

Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 22

Leads

This section of the convention card allows you to outline your opening-lead agreements. Although this is a useful tool for your partnership to improve understanding in the opening-lead department, remember that this section is in fact for the benefit of your opponents so that they will know what your methods are when they declare.

Circle card led, if not in bold In this section, circle the card your partnership has agreed to lead from the list of common holdings, unless that card is already in bold-face type. The cards in bold represent the “standard” lead from a particular holding, but your partnership is free to deviate from the standard treatment as long as you indicate it on the convention card. If, for example, your partnership has agreed to lead the ace from ace-king, circle the letter “A” on the line that reads “A K x.” Note that this section is divided into two parts: one for leads versus suit contracts, the other for leads versus notrump contracts. This allows partnerships who vary their lead agreements in each of these cases — a common occurrence — to show it on the convention card.

This section refers to opening leads only, and not to defensive leads made later in the play.

ALERT

What’s that red “x” on the top line? It’s for partnerships that prefer to lead low from a doubleton. If your partnership has this agreement, circle the **RED** “x” and pre-Alert opponents that you play this method at the beginning of each round. (A pre-Alert is an announcement made to the opponents before the auction begins on the first board of a round. In this case, it would something such as, “We lead low from doubletons on defense.”)

LEADS (circle card led, if not in bold)			
versus Suits		versus Notrump	
x x	x x x x	x x	x x x x
x x x	x x x x	x x x	x x x x
A K x	T 9 x	A K J x	A Q J x
K Q x	K J T x	A J T 9	A T 9 x
Q J x	K T 9 x	K Q J x	K Q T 9
J T 9	Q T 9 x	Q J T x	Q T 9 x
K Q T 9		J T 9 x	T 9 x x
LENGTH LEADS:			
4th Best	vs SUITS <input type="checkbox"/>	vs NT <input type="checkbox"/>	
3rd/5th Best	vs SUITS <input type="checkbox"/>	vs NT <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Attitude vs NT <input type="checkbox"/>		
Primary signal to partner's leads			
Attitude <input type="checkbox"/> Count <input type="checkbox"/> Suit preference <input type="checkbox"/>			

Length Leads Check the appropriate box(es) in this section. If you lead fourth-best, for example, against suit and notrump contracts, check both boxes on the “4th Best” line.

Primary signal to partner's leads When your partner makes the opening lead, dummy is displayed and you (being a good partner) must signal partner as to the best way for him to proceed. This is called your primary signal. There several ways to go about this:

- You can, for example, indicate that you like the opening lead by playing a high card (in standard methods). Or you can play low to show disinterest in partner’s suit. These are “attitude” signals.
- Your partnership may prefer to give “count” on the opening lead, which in standard requires that you begin a high-low signal to show an even number of cards in the suit led. To show an odd number, play low first then high on the next trick.
- You could play that a low card asks the opening leader to switch to a lower-ranking suit, while a high card asks for a switch to a higher-ranking one. This approach is called “suit preference.”

Of course, each deal is different and good defenders will know whether attitude, count or suit preference should apply depending on what the dummy looks like and what the auction has been. You should check the box, however, that fits your general defensive approach.