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This Week in Bridge

(33) 1430 Keycard and 1430 Gerber

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Level: 3

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General

A change to the structure of our responses to Ace-asking bids (Blackwood and Gerber) will lead to a much more efficient slam-bidding process. This document is all about these improved tools (1430 Keycard and 1430 Gerber) and why they will help us bid better slams.

1430 Keycard Blackwood

The reasons that *Keycard Blackwood* is so much better than *straight Blackwood* should be obvious - one suit (trump) is more important than the others. So in this important suit (the "Key Suit") we want to know about more than just the Ace - we want to know about the King and Queen as well.

So here is how it works - we promote the King of trump to a fifth Ace, or "Keycard". We treat the Queen as an extra card that we want to find out about as well. If we are missing a Keycard then we do not want to bid a slam when we are also missing the trump Queen - the Keycard is one likely loser and the trump Queen would be another potential loser (not to mention all the other tricks we still have to win.)

Note: The 1430 name comes from the score for bidding and making 6M, Vulnerable. +1430!

Example

1♠ 2♠

4NT __?

- Step 1: 5♣ 1 or 4 Keycards
- Step 2: 5♦ 3 or 0 Keycards
- Step 3: 5♥ 2 Keycards without the Queen
- Step 4: 5♠ 2 Keycards with the Queen

If partner bids 5♣ or 5♦ and we still aren't sure if we should bid a slam or not, then we can make the cheapest bid that is not the trump suit – rebidding our trump suit is to play. This cheapest bid asks partner for the Queen of trump. If partner has the Queen, then they do something forward-going (like bid their cheapest King or just bid slam) and if they do not have the Queen of trump, they sign off by rebidding 5M (our suit at the cheapest level.)

Advanced Notes: 5NT asks partner for Kings at this point in the bidding. We can play Number of Kings or Specific Kings. Specific Kings is a slightly better agreement, but also leads to more complicated auctions. It is most important to have an agreement with partner about our King-asking structure.

1430 Gerber

You can continue to use whatever rules your partnership uses for when 4♣ is Gerber and for when it has other meanings. We will just look at adjusting the responses to 4♣ Gerber.

Advice for Gerber Rules

Examples of possible Gerber agreements:

- 4♣ Gerber over First or Last NT
- 4♣ Gerber over First or Last NT and Always a Jump
- 4♣ Gerber over First or Last NT when not another specific meaning (Natural, Splinter, Cuebid)

This third option is the preferred choice for when 4♣ should be Gerber.

Slam Bidding Options

When partner opens Notrump and we are interested in slam with a balanced hand that has no 4-card Major, then we have to decide whether to invite slam with a quantitative bid or drive to slam by asking for aces.

1NT 4NT vs. 1NT 4♣

Combining Both Methods

We would like to be able to do both of these things at the same time. To do this we use 1430 Gerber. Here are our new Gerber agreements:

1NT 4♣

—?

- Step 1: 4♦ 1 or 4 Aces
- Step 2: 4♥ 3 or 0 Aces
- Step 3: 4♠ 2 Aces with a Min (declining Quantitative Bid)
- Step 4: 4NT 2 Aces with a Max (accepting Quantitative Bid)

This is similar to 1430 Keycard with the concept of Max-Min replacing “with the Queen” or “without the Queen.”

Note: The way to remember this is to think about Quantitative replacing the Queen.

Asking for Max or Min in 1/4 and 3/0 Auctions

If partner bids 4♦ (1 or 4 Aces) or 4♥ (3 or 0 Aces) then we can ask if they are maximum or minimum in a similar way as we ask for the Queen – we make the cheapest bid.

- If partner is a maximum (“has the Queen”) they do something forward going, like bid their cheapest King.
- If partner is a minimum (does not “have the Queen”) then they return to our suit, that is, bid 4NT.

Conclusion

Keycard is clearly an improvement over number of Aces, as it is important to know about the King and Queen of the trump suit. But the change to 1430 Gerber is also an excellent improvement in slam bidding over NT, allowing us to accomplish both of our slam bidding goals – asking for aces and asking for partner’s size (maximum or minimum) with one tool.