

What is your agreement? When you have Singletons or Voids or a Double Fit?

By Neil H. Timm

Playing any bridge system whether it be 2/1, or Precision, or Standard American, or ACOL, etc. one usually plays in 3NT with 25 HCP in your combined hands, in 4♥/4♠ with 26 Distribution Points (DP), 5♣/5♦ with 29 DP, 6NT with 33 HCP, 6 in any suit with 32 DP, and finally one bids a grand slam with more.

However, what happens when the partnership has singletons or voids and only 17-23 HCP, which occurs about 53% of the time or what is one to do with a double fit in the majors or the minors or a major – minor double fit? Do things change? Yes.

What happens with shortness (singletons or voids) after a one level major suit bid?

♠AKQ72	♠843
♥A45	♥7
♦102	♦A987
♣A105	♣KQ743

With only 29 DP in the combined hands, 7♠ can be made on any lead!

♠345	♠
♥AKQ72	♥9643
♦A10	♦974
♣A52	♣KQ743

With only 26 DP, 7♥ may be made even on a trump lead, a contract that usually requires 36 DP in the two hands.

To evaluate hands with voids and singletons, one needs a system of bids that show shortness and a “fit” with associated outside suit length and methods for evaluating controls. Methods include Exclusion Roman Keycard

Blackwood (ERKCB) and the ambiguous splinter convention as well as delayed splinter methods.

What happens with double fit hands?

♠AKQ72	♠843
♥345	♥AKQ102
♦A7	♦345
♣345	♣A7

With only 26 HCP or 28 DP, you can make 6♠, 6♥ or even 6NT when the majors break 2/3 about 66% of the time (2/3)! A far cry away from 32 DP or 33 HCP usually needed for a slam.

♠7	♠A84
♥AK45	♥102
♦AQ7	♦K9543
♣AKJ103	♣Q74

With only 29 HCP or 32 DP, you can make 7♣ with this these double fit minor suit hands.

To evaluate double fit hands, one uses fit bids and 1430 or 3014 Double Roman Keycard Blackwood (DRKCB) depending on who is asking when the opener has shown extra values.

Let's begin. What does one do with shortness?

Short Suit Total (SST) Rule

When opening one of a major, a splinter bid shows 3/4 card support for the major suit bid and usually 13+ Working HCP and a SST=0-3 for both partners. One applies the SST Rule

Opener adds his HCP to 13.

With 19-21 HCP then 13-SST = # of tricks possible.

If the SST in both hands = 2, then we have 11 tricks with a singleton in both hands, with a **void and singleton** 13-(SST=1) =12. **A SLAM**

If the total HCP= 22-24 in both hands, you gain a trick. So, with singletons in both hands $13-(SST=2)+1=12!$ And with 25-27 you gain 2 tricks.

NOTE: For that unusual hand with 2 voids, $13-0=13$, a grand Slam!

Mike Lawrence and Anders Wirgen developed the SST Rule in their book: "I FOUGHT THE LAW of Total Tricks" (2004)- Published by Mikeworks.

The Splinter Bidding Convention

Singletons

$1\spadesuit$ - pass - $3\heartsuit^*$ (singleton somewhere - **ambiguous splinter**) - to ask where, bid next step ($3\spadesuit$). Then $4\heartsuit$ - $4\clubsuit$ - $4\diamondsuit$ show singletons (direct bids) - or some may prefer to use submarine-like bids $3NT^*=\clubsuit$, $4\clubsuit^*=\diamondsuit$, and $4\diamondsuit^*=\heartsuit$ to avoid a X

$1\heartsuit$ - pass - $3\spadesuit^*$ (singleton somewhere - **ambiguous splinter**) - to ask where, bid next step (3NT). Then $4\clubsuit$ - $4\diamondsuit$ show singletons and $4\heartsuit$ = spades (singleton) - or again you may use submarine-like bids $4\heartsuit=\spadesuit$, $4\clubsuit^*=\diamondsuit$, and $4\diamondsuit^*=\heartsuit$

If you do not need to know where the singleton is located, since it may help the opponents, bid 4NT as 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB) with spades agreed. Or you may use 3NT as 1430 Baby Blackwood RKCB to keep the responses at a lower level. When hearts are the agreed suits you **MUST** use $4\spadesuit$ as kickback 1430 **NEVER** use 4NT since with the AQ you are always too high, committed to 6! Or, you may use cue bids.

