

The “Cappelletti” (“Hamilton”) Convention

The Cappelletti (Hamilton) 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, 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 either “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, when the Partnership is utilizing the Cappelletti Convention 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*, to show his/her 6-card, or longer, suit held.