

# CAPPELLETTI CONVENTION

## A Defense to NT (strong or weak)

This conventional method carries the designation or the surname for Mr. Michael Cappelletti, to whom it is generally credited. Since the concept is also referred to as **Hamilton**, bearing the name of Mr. Fred Hamilton of California, the precise origin of this concept is unable to be determined. Added to this confusion is also the designation Pottage for the same concept, ascribed to Mr. John F. Pottage of London, England, under which designation the concept is known. The origin of this concept is also claimed by Mr. Gerald W. Helms of Charlotte, North Carolina. But nobody except him thinks this is the case.

The concept is employed as a defense mechanism over an opening of No Trump by the opponents in either the direct seat or in the balancing seat. The overcall promises either a one-suited holding or a two-suited holding with values not exceeding 12+ points. Importance must be given to the state of vulnerability and the location of the values, which should be in the suit or suits promised or indicated. Although it is a matter of partnership agreement, the one-suited holding should contain at least a 6-card plus suit, and for a two-suited holding the distribution 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. Some very aggressive players will even decide to overcall with a 4-4 distribution, but only in the Major suits. This is purely a matter of partnership understanding.

After a No Trump opening, the bids of the overcaller (also referred to as the interferer) are as follows:

Interferer:

2 ♣: Shows any one-suited holding.

2 ♦: Shows Hearts and Spades, both Major suits.

2 ♥: Shows Hearts and an unspecified Minor suit.

2 ♠: Shows Spades and an unspecified Minor suit.

2 NT: Shows both Minor suits.

Double: If the interferer has not previously passed, then any double is for penalty. Partner must pass.

Each overcall generally promises less than 12+ high card points.

All overcalls at the Three Level are natural.

The advancer (partner of the Interferer) has several options, not forgetting that the 1 No Trump bidder sits to his left with a defined strength and distribution.

Responses after Interferer has overcalled with 2 Clubs showing a one-suited holding:

Pass: with at least 6-card support in Clubs.

2 ♦: Relay bid, allowing his partner to pass or bid his suit. If the suit is Diamonds, then the interferer passes.

2 ♥: This bid shows a 6+-card Heart suit and also weak values.

2 ♠: This bid shows a 6+-card Spade suit and also weak values.

2 NT: Promises 11 plus High Card Points and support for all four suits. Partner is invited to bid game with a maximum.

Responses after Interferer has overcalled with 2 Diamonds showing both Major suits:

Pass: with at least 6-card support in Diamonds.

2 ♥: Choice of suit, unconstructive. Shows preference.

2 ♠: Choice of suit, unconstructive. Shows preference.

2 NT: Promises 11 plus High Card Points and support for both majors. Partner is invited to bid game with a maximum. NOT NATURAL

3 ♣: This bid shows a 6-card length in Clubs

3 ♥: Invitational, promising 4 or more Trump.

3 ♠: Invitational, promising 4 or more Trump.

Responses after Interferer has overcalled with 2 Hearts or 2 Spades showing the bid Major suit and an unspecified Minor suit:

Pass: Shows a fit for the known Major suit and between 0-7 points.

Single Raise: Shows a fit for the known Major suit and about 10-12 points.

2 NT: This is a relay bid by the advancer asking the interferer to bid his unspecified Minor suit. However, if the advancer raises the Major suit of the interferer on the second round of bidding, then the advancer shows a good fit for the known Major suit and around 10-12 points. This is then invitational.

Responses after Interferer has overcalled with 2 No Trump showing both Minor suits:

3 ♣: Shows a weak holding. This is a preference for Clubs and also a sign off. No game interest.

3 ♦: Shows a weak holding. This is a preference for Diamonds and also a sign off. No game interest.

3 ♥: Advancer promises a one-suited holding in Hearts (generally a 6-card plus suit) and shortness in both Minor suits.

3 ♠: Advancer promises a one-suited holding in Spades (generally a 6-card plus suit) and shortness in both Minor suits.

4 ♣: A jump in Clubs promises a distributional holding, good support, and invites game

if the interferer has maximum values.

