

Chapter 1: Introduction to Key Lime Precision Version 13

History of Key Lime Precision

My journey into competitive bridge has been a fast one filled with memories and epiphanies. It started innocently enough watching a duplicate game in Sun City Center, FL - I was working a maintenance job for the local community association that oversees the infrastructure for the residents. Every Saturday afternoon I'd see folks come out with their convention cards and discussion about the one hand that managed to get away. For some reason it looked like fun. With all the smiling faces and joys expressed on each separate hand, I thought to myself, "How can I go wrong learning this game? This looks easy enough!". A challenge indirectly has been issued and I decided to give the game a go.

I went to a local library and started to research this game called bridge. I grabbed a couple of books and started reading them. One of the first things I realized was that bridge is a very dynamic and vibrant game filled with strategy, logic, table feel, and presence. For about 3-4 weeks I kept reading, and finally, I gathered up the courage to go to an actual club to see if I could manage.

It was a Friday morning, sunny with light winds. There happened to be a game at the Tampa Bay Bridge Center. I don't remember the partner I had but I do remember that in my first game I actually managed to get a fraction of a masterpoint. That first game was strange – had to move all the time, meeting a new pair every so often, trying to get the hands in on time, what stress and pressure I felt! I played a few more times there, gaining experience and knowledge. I was eager and hopeful. This game offered many avenues for success and development.

I then moved to Sioux Falls, SD, which rest assured, is a radical departure from Tampa, FL. I went to the library there as well to read up about bridge, where I encountered two books that would influence my thinking greatly over the next few years: *Win with Romex* and *Precision Bidding, Precision Play*. I would go to the local club, but with so few people and set partnerships, I rarely got to play. When I did, I made many, many mistakes and wasn't getting anywhere in the game. It admittedly was a nearly unending source of frustration and almost caused me to quit. I started playing bridge online to see if I could learn anything at all – at the time, the service of choice was Microsoft's Zone. I mostly played in the beginning rooms, but every now and then I'd enter the advanced and expert rooms, only to get my head handed to me over and over again. This did not deter me like most; it only made me want to buckle down and learn more about this game that was quickly becoming a focal point in my life.

My time in Sioux Falls ended soon enough, and I relocated to Rapid City, SD. Times were rough there with very little job opportunities for my skill set.

However the club there was very welcoming of me, even when I'd have to walk across town literally to get to the club from time to time! My first win of any sort occurred one spring day when I showed up to play with the local director of the game. Imagine me, barely a year removed from getting my first book in bridge, actually winning 0.70 masterpoints! This feelings I got, that feeling of accomplishment, helped me through the hard times I was living in up there – at the time my home was an old motel room that I could barely afford because I had NOTHING to my name! This definitely had a positive effect on me, and gave me the confidence to improve and mature. That club exemplified one of my major motifs in the game: ***Share the knowledge you have with others, and make them better players and people for it.***

My father passed on 24 June 2000. This was a day of reckoning for me, for it was my father that saw me when the world thought I was invisible. His adopting a troubled teenager and showing me great love and devotion has not been forgotten. Life as I knew it stopped, simply came to a grinding halt. I came home to Tampa to help the family and to rebuild. I took a pause from the game to regroup emotionally – and to get my hands onto some of the most important texts in the game: books about conventions, treatments, systems, and the like. I restarted playing at the local club and realized that the time in South Dakota had been put to great use. I was excelling and starting to gain points regularly in the Friday restricted game. At this point I decided to enter open games.

