

# Roman Key-card Blackwood

Presented by Mike Savage

Roman Key-card Blackwood treats the king of the agreed-on trump suit as a control, along with the four aces, making a total of five controls. These responses to four notrump allow you to show your number of controls and also to show if you have the queen of trumps (very useful in slam exploration) all at the five level. King showing responses are not a part of this convention and can be shown with your regular methods, whatever they are. Shown in black below is a very simple Roman Key-card step response structure after 4NT and **shown in blue** are **1430 Roman Key-card** step responses after 4NT (a reverse version – sometimes slightly more effective):

**5C** = 0 or 3 of the five controls (aces and the king of trumps).

**1 or 4 of the five controls**

**5D** = 1 or 4 of the five controls

**0 or 3 of the five controls**

**Responses to 5C and 5D:**

Step response, *when it is not the trump suit* (you need to be able to sign off at the 5-level when you lack enough controls), asks for the queen of trumps. Cheapest response denies the queen, the next possible response shows the Queen (Example: over a 5C response, 5D asks if you have the trump queen & responding 5H (cheapest bid) denies the queen and bidding 5S shows it.\*

**5H** = Two controls *without* the queen of trumps

**5S** = Two controls *with* the queen of trumps.

\*There are more thorough responses available to the queen-asking bid! **The following is a much better system.** Basically, *with the trump queen, cue-bid your lowest-ranking king.*

After partner has asked you for the queen of trumps:

1. **Bid five of the trump suit *without* the queen.**
2. Bid six of the trump suit (**some bid 5NT**) *with* the trump queen & no side king
3. Cue bid your lowest king at the 5 or 6 level, below six of the trump suit when you have the trump queen and at least one king. Bid 5NT (**if not used for #2**) with the trump queen and a king if showing it puts you above six of your suit.
4. After showing the trump queen and a side king, if your partner bids six of a suit lower than trumps, bid seven if you have that king also.

As to king showing, use your favorite method. Over 5NT you could respond your number of kings (6C = 0, 6D = 1, etc), you could respond in Roman style (6C = 0 or 3, 6D = 1 or 4, 6H = 2) or, as many experienced partnerships choose, you could bid your kings up-the-line (6C = shows the club king, may have higher kings), 6D = shows the diamond king, denies the club king, etc.). This last method is the one many experts use but you should use the method that you are most comfortable with (the one that you will remember).