4 ♦: A jump in Diamonds promises a distributional holding, good support, and invites game if the interferer has maximum values.

If the interferer has previously passed, then a double by the interferer cannot be for penalty. In this case the double promises either a one-suited holding in Clubs or a one-suited holding in either of the Red Suits, Diamonds or Hearts. The advancer relays with a bid a 2 Clubs, which the interferer passes if Clubs is the suit.

If the one-suited holding of the interferer is a Red Suit, Diamonds or Hearts, then the interferer bids 2 Diamonds after the 2 Clubs relay. If the interferer rebids 2 Hearts after the 2 Clubs relay, then the interferer promises a Major-Minor two-suited holding, the Major suit being the stronger, normally longer suit. The advancer either passes or corrects to Clubs since the Minor suit is always the Club suit.

In the case that the auction proceeds as follows: 1 No Trump - 2 Clubs - Double, a Redouble shows 7 or more high card points and support in all suits, and invites his partner to compete on the three level.

As already mentioned, the Cappelletti Treatment can be used as either a direct overcall or in the pass-out seat.

MEL's Rule:

Sometimes it hard to tell if it is right to bid or not using capelletti. Mel's rule of 8 is to help. Like with any rule, judgment is still important. Total number of cards in our 2 longest suits minus the total number of **losers** in your hand is 2 or greater = bid. Need at least **8 points** in the 2 suits.

Losing tricks: Count losers only in the first 3 cards of each suit ( the 4<sup>th</sup>., 5<sup>th</sup>., etc. cards in a suit are winners.

With 3 or more cards in a suit the Ace, K, Q are winners, anything lower are losers.

With 2 cards in a suit, Ace or King are winners, anything lower is a loser.

With 1 card in a suit, Ace is a winner.

There are never more than 3 losers in a suit

Example

No 1	No 2
K 5 3	K J 6 5 4
A Q 8 7 4	K J 6 5 3
K 7 2	8 6
9 3	5

*Hand 1 = 8 cards in 2 longest suits but 7 losers ( 8-7 = 1 ) = pass*

*Hand 2 = 10 cards in 2 longest suits and 7 losers (10-7 = 3) =bid*

Example Hands.

You are *West*. North opens the bidding as shown, and East is next to call. Bid these hands with your favorite partner and record your bidding.

1. None Vul  
 ♠ A J 9 8 6  
 ♥ K 5 3  
 ♦ 4 2  
 ♣ 8 7 2  
 North opens 1 NT

2. N-S Vul  
 ♠ 6  
 ♥ 10 6 5 4 3  
 ♦ 10 6 5  
 ♣ A 7 6 2  
 North opens 1 NT

3. E-W Vul  
 ♠ Q 9 7 6 5  
 ♥ K J 9 6 2  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ K 9  
 North opens 1 NT

4. Both Vul  
 ♠ A J 9 7 5  
 ♥ K 9 8 7 6  
 ♦ 3  
 ♣ 5 4  
 North opens 1 NT

5. None Vul  
 ♠ Q J 9 8 7 6  
 ♥ 2  
 ♦ K 8 2  
 ♣ 7 4 3  
 North opens 1 NT

6. N-S Vul  
 ♠ K J 9 7 5  
 ♥ K 10 8  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ J 8 7 5  
 North opens 1 NT

7. E-W Vul  
 ♠ 2  
 ♥ K 9 8 7 6 4  
 ♦ 10 8 3  
 ♣ A J 2  
 North opens 1 NT

8. E-W Vul  
 ♠ K J 4  
 ♥ A 9 7 5 4  
 ♦ Q 9 3  
 ♣ 8 2  
 North opens 1 NT

9. None Vul  
 ♠ 2  
 ♥ K Q 10 2  
 ♦ Q 8 6 4  
 ♣ A 8 7 5  
 North opens 1 NT

10. N-S Vul  
 ♠ J 10 9 8 5  
 ♥ 9 6 2  
 ♦ 8 7 6 5  
 ♣ 3  
 North opens 1 NT

11. Both Vul  
 ♠ A 9 7 5  
 ♥ 2  
 ♦ Q 9 8 2  
 ♣ Q 10 5 3  
 North opens 1 NT

12. Both Vul  
 ♠ Q 7 6 4 3  
 ♥ 4  
 ♦ K J 6 2  
 ♣ 6 4 2  
 North opens 1 NT

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 Cut here and give East hands to partner.

