

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

- Blackwood is not the only way to determine controls.
- It is often not the best war.
- Nevertheless it is an important convention when used properly.






Use Blackwood When:

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

When Should You Not Use Blackwood

- The original form of Blackwood has been around since the 1940s.
- 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.

3 Common Mistakes in Using Blackwood

1. Using 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 Blackwood.
2. Using Blackwood when you have a void or a small doubleton.
3. Using Blackwood when you cannot handle all the possible responses.



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.

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

♠ 8
♥ A Q J 10 7 5
♦ K Q
♣ A Q J 5

Opener	Responder
1 ♥	3 ♥
4 nt	5 ♦
5 ♥	

RKCB Example 2

 A J 10 7 2

 A K 7

 A K 10 5

 4

Opener

1 

3 

4 nt





Responder






2 

3 

5 

RKCB Example 3

 K 4
 K J 9 6 5 4
 A K Q J
 4

Opener	Responder
1 	2 
2 	2 
4 nt	5 
??	

RKCB Example 4

♠ A
♥ K Q J 4
♦ A K
♣ A K Q 8 6 4

Opener	Responder
2 ♣	2 ♦
3 ♣	4 ♣
4 nt	5 ♣
??	