

Blackwood

<p>♠KQ52 ♥KQ863 ♦42 ♣Q8</p> <p>♠109 ♠86 ♥J107 ♥942 ♦1098 ♦A75 ♣K10763 ♣J9542</p> <p>♠AJ743 ♥A5 ♦KQJ63 ♣A</p>	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>4N⁽¹⁾</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>5♣⁽²⁾</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♦⁽³⁾</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>5♥⁽⁴⁾</td><td>Pass</td><td>6♠</td></tr></table> <p>All pass</p> <p>1 Roman Key Card Blackwood ("RKCB") 2 1 or 4 of the 5 "aces" 3 Do you have the queen of trumps? 4 Yes, and ♥K</p> <p>When one hand knows that all suits are controlled and is only interested in a few key cards the use of RKCB is appropriate. Here, if North has ♠KQ, ♥K and ♦A, a grand slam will make. South bids RKCB and knows that one key card is missing, that card being ♠K or ♦A. If North has the queen of trumps slam will still be reasonable; and will be as good as lay down if North has a side suit king (then ♥5 loser is covered by ♥K or can be thrown on ♣K). North's bid of 5♥ is just what South wants to hear and the small slam is reached.</p> <p>The defence will take ♦A but declarer has the rest of the tricks.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass	4N ⁽¹⁾	Pass	5♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	5♦ ⁽³⁾	Pass	5♥ ⁽⁴⁾	Pass	6♠
West	North	East	South																		
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Pass	2♠	Pass	4N ⁽¹⁾																		
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Pass	5♥ ⁽⁴⁾	Pass	6♠																		
<p>♠109 ♥1085 ♦Q1098 ♣J1082</p> <p>♠K52 ♠AQJ876 ♥KQJ ♥A64 ♦A632 ♦KJ ♣K75 ♣Q4</p> <p>♠43 ♥9732 ♦754 ♣A963</p>	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4N⁽¹⁾</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♠⁽²⁾</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>6♠</td><td>All pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>1 RKCB 2 2 of the 5 "aces" with ♠Q</p> <p>West is in a similar position to South on board 1 and can invoke RKCB without needing to use any preparatory cue bidding. Generally if we use RKCB and find that, at most, only one of the five key cards and the queen of trumps is missing, we commit to at least a small slam; and if at least two of these six cards are missing we stay out of slam. Here West knows that just one of these cards is absent so bids 6♠.</p> <p>East has no losers bar the ace of clubs.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♠	Pass	4N ⁽¹⁾	Pass	5♠ ⁽²⁾	Pass	6♠	All pass		
West	North	East	South																		
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6♠	All pass																				

<p> ♠AJ6 ♥A84 ♦K6 ♣AKQ54 ♠974 ♥J92 ♦10987 ♣873 ♠10 ♥10653 ♦AQ542 ♣1096 ♠KQ8532 ♥KQ7 ♦J3 ♣J2 </p>	<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1 ♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4N⁽¹⁾</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5 ♣⁽²⁾</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>5 ♦⁽³⁾</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5 ♥⁽⁴⁾</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>6N⁽⁵⁾</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>1 RKCB 2 1 or 4 of the 5 "aces" 3 ♠Q? 4Yes, and ♥K 5 Key bid (see text)</p> <p>North is able to take control of the auction and follows a familiar route. South is generally marked with six spades – with 5332 he would have opened 1N or rebid 2N; with 5spades and a 4card side suit he would have bid the second suit or raised the clubs. Depending on whether partner has ♠K or ♦A there are a clear eleven or twelve tricks. If South has the king of spades there are only eleven sure tricks – six spades, two hearts and three clubs – but South should have another card to bring the total to twelve. Slotting ♦A into the South hand gives a clear twelve tricks – five spades (missing ♠K), two hearts, two diamonds and three clubs.</p> <p>There is, however, a potential problem if South holds the king of trumps. In 6♠ South will play the contract and the lead may come through the vulnerable diamond holding. In order to protect this North should bid 6N, whereby the king of diamonds isn't under immediate attack.</p> <p>As we are scoring at match points East had better cash his ♦A else the defence won't make a trick. 6♠ by South was a 50:50 contract but fails here with the ace of diamonds offside (provided West leads that suit).</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>				1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4N ⁽¹⁾	Pass	5 ♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	5 ♦ ⁽³⁾	Pass	5 ♥ ⁽⁴⁾	Pass	6N ⁽⁵⁾	All pass	
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<p>♠ 10974 ♥ 54 ♦ 1063 ♣ A742</p> <p>♠ A2 ♥ J1086 ♦ KQ5 ♣ K865</p> <p>♠ KQJ3 ♥ AQ932 ♦ AJ7 ♣ 3</p> <p>♠ 865 ♥ K7 ♦ 9842 ♣ QJ109</p>	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1N⁽¹⁾</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♣⁽²⁾</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4N⁽³⁾</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>5♣⁽⁴⁾</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♥</td><td>All pass</td></tr></table> <p>1 12-14 2 Stayman 3 RKCB 4 1 or 4 of the 5 "aces"</p> <p>East, holding two of the key cards, knows West holds only one of them (as they cannot sum to more than five) and realises that the partnership is missing two of them. Given the comments made for board 2 the partnership should stay out of slam. East West's trump holding is very good but, with the king of trumps offside, the slam fails.</p> <p>This sort of slam, which you might bid if feeling lucky or are of a gambling bent, is a "nothing", a 50:50 shot. It's success could be determined by the toss of a coin.</p>	West	North	East	South	1N ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	2♥	Pass	4N ⁽³⁾	Pass	5♣ ⁽⁴⁾	Pass	5♥	All pass
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<p>♠ Q64 ♥ A832 ♦ 10962 ♣ A3</p> <p>♠ J10972 ♥ J9 ♦ QJ73 ♣ 85</p> <p>♠ K853 ♥ Q ♦ K854 ♣ 10764</p> <p>♠ A ♥ K107654 ♦ A ♣ KQJ92</p>	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♥⁽¹⁾</td><td>Pass</td><td>4N⁽²⁾</td></tr><tr><td>All pass</td><td>5♥⁽³⁾</td><td>Pass</td><td>7♥⁽⁴⁾</td></tr></table> <p>1 4+hearts, 10-12 (limit raise) 2 RKCB 3 2 of the 5 "aces" without the queen of trumps 4 Not worried about ♥Q (see text)</p> <p>South has a freaky two suiter and opening at the one level should make the auction easier than a 2♣ start (the heart suit is not very robust). South strikes gold and knows partner has the two aces that should cover the two losers (a heart and a club). South knows that there is a ten card heart fit as partner would not show jump support with fewer than four hearts. There are, at most, three cards missing in the trump suit. They will break 2-1 almost 80% of the time so asking for that queen isn't, in practice, necessary.</p> <p>There is no problem in the play. Some Souths may have bid 7N which also makes (but would rue that decision had the club break been awful).</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass	3♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4N ⁽²⁾	All pass	5♥ ⁽³⁾	Pass	7♥ ⁽⁴⁾
West	North	East	South														
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Pass	3♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4N ⁽²⁾														
All pass	5♥ ⁽³⁾	Pass	7♥ ⁽⁴⁾														

