Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card
— part 24 (conclusion)

Putting it all together
Some general guidelines about the use of the convention card are presented here, along with an example of a properly filled-out card. (Yours may be different, of course!)

The purpose of the convention card
Although the convention card is a great way for you and your partner to discuss your methods and refresh your memories as to what your agreements are if you haven't played together in awhile, remember that the convention card exists for the convenience of your opponents. The opponents may wish to look at your card at the beginning of a round to get a general idea of what your methods are, they might want to see what your opening lead agreements are when they declare or they may wish to look at your card during the auction to see what your agreements are without asking you to explain them verbally.

Note: Just as you should ask questions during the auction only when it is your turn, you should look at an opponent's card only when it is your turn to bid.

Where should the convention card be placed during play?
Since the card is for the benefit of the opponents, it should remain in a place that they can easily access it, *i.e.*, on the table. When bidding boxes are in use, it can be difficult to find enough room for the boxes, the convention cards, score slips, boards and snacks/drinks. Some players find it helpful to fold their convention cards in half to help conserve space, while others keep non-essential items (food) off of the table. Whatever your approach, avoid practices such as sitting on the card. Make it easy for your opponents to pick up and read your card.

Properly filled out cards
We've all encountered pairs who have either no convention cards or blank cards with the words "Standard" scribbled at the top. This is inappropriate and not in the spirit of the game. If you haven't got time to properly fill out the convention card, you haven't got time to play. It is also required that both partners — not just one — have properly filled-out cards.

Both players must have identically filled-out convention cards. It is not permitted for one partner to make calls that mean one thing while the same call from his or her partner means something else.

SPECIAL DOUBLES
After Overcall: Penalty☐ _____
Negative☑ thru 3♠
Responsive☑: thru 3♠ Maximal☑
Support: Dbl.☑ thru 2♥ Redbl☑
Card-showing☐ Min. Offshape T/O☐

SIMPLE OVERCALL
1 level 6 to 18 HCP (usually)
often 4 cards☐ very light style☐
Responses
New Suit: Forcing☐ NFConst☑ NF☐
Jump Raise: Forcing☐ Inv.☐ Weak☑

JUMP OVERCALL
Strong☐ Intermediate☐ Weak☑

OPENING PREEMPTS

	Sound	Light	Very Light
3/4-bids	☐	☑	☐

Conv./Resp. _____

DIRECT CUEBID

OVER:	Minor	Major
Natural	☐	☐
Strong T/O	☐	☐
Michaels	☑	☑

NOTRUMP OVERCALLS
Direct: 15 to 18 Systems on☑
Conv.☐ _____
Balancing: 11 to 14
Jump to 2NT: Minors☐ 2 Lowest☑
Conv.☐ _____

DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP

vs:	strong	weak
2♣	♣ + other	majors
2♦	♦ + major	natural
2♥	majors	natural
2♠	spades	natural
Dbl:	one suit	penalty

Other 2NT=minors

OVER OPP'S T/O DOUBLE
New Suit Forcing: 1 level☑ 2 level☐
Jump Shift: Forcing☐ Inv.☐ Weak☑
Redouble implies no fit☑

2NT Over	Limit+	Limit	Weak
Majors	☑	☐	☐
Minors	☑	☐	☐

Other _____

VS Opening Preempts Double Is
Takeout☑ thru 4♥ Penalty☐
Conv. Takeout: _____
Lebensohl 2NT Response☑
Other: _____

SLAM CONVENTIONS Gerber☑: 4NT: Blackwood☐ RKC☑ 1430☐

vs Interference: DOPI☑ DEPO☐ Level: _____ ROPI☐

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 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☐	vs NT☐
3rd/5th Best	vs SUITS☐	vs NT☐
	Attitude	vs NT☐

