

Roman Keycard Blackwood: Part 3: What Suit is Trump?



By Steve & Kitty Cooper

In our previous articles we discussed what a key card is and how to ask for the queen of trumps. Here we address what at first glance may seem like a non-issue: What suit is trumps?

First of all, why does it matter? In regular Blackwood you don't have to know what suit partner thinks is trump – you count the number of aces you have and make the bid that discloses that number to partner. But remember that one of the key advantages of RKC is that you use it to tell partner about the king and queen of trumps. And, obviously, to do that you need to know what trump is. Consider this simple auction: 1♠-2♥-4NT. Let's assume that 4NT clearly asks for key-cards. If you have two aces and the king

of spades do you have two keycards or three? If spades are trump you have three; if hearts are trump you have two. And similarly if you have the king of hearts but not the king of spades with your two aces – if hearts are trump you have three, but if spades are trumps you have two. And if you have two aces and the queen of hearts do you bid 5♥, the step that shows two key-cards without the queen of trumps, or 5♠, the step that shows two keycards with the queen? The answer again depends on what trumps are. It can be downright embarrassing if you think spades are trump and show the king of spades as a keycard when partner thinks hearts are trumps and bids a slam (or, worse, a grand) off a cashing ace (when we do it's usually the ace of trump that's missing; our teammates are always

very understanding).

Unfortunately, there's no simple rule we can give you to answer this key (no pun intended) question. The best we can do is give you some of the rules that we use and that we think are probably standard expert practice. As always, you and your partner need to decide what you want to play; it's critical that the two of you agree on what your bids mean:

First, if partner just raised a suit that suit is trump for purposes of RKC - e.g., 1♠-2♣-3♦-4NT is RKC with diamonds trumps; 1♠-2♥-2♠-3♣-4NT is RKC with spades trump. This means that even if we've bid and raised two suits the second one is trump – e.g. 1♠-2♠-3♣-4♣-4NT is RKC with clubs trumps. Warning, many people prefer to play that the higher ranking suit is always trump in this situation, so discuss this with your regular partner.

Second, if no suit has been raised then the last suit bid is trump – e.g. 1♠-2♥-3♦-

4NT is RKC for diamonds. This also takes care of the case where there is one suit that partner can raise below game and another that he can't. For example, 1♥-2♦-3♥-4NT is RKC with hearts trump – if responder wants to bid RKC with diamonds trump he bids 4♦ and then 4NT.

Last, but definitely not least, after a strong jump shift or 2♣ opening, 4NT by the jump shifter/2♣ opener is RKC in his own suit unless he raises partner's suit – e.g., 1♥-2♠ (strong)-3♣-4NT is RKC with spades trump; 2♣-2♦-2♥-3♣-4NT is RKC with hearts trump.

These three rules are just a start (you don't think it's all that easy to bid a grand off the ace of trump, do you?). But they are a decent start. As you play RKC more you will find other auctions where you need to clarify with your partner which suit is trump.

Up next: Asking for kings.

2015 District 17 Board of Directors

D17 website: www.d17acbl.org

Darwin Afdahl (Tucson)
520 742-1801 (H) 520 305-0360 (C)
darwin@afdahls.com

Bonnie Bagley
(Ex officio, National Board Member)
719 593-0205 (H/C)
bonnie@bonniebagleyd17.com

Rod Bias (Phoenix)
623 444-7960
rod.bias@cutlip.org

Frank Fine (Albuquerque)
505 345-5155 (H) 505 463-2400 (C)
finefrank@gmail.com

Robb Gordon
(Arizona at Large)
928 203-7707 (H) 928 202-7772 (C)
robbgordon@gmail.com

John Grossmann
(Colorado at Large)
719 233-9464
blackstone.co@comcast.net

Jim Horton (Mesa)
480 883-6369 (H) 480 200-7566 (C)
jhorton2739@gmail.com

JoAnne Lowe (Phoenix)
480 836-7296 (H) 480 577-9833 (C)
pnutlowe@cox.net

Art McHaffie
(New Mexico at Large)
505 986-6074
ermchaffie@msn.com

Flo Newlin (Denver)
303 716-9881 (H) 303 916-7211 (C)
cnewlin@comcast.net

Steve Nordberg (El Paso)
915 833-5915
texminn@sbcglobal.net

Jerry Ranney (Denver)
303 697-9469 (H) 720 333-4857 (C)
jtranney2@msn.com

John Scibelli (Las Vegas)
702 341-9787
jvscibelli@cox.net

Rod Southworth
(Cheyenne & Laramie, Wyoming)
307 221-2634
southworth15@yahoo.com

John Van Ness
(Colorado at Large)
970 923-2500 (H) 970 948-2085 (C)
johnvanness@comcast.net

Improve Your Play



By **Larry Matheny**
Fort Collins, Colorado

Manage Your Entries
When declaring 3NT it is usually correct to begin by counting your tricks. It is equally important to make sure you have entries to those tricks.