Showing Voids

$1\spadesuit$ - pass - $4\clubsuit^*/4\diamondsuit^*$ (void in suit bid) and $3NT^*$ = heart void.

$1\heartsuit$ - pass - $4\clubsuit^*/4\diamondsuit^*$ (voids in suit bid) and $3NT^*$ = spade void.

However, if you play some version of Bergen/Reverse Bergen /Combined Bergen raises then $3NT^*$ cannot be used to show 3-card support with 13-15 Dummy points over a major suit bid. And, you must give up the $4\clubsuit^*$ and $4\diamondsuit^*$ Swiss bids. Not a big Deal!

The Void bids initiate the Exclusion Roman Keycard Blackwood (ERKCB) Convention --- which assumes the agreed upon Major and EXCLUDES the void suit.

The responses are NOT 1430/3014 RKCB, but works using steps:

First Step = 0 Keycards

2nd step = 1 Keycard without the Queen

3rd step = 1 Keycard with the Queen

4th step = 2 Keycards without the Queen

5th step = 2 Keycards with the Queen
6th step = 3 Keycards without the Queen
7th step = 3 Keycards with the Queen

For example Over the 5♣ the steps are:

5♦ = 0
5♥ = 1 without Queen
5♠ = 1 with Queen
5NT = 2 without Queen
6♣ = 2 with Queen
6♦ = 3 without Queen
6♥ = 3 with Queen

Over 3NT*/4♣*/4♦*/5♦/5♥/5♠ --- the responses are again steps and NOT 1430/3014.

What about the Queen ask? Over the first step = zero, the next step is the Queen ask.

The first step denies and next step says yes with the Queen. And two steps say yes and an outside king in the bid suit.

Eddie Kantar (2008), “Roman Keycard Blackwood Slam Bidding for the 21st Century” by Master Point Press only uses 3 Exclusion Roman Keycard Blackwood steps: 0, 1, 2, 3 (rare) and again it is not 1430/3014.

When opening one of a major **GIVE UP 2NT*** as Jacoby!
The bid of 2NT* is NOT JACOBY but 1430 RKCB for the agreed major.

Many use Jacoby 2NT* over the bid of a Major to show 4-card support and 13+ dummy points. A better solution is to replace the bid with 1430. Why? You can investigate slam at a low level. To use the bid you can have 3/4-card support for the major; but, never a singleton or a void since one uses “The Splinter Convention”.

The responses for the bid of 2NT* Roman Keycard Convention are:

3♣ = 1/4 Key Cards
3♦ = 0/3 Key Cards
3♥ = 2/5 Key Cards without the Queen of Trump
3♠ = 2/5 Key Cards with the Queen of Trump or holding a 6th Trump

DOPI/ROPI Interference at the 3 level **DBL/RE-DBL**: 0 or 3 Key Cards and **PASS**: 1 or 4 Keycards (i.e. 3014 RKCB – next step 2/5 w/o Q, next step 2/5 w Q). Used when the rank of the interference bid is lower in rank than you’re agreed upon suit.

DEPO Interference at the 4 level **DBL**: Even # Key Cards (0/2/4) or **PASS**: Odd # (1/3) Used when the interference bid is higher in rank than your agreed upon suit.

QUEEN ASK – Next step 3♦ After 3♣ OR 3♥ After 3♦

After 3♣ the 3♦=Trump Queen Ask - one answers as follows

Hearts Trump

- 3♥ - NO Queen of Trump – (1st step)
 - 3♠ - Specific King Ask (Next Step)
 - Cheapest King = 4♣/4♦/4♥/3NT= K♠
 - (May try second King ask)
 - 4♠= Non -Trump Queen Ask
 - Cheapest Queen = 5♣/5♦/4NT=Q♠
 - 3♠ = Q♥ but NO KINGS (2nd step)
 - 3NT = Specific Non-Trump Queen Ask (Next Step)
 - Cheapest Queen = 4♣/4♦/4♠
 - (May try second Queen Ask)
 - 4♥ - Sign-off =NONE
 - 3NT=Q♥ and ♠K
 - 4♣/4♦/4♥ = Q♥ and King of bid Suit (K♣/K♦/K♥)
 - (May try second King Ask)