The open game in Tampa is very diverse with a sound mixture of players. I learned that not only did I need to work on being a better player, but also being a better ***partner***. This not only means being nice to partner, supporting unflinchingly partner when they missed what seemed to you was an obvious line of play, but also being able to be versed AND confident in the growing ability high achievers have. I was lucky that the directorship and other good players took interest in me early on. Maybe it was seeing a young person, maybe it was seeing someone with potential, but nevertheless I was fortunate to have a lot of support. The growth was staggering; in the span of 5 months, went from a SAYC (Standard American Yellow Card) player to a 2/1 Game Force to a Precision player, and was learning other systems as fast I could. During this time, I managed to win a section top for my flight at a sectional playing with a wonderful lady that was quite skilled for a C player. Yet I felt so lacking in basic skills and concepts – I was woefully inconsistent and at times it was a struggle just to get to a 40-45 percent game. I realized more study and practice was sorely needed to improve. My analysis was clear; I had a very long way yet to go.

I managed to catch the eye of a B player that for some reason took to me. Her name was Jeanne Twait, and she took me under my wing. Her personality is a fusion of motherly gentleness coupled with a fierce determination at the table to not only win, but to give it her very best each time out. Her intimate knowledge of bridge by being a teacher (once again, spreading knowledge to those that seek it) helped me achieve more in a shorter period of time than most intermediate

players. We started with 2/1 GF then migrated to Precision. Her methods were sound, logical, and most importantly, disciplined. I played my first knockout with her and two other players and placed 2nd in our bracket. This was a tremendous accomplishment for me and added a great amount of fuel to the fire of diligent desire. After that knockout we played in a Swiss Teams, didn't win anything major, but dealing with better opposition made me once again appreciate that I must move forward and improve. I returned home, broadened by the experience in Orlando, but eager to repeat it, and to do it BETTER.

I remember it like it was yesterday...I was sitting at the local Village Inn near the University of South Florida. With me that morning were two ladies: my mentor, Jeanne, and her friend, Pan McKay. I was very eager with excitement that day...I had been bitten by the bug of Precision. I don't remember if anything significant was accomplished that day, but the images of the three of us that shared similar ideas and concepts about the game have remained with me and serve as a constant reminder of how much people determine the joy of duplicate bridge. An important concept was impressed upon me: ***Seek better players, seek a better way to do things, dare to think outside of the box if necessary, but at all times, strive to better yourself, to make yourself irreplaceable in the eyes of your partner, and feared in the eyes of your competition.***

Well, marriage and being laid off from my job caused me to relocate to Huntsville, AL. It's a hidden gem of a city, with rolling hills, green trees, and a very educated population due to NASA and Redstone Arsenal. Moving has always been a part of my life, but this time, for some reason, it was just different – new city, new horizons, new everything. While I was there I started to play regularly at the local bridge club, which is owned by Louise and Fred Marshall, two of the nicest folks you'll ever meet. I remember that first meeting, it was on a Friday – I ran into a wonderful player, Richard (Dick) Dillard. He shook my hand, offered me into the club, and from that point I was always without fail welcomed. Come to find out, Richard would cross my path, but in a very interesting way again...Every player, from the beginner like I was, to the in house Diamond and Grand Life Masters, made it a point to address me, answer my questions, give me new situations to think through, and seek an active interest in my development. With all that encouragement, it was easy to grow, easy to push forward. I was willing and the desire was strong to better myself; I would play with anyone and everyone, with anything and everything. Due to this I was progressing at a significant rate, and with the support of many, I decided to embark to my first NABC, in Las Vegas, NV. I distinctly remember the song that was playing on the radio as I left on U.S. 72 westward towards Memphis – “The Great Beyond” by R.E.M.

I've never been a fan of flying due to my poor hearing, so I loaded up the car and headed out to Nevada. That first day I had left Huntsville a little later than I wanted to, but made up excellent time until I got into eastern Arkansas, where I