<p>♠8632 ♥K107 ♦J1096 ♣102</p> <p>♠4 ♥2 ♦AKQ ♣KQJ87543</p> <p>♠QJ75 ♥AQ54 ♦853 ♣A6</p> <p>♠AK109 ♥J9863 ♦742 ♣9</p>	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1N⁽¹⁾</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♣⁽²⁾</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♠⁽³⁾</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>6♣</td><td>All pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">1 12-14 2 Gerber (asking for aces) 3 2 aces</td></tr></table> <p>We don't use 4♣ for anything at present so it's available on this sort of deal where slam may be made on a great source of tricks (here the long club suit) but not the traditional values associated with bidding to slam. Including the queen of clubs, this slam makes on a working count of 22 hcps.</p> <p>Declarer knows that one of the (real) aces is missing but doesn't mind which it is. Anyone trying 6N ("we're only missing one ace") will soon be brought down to earth (with a sharp double too).</p>	West	North	East	South			1N ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	4♠ ⁽³⁾	Pass	6♣	All pass			1 12-14 2 Gerber (asking for aces) 3 2 aces							
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<p>♠Q10876 ♥6 ♦K109 ♣AKQ7</p> <p>♠K5 ♥J1075 ♦652 ♣10843</p> <p>♠A3 ♥98432 ♦873 ♣962</p> <p>♠J942 ♥AKQ ♦AQJ4 ♣J5</p>	<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♦</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♠⁽¹⁾</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4N⁽²⁾</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♥⁽³⁾</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>5♠</td><td>All pass</td><td></td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">1 Roughly 18hcps in a balanced hand (15-17hcps would rebid 3♠ and, with 19 hcps, South would have opened 2N) 2 RKCB 3 2 of the 5 "aces" but no ♠Q</td></tr></table> <p>North makes a hasty retreat to 5♠ when he knows that two key cards are missing. Playing ordinary Blackwood would not work well on this hand as the king of spades would not feature in the reply to the asking bid. In that world North might bid the slam as only one ace is known to be missing.</p> <p>The trumps are not set up to allow the defence to make a mistake (yes, sometimes with K x x opposite a singleton ace of trumps defences have been known to crash the top cards).</p>	West	North	East	South				1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass	4♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4N ⁽²⁾	Pass	5♥ ⁽³⁾	Pass	5♠	All pass		1 Roughly 18hcps in a balanced hand (15-17hcps would rebid 3♠ and, with 19 hcps, South would have opened 2N) 2 RKCB 3 2 of the 5 "aces" but no ♠Q			
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♠ QJ65
 ♥ 1053
 ♦ 107
 ♣ J1065
 ♠ 2
 ♥ AKQ98
 ♦ KQ53
 ♣ K43
 ♠ A109
 ♥ J4
 ♦ AJ9864
 ♣ A7
 ♠ K8743
 ♥ 762
 ♦ 2
 ♣ Q982

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
3 ♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4 N ⁽²⁾	Pass
5 ♠ ⁽³⁾	Pass	5 N ⁽⁴⁾	Pass
6 ♥ ⁽⁵⁾	Pass	7 ♦	All pass

1 *Splinter raise of diamonds – shortage in spades, good 4+ trump support and extra values* 2 *RKCB* 3 *2 of the 5 “aces” with ♦Q* 4 *How many side suit kings?* 5 *Two*

Once West shows extra values it's inconceivable that the hand doesn't have at least one of the top cards in hearts – hence East being able to use RKCB though having a heart holding with no control (ace, king, singleton or void). When West replies 5 ♠ East knows the partnership has all the key cards (including the queen of trumps). East can try for a grand slam by asking for side suit kings (yes, remember that the king of trumps is included in the ace reply to RKCB). East can slot in ♣K and ♥K. He counts six trumps, a top spade, two spade ruffs (yes, the power of knowing of the shortage), two hearts and two clubs. Thirteen tricks and an auction that has been efficiently bid to the top spot.

(Slightly esoteric note: in general, when replying to the 5N king ask, unless holding all three side suit kings, it might be better not to include a king that was in the splinter suit – partner won't play you for that card and he may slot that king in somewhere else with disastrous consequences.)