Spades Trump

- 3♥ =NO Queen of Trump – (1st step)
 - 3♠ = Specific King Ask (Next Step)
 - Cheapest King 4♣/4♦/4♥/3NT=♠K
 - (May try second king ask)
 - 4NT= Non -Trump Queen Ask
 - Cheapest Queen = 5♣/5♦/5NT=Q♥
 - 3♠ = Q♠ but NO KINGS (2nd step)
 - 3NT = Specific Non-Trump Queen Ask (Next Step)
 - Cheapest Queen 4♣/4♦/4♥
 - (May try second Queen Ask)
 - 4♠ - Sign-off = NONE
 - 4♣/4♦/4♥= Q♠ and King of bid Suit (K♣/K♦/K♥)
 - (May try second King Ask)
 - 4♠=Q♠ and ♠K

After 3♥ (Queen Ask) - one bids as follows

Hearts

- 3♠ = NO Queen of Trump – (1st step)

3NT=Specific King Ask
 Cheapest King = 4♣/4♦/4♥/4♠
 (May try second King Ask)
 4NT= Non -Trump Queen Ask
 Cheapest Queen = 5♣/5♦/5♥=Q♠
 (May try second Queen Ask)
 3NT = Q♥ but NO KINGS (2nd step)
 4♣= Specific Non-Trump Queen Ask (Next Step)
 Cheapest Queen = 4♦/4♠/4NT = Q♣
 (May try second Queen ask)
 4♥ - Sign-off = NONE
 4♣/4♦/4♥/4♠ = Q♥ and King of bid suit
 (May try second King Ask)

Spades

3♠ - NO Queen of Trump – (first step)
 3NT=Specific King Ask
 Cheapest King = 4♣/4♦/4♥/4♠
 (May try second king ask)
 4NT = Non-Trump Queen Ask
 Cheapest Queen =5♣/5♦/5♥
 3NT = Q♠ but NO KINGS (2nd step)
 4♣ = Specific Queen Ask (Next Step)
 Cheapest Queen 4♦/4♠/4NT = Q♣
 (May also try second Queen ask)
 4♠ - Sign-off = NONE
 4♣/4♦/4♥/4♠ = Q♠ and King of bid suit
 (May try second King Ask)

SPECIFIC SUIT ASK (SSA) After 3♣: 3♥, 4♣, 4♦ is SSA. After 3♦: 3♠, 4♦, 4♥ is SSA

Make a 1st step response, including 4NT with third-round control Qx(x), Ax, AQx, xx

Make a 2nd step response with second-round control Kxx(x)

Make a 3rd step response with Kx

Raise the ask bid with KQx and JUMP to the trump suit with a singleton

Voids

Used ONLY after Sign-Off in Major 4♥/4♠

5♣/5♦/5♥ Void in bid Suit

4♠=Void in Spades if Hearts are Trump

Definitions

Direct Splinter Bid - A method of using an artificial jump in a side suit to show a 3/4+ major trump support and a singleton/void in the bid suit. The splinter bidder promises game going values, typically 13+ dummy points for responder (some always require 4 cards and some limit the bid to a maximum to be 16 Dummy Points).

Delayed Splinter by Responder – A 4-level jump rebid showing 13+ Dummy Points and 3 card support opener's bid major.

Auto/Self-Splinter Bid – A name for a splinter bid when the splinter bidder is setting not his partner's suit, but his own.

Mini-Splinter - 3 level jump rebids by opener showing 4+ trumps support in responder's suit, shortage (singleton/void) in the bid suit, and 16+ Bergen Points. Opener's Mini Splinter suit is usually *beneath* responder's suit, allowing responder to signoff in 3♥/3♠ with only 6-8 starting points (e.g. 1♦ - 1♠ - 3♥*). If it is above, it is a game force bid.

What happens when you open one of a minor?

