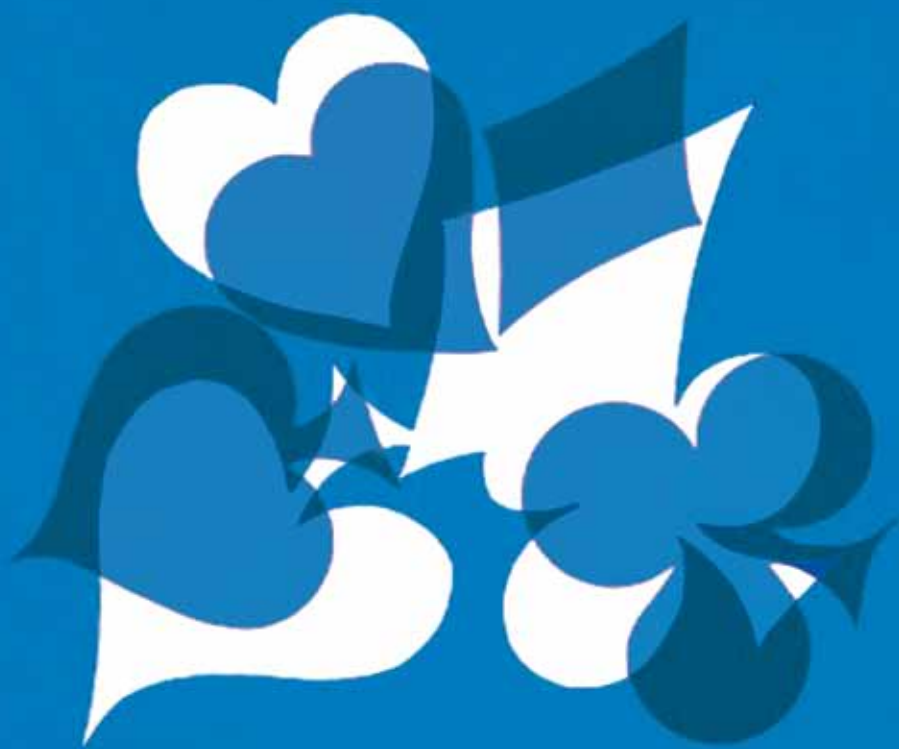


WINNING BRIDGE CONVENTIONS

# KICKBACK KEY CARD

Patty Tucker



An Honors eBooklet from Master Point Press

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# KICKBACK KEY CARD

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**Kickback Key Card  
(Kickback)**

## **Kickback Key Card (Kickback)**

Kickback is a version of Roman Key Card Blackwood proposed by Jeff Rubens (*The Bridge World* magazine) as a space saving tool. Just as in Roman Key Card Blackwood the convention is designed to keep a partnership from bidding slam when their trump suit is weak. The responses deal 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 Kickback (some partnerships switch the meaning of the first two steps of the 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 difference in the two conventions is that Kickback uses the suit above the trump suit to ask for key cards.

Therefore:



- If clubs are trumps, 4♦ asks for key cards
- If diamonds are trumps, 4♥ asks for key cards
- If hearts are trumps, 4♠ asks for key cards
- If spades are trumps, 4NT asks for key cards (the same as in Roman Key Card)

After you and partner have bid and raised a suit, the suit (or NT) above your trump suit 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. The advantages of this convention are that:

- You will *always* have enough space in the bidding to ask for the Queen of trumps,
- Your opportunity to explore minor suit slams will be increased as you will be able to explore slam without exceeding the five level of your trump suit, and
- In some minor suit slam situations, you will still be able to play (“sign off”) in NT below the five-level when you do not have sufficient key cards to bid slam.

You would respond as follows in each of the situations:

1<sup>st</sup> Step = 0 or 3 Controls.

2<sup>nd</sup> Step = 1 or 4 Controls.

3<sup>rd</sup> Step = 2 or 5 Controls without the Queen of trumps.

4<sup>th</sup> Step = 2 or 5 Controls with the Queen of trumps.

For each of the auctions this is what the bidding would look like:

Trumps	Kickback Bid	0 or 3 Controls	1 or 4 Controls	2 or 5 Controls, No Queen	2 or 5 Controls, With Queen
Clubs	4♦	4♥	4♠	4NT	5♣
Diamonds	4♥	4♠	4NT	5♣	5♦
Hearts	4♠	4NT	5♣	5♦	5♥
Spades	4NT	5♣	5♦	5♥	5♠

The Kickback 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 Kickback for you and partner to have at least five of the six key cards (the five controls and the Queen of trumps) you will not contemplate bidding higher.*

**After partner's response to Kickback:**

### **3) 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.

### **4) With four of the five controls between your two hands:**

- If your partner's response promised the Queen of trumps, you will bid slam at the six level;
- If your partner's response denied the Queen of trumps, you will return to your trump suit at the lowest level; and
- If your partner's response did not show or deny the Queen of trumps, you will 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, by returning to 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 denied the Queen of trumps, you will bid slam at the six level;
- If your partner's response promised the Queen of trumps, you may ask for kings; and
- If your partner's response 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 (depending upon your hand):
    - Pass your partner's bid of the six level of your suit (or bid grand slam, or depending upon your hand).
    - Make a try for grand slam, or
    - Bid grand slam.
  - If partner confirms the Queen of trumps and shows a king, you may ask (if you are interested) if partner has additional kings.

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## Kickback Key Card

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 Kickback Key Card convention.



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