

ACBL Convention Card – To compete more effectively in duplicate bridge you and your partner adopt a system of bidding agreements (natural and conventional). You use these agreements to communicate during the auction. Bridge is a game of skill not of secrets. The winners should be determined solely by skill, flair and normal playing luck. This means that the agreements your partnership employs (plays) must be available to your opponents and *visa versa*.

The ACBL Convention Card (CC) formally tells opponents your partnership agreements – the general approach your partnership will use and any special bidding sequences and/or conventions you play. It is an ACBL requirement for each player to have a completed CC on the table throughout the session. The agreements you mark in a **BLUE** section require an **Announcement!** and the agreements you mark in a **RED** section require an **Alert!** Actively ethical partnerships go out of their way to make sure that their agreements are made know to their opponents. A major tenet of active ethics is the principle of full disclosure.

Players are not required to understand their opponent's systems ... your opponents have the right to ask questions about your partnership agreements and you have the right (when it is your turn to make a call) to ask questions about their agreements.

Novice (20 Masterpoints) – The following agreements might be appropriate for a partnership where each partner has 20 masterpoints and has completed EasyBridge! 1 and 2.

There are no requirements that any system of bidding agreements must be employed, only that the agreements employed must be disclosed. The following agreements are only suggested. These agreements have been taken primarily from EasyBridge 1 & 2 (EB#) with additions from the Standard American Yellow Card System (SAYC), Bridge Basics 1 & 2 (BB#) and The Convention Card (TCC). In application, it is imperative to discuss and have a partnership understanding on the bidding agreements (natural and conventional) employed.

Front – The ACBL CC is divided into two sections. The front side of the CC deals with agreements the partnership would use to bid for a contract (offensive bidding).

1. General Approach:

- Standard American
- **Very Light:** Preempts If you use undisciplined preempts (*e.g.*, not guaranteeing strength in the bid suit). [see TCC p.1]
- **Forcing Opening:** 2♣ This is the only opening bid that forces partner to bid – all other opening bids may be passed. If partner may not pass an opening bid of 1♣ (convenient club or big club) or 1♦ (Precision) you must check the appropriate box and **Announce** or **Alert** as appropriate.

2. Notrump (Nt) Openings Bids:

- **Open 1Nt:** 15-17 hcp **Announce** [see EB1 p.47]
- 5-card Major common Do not open 1Nt with a 5-card major. [see EB1 p.21]
- **Stayman:** 2♣ is asking opener if he has a 4-card major ... does not require an alert. [see EB1 p.50]
- **Jacoby Transfers:** 2♦ transfer to 2♥ **Announce** and 2♥ transfer to 2♠ **Announce** [see EB1 p.50]
- 2♠ is a relay to 3♣. [see SAYC p.2]
- 2Nt is invitational with 8-9 hcp. [see EB1 p.49 & 52]
- **Open 2Nt:** 20-21 hcp [see EB1 p.47]
- **Jacoby Transfers:** 3♦ transfer to 3♥ **Announced** and 3♥ transfer to 3♠ **Announced**. [see SAYC p.3]
- **Open 3Nt:** 25-27 hcp [see EB1 p.47]
- **Jacoby Transfers:** 4♦ transfer to 4♥ **Announced** and 4♥ transfer to 4♠ **Announced**. [see SAYC p.3]

“Good bidding is to use your judgment and experience to choose between alternatives. There is seldom just one bid that fits the circumstances; but there is usually one bid that works better than others.” Edith McMullin [see EB2 p.4]

3. Major Suit Openings:

- 1♥ or 1♠ shows a 5-card suit (minimum) and opening values. [see EB1 p.21]
- Double raise (1♥ - 3♥) shows good 10/11-12 points and 4-card support for opener's suit. [see EB1 p.29]
- After Overcall: Double Raise is Weak (e.g., 1♥ by opener, 1♠ overcall, and 3♥ by responder shows a weak hand and at least 3-card support for opener's suit) **Note:** Cue bid* shows limit raise. [see EB1 p.45]
- 1Nt is 6 to 10 hcp: denies support for partner's bid suit and 4-card (or longer) suit that can be bid at the 1-level. [see BB1 p.94]
- 2Nt is reserved. [see BB1 p.133]
- 3Nt is 13 to 15 hcp, balanced hand and 2-card support. [see SAYC p.3 and see BB1 p.133]

* A cue bid is the bid of the OPPONENT'S suit. Remember, any bid not understood is forcing one round.

4. Minor Suit Openings:

- Without a 5-card major or notrump opening hand, open better (longer) minor (with 4♦ & 4♣ open the higher ranking suit & with 3♦ & 3♣ open the lower ranking suit). [see EB1 p.21 & BB1 p.111]
- Double raise (1♣ - 3♣) shows a limit raise of good 10/11-12 points and 5-card support. [see EB1 p.30 & BB1 p.133]
- After an over call, double raise (1m by partner, 1-level overcall, and 3m by responder) shows a weak hand and at least 5-card support for opener's suit. [see EB1 p.21]
- **Note:** Cue bid shows limit raise. [see SAYC p.7]
- Frequently by pass 4+♦ Unless you have about a full opening hand (a hand worth two bids) bid 4-card majors first. [see EB1 p.22]
- 1Nt is 6 to 10 hcp and denies a 4-card major. [see BB1 p.133]
- 2Nt is 11 to 12 hcp and denies a 4-card major. [see BB1 p.133]
- 3Nt is 13 to 15 hcp and denies a 4-card major. [see BB1 p.133]

5. Opening 2 Bids:

- **Opening 2♣:** Strong and Game Forcing showing a hand with 22+ hcp or playing strength that is one trick away from game (8½ Quick Tricks). [see EB1 p.63 & 65]
- 2♦ is waiting. [see EB1 p.63]
- Rebid of 3-cheapest minor is Double Negative – responder can now pass (short of game) if opener rebids his suit. [see EB1 p.63]
- Opening 2♣ and rebid 2Nt is notrump hand with 22 to 24 hcp. [see EB1 p.47 & 65]
- **Opening 2♦♥♠** (Weak Two Bid): 5-10 hcp, 6-card suit (vulnerable - 2 of top 3 honors ♠KQ10876; non-vulnerable - 2 of top 4 honors) and no outside 4-card major or void. [see EB1 p.61 and EB2 p.36]
- 2Nt asks for feature (A or K). With good hand (7+ to 10 points) bid A or K, otherwise, rebid suit. [see EB2 p.36]

6. Other Conventional Calls:

- None.

Back – The back side of the CC primarily deals with agreements the partnership would use in competitive bidding and defensive signals.

7. Special Doubles:

- Negative Doubles through 3♠. [see EB1 p.33]
- Takeout (TO) Double (not on the cc) When made at your first turn to call, the double is not for penalty. The TO double says I have one of two kinds of hands: 1) 13 dummy points, shortness in my opponents suit (no more than 2 cards) and can support any suit you bid (strongly suggests 4-cards in any unbid major) or 2) 17+ hcp and making a forcing bid. [see EB1 p.33, 36 & 46]
- Min. Offshape T/O If by agreement, you would make a Takeout Double with minimum values (12-14 hcp) which does not show shortness in the opening “bid suit” and support for all “unbid suits” this is a Minimum Offshape Takeout Double and **must** be marked on the convention card. [see EB1 p.33 & 56]

8. Overcalls:

- 1-level overcalls are 8 to 16 hcp. [see EB1 p.34 & 45]
- **Responses:**
- New Suit: (Non Forcing) NF
- Jump Raise: Weak **Note:** Cue bid shows limit raise. [see EB1 p.45 & 56]

If you don't have the shape for an overcall (at least five good cards in a suit), and you don't have the shape (or points) for a takeout double. **PASS** ... Good players love it when their opponents make silly wrong shape bids against them. It not only tells them how to play the hand, but gives them the option of punishing the miscreant for his undisciplined ways. Edith McMullin [see EB1 p.41]

9. Jump Overcall and Opening Preempts:

- **Opening Preempts:** 3♠ with KQ108765 or 4♠ with AKQJ10865 “When you preempt, you should have very few high card points outside your preempt suit.” Edith McMullin [see EB1 p. 61]
- Very Light If you use undisciplined preempts (not guaranteeing strength in the bid suit). [see TCC p.1]
- **Jump Overcall:** Weak Same as opening preempt. [see EB1 p.61]

10. Direct Cuebid:

- **Reserved.** The Direct Cuebid (Cue-Bid Overcall) was originally used to show a powerful hand with slam interest. Today the Direct Cuebid is commonly used as a conventional bid. The Direct Cuebid of natural bids is covered in Easybridge 3.

11. Nt Overcalls:

- **Direct 1Nt Overcall:** 15-18 hcp (**Announced**) [see SAYC p.6]
- **Balancing Notrump:** usually 11-14 (not Announced) [see SAYC p.7]

12. Defensive Bids vs. Nt Openings:

- Suit bids are natural. Double is for penalty.

13. Over Opponent's Takeout Double:

- New Suit Forcing: 1-level [I am still researching.]
- Jump Shift: Weak [I am still researching.]
- Redouble Implies no fit (shows 10 pts) [see EB1 p.37]

14. Vs. Opponent's Preempt:

- Double is takeout through 3♠.

15. Slam Conventions:

- **Gerber:** 4♣ is ace asking over opening notrump or last bid notrump. [see EB1 p.70]
- **Blackwood:** 4Nt is ace asking over suit bids. [see EB1 p.67]

16. Leads:

· versus Suits

- **versus Notrump*** [see EB1 pp.67-68]
- Top of Sequence – (three touching) KQJx QJ10x J109x (or nearly touching QJ983) [see EB1 p.67]
- Top of Interior Sequence – AKJx AQJx AJ109 A109x KQ109 Q109x**
- Many would play A from AK.
- 4th Best vs NT ☒

* EB1 suggests playing coded 9s and 10s. ** EB1 suggests 2nd highest.

17. Defensive Carding:

- Primary signal is Attitude. . [see EB2 p.4]
- Carding is standard: high is encouraging (means you like the suit or don't have anything better to say) and low is discouraging (means you don't like the suit).

Remember **Bridge should be fun!**

See Edith McMullin: EasyBridge 1 & 2, Audrey Grant: Bridge Basics 1 & 2 and ACBL: Standard Yellow Card System Booklet, a.k.a. Standard American Yellow Card (SAYC), April, 2003, and Edith McMullin: The Convention Card (TCC). Thanks to my friend and partner Peggy Gibson for her help in preparing this document.

Novice Convention Card (20 Masterpoints)
© Fred E. Ferguson, 2005 – November 17, 2005