Now you employ Mini-Splinters: A jump shift or jump reverse (by opener) to show a 4 card fit, a singleton or void in the named suit, and *invitational* values:

1♣ - 1♥ - 3♦ = 4 hearts and a singleton/void in diamonds

1♣ - 1♠ - 3♦ = 4 spades and a singleton/void in diamonds

1♦ - 1♥ - 3♣ = 4 hearts and a singleton/void in clubs

1♦ - 1♠ - 3♣ = 4 spades and a singleton/void in clubs

Responder next bids the major at the 3-level with minimal values to sign-off and game with more. To initiate slam interest responder employs a cue bid or uses RKCB.

Would partner have recognized 3♣/3♦ as a mini-splinter? It's a jump where the non-jump would have been forcing (in this case a reverse), so it must be a splinter. However, we'd never discussed what ranges the two splinters might show. But I think it makes total sense for the mini-splinter to be forcing only to the three-level, since we also have available the full splinter, i.e. a double-jump for a game force.

Note: partnership agreements for Mini Splinters vary - some play openers jump forces game.

Opposite a NON-PASSED hand, one might consider the following four sequences as mini-splinters (for the minors), as opposed to jump shifts (according to partnership style and after discussion):

1♣ - 1♦ - 2♥

1♣ - 1♦ - 2♠

1♣ - 1♥ - 2♠

1♦ - 1♥ - 2♠

Questions about Splinters

(1) Can you use splinters with 3-card support?

Yes they are called delayed Splinter bids; for example, 1♥-2♦; 2♥-4♣*. You have 13+ dummy points and 3-card support. With delayed splinters, one usually uses a double jump in the suit so that they are not ambiguous!

(2) Can you splinter if the suit is a singleton honor; say an ace or a king?

Yes! Some may not agree but you do after for example a Jacoby 2NT bid and Opener bids his singleton honor.

(3) Can Splinter bids be used over a minor suit opening?

Yes! --- Some say No, Partnership agreement.

(4) How do you show a void?

You can use control bids or Scroll bids, more on this later. In addition, a void may be shown using Blackwood!

(5) When the opponents Splinter, what is the best lead? ----Lead a trump!

(6) Can the opener Splinter ----- Yes these are called Mini-Splinters or a Jump-reverse.

1♣-2♠; then 3♦* by Opener is a Mini-Splinter in support of spades while 2♦ is a reverse (17+ points).

A Mini-Splinter shows 16+ Dummy Points in support of spades in this example.

For a passed hand, it shows invitational values in support of the bid major, for example:

Pass- Pass-1♠ - Pass- 3♦* (Opener)

When is one near a Slam when hearing a Splinter?

- (1) Use Short Suit Total (SST) Rule
- (2) Use the Rule of 26
- (3) Use LTC or Rule of 24

Rule of 26

When opening one of a major, a splinter bid shows four card support for the major suit bid and 13+ Dummy Points.

When should the opening bidder consider slam?

One may apply the Rule of 26.

Opener merely adds his HCP in his suits outside the known splinter suit and if the total is 26+, you should consider slam in the major suit bid (recall partner has at least 13 Dummy Points).

This rule works because once the partnership can ignore an entire suit, you can expect to make a small slam with only 26+ game points; you do not need 33+ points

LTC Rule or Rule of 24

When opening one of a major, a splinter bid shows four card support for the major suit bid and 13+ Dummy Points. When should you opener consider slam?

One may apply the Rule of 24 or the LTC Rule.

Opener merely assumes 6/7 losers for partner and adds his known losers to 6/7. With **6** losers:

24-6-6=12 and 24-6-7=11. **IN THE SLAM ZONE**

If Opener has 5 losers -- slam is definitely possible! Since 25-5-7=13.

Splinter Example with Direct Splinter Bid

Opener	Responder
♠KQ83	♠J9754
♥J97432	♥AKQ4
♦K	♦
♣AJ2	♣KQ6

South opens 1♥ and with 19 dummy points north bids 4♦* to show 13+ dummy points and a singleton/void in diamonds. Opener next bids 4NT (RKCB 1430) and partner responds 5NT an even number of keycards with a void somewhere. Opener next bids 5♥.

