



ACBL ALERT REGULATIONS



Effective January 1, 2012

ALERTS—Say “Alert” and tap the Alert card (or display it) if in use, when partner makes **any of the following calls**, but don’t explain them until asked (“Please explain” is the way to ask), whereupon the Alerter must give a full explanation of the call, not just the name of a convention. A common error is to Announce the meaning of a call instead of Alerting it. When an Alert is given, ASK, don’t ASSUME. A notrump (NT) rebid following a strong artificial opening is treated as a NT opening with regard to Alert and Announcement requirements for subsequent bids by either partner.

- All conventions that are not exempted on the next page and calls related to Pre-Alerts (see next page)
- A bid whose forcing or non-forcing nature is unusual, or one that has an unusual strength, length, distribution, or range requirement; e.g., a direct NT overcall based on fewer than 14 high-card points (HCP) or more than 19 HCP; a weak two bid with a range greater than 7 HCP or not showing at least five cards in the suit; a 3level opening not weak
- Any opening bid meant as Blackwood, Gerber, control-asking or something similar
- 2♣ opening that is natural but not strong, and conventional responses (including negative doubles)
- 2♦/2♥/2♠ opening that is not a natural weak two bid, or is weak but promises another suit
- 3NT opening based by partnership agreement on a six-card or longer suit, whether “gambling” or not
- In response to a one-level suit opening, a weak single jump raise or weak jump shift, over a pass
- Strong single raise of a natural one-level suit opening, even if only “constructive”
- 1♦ response to 1♣ that denies a four-card major regardless of hand strength
- Non-forcing non-game new-suit response by an unpassed hand (UPH) to an opening suit bid at any level
- Non-forcing 2NT, conventional response other than 2NT, or invitational raise, in response to a non-forcing opening bid at the two level
- Unusual response to an artificial 2♣ opening (e.g., controls, HCP, 2♥ bust, 2♦ game force, negative double)
- 1NT response that by partnership agreement may be based on more than 10 HCP, but is not Announceable
- 1NT rebid by opener that by partnership agreement may be stronger than 15 HCP, unless the opening was strong
- Artificial checkback rebid (e.g., Checkback Stayman, New Minor Forcing) after a natural opener’s NT rebid
- Rebid by a notrump bidder in reply to a cheapest club query, if it is non-standard (e.g., Puppet Stayman)
- Subsequent call by a Stayman bidder that does not promise an implied major
- Next-level club response to a natural NT opening (or overcall) that does not ask for a four-card major
- Natural 2♦/2♥/2♠ response to a 1NT opening or 1NT overcall that is not a weak signoff
- Gerber 4♣ in the absence of a previous NT bid, or other unusual ace or control-asking bid
- Strong or intermediate jump overcall of one-level suit openings and responses, except in balancing seat
- Weak jump shift as an advance of partner’s overcall
- Jump in a new suit that promises support for partner’s suit, even if natural (“Fit Jump”)
- Unusual NT by an unpassed hand if a non-jump 1NT/2NT/3NT bid, or a jump to 3NT, or does not definitely show either both minors or the two lower unbid suits (as indicated on the convention card)
- Penalty(ish) double of a natural bid when non-penalty is expected, including: double of an overcall of a one-level suit opening, through 4♥; double of a non-forcing opening bid in a suit (including 1♣ or 1♦ that “may be short”); double of a natural new-suit response to an opening bid, through 4♥
- Non-penalty double when penalty is expected, including: negative double of 4♠ or higher overcall, double showing support, takeout double of 4♠ or higher opening bid, double of an overcall of a natural 2♦ or higher opening bid, double of a NT bid (except 1x-P-1NT-Dbl), double of a conventional bid (or cue bid) that shows strength in another suit or merely denies strength in the suit, e.g., 1♠-P-2♣-2♠-Dbl = “I don’t want a spade lead”
- Negative double that does not show what is usually expected (e.g., 1♣-1♥-Dbl denying, or not implying, four spades)
- Conventional redouble (e.g., showing 3-card support), except one obviously asking for a rescue (“S.O.S.”)
- Passes with highly unusual or unexpected meanings; e.g., 1♦-Dbl-Rdbl-Pass showing a desire to defend 1♦ redoubled; 2♣ (strong, artificial)-2♠-Pass showing values; 1♠-2♣-Pass semi-forcing, 1♠-P-2♣-2♠-Pass = “I want spades led”
- Most negative inferences; e.g., 4♥/4♠ opening that can’t be strong (NAMYATS), jump raise of 1♥/1♠ to 4♥/4♠ that might be strong (Big Club system), calls made in lieu of a support double or redouble, thereby denying exactly three-card support

