

Key Card Swiss is just one of the conventions intertwined in the Raising Partner's major suit opening.

It is defined as jumps to 4♣/♦ over partners 1♥/♠ opening. It is 12-15 points with 4 card (can be 5 card) support for partner. With a hand of 16+ points it's best to use the Jacoby 2NT convention. The distinction between the 4♣ and 4♦ bids is as follows: -

4♣ = Two key cards + a feature. The feature may be one of the following: -

- 1- A third key card
- 2- A singleton
- 3- The queen of trumps

After the 4♣ bid, opener may sign off in 4 of the agreed major if he has a weak hand. With slam ambitions, he normally enquires about responder's feature as follows: -

After a 1♥ - 4♣, 4♦ enquires: -

- 4♥ = ♥Q
- 4♠ = singleton ♠
- 4NT = a third key card
- 5♣ = singleton ♣
- 5♦ = singleton ♦

After a 1♠ - 4♣, 4♦ enquires: -

- 4♥ = singleton ♥
- 4♠ = ♠Q
- 4NT = a third key card
- 5♣ = singleton ♣
- 5♦ = singleton ♦

If responder has a game forcing hand with a singleton he would normally show it directly by splintering. However, should he happen to have 12-15 points and two key cards, it is more descriptive to use Key Card Swiss. Should he have a void, then it is better to show it directly by splintering (Ambiguous Splinter) whatever the point range, so a shortage bid subsequently shown by Key Card Swiss is always a singleton.

Example 1

West	East	West	East	(1) Key Card Swiss
♠ KQ653	♠ AJ42	1♠	4♣ (1)	(2) feature?
♥ J85	♥ 3	4♦ (2)	5♥ (3)	(3) singleton ♥
♦ KJ9	♦ AQ86	6♠	pass	
♣ AK	♣ Q432			

Example 2

West	East	West	East	(1) Key Card Swiss
♠ KQ653	♠ AJ42	1♠	4♣ (1)	(2) feature?
♥ J85	♥ Q432	4♦ (2)	5♣ (3)	(3) singleton ♣
♦ KJ9	♦ AQ86	5♠	pass	
♣ AK	♣ 3			

Example 3

West	East	West	East	(1) Key Card Swiss
♠ KJ653	♠ Q742	1♠	4♣ (1)	(2) feature?
♥ K85	♥ AQ32	4♦ (2)	4♠ (3)	(3) trump queen
♦ KJ9	♦ AQ8	6♠	pass	
♣ AK	♣ 63			

Example 4

West	East	West	East	(1) Key Card Swiss
♠ K8653	♠ Q742	1♠	4♣ (1)	(2) not interested
♥ K85	♥ AQ32	4♠ (2)	pass	
♦ KJ9	♦ AQ8			
♣ K7	♣ 63			

Now what about the direct 4♦ Swiss bid? After a 1♥/♠ opening: -

4♦ = 4 card support, 12-15 points but lacking the requirements for 4♣.

After the 4♦ bid, opener may sign off in 4 of the agreed major if he has a weakish hand. With slam ambitions, he may cue bid or enquire about partner's key cards.

Example 5

West	East	West	East	(1) Key Card Swiss
♠ KQ653	♠ J742	1♠	4♦ (1)	
♥ J85	♥ A43	4♠ (2)	pass	
♦ KJ9	♦ AQ8			
♣ AK	♣ Q63			

(2) Here the West hand is not good enough to look for slam. There is a key card missing and also probably a ♥ loser or two.

Example 6 But with a stronger hand West can make a try: -

West	East	West	East	(1) Key Card Swiss
♠ KQ653	♠ J742	1♠	4♦ (1)	(2) RKCB
♥ K85	♥ A43	4NT (2)	5♥ (3)	(3) 2 key cards
♦ KJ9	♦ AQ8	6♥	pass	
♣ AK	♣ Q63			

Example 7 Give East a less suitable hand and we can stay low: -

West	East	West	East	(1) Key Card Swiss
♠ KQ653	♠ J742	1♠	4♦ (1)	(2) RKCB
♥ K85	♥ QJ3	4NT (2)	5♦ (3)	(3) 1 key card
♦ KJ9	♦ AQ8	5♥	pass	
♣ AK	♣ QJ3			