

# Roman Keycard Blackwood over Preempts

## Weak Roman Keycard Blackwood

By Neil H Timm

When your partner preempts, there are ways to investigate the hand further. For two-level preempts, one may bid 2NT to ask your partner for a feature or you may use the Ogust Convention. Or, you can play modified Ogust, Two-step Ogust, Roudinesco rebids, Romex rebids, the McCabe Adjunct Convention, etc.

What method can you employ if your partner bids at the three-level and you have a very good hand? A convention that is similar to the 2NT asks is the Ogust 3NT ask.

The responses are

- 4♣\* minimum, 1 top honor (BAD/WEAK Hand and BAD/STRONG Suit)
- 4♦\* minimum, 2 top honors (BAD/WEAK Hand and GOOD/STRONG Suit)
- 4♥\* maximum, 1 top honor (GOOD/STRONG Hand and BAD/WEAK Suit)
- 4♠\* maximum, 2 top honors (GOOD/STRONG Hand and GOOD/STRONG Suit)
- 4NT\* all 3 honors, A-K-Q-x-x-x and little else

\*= alert

However, a major disadvantage of this approach is that 3NT is no longer to play; and you should not play the 1430 Baby Blackwood Convention for the same reason.

Alternatively, you may use the **Roth Four-Club Convention**. It is usually a slam-try allowing one to assess the partnership's prospects for slam without going beyond a safe contract.

After the three-level bid, partner bids 4♣ which is artificial and asks partner to describe his hand further. The responses go:

- 4♦\* bad hand, bad suit.
- 4♥\* bad hand, good suit (2 of the top 3 honors in the preempt suit).
- 4♠\* good hand (1 or 2 honors outside the preempt suit), bad suit.
- 4NT\* good hand, good suit.

The responses are similar to Ogust but use different steps. What do you think?

Need better information regarding the trump suit. Then, another option is to use 4♣ as Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB) [used with weak two bids (2♦/2♥/2♠) and three level (3♦/3♥/3♠) bids]. Over 3♣, the bid of 4♦ is used.

The bid of 4NT should NEVER be used since it may get the auction too high.

The responses to Roman Keycard Blackwood over Preempts, called **Weak Roman Keycard Blackwood** by Eddie Kantar are:

**The bid of 4♣ is used Over the bids of 3♦ or 3♥ or 3♠**

- 4♦ first step 0 keycards in the agreed suit
- 4♥ second step, 1 keycard without the Queen
- 4♠ third step, 1 keycard with the Queen
- 4NT fourth step, 2 keycards without the Queen
- 5♣ fifth step, 2 keycards without the Queen

The only step in which the queen is not known is the first-step. The next bid of 4♥ is the Queen ask --- 4♠ = no and 4NT = yes. A jump over the four hearts bid (5♣/5♦/5♥/5♠) is the Specific Suit Ask (SSA).

**Over the bid of 3♣ - the bid of 4♦ is used and the Responses are:**

- 4♥ first step 0 keycards in the agreed suit
- 4♠ second step, 1 keycard without the Queen
- 4NT third step, 1 keycard with the Queen
- 5♣ fourth step, 2 keycards without the Queen
- 5♦ fifth step, 2 keycards without the Queen

The only step in which the queen is not known is again the first-step. The next bid of 4♠ is the Queen ask --- 4NT = no and 5♣ = yes. A jump over the four hearts bid (5♣/5♦/5♥/5♠) is the Specific Suit Ask (SSA).

**The steps are easy to remember --- JUST think of is as 0-1-1-2-2!**

This Bridge Note was motivated after reading the article by Mike Lawrence in the October 2014 issue of the "Bridge Bulletin", page 44. I thought our members needed more information regarding the convention, like its name, which was not in the Lawrence article.

His example follows.

North	South
♠7 4	♠A K Q 9
♥8	♥K Q J 9
♦A 8 7	♦2
♣K J 10 9 8 4 2	♣A Q 5 3

With 21 HCP, south clearly needs a way to investigate slam, and the bid of 4NT is not an option.

Bidding goes as follows using the Weak Roman Keycard Blackwood Convention.

3♣	4♦
5♣	6♣

Let's look an example which uses SSA option for the convention.

Opener	Responder
♠A 7	♠K 2
♥A 10 9 8 7 6	♥A Q 2
♦7	♦A Q 6 5 4 2
♣3 4 5	♣A 7

The bidding now goes:

3♥	4♣
4NT (2 w/o)	5♦ (SSA for diamonds)
6♥ (singleton ♦)	7♥

#### **SPECIFIC SUIT ASK (SSA)**

Make a 1<sup>st</sup> step response, including NT with third-round control Qx(x), Ax, AQx, xx

Make a 2<sup>nd</sup> step response with second-round control Kxx(x)

Make a 3<sup>rd</sup> step response with Kx

Raise the ask bid with KQx and JUMP to the trump suit with a singleton

What happens if the Opponents interfere? Most play that the convention is OFF; however, it is a partnership agreement.