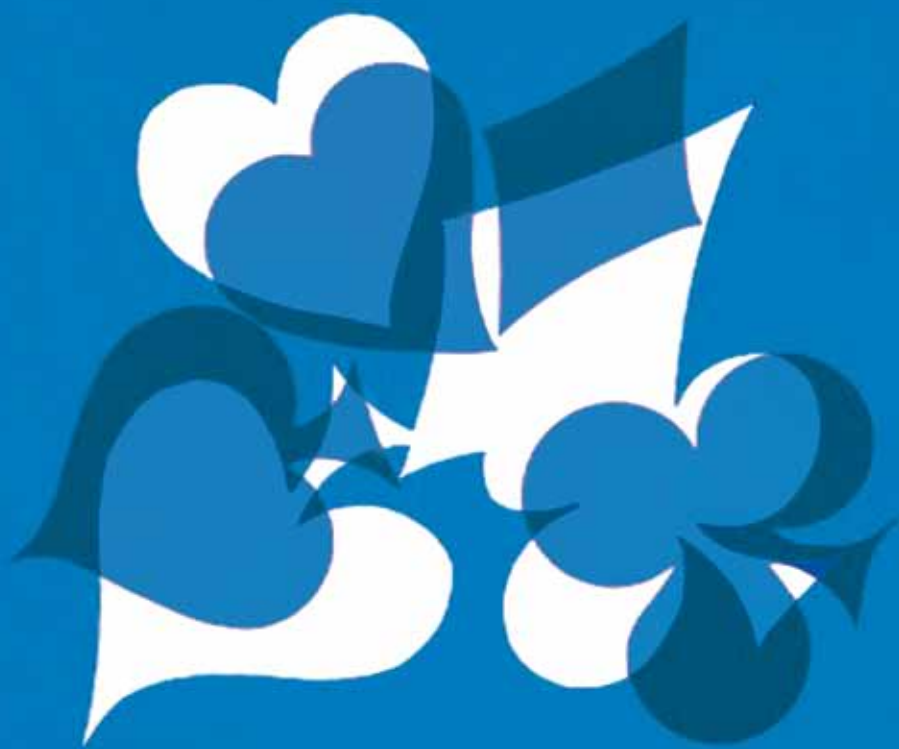


WINNING BRIDGE CONVENTIONS

ROMAN KEY CARD BLACKWOOD

Patty Tucker



An Honors eBooklet from Master Point Press

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eBooklet on Slam Bidding Conventions

Serious 3NT

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Roman Key Card Blackwood (with Specific Kings)

Kickback Key Card (Kickback)

These booklets may be purchased as a single volume in digital or paper format under the title *Slam Bidding Conventions*, one of eight books in Patty Tucker's Winning Bridge Conventions Series.

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**Roman Key Card Blackwood
(with Specific Kings)**

Roman Key Card Blackwood (with Specific Kings)

Roman Key Card Blackwood is similar to the original Blackwood Convention but was designed to keep a partnership from bidding slam when their trump suit is weak. Original Blackwood deals with the four Aces (four controls). Roman Key Card (Key Card) deals with the four Aces, the trump King and the trump Queen (five controls and the Queen of trumps). All six of those cards are the 'Key Cards' referenced in the title of the convention.

There is some variation in the steps for Key Card (some partnerships switch the meaning of the 5♣ and 5♦ response) but there is very little difference in the benefit of either of the methods. You will be learning the "3014" variation.

With the introduction of asking for which 'specific kings' partner holds versus simply the 'number of kings', partnerships are sometimes able to bid a grand slam based on their ability to better count how many tricks they might be able to win.

The 4NT bidder can be the opening bidder or the responder (or overcaller or advancer). The partner who initiates the Key Card auction is simply the

partner who has garnered enough information to know that slam is likely for the partnership.

After you and partner have bid and raised a suit, a bid of 4NT is Key Card and asks partner how many of the five controls he has in his hand. Partner will also be able to tell about the Queen of trumps, but is sometimes unable to give that information until his subsequent bid.

