

Roman Key-Card Blackwood

30 Minute Mini Lesson



A Word About Slam Bidding

- To bid a slam with reasonable Safety you Need:
 - a) First-round control of four suits (grand slam)
 - b) First-round control of three suits and second-round control of the fourth suit. (small slam)
 - c) Close to 33 hcps (small slam)
 - d) Close to 37 points (grand slam)
 - e) A source of tricks.

Some General Thoughts About Blackwood

- The original form of Blackwood has been around since the 1940s.
- Blackwood is not the only way to determine controls.
- It is often not the best way.
- Blackwood is not used to tell you if there is a slam. It is used to keep you out of a bad slam, when opponents have two (or more) immediate winners.

Use Blackwood When:

- Both you and your partner know what is trump.
- You are quite sure that, if you have adequate controls, you have a good chance of making a slam.

5 Common Mistakes in Using Blackwood

1. Initiating Blackwood when you have a void.
2. Initiating Blackwood when you have a small doubleton.
3. Initiating Blackwood when no trump will be the final contract.
 - a) 1 nt ... 4 nt. Not Blackwood.
 - b) 1 nt ... 2 ♣ ... 2 ♦ ... 4 nt... not Blackwood.
 - c) 1 nt... 2 ♣ ... 2 ♥ or 2 ♠ ... 4 nt Maybe?

5 Common Mistakes (Cont.)

4. Initiating Blackwood when you cannot handle all the possible responses.
5. Initiating Blackwood when partner does not know what will be trump.

Key-Card Blackwood

- There are 6 key cards
 - The four aces
 - The king of the agreed trump suit.
 - The queen of the agreed trump
- After a trump suit has been agreed upon, a bid of 4 no trump initiates the convention.

Responses to 4 No Trump

- 5 ♣ Shows 1 or 4 key cards (no indication of the trump queen).
- 5 ♦ Shows 0 or 3 key cards (no indication of the trump queen)
- 5 ♥ Shows 2 or 5 key cards, without the trump queen.
- 5 ♠ Shows 2 or 5 key cards, with the trump queen.





The Queen Ask

- After a response of 5 ♣ or 5 ♦, a bid of the next non trump suit asks for the queen.
- You answer by bidding:
 - The next suit to say “I do not have the queen.”
 - Skipping a suit to say “I do have the queen.”
- The only time you ask about the trump queen is when you know your side has all the top five key cards.

Asking for Kings

- You cannot ask for kings and ask about the trump queen.
- Since the trump king is one of the key cards, that king is known.
- There are only three kings remaining.

5 No Trump Asks for Kings

- 6  shows 0 kings.
- 6  Shows 1 king.
- 6  Shows 2 kings.
- 6  Shows 3 kings.

Responding to 4 No Trump With a Void

- Never bid a void as an ace.
- When partner initiates Blackwood and you have a **useful void**.
 - A void in a suit the opponents have bid.
 - A void in an unbid side suit.
 - *A void in a suit partner has bid naturally is not useful.*

Responding With a Useful Void

- After 4 no trump
 - 5 no trump shows an even number of key cards, an a useful void.
 - 6 of a suit shows an odd number of key cards, with a void in the suit bid, if the suit is below the agreed trump.
- 6 of the trump suit shows a void above the agreed trump suit.

Things to Discuss With Partner

- 1430 or 3014?
- How do we know when there is a trump suit agreement.
- What common bidding sequences lead to Gerber.
- How to understand the quantitative 4 no trump.

RKCB Example 1

North Hand

♠ 8
♥ A Q J 10 7 5
♦ K Q
♣ A Q J 5

North

1 ♥
4 nt
5 ♥

South

3 ♥
5 ♦
6 ♥





South Hand

♠ A 7 3
♥ K 9 6 2
♦ A 8 4 3
♣ 7 3

RKCB

Example 2




North Hand

 A J 10 7 2
 A K 7
 A K 10 9
 4





North

1 
3 
4 nt
6 

South

2 
3 
5 

South Hand

 K Q 3
 J 9 6 2
 3
 A K Q 7 3

RKCB

Example 3

North Hand

♠ K 4
♥ K J 9 6 5 4
♦ A K Q J
♣ 4

North

1 ♥
2 ♦
4 nt
5 ♥

South

2 ♣
2 ♥
5 ♣

South Hand

♠ Q J 7 5
♥ Q 10 7
♦ 3
♣ A K 9 7 3

RKCB

Example 4

North Hand

♠ A
♥ K Q J 4
♦ A K
♣ A K Q 8 6 4

NorthSouth

2 ♣	2 ♦
3 ♣	4 ♣
4 nt	5 ♣
7nt	

South Hand

♠ 7
♥ A 9 6 2
♦ Q 8 4 3
♣ J 10 7 3

RKCB Example 5

North Hand



♥ A J 10 6 4 2



♦ K Q 8



♣ K 10 8 4

North

1 ♥

3 ♠

6 ♥

South

2nt

4nt

7 ♥

South Hand

♠ 9 7

♥ K Q 4

♦ A J 10 5

♣ A Q 8

RKCB Example 6

North Hand

♠ A 7
♥ A 10 9 8 4 2
♦ K Q 2
♣ K 8

North

1 ♥
3 ♥
4nt
6 ♣

South

2nt
4 ♣
5nt
6 ♦

South Hand

♠ K Q J 4
♥ K Q 6 5 3
♦
♣ A 9 5 2

RKCB Example 7

North Hand

♠ A K 5 3
♥ A K 10 8 5 3
♦ 6
♣ 9 2

North

1 ♥
3 ♦
4nt
6 ♥

South

2nt
4 ♣
5 ♠

South Hand

♠ Q 4
♥ Q 9 6 4
♦ A 8 5 4
♣ A 8 6