and your partner to opponents you haven't met. In the excitement of playing the game, however, we sometimes forget our social obligations. Or sometimes we forget the names of players we've previously met! In either case, the space for players' names on the convention card is one of the easiest ways to allow everyone to associate a name with a face.

**GENERAL APPROACH** Do you and your partner play Standard American? Two-over-one game forcing? Precision? Maybe you even prefer "Goren", "Schenken" or "Four-card majors" as the best way to describe your methods. Whatever your system, the GENERAL APPROACH space allows your opponents to see the shorthand description of it here.

**Tip:** To help remember your ACBL player number, write it next to your name on the convention card.

NAMES	
GENERAL APPROACH	
Two Over One: Game Forcing <input type="checkbox"/>	Game Forcing Except When Suit Rebid <input type="checkbox"/>
VERY LIGHT: Openings <input type="checkbox"/>	3rd Hand <input type="checkbox"/> Overcalls <input type="checkbox"/> Preempts <input type="checkbox"/>
FORCING OPENING: 1♣ <input type="checkbox"/> 2♣ <input type="checkbox"/> Natural 2 Bids <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> _____	

**VERY LIGHT:** Although many players will occasionally open or preempt with a light, shapely hand, the boxes under the VERY LIGHT category

are designed for partnerships who agree to use aggressive, light bidding as a matter of course, not just every now and then. If you and your partner agree to regularly open hands that most players wouldn't, it's legal to do so, but the opponents have a right to know about it too. Check the "Openings" box. If you and your partner think that preempting 3♣ is okay with ♠9 2 ♥10 ♦8 6 2 ♣Q 8 7 6 5 4 3, check the "Preempt" box.

**Two Over One:** How do you and your partner treat auctions that begin with a two-over-one sequence? For example:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♣

Is this forcing to game? Forcing for just one round? If the auction begins 1♥-2♣; 2♦-3♣, may opener pass? Some partnerships allow the bidding to stop at 2NT or when responder simply rebids his suit. Others treat two-over-one sequences as 100% game-forcing. Check the box that best describes your approach.

**FORCING OPENING:** What's your systemic "big bid"? Do you play strong two-bids? Or do you use the popular 2♣? Maybe 1♣ is the strong bid in your system (Precision, for example). Check the appropriate box on this line.

**ALERT**

If you use 1♣ as your strong system bid, you must Alert the opponents. (If you or your partner open a strong, artificial 1♣, say "Alert." to warn them about the unusual meaning. If they want to know more about your methods, they'll ask.) Notice that this box is in RED. Items in RED on the convention card require an Alert.

**Rule** The ACBL General Convention Chart doesn't allow partnerships to agree to open one-level suit bids with fewer than 8 high-card points. The bottom range for a 1NT opening is 10 HCP. Preempts, of course, are weaker by nature, but a preemptive style that is regularly *very* weak should be indicated on the convention card. Also, if you check any of those boxes, you must tell each of your opponents in advance of play.