You are *East*. North opens the bidding as shown, and you are next to call. Bid these hands with your favorite partner and record your bidding.

1. None Vul  
 ♠ 3  
 ♥ A Q 10 2  
 ♦ A K 9 7 5  
 ♣ 6 4 3  
 North opens 1 NT

2. N-S Vul  
 ♠ A K Q J 7 3  
 ♥ A 2  
 ♦ 7 4 2  
 ♣ 8 3  
 North opens 1 NT

3. E-W Vul  
 ♠ A  
 ♥ 3  
 ♦ K Q 10 9 6  
 ♣ Q 8 7 6 5 4  
 North opens 1 NT

4. Both Vul  
 ♠ 8 2  
 ♥ Q J 5  
 ♦ K J 10 8  
 ♣ K 10 9 8  
 North opens 1 NT

5. None Vul  
 ♠ A 10 2  
 ♥ K Q J 9 7  
 ♦ A Q 3  
 ♣ Q 2  
 North opens 1 NT

6. N-S Vul  
 ♠ 3  
 ♥ A 7 2  
 ♦ K Q 10 9 7 6 5  
 ♣ K 6  
 North opens 1 NT

7. E-W Vul  
 ♠ K J 9 7  
 ♥ 10 2  
 ♦ A 9 7 5 4  
 ♣ 8 3  
 North opens 1 NT

8. E-W Vul  
 ♠ 9 6 3  
 ♥ 3  
 ♦ A 8 2  
 ♣ A Q 9 6 5 4  
 North opens 1 NT

9. None Vul  
 ♠ A K 8 6 5  
 ♥ A J 9 7  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ 6 4 3  
 North opens 1 NT

10. N-S Vul  
 ♠ K 3  
 ♥ A K 7 5  
 ♦ 10 2  
 ♣ A K J 8 2  
 North opens 1 NT

11. Both Vul  
 ♠ 3  
 ♥ K Q 9 7 6  
 ♦ 7 5 4  
 ♣ A K J 7  
 North opens 1 NT

12. Both Vul  
 ♠ A J 9  
 ♥ K Q 9 7  
 ♦ 4  
 ♣ A 9 8 7 5  
 North opens 1 NT

Answers to examples:

1. 1NT – 2H-p-p; p Not enough for west to raise
2. 1NT – X-p-p; p seven tricks off the top, plus the master suit. West single ace is good enough, no reason to run
3. 1NT – 2NT-p-3C; p-p-p yes west has to bid the 2 card suit, it is the better minor.
4. 1NT – p-p-2D; p-2H-p-p; p classic balance seat auction.
5. 1NT – X-p-?? There are several calls here. I think 3S is the best, as game seems likely in either spades or NT. East should raise to 4S on this hand. passing is my second choose. Again, hard hand, as you have enough to defend, but the 6<sup>th</sup> spade gets me bidding.
6. 1NT – 3D-p-p; p Or double if you are brave, but 3D is the standard bid. Is there a difference between 2C and then 3D or 3D directly?
7. 1NT – p-p-2C; p – 2D-p-2H; p-p-p Not enough for east to come in on, but enough for west.
8. 1NT – p-p-p – very close to a 2C bid, but not to my liking. Others would disagree.
9. 1NT – 2D-p-3H; p-4H-p-p; p – I think, 3H might also be a fine place to end.
10. 1NT – X-p-2S; p-p-p this time west should run, as nothing to help. It could be wrong, but seems like the percentage play.
11. 1NT – 2H-p-2Nt; p-3C- p-p; p found a fit
12. 1NT – 2H-p-2NT; p-3C-p-p; p some might bid 2S as west, I don't think this is unreasonable, but not my suggestion as partner will not know when to pass or bid on. One more spade and it would be the right call.