

The Cappelletti (Hamilton) Convention

The **Cappelletti Convention** is a defense method, used in either the direct (2nd) seat or in the balancing (4th) seat, following an opening bid of 1-NoTrump by an Opponent. It is a system of bids which enables the opposition to compete, or at the very least, interfere following the Opponent's 1-NT opening.

The Overcaller "Intervenor" promises either a 1-suited or a 2-suited holding, with values not exceeding 15 high-card points. Importance should be given to the state of vulnerability and to the location of the high-card point values, which, ideally, should be in the suit or suits indicated by the Convention. Although it is a matter of Partnership agreement, the 1-suited holding should contain at least a 6-card, or longer, suit; and for a 2-suited holding should be at least 5-5. Some advocates have reduced the distribution to 5-4 if the values are located only in the two suits such as: KQJ10 and AQ1087.

The "Cappelletti" Convention can be used alone in order to compete over an Opponent's 1-NT opening, but because many Partnerships, today, are utilizing weak (12-14 HCP) opening No-Trump bids, and because the "DONT" Convention, also used as an alternate defense mechanism, does *not* have a "double" which signifies an equivalent or better holding, some find that use of a combination of both the "DONT" Convention following a strong (15-17 HCP) 1-NT opening by an Opponent, and the "Cappelletti" Convention used following a weak (12-14 HCP) 1-NT opening, to be a formidable duo for interference under these varying circumstances.

The "Cappelletti" Convention of bids, used by an Opponent ("Intervenor") following a 1-NT opening by the opposition, are as follows:

- "2C" - Shows any 1-suited holding
- "2D" - Shows both Major suits, Hearts and Spades
- "2H" - Shows Hearts and an unspecified Minor suit
- "2S" - Shows Spades and an unspecified Minor suit
- "2-NT" - Shows both Minor suits

"Double" – A "Take-Out" showing an equivalent (opening count or better) holding – The Responder ("Advancer") may, at his/her discretion, then "Pass" and convert the "Take-Out" to a Penalty Double, else bid his/her longest suit with preference shown towards either Major suit

All overcalls at the 3-level are natural.

Responses, by the "Advancer", after the "Intervenor" has overcalled with "2C" showing a one-suited holding:

- "Pass" - With at least a 6-card, or longer, Club suit
- "2D" – A "Relay" bid, allowing the Partner (Intervenor) to "Pass" if his/her suit is Diamonds, else bid his/her higher-ranking suit of choice, Hearts or Spades

Responses, by the “Advancer”, after the “Intervenor” has overcalled with “2D” showing both Major suits:

- “Pass” - With at least a 6-card, or longer, Diamond suit
- “2H” - Choice of suit, showing preference for Hearts
- “2S” - Choice of suit, showing preference for Spades
- “3C” – With at least a 6-card, or longer, Club suit

Responses, by the “Advancer”, after the “Intervenor” has overcalled with “2H” or “2S” showing the bid Major suit *and* an Unspecified Minor suit:

- “Pass” - Shows a fit (3-cards or more) for the known Major suit
- “2-NT” - This is a relay bid by the advancer asking the Intervenor to bid his unspecified Minor suit

Responses, by the “Advancer”, after the “Intervenor” has overcalled with “2-NT” showing both Minor suits:

- “3C” - This is a preference for Clubs
- “3D” - This is a preference for Diamonds
- “3H” – The “Advancer” promises a 1-suited holding in Hearts (generally a 6-card {+} suit), and shortness in both Minor suits
- “3S” – The “Advancer” promises a one-suited holding in Spades (generally a 6-card {+} suit), and shortness in both Minor suits

An additional response exists for use by the Responder (“Advancer”) to a “Cappelletti” call. This consists of ignoring the selection of suit, or suits, offered by the Intervenor, and bidding any 6-card suit of his/her own.

If the “Intervenor” has previously “Passed”:

A “double” by the Intervenor, having previously “Passed”, cannot be of opening count with potential for conversion to penalty by the “Advancer”. In this case, therefore, the “double” promises a 1-suited holding. The “Advancer” simply “Relays” with a bid of “2C”, which allows the “Intervenor” to “Pass”, if Clubs is his/her suit, else, bid 2D, 2H, or 2S, as appropriate to show his/her 6-card, or longer, holding.

