



Bill Jacobs

FANTUNES REVEALED

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In the second segment of the World Mind Sports Games final of 2008 in Beijing, the following board was dealt:

Italy was playing England for the gold medal. Here is the auction at the two tables:

West	North	East	South
	<i>Fulvio Fantoni</i>		<i>Claudio Nunes</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♦	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

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Now Justin Hackett signed off in 4♥ whereas Fulvio Fantoni cue-bid his diamond king with 4♦. This was sufficient encouragement for Claudio Nunes, who promptly bid the excellent slam, making with an overtrick.

Whilst the auctions *sounded* similar, there was in fact a world of system difference.

The English pair were playing a natural system, so Jason Hackett took quite some risk in opening with a non-forcing 1♥. He escaped the ignominy of playing 1♥ making 7, but when he subsequently made a slam try, his brother Justin reasonably refused to cooperate with his miserable 4-point hand. And so the excellent slam was missed.

The Italian pair were playing their own home-grown system. 1♥ was natural but *forcing* as there was no upper limit to the strength of the opening hand. 2♥ showed about 3–6 points in support. In that context, Fulvio Fantoni had no qualms about cooperation: hence his 4♦ cue bid. And South knew that slam would now be an excellent bet.

This elegant auction was so impressive that my bridge partner, Ben Thompson, and I decided to learn this system, which is named Fantunes, after the inventors. After three years of playing it, with some success, we have discovered that Fantunes:

- is a theoretically sound bidding system
- is a winning method in the hurly-burly of competitive bridge, because it presents serious problems for the opponents
- is tremendous fun to play

The Fantunes system has worked so well for Fantoni and Nunes that in 2011, they occupied the number one and two positions in the World Bridge Federation rankings. Their list of wins is long, and includes:

- World Olympiad in 2004 and 2008
- Bermuda Bowl in 2005
- World Open Pairs in 2002

You cannot get to be the world number one without a good bidding system. The Fantunes method clearly works for Fantoni and Nunes: it can work for you also.

What's in this book?

This book presents the Fantunes methods to the world. The material has been gleaned from examining the records of several thousand hands that Fantoni and Nunes have bid on the internet, on Bridge Base Online's Vugraph, and subsequent extensive road-testing in my own partnership.

We will journey through each of the opening bids, and discuss the system at three separate levels:

Philosophy: What is good and bad about this opening bid? How does it compare to its use in other systems?

Even if you have no interest in actually playing Fantunes, I hope the discussion will provide some insight into bridge bidding theory.

Basics: The basic response structure is described. If you want to try the system, you must learn and play the basics.

Advanced: There are parts of the system that get quite complicated. The good news is that you do not have to play all the complex stuff. Fantunes is an extremely effective system even with just its basics. Where you see this symbol:



it indicates that what has been described can be regarded as optional, and a possible simpler approach is suggested.

I should emphasize up front that the methods described in this book are a little different to what Fantoni and Nunes actually play – it is an adaptation of Fantunes, with a slightly reduced level of complexity. In many ways, Fantunes is a *style* rather than a *system*: heavy and forcing 1-suit openings, lighter natural higher openings. Everyone can bring their own flavour to it, and choose their own degree of complexity.

The basics of Fantunes

Fantunes involves an interesting and unique scheme of opening bids and responses. However, despite its uniqueness, it is a quintessentially *natural* system, at least in terms of its opening bids.

This naturalness has a number of positive side-effects. Firstly, it is a system that you should be allowed to play in most competitions. It is not intended to defeat opponents by confusing them or by presenting unfamiliar problems. Instead, it is designed to defeat the opponents by quickly forcing the bidding up to moderately high levels on limited values ... it is a system of mild natural pre-empts. There should be no problems of system legality.

When we introduce the system to our opponents at the start of the round, and they look surprised, we often say: "our system is more natural than yours".

Secondly, once you have mastered the early part of the Fantunes auction, you can use your own familiar methods when entering the slam zone. For example, Fantoni and Nunes use TURBO to check on aces when investigating a slam. In TURBO, a bid of 4NT shows an even number of key-cards; bypassing 4NT shows an odd number. There is no reason why you must use TURBO when playing Fantunes: in my partnership we use Roman key-card Blackwood instead.

The same applies, in most cases, to dealing with pesky opponents who overcall your opening bid. Because your Fantunes opening bid is mainly natural, you can use your favourite methods in dealing with interference. The system benefits greatly from its natural beginnings, should the auction become competitive. In a majority of auctions, the opening bid and/or the first response will have genuinely named a suit: this makes it much easier to cope with interference.

It is time to get started.

Fantunes divides all its opening bids into three categories:

1. Sound opening hands
2. Minimum distributional opening hands
3. Minimum balanced opening hands.

A 'sound' opening hand will have at least 15 points¹ if balanced, or 14 points if unbalanced (distributional), although there is one exception to this, in the case of opening hands with both majors.

'Sound opening hands' have no upper limit: their range is '14-37 points'.

The three categories are opened as follows:

Sound opening hands:	Open 1 of a suit
Minimum distributional opening hands:	Open 2 of a suit
Minimum balanced opening hands:	Open 1NT

What could be more natural than that? There is no artificially-strong 2♣ opening, nor artificially weak 2♦, just a series of natural opening bids. Here are the Fantunes opening bids:

1♣	clubs 14+ points, or balanced 15+
1♦	diamonds 14+
1♥	hearts 14+ (11+ if you also have spades)
1♠	spades 14+ (11+ if you also have hearts)
1NT	balanced 12-14
2♣	clubs 10-13
2♦	diamonds 10-13
2♥	hearts 10-13
2♠	spades 10-13
2NT	balanced 21-22

You can make your own choices for the higher opening bids, for example Gambling 3NT, Namyats, etc.

There are some strict rules for the distributions allowed for each opening bid. Here are the highlights:

- 1♣ promises at least a doubleton club
'balanced' options include 5332 shape with the 5-card suit in *either minor*
- 1♦ usually has at least 5 diamonds
but is also opened on 1=4=4=4 and 4=4=4=1 shapes
(singleton black suit)
- 1♥, 1♠ show 5+ cards in the major

¹ In this book, the term 'points' always refers to high-card points on the 4/3/2/1 scale

- 1NT is opened on all the following patterns with the appropriate strength:
- 4333
 - 4432
 - 5332 (any 5-card suit)
 - 5422 (except with 5-4 in the majors: open one of a major instead)
 - 4441 (gulp) 12-13 points (with 14 points, open 1♣ or 1♦)
- 2 suit the hand must be unbalanced, which means it must have a 6-card suit or a singleton or void somewhere. It is forbidden to open with 2 of a suit on a 5422 or 5332 shape, in first or second seat.
- 2♥, 2♠ openings deny 4 cards in the other major. With both majors, open 1-major (or pass an inappropriate 10-11 point hand).

Because opening bids of 1-suit have no upper limit, they cannot be passed: partner must respond even with 0 points. Generally speaking, the responses are:

- 1-level: weak and natural – might be 0 points
- 2-level: strong and mainly natural, usually forcing to at least game
- 3-level: two-suiters (at least 5-5 shape), and forcing to game.

There are several exceptions to this, but you will see that there is a clear emphasis on showing suits early, both with the opening bid and the first response. However, once a game forcing situation is established, the auction often unfolds *unnaturally*, in particular with the use of relay bids: artificial bids asking for a further description of partner's hand.

The Fantunes philosophy is basically this: we start with a natural bid, which will stand us in good stead should the auction become competitive; however, once we have the auction to ourselves, we will sometimes use relay methods to search for the right contract. This principle is one of the cornerstones of the system.

The outcome is that there is a lot of system detail behind the super-natural openings. It takes some learning: you can look at the section *System card* to get an overview of the auctions, but with practice, it all falls into place.

1♣ auctions

1♣ shows 15+ points and a balanced hand, or 14+ points, unbalanced with clubs.

As the lowest opening bid², 1♣ holds a special place in the heart of system fiends around the world. It is the opening that has the most room from which to manoeuvre, and therefore there is an incentive to pack multiple meanings into it. Most modern systems do just that, for example:

<i>Precision:</i>	any hand with 16 or more points
<i>Standard American:</i>	natural, or an opening hand lacking a 5-card major or 4 diamonds
<i>Polish Club:</i>	a weak notrump, or a medium hand (15+ points) with clubs, or any 18+ hand.

and so on. The idea is that with the maximum amount of bidding room available, the subsequent auction will clarify opener's hand. This is all very well, but where it can sometimes come unstuck is when the dastardly opponents come into the auction, and bounce the level up so high that opener is unable to clarify the nature of his³ hand. It is a problem for any system that has significant ambiguity in an opening bid.

Intervening at every opportunity over the opponents' ambiguous 1♣ opening is a winning strategy. Examining the systems listed above, only the Polish Club system attempts to counteract this threat. By putting a weak opening option (the weak notrump) together with stronger options for its 1♣ opening, it says to the opponents: "intervene if you dare, but be careful, because the hand might well belong to you, even for game, so if you make very light overcalls with destructive intent, it might be your own auction and final contract that is destroyed".

² If you exclude an opening 'bid' of Pass – Forcing Pass systems do not, and use the pass to describe an opening hand of some form, thereby gaining a useful extra step in the response structure.

³ For convenience only, throughout the book, we refer to the players using male pronouns

Fantunes is certainly guilty of having ambiguity in its opening 1♣: either clubs or a balanced hand, although this ambiguity is probably no greater than other popular systems.

