

GERBER AND BLACKWOOD

Both the **Gerber** and the **Blackwood** Conventions are “*Ace-asking*” conventions which are used when it is necessary to ascertain the number of Aces held by Partner when there is a presumption of a possible, or likely, Small or Grand Slam contract. **These Conventions should not be used when the would-be invoking Partner has either a worthless doubleton, or a void.** Under these circumstances, the knowledge as to the number of Aces held by Partner may be worthless. Cue-bids are the constructive alternative under these conditions so as to ascertain which specific Aces the Partnership holds, not the number of them that they hold.

The Gerber Convention: - A “**4C**” artificial bid asking Partner how many Aces he/she holds.

Responses: (All artificial)

1. “**4D**” = none (0) or four (4) Aces
2. “**4H**” = one (1) Ace
3. “**4S**” = two (2) Aces
4. “**4-NT**” = three (3) Aces

Notes:

1. Recognition as to when “**4C**” is **Gerber**, and when it is not, is strictly by Partnership understanding. The least misunderstood is to have a bid of “**4C**” always be **Gerber** over a **beginning or ending No-Trump bid**. Other Partnership interpretations are acceptable, though, as well.
2. The asking for Kings can be either “**5C**” or else by the next available suit (exclusive of the agreed-upon suit) and is also by Partnership agreement. Responses are then similarly sequential.
3. The escape mechanism into a No-Trump contract is achieved by a direct bid of the cheapest No-Trump bid by the **Gerber-invoking Partner**.
4. Responses when holding a void or when there is interference also need to be decided by Partnership agreement.

The Blackwood Convention: - Another Ace-asking convention in which “**4-NT**” is the artificial conventional bid. “**5-NT**” then asks for Kings in a similar manner. Since the “**5-NT**” bid is usually an attempt to reach a Grand Slam, it guarantees that the Partnership holds all four Aces.

Responses: (All artificial)

1. “**5C**” = none (0) or four (4) Aces
2. “**5D**” = one (1) Ace
3. “**5H**” = two (2) Aces
4. “**5S**” = three (3) Aces

Notes:

1. A **1-NT/4-NT** sequence is “*quantitative*,” not conventional.
2. The escape mechanism to a final “**5-NT**” contract is achieved by the invoking Partner bidding a new non-agreed-upon suit which demands Partner to bid “**5-NT**”
3. Responses when the responding Partner is holding a void are:
 - a) With one Ace (Control) and a void = 6 of the void suit if it be a suit below the agreed-upon Trump suit or 6 of the agreed-upon Trump suit to show a void in an unspecified higher-ranking suit.
 - b) “**5-NT**” = 2 Aces (Controls) and an unspecified void.
4. Management of an interference bid by the Opponents is by either:
 - a) “**D**” “**O**” “**P**” “**E**” Convention = “*Double*” = an Odd #, “*Pass*” = an Even # of Aces or Controls.
 - b) “**D**” “**O**” “**P**” “**1**” Convention = “*Double*” = No Aces (Controls), “*Pass*” = one Ace (Control), and then up the ladder, thereafter, to show two and three Aces (Controls) sequentially.

The Roman Key-Card Blackwood Convention: - A form of **Blackwood** in which the King of the Trump suit is counted as a 5th Ace. (**In this system, there are a total of five “CONTROLS”**) The responding answers to “**4-NT**” are as follows using (“**0314**”) responses. (Using (“**1430**,” responses, 1 & 2 below are reversed.)

1. “**5C**” = none (0) or three (3) Controls
2. “**5D**” = one (1) or four (4) Controls (All four Aces or three + the King of the Trump suit)
3. “**5H**” = two (2) Controls without the Queen of the Trump suit
4. “**5S**” = two (2) Controls with the Queen of the Trump suit