

Chapter 2 – Opening 1♣: A Strong Opening

In Key Lime Precision there are 4 opening forcing bids: 1♣, 2♦, 4♣, and 4♦. Let's begin with the most often used of the four, 1♣. 1♣ is used on all hands that are 16 or more high card points (HCP), EXCEPT in the following cases (which is handled via the 2♦ opening bid):

1. Hands that is balanced, strong, and contains at least 19 HCP with all suits stopped adequately.
2. A 3 suited. 4-by-1 hand, similar to the Roman 2♦ opening, a hand that is very hard to describe in most methods without sacrificing the accuracy of picture bidding.
3. Hands that are game-forcing (GF) with diamonds as a major component of the hand; hands that would be opened with a strong 2♣ opening in 2/1 GF, but if a diamond fit is found, wrong sides the contract.

Over the 1♣ opening, the responder has a schedule of bids that allows his/her hand to be fully described at their first turn. This allows for a few things to occur:

1. If there exists a fit or a superfit with a suit, it is established as trumps immediately, thus conserving bidding room. Also, this conceals the strong hand from the opponents. This enable the partnership to have the lead coming into the strong hand, not exposed to be played through as in many forms of Precision. Declarer advantage cannot be overrated – the probabilities are far more in your favor when the defense only knows that you have three or four cards, thus concealing a five-card help suit. The first trick often determines the course of the actual hand. KLP maximizes the chance of getting overtricks, very important at matchpoint scoring, but also prevent a poor result from tabling the strong hand, important at IMPs. The best of both worlds...and KLP offers it.
2. If opener cannot support responder, they will free bid their hands. If responder can support, once again, a fit is found and the strong hand is concealed. Knowing that you have GF values with NO fit, automatically steers the concealed strong hand towards the golden game of 3NT.
3. If opener has a 1NT opening hand, the full system of Stayman and regular transfers can be used with the confidence that opener has exactly 2 pieces in the transfer suit. A retransfer, then show six cards from responder, and loudly infers that they want slam if they bid it at the two level, and simply want game if they bid at the four level. KLP uses the principle of fast arrival – the slower we go, the better we are.

The schedule of bids is as follows (for the complex responses see below):

1♦ - artificial negative, 0-7 HCP. Responder uses this bid to describe a bust hand or a hand that would weak jump shift in 2/1.

1♥ - transfer into spades, 8+HCP, GF, 5+ in suit.

1♠ - transfer into NT, 8-14 HCP, GF

1NT - transfer into clubs, 8+HCP, GF, 5+ in suit

2♣/♦ - transfer into diamonds/hearts respectively, 8+HCP, GF, 5+ in suit

2♥ - 3 suited hand, 8-14 HCP, red suit singleton

2♠ - 3 suited hand, 8-14 HCP, black suit singleton

2NT - any slam going hand, 15+, either balanced or 3 suited

3♣ - unknown long major

3♦ - unknown long minor

OPENER'S REBIDS AFTER A POSITIVE RESPONSE

Once opener hears a positive response it is of the highest importance that he/she point the partnership in the direction of the bidding by accepting the transfer with three piece support. However, if they have four piece support, they superaccept the transfer (i.e. 1♣ - 1♥ - 2♠*). Otherwise bidding occurs along natural lines.

For the 2♥ and higher responses, opener will make a relay bid to allow responder to describe further their hand. The three suited hands relay with 2NT, where responder will bid the suit of their shortage. 3♦ is the relay for the unknown minor (3♥ = ♣, 3♠ = ♦ [think shape to ease memory concerns]), and 3♥ is for the unknown major (3♠ = ♥, 3NT = ♠ [think of bid that can't make sense]).

ONCE A FIT IS FOUND

After a suit is established as trumps, responder may initiate a keycard inquiry by bidding the next bid available to them, including NT. This is referred to as RKC Kickback, and it is a major component to accurate slam bidding in Key Lime Precision. This is used regularly at low levels to find out if slam is feasible. The responses to Kickback are exactly the same as RKC Blackwood 4NT:

1st step = 1 or 4 keycards
2nd step = 0 or 3 keycards
3rd step = 2 keycards, no Queen
4th step = 2 keycards, with Queen
Jump bid = 3 keycards with a void in the bid suit

There's a logical extension to this ace ask. If the responder desires to know more information, they simply repeat the bid suit or NT they used to ask for keycards the first time, but this time to ask for specific KINGS:

1♣ - 1♥*
1♠** - 1NT***
2♦**** - 2NT*****
3♦*****

* - transfer to spades
** - partner I have three spades and we're playing in them
*** - how good are you over there?
**** - I have 0 or 3 keycards
***** - Partner tell me about the kings you hold.
***** - Partner I hold the King of diamonds, but NOT the King of clubs, otherwise I'd bid that.

In theory you can ask for Queens, even Jacks. This extension of Kickback is referred to as Spiral Scan, a wonderful technique invented by Dr. George Rosenkranz. Spiral Scan uses denial cuebids to show controls, but in KLP we use a bypass to deny control, which is the direct opposite of the original Spiral Scan. This is something that your partnership will need to discuss.