ran into the notorious construction on I-40. I stopped at a Denny's, called home to check in, and ate a pretty nice breakfast (you'll learn that I like my eggs done a very certain way, and rest assured the waitress got this part dead on perfect – nice tip was offered too). It was roughly 10PM, my journey only about 4 hours old, but the long night to cross – it was something I was not looking forward to. However, the traffic was light, and the mind very crisp. During the long drive, I started to think a lot about all the wrong contracts that I was getting into at the clubs and at sectionals. I was at many times groping in the auction instead of bidding confidently and with purpose. I started to think to myself how I could devise a scheme, a better approach, a skilled method to entitle that I would get into the optimum contract each and every time, and furthermore, to stay out of the poor ones that I was putting my poor partners into! After traveling throughout the night in Oklahoma, slogging through the rush hour in Oklahoma City, and crossing both western Oklahoma and the panhandle of Texas under most threatening skies, I finally made it into New Mexico. During this crossing through the rain and wind and hailstorm that hit, my mind was determined – I wanted to take a giant step at Nationals. So, at a restaurant in the middle of western New Mexico, I started writing down on a memo pad the rudimentary beginnings of Key Lime Precision.

I knew at that time that the expert pairs, the players that many of us look up to, many of them were not only using a strong club but had specialized responses over 1♣. Furthermore they were able to achieve the optimum contract, with or without interference. I had with me the WBF file of a famous pair that resides here in the Tampa Bay area, Eric Rodwell and Jeff Meckstroth. Known as Meckwell, their system, RM Precision, is rumored to be over 800 pages in length, with great amount of attention and detail given to each phase of the game. I studied those 6 sheets of paper intently. Listed in their supplemental notes was the structure they used for 1♣ opening. Starting with that, I decided to create my own, using a simple transfer scheme and easily remembered responses. Key Lime Precision was born and off the ground.

I arrived in Las Vegas right at sundown, to cooling skies and luckily light traffic. I was at my first NABC, and I had started a system that would help myself and others play better bridge – I just simply didn't know the learning I was about to undertake. I spent 10 days in the desert, and played predominantly with two players. I was very uncomfortable with both of them. I learned immediately that having a steady well practice partnership is an absolute must at regionals and Nationals. I kept missing games and slams left and right. I gained a lot of points, but not a lot of the prized golds that are needed to get to the master level of Life Master. I was frustrated. In a last ditched effort to salvage my trip, I decided to try one final event, the national 99ers pairs. I met a wonderful lady, Wilma, from Nova Scotia. We played a very simple system, yet after the first session we were 5th overall. Well, unfortunately, those pesky slam hands reached up and grabbed me one more time. I put my partner into a 6NT slam that had no prayer of making while 6♠ was cold from any lead. We got a zero -- this board if we had bid and

made the slam would have won us the entire event. Instead, we ended up third. I realized that I needed to develop this creation of mine quickly, and pass it on to others. I had made up my mind that evening – I would bring Key Lime Precision as fast as I could to the masses.

My time in Huntsville didn't last long. My health, already suspect, reared its ugly head. I moved to Oklahoma City, OK to start treatment. I knew some bridge-playing friends there so it wasn't too bad to start off with. However, that first club game was a disaster. First, no C flight, which meant you were competing against players that had been playing a lot longer than you had. Second, the strats were 0-1500, and 1500-up. Thirdly, everyone, and I mean **EVERYONE**, played practically the same thing. It was not a good game. The players greatly frowned upon me because of my age. There was no control, no confidence, no...nothing. At that point, I talked things over the one regular partner I had, Karen Koldyk. Karen, like I, was very far advanced for our masterpoint totals, but she was totally frustrated at the total lack of attention and instruction she was receiving at the local club. Her bridge education was almost entirely online before me, because, guess whom was her mentor (good old Richard sneaks up again ☺)? Basically, we agreed that we were not going to have any success unless we did something radical. We collectively worked on this method for about 2 weeks, ironing out the basics and starting sequences. Lots and lots and lots of argument, discussion, writes and rewrites, and frequent trips to the Kinko's to laminate yet another convention card...now, I look at this with fond memories.

