



Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 23

DEFENSIVE CARDING

This section allows your opponents to see at a glance what your defensive carding methods are. It is arranged in two columns: one for suit contracts and one for notrump contracts. This is because you may wish to use one defensive strategy versus suits and a different one versus notrump declarers.

Standard

“Standard” methods look like this:

- Attitude: a high card in a suit signals encouragement, while a low one is discouraging.
- Count: playing a high card followed by a low one in the same suit typically shows an even number of cards in that suit. Low-high shows an odd number. (Note that most standard players reverse this scheme in the trump suit.)
- Suit preference: playing a low card shows a preference for the lower-ranking non-trump suit. Against notrump contracts, a low card shows interest in the lower-ranking suit if declarer/dummy has a known strong suit.

Relevant exceptions should be described in the lines provided after the “Except” box.

Upside-Down

- Attitude: a low card in a suit signals encouragement, while a high one is discouraging.
- Count: playing a low card followed by a high one in the same suit typically shows an even number of cards in that suit. High-low shows an odd number.
- Suit preference: most upside-down practitioners use standard suit preference for simplicity and logic: low cards correspond to lower-ranking suits, high cards to higher-ranking suits.

DEFENSIVE CARDING		
	vs SUITS	vs NT
Standard:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Except <input type="checkbox"/>		
Upside-Down:		
count	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FIRST DISCARD		
Lavinthal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Odd/Even	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER CARDING		
Smith Echo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trump Suit Pref.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster Echo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SPECIAL CARDING	<input type="checkbox"/>	PLEASE ASK



You may use any combination of standard and upside-down that you wish, as long as you clearly indicate your methods on the convention card. For example, you may play standard count and upside-down attitude.

First Discard

You may use your first opportunity to discard to carry a message to partner. Here are two popular approaches:

- Lavinthal: Discard the suit you don't like, but a low discard says you like the lower-ranking of the remaining non-trump suits, while a high discard says you like the higher-ranking one. If spades are trumps, for example, a high heart discard would say you like diamonds.
- Odd/Even: An odd discard (the 3, 5, 7 or 9) says you like the suit you just discarded from, while an even one says you don't.

Special Carding, Please Ask

If you have any other unusual agreements or have special defensive methods that you don't have enough room to describe elsewhere on the card, check this box. (Note that the ACBL convention charts permit only certain types of carding schemes. If you're unsure if your methods are permitted, consult the appropriate chart before play.)

Other Carding

Here are some other common, but advanced techniques:

- Smith Echo: In this method, either defender shows encouragement for the suit initially led by “echoing” (playing high-low) on declarer's run of a long suit in dummy or in his hand. Failing to echo means you'd prefer a switch to a different suit. This assumes that you do not have to give count in the suit declarer plays on, in which case the Smith echo would not apply.
- Trump Suit Preference: If you play a high trump the first time declarer plays the suit, it shows interest in the higher-ranking non-trump suit. A low trump indicates preference for the lower-ranking suit. If hearts are trumps, for example, and you play the 10 from 10–6–2 when declarer plays the ♥A, it shows that you like spades.
- Foster Echo: Some defenders agree to play that the partner of the opening leader follows suit with his second-highest card when he can't beat dummy's card or the card that was led.

