

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 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 NT bid by the Gerber-invoking Partner.
4. Responses when holding a void or when there is interference need be discussed by 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 and a void = 6 of the void suit if it be a suit below the agreed 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 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.
 - b) **“D” “O” “P” “I” Convention** = “Double” = No Aces, “Pass” = one Ace, and then up the ladder, thereafter, to show two and three Aces 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.

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