DLr: North
Vul: nil

♠ K65
♥ AK9
♦ 87643
♣ 94

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 8
♥ QJ10872
♦ -
♣ KQJ762

♠ A97432
♥ 43
♦ 1095
♣ 53

♠ QJ10
♥ 65
♦ AKQJ2
♣ A108

North led a club, blowing one defensive trick, and South took the ace, blowing another. It was hard for either defender to realise at trick 1 that West had a side-suit of KQJxxx in clubs. After this start, 4♥ made, and since South made 3NT at the other table after a 1♦ opening and 2NT overall (5♦ also makes), that was 14 IMPs away.

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A strong 1NT opening would be no picnic either. West might just bid 4♥ over that opening bid as well and N/S are in the same leaky boat.

This deal is a fine example of just how valuable it is to name a real suit early in the auction. A 1♦ opening on the above deal almost guarantees a successful game contract: any other opening bid will likely lose the 10-card diamond fit and lead to a poor result. For the most part, Fantunes excels at the task of naming a suit: all its opening suit bids other than 1♣ are entirely natural, and this pays off again and again. The 1♣ bid is something of an Achilles heel, as it is with so many systems.

Statistically, 1♣ is the poorest performing of all the Fantunes opening bids (refer to the section *Fantunes by the numbers* for more detail). The inferior results most often occur because they are being compared to a strong 1NT opening at the other table. The 1NT opening does well for two reasons:

- it is harder for the opponents to intervene over it, and find their own fit
- there tends to be less information provided to the opponents after a 1NT opening.

We will return to that topic when discussing the Fantunes 1NT opening.

Initial responses to 1♣ fall into one of four categories:

<i>Weak hand</i>	1♦, 1♥ and 1♠ are transfer responses that could be on as few as 0 points. 1♦ shows hearts, 1♥ shows spades, 1♠ denies a major.
<i>Balanced game force</i>	1NT shows any balanced hand of 10 or more points.
<i>Game force with a suit</i>	The 2-level responses promise at least 10 points, with a 5+ card suit.
<i>Game force with a 2-suiter</i>	The 3-level bids denote hands with at least 5-5 shape and enough for game.

Here is the full list of responses:

1♦ 0–11, 4+ hearts

1♥ 0–11, 4+ spades

1♠ 0–11, no major

All other responses force the partnership to game:

1NT 10+, balanced (includes 5332 with a minor)

2♣♦♥♠ 10+, at least a 5-card suit (denies 5332 shape: see 1NT and 2NT)

2NT 10+, 5332 pattern, with a 5-card *major*

3♣ 10–15, 5–5 pattern, clubs and another

3♦ 10–15, 5–5 pattern, hearts and spades

3♥ 10–15, 5–5 pattern, hearts and diamonds

3♠ 10–15, 5–5 pattern, spades and diamonds

After many of these responses, opener will make a rebid that indicates which of the two 1♣ hand-types he has: clubs or a balanced hand. It is highly desirable to resolve this ambiguity early in the auction.

Weak responses to 1♣

Transfer responses to 1♣ are becoming increasingly popular in the bridge world. It makes sense to allow more room when responder is showing a major suit. This approach gives opener a previously unavailable bid: to accept the transfer with an appropriate hand. Different systems (and players) apply different meanings to the bid that accepts the major suit transfer, for example 1♣ – 1♦ – 1♥. In Fantunes 1♥ is used to show real support, at least 4 cards, or a very strong balanced hand: 23+ points.

The 11-point upper limit for the 1-suit responses is somewhat arbitrary. Fantunes occasionally respond with 1-suit on stronger hands, for example a 13-count. One situation where this might be attractive is holding the dreaded 4441 shape. The only alternative to responding with 1-suit is to treat the hand as balanced and bid 1NT: tolerable, but not necessarily desirable.

You will also notice that there is an overlap in strengths between the 1-suit response and the higher responses. This allows responder to choose who might end up as declarer. For example, suppose you are dealt:

♠ xxx ♥ Axxx ♦ AKx ♣ 10xx

and partner opens 1♣. You would bid 1♦, showing hearts, because all things being equal, you would prefer the lead to come up to partner's hand in the likely eventual 3NT contract. But with:

♠ xxx ♥ Q10xx ♦ KJx ♣ AJx

you have the same shape and points, but with all those tenaces, you are happy to be declarer in notrumps, so would respond 1NT to 1♣.

There are many similar situations in Fantunes where you have options on how to proceed. It is by no means a rigid structure, and therein lies much of the fun in playing it. Fantunes works hard at ensuring that the right player ends up as declarer, as we will see.

Here is an example from the French Open Teams in 2009:

<i>Fantoni</i>		<i>Nunes</i>
♠ AQ		♠ 76
♥ Q83		♥ KJ974
♦ AJ1092		♦ K84
♣ A76		♣ KQ3
	W E	
1♣		1♦
1NT		2♦
2♥		3NT
4♥		Pass

We will explain the auction in detail later, but note Nunes' choice of response. He had no desire to make the system bid of 2NT, showing a 5-card major with 5332 shape, because that might leave him as declarer in 3NT, exposed to a spade lead. He chose instead a slightly over-strength transfer response, the better to ensure he would eventually be dummy.

1♣ – 1♦ (0–11, 4+ hearts)

Opener's rebids are categorised as follows:

4-card support (or 23+) Accept the transfer with 1♥

Other balanced hands Rebid 1NT, 2NT or 2♥

Club hands Make a suit rebid

Specifically:

- 1♥ 4+ hearts, any strength, or 23+ balanced
- 1♠ natural and forcing, confirms an unbalanced hand with clubs and spades
- 1NT 15–18, balanced, fewer than 4 hearts (with a *good* 18 points, you can rebid 2♥ or 2NT instead)
- 2♣ 14–17, one-suiter with clubs, non-forcing
- 2♦ 18+, either natural with diamonds, or 6+ clubs
- 2♥ 19–20, exactly 3-card heart support
- 2♠ natural and game-forcing, with at least 6 clubs and 4 spades
- 2NT 19–20, balanced, with 2 hearts (or 3 hearts in a 4333 hand)
- 3♣ about 8 playing tricks in clubs, like an Acol 2

1♣ – 1♦ – 1♥ (4+ hearts or 23+ balanced)

Most of the time, opener has 4-card heart support. The 23+ option is shown later with a minimum notrump bid, and the auction develops naturally from there. The 23+ option includes all 5332 shapes, including with a 5-card major. You will still be able to find a 5–4 major suit fit, and it is highly unlikely that you need to discover a 5–3 major suit fit.

Responder's first duty is to show a hand of misery: 0–5 points, where you only bid because you had to bid. The 'hand of misery', gets consistent treatment in Fantunes. Partner opens at the one level, you have to respond, and now partner makes a bid that you also cannot pass. You show the hand of misery by making a minimum bid in any suit that the partnership has already shown.

In this case, the hand of misery simply raises 1♥ to 2♥. Opener can pass this, or make a further try by bidding 3♥ or making a long-suit try in a new suit. With the 23+ hand, opener bids 2NT, and the bidding proceeds naturally from there.

With 6+ points, responder bids a *short* suit (at most two cards), or 1NT with 3433 shape. Once again, the bidding proceeds naturally. Opener bids notrumps to indicate the 23+ hand, or something else to investigate how high to take the heart fit.

That 'something else' can be as follows:

- with a hand that has nothing extra, and is not excited by responder's 1NT or short suit bid, opener returns to 2♥, non-forcing
- if opener still has game interest, he makes a game try by bidding a new suit
- if opener has a very strong hand, he *jumps* to 3♥. This forces to game and invites cue-bidding
- of course, with a game-going hand but no real interest in slam, opener can simply bid 4♥

Example auctions

♠ AJx		♠ xx
♥ AQJx		♥ Kxxx
♦ Ax		♦ xxxx
♣ xxxx		♣ xxx
1♣		1♦
1♥		2♥
Pass		

A simple auction to 2♥ with the hand of misery.

♠ AJx		♠ xx
♥ AQJx		♥ Kxxx
♦ Ax		♦ KJxx
♣ xxxx		♣ xxx
1♣		1♦
1♥		1♠
2♥		Pass

East shows some values and spade shortage. West is not excited: ♠J is not a great card, so he signs off, and East, with nothing extra, respects the sign-off.

♠ AJx		♠ xxx
♥ AQJx		♥ Kxxx
♦ Ax		♦ KJxx
♣ xxxx		♣ xx
1♣		1♦
1♥		2♣
2♦		2♥
Pass		

The club shortage fits West’s hand better, so he makes a second try via 2♦. However East has shown everything he has and signs off.

♠ AJx		♠ xxx
♥ AQJx		♥ Kxxxx
♦ Ax		♦ KJxx
♣ xxxx		♣ x
	W E	
1♣		1♦
1♥		2♣
2♦		4♣
4♦		4♥
Pass		

This time, once West shows a bit of interest, East has enough to go for game, splintering on the way.

♠ AKQJ		♠ xxx
♥ Ax		♥ Kxxx
♦ AQxx		♦ KJxxx
♣ Axx		♣ x
	W E	
1♣		1♦
1♥		2♣
2NT		3♦
...		

West shows 23+ balanced, East reveals the 5-card diamond suit, and now West is off to the races (7♦). With 5 hearts and 4 diamonds, East would have rebid 3♥ and bid the diamonds later. This is a powerful auction, because responder can reveal both the shape and high-card values at a low level. Compare this with the challenge of a standard 2♣ opening.

1♣ – 1♦ – 1NT (15–18 balanced)

This is quite like the auction 1♣ – 1♥ – 1NT in Standard, although with different hand strengths. You can use methods with which you are familiar.

