



Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB)

Roman Key Card Blackwood is a modern, and increasingly popular, version of the **Blackwood 4NT** convention. While the responses are a little more complicated than standard Blackwood, it is not too different. Note that there are many slightly different variations of RKCB - the one presented here is one of the commonest (and simplest).

When is 4NT RKCB? (same rules as normal Blackwood)

- You have an agreed trump suit (either bid & raised, or agreed by implication - e.g. 1NT - 3♦; 3♠ - 4NT where diamonds is the trump suit and 3♠ was a cue bid).
- One of you jumps to 4NT after a suit bid by partner (e.g. 1♥ - 2♦; 3♣ - 4NT) - assume for now that the last bid suit, clubs, are trumps
- **NOT** after partner's last bid was a natural bid in NT - then 4NT is a quantitative slam try

Key Cards

In Blackwood we ask for Aces; in RKCB we ask for Key Cards. There are 5 Key Cards: the 4 Aces and the King of Trump. In addition, we are sometimes able to ask about the Queen of trump as well.

Responses to 4NT (1430 version)

- 5♣: 1 or 4 Key Cards
- 5♦: 0 or 3 Key Cards
- 5♥: 2 or 5 Key Cards (without the trump Queen)
- 5♠: 2 or 5 Key Cards (with the trump Queen)

After one of the first two responses above, the 4NT bidder can ask for the trump Queen by bidding the next step (not counting the trump suit). Their partner then responds:

- sign off in trump suit at lowest level: no trump Queen
- 5NT: trump Queen but no side-suit Kings (or none safe to show)
- a side suit: trump Queen and you have the King in this suit (& possibly others);
- show your cheapest side King if you have two or more

Asking for Kings with 5NT

The 4NT bidder can later ask for Kings with a bid of 5NT (they may earlier have asked for the trump Queen or they may not have). These are shown in the same way as standard Blackwood:

- 6♣: 0 Kings (in side suits)
- 6♦: 1 King (in side suits)
- 6♥: 2 Kings, etc

But note that you **do not count the trump King** in these - you will already have shown or denied it since it is one of the original Key Cards. Also note that, as in normal Blackwood, the 5NT ask must be a try for a grand slam, so must promise that all 5 Key Cards and the trump Queen are present between the two hands.

Some Points to Note

- Plan the possible responses before using 4NT - might a response get you too high?
- Are you right to take control with 4NT, or might a cue bid to consult partner be better?
- Consider the early auction after a 0 or 3, or 1 or 4 response: which holding will partner have?