A Modern Splinter Bidding Convention
When Opening One of a Major

By Neil H. Timm

Why the convention works!

Short Suit Total (SST) Rule

When opening one of a major, a splinter bid shows 3/4 card support for the major suit bid and usually 13+ Working HCP and a SST=0-3 for both partners. One applies the SST Rule

Opener adds his HCP to 13.
With 19-21 HCP then 13-SST = # of tricks possible.

If the SST in both hands = 2, then we have 11 tricks with a singleton in both hands, with a **void and singleton** 13-(SST=1) =12. **A SLAM**

If the total HCP= 22-24 in both hands, you gain a trick. So, with singletons in both hands 13-(SST=2)+1=12! And with 25-27 you gain 2 tricks.

NOTE: For that unusual hand with 2 voids, 13-0=13, a grand Slam!

The SST Rule was developed by Mike Lawrence and Anders Wirgen in their book: "I FOUGHT THE LAW of Total Tricks" (2004)- Published by Mikeworks.

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Singletons

1♠ - pass - 3♥* (singleton) – to ask where, bid next step (3♠)
    Then 3♠ - 4♣ - 4♦ show singletons

1♥ - pass - 3♠* (singleton) – to ask where, bid next step (3NT)
    Then 4♣ - 4♦ - 4♥ show singletons

If you do not need to know where the singleton is located, since it may help the opponents, bid 4NT as 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB) --- Or you may use 3NT as 1430 Baby Blackwood RKCB to keep the steps at a lower level (Some use kickback bid of 4♠ for hearts). Or, you may next use cue bids.

Voids

1♠ - pass - 4♣*/4♦*(void in suit bid) and 3NT * = heart void.
1♥ - pass - 4♣*/4♦* (voids in suit bid) and 3NT* = spade void.

However, if you play some version of Bergen/Reverse/Combined Bergen Raises then 3NT* cannot be used to show 3-card support with 13-15 Dummy points over a major suit bid. And, you must give up the 4♣* and 4♦* Swiss bids. Not a big Deal!

The Void bids initiate the Exclusion Roman Keycard (RKCB) Convention --- which assumes the agreed upon Major and EXCLUDES the void suit.

The responses are NOT 1430/3014 RKCB, but works using steps:

First Step = 0 Keycards
2nd step = 1 Keycard without the Queen
3rd step = 1 Keycard with the Queen
4th step = 2 Keycards without the Queen
5th step = 2 Keycards with the Queen
6th step = 3 Keycards without the Queen
7th step = 3 Keycards with the Queen

For example Over the 4♣ the steps are:

4♥ = 0
4♠ = 1 without Queen
4NT = 1 with Queen
5♣ = 2 without Queen
5♦ = 2 with Queen
5♥ = 3 without Queen
5♠ = 3 with Queen

Over 3NT or 4♦ --- the responses are again steps and NOT 1430/3014.

Eddie Kantar (2008) "Roman Keycard Blackwood, 5th Edition, published by Master Point Press, only uses 3 Keycard steps: 0, 1, 2, 3 (rare) and again it is not 1430/3014.

Final Note - When opening one of a major GIVE UP 2NT* (alert) as Jacoby! Instead, the bid of 2NT should be 1430 RKCB for the agreed major.