Note that in Fantunes, hearts have only been *shown*, not *bid*, and you should strive to make the strong hand declarer in an eventual heart contract. Here is how Fantunes does it:

- 2♣ invitational hand or better: opener rebids 2♦ with any 17–18 points, game forcing. With 15–16, opener describes his hand with 2♥ (3 hearts), 2♠ (4 spades), 2NT (neither). After opener's 2♦, responder bids 2NT to allow opener to describe his hand and usually become declarer.



You might be more comfortable with a '2-way checkback' approach. 2♣ is a puppet to 2♦ (which responder can pass), and then responder makes a natural invitational bid.

- 2♦ re-transfer to 2♥ (showing at least 5 hearts), after which responder can pass, or bid a new suit game-forcing, or 2NT invitational.
- 2♥ transfer to spades! This is a weak bid: responder is describing 4 spades and 5 hearts in a weak hand. Opener can pass 2♥ or complete the transfer to 2♠.
- 2NT puppet to 3♣, typically to play 3♣ or 3♦ with a weak hand and length there.
- 3♣/3♦ natural 5+ card suit, game forcing, implying only 4 hearts since responder has not re-transferred to hearts first.
- 3♥ another transfer to spades. Shows 4–4 in the majors, with enough for game.

1♣ – 1♦ – 2♥ (19–20, 3 card support)

This is a descriptive auction: responder is well placed. You are unlikely to be in the slam zone, although it is possible. It is usually a matter of choosing the right part-score or game.

If you want to play Fantunes with all the bells and whistles, you can take precautions to ensure the strong hand will be declarer as often as possible, with the following rebids by responder:

- 2♠ puppet to 2NT: typically this will be raised to 3NT, but responder can also reveal a 5-card minor, or rebid the hearts to give opener a choice of games.
- 3♣/♦ *short-suit tries.*
- 3♥ this 'raise' is actually a transfer in disguise! It shows spades, typically 4–4 in the majors, and now opener has the choice of declaring in spades or notrumps. It is equivalent to the auction described in the previous section: 1♣ – 1♦ – 1NT – 3♥.



The 2♠ and 3♥ 'puppet/transfer' bids are not intuitively obvious. It can feel strange to have responder make a second transfer after having made an initial transfer. You may opt for a simpler and more natural approach.

1♣ – 1♦ – 2NT (19–20, 2 card support)

The continuations here are similar to 1♣–1♦–1NT:

- 3♣ game-forcing relay: opener makes a descriptive bid, in particular bidding 3♠ with a 4-card suit.
- 3♦ re-transfer to 3♥ (showing at least 5 hearts, probably 6), which responder can pass, or bid a new suit game-forcing, or 3NT for a choice of games.
- 3♥ transfer to spades, weak: responder is describing 4 spades and 5–6 hearts in a very weak hand. Opener can pass 3♥ or complete the transfer to 3♠.
- 4♣/4♦ typically a 6-card suit, deciding against 3NT.

We have now gone through all of opener's rebids after 1♣–1♦ where the 1♣ opener has balanced pattern: 1♥, 1NT, 2♥ and 2NT. Actually, the 1♥ rebid could also be made on an unbalanced hand with 5 clubs and 4 hearts, but aside from that proviso, these rebids all suggest a balanced hand.

All other rebids reveal the 1♣ opening as showing clubs. In the main, these unravel as natural auctions, but we will take a look at them anyway.

1♣ – 1♦ – 1♠ (natural, with clubs and spades)

Here responder has three possible options for hands of misery: 2♣, 2♥ and 2♠ all show about 0–5 points and a preference for that suit.

At the other end of the scale, if responder has 10 or 11 points, enough to commit to game, he wheels out the fourth suit, in this case 2♦.

Notrump bids are natural and non-forcing: about 6–7 points for 1NT and 8–9 for 2NT.

Finally, a jump bid in one of the three shown suits, clubs, hearts and spades, shows invitational values.

In summary, this auction is much like standard natural bridge. You can sign-off in a suit with a minimum, bid notrumps naturally, make an invitational jump-raise, and if all else fails, bid the fourth suit.

1♣ – 1♦ – 2♣ (14–17, natural)

Usually, opener has a 6-card club suit for this, but the bid can also be made with 5 clubs and 4 diamonds. This auction is hardly different from a standard 1♣–1♥–2♣ auction, and there is nothing special about the subsequent bidding.

1♣ – 1♦ – 2♦ (18+ with diamonds or 6+ clubs)

Responder's continuations are:

- 2♥/3♣ miserable 0-5 point hands
- 2♠ artificial game force: opener rebids 3♣ with the club hand; all other rebids indicate diamonds and show shape
- 2NT another way of showing 0-5 points, this time with short clubs and longer diamonds: responder wants to play 3♣ if opener has the club hand, or 3♦ if opener has diamonds
- 3♦ invitational with 5+ diamonds

1♣ – 1♦ – 2♠ (game Force: 6 clubs and 4 spades)

Because a forcing 1♠ rebid was available, this jump is very explicit, showing at least 6–4 shape and enough for game.

1♣ – 1♦ – 3♣ (8 playing tricks in clubs)

Consistently throughout Fantunes, opening 1-suit and jump-rebidding it over a possibly weak response suggests a strong one-suited hand, short of a game force. The only way to stay out of game is for responder to pass right there: any continuation by responder forces to game. In this auction, a new suit by responder (3♦ or 3♠) would tend to be 'semi-natural', possibly showing a stopper for a possible 3NT contract. This is like a natural Standard auction 1♣ – 1♥ – 3♣, with adjusted ranges.

Example auctions

♠ AKxx		♠ Qxxx
♥ KJ		♥ A10xxx
♦ AQxx		♦ xx
♣ xxx		♣ Qx
	W	E
1♣		1♦
1NT		2♣
2♦		2NT
3♠		4♠
Pass		

Responder artificially invites after the 1NT rebid. Opener shows a maximum via 2♦, responder asks with 2NT, and the spade fit is found, played by the strong hand.

♠ x		♠ Jxx
♥ AKx		♥ xxxx
♦ AQxx		♦ Kxxx
♣ AKQxx		♣ xx
	W	E
1♣		1♦
2♦		3♣
3♦		5♦
Pass		

Opener shows 18+ with clubs, or 18+ with clubs and diamonds. Responder signs off in 3♣, and opener reveals that he had diamonds all along (and extra strength when he did not pass 3♣). Responder chooses the contract. Try bidding this in Standard.

♠ Axx		♠ Qxxx
♥ KQx		♥ Axxx
♦ Kx		♦ xx
♣ AKxxx		♣ Qxx
	W	E
1♣		1♦
2♥		3♥
3NT		Pass

Opener shows about 19–20 points with three hearts. Responder bids 3♥, showing four spades. Opener selects 3NT as the final contract.

W E

1♣ - 1♥ (0-11, 4+ spades)

There are a few little differences to the $1\clubsuit - 1\diamond$ auction:

After $1\clubsuit - 1\heartsuit - 1NT$, $2\diamondsuit$ is a transfer to hearts, suggesting 5-4 shape in the majors. Opener responds to the transfer with a major-suit preference. Similarly, a $2\heartsuit$ rebid by responder is a simple re-transfer back to spades. These rebids work the same way one level higher, that is after $1\clubsuit - 1\heartsuit - 2NT$.

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1♣ – 1♠ (0–11, no major)

Opener's rebids here are similar to when responder showed a major. However, there is no suit to support. Here is how it unravels.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 1NT | 15–18, balanced |
| 2♣ | 14–17, with clubs, non-forcing |
| 2♦ | 18–20, at least 4–4 in the minors, non-forcing |
| 2♥ | a three-way bid, perhaps the most complicated of the whole system:
23+ balanced
18–20 with long clubs and at most two diamonds
21+ points with long clubs and a singleton or void somewhere |
| 2♠ | this has only two options, thankfully:
18–20 with long clubs and at least three diamonds
21+ points with long clubs and no outside shortage |
| 2NT | 19–20, balanced |
| 3♣ | about 8 playing tricks in clubs, like an Acol 2 |
| 3♦/♥/♠ | game-forcing natural bid, typically with at least 6 clubs and 4 of the bid suit |

1♣ – 1♠ – 1NT (15–18, *balanced*)

This is like a Standard 1NT opening, but we have already found out that there is no 8-card major suit fit available. Therefore, responder's rebids are a little different to normal:

2♣/2♦ to play!

2♥/2♠ weakness in that major and 7–11 points. It is a try for 3NT but warns about possible stopper issues in the suit bid. With the major under control, opener can select 2NT (minimum) or 3NT (maximum); otherwise try for a minor suit contract.

2NT natural and invitational

3♣/♦ natural and invitational, typically a 6-card suit

3♥/3♠ shortage in the bid suit, and 5–4 in the minors, game forcing. This is typically (31)(54) shape. Opener should be well placed to proceed.

1♣–1♠–1NT is a powerful auction for Fantunes, because so much has already been discovered about the hand. Here is a simple example from real life:

<i>Nunes</i>		<i>Fantoni</i>
♠ A963	W E	♠ Q5
♥ AQ93		♥ 1065
♦ QJ		♦ 1095
♣ K107		♣ J9432
1♣		1♠
1NT		2♣
Pass		

Fantunes was able to arrive at the fine contract of 2♣. With a little racing luck, that made 10(!) tricks ... Claudio and Fulvio do have a tendency to take more tricks than normal.

At the other table, the French internationalists had everyone else's auction: 1NT passed out. When diamonds were led, that slid two off, for 6 IMPs to the Italians.

Now is a good time to look at the 2NT rebid:

1♣ – 1♠ – 2NT (19–20, balanced)

This is just like the 1NT rebid, only higher:

3♣/♦ to play

3♥/3♠ shortage in the bid suit, and 5–4 in the minors, game forcing, typically (31)(54) shape.