Using Ambiguous Method

Opener	Responder
♠KQ83	♠J9754
♥J97432	♥AKQ4
♦K	♦
♣AJ2	♣KQ64

South opens 1♥ and with 19 dummy points north bids 4♦* to show 13+ points and a diamond void. Opener next bids 4NT* and responder shows an even number of keycards with a void. Opener next bids 6♥.

Let's look at another example.

Opener	Responder
♠Q972	♠AKJ6
♥AK98753	♥QJ62
♦K4	♦Void
♣void	♣QJ642

1♥	4♦*	Void in diamonds
5♣ (EKCB)	5♠	1 Keycard with the Queen
6♣ cue bid	6♠	Cue bid
7♥	Pass	
Pass		
*=Alert		

Delayed Splinter

Opener	Responder
♠AJ4	♠KQ65
♥AK52	♥QJ98
♦J	♦1032
♣AQ876	♣K5

1♣	2♥	
4♦ (S/V)	4♠	1430 Kickback for hearts
5♦ 2 w/o Q	5♠	King ask
6♥ yes	pass	
Pass		
*=Alert		

Splinter Example with Mini-Splinter

Opener	Responder
♠4	♠AKQ10
♥AQ74	♥10932
♦AK97	♦Q32
♣QJ102	♣A5

South opens 1♦ with 16 points and North bids 1♥ to show 6+ points.
South next bids 3♠* - **splinter** to show heart fit (do not bid 4♥ partner may pass since fast arrival). A game force bid.

With a heart fit, North bids 4♠ as kickback for hearts and the heart slam is reached.

Example of Auto/Self-Splinter Bid

Opener	Responder
♠A64	♠K87
♥7	♥986
♦AKJ854	♦3
♣AQ9	♣KJ10642

Bidding

1♦	1NT
3♥* (Auto-Splinter)	5♣
6♣	pass
Pass	

The Jump reverse is an Auto/Self-Splinter bid, which shows a heart singleton/void and says to partner that he has great diamonds. However, after the bid of 5♣ South bids the club slam.

2NT* Jacoby/Keycard Ask

Opener	Responder
♠KQ865	♠A8742
♥K	♥1076
♦KQ1042	♦AJ6
♣84	♣AK

Bidding using Jacoby

1♠	2NT*
3♥* (S/V)	4♦ (Cue bid)
4♥	4♠
Pass	pass

*=Alert

Bidding using 2NT*=1430 RKCB

1♠	2NT*
3♣ 1 Keycard	4♦ (Queen Ask)
4♣ yes and club K	5♦ Cue bid
5♥ Cue bid	6♠
Pass	pass

*=Alert

You may have missed the slam using Jacoby NT, but get there in a direct manner using 2NT* as 1430 RKCB!

Example of Exclusion Keycard Blackwood

Opener	Responder
♠Q	♠AK10862
♥AKQ8732	♥105
♦5	♦KQJ82
♣Q1062	♣void
4♥	5♣ void in clubs (ERKCB)
6♣ (2wQ)	6♥
Pass	pass

Opener opens 4♥ with 13 HCP and a quality suit. Responder with no clubs and 13 HCP but with 18 support/dummy points and a 10 known card heart fit bids Exclusion Roman Keycard Blackwood (5♣). Opener with two keycards and the Queen of trumps bids 6♣. Responder bids the heart slam.

The slam is bid and made with only 26 HCP and missing two aces.

Double Agreement Roman Keycard Blackwood**

Roman Keycard 1430 Blackwood is a widely used convention: The standard commonly used responses follow.

4NT with an agreed upon suit (Keycard Ask) and not using Kickback
5♣ = 1/4 Key Cards
5♦ = 0/3 Key Cards
5♥ = 2/5 Key Cards without the Queen of Trump
5♠ = 2/5 Key Cards with the Queen of Trump or holding a 5th Trump

Kickback

Use 4 Diamonds as Keycard ask when CLUBS is the agreed upon suit
Use 4 Hearts as Keycard ask when DIAMONDS is the agreed upon suit

Use 4 Spades as Keycard ask when HEARTS is the agreed upon suit

Voids

5NT = 0, 2 or 4 an even number of Key Cards with a void

6 of suit below the trump suit = odd number key cards (1/3) with a void in the suit below the trump suit

