

Roman Key Card Blackwood Standard (3014) variant

NG34Bridge

Roman key Card Blackwood is an improvement on Key Card Blackwood because it takes fully into account the honour strength of the combined trump holding. Consider this situation:

West	East	West	East	Using Key Card Blackwood, and with only one key card missing, it is reasonable to bid a small slam. Unfortunately the only missing key card is the trump king, and the trump queen is missing too. One off!
♠ A 7 4	♠ K Q	1♣	1♦	
♥ J 8 6 3	♥ A 7 4 2	1♥	4NT	
♦ 10	♦ A K 8 5	5♥	6♥	
♣ A K J 6 2	♣ Q 9 8			

Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB) creates space at the 5 level to either show the trump queen or to ask about its whereabouts.

Responses to 4NT (RKCB)

- 5♣ = 0-3 key cards (KC);
- 5♦ = 1-4 KC;
- 5♥ = 2-5 KC & no trump queen ;
- 5♠ = 2-5 KC & trump queen.

There is an alternative version of RKCB where the meanings of the 5♣ and 5♦ responses are reversed. To distinguish between them the version shown here was originally known as the 0314 version, now more commonly known as the 'Thirty Fourteen' version or '1430' version because it is easier to say. The alternative version is now known as the 'Fourteen Thirty' version or '1430' version

If the partnership is missing two (or more!) key cards, slam should be avoided. If the partnership is missing a key card and the queen of the agreed suit, slam should not be pursued unless the combined trump holding is 10 cards or longer (where there is a good chance that the queen will drop.)

If the response to RKCB 4NT is 5♥ or 5♠ then the RKCB bidder knows the whereabouts of the trump queen. If the response is 5♣ or 5♦ then the RKCB bidder does not know the whereabouts of the trump queen, but if the response shows that the partnership has all five key cards, then a grand slam may be on, provided one or other partner has the trump queen. Without it you should sign off in a small slam without asking for Kings.

West	East	West	East	5♥ shows two key cards and the ♥Q. One key card is missing but with a club singleton and a combined minimum of 32 HCP East is happy to bid 6♥.
♠ A Q 9 8	♠ K 4 3	2NT	3♦	
♥ Q 8	♥ A J 9 6 5 4	3♥	4NT	
♦ K Q 7	♦ A 10 9	5♥	6♥	
♣ A K 7 6	♣ 5	P		

Trump Queen Ask

If the response to the RKCB bid is 5♣ or 5♦ and the RKCB bidder does not have the trump queen she can ask partner if he has the trump queen by bidding the next suit up (not trumps, which is a sign off). Partner's responses are as follows:

1. No trump queen: bid five of the trump suit.
2. Possessing the trump queen: either
 - a) bid six of the trump suit with no side suit king, or
 - b) bid a side suit king (cheapest king with more than one)

Examples (spades are trumps):

- 4NT-5♣-5♦-5♠ 0-3 key cards and no trump queen
 4NT-5♣-5♦-5♥ Responder has shown 0-3 key cards, the trump queen and ♥K.
 4NT-5♣-5♦-6♣ 0-3 key cards, the trump queen and no side suit kings

A 'queen ask' bid above five in the trump suit commits to a small slam, so should only be made if a small slam is certain and a grand slam is probable if responder holds the trump queen.

Example (hearts are trumps):

4NT-5♣-5♦ Responder will have to respond above 5♥

West	East	West	East	West's 5♥ is queen asking. East's 6♥ bid shows the trump queen and the ♥K. West confidently bids 7♠. Just 28 combined HCP!
♠ A K 7 6 5 4	♠ Q 3 2		1♣	
♥ A Q 5 4 3	♥ K 2	1♠	2♣	
♦ A	♦ J 7	3♥	4♣	
♣ 3	♣ A J 10 8 6 2	4NT	5♦	
		5♥	6♥	
		7♠	End	

King Ask (Grand Slam Try)

Sometimes the 4NT bidder possesses the trump queen and knows that the partnership holds all five key cards, so can bid 5NT to ask how many non-trump kings partner holds. This may help determine whether the grand slam should be in a suit or in the higher scoring 7 No Trumps.

Partner may have already shown an outside king in responding to the Trump Queen Ask, but he should still include it in his response.

Responses to 5NT (Side King ask):

6♣ = 0 kings; 6♦ = 1 king; 6♥ = 2 kings; 6♠ = 3 kings

Bidding RKCB after interference (DOPI : Double = 0, Pass = 1)

W	N	E	S
	1♣	P	1♥
2♦	2♥	4♦	4NT
5♦	?		

A double by North shows no aces. A pass shows one key card. 5♥ shows two key cards. 5♠ shows three key cards.

Bidding RKCB when the agreed suit is a major

Don't use Blackwood if the response might go too high: For instance, if hearts are agreed as trumps, and you have one key card so need three key cards from partner for slam, then a 5♠ reply showing two key cards is a disaster. You are forced to bid 6♥.

- If the agreed suit is hearts, the Blackwood bidder needs 2 key cards
- If the agreed suit is spades, the Blackwood bidder needs just one key card.

Bidding RKCB when the agreed suit is a minor

Don't use Blackwood if the response might go too high:

Playing KCB or RKCB (3014)

- if clubs are agreed as trumps, and you need two key cards from partner for slam, then a 5♦ reply showing only one key card is a disaster. You are forced to bid 6♣.
- if diamonds are agreed as trumps, and you need three key cards from partner for slam, then after a 5♥ reply showing only two key cards you are forced to bid 6♦.

Grand Slam Force

The Grand Slam Force is a convention that uses an artificial 5NT bid to ask partner about the quality of his trumps, for the purpose of probing for a grand slam. After a trump fit has been found (or implied; 1♥:5NT would indicate a heart fit), any 5NT bid that does not conflict with other conventional meanings a pair has agreed on (i.e. a 5NT Blackwood rebid) **asks partner to bid a small slam with less than two of the top three honour cards in his suit, and to bid a grand slam with two top honours.**

The grand slam force is usually used when one player has one top trump honour and is certain all the other suits are completely stopped, but needs to find the other two top trump honours in partner's hand in order to count 13 tricks.

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
♠ A K 4 3	♠ 8 7 6	1♥	3♥
♥ K 8 7 5 4	♥ A 9 6 3 2	5NT	6♣ (ace or king)
♦ A K Q J	♦ 6 4	6♥	
♣ —	♣ K Q 8		