

## Blackwood

Since 3NT is the game-level bid in no trumps, the bid of 4NT has been set aside as Blackwood if a suit has been set as trumps during the auction. Bidding 4NT:

- Tells partner your partner that you have enough strength to try for slam, and
- Asks partner how many aces they have

By using Blackwood, you can check whether the opponents have two aces to cash.

### Rules for Using Blackwood

- You should not use Blackwood when you have a void, since if you find that you have 1 or 2 aces missing you do not know whether partner has an ace in the same suit as your void.
- You do not show a void as an ace when responding to Blackwood.
- If you bid Blackwood 4NT you should know what to bid over partner's response.

### Responding to Blackwood 4NT

5 ♣ 0 aces or 4 aces

5 ♦ 1 ace

5 ♥ 2 aces

5 ♠ 3 aces

### What to do After Partner's Response

- If you are missing 2 aces, stop at the 5 level
- If you are missing 1 ace, bid six of your suit
- You can bid 5NT as a king ask

### Remember

Blackwood will not tell you anything about partner's strength or distribution. Inexperienced players often use Blackwood too early in the auction instead of taking the bidding slowly to find out about the partnership's combined assets.

### When 4NT is Not Blackwood

High Card Points are a good indicator of the number of tricks that you will make with balanced hands. They are less accurate when there are long suits and shortages about. When one player (usually opener) shows a balanced hand by bidding no trumps a bid of 4NT is not Blackwood – it is quantitative, asking partner to pass with a minimum or bid on with a maximum.

♠ AK3		♠ J75
♥ KQJ32		♥ A95
♦ K764		♦ AQJ
♣ 3		♣ K975

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 NT	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♥	Pass
6 ♥	All pass		

Once East shows three-card heart support West is willing to bid slam unless two aces are missing. Blackwood establishes that East has 2 aces so West bids 6 ♥.

♠ AQJ		♠ 876
♥ K85		♥ AQ2
♦ A10765		♦ K98
♣ Q6		♣ AKJ3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	4 NT	Pass
6 NT	All pass		

East has a balanced hand with 17HCP. They are willing to play 6 NT unless West has a minimum, so they bid 4 NT (not Blackwood) to invite. West, with a non-minimum and a 5-card suit, accepts the invitation.

East Deals

♠ AK6		♠ —
♥ J875		♥ AKQ943
♦ 98		♦ KQJ65
♣ Q976		♣ K2

East opens 1 ♥ and West bids 3 ♥. If East asks for aces the answer will be unhelpful because a minor suit ace is excellent while the spade ace may be worthless. Do not use Blackwood if you have a void.