You would respond as follows:

5♣ = 0 or 3 Controls.

5♦ = 1 or 4 Controls.

5♥ = 2 or 5 Controls without the Queen of trumps.

5♠ = 2 or 5 Controls with the Queen of trumps.

The 4NT bidder's next bid will depend on how many controls his partner has shown. **Remember that you will not bid slam unless you have at least five of these six key cards.** We are considering: the four Aces; the King of Trumps; and the Queen of Trumps. *If it is not possible, after the first answer to Key Card, for you and partner to have at least five of the six key cards (five controls and the Queen of trumps) you will not contemplate bidding higher.*

After partner's response to 4NT:

1) With less than four of the five controls:

If you and partner do not have at least four of the five controls between your two hands, you will return to your trump suit at the lowest level.

2) With four of the five controls between your two hands:

- If your partner's response (5♠) promised the Queen of trumps, you will bid slam at the six level;
- If your partner's response (5♥) denied the Queen of trumps, you will return to your trump suit at the lowest level; and
- If your partner's response (5♣ or 5♦) did not show or deny the Queen of trumps, you will be able to ask your partner, "Do you have the Queen of trumps"? (*Partner's response will either deny the Queen of trumps, in which case he will return to the trump suit at the five-level, or confirm the Queen of trumps, in which case he will return to the trump suit at the six-level or bid (if he has one) his lowest King in the bidding ladder outside of the trump suit.*)
 - If partner shows the Queen of trumps you will bid slam at the six-level.

- If partner denies the Queen of by returning the trump suit at the five-level, you will pass.

With all of the five controls between your two hands:

- If your partner's response (5♥) denied the Queen of trumps, you will bid slam at the six level;
- If your partner's response (5♠) promised the Queen of trumps, you may ask for kings; and
- If your partner's response (5♣ or 5♦) neither denied nor confirmed the Queen of trumps, you will ask partner, "Do you have the Queen of trumps?" (*Partner's response will either deny the Queen of trumps or confirm the Queen of trumps, in which case he will return to the trump suit at the six-level or bid (if he has one) his lowest King in the bidding ladder outside of the trump suit.*)
 - If partner confirms the Queen of trumps and denies a king, you will pass your partner's bid of 6♥ or 6♠ (or bid or make a try for grand slam depending upon your hand).

- If partner confirms the Queen of trumps and shows a king, you may ask (if you are interested) if partner has additional kings.
- If partner denies the Queen of trumps by returning to the trump suit at the five-level, you will bid slam at the six level.

How do you ask about the Queen of trumps and how does partner communicate with you?

When partner's first answer to Key Card neither confirmed nor denied the Queen of trumps it is possible to make a bid which asks partner if he has the Queen of trumps. The only two responses that partner makes to Key Card that don't give you information about the Queen of trumps are a response of 5♣ or 5♦. **If partner knows from the bidding, and the cards that he holds, that your partnership holds ten or more cards in the trump suit, he will show the Queen of trumps.** (*Remember you will only ask partner if he holds the Queen of trumps if it is still possible, after partner's response to 4NT, for your partnership to hold five of the six key cards.*) To ask partner if he holds the Queen of trumps you bid the next suit up-the-line which is not trumps.

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Roman Key Card Blackwood

Bridge students quickly discover that ‘basic’ bidding’ will only get them so far. If they really want to improve, it is necessary to master a certain number of bidding conventions, and be prepared both to play them and play against them. This ebooklet covers the Roman Key Card Blackwood convention.



PATTY TUCKER (Dunwoody, Georgia) is an ABTA Master Bridge Teacher and cofounder of Whirlwind Bridge and Atlanta Junior Bridge. Her success at the bridge table culminated in her victory in the 2000 Baldwin Flight A North American Open Pairs with long-time bridge partner Kevin Collins. Patty and Kevin were married in 2006.