We decided to play in the Atlanta super sectional, and take a two-week holiday touring the southeastern United States. Matter of fact, I remember playing on my birthday – a joy I strongly recommend doing! And I remember as well the incredible birthday cake I received, totally out of the blue, totally surprising! We played quite well, amassing over 7 silver points, and learned quite a bit about the ins and outs of a strong club system. For one, you have to have concrete agreements about handling interference over a 1♣ opening. Secondly, one must always think of where you want to go, and then get there with patience and diligence. You also must at all costs slow the auction down whenever possible, and absolutely refuse to use 4♣ or 4NT as the sole ace-asking bids. However, we didn't miss one single slam, not one out of the 16 we played in, but we did miss 7 slams that with the extra tools we integrated into Key Lime later on, we could have made.

We returned back to Oklahoma City, and played a lot of tournaments the first part of 2002. We were successful too -- over 80 percent placings in C and 65 percent placings in B and up. We even won a couple of games. We went to my second National in Houston, TX for 4 days – played decently, but we didn't get the desired results. One of the big headaches we had was the inability to show a strong 3 suited hand, or the ability to show a constructive two suiter in the minors in one bid – these two shortcomings cost us a lot of IMPs and matchpoints. Luckily I stumbled across the wonderful writings of Dr. George Rosenkranz and

his brilliant Romex Forcing Club system that offers mechanisms to show both of these hand types compactly.

Things were looking up -- but things were about to turn for the worse. My health in some regards got better, but in other areas, got much worse. Frankly I was homesick. Most of my family is from here in the Tampa area. Furthermore, the quality of bridge in that part of the country was very suspect. I wasn't improving. I needed to be challenged consistently. With all these factors, I decided to return home.

When I returned home not much had really changed at the local club, but with the advent of Bridge Base Online I had the necessary forum to foster new ideas and concepts to the discerning masses to see if they could adequately function within the game. BBO has been an immense source of information, practice, learning, and progression for KLP, and I am grateful that the community is so tolerant of such an advanced, scientific method. The refinements and contributions from the BBO family have greatly aided the continued evolutionary change that KLP is known for. The bidding tables alone are worth their price in gold, and the openness and freedom to be willing to try and fail – that in itself is why BBO is simply the best place to play online, period.

Goals of Key Lime Precision

I've decided to publish this method with four goals in mind:

1. To enable players to accurately bid their games and slams. More World Championships, Spingolds, knockouts, etc. et al. have been LOST due to the failure to bid these hands accurately and with control. So many times I have had teammates or have overheard other players lamenting on why they didn't get to the right spot...why give yourself grief when you can play a method that actively promotes bidding that is empowering, skillful, and gives every chance possible to create swings and momentum? Why use a system that only knows the ability to bid 3NT, when you can have a system that can and will reach six of a minor and get the nice slam bonus? Why use something that doesn't allow you to immediately pinpoint your working assets?
2. To give players in my grouping the tools needed to compete and be successful against more experienced opponents. It's not a lot of fun to play when the opponents have been playing your methods for longer than you've been alive. Also, when you play standard carding, you're already at a disadvantage. I couldn't stand giving my opponents free tricks. Give your opponents headaches whenever possible - I love it when they find out that I use a forcing club system because many players get nervous and start squirming. I also enjoy giving out lots of 500's and 800's when they enter into a forcing club auction on hands that everyone in this universe would simply pass. KLP is designed to punish the opponents as much as possible when they get into our auctions. It's your singular

purpose to not only get to the best place to play, but to make life as difficult as possible for your opponents to even think about entering the auction. Look at this way: Do you want a hard earned 90 or 110, or do you want a juicy 500 on the traveler?

3. To give intermediate players the tools needed to make Life Master, and to give seasoned players a system that would allow them to compete at higher levels without being at a disadvantage. A forcing club system is more likely to arise when you play in the higher echelons of knockouts, Swiss teams, and matchpoint competition. The higher up you play, the more exotic things tend to get. You need to have tools at your disposal to get to the same contracts the field's getting too more consistently. Quite bluntly, most SAYC and 2/1 players do not have the necessary agreements to progress past a certain level because of the lack of techniques used. I don't think that players that desire to excel want to be left behind. Why struggle, when Key Lime gives every possible mechanism to get you to those rarefied heights with purpose, control, and most importantly – a sense of confidence?