(OVER)

PRE-ALERTS—Before cards are taken from the board, disclose to the opponents:

Any Mid-Chart or Super-Chart conventions, unusual general approaches (e.g., canapé, two-system methods; highly aggressive methods or preempts; opening bids (even in third seat) or two-over-one responses that are weaker than usual; overcalls with fewer than 6 HCP; low leads from doubletons. **Pre-Alertable calls must also be Alerted later.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS—Explain partner’s bid without being asked, and tap the Alert card (or display it) if in use:

- State the HCP range of a 1NT opening, but not of a higher NT opening or NT overcall (e.g., “14-plus to 17”)
- “Forcing” for a forcing 1NT response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening, but only over a pass (Alertable over a bid or double)
- “Semi-Forcing” for a semi-forcing (opener may pass with no more than a balanced minimum) 1NT response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening. Not required if responder is a passed hand, when semi-forcing is assumed
- “Transfer” for a diamond-to-heart or heart-to-spade transfer response at any level to any natural NT opening or NT overcall. “Transfer” must be Announced even if a later game-forcing bid (Alerted) may cancel the transfer meaning. If a later canceling bid is not game-forcing the transfer must be Alerted, not Announced. Alert all other transfer bids.
- “May be short” for **non-forcing** 1♣ or 1♦ openings that might be based on fewer than three cards. Alert if forcing.

DO NOT ALERT OR ANNOUNCE:

- Non-forcing one-level suit opening with an agreed range of somewhere between 10-21+ HCP
- Artificial strong 2♣ opening and 2♦ negative, “semi-automatic,” or “waiting response” that that is not game-forcing
- 2NT negative response to a natural strong two bid
- Stayman next level of clubs in response to an opening NT bid or NT overcall, asking for a major, four or five long
- Natural 2♦/2♥/2♠ signoff response (not 2♣, which must be Alerted) to a 1NT opening or overcall
- Possible bypass of a four-card major when bidding NT
- Possible two-card 2♣ rebid after a forcing or semi-forcing 1NT response, if only done with 2-2 minors
- Non-invitational raise of a natural non-strong two bid, or a forcing 2NT response even if conventional
- Jump raise, weak or strong, except a weak single jump raise of an opening one bid when RHO passes
- Natural, constructive (i.e., not weak) or better jump shift as an advance of an overcall, even if not forcing
- Cue bid (bid of a suit shown by an opponent), regardless of meaning, except for a direct cue bid of a natural opening bid played as natural. 1x-P-1y-2x/2y natural are not Alertable, but 1x-2x natural is Alertable if 1x is not artificial
- Natural bid in a suit bid artificially by an opponent, a double that shows the suit, or a lead-directing double of the suit
- Jump overcall of any strength over a weak two-level or higher opening bid
- 4NT or higher unusual NT bid, an unusual jump to 2NT, or any unusual NT by a passed hand
- Blackwood 4NT ace or key-card inquiry; but declarer or dummy should explain the response(s) before play starts
- 4♣ Gerber ace-asking after partner has bid NT naturally
- Forcing pass whose forcing nature is not unexpected

DELAYED ALERTS AND FULL DISCLOSURE—Alertable bids above 3NT, starting with opener’s second call, are Alerted after the auction. Before the opening lead, declarer or dummy Alerts such bids made by their side. Although legal, it is better not to explain one’s own bids. Defenders Alert and explain partner’s bids, not their own, when the opening lead is face down, before dummy is tabled. Conventional doubles, redoubles, and passes must be Alerted immediately when made, but forcing passes at this level are not Alertable.

In addition to delayed Alerts, before the opening lead declarer and/or dummy should disclose anything about their auction that might be unknown to the other side because it was not previously disclosed (e.g., major suit bypass possibility, negative inferences, the meaning of bids following 4NT or Gerber 4♣, even those not Alertable). Don’t make them ask.

ALERT MISTAKES—Players who realize their own mistake (failure to Alert, or wrong explanation) must call the Director immediately. If partner has made a mistake, do not make a call that could have been suggested by it if there is a logical alternative, or give any indication of it before the final pass, after which call the Director before the opening lead is made (but a defender must wait until end of play). Players who know that a call is Alertable, but can’t remember the meaning, must Alert it anyway. When asked to explain, do not show doubt if you are going to make a call that assumes a certain meaning. Just state that meaning confidently, and continue. Do not say, “I’m taking it as....,” which tells partner of your doubt. If it turns out you were wrong about the meaning, the Director will straighten things out later. If you were right, no harm no foul.

Compiled unofficially (January 2012) by Marvin L. French, mfrench1@san.rr.com, who welcomes questions or comments.