

Balancing Cappelletti/Hamilton

By Mike Savage

There is a simple tweak to increase the efficacy of **Cappelletti/Hamilton** in the pass-out seat—use Double to show the one-suited hand and 2C to show both minors. When you are in the balancing seat, after passing originally or even as a non-passed hand, you almost never will want to make a penalty double of a strong 1NT (or even after a weak 1NT when you're a passed hand). If you have already passed, you obviously couldn't have a penalty double all by yourself and if you are a non-passed hand and your left-hand opponent has opened a strong 1NT, his high-card points would be right behind yours—and besides partner wouldn't have a clue as to which suit to lead. So, why use the double for a bid that you probably will never make—a penalty double?

A much better usage for the double in the pass-out seat would be to use it to show a one-suited hand—instead of using the regular **Cappelletti/Hamilton** 2C bid for that purpose. Playing this way would enable you to play in clubs at the two-level instead of the three-level. Using the double for the one-suited hand would also free up 2C to show a two-suited hand in the minors and enable your partner be able to pick his best minor at the *two-level*—as opposed to having to pick his best minor at the *three-level* over 2NT, using standard **Cappelletti/Hamilton**.

Since you would virtually “never” double 1NT for penalty in the pass-out seat, using it for another purpose has *got* to be an improvement. The meanings of 2D, 2H and 2S would still remain the same as in standard **Cappelletti/Hamilton**.

Here is *Balancing* **Cappelletti/Hamilton** in the pass out seat (modifications in red):

1NT-P-P: (Exception: in 4th seat after a weak 1NT opener and you are *not* a passed hand, the double should be for penalties).

DbI: Shows a one-suited hand; partner is asked to bid 2C—then the doubler will pass or correct to his suit. Your partner might also choose to pass the double with a balanced opening hand or better.

2C: Shows both minors; partner should pick his best minor fit by passing or bidding 2D.

2D: Shows both majors; partner is asked to pick his best major fit at the appropriate level.

2H: Shows Hearts and an unknown minor; partner is asked to pass or raise with a heart fit but with heart shortness and support for both minors, he should bid 2NT, asking for your minor.

2S: Shows Spades and an unknown minor; partner is asked to pass or raise with a spade fit but with spade shortness and support for both minors, he should bid 2NT, asking for your minor.

2NT: Shows a very strong minor 2-suited hand, looking for game, even after a strong NT.