FOLLOW-ONS AFTER OPENER ACCEPTS A TRANSFER POSITIVE

There are two forms of systems in bridge: full duplex and half duplex. SAYC and 2/1 Game Force are full duplex, which allows both players to communicate their collective holdings with approach forcing bidding. This approach works well in basic situations, but when it comes to game or slam tries the lack of a captain making the attempt to ascertain the best contract causes much confusion and frustration in the bidding. Complex relay structures are half duplex, which means one hand is constantly asking the other hand questions such as shape, suit quality, keycards, etc. This requires much study to all the complicated sequences that occur.

Enter in Key Lime Precision, the first system to be three quarters duplex. I firmly believe that there are instances where either hand needs to become captain, not just a one-way communication. Until now, there was no way possible to allow a transfer of ownership in an auction because the tools simply did not

exist. Now I introduce to you secondary transfers and fragment asking bids (FABs for short).

After the primary transfer has been accepted, responder's rebid becomes a secondary transfer, showing 4+cards in the transfer suit. We still retain the next immediate bid as RKC Kickback, so at times you will need to think ahead with your second bid. If opener accepts the secondary transfer, you know that you have a double fit, thus enhancing any slam try you desire. 6 Ace RKCB and 6 Ace RKC Kickback is used when double fits are found.

6 Ace RKCB is used when a double fit is found with one of the players using a 4NT. The responses are as follows:

- 5♣ → 1 or 4 keycards
- 5♦ → 0 or 3 keycards
- 5♥ → 2 keycards, neither queen
- 5♠ → 2 keycards, one queen
- 5NT → 2 keycards, both queens

6 Ace RKC Kickback uses the same step responses, but it starts at the **cheapest suit** that a fit is known to have.

This covers all 5-4 or more shapely hands responder might have, but what about 5-3-3-2/6-3-2-2/6-3-3-1/7-2-2-2/7-3-3-0 hands that are single suited in nature but with plenty of playing strength? Fragment bidding allows opener to ascertain whether all cards are "working". To initiate a fragment ask, simply rebid the transfer suit at the cheapest level. This alerts partner to one of the five hand types. Partner will then bid the next step up the line with the following responses:

- Step 1 → 5-3-3-2
- Step 2 → 6-3-2-2
- Step 3 → 6-3-3-1
- Step 4 → 7-2-2-2
- Step 5 → 7-3-3-0

After responder announces their shape, opener can make a 2nd relay to ask for the short fragment:

- Step 1 → low remaining suit
- Step 2 → middle remaining suit
- Step 3 → highest remaining suit

A word of caution: fragment bidding announces serious slam interest and should be used only in that strain. Responder should inquire when the combined assets are at least 29 or more HCPs, or compensating shape. If opener rejects the

fragment relay, this announces that he/she are at a minimum strong club opening (16-19 HCP) and does not see slam in the immediate future.

COPING WITH INTERFERENCE

Since KLP is a forcing club structure, one of the most important concepts to stress is handling interference over the 1♣ opening. Many feel absolutely compelled to get involved with a forcing club auction and you can collect many low-level penalty doubles when no game exists for your side. Opponents will do anything to interrupt the auction, especially when they do not have any values at all to compete. There are many defenses against a strong club, but I feel that the treatments in KLP not only identify the two hand's combined strength but also can pinpoint certain suits in the bidding to allow the partnership to avoid a no play contract.

In reality there are three different classes of interference:

1. Natural overcalls (Mathe falls into this category as well)
2. Two-suited overcalls where the suits are known (Truscott, Brozel)
3. Two-suited overcalls based on shape, color, etc. (CRASH, Suction)

Case 1: Natural Overcalls and Mathe

This category is the easiest one to deal with because you know immediately what the suit(s) is. Over this overcall, a pass becomes **FORCING**, demanding partner to make another call, including double. Responder can be sitting on a trump stack, a GF hand with a stopper in the overcalled suit, or may elect to take a free bid to set a GF. A double is negative and implicitly denies control in the enemy overcall. The schedule of responses is still on over a 1♦ overcall, but over anything else, the schedules of responses still apply via steps. For example:

1♣ (1♥) 1♠* → game forcing hand, balanced, has stopper for NT

1♣ (1♥) 2♥ → game forcing hand, transfer to ♠, NO stopper for NT

1♣ (1♥) P P

X P 2♥ → game forcing hand, transfer to ♠, HAS stopper for NT.

If the overcall is 2NT or higher, all bids by responder are natural. A double is card-showing and can be converted for penalties, a pass becomes semi-forcing, and a free bid is invitational.

Case 2: Two-Suited Overcalls Where BOTH Suits Are Known

To counter the two suited overcalls where suits are known, a pass becomes forcing showing length in the overcalled suit, a double is negative, a free bid other than a cuebid of an anchor suit is G/F without a stopper, and a pass followed by free bid in an anchor suit is game forcing. Transfers are still on via steps. The principles are the same as above with natural overcalls, with a pass then cue showing a stopper in the bid overcalled suit. If the overcall is 2NT or higher, all bids by responder are natural. A double is card-showing and can be converted for penalties, a pass becomes semi-forcing, and a free bid is invitational.

Case 3: Two-Suited Overcalls Where NO Suits Are Known

This category is not as hard as people might think. KLP treats the overcall suit naturally, even over a suction bid. That means that an immediate cue over the overcall is a transfer that's G/F with no stopper in the bid suit. All other meanings remain the same. If the overcall is 2NT or higher, all bids by responder are natural. A double is card-showing and can be converted for penalties, a pass becomes semi-forcing, and a free bid is invitational.

For the complex structure of responses to 1♣, refer to end of this chapter.