Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 6

1NT: Forcing In standard bidding, a 1NT response to a 1♥ or 1♣ opening is non-forcing, showing a limited hand, meaning it has less than invitational strength. Many pairs, however (especially those who play the popular system called Two-over-One Game Force), define their 1NT response as forcing for one round, hence the name “1NT forcing.” Opener must bid again, even if it means bidding a three-card suit at the two level, to allow responder an opportunity to finish describing her hand.

For example, opener holds ♠ A Q 7 3 ♥ 7 3 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ K 6. After opening 1♣ (the opponents are silent), responder bids 1NT (forcing). If a convenient rebid is available, opener would choose it. Here, however, she rebids 2♣. Since the 1NT response is frequently played as denying game-forcing values (note that there are many ways to play this, however), responder can now make a non-forcing correction to her suit, such as 2♥ or 3♠, with the appropriate hand. Alternatively, opener may pass (with a diamond fit) or take a preference to 2♣ which typically shows a doubleton. There are other possibilities as well, but this outlines the general structure.

Semi-forcing Other pairs, even Two-over-One fans, allow opener to pass 1NT with a balanced minimum, such as the example hand above. This approach is referred to as “1NT semi-forcing.” If you play 1NT Forcing or Semi-forcing, check the appropriate box.

Invitational If you play that a 2NT response to 1♥ or 1♠ shows a balanced hand with game-forcing strength, check the box.

2NT: Forcing If you play that a 2NT response to 1♥ or 1♠ shows a balanced hand with game-forcing strength, check the box.

Invitational If a 2NT response to a one-of-a-major opening shows a balanced invitational hand, check the box and indicate the high-card point range (11 to 12 is usual) for this bid. Neither of these treatments is Alertable.

Drury Many pairs believe that it’s advantageous to be allowed to open light in third (or even fourth) seat. To prevent their passed-hand partner (responder) from getting overboard with an invitational hand, the Drury convention allows responder to inquire whether the opening hand is light or full strength. Drury works like this: after a 1♥ or 1♠ opening in third seat, a 2♣ response asks opener to clarify how good (or bad) her hand is. Rebidding the major shows a full-strength opener, while a 2♦ rebid shows a sub-minimum hand. The 2♣ rebid warns responder to “take it easy.”

Reverse Reverse Drury is considered to be an improvement over the original Drury convention. For example, after this auction

1♥ Pass 1♠ Pass
1♥ Pass
2♣ Pass

East may show a poor opening hand by rebidding his major (2♥). With full values, East could instead bid 2♠ to show a full opener. Since the meanings of these responses are the opposite of Drury, this treatment is called “reverse Drury.” Experienced players usually prefer the reverse variation.

2-Way As a further refinement to the Drury idea, some pairs allow responder to differentiate between three- and four-card support. The 2♠ response shows three-card support for opener’s major, while 2♦ shows four. Since the 2♠ response is needed for the four-card raise, this method requires that the partnership play reverse Drury.

Examples:

West North East South
Pass Pass 1♥ Pass
2♠ (1)

(1) I have an invitational hand with three-card spade support.

Fit If your version of Drury guarantees a fit (at least three cards) for opener’s major, check the box. Some players employ a variation which does not promise a fit. The pairs would leave this box blank.

Alert Note that all of these Drury variations are in RED, requiring you to Alert when your partnership employs these methods.

Other Other specialized agreements to a one-of-a-major opening may be listed here. These treatments require an Alert.

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