6 trump suit = odd number of key cards (1/3) with a void in higher ranking suit

DOPI/ROPI Interference at the 5 level DBL/RE-DBL: 0/3 Key Cards and PASS: 1/4 Key Cards

DEPO Interference at the 6 level DBL: Even # Key Cards (0/2/4) or PASS: Odd # (1/3)

QUEEN ASK: After 5♣, 5♦s are Queen Ask AND After 5♦, 5♥s are Queen Ask

Responses:

Denial: Return to the five-level of the agreed upon suit

6 Level of agreed Suit: With Queen and no side-suit king or extra trump

6 Level of Lower King Suit: With Queen and 1/2 side-suit king

5NT: With Queen without a side-suit king, but trump extra

5NT is a Specific King ASK (USUALLY NOT NUMBER OF KINGS) @

YES: Bid Lowest King Suit BELOW the agreed upon trump suit

NO: Return to the agreed upon trump suit

To ask for a SECOND king, the asker bids the suit. Without, return to the agreed suit.

Holding a SECOND king: Make a 1st step response, including 6NT with Kxx(x)

Make a 2nd step response with Kxx

Raise the ask suit with Kx

@ Some play number of Kings and not specific king, ask your partners.

SPECIFIC SUIT ASK (SSA) after 5♣: 5♥, 6♣, 6♦ is SSA. After 5♦: 5♠, 6♦, 6♥ is SSA

Make a 1st step response, including 6NT with third-round control Qx(x), Ax, AQx, xx

Make a 2nd step response with second-round control Kxx(x)

Make a 3rd step response with Kx

Raise the ask bid with KQx and JUMP to the trump suit with a singleton

**With NO AGREED upon SUIT many use the standard BLACKWOOD

CONVENTION for Ace Asking and 5NT for NUMBER of Kings Ask; others may use 1430 based up the last bid suit.

Given the above overview, it often happens playing for example Smolen or Quest Transfers that a partnership has a double agreement. For example: Major-Major, Major-Minor, Minor-Major, or Minor-Minor (less common); such agreements often lead to slam investigations.

With a double agreement, there are now six keycards (four aces and two kings), NOT FIVE, so we have what are called Double agreement 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood (DRKCB). We consider DRKCB responses for some double agreements.

1. Major-Major Agreements

a) Opener	Responder	b) Opener	Responder
1♠	2♥	1♥	2♠
3♣	3♠	3♠	4♥
4♥	4NT	4NT	

Then 4NT is a DRKCB ask.

When responding to DRKCB asks, there are now six keycards. And, **there are no void-showing responses**. The first two responses (5♣ and 5♦) of DRKCB are the same as RKCB; however, there are now three queen showing responses:

5♥	=	2 with neither queen
5♠	=	2 with one queen
5NT	=	2 with both queens

Note that in the second step (5♠) you do not know which queen. However, if partner makes a 1st or 2nd step responses to a DRKCB ask, unless the asker has both of the agree-upon suit queens, the queen situation is unknown. To ask about queens, the asker uses the next available “free bid” step, excluding the trump suits, but including 4NT. The four-step responses are used.

1 st step	=	2 with no queen
2 nd step	=	2 with lower-ranking queen only
3 rd step	=	2 higher-ranking queen only
4 th step	=	2 both queens

When investigating a small slam in double-agreement sequences, you are looking to have at least five of the six missing Keycards plus at least one queen of the agreed upon suits.

We now consider two **major-major** examples.

(A) Opener	Responder	Comments
♠A873	♠KJ5	
♥A982	♥KQJ63	
♦K2	♦A94	
♣Q7	♣A5	
1♠	2♥	(1) Double Agreement
3♥	3♠ (1)	(2) DRKCB

4♥	4NT (2)	(3) 2 with neither queen
5♥ (3)	6♥ (4)	(4) ♠Q is missing

(B) Opener	Responder	Comments
♠A8732	♠KJ5	
♥AQ95	♥KJ632	
♦A2	♦K94	
♣A7	♣Q5	

1♠	2♥	(1) Double Agreement
3♥	3♠ (1)	(2) DRKCB
4♥	4NT (2)	(3) 1 or 4 key cards
5♣ (3)	5♦ (4)	(4) Queen ask with double agreement
5NT (5)	6♥ (6)	(5) ♥Q (2 nd step, lower-ranking queen)
		(6) ♠Q is missing

Note that if the response in example (B) was 5♦ (0 or 3) instead of 5♣, one could not ask for the missing queen! No “free-bid” step is available for a queen asks since one must by-pass all five-level bids. The five level bids are sign-offs and 5NT is the King ask. Queen asks are more easily used with kickback DRKCB sequences as we shall see.