You might be wondering about the 4-level rebids by responder, which have not been listed. Well, it is not that important, but bidding 4♣ or 4♦ is a mild slam try in that suit, and bidding 4♥ or 4♠ is a strong slam try in the corresponding minor. Here is a spectacular example from a European Champions Cup match against a top Dutch team:

<i>Fantoni</i>		<i>Nunes</i>		
♠ A83		♠ 62		
♥ AQ107		♥ 84		
♦ 85		♦ AKQ10962		
♣ AKQ4		♣ 108		
	<table><tr><td>W</td><td>E</td></tr></table>	W	E	
W	E			
1♣		1♠		
2NT		4♠ (D'ble)		
Red'ble		4NT		
5♦		6♦		
Pass				

The lengths Fantunes will go to get the strong hand as declarer! It made no difference on this deal, but a small change to the West hand would illustrate the point. For example: ♠A83 ♥KJ107 ♦J5 ♣AKQJ – you certainly would not want a heart being led through that hand as dummy at trick 1.

As for the auction, Fulvio had several opportunities to bid diamonds (2♦ over 1♣, 4♦ over 2NT) but did not take them. When Claudio showed interest in slam and control in spades with his redouble, Fulvio bid a TURBO 4NT, showing an even number of key-cards in diamonds. Claudio signed off, lacking the diamond queen, but Fulvio knew slam would be a decent bet, as partner would not have shown interest if holding only one ace.

The Dutch pair of de Wijs – Muller (world champions in 2011) bid to 3NT at the other table.

1♣ – 1♠ – 2♣ (14–17, natural)

The auction develops quite similarly to the 1NT rebid:

- 2♦ to play
- 2♥/2♠ game try, showing weakness in the bid suit
- 2NT natural and invitational
- 3♣/♦ natural and invitational
- 3♥/3♠ splinter bid, showing club support

1♣ – 1♠ – 2♦ (18–20, natural)

Once again, the auction is on a natural track, and the continuations are very familiar:

- 2♥/2♠ game try, showing weakness in the bid suit
- 2NT natural and invitational
- 3♣ to play
- 3♦ natural and invitational
- 3♥/3♠ splinter bid, fitting one minor or the other

It is time to take a deep breath, and look at:

1♣ – 1♠ – 2♥ (23+ balanced, or 18–20 with 6+ clubs and 0–2 diamonds, or 21+ with a shortage)

Fortunately this auction does not come up very often! Opener is very strong, but responder is often appallingly weak. Here are the responses:

- 2♠ 4+ points: enough for game opposite the 21+ point option
- 2NT 0–3, with 6 diamonds and 1–2 clubs: opener can choose between 3♣ and 3♦ as possible final contracts. This could mis-position 3NT should opener have 23+ balanced, but this would be very rare.
- 3♣ 0–3 signing off in 3♣
- 3♦ 0–3, signing off in 3♦ with very short clubs

After the 2♠ relay bid, opener describes:

- 2NT 23+ balanced: the continuations are the same as after 1♣–1♠–2NT, although here we are committed to game
- 3♣ 18–20 with long clubs and at most two diamonds. Responder can pass, show a weakness in a major (essentially asking for a stopper) or bid a natural and forcing 3♦.
- 3♦/♥/♠ 21+ with shortage in that suit



A simpler approach to this auction is to have 2♥ be one of 23+ balanced, or a game-forcing hand with clubs, or a game-forcing hand with clubs and hearts. Responder bids 2♠ to find out, and opener bids 2NT with 23+ balanced, 3♣ with the game-forcing 1-suiter, and higher bids would show hearts.

Example auctions

♠ QJx ♥ Axx ♦ AKQx ♣ AKx	W E	♠ Axx ♥ x ♦ Jxxx ♣ Qxxxx
1♣ 2♥ 2NT 4♦ 6♦		1♠ 2♠ 3♥ 4♠ Pass

Opener shows 23+; responder reveals a heart shortage and 5-4 in the minors. Opener’s hand fits well and so the slam is reached. Compare this to a Standard auction starting 2♣-2♦-2NT. In Fantunes, the lower auction allows some shape information to be shared, before the strong balanced hand is revealed. This is a recurring theme.

♠ AJx ♥ AKx ♦ x ♣ AKQJxx	W E	♠ xxx ♥ xxx ♦ xxxxx ♣ xx
1♣ 2♥ 3♦ Pass		1♠ 3♣ 3NT

Responder shows a hand of ultra-misery. Opener reveals a huge hand with a diamond shortage, responder admits to a diamond ‘stopper’.

♠ AK ♥ xxx ♦ Qx ♣ AKQxxx	W E	♠ Qxx ♥ xx ♦ KJxxx ♣ Jxx
1♣ 2♥ 3♣ 4♣		1♠ 2♠ 3♥ Pass

Opener shows 18-20 with long clubs and short diamonds. Responder shows weakness in hearts, resulting in 3NT being avoided, and the extra values are lacking for 5♣.

1♣ – 1♠ – 2♠ (18–20, long clubs and 3–4 diamonds, or 21+ clubs, no shortage)

This is like the 2♥ rebid, but the continuations are a bit simpler:

2NT 6+ game forcing. Opener rebids 3♣ or 3♦ with the 18–20 option, or makes a natural higher bid with 21+

3♣/3♦ 0–5 to play in that suit



Alternatively, just make 2♠ a natural and game-forcing bid. Even though responder has denied a major, perhaps opener has 5–6 shape, or some other gigantic hand that needs to be explored naturally.

Example auctions

♠ A
♥ AJx
♦ Qxx
♣ AKJxxx



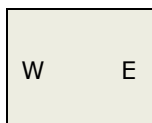
♠ xxx
♥ xxx
♦ Kxxxx
♣ xx

1♣
2♠
Pass

1♠
3♦

Responder shows a desire to play 3♦ opposite the 18–20 point hand.

♠ A
♥ xxx
♦ AKQx
♣ AKxxx



♠ Qxx
♥ AQx
♦ Jxxxx
♣ xx

1♣
2♠
3♦
4♠
6♦

1♠
2NT
4♦
5♦
Pass

Responder forces to game, then raises his partner's diamonds. 5♦ shows an odd number of key-cards, and opener bids the slam.

1NT response: balanced game force

With the relatively strong opening bid, 1♣ – 1NT introduces a game-forcing auction. The 1NT balanced response also includes 5332 shapes with a minor, and an occasional 4441. As every system enthusiast knows, the 4441 shape is a pesky beast: not a strictly balanced hand, but no 5-card suit to show. You would respond with 1 of a suit with 10–11 4441 shapes to avoid the mis-descriptive 1NT.

Opener's rebid distinguishes between the two basic hand-patterns for 1♣: balanced or unbalanced with clubs. Here again the 4441 shape (always with 4 clubs) presents a dilemma: is such a hand 'balanced' or 'unbalanced with clubs'? Opener can decide, perhaps in part determined by whether the singleton is an honour.

The rule for opener's rebid after 1♣ – 1NT is straightforward: with a balanced hand you bid 2♣; with an unbalanced hand you bid Something Else:

- 2♣ any balanced hand: includes 5332 with a minor and optionally 4441 shapes
- 2♦ 18+, unbalanced
- 2♥ 14–17 with clubs and hearts
- 2♠ 14–17 with clubs and spades
- 2NT 14–17 with clubs and diamonds
- 3♣ 14–17 one-suiter with clubs (at least 6 clubs)
- 3♦♥♠ 18+, natural bid, showing 64 shape

1♣ – 1NT – 2♣ (balanced)

Both hands are balanced, so the ensuing auction is going to be fairly simple, although there is in some ways no 'simple' in Fantunes. Here are responder's rebids:

- 2♦ any 13+ hand
- 2♥ 10–12 with hearts: bidding develops naturally
- 2♠ 10–12 with spades: bidding develops naturally
- 2NT 10–12 no major, no 5-card minor
- 3♣ 10–12, 5 card suit
- 3♦ 10–12, 5 card suit

This is an auction where you do not want to be too descriptive in the bidding. Most of the time you are just checking for a 4–4 major suit fit, otherwise you will play 3NT: it is not a good idea to give the opponents too much insight into your exact hand patterns.

Here is an example from a European Champions Cup match against Turkey. The full deal is shown, as it is worth looking at the play:

Dir: South	♠ 10864		
Vul: Both	♥ A53		
	♦ Q54		
	♣ AJ7		
♠ 753		N	♠ J2
♥ J1096		W	♥ Q74
♦ J82		E	♦ A73
♣ 632		S	♣ KQ1094
	♠ AKQ9		
	♥ K82		
	♦ K1096		
	♣ 85		

West	North <i>Nunes</i>	East	South <i>Fantoni</i>
			1♣
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

East led the club king, of course. Claudio won, drew trumps and lost a diamond finesse to West's ♦J. However there was still time to set up the diamonds for a heart discard, and 10 tricks came in. A heart lead would probably have beaten the contract, but East was not to know that.

At the other table, the auction was a bit *too* simple: South opened 1NT and North responded 3NT.

North did not bother with Stayman with his 4333 shape.

Against 4♠ the heart lead was needed but a club lead made. Symmetrically, against 3NT the club lead was needed but here West led a heart.

It was not all over, however, as the defenders were the great Norwegian pair Geir Helgemo (West) and Tor Helness (East). Declarer won ♥K, cashed three top spades and played a diamond to the queen: Helness smoothly ducked his ♦A. He realised it was his precious entry to the clubs.

Declarer did what you or I would do, played a diamond back to the 10. Now it was all over: Helgemo found the club switch whilst his partner still had the ♦A. Down 1.

1♣ – 1NT – 2♣ – 2♦ (13+)

In this scenario, the partnership has considerable extra strength, at least 28 combined points, and so it is worth having some more detailed exploration.