		♠AJ962		
		♥AK1064		
		♦K5		
		♣K		
♠754			♠K1083	
♥QJ98			♥52	
♦10963			♦Q72	
♣43			♣J762	
		♠Q		
		♥73		
		♦AJ84		
		♣AQ10985		
<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	
		1♠	Pass	
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass	
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass	
3NT	Pass	4NT	All Pass	

Opening lead: ♦3

Bidding:
South forced to game by bidding 2♣ and then bid and rebid notrump. With extras, *North* invited slam but *South* declined.

Play:
West led the three of diamonds and after analyzing the hand, declarer decided the best line was to establish club tricks. It was obvious there were few entries to his hand so he made sure to win the first trick with the king in dummy. If he had ducked and the queen was played by *East*, a valuable entry to his hand would be lost.

At trick two he led the king of clubs overtaking with the ace. He continued with the queen and ten of clubs losing to the jack. *East* led a second diamond won by declarer with the ace and *South* now had his ten tricks: one spade, two hearts, two diamonds, and five clubs.

If declarer had played for the clubs to divide three-three, or ♠J to drop, he would have failed. Overtricks are important in a pairs game, but it is often best to ensure your contract.

PUEBLO WINTER SECTIONAL

February 13, 14, 15, 2015
Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center
210 N. Santa Fe (exit 98-B off I-25)
Pueblo, Colorado

Friday—February 13, 2015

1:00 PM	Stratified Pairs (Single Session)
	Stratified 199er Pairs (Single Session)
7:00 PM	Stratified Pairs (Single Session)
	Stratified 199er Pairs (Single Session)

Saturday—February 14, 2015

10:00 AM	Stratified Pairs (Double Session)
	Stratified 199er Pairs (Single Session)
3:00 PM	Stratified Pairs (Double Session)
	Stratified 199er Pairs (Single Session)

Sunday—February 15, 2015

10:00 AM	Stratified Swiss Teams (Two Sessions)
----------	---------------------------------------

Stratified Events: A - 1500+ B - 750-1500 C - 0-750
99er Pairs: D - 100-200 E - 50-100 F - 0-50
Single Session Entries will be accommodated

Tournament Chair: Barry Roof (719) 544-6725
Partnerships: Barry Roof (719) 544-6725
Director-in-Charge: William Michael

Fees: \$10 per person per single session;
Non and Unpaid ACBL members \$1.00 additional
Swiss Teams Event: \$92.00 per team

Sanction #: S1502094

Snacks at all events – **LUNCH SUNDAY ONLY**

Enjoy our unmatched hospitality in a friendly hometown atmosphere
BEST FOOD IN THE SOUTHWEST

MAKE RESERVATIONS EARLY

PHOENIX PRESIDENTS' DAY SECTIONAL

February 13 - 16, 2015

ASU West Campus
4701 West Thunderbird Drive
Glendale, AZ 85306 (602) 543-7751

Friday, February 13			
10 am & 3 pm	Stratified Open Pairs	Single Sessions	
10 am & 3 pm	Stratified 199er Pairs	Single Sessions	
7:30 pm	Silver Bracketed KOs	1st Round	
Saturday, February 14			
10 am & 3 pm	Stratified Open Pairs	Single Sessions	
10 am & 3 pm	Stratified 199er Pairs	Single Sessions	
10 am & 3 pm	Silver Bracketed KOs (cont'd)	2nd and 3rd Rounds	
Sunday, February 15			
10 am & TBD after lunch break	Strati-Flighted Swiss Teams	2 Session Event	
10 am & TBD after lunch break	Stratified 199er Swiss Teams	Single Sessions	
	<i>Dining options available</i>		
Monday, February 16			
10 am & 3 pm	Stratified Open Pairs	Single Sessions	
10 am & 3 pm	Stratified 199er Pairs	Single Sessions	
10 am & 3 pm	Compact KOs	2 Session Event	

Stratified Events:
A = 2000+ D = 100-200
B = 500-2000 E = 50-100
C = 0-500 F = 0-50

Strati-Flighted Events:
A = 3000+ B = 750-2000
X = 0-3000 C = 300-750
D = 0-300

Note: Stratifications for all events are based on average MP holdings. If an event has an upper MP limit, every player must fall within that limit. Top KO bracket may be handicapped.

Entry Fees:
\$11 per session for current ACBL members
\$14 for all others

- Free parking in designated lot
- Parking carts available Friday & Monday

Tournament Chair
JoAnne Lowe (480) 836-7296
(480) 577-9833
pnutlowe@cox.net

Partnerships
Anne Marie Harrington (480) 874-3852
aharrin708@aol.com

Director In Charge
Gary Zeiger

Sanction # S1502028

- Members with < 10 MPs play FREE!
- Dining options available
- Hospitality breaks every session
- Non-smoking facility
- No alcohol allowed on campus