

The “Kickback” (“Redwood”) Convention

When a Slam in suits other than Spades is contemplated, the use of the standard “**Blackwood**” (“**4-NT**”) asking bid to determine whether or not a potential slam is feasible does not always work. In some instances the response signifying the numbers of key cards present takes the bidding beyond the 5-level of the agreed-upon suit such that the Partnership is inadvertently propelled into an unmakeable 6-level contract. For example, if the agreed-upon suit is Clubs, and one asks for Controls by bidding “**4-NT**”, hoping to find two of the four Aces and/or the King of the agreed-upon suit, and the response begets a “**5D**” call, showing only 1-control card when using “**Roman-Key-Card**” (“**0314**”) responses, the Partnership is now committed to a doomed unmakeable **6C** contract, if the asking Partner were seeking two controls.

So as to eliminate this potential problem, the “**Kickback**” Convention is used as an alternative to the standard “**Roman Key-Card Blackwood**” Convention, and is used for all four suits. If the Partnership uses this convention singularly when seeking only a Minor suit slam, then this partial form of the “**Kickback**” Convention is called the “**Redwood**” Convention, since the initiating calls are in either of the red suits (“**4D**” or “**4H**”).

The step responses in both conventions are the same as in “**Roman Key-Card**,” i.e., either “**0314**” or “**1430**”, but the initiating call is not singularly “**4-NT**”. Whatever the suit agreed-to by the Partnership, the “*asking-bid*” is a **relay bid of the next higher-ranking suit at the 4-level**. Accordingly, if the agreed trump suit is Clubs, then the relay bid is “**4D**”; if the agreed trump suit is Diamonds, then the relay bid is “**4H**”; (these first two responses representing both **red suits** and, thus, this conventional method is therefore designated as the “**Redwood**” Convention, instead of **Blackwood**); and if the agreed-upon suit is Hearts, then the relay bid is “**4S**”; and if the agreed-upon suit is Spades, then a “**4-NT**” bid is used. When all four suits utilize the system it is then designated as the “**Kickback**” Convention.

- “**4D**” **Roman Key-Card Blackwood for Clubs – “Kickback” (“Redwood”)**
- “**4H**” **Roman Key-Card Blackwood for Diamonds – “Kickback” (“Redwood”)**
- “**4S**” **Roman Key-Card Blackwood for Hearts – “Kickback”**
- “**4-NT**” **Roman Key-Card Blackwood for Spades – “Kickback”**

When Clubs is the Agreed-Upon Trump Suit

If the agreed Minor suit is Clubs, then the **Kickback** (“**Redwood**”) initiating bid is “**4D**.” The number of Keycards is shown in a series of four steps. (Using “**1430**” responses)

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1C	3C
“ 4D ”	“ 4H ” (Showing 1 or 4 keycards)
	“ 4S ” (Showing 3 or 0 keycards)
	“ 4-NT ” (Showing 2 or 5 keycards without the Club Queen)
	“ 5C ” (Showing 2 or 5 keycards with the Club Queen)
	“ 5D ” (5 of the asking Suit) = 2 or 4 Keycards + Void)
	Jump in Suit = 1 or 3 keycards + a Void in the Suit Bid
	“ 5-NT ” (showing 1 or 3 keycards + a Void in the asking suit)

When Diamonds is the Agreed-Upon Trump Suit

If the agreed Minor suit is Diamonds, then the “Kickback” (“Redwood”) initiating bid is “4H.” The number of Keycards is again shown in a series of four steps. (Using “1430” responses)

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1D	3D
“4H”	“4S” (Showing 1 or 4 keycards)
	“4-NT” (Showing 3 or 0 keycards)
	“5C” (Showing 2 or 5 keycards without the Diamond Queen)
	“5D” (Showing 2 or 5 keycards with the Diamond Queen)
	“5H” (5 of the asking Suit) = 2 or 4 Keycards + Void)
	Jump in Suit = 1 or 3 keycards + a Void in the Suit Bid
	“5-NT” (showing 1 or 3 keycards + a Void in the asking suit)

When Hearts is the Agreed-Upon Trump Suit

If the agreed suit is Hearts, then the “Kickback” initiating bid is “4S.” The number of Keycards is again shown in a series of four steps. (Using “1430” responses)

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1H	3H
“4S”	“4-NT” (Showing 1 or 4 keycards)
	“5C” (Showing 3 or 0 keycards)
	“5D” (Showing 2 or 5 keycards without the Heart Queen)
	“5H” (Showing 2 or 5 keycards with the Heart Queen)
	“5S” (5 of the asking Suit) = 2 or 4 Keycards + Void)
	Jump in Suit = 1 or 3 keycards + a Void in the Suit Bid
	“5-NT” (showing 1 or 3 keycards + a Void in the asking suit)

When Spades is the Agreed-Upon Trump Suit

If the agreed suit is Spades, then the “Kickback” initiating bid is “4-NT.” The number of Keycards is again shown in a series of four steps. (Using “1430” responses)

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1S	3S
“4-NT”	“5C” (Showing 1 or 4 keycards)
	“5D” (Showing 3 or 0 keycards)
	“5H” (Showing 2 or 5 keycards without the Spade Queen)
	“5S” (Showing 2 or 5 keycards with the Spade Queen)

Note: The Kickback Intervenor relays in the next higher-ranking suit, excluding the Trump suit, in order to ask for the Queen of the Trump suit.

- 5 of the Trump Suit (No Queen)
- 6 of the Trump Suit (Queen but no outside King)
- Suit Bid (Queen + King of the Suit Bid)
- “5-NT” (Queen + 3 Outside Kings)

“King Ask” = 5 of the next higher suit after the Trump Suit.

- 1st Step (No King)
- 2nd Step (1 King)
- 3rd Step (2 Kings)
- 4th Step (3 Kings)