



Conventional Wisdom

Filling out the convention card — part 16

Slam Conventions

This section allows you to briefly describe your conventional slam methods. Note that none of these treatments is Alertable, but you should offer to explain the meanings of these bids before the opening lead is made if your side declares.

vs Interference When the opponents interfere with your ace-asking (or key-card-asking) auctions, there are conventional methods available to combat the interference. Some of the most popular are listed here. Check any that apply.

DOPI An acronym that stands for “Double with none (0), Pass with one (1).” It works like this:

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1♠	3♥	4NT	5♥
?			

The opponents are being pests. Your 4NT bid (say, regular Blackwood) was asking for aces, but LHO’s 5♥ bid has messed things up. DOPI can help. Partner can double with no aces or pass with one ace. (Partner bids 5♠ with two and 5NT with three.) This gives you the chance to double the opponents instead of being forced to bid a slam with an insufficient number of aces.

Gerber

This convention uses a jump to 4♣ after a natural notrump bid to ask for aces. For example,

You	Partner
1NT	4♣

or

You	Partner
2NT	4♣

In both cases, partner is asking for the number of aces you hold. The responses: 4♦ shows all or none, 4♥ shows one, 4♠ two and 4NT three.



This is a frequently misused convention. Many pairs treat any bid of 4♣ as Gerber, while others use it after a fit in a suit has been found (e.g., 1♠–3♠; 4♣). Your partnership can, of course, agree to play it in such a fashion, but you must explain your agreements after the auction if your side declares.

4NT: There are many ways to ask for aces and/or relevant high cards in an agreed suit. Check the box that applies.

Blackwood: Traditional Blackwood is one of the oldest conventional treatments. A bid of 4NT asks partner to reveal how many aces he or she holds. The responses: 5♣ shows all or none, 5♦ shows one, 5♥ two and 5♠ three.

RKC: Roman Key Card Blackwood is a popular 4NT variation that asks not only about the aces, but also about the king of the agreed suit. These five cards are referred to as key cards. The responses: 5♣ shows none or three, 5♦ shows one or four, 5♥ shows two or five without the queen of the agreed suit, 5♠ shows two or five with the queen.

1430: A refinement of RKC Blackwood is 1430 Blackwood. 4NT still asks for key cards, but the first two responses are reversed. Therefore, 5♣ shows one or four, 5♦ shows none or three. The last two steps are the same. The name comes from the number of key cards shown in the first two steps (14–30).

SLAM CONVENTIONS Gerber : 4NT: Blackwood RKC 1430

vs Interference: DOPI DEPO Level: _____ ROPI

DEPO Another way to cope with Blackwood interference. Double shows an even number of aces, pass shows an odd number.

ROPI An extension of DOPI. If an opponent doubles your ace-asking bid (usually 4NT), redouble shows no aces, pass shows one, etc.

Level: Some pairs have agreed to use DOPI and DEPO only at the five level. (If the opponents compete to the six level, DOPI and ROPI don’t apply.) Other pairs use DOPI if the opponents’ suit is lower-ranking, but DEPO if it’s higher-ranking. Write your agreement (if any) in the blank provided.

