

INTERMEDIATE LESSON 13: TEACHER NOTES

Splinters & Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB)

Lesson Content

Splinters are used when you have a fit, at least a game going hand and interest in a slam. Because they show a singleton or void in a side suit, your partner can then re-evaluate their hand and either bid game or use RKCB. Cue bidding is not covered in this lesson.

Roman Keycard Blackwood asks for the number of keycards, which include all aces plus the king of trumps. The queen of trumps and outside kings can also be asked for in further bidding.

Main Points to Emphasise

- Splinters (showing a **singleton or void in that suit**) should only be used with a **fit** and **at least** game values.
- A splinter is usually a **double jump** in a side suit; though in certain situations where a suit bid would show strength, a **single jump** is a splinter.
- After a splinter you now re-evaluate your hand - with 3 or 4 small cards opposite a singleton or void, you will be able to ruff some. Holding split honours such as KJ43 is not so valuable.
- When responding to **RKCB** you include the **king of trumps** as well as all the **aces**
- With 2 keycards you can also show whether you have the **queen of trumps**.
- If you have shown 1/4 or 0/3 keycards then the next suit up (as long as **this is not the trump suit**) asks for the trump queen as well as outside kings
- If a trump suit has not been established, RKCB asks in the **last bid suit**
- **5NT** always asks for **outside kings** and usually you will hold the trump queen or extra length. You are looking for a grand slam.

Lesson Progression

- Discuss what a splinter shows and the type of hands where you would use a splinter
- Use the example hands to show various splinter bids with a **double jump**. Then look at the auctions where a **single jump** is a splinter (these are when bidding the suit would be forcing and strong, therefore a jump is a splinter)
- After a splinter from partner, you should **re-evaluate your hand**. Give examples where you just **bid game** (minimum hands or bad placement of honours) and where you **investigate a slam with RKCB**. (Quiz hands are useful as examples)

- Go over the responses to RKCB, particularly when you show or deny the queen of trumps.
- Explain the use of the **next suit up** (as long as this is not the trump suit) to ask for the trump queen. This is used if partner responds 5C or 5D to RKCB. The responses to this asking bid should be clearly explained as there is **a flow on to show the number of outside kings** as well.
- Go over the responses to 5NT as these are simply 0,1,2,3
- Use the bidding examples to clarify the use of splinters and RKCB.
- Play the hands