Primary signal to partner's leads
Attitude☑ Count☐ Suit preference☐

DEFENSIVE CARDING

	vs SUITS	vs NT
Standard:	☑	☑
Except	☐	

Upside-Down:

count	☐	☐
attitude	☐	☐

FIRST DISCARD

Lavinthal	☐	☐
Odd/Even	☑	☐
	☐	☐

OTHER CARDING

Smith Echo	☐	☐
Trump Suit Pref.	☐	
Foster Echo	☐	☐

SPECIAL CARDING ☐ **PLEASE ASK**

NAMES Susan Spade & Harold Heart

GENERAL APPROACH 2/1
Two Over One: Game Forcing☑ Game Forcing Except When Suit Rebid☐
VERY LIGHT: Openings☐ 3rd Hand☑ Overcalls☐ Preempts☐
FORCING OPENING: 1♣☐ 2♣☑ Natural 2 Bids☐ Other☐ _____

NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS

1NT	
15 to 17	
_____ to _____	
5-card Major common☐	3♣ natural, inv.
System on over Dbl	3♦ natural, inv.
2♣ Stayman☑ Puppet☐	3♥ 4-1-4-4 (GF)
2♦ Transfer to ♥☑	3♠ 1-4-4-4 (GF)
Forcing Stayman☐	
2♥ Transfer to ♠☑	4♦, 4♥ Transfer☑
2♠ → clubs	Smolen☐
2NT → diamonds	Lebensohl☑ fast denies)
	Neg. Double☑ 3-lvl
	Other: _____

2NT 20 to 21
Puppet Stayman☐
Transfer Responses:
Jacoby☑ Texas☑
3♠ slam try in minor
3NT _____ to _____
Gambling
Conventional NT Openings

MAJOR OPENING

Expected Min. Length	4	5
1st/2nd	☐	☑
3rd/4th	☑	☐

RESPONSES
Double Raise: Force☐ Inv.☑ Weak☐
After Overcall: Force☐ Inv.☐ Weak☑
Conv. Raise: 2NT☑ 3NT☐ Splinter☑
Other: _____
1NT: Forcing☑ Semi-forcing☐
2NT: Forcing☐ Inv.☐ _____ to _____
3NT: _____ to _____
Drury☑: Reverse☑ 2-Way☐ Fit☐
Other: _____

MINOR OPENING

Expected Min. Length	4	3	NF 0–2	Conv.
1♣	☐	☑	☐	☐
1♦	☐	☑	☐	☐

RESPONSES
Double Raise: Force☐ Inv.☐ Weak☑
After Overcall: Force☐ Inv.☐ Weak☑
Forcing Raise: J/S in other minor☐
Single raise☑ Other: _____
Frequently bypass 4+♦☐
1NT/1♣ 6 to 10
2NT Forcing☐ Inv.☐ 11 to 12
3NT: 13 to 15
Other _____

	DESCRIBE	RESPONSES/REBIDS
2♣	_____ to _____ HCP Strong☑ Other☐ 2♦ Resp: Neg☐ Waiting☑	2♥ = dbl neg.
2♦	5 to 10 HCP Natural: Weak☑ Intermediate☐ Strong☐ Conv.☐	decent suit feature 2NT Force☑ New Suit NF☐
2♥	5 to 10 HCP Natural: Weak☑ Intermediate☐ Strong☐ Conv.☐	2NT Force☑ New Suit NF☐
2♠	5 to 10 HCP Natural: Weak☑ Intermediate☐ Strong☐ Conv.☐	2NT Force☑ New Suit NF☐

OTHER CONV. CALLS: New Minor Forcing:☑ 2-Way NMF☐
Weak Jump Shifts: In Comp.☑ Not in Comp.☐ _____
4th Suit Forcing: 1 Rd.☐ Game☑
Unusual vs. Unusual
Truscott vs. Big Club

Looking at your own convention card during the auction or play
The Laws forbid access to written memory aids during any phase of the game, and this includes your own convention card. Your convention cards are for the opponents' use, not yours. Note that clubs may relax this rule, however, especially if new players are participating, to assist them in learning. Experienced players may wish to overlook a newcomer's dependence on the card. All players should be aware, however, that the card is not a memory crutch. Newcomers may be given a pass, but others should refrain from peeking at the card during the bidding or play.

Active ethics
Be proactive in making sure your opponents understand your explanations. Don't use jargon or convention names when explaining calls. If an opponent looks confused at your explanation, rephrase. Keep your explanations simple, direct and open — the same way that your methods should appear on your convention card.