

## BLACKWOOD and GERBER

Blackwood in one form or another is used by almost all bridge players to ask for Aces and Kings in slam bidding in suit contracts., Gerber is used to ask for Aces and Kings over No Trump bids in order to keep 4NT as a "quantitative" bid. We all know the drill: after 4NT 5Clubs shows 0 or 4 Aces, 5 Diamonds is one Ace, 5 Hearts is 2 Aces and 5 Spades is 3 Aces. Using Gerber, after the 4 Club asking bid, 4 Diamonds shows 0 or 4 Aces, 4 Hearts is one Ace, 4 Spades is 2 Aces and 4 NT is 3 Aces. The asking bid for Kings is 5NT in Blackwood and 5 Clubs in Gerber. The responses are the same as for Aces in both systems except that the first step does not show 0 or 4 but only 0. The fourth King is shown by the fifth step (6NT in Blackwood and 6 Clubs in Gerber).

### USING BLACKWOOD and GERBER

Both of these asking bids should only be used at appropriate times. They are not miracle bids and are often misused .

DO NOT USE Blackwood or Gerber if:

1. You do not know which strain you are going to play in. Either a suit must have been agreed on, or you must know whether to play in NT or a specific suit.
2. Blackwood is not very suitable for minor suits because there isn't enough room for the proper answers. You should have 2 Aces to use Blackwood for a club slam and at least one Ace for a diamond slam..
3. You have an open suit (no Ace or King) because the opponents could cash 2 tricks in that suit.
4. You have a void.
5. If a response by partner will put you too high.
6. You are not sure that your side has enough strength ( points or distribution) to make a slam.
7. Do not ask for Kings unless you are interested in a GRAND SLAM. If you do aks for Kings, you GUARANTEE all 4 Aces. Avoid asking for Kings if any of partner's potential answers will put you overboard.

### WHEN IS 4NT BLACKWOOD?

A. If partner's last bid was 1, 2, or 3NT, or your last bid was 3NT, 4NT is NOT Blackwood UNLESS a major suit is agreed on. It should be Quantitative, asking your partner to bid 6NT with a maximum.

Partner	You	Partner	You	Partner	You	Partner	You
	1♥	1♠	2♣	1♠	2♥	1♥	2♦
2 NT	4 NT	2 NT	4 NT	3♦	3 NT	3♦	3♥
				4♦	4 NT	3 NT	4 NT
	Quantitative		Quantitative		Quantitative		BLACKWOOD

B. Immediately after Stayman, Jacoby transfer bids, or a minor suit transfer bid, 4 NT is NOT Blackwood.

Partner	You	Partner	You	Partner	You
1 NT	2 ♣	1 NT	2 ♥*	1 NT	2 ♠#
2 ♠	4 NT	2 ♠	4 NT	3 ♣	4 NT
			* Jacoby	# Transfer to Clubs	
<-----NOT-----			-----Blackwood----->		

C. If partner has never bid or doubled, 4 NT is NOT Blackwood except when you open 4 NT or bid 4 NT over 4 of a minor suit preemptive bid.

You		You	Opponent	Partner	Opponent
4 NT		1 ♥	1 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
		4 NT			
Blackwood		Not Blackwood			
Opponent	You	Opponent	Partner	Opponent	You
4 ♥	4 NT	4 ♦	Pass	Pass	4 NT
Not Blackwood		Blackwood			

D. All other situations should be Blackwood, unless you agree to a different treatment on a specific auction.

#### SHOWING A VOID

Remember you should not use Blackwood or Gerber to ask partner for Aces if you have a void. But if partner uses Blackwood and you have a void, there is a simple way to show it IF you have one or two Aces AND there is an agreed trump suit.

1. With one Ace bid SIX of the void suit IF it ranks below the trump suit. If it is of higher rank, bid SIX of the trump suit.
2. With 2 Aces, bid 5 NT. If the trump suit is a major, the Blackwood bidder can bid 6 Clubs to ask which suit is the void. If the void suit cannot be shown (because the void is in clubs, or the void is in Spades and trumps are hearts), bid six of the trump suit.
- 3 NEVER count a void as an Ace.
4. Make the normal response with 0 Aces (5 Clubs) or three Aces (5 Spades). If you have 3 Aces, most likely your partner will have the Ace in your void suit, so give your partner the chance to ask for Kings by bidding 5 Spades.

### IF THE OPPONENTS INTERFERE

There are many systems designed to cope with interference. Perhaps the easiest to use (and remember) is DOPI, which stands for Double with 0 Aces and Pass with one. If you have two aces, bid the next higher ranking suit over the opponents interference bid. With 3 Aces bid two ranks above the interference bid. If the interference bid is 5 Spades or higher DOPI must be modified. Double to show 0 or two Aces, Pass to show 3 Aces. Your partner will have the burden of deciding what to do, based upon the previous bidding.

### WHEN IS 4 CLUBS GERBER

If partner's last bid was a NATURAL bid of 1 or 2 NT, a jump to 4 Clubs is Gerber

Partner	You	Partner	You	Partner	You
1 NT	4 ♣	1 ♠	2 ♥	2NT	4 ♣
		3 NT	4 ♣		
Gerber		Not Gerber		Gerber	

  

Partner	Opponent	You	Partner	You	Partner	Opponent	You
1 NT	2 ♠	4 ♣	1 ♥	2 NT	1 NT	3 ♥	4 ♣
			4 ♣				
Gerber			Gerber		Not Gerber		

As long as partner's last bid was a natural NT, it doesn't matter if Clubs were previously bid.

You	Partner	Partner	You
1 ♣	2 NT	1 ♣	1 ♠
4 ♣		1 NT	4 ♣
Gerber		Gerber	

There is another auction when a JUMP to 4 Clubs is Gerber, and that is when the responder to 1 NT uses Stayman

Partner	You	Partner	You
1 NT	2 ♣	2NT	3 ♣
2 ♠	4 ♣	3 ♥	4 ♣
Gerber		Not Gerber	

## SOS REDOUBLES

Some partnerships use the redouble bid as an escape from a (perceived) bad contract. When one of the partners believes the partnership is in trouble when their low level contract is doubled for penalties, a redouble (Save O Save) can be used to try to improve a bad situation. It is VERY important, however, to distinguish it from standard uses of the bid.

1. NORTH	West	North	East	South	SOUTH
♠ J x			1 ♠	2 ♥	♠ x x x
♥ -	Pass	Pass	Double	Pass	♥ A K x x x
♦ x x x x x x	Pass	Redouble	Pass	3 ♦	♦ Q x x
♣ Q J x x x	Pass	Pass	Pass		♣ A x
2. ♠ 6	NORTH		East	South	West
♥ A Q 7 3			Pass	1 ♠	Double
♦ K Q 8 7 3	?				
♣ 10 6 2					
3. ♠ J 4 2	NORTH		East	South	West
♥ 8 3				1 ♥	Double
♦ K J 10 8 7 5	?				
♣ Q 5					
4. ♠ K J 6 4	NORTH		East	South	West
♥ 9 6	1 ♦		Double	Redouble	1 ♥
♦ A K 10 5 3	?				
♣ Q 8					
5. ♠ 7	NORTH		East	South	West
♥ K 7 4	1 ♦		Double	2 ♠	Pass
♦ A Q J 9 8	?				
♣ K 8 6 2					
6. ♠ J 7 6 5 3	NORTH		East	South	West
♥ 9 5 3				1 ♦	Double
♦ 2	Pass		Pass	Redouble	Pass
♣ Q 10 7 2	?				

Answers

2. Redouble    3. 2 ♦    4. Pass    5. Pass    6. 1 ♠