Opener's rebids are:

- 2♥ 15–17 with hearts: bidding develops naturally
- 2♠ 15–17 with spades: bidding develops naturally
- 2NT any hand with 18+ points
- 3♣ 15–17 with 5 clubs
- 3♦ 15–17 with 5 diamonds
- 3♥ 15–17 with 2344 shape
- 3♠ 15–17 with 3244 shape
- 3NT 15–17, 4333 with a 4-card minor



If this is too hard to remember, you can certainly revert to natural bidding after the strength-showing 2♦ rebid.

Example auctions

♠ AJxx		♠ Qxx
♥ KQxx		♥ Axx
♦ Ax		♦ Jxxx
♣ KJx		♣ Axx
	W E	
1♣		1NT
2♣		2NT
3NT		Pass

Opener knows partner is limited to 12 points, so there is no slam. In this auction, no suits were revealed at all.

♠ AQJx		♠ Kx
♥ Kx		♥ Axxx
♦ KJxx		♦ AQxx
♣ Qxx		♣ Kxx
	W	E
1♣		1NT
2♣		2♦
2♠		2NT
3♦		4NT
5♥		6♦
Pass		

Responder shows 13+ and opener shows 15–17 with spades. Responder enquires further and opener admits to a diamond suit. That is enough for slam.

♠ AKQx		♠ Jxxx
♥ KJxx		♥ AQxx
♦ K		♦ AQx
♣ QJxx		♣ xx
	W	E
1♣		1NT
2♣		2♦
2NT		3♥
4♦		4♥
Pass		

Opener treats his hand as balanced. The heart fit is discovered, and opener cue-bids 4♦ to announce the fit. Fantunes' cue-bids show first or second round control. That tells responder that there are two top club losers, and the partnership stays safely in game.

1♣ – 1NT – 2♥/♠ (14–17 natural)

Mostly, responder relays with 2NT. Opener can then complete the hand description in a natural way: 3♣ to show the sixth club, rebidding the major with 56 shape, bidding a new suit as a fragment, typically 5431 shape, or raising to 3NT with 5422.

1♣ – 1NT – 2NT (14–17 with diamonds)

In this auction, responder can relay with 3♣. Here opener's rebid of 3♦ shows extra length in a minor (64 or 65 shape) to avoid bypassing 3NT. Bidding a major shows a fragment in that suit, and 3NT depicts 2245 shape.

1♣ – 1NT – 2♦ (18+ unbalanced)

Here, 2♥ is responder's relay. Opener continues to describe his hand, symmetrically:

- 2♠ spades: opener can relay with 2NT, equivalent to 1♣–1NT–2♠–2NT
- 2NT diamonds: opener can relay with 3♣, equivalent to 1♣–1NT–2NT–3♣
- 3♣ one-suiter in clubs
- higher hearts: like after the auction 1♣–1NT–2♥–2NT (opener will not have 6 clubs and 4 hearts, because that hand would have bid 3♥ directly over 1NT)

In all the auctions where opener shows a distributional hand, it is the balanced hand that takes control. This is as it should be in relay-style auctions: the balanced hand will know the nature of the fit, particularly when opener reveals 5431 shape.



There are several auctions in Fantunes where a player makes an artificial bid to show extra strength, like this 2♦ rebid. It can help clarify how high the auction should go, but it is not absolutely essential. Having the 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ rebids as natural (and with no strength limit) after the 1NT response is a perfectly viable alternative.

2-level responses: game force with a suit

The 2-level responses indicate game-forcing values with a suit. 2♣, 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ are all natural bids, and they all deny 5332 shape. With a 5-card minor and 5332, you respond 1NT; with a 5-card major and 5332, you respond 2NT.

Opener's rebid clarifies whether the opening bid is based on clubs or a balanced hand. The balanced opening hand rebids 2NT (except after the 2♣ response, where 2♦ shows the balanced hand). The club-oriented opening hands make a descriptive natural bid.

1♣ – 2♣ (10+ natural)

This one has a small unusual twist: remember that the 1♣ opener has either clubs or a balanced hand. Which do you think is more likely when responder bids a natural 2♣? Right: 90% of the time, maybe more, opener has a balanced hand, rather than the unbalanced hand with clubs. It therefore makes sense to use the lowest possible rebid to denote the balanced-hand opening.

With this in mind, opener's rebids are:

- 2♦ artificial bid showing a balanced hand
- 2♥/♠ natural, showing clubs as well
- 2NT shows diamonds but *not* clubs: a 5332 pattern, with 5 diamonds
- 3♣ natural raise: at least 5 clubs, with a possible side-suit of diamonds
- 3♦/♥/♠ splinter bid

The bidding develops naturally in all these auctions.

Here is a sweet example from the 2004 Olympiad:

<i>Fantoni</i>		<i>Nunes</i>
♠ Q63		♠ K85
♥ J102		♥ 8
♦ K963		♦ AQ
♣ AKQ		♣ J1098632
	W	E
1♣		2♣
2♦		3♣
3♦		3♠
4♣		4♦
4NT		5♣
Pass		

The auction had three distinct phases. In phase 1, the basic hand types were described: 2♦ showed a balanced hand and 3♣ a one-suiter in clubs.

Phase 2 was a search for 3NT: 3♦ and 3♠ showed stoppers alerting Fantoni to the gaping hole in hearts.

Phase 3 was toying with slam. 4♦ was a cue-bid and 4NT was TURBO, showing an even number of keycards. Missing two keycards, Nunes signed off in the perfect 5♣.

What did the Italians earn for this? A loss of 4 IMPs! At the other table, the pair from Hong Kong had the auction 1♦-3♣-3NT. Giorgio Duboin, not on lead, doubled this contract holding ♥AKQxx, but partner failed to come through, leading a club. 9 tricks.

Six years later, in the 2010 Buffet Pairs event, history repeated itself:

<i>Fantoni</i>		<i>Nunes</i>
♠ A103		♠ KQ6
♥ AKQ8		♥ -
♦ A87		♦ 64
♣ K83		♣ QJ1076542
	W	E
1♣		2♣
2♦		3♣
3♦		3♠
4♣		4♥
4♠		4NT
6♣		Pass

Amazingly, the first seven bids were the same as in 2004. Then Nunes cue-bid 4♥ and over 4♠ bid 4NT to show an even number of key-cards (zero is an even number!).

This time they lost only two IMPs for reaching the right contract. At the other table Bob Hamman opened 2NT, Zia showed his clubs and subsequently bid 6♣. Hamman with his notrump orientation corrected to 6NT. Again, Duboin was not on lead, this time with ♦Q10xxx. The diamond lead was not found, unsurprisingly, so 6NT made easily.

In 2016, Fantunes may break even with this auction.

1♣ – 2♦/♥/♠ (10+ natural)

These auctions are similar to 1♣ – 2♣: opener rebids naturally, although here with the balanced hand, he bids 2NT. Other new suits indicate that opener started with clubs and that suit.

Objection! *By forcing responder to jump to the 2-level with a good hand, you are just pre-empting your own auction, rather than taking it slowly. Whatever happened to 'approach forcing'?*

This objection is not really valid because responder is telling a lot more about his hand than you might think. Consider the equivalent situation in Standard: 1♣ – 1♠ – 1NT. The auction is certainly lower, but responder has transmitted less data: he has only shown 4 spades and 6+ points at this stage. It is only with his second, and maybe third, bids that he will reveal any extra length or points.

Moreover, in Fantunes, certain hand patterns are excluded from the jump response. It will not be made on most hands with 5–5 shape: these hands respond descriptively at the three level. The 2-suit response also denies 5332 shape: 2NT is used for the major 5332 hand, and with a minor and 5332, you show it as balanced with a 1NT response. Once again, this narrows down the range of patterns for the 2-level suit response.

It is true that *opener* can be a little bit pre-empted out of describing his hand after the 2-level response, however we have found that this is not a common problem. Here is an example from the 12th World Bridge Olympiad where it was a problem:

<i>Nunes</i>		<i>Fantoni</i>
♠ K8		♠ AQ10974
♥ KQ9874		♥ 5
♦ AK53		♦ Q52
♣ 8		♣ AQ7
	W	E
1♥		2♠
3♦		3NT
Pass		

The setting was a little different (a 1♥ opening rather than 1♣), but the principle was the same. Fantoni had to jump to the 2-level in response to 1♥ and this deprived him of the room to show both his strong spade suit and the club stopper. The result was that the excellent slam in spades was missed. I suppose I must grudgingly accept that this is a tiny system weakness.

Anyway, back to the 2-level responses to 1♣. There is one little piece of system that is needed after this auction:

1♣ – 2♦/♥/♠ – 2NT (balanced)

The continuations are mostly natural, but Fantunes uses an artificial 3♣ rebid to show extra values. This will assist the partnership in determining how high to bid.

- 3♣ any hand with 13+ points
- 3♦/♥/♠ natural, but limited to 10–12 (a rebid of the original suit indicates at least a 6-card suit)
- 3NT 10–12, after a 2-major response, this implies a side suit of clubs (responder cannot be 5332)

Once again, the bidding develops naturally, but opener will now have a better idea of the overall partnership strength.



The 3♣ rebid by responder is another example of an artificial strength-showing bid (like 1♣ – 1NT – 2♦). If you want to ease into Fantunes with a minimum of artificiality, you could do away with this meaning and revert to natural bidding.

1♣ – 2NT (10+, 5332 with a major)

Opener will have one of two reactions to this. Most of the time, he will want to know which major responder holds.

However, some of the time he will not: for example with 2245 or 33(34) shape, he might just raise 2NT to 3NT. Alternatively, he could have a hand with very long clubs, or perhaps 56 in the minors. With this hand he rebids 3♦, essentially setting clubs as trumps, and cue-bidding can follow.

