



Roman Keycard Blackwood

By Steve & Kitty Cooper

Special Keycard

We present here the fourteenth in an occasional series on Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKC).

Sometimes bidding 4NT as RKC is too dangerous because a disappointing answer may take you beyond what you can make. We have looked at Redwood and Kickback as possible solutions, but even they are not always good enough. For example, if you hold ♠xxx ♥KQJxx ♦AK ♣AKQ and partner opens 3♠ you'd like to bid a small slam if he has two keycards. However if 4NT is your only keycard ask you're not going to like your result if he bids 5♦, showing no keycards with his ♠QJ10xxxx and no aces.

To deal with this problem Special RKC was developed: Over any preempt other than 3♣ a bid of 4♣, even when it's not a

jump, asks for keycards. But since partner preempted he is very unlikely to have more than two keycards, so the responses are different (hence, "special"). The first step shows no keycards but doesn't deny having the queen of trump; the second step shows one keycard and denies having the queen of trump; the third step shows one keycard with the queen of trump; the fourth step shows two keycards without the queen of trump, etc.

After a response showing zero (the first step) the RKC bidder may ask about the queen of trump by bidding the next step, and partner responds as always (he signs off in our suit without the queen, shows a king if he has the queen, and jumps in our suit if he has the queen with no kings).

In the one special case - when partner opens 3♣, where 4♣ just furthers the preempt - you bid 4♦, as if it were Redwood, but partner responds with the Special RKC steps given above.

Up next: Responding with a void when you've shown shortness in the auction.

Couch --Continued from page 8

which card to play, within percentages determined by the game theory solution.

7. Then there are the mondo bizzaro, macho, and suicidal "fun plays." For example, what should *East* do with ♠KJx when declarer has ♠Qxx? He always is entitled to two tricks (assumed to be enough to beat 1NT), but he can get greedy and capture the first round play of dummy's ♠10 with the ♠K. If declarer reasonably thinks that the suit is ♠Jxxx and ♠Kx, she may hold herself to one trick. (Or declarer may have ♠Qxxx and *East* has now allowed a contract that could have been defeated to make!)

So, I am going to offer a "solution," even though I cannot fully support it: "Against a competent declarer, most of the time," when *South* leads a small card toward ♠A109x, I think *West* should play the card

underlined (with touching honors, *West* should randomize which honor to play):

- ♠K/♠Q ♠J (Boy, am I good?)
- ♠Kx, ♠Qx, ♠Jx
- ♠KJ
- ♠Q/♠Jxx
- ♠Kxx (this may not be "most")
- ♠QJx
- ♠KQx
- ♠Jxxx
- ♠K/♠Qxxx
- ♠QJxx
- ♠KJxx
- ♠KQxx

(I assumed that if *West* had started with a five card or longer card suit, he would have led it.)

So, how did I end up on the couch? I was *East* with ♠Jxx, partner ducked with ♠Kxx and, alas, I won the jack on the first round.

Play Basics

By Kitty & Steve Cooper

Probabilities

Some bridge players would prefer never to think about percentages. But even if you hate math, there are some very easy principles to fall back on. You do not need to know the exact numbers for most hands, just some basic probabilities and the most frequent situations.

Suppose you have to choose between a finesse or a suit break to make your contract; which do you pick? You know that a finesse for a specific card is a 50% proposition; that is, half the time it will work and the other half not.

So what are the odds that a suit will break the way you need it to?

The answer is that it depends on how many cards your opponents have in that suit. Here is a good general principle: when there is an even number of cards missing, the most even break is well below 50% except when you are missing only two cards, where they tend to split evenly (go figure). But an odd number of missing cards breaks as evenly as possible about two thirds of the time.

Assume your choice is between playing for a 3-3 or taking a hook; which should you choose? Using our basic rule from above, we know that six missing cards are not likely to break 3-3 - in fact, they do so only 33% of the time, thus making the 50% finesse the superior choice.

What if your choice is between a 4-3 split and a finesse? Because seven missing cards will tend to divide as evenly as possible, about two thirds of the time, you should play for the break rather than the hook.

Sometimes more than one split will allow you to succeed, in which case the probabilities of particular outcomes must

be combined.

For example, if you need four tricks from AKQxx opposite xx you will succeed when the suit splits 3-3 or 4-2, about an 82% chance.

Another combined chance you should know is when you need a suit to split 3-3 or one of two missing honors to drop. For example, if you have A109xx opposite Kx cashing the king, ace, and then playing the ten will get you four tricks whenever the suit is three-three or either honor falls doubleton.

However, if you have AKJ10x opposite two small, the finesse is better since only one honor is missing. Next month we will delve into suit combinations and explain this one in more depth.

What if you have an 11 card fit missing only the king - do you play for the drop or take the finesse? Remember the caveat above; in this one case the even number of missing cards is slightly more likely to split evenly.

Here is a table of the most useful odds to know. A complete table is available online in the Wikipedia at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridge_probabilities

Split	Probability
1-1	52%
2-1	78%
2-2	41%
3-1	50%
3-2	68%
3-3	36%
4-2	48%
4-3	62%

If you enjoyed this discussion of percentages you might try the book *Bridge Odds for Practical Players* by Hugh Kelsey & Michael Glauert. You might also read the *Bridge Encyclopedia* section on percentages.



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District 17

North American Pairs (NAP)

2016 District Finals

at the

Albuquerque Regional

January 18 - 24

Flight B

Friday January 22

1:00 PM & 7:00 PM

Flight A and Flight C

Saturday January 23

1:00 PM & 7:00 PM





Qualifying events were held at local clubs in June, July, and August

To play in the finals, players must have their ACBL and Life Master dues paid up and have qualified in a NAP club game. First place winners in the district finals in each flight will be eligible to receive \$700 apiece to attend the national finals. Second place winners will be eligible to receive \$300 apiece. Third place winners will be eligible to receive \$200 apiece.


For more information contact your unit NAP Coordinator
or
Jim Horton
480-200-7566
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Or visit the District 17 web site
www.d17acbl.org



Northern Colorado Bridge - Unit 363

American Contract Bridge League



Winter Sectional - January 29-31

Larimer County Fairgrounds - The Ranch - McKee Building
Exit 259 off I-25 (Crossroads to Fairgrounds Avenue)
Loveland, Colorado

FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 2016
NOTE NEW FRIDAY SCHEDULE!

10:00 a.m. Stratified Pairs - First of 2 Sessions
Stratified Pairs Single Session
Stratified Pairs 299er Single Session

3:00 p.m. Stratified Pairs - Second of 2 Sessions
Stratified Pairs Single Session
Stratified Pairs 299er Single Session

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 2016

10:00 a.m. Stratified Pairs - First of 2 Sessions
Stratified Pairs Single Session
Stratified Pairs 299er Single Session

3:00 p.m. Stratified Pairs - Second of 2 Sessions
Stratified Pairs Single Session
Stratified Pairs 299er Single Session

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2016

10:00 a.m. Strati-Flighted Swiss Teams (Including 299er flight if enough 299er teams register)

Entry Fees: Pairs - \$10.00 per person
ACBL Members with 0-5 MPs play for free in either 299er Single Session on Friday
Sunday Swiss - \$104.00 per team, includes lunch and dessert
\$3 additional per person/per session for non or unpaid ACBL members


Stratifications: Open Pairs: A=2000+, B=750-2000, C= 0-750
Strati-Flighted Swiss Teams: A=3000+, AX=0-3000, B=1250-2000, C=750-1250, D=0-750
299er Pairs and Swiss Teams: E= 200-300, F=100-200, G=0-100

Stratifications are by pair/team average masterpoints
Players with more than 2000 MPs must play in A-A/X.
Mid-chart conventions allowed in Flight A in flighted events.

Co-Chairs: John Wolf (john-wolf@comcast.net, 303-810-4902)
Glynn Sisson (glynnsisson@aol.com, 970-227-1031)

Partnerships: Hart & Teresa Renger (trenger@comcast.net, 970-207-1938)
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