

Cue Bidding and RKCB

RKCB

What are Key Cards?

The five Key Cards are the four aces and the King of the agreed trump suit.

The two types of RKCB

The traditional method (0314) or

The 1430 method

Responses to 4NT

	Traditional Blackwood	Traditional RKCB (0314)	RKCB (1430)
5♣ 0 or 4 aces		0 or 3 Key Cards	1 or 4 Key Cards
5♦ 1 ace		1 or 4 Key Cards	0 or 3 Key Cards
5♥ 2 aces		2 Key Cards No trump Q	2 Key Cards No trump Q
5♠ 3 aces		2 Key Cards and trump Q	2 Key Cards and trump Q

Asking for Kings

5NT asks for Kings

Only use it if you know the partnership holds all the Aces/Key Cards

If playing RKCB don't forget that you have already shown the trump King if you hold it so don't include it in your calculations.

Asking for The Queen of Trumps

If the responder to RKCB has two Key Cards then we will also know whether they also possess the Queen of trumps.

But what if they reply something else?

After a RKCB response the next suit up which is not the trump suit asks for the trump Q.

Without it, just bid the trump suit at the lowest level.

With it, bid anything else (usually to show your lowest King)

Eg

You	Partner	You	Partner
1♥	3♥	1♠	3♠
4NT	5♣	4NT	5♣
5♦	5♥	5♥	6♦

When do or don't we use Blackwood or Roman Key Card Blackwood?

Use Blackwood when we have enough strength for a slam.

E.g. Partner opens 1♥ we have:

♠ A K 6
♥ K J 8 5 4
♦ K 10
♣ A Q 9

DON'T USE BLACKWOOD TO FIND OUT IF YOU HAVE ENOUGH STRENGTH FOR SLAM

Partner	You
♠ A 9 6	♠ K Q J
♥ K 7 5 4	♥ A 10 3 2
♦ 10	♦ K Q J 7
♣ A J 9 8 3	♣ Q 6

1♣ 1♦
1♥ ?

Use Blackwood when a suit has been agreed.

Auctions such as:

You	Partner	You	Partner
1♠	3♠	2♣	2♦
4NT		2♥	3♥
		4NT	

You	Partner	You	Partner
1♥	4NT	1♠	2♣
		2♥	4NT

DON'T USE BLACKWOOD IF YOU
DON'T KNOW WHAT SUIT YOU ARE
GOING TO PLAY IN

Eg Partner opens 1♠ and you hold:

You

♠ 6

♥ A K 7 2

♦ K Q 2

♣ A Q J 9 5

1♠	3♣
3♦	?

Use Blackwood when we need to know if
partner has the right cards to make slam.

We have: ♠ A

♥ K Q 10 7 5 4

♦ A

♣ K Q J 9 2

We open 1♥ and partner says 3♥

DON'T USE BLACKWOOD IF THE
RESPONSE DOESN'T TELL YOU WHAT
YOU WANT TO KNOW

Eg

You open 1♠ and partner says 3♠.

You hold:

♠ A K 10 5 4 3
♥ 8
♦ 7 2
♣ A K Q J

Use Blackwood when we need to know if partner has the cards so opponents cannot cash two tricks.

Partner opens 1♥ and we have:

♠ 6
♥ K Q 9 5
♦ A K J 10
♣ A Q 9 8

Surely a heart slam is “on”, but can they cash two aces?

DON'T USE BLACKWOOD IF THE
REPNSE COULD TAKE YOU HIGHER
THAN YOU WANT TO GO

Eg Partner opens 1♦ and we hold:

♠ Q
♥ K Q J
♦ A Q 10 7 5
♣ K Q J 9

What if the auction goes:

Partner	You
1♦	4NT
5♥	Help!

Use Blackwood when partner's response will tell us what we want to know

We hold:

♠ A K Q J 5 3 2

♥ 4

♦ 10

♣ A K Q J

After:

You

Partner

2♣

2♦

2♠

3♠

DON'T USE BLACKWOOD WITH A VOID

Eg Your hand is:

♠

♥ A K Q 9 8 3 2

♦ 10 7

♣ A K Q J

After:

You

Partner

2♣

2♦

2♥

3♥

4NT

5♣

?

Cue Bids

Cue Bids are used when a suit has been agreed and the partnership is already committed to game.

A bid of a suit that is not the trump suit is a cue bid and says I think we should be looking for a slam and this is my lowest first round control (usually the ace, but sometimes a void).

If a suit is missed out then the implication is that the bidder does NOT have first round control.

If a suit is repeated then the implication is that the bidder has second round control too (usually the king as well as the ace).

If a suit is missed out and then subsequently bid, then the implication is that the bidder does not have first round control, but does have second round control (usually the king, sometimes a singleton)

Eg

You	Partner
1♥	3♥
4♣	4♠
5♣	5♦
6♥	

The hands might be:

You	Partner
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♠ K Q	♠ A J 7 6
♥ A K 7 5 4	♥ Q J 10 3 2
♦ 10 4	♦ J
♣ A K J 10	♣ Q 6 4

Let's look at two earlier hands when Blackwood wasn't suitable:

DON'T USE BLACKWOOD WITH A VOID

Eg Your hand is:

♠
♥ A K Q 9 8 3 2
♦ 10 7
♣ A K Q J

After:	You	Partner
	2♣	2♦
	2♥	3♥
	4NT	5♣
	?	

DON'T USE BLACKWOOD IF THE RESPONSE DOESN'T TELL YOU WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW

Eg

You open 1♠ and partner says 3♠.
You hold:

♠ A K 10 5 4 3
♥ 8
♦ 7 2
♣ A K Q J

Suppose the hands are:

You	Partner
♠ A K 10 5 4 3	♠ Q 8 7 6
♥ 8	♥ A 9 6
♦ 7 2	♦ K Q 10 4
♣ A K Q J	♣ 6 4

You	Partner
1♠	3♠