4. To have a method that would consistently incorporate new bidding methods and become the pinnacle of all bridge systems in terms of bidding, defense, and play. Why play a method that will become out of date or a method that refuses to address its shortcomings? A great example of this in Key Lime was the change undergone from version 8 to 9 to 10. In the span of two weeks, we went from a method that showed two suiters opposite a forcing club at the THREE level, to using one bid to show every type of two suiter, and compressing the auction into a nice tidy package as a reward. Imagine the happiness you will have knowing exactly what the combined assets and shape are in ONE round of bidding? Being able to evolve and accept logical, innovative concepts will allow you to progress and gain a further enjoyment from the game. KLP always strives to incorporate technological innovations that progress the system. Does this mean everything is right for Key Lime Precision? Of course not – they are many treatments that are common in 2/1 that do not see the light of day in Key Lime, such as weak jump shifts, determining whether or not 2♦ is waiting, negative, game forcing, or what not after a 2♣ opening, new minor forcing after a 1m-1M-1NT sequence, RKC 0314, 4NT ALWAYS being ace-asking, trying to determine what an opening 2♦ and 2♥ bid should mean, and the list goes on and on.

New Additions to Key Lime Precision

In Key Lime Precision Version 13, more transfer overcalls, fragment bidding, and a new proposed runout scheme over the micro NT opening has been implemented. Also, a doing away with 2 of a major preempts, in favor of a shape showing set of bids that will pinpoint the final contract immediately. KLP has matured to the status of a world-tested system. These ideas are showing up more and more on expert's convention cards, and as a commitment to you the student, I introduce them to you in the upgraded version of KLP. My intent is to

always bring cutting edge concepts into KLP so that you the user can compete more effectively against your opponents. Why be behind, when using KLP, you're constantly the standard beater! I've also decided to include example hands, something that was lacking before, so that you the student can grasp the implications as well as the concepts. The hands are from actual play, to show you the proper way to get in and out of an auction.

Expectations of You the Student

My expectations of you the student is really simple. I expect you to devote considerable time and practice using KLP. It took me over a year just to get everything sorted out, but was well worth the time invested. This system will get you results quickly and often. The method can be played in matchpoints, IMPs, team play, and total points easily without adjustment. Also, you'll gain valuable confidence knowing that your bidding is better because of KLP. The valuable tournament experiences that this system has encountered and adjusted to gives KLP a sort of flexibility few methods even dare to approach. I can not overstate the importance of practice – BBO has a wonderful tool called Partnership Bidding, and nearly everyday I'm in there with one of my KLP students consistently making sure that our system, like a well choreographed dance, is learned step by step, until the whole thing is stunning to watch.

If you are someone that does not feel comfortable with thinking out of the box, someone who wants a simple approach, someone that doesn't like a lot of conventions and treatments, KLP is **NOT** for you. KLP is designed to be the premium sports car, the finest wine, the top end, high quality bidding system. Due to this, it's very hard to start learning this method without realizing the science involved in it. There's a lot of science, but, the logic is so clear and certain that if you give it a try, I feel you will see how strong and solid the method really is.

I share with you all a method that has stood the greatest test of all - time itself. KLP is fastly becoming a method that the world's best are using – from Tampa to Knoxville to Indonesia to St. Lucia to South Africa; this system is being accepted quickly as one of the absolute best. Spread the word, KLP is for **EVERYONE**. It is a system "of the people". I wish you all happy bridging, and great success using Key Lime Precision as your system – slay those pesky opponents, get those valued masterpoints, and best of all, gain the respect and reverence everyone of us seek. Enjoy!