

Advance Concept

3NT as Roman Key Card Blackwood

When the response to an opening Bid of a Major indicates a **Limit-raise**, a rebid of 3NT by the Opener makes little sense in light of the fact that the Partnership has a minimum 9-Card fit in a Major suit and potentially sufficient HCP for Game. Recalling that the HCP requirement for Game in either NT or a Major are basically the same the 3NT rebid is somewhat ambiguous. Just what is the Opener trying to say? That he has sufficient HCP for Game? Then, why didn't he just Bid Game in the Major? Needless to continue, the 3NT Bid can be better used perhaps as a lower level search for that elusive 26 HCP slam. Consider these hands:

♠AQ	LTC = 1	♠832	LTC = 1
♥KJ865	LTC = 2	♥AQ74	LTC = 2
♦KQJ42	LTC = 1	♦A8	LTC = 2
♣7	LTC = 1	♣J984	LTC = 3

The Bidding should maybe proceed as : 1♥ – ? – 3♥ – P; 4♥ – P – P – P. With a 5-Loser hand the Opener might be anxious but cautious in considering a slam try, especially cautious in light of 3 missing A's and the possibility that Partner is holding only a single Ace. 4♥ is a much safer contract yet Partners 10-11 PP just may hold 2 Aces. The 4♥ Bid sounds like a close-out Bid and 4NT (by Responder) is a big gamble in light of the two missing Aces. **3NT RKC** to the rescue. The responses to 3NT are identical to the standard RKC responses, just 1-level lower. The auction can now safely proceed in this manner: 1♥ – ? – 3♥ – P; 3NT – P – 3♠ – P; 6♥ – P – P – P.

An excellent slam was revealed through the use of **3NT RKC**. Everyone else in the room is likely to be in 4♥ giving this partnership a top board. Venturing into standard 4NT RKC might necessarily leave Partnership in a 5♥ contract when we recognize that viewing each hand separately (and knowing, through the bidding, the low HCP count) that 5♥ is hardly attainable and a place that most wouldn't venture. Once the 3♥ or 4♥ bid is made which Partner do you think would suggest slam by bidding 4NT RKC? My estimation is neither! **3NT RKC** is about the only way a safe & sane bridge partnership could find slam.