

## ROMAN KEYCARD BLACKWOOD (RKB)

When considering a slam in a suit contract there are five key cards you're interested in - the four aces and the king of trumps. RKB uses 4NT as an ask. This tool is most useful if you are asking about a major suit. The responses are:

- Step 1: 5C 1 or 4 keycards
- Step 2: 5D 0 or 3
- Step 3: 5H 2 without trump Q
- Step 4: 5S 2 plus trump Q

(This is known as fourteen thirty responses, 1430 being the score for a vulnerable major suit slam.)

(The notes above assume that you have earlier made a clear decision about what is to be the trump suit. If perhaps this has not been confirmed most people play that the last naturally bid suit is the one you're asking in.)

Because you generally know from the bidding that you have the values together to try for a slam, these responses mostly give you enough information to decide whether to bail out or bid the slam.

### FOR MORE ADVANCED PLAYERS ONLY

If you have one key card missing, you need to be sure that your trumps are good enough. The trump queen may become very important now. If you don't hold it yourself and your partner's reply of five clubs or five diamonds has not given you any information about the queen you may wish to ask about it. This only works in a major suit because otherwise the replies would get you to the six level anyway. If you are considering a minor suit slam you have to make a judgement now. Playing pairs or match point scoring you may as well bid the slam as five of a minor scores less than three no trumps in many cases.

You also need to be sure about the trump queen if you are considering a grand slam - which you obviously only do if you have now confirmed your side has all five key cards.

To ask about the trump queen, bid the next suit above partner's response (other than the trump suit which would be a sign off). The responses are:

One step up denies the queen

Two steps up shows the queen but denies any other kings (obviously excluding the trump king)

Any higher bid than this shows the queen and is the lowest other king you have. You and your partner can now bid your kings up the line in exploring the grand slam.

If you know you have all five key cards and the trump queen after the first RKB response, you can bid five no trumps to ask partner to bid kings (other than the trump king) up the line. Bidding kings up the line is better than asking for the number of kings because the distribution may make it important to know which king partner has. With no kings, bid the trump suit.