

# Balancing Cappelletti/Hamilton

By Mike Savage

Here 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 would never make – a penalty double?

A much better usage for the double in the pass-out seat would be to use the double to show a one-suited hand – instead of using the regular Cappelletti/Hamilton 2C bid for that purpose. Playing this 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 4<sup>th</sup> seat after a weak 1NT opener and you are *not* a passed hand, the double should be for penalties).

- Dbl:** 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; your 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; your 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.