

Blackwood

RKCB (Roman Key Card Blackwood)

This is the Basic System. RKCB is so similar to traditional Blackwood that it is reasonably easy to switch. The extra information that it provides about the trump suit is wonderful. Bidding makeable slams becomes much easier.

Note: It is quite rare to need anything more advanced than the basic system. So its best to ignore the extensions (*Q ask, K ask and more*) until the base system is fully under control.

There are 5 key cards: the four Aces plus the King of trumps

Note: *You must be clear what suit is agreed as the trump suit*

RKCB	Response	Key Cards
4NT	?	
	5♣	0
	5♦	1
	5♥	2 without Q
	5♠	2 with Q
		Roll over
		3
		4
		5

The steps are:

- ♣ Nought
- ♦ One
- ♥ Two without
- ♠ Two with

Roll over to clubs if holding three

Notes

- The first three responses are exactly as in traditional Blackwood, i.e.0/1/2
- 5♠ shows 2 key cards **plus the Q of trumps**
- Then, as in standard Blackwood, one “rolls over” to clubs
- Often the 4NT bid **“announces”** the last bid suit as trumps **Unlike ordinary Blackwood, with RKCB you must know which suit is proposed as trumps.** In the early days of using RKCB this ambiguity can be a problem.
- If partner responds 5♣ and you are afraid it may mean zero, then bid as if partner means zero. If wrong a partner holding 3 key cards should correct to a small slam. *In practice it is rarely ambiguous.*
- When familiar with the system RKCB can sometimes be used as a stepping stone to slam in NT, perhaps by “misleading” partner as to the trump suit in order to find out about location of K/Q
- Described is RKCB 3014. Some players use a variation called RKCB1430
- As with ordinary Blackwood be careful that the response is not too high!

An Example: Spades are agreed as Trumps

Your Hand

♠ A J 5 4
♥ K Q 5 3
♦ A K 7 3
♣ 5

Important & Missing

♠K ♠Q
♥A
-
♣A

Your Call

4NT

Responder

?

5♣ 0 or 3 of these

5♦ 1 of these

5♥ 2 of these

5♠ 2 of these

Key Cards

plus ♠Q

What is The Trump Suit?

1♠	3♠	Spades
4NT		
1♦	1♥	Hearts
2♥	4NT	
1♦	1♥	Hearts
4♣	4♦	4♣ is the start of a control showing sequence agreeing hearts as trumps
4NT		
1NT	4NT	This is quantitative, not Blackwood
1♦	3♦	Diamonds
4♥	4♠	4♥ went past 3NT, so this is a slam try agreeing diamonds
4NT		