2. Major-Minor Agreements

c) Opener	Responder	d) Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦	1♥	2♣
2♥	3♥	2♠	3♠
4♦	?	4♣	?

Looking at the sequences in (2), one needs to replace ‘?’ with unlimited Keycard asks.

After a Major-Minor double agreement ending in 4♣, 4♦ is DRKCB, the un-bid minor.

And, after Major-Minor double agreement ending in 4♦, 4♥ is DRKCB, the un-bid major.

These follow the “kickback” sequences for RKCB. Using the kickback sequence we have a queen showing bonus. The first two steps 1/4 or 0/3 remain the same. The following chart means there are four ‘third-step’ responses.

1 st step	=	2 with no queen
2 nd step	=	2 with lower-ranking queen only
3 rd step	=	2 with higher-ranking queen only
4 th step	=	2 with both queens

To illustrate, after the 4♦ DRKCB bid, we have that

4♥	=	1 or 4
4♠	=	0 or 3
4NT	=	2 with no queen
5♣	=	2 with lower ranking queen
5♦	=	2 with higher ranking queen
5♠	=	2 with both queens

Thus, after Major-Minor double agreements we do not need queen asks when using kickback DRKCB asks.

After any four-level double Major-Minor or Major-Minor agreements, 4NT is again DRKCB as illustrated in the major-major double agreement bids above.

3. Minor-Major Agreements

e) Opener	Responder	f) Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣	1♣	1♥
3♣	3♠	2♦	3♣
?		3♥	?

g) Opener	Responder
1♥	2♦
4♦	4♥
?	

With Minor-Major double agreements, one may again use kickback bids. Then in (e) 4♥ is DRKCB. In (f and g), 4♠ is DRKCB. And, after any four-level double agreement, the 4NT is DRKCB. **However, there is not universal agreement on this. Many players who play “kickback” after any three-level minor-major double agreement use four of the agreed upon MINOR as DRKCB!** This is better than the higher level “standard” kickback responses since it keeps Key Card ask at an even lower level. You must discuss this with your partner --- playing kickback Key Card.

With Minor-Major kickback sequences, except for the 4NT ask, we again may obtain information directly regarding all suit queens.

Let's consider a few examples.

(C) Opener	Responder	Comments
♠KJ1072	♠A63	
♥KQJ5	♥A2	
♦9	♦A54	
♣KQ6	♣AJ732	
1♠	2♣	(1) Game Force
2♥	3♠ (1)	(2) Double Agreement

4♣ (2)	4♦ (3)	(3) DRKCB (4NT is a diamond cue bid)
5♣ (4)	5NT (5)	(4) 4 th step 2 with the lower-ranking queen
7♣ (6)		(5) Grand Slam try promising the four aces
		(6) Can count 13 tricks with clubs as trump: five clubs, four hearts, two spades, the ♦A and a diamond ruff.

(D) Opener	Responder	Comments
♠J52	♠A107	
♥AK10863	♥QJ	
♦Q74	♦A10532	
♣Q	♣AK8	
1♠	2♦ (1)	(1) Game Force
2♥	2NT (2)	(2) Looking for more information
3♦	3♥ (3)	(3) Double agreement
4♥ (4)	4♠ (5)	(4) Nothing more to say
5♠ (6)	6♥ (7)	(5) DRKCB (without kickback, one uses 4NT# for the ask)
		(6) '2' with lower-ranking queen.
		(7) One Keycard missing

If you bid 4NT, then the bid of 5♠ shows only one of the agreed upon queens. You do not know which queen; using kickback asks, you are able to obtain more information.

