

# The Big Four (Conventions)

## Al Roth – Negative Doubles



1914-2007

**Negative Doubles** invented in 1957 are used by responder. After any opening bid and any suit overcall, a double shows values (the higher the level, the more points needed) and the “other suits.” The focus is on the other major(s).

Roth is also credited with popularizing five-card majors, forcing notrump responses and the unusual notrump.

## Sam Stayman – Stayman



1909-1993

**Stayman** is used after a 1NT or 2NT opening (or overcall). A bid of 2♣ (over 1NT) or 3♣ (over 2NT) asks the notrump bidder for a 4-card major. An answer in diamonds denies a

major. Technically, this convention was originally conceived by Stayman’s partner (George Rapee) in 1945, but Stayman got the credit.

Stayman also invented “Namyats” (his name backwards) for strong 4-level openings in a major.

## Easley Blackwood – Blackwood

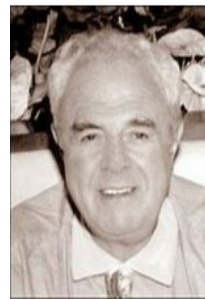


1903-1992

**Blackwood** was first developed in the 1930’s (but not in use until the late 1940’s) when Mr. Blackwood reached seven missing an ace and never wanted it to happen again. The convention is used to

show the number of aces (after 4NT) and then the number of kings (after 5NT). Over the years, it has been enhanced to the point where experienced players use “Keycard” Blackwood to also include information about the trump king (and queen).

## Ozzie Jacoby – Jacoby Transfers



1902-1984

**Jacoby Transfers** (invented in the 1950’s) are used after notrump openings to transfer the contract to the strong side. 1NT-2♦ is a transfer to hearts and 1NT-2♥ is a transfer to spades.

Mr. Jacoby was a brilliant mathematician who was a code-breaker during WWII and the Korean war. He is also credited with the Jacoby 2NT convention (1 MAJ – 2NT as a game-forcing raise).