Usually, opener wants to explore responder's hand further, and he does this by rebidding 3♣. Responder clarifies as follows:

3♦	10–12 with <i>hearts</i>
3♥	10–12 with <i>spades</i>
3♠	13–15 with <i>hearts</i>
3NT	13–15 with <i>spades</i>
4♣	16+ with <i>hearts</i>
4♦	16+ with <i>spades</i>

You will see that this scheme of rebids is designed to allow opener to declare in responder's major. After the 3♦ and 3♥ rebids, opener can bid the major to set the suit for cue-bidding. After the higher-and-stronger rebids, opener can sign off in responder's major, or make an advance cue-bid.

At any time opener can bid 3NT to play there.

Example auctions

♠ AQxx		♠ KJxxx
♥ AKJ		♥ Qxx
♦ Jx		♦ Qxx
♣ KQxx		♣ Ax
	W	E
1♣		2NT
3♣		3♥
3♠		4♣
4♥		4♠
Pass		

Opener discovers responder’s suit and range, and sets spades as trumps. When opener denies a diamond control (bypassing 4♦), a safe game is reached.

♠ QJx		♠ Ax
♥ AJx		♥ KQxxx
♦ Kxxx		♦ Qxx
♣ Axx		♣ KQx
	W	E
1♣		2NT
3NT		4NT
Pass		

Opener selects 3NT without enquiring further. Responder is too strong to let this go, so makes a quantitative raise to 4NT, but opener has nothing to spare.

3-level responses: game force with two 5-card suits

The Fantunes style is generally to take things slowly in strong auctions. Therefore, the 3-level responses are quite explicit, in order to take some pressure off the other auctions. A response at the 3-level is used to show a two-suiter after all the Fantunes 1-level openings.

There are six combinations of two-suiters. Three of the six combinations are handled with 3♣. The other three responses cater for the other three combinations.

1♣ – 3♣ (10–15, 5–5, clubs and another)

Opener relays with 3♦ to discover the second suit. Responder bids naturally:

- 3♥ clubs and hearts
- 3♠ clubs and spades
- 3NT clubs and diamonds

Now opener can sign-off in 3NT or 4-major. A 4♣ bid sets clubs as trumps for cue-bidding. A new suit sets responder's other suit for cue-bidding. For example, after 1♣–3♣–3♦–3♠, 4♦ or 4♥ is a cue-bid, setting spades as trumps.

1♣ – 3♦ (10–15, 5–5, hearts and spades)

1♣ – 3♥ (10–15, 5–5, hearts and diamonds)

1♣ – 3♠ (10–15, 5–5, spades and diamonds)

The continuations are natural and intuitive. Opener can:

- sign-off in any game
- propose clubs as trumps with a 4♣ bid
- set one of responder's suits below game, to start cue-bidding (eg 1♣ – 3♦ – 3♥ or 1♣ – 3♥ – 4♦)
- after the 3♥ or 3♠ response, bid the other major as a general slam try in responder's major: 1♣ – 3♥ – 3♠ or 1♣ – 3♠ – 4♥

Passed hand variations

Not a lot changes when responder is a passed hand, but there are a few points of interest.

The 1♣ – 1-suit auctions remain the same, because the response denies opening bid values anyway.

In the auction 1♣ – 1NT – 2♣ – 2♦, responder is normally showing 13+ points, which is not possible as a passed hand. A passed hand 2♦ bid would simply show 10–11 points and 5 diamonds.

The auction Pass – 1♣ – 2-suit is hardly required at all. The Fantunes 2-level openings with 10–13 means that there's practically nothing a passed hand can have to force to game after a third or fourth seat 1♣ opening. Therefore the 2-suit responses as a passed hand should indicate around 8–9 points and a decent 6-card suit. Opener can pass this bid, or bid 3♣, *non-forcing*. All other rebids by opener commit the partnership to game.

The three-level responses (1♣ – 3♣, etc.) are also not required. 5–5 shape and 10 or more points are always opened with Fantunes, often at the 2-level.

Interference over 1♣

As discussed at the start of this chapter, 1♣ openings are very susceptible to opposition interference. It is essential to have sound agreements on how to deal with this.

1♣ – (D’ble)

Because the 1♣ opener promises about 3 more points as a minimum than in Standard, the requirements for responder to voluntarily bid are consequently reduced. This takes a little getting used to ...

Red’ble 7+ points: bidding proceeds similarly to when a Standard 1♣ opener has been doubled.

1♦ 4–5 hearts, with at least about 5 points. However, the bidding does not proceed as in the uncontested equivalent auction. Here the demands are different: you are less likely to have a great heart fit given the double, and you have to be mindful that the opponents may continue to bid.

Assuming fourth hand passes, opener rebids as follows:

1♥ 3-card support, *non-forcing* (14–17)
1NT 15–18 again, but typically without 3-card support. System can remain on in this auction ... one of the few times it is retained in competitive situations
2♥ 4-card support, *non-forcing* (14–17)
2NT 19–20, could have 3-card support
3♥ 4-card support, 18+ points, prepared to commit to game

All the other rebids are essentially unchanged.

1♥ 4–5 spades, 5+ points. Bidding continues similarly to the 1♦ response.

1♠ 5 clubs in a limited hand, about 5–9 points.

1NT 5 diamonds in a limited hand, about 5–9 points.

2♣ clubs, 10+ points, forcing to game

2♦/♥ transfer bids showing 6+ cards in the next higher suit. The idea is to pre-empt the opponents whilst still hoping to make opener declarer, forcing the takeout-doubler on lead.



None of these transfer bids are mandated practice. Initially at least, play methods with which you are familiar.

1♣ – (1♦)

This is conceptually similar to when they double, although there are some differences, as the opponents have named a suit.

D'ble 6+ points, at most one 4-card major

1♥ 5+ spades

1♠ 5+ hearts (the lengths Fantunes goes to get the strong hand as declarer!)

1NT natural, non-forcing

2♣ clubs, 10+ points, forcing to game

2♦ 4–4 in the majors, at least invitational values



The 'switched major' responses are not something you want to forget. If you *might* forget, then do not play it!

1♣ – (1♥)

Here there is only one unbid major, so you might be able to guess the methods:

D'ble	4–5 spades
1♠	denies spades or good heart stoppers: so typically interested in one or more minor suits
1NT	natural, non-forcing
2♣/♦	natural, 10+ points, forcing to game
2♥	6 spades

Fantunes does nothing special after 1♣ is overcalled with 1♠. A double is your standard negative double, suggesting hearts. Bidding a suit at the two-level is natural and game-forcing.

Fourth Seat Intervention

So much for direct intervention. What about when responder has made a 0–11 bid at the one-level, and fourth hand enters the auction?

If fourth hand enters with an overcall, then bidding reverts to natural. Opener should tread a little carefully, because responder has yet to show any strength. For example, after 1♣ – 1♦, and then a 1♠ overcall, a 1NT rebid by opener would indicate considerably more than the original 15–18. 17–20 would be closer to the mark.

One auction where you are still in danger is 1♣ – 1♦ (say) and then double. Suppose the double is a takeout of hearts, a good method. This is not the time to be bidding 1♥ as a force, like in the uncontested auction. Indeed, a 1♥ contract might be your only port in the storm. Instead, modify opener's rebids like this:

Pass	neutral, nothing to say, <3 hearts
Red'ble	18+ points
1♥	at least 3-card heart support, <i>non-forcing</i>
1♠	natural and <i>non-forcing</i> , showing clubs as well
1NT	solid values, about 17–20
2♥	4-card heart support, good hand, but non-forcing

1♦ auctions

1♦ shows 14+ points, unbalanced with at least 4 diamonds.

From the complexities of 1♣, we now move to the calmer waters of the 1♦ opening. The relatively strong, natural and unbalanced opening of 1♦ is a big IMP winner for Fantunes: statistically it is the most successful of all its opening bids. Why? Because it transmits so much more initial information than a Standard 1♦ opening, which has a lower strength requirement and could be made on as few as 3 diamonds. The Fantunes 1♦ opener usually has at least a 5-card diamond suit, although it is also made on 4441 shapes with a black shortage.

Like all the 1-suit openings, responder is forced to make a bid, even on 0 points. This leads us to:

Objection! *Forcing me to respond to a normal opening bid with zero points is all too often going to get us way too high with not enough values.*

It seems a valid concern, but is it really? The Fantunes opening 1-suit bids show in the main 14+ points, and we have to respond. Therefore the combined minimum partnership assets are $14+0 = 14$ points.

Now suppose you are playing Standard. People routinely open with 11 points in Standard: conservatives might pass balanced 11-counts, but many do not. And responder usually scrapes up a response on 5 points, sometimes less, so the combined minimum partnership assets in Standard are $11+5 = 16$ points.

That is just a two-point difference, and experience says it has little if any negative effect on your outcomes. Another way of looking at this is: if you do have 14+0 points, what does that say about the hand? It says that the opponents probably have a game. Much of the time, the opening bid will be overcalled by the opponents, releasing responder from the need to bid. And if responder does make his forced bid on 0 points, then it might be all the more difficult for the opponents to reach their game.

A more problematic issue for Fantunes is where the combined point counts is something like 18+0. Now the opponents probably do not have a game, and the forced response may result in the Fantunes pair getting a little high (and without the aid of any illicit substances). That

can certainly happen, but Fantunes has some effective mechanisms, in particular the Gazzilli convention, to handle that scenario.

On balance, the forced response to the one-level openings is a winner for Fantunes. The problems created for the opponents tend to be greater than the problems created for Fantunes.

Here is a typical example:

Dlr: South
 Vul: E/W

♠ 953
 ♥ 96
 ♦ 942
 ♣ Q9843

♠ 107
 ♥ A853
 ♦ 763
 ♣ AK107

N

W

E

S

♠ K
 ♥ KQ104
 ♦ AKQJ8
 ♣ J65

♠ AQJ8642
 ♥ J72
 ♦ 105
 ♣ 2

West	North	East	South
<i>Brogeland</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Saelensminde</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
Pass	1NT	2♠	1♦
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
			All Pass

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>Versace</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Helgemo</i>
Pass	Pass	3♠	1♦
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Look at the dual effect of North’s 1NT response, which shows 0–9 points. In the first room, it changed the tenor of the auction, and E/W ended up in a comfortable partscore, making 9 tricks. In the second room, not only did the pass propel E/W into 4♠, but it told Lauria how to play it! He dropped the singleton spade king offside, figuring that if North held it, he most probably would have scraped up a response to 1♦.

Initial responses to 1♦ fall into these categories:

<i>Weak hand</i>	1♥, 1♠, 1NT and 3♦ are natural responses that could be on as few as 0 points. 2♦ is an unnatural response, also showing a specific weak hand.
<i>Game force with a major</i>	2♥, 2♠ and 2NT responses show a major, similar to the structure after a 1♣ opening.
<i>Game force with a 2-suiter</i>	The 3-level bids (other than 3♦) denote hands with at least 5-5 shape and enough for game, like after 1♣.
<i>Other game forces</i>	2♣ is an artificial game force, with one of three hand types: balanced, clubs or diamonds.

The 1♦ opening is forcing on responder, and here are his options:

1♥	0-9, 4+ hearts
1♠	0-9, 4+ spades
1NT	0-9, no major
2♦	0-5, 5+ spades, 4+ hearts
3♦	0-5, 4+ diamonds

All other responses force the partnership to game:

2♣	10+: balanced, or clubs, or a diamond raise
2♥/2♠	10+, at least a 5-card suit (denies 5332 shape: see 2NT)
2NT	10+, 5332 pattern, with a 5-card major
3♣	10-15, 55 pattern, hearts and spades
3♥	10-15, 55 pattern, hearts and clubs
3♠	10-15, 55 pattern, spades and clubs

You will note several similarities with the 1♣ auctions ... all the responses of 2♥ and higher are identical in concept to those made in response to 1♣. The one-level responses are weak and natural: there is no room for transfer responses after 1♦.

Weak responses to 1♦

1♦ – 1♥ (0–9, 4+ hearts)

So far, so natural. And many of opener's rebids are natural as well:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1♠ | 14–17, natural, non-forcing |
| 1NT | 18+, unbalanced |
| 2♣ | 14–17, natural, non-forcing (at least 5 diamonds and 4 clubs) |
| 2♦ | 14–17, natural, non-forcing, 6+ diamonds |
| 2♥ | 14–16, raise (usually 4 hearts) |
| 2♠ | game force, 6+ diamonds, 4+ spades |
| 2NT | game force: a one-suiter in diamonds, or at least 5–5 in the minors, or a game-forcing heart raise |
| 3♣ | 16–17, 5–5 in the minors, good playing strength |
| 3♦ | about 8 playing tricks in diamonds, like an Acol 2 |
| 3♥ | 17–18, 4 card raise |

There is no magic about responder's continuations after one of the 14–17 point rebids. The partnership is limited to about 26 points, so responder will tend to either sign-off with a hand of misery (0–5) or investigate game possibilities with a better hand.

However, the 1NT rebid gives us our first taste of the Fantunes Gazzilli style, although this is not strictly a Gazzilli auction.

1♦ – 1♥ – 1NT (18+ unbalanced)

First remember that with all 5332 balanced hands with a minor, 1♣ is opened. That is why the strong 1NT rebid will be in some way unbalanced: either a 6-card suit of diamonds or at least 5-4 shape.

Responder's next duty is to reveal his strength: 0-5 or 6-9. Most, but not all, of the 6-9 hands are bid via an artificial game force of 2♣. Here is the scheme of responses:

- 2♣ 6-9, any hand, except the 6-9 hands listed below
- 2♦ 0-5, signing off in 2♦
- 2♥ 0-5, signing off in 2♥
- 2♠ 6-9, 5 hearts, 4 spades
- 2NT 6-9, 3433 shape
- 3♣ 0-5, signing off in 3♣ (typically 4 hearts and 6 clubs)

After all responder's rebids, opener can describe his hand naturally. In fact so much information has been transmitted early in the auction that you will find there is ample room for investigating partscore, game or slam.

1♦ – 1♥ – 2NT (game force)

Responder 'puppets' with 3♣ now, to discover the nature of the game force. Opener then describes:

- 3♦ diamond single-suiter
- 3♥ game-forcing heart raise
- 3♠ diamond-club two-suiter

1♦ – 1♠ (0–9, 4+ spades)

Of course this auction develops very similarly to 1♦ – 1♥. Only a couple of points are worth noting.

1♦ – 1♠ – 2♥ shows a strong hand with 6+ diamonds and 4 hearts, equivalent in concept to 1♦ – 1♥ – 2♠. With lesser shape, i.e. 54, you rebid 1NT.

The auction 1♦ – 1♠ – 2♣ is a little suspect regarding opener's length in diamonds. Opener might have 1=4=4=4 shape.

Could the 1=4=4=4 shape result in missing a heart fit? Not at all ... consider these three auctions:

1♦ – 1♠ – 2♦ – 2♥

1♦ – 1♠ – 2♣ – 2♥

1♦ – 1♠ – 1NT – 2♥

In each case, the 2♥ rebid by responder shows the same hand type: 5+ spades, 4+ hearts and 6–9 points. This is where that strange 1♦ – 2♦ auction comes into play. The 2♦ response shows a weak hand, less than 6 points, with at least 5 spades and 4 hearts. This allows Fantunes to properly handle that awkward hand pattern: with a weak hand and that shape, it is described with a single bid, the 2♦ response. With the stronger version, you go slowly. How very neat.

Finally, what do you think would be the meaning of this auction?

1♦ – 1♠ – 3♥ ?

3♥ a splinter bid ... a strong raise in spades with shortage in hearts. Fantunes does employ splinter bids where they make sense – see the first hand in this book, for example. I have not listed them explicitly, but you can safely assume that a high jump bid after a player has revealed a suit is a splinter bid.

Example auctions

♠ Axx		♠ Qxx
♥ AQx		♥ xxxx
♦ AQ10xxx		♦ Kx
♣ x		♣ Kxxx
1♦		1♥
2♦		3♦
3♥		3NT
Pass		

Opener makes a natural and non-forcing rebid. Responder gives an invitational raise. Opener accepts, showing his 3-card heart support, and responder chooses 3NT. A strong hand with a long diamond suit and 3-card support for partner’s major is a nightmare scenario playing a natural system⁴. For example, on this pair of hands the auction might go 1♦ – 1♥ – 3♦ – 3NT, and now opener is dreadfully uncomfortable about not having revealed the heart support. But in Fantunes, the stronger opening bid often allows the auction to develop more slowly, allowing more description.

♠ AKJx		♠ 10xx
♥ x		♥ Jxxx
♦ AQxxx		♦ x
♣ Kxx		♣ xxxxx
1♦		1♥
1♠		Pass

Who says Fantunes drives you too high? While it is rare to stop in one of a suit in Fantunes, it can happen. Playing Standard, it is not so easy to play in 1♠!

⁴ So much so, that in the American Bridge World magazine, it has been dubbed the “Bridge World Nightmare Hand”

♠ AKxx ♥ x ♦ AQJxx ♣ AKJ	W E	♠ xx ♥ Qxxx ♦ Kx ♣ Qxxxx
1♦ 1NT 2♠ 4♣ 6♣		1♥ 2♣ 3♣ 4♦ Pass

After an early game-force is established, natural bidding reveals the club fit. When responder cooperates with a diamond cue bid, opener has enough for slam.

♠ x ♥ KQxx ♦ KQJxx ♣ AJx	W E	♠ Axxxx ♥ Axxx ♦ xx ♣ xx
1♦ 2♦ 3♥ Pass		1♠ 2♥ 4♥

Responder describes his shape with around 6–9 points. Opener invites and responder accepts.

♠ – ♥ Qx ♦ AKQxxx ♣ AKQxx	W E	♠ Qxxx ♥ Kxxxx ♦ x ♣ Jxx
1♦ 2NT 3♠ 4♦ 4♠ 6♣		1♥ 3♣ 4♣ 4♥ 4NT Pass

Opener shows a game force, and then a powerful minor two-suiter. Responder sets clubs as trumps and cue-bids a heart control.

1♦ – 1NT (0–9, no major)

With neither major ostensibly in play, this is one of the more straightforward auctions. Opener will often pass 1NT, but if he does not, then ...

- 2♣ Gazzilli, either 14–17 with diamonds and clubs or any 18+ unbalanced hand
- 2♦ 14–17, natural, non-forcing: 6+ diamonds or possibly 5 diamonds and a 4-card major
- 2♥ game force, 5+ diamonds, 4+ hearts
- 2♠ game force, 5+ diamonds, 4+ spades
- 2NT game force: either a one-suiter in diamonds, or at least 5–5 in the minors
- 3♣ 16–17, 5–5 in the minors, good playing strength
- 3♦ about 8 playing tricks in diamonds, like an Acol 2

As you can see, many of the rebids are the same as after a major suit response, and the follow-ups are similar as well.

There are two auctions where further detail should be given.

1♦ – 1NT – 2♦ (14–17 with diamonds)

This is very similar to the auction 1♣ – 1♠ (no major) – 2♣. The major suit rebids by responder are the same as well: responder bids a major to show *weakness* there and invitational values, about 7–9 points.

1♦ – 1NT – 2♣ (Gazzilli: 14–17 with clubs or 18+ unbalanced)

Here is a genuine Gazzilli auction, where the 2♣ bid is two-way: either a limited hand with clubs, or some strong hand.

The Gazzilli 2♣ is an essential tool in Fantunes: it applies to the following four auctions:

1♦ – 1NT – 2♣
1♥ – 1NT – 2♣
1♠ – 1NT – 2♣
1♥ – 1♠ – 2♣

Here is what Fulvio Fantoni says about Gazzilli:

Question: If you had to choose a convention, which one would you pick?

Fulvio Fantoni: Gazzilli ... it is a convention that I think should be used by all who play natural bridge.

Strong words. Gazzilli allows opener to describe a strong hand with a two-step sequence in these auctions. Responder divides his range into minimum or maximum when rebidding after 2♣. Opener's strong hand plus responder's maximum places the partnership in a game force.

Gazzilli is very useful in standard systems, but it is utterly essential in Fantunes. In Standard, a 1NT response is approximately 5–9 points, but in Fantunes it is very wide-range: 0–9 points. Gazzilli is the key tool that allows Fantunes to handle such a wide-ranging response.

Responder's follow-ups are:

- 2♦ 0–5, signing off in 2♦
- 2♥ any 6–9 (except with 4 diamonds), forcing to game unless opener follows up with 2NT or 3♣
- 3♣ 0–5, signing off in 3♣ with a 6-card suit
- 3♦ 6–9, 4-card diamond support

You might notice that there are some unused bids in that list, for example 2♠ and 2NT. Perhaps Fantoni and Nunes assign some meaning to them, unknown to us, but the fact is that not every bid in

the world has to mean something. In this case, bidding anything except the space-saving 2♥ with a maximum 1NT response might simply pre-empt partner out of describing his hand.

It is important to look at how opener responds to the 6–9 2♥ bid: not all his choices are what they seem. His options are:

- 2♠ 18+, game forcing, with *clubs* (opener cannot rebid clubs directly, because that shows the weaker hand)
- 2NT 16–17 with 5–4 in diamonds and clubs. This allows responder to progress to game with 8–9, but sign-off in 3-minor with 6–7. In progressing, responder can choose 3-major to show weakness there, in true Fantunes style. That way, 3NT can be properly explored.
- 3♣ 14–15 with 5–4 in diamonds and clubs. Typically responder will pass or convert to 3♦.
- 3♦ 18+ with a one-suiter in diamonds. (Responder can bid a weak major to investigate 3NT.)
- 3♥/♠ 18+ natural, 5–4 shape: maybe a 4–3 major suit game is in order

One important point to note about all Gazzilli auctions is that 2♣ is avoided with an absolute game-forcing hand, even though 2♣ is forcing. Most game forcing hands are bid via a 2NT rebid or a reverse into a major. This means that after a ‘hand-of-misery’ response to 2♣, opener can bid again as an *invitational* action.

1♦ – 2♦ (0–5, 5+ spades, 4+ hearts)

This specialized response is used to handle an awkward hand pattern when responding to 1♦. It is not awkward just in Fantunes: all systems have challenges in this area. Because the description is so specific, the bidding can continue naturally. Opener can select a contract at the two-level, or invite at the three-level.

You might ask ... what am I meant to do with the following hand?

♠ xx ♥ xxx ♦ AJxx ♣ Kxxx

The answer is that you must respond 1NT to 1♦ with that hand, showing 0–9 and denying a major. That is a bit uncomfortable, and might lead you to the wrong partscore contract, but it is the price you pay.



I would not blame you if you ditched the Fantunes 2♦ response, and switched it to 6–9 points and 4-card diamond support.

Game forcing responses to 1♦

1♦ – 2♣ (10+, clubs or diamonds or balanced)

Many of the strong responses are packed into 2♣. The bidding proceeds with opener describing his hand and responder in control, unless responder chooses to give up control with a natural bid. Opener's duties are to outline most of his shape, and show his strength as 14–17 or 18+. Here are opener's rebids:

- 2♦ single-suiter of diamonds (any strength), or diamonds and clubs with 14–17 points
- 2♥/2♠ natural, showing the major, any strength
- 2NT 6+ diamonds, exactly 3 clubs, 18+
- 3♣ 4+ clubs, 18+ (compare with the 2♦ rebid, which includes the club hand but in a minimum strength hand)
- 3♦ strong, self-sufficient diamond suit. Sets diamonds as trumps for cue-bidding.

Opener has begun the process of describing his hand, and responder can find out a lot more!

1♦ – 2♣ – 2♦ (single-suited diamonds, or 14–17 with clubs)

Responder can make a natural bid here (other than 2♥), with a hand with clear direction. 2♠ (showing clubs and spades), 3♣ (a long, strong club suit) or 3♦ (setting diamonds) are all natural, as would be 2NT.

Usually however, responder would like to know more about opener's hand, and he finds out by relaying with an artificial 2♥. Opener's rebids are:

- 2♠ one-suiter in diamonds, 18+. Then responder can relay again with 2NT, and opener names a shortage (typically 6331 shape), or bids 3♦ with no shortage.
- 2NT 6+ diamonds, 3 clubs, 14–17. Responder can then relay with 3♣, asking for a shortage (3♦ would deny one, showing 2=2=6=3 shape). This relay is also available after the direct 2NT rebid by opener, which shows the same shape but 18+ points.
- 3♣ 4+ clubs, 14–17. Once more, responder can relay with 3♦ and opener shows a major suit fragment (possibly a doubleton if 2164 shape), or bids 3NT with 2254 shape.
- 3♦ one-suiter in diamonds, 14–17, short in clubs
- 3♥/♠ one-suiter in diamonds, 14–17, short in that major
- 3NT one-suiter in diamonds, 14–17, balanced, doubleton club: (32)62 shape

As you can see, it is not difficult for responder to find out close to the exact shape. Opener's other rebids work similarly, as we will see.

1♦ – 2♣ – 2♥/♠ (diamonds and a major)

Over 2♥, once again responder can rebid naturally: 2♠ to show spades, 3♣ to show long clubs, or 3♦ or 3 of opener's major to set that suit. 2NT is the relay bid to find out more, and opener bids as follows:

- 3♣ 3 clubs: (41)53 or (40)63 shape
- 3♦ extra length in diamonds, typically 64 shape

1♦ – 2♣ – 2♥ – 2NT – 3♥
 1♦ – 2♣ – 2♠ – 2NT – 3♠
 65 shape

1♦ – 2♣ – 2♥ – 2NT – 3♠
 1♦ – 2♣ – 2♠ – 2NT – 3♥
 fragment, typically (43)51 shape

3NT 5422 shape, 14–17 (with a stronger hand and this shape, bid higher)

1♦ – 2♣ – 3♣ (18+ with clubs)

The continuations here are like the slower auction that shows 14–17 with clubs (1♦ – 2♣ – 2♦ – 2♥ – 3♣).

Responder relays with 3♦ and opener bids 3♥/♠ to show a major suit fragment (2–3 cards), identifying a shortage in the other major, 3NT with 2254 shape and 18–20, or 4♣ with the same shape and even more strength.

You may have noticed a theme here regarding the responses to all these relays. When opener has shown a single-suiter, then the next relay bid requires him to identify a *shortage*. When opener has shown a two-suiter, then the next relay requires him to identify a *fragment*. In this latter scenario, this is indicating a shortage in the fourth suit.

We will see this approach used elsewhere: in particular after the 2♣ response to 1♥/1♠, and also in the relays used over the 2-level openings.



Are these relay methods not to your taste? They are not mandatory. Bearing in mind that the 2♣ response forces the partnership to game, you can certainly revert to natural bidding thereafter. You may not achieve the full shape definition (showing fragments and shortages), but your resulting auction will be acceptable.

Also remember that there is no such thing as an 'opener's reverse' here. In other words, 1♦ – 2♣ – 2♠ (for example) does not indicate any extra values, over and above the 14 points that are originally promised.

Example auctions

♠ x		♠ AKJx
♥ Qxx		♥ Axxx
♦ AKQxxx	W E	♦ xx
♣ KQx		♣ Jxx
1 ♦		2 ♣
2 ♦		2 ♥
2NT		3 ♣
3 ♠		3NT
Pass		

Opener shows a one-suiter, or a limited two-suiter in the minors. Responder enquires, and opener shows 14–17 with 6 diamonds and 3 clubs. Responder enquires again and opener reveals short spades. Responder selects 3NT. If responder’s majors were reversed, he would have investigated a diamond slam.

♠ Axx		♠ Qxxx
♥ AQx		♥ Kxxx
♦ KQxxxx	W E	♦ Ax
♣ x		♣ Jxx
1 ♦		2 ♣
2 ♦		2 ♥
3 ♦		5 ♦
Pass		

Opener shows a one-suiter, or a limited two suiter in the minors. Responder enquires, and opener shows a one suited 14–17 with short clubs. With the problem in clubs identified, responder chooses 5♦.

♠ AKx ♥ Q ♦ KQxxx ♣ Jxxx	W E	♠ Qxx ♥ xxxxx ♦ Ax ♣ AKQx
1♦ 2♦ 3♣ 3♠ 4♠ Pass		2♣ 2♥ 3♦ 4♣ 6♣

Opener shows a one-suiter, or a limited two-suiter in the minors. Responder enquires, and opener shows clubs. Responder relays again and opener shows a spade fragment and therefore short hearts. This is good news for responder, who sets clubs as trumps for cue-bidding. Opener reveals a spade control and responder has heard enough