(E) Opener	Responder	Comments
♠Q9	♠AKJ542	
♥K83	♥AQJ2	
♦AJ83	♦K5	
♣AQ65	♣2	
1NT	2♣ (1)	(1) Stayman
2♦	3♥ (2)	(2) Smolen (at least 5♠-4♥ in majors)
3NT (3)	4♠ (4)	(3) Does not have four hearts
4NT (5)	5♣ (6)	(4) Six spades
5♦ (7)	5♠ (8)	(5) DRKCB
7NT (9)		(6) 0 or 3 Keycards
		(7) Queen Ask
		(8) Lower ranking queen ♥Q
		(9) 13 Tricks

While Minor-Minor double agreements do occur, they are less common. They tend to occur most often if you employ Minor Suit Stayman and delayed splinters. Using DRKCB for a double minor suit agreement, instead of just RCKB, it is easier to bid at the seven level for a minor for a Match Point/IMPS top since others will usually only be is a small slam. See the Kantor (Page 87) for a discussion (reference one below).

In example (E), responder bid four spades to show 6-4 in the majors. Alternative, using Extended Texas Transfers, responder would bid 4♥ and opener would bid 4♠. Now responder would bid 4NT for DRKCB. Or playing South African Texas Transfers, responder would bid 4♦ as a transfer to spades. A better solution is to use Quest Transfers in place of Smolen. Unlike Smolen (which is game forcing), Quest Transfers are invitational or better (unlimited) and may be used with 5-4 or 6-4 hands. We shall discuss Quest bids in a future Lesson.

Finally, while one cannot show voids with DRKCB, one may still use Exclusion DRKCB (EDRKCB). As an example, we will use consider the following hand taken from Quested (Page 90), reference two below.

(F) Opener	Responder
♠K9	♠AQJ2
♥AJ3	♥KQ85422
♦KJ853	♦Void
♣A87	♣KQ2

After finding a double fit in Hearts and Spades at the 4-level, the bid of 5♦ by responder is EDRKCB. Using it, you should easily reach the contract of 7♥! Using other methods, you might stop at six and get a low board in either Match Points or IMPS.

Final Example

(G) Opener	Responder	Comments
♠AK754	♠QJ2	
♥AQ6	♥K85432	
♦952	♦A8	
♣103	♣A7	
1♠	2♥	(1) Double Major-Major agreement
3♥	3♠ (1)	(2) Would like lead to come up to partner
4♥ (2)	4NT (3)	(3) DRKCB ask
5♦ (4)	5♥ (5)	(4) 0 or 3 Key Cards, surely 3
5NT (6)	7NT (7)	(5) Queen ask
		(6) 2 nd step response – lower ranking queen
		(7) 13 Tricks

If you did not play DRKCB, would you get to the 7NT contract? Playing only Blackwood, you would never reach the grand slam. Playing RKCB without kickback, you may depending how you play the 5NT ask. Playing RKCB with kickback after the four-heart bid and 5NT as a specific king ask (SKA), depending how you show the ♠K, you may reach the grand slam for this example.

For additional information on slam bidding, one may consult the following books:

(1) Eddie Kantar (2008), "Roman Keycard Blackwood Slam Bidding for the 21st Century" by Master Point Press

(2) Terrence Quested (2006), "No Trump Bidding Stayman and Transfers" by Trafford Publishing.

Problem

Bid the following hand.

(H) Opener	Responder
♠AQ6	♠J5
♥8	♥QJ
♦KJ73	♦AQ654
♣AQJ62	♣K543

You have a double fit (agreement in the minors). Using DRKCB, you should reach a slam in 6♦. Some may reach a slam in clubs, also a 5-4 fit. However, you need to take a spade finesse, but in six diamonds you do not. Because you have a doubleton spade, your clubs will be more useful as a side suit than as trump. You can only get rid of one spade on dummy's fifth diamond if clubs is trump.

The bidding may go:

1♣	1♦	(1) Game forcing splinter
3♥ (1)	4♣ (2)	(2) Ambiguous --- probably length
4♦ (3)	4♥ (4)	(3) Double minor suit agreement
4NT (5)	5♥ (6)	(4) DRKCB kickback ask
5NT (6)	6♦ (7)	(5) 0 or 3 Keycards
		(6) Lower-ranking ♣Q
		(7) Bids slam in clubs not diamonds to discard your spade loser