

Fifth Chair



Roman Key Card (RKC) Blackwood

Miscellaneous - but important things to remember!

First: Never bid a small slam off 2 keycards.

Second: Never bid a grand slam off 1 keycard.

REMEMBER - AFTER AN OPENING BID, AN IMMEDIATE BID OF 4NT IS NORMAL BLACKWOOD, not RKC, since both sides didn't agree on a trump suit, UNLESS YOU HAVE PRIOR AGREEMENT WITH PARTNER.

Below you will find both bidding systems of RKC, followed by an explanation of how to determine which suit is the trump suit!

After you and partner have bid and raised a suit, it becomes the agreed trump suit. The king of the agreed suit, PLUS the four Aces are considered keycards - 5 keycards in all.

These are the responses to RKC 4NT (0314)

5c = None, or Three keycards (AAA) (AA K of trumps)

5d = One or 4 keycards (A) (K of trumps)

5h = Two or 5 keycards, WITHOUT the Queen of Trump (AA) (A - K of trumps)

5s = Two or 5 keycards with the Queen of Trump (AAQ) (A - KQ of trumps)

5NT= 2 keycards and a useful void. A useful void is a suit not bid naturally by either side. Given a choice of showing 2 and useful void, or showing 2 with queen, responder must decide on previous auction which is more important. see example....

e.g. KQXXXX(X) and pard has shown 4, the void is much more powerful.

These are the responses to RKC 4NT (1430)

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5NT= 2 keycards and a useful void. A useful void is a suit not bid naturally by either side. Given a choice of showing 2 and a useful void, or showing 2 with queen, responder must decide on previous auction which is more important. see example....

e.g. KQXXXX(X) and pard has shown 4, the void is much more powerful.

6x=odd number of key cards plus a useful void, either in the bid suit (if 6x is LOWER ranking than the agreed trump suit) or in a higher ranking suit if 6x=a jump to the six level in trumps.

a 5nt rebid by asker

(1) guarantees possession of all 5 key cards and the trump Q

(it implies that its presence or absence is insignificant) and

(2) invites a grand slam. two sorts of responses are available.

the simpler but less effective method is to show kings quantitatively

(6c=0, 6d=1, 6h=2, 6s=3); the more effective is to QBid specific kings

(6c=club K, 6d=D king, no club king, etc).

After the first response, the RKC bidder has three options:

a) 5NT, inviting a grand slam, promises ALL keycards plus the Queen of trump. This asks partner for EITHER the # of Kings, or specific Kings, whichever has been agreed upon beforehand!

b) Over 5c or 5d, the next highest ranking suit (NOT the agreed trump) asks partner if he has the queen of trump.

The responses are:

1) Return to the trump suit - NO trump queen.

2) 5NT = trump queen, no side king.

3) New suit = trump queen plus a king in the suit bid

A new suit at the six level is a grand slam try, promising all 5 key cards, and asking partner to evaluate his holding in that suit.

1) With second-round control (king or singleton), responder bids the grand slam.

2) With third round control (qxx or a doubleton) responder bids a new suit, provided it is lower ranking than the trump suit at the six level.

3) With no control (three or more cards, without the king or queen, responder signs off in the trump suit at the six level.

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Why (1430) instead of (0314)? Ease of inquiry when hearts is the agreed trump suit. Partner is much more likely to ask for the queen after a response of 1 keycard than none. Playing 1430, you can inquire about the queen with 5d. Partner, without the queen, bids 5h.

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Playing Jacoby Transfer 1NT - 2H - 2S 4NT is NOT RKC - just quantitative, whereas Texas transfer, 1NT - 4H - 4S 4NT IS RKC

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PRIORITIES for determining which suit is the RKC trump suit

1) Any agreed upon trump suit:

A) A suit that was bid and raised by the partnership, (including conventional raises such as Jacoby 2NT, or splinter bids)

Example:

1S - 3S or 1S - 2C - 2H - 3S. spades are trumps.

B) If there are two such suits, the last one

Example: 1S - 2D - 3D - 3S, spades are trump.

C) If there is no suit bid and raised, the LAST suit bid by partner before the 4NT becomes the asked for suit.

Example: 1S - 2D - 3C - 4NT, clubs are trump.

D) EVEN IF ONE OF THE PARTNERS HAS NEVER ACTUALLY BID IT.

Example: 1H - 2NT (Jacoby 2NT) agrees hearts is the trump suit by systemic agreement.

2) A strong 2 Bid Example: 2c - 2h - 2s - 3h - 4N spades is trump suit.

If opener wanted to bid RCK for hearts, it could have gone

2C - 2H - 3H

3) A strong jump shifter's suit.

4) A preemptor's suit - Notice that # 2 has PRIORITY over this one.

5) The last NATURALLY bid suit.

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Here's a simpler way to look at it 1) If we didn't agree on a suit, but someone showed a big hand, his suit is trumps.

2) If somebody showed a strong SUIT, then that suit is trumps.

3) Otherwise it's the LAST bid suit

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Subject: Re: RKC a lesson

It would not be unusual to ask for the queen of trumps missing one keycard and stop at the 5-level if partner doesn't have the queen, particularly when you are certain you only have an 8-card trump fit.

For example, opener holds 3 keycards and this auction occurs:

1C 1H

1S 3S (invitational)

4NT 5D* (1 or 4 - known by opener to be 1 since

3S was invitational)

5H* (Q ask) 5S (no queen of spades)

Pass

When might you risk slam anyway in this case?

Scenario #1: Opener holds the trump king - since the partnership is missing an ace and the trump queen, slam will AT BEST 50% (and less if opener is not looking at the ten and jack of trumps). Worse yet, if opener isn't looking at the trump ace, this might be the trump layout:

KTxx 9xxx

and you might not make 5!

Missing an ace and the trump queen in an 8-card fit, opener should usually resist the temptation and NOT bid slam.

Scenario #2: Opener does not hold the trump king - now an optimistic view to take is that the missing keycard might be the trump king and therefore it could be reasonable to take a shot at slam hoping the trump suit is something like AJxx T9xx and hopefully NOT AJxx 7xxx

Whether the opener is holding the jack and/or ten of trumps will probably affect the decision.

Although pessimism will pay dividends sometimes in a 9-card fit:

Kxxxx 9xxx (less than 25% chance) the odds are much better than with an 8-card trump fit and it will often pay to risk slam in this case.

Note that a long solid side suit for a source of tricks might allow you to make 6NT when 6 of a suit is doomed.

One last thing: If you end in slam NOT having asked for the queen, the opponents cash an ace early and you're left with a trump suit of AJxx KTxx, tend to play the opening leader for the trump queen if he/she led a small card (not a sequence). Since a trump MIGHT have been led without the queen as a "safe" lead, there is a slightly better chance of the queen being on your left.