

The “Exclusion” Blackwood Convention

Whenever a Player perceives that a Slam contract is feasible, several ace-asking, or control-asking conventions are available for use in order to affirm that the needed controls are present and that the perceived slam is feasible. The most frequently used include “Gerber,” “Blackwood,” and the “Roman Keycard Blackwood” Conventions.

In addition to the afore-mentioned, “Exclusion” Blackwood, sometimes referred to as “Voidwood,” was devised to be used so as to resolve the situation when the asking Partner holds a void. Under these conditions, the asking Partner is *not* interested whether Responder holds the Ace in the askee’s void suit, as the asking Partner already has first-round control by virtue of his/her void in that suit. Partner's Ace in that suit, if held, would, thus, represent a duplication. The asking Partner needs to know how many controls, in all the *other suits, exclusive* of his/her suit in which he/she holds the void.

“Exclusion” Blackwood remains as an alternative to cue-bidding, which seeks the first-round control of specific suits, when the asking Partner holds a void. “Exclusion” Blackwood is a variation of “Roman Keycard Blackwood,” where only four keycards: the three Aces outside the void suit *and* the King of the trump suit is sought. However, the asking bid is not “4-NT,” rather it is “the void suit at the 4-level or the 5-level.” “Voidwood” is, therefore, initiated by jumping to the 4-level or the 5-level in the void suit, after a fit has been found. It denotes a void in the suit bid and asks for the number of keycards held by the Responder. Thus, after establishing the trump suit, a jump-bid, higher than game-level in any un-bid suit, or in a suit bid by the Opponents, represents an initiation of “Exclusion” Blackwood. Such initiation bids, and the responses to them, are all alertable. For example:

1H – 3H – “4S” (or) 1S – 3S – “5C”

The responses are, as in “Roman Keycard Blackwood.”

- 1st step – 1 or 4, if playing “1430” (0 or 3 key cards if playing “0314”)
- 2nd step – 3 or 0 if playing “1430” (1 or 4 key cards, if playing “0314”)
- 3rd step – 2 key cards *without* the trump Queen
- 4th step – 2 key cards *with* the trump Queen

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
KQJ82	A4		
AKJ642	Q973	1H	3H
K7	9643	“5C”	“5D” (1-control using “1430”)
-----	A8	6H	

After hearing Partner's reply, it is possible to ask her for the trump Queen. This is done by making the cheapest bid outside of the trump suit. For example:

1S 3S
“5C” “5D”
“5H”

Note: However, if the asking Partner has to make a higher bid than the agreed trump suit on the 5-level, in order to seek the presence or absence of the trump Queen, a repeat of the

void suit becomes then the Queen-Asking bid. A 5-No Trump bid is **never** employed as a Queen-Asking Bid.