



Conventional Wisdom - part 6

In each of the next several issues, we'll break down a section of the new ACBL convention card. See pages 18-19 of the March issue for the complete card and a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

Bridge is very competitive. Uncontested auctions are increasingly uncommon as players often enter the bidding with very few high-card points. Yet, for all the bidding that can occur at low levels, many doubles there are played as something other than penalty. There are more opportunities to use these versatile doubles as showing the unbid suits or support for partner than a desire to defend. Negative and responsive doubles tend to show support for the unbid suits. For exam-

ple, if partner opens the bidding 1♠ and your RHO overcalls 2♦, a double by you shows length in hearts and clubs. A typical responsive double is when your partner makes a negative double (showing length in the unbid suits), and you would like to compete but have no clear direction, so you double. Support doubles occur when partner opens the bidding, you respond in a suit and there is competition. Your partner, the opener, can double or redouble to show exactly three-card support for the suit you bid.

<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>
1♥	1♠	1♣ Dbf	Pass

Most partnerships play support doubles through to a lower level because it could be that you have a seven-card fit. For example, if the intervening bid had been 2♠, you and your partner need to discuss whether the double would still be support.

For **Negative, Responsive and Support** doubles, check the box and indicate how high you play that type of double. For example, if you play Responsive doubles through 4♦, check the box and write 4♦ in the line next to "Thru." Note that Support doubles and redoubles (**Rdbl**) are not in red and no longer require an Alert.

Immediate **Penalty** doubles at low levels are so rare that they do require an Alert.

Maximal doubles occur in competitive auctions, typically after the opponents interfere and take up bidding room. In certain situations (usually at the three level), a double of the opponents' suit becomes a game try. A classic example:

<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>
1♠ Dbf	2♥	2♠	3♥

Some pairs define a double by opener as a hand with game interest.

DOUBLES

Negative Thru _____ Penalty

Responsive Thru _____ Maximal

Support Thru _____ Rdbl

T/O Style _____

Other _____

T/O Style This line isn't to let the opponents know if you prefer Chinese or Thai food, it's your "takeout double style." Some partnership agreements on takeout doubles include off-shape hands, balanced hands, "card-showing" doubles or takeout doubles with hands that are less than opening strength. Your partnership's general approach to takeout doubles can be noted on this line.

Other Any other type of conventional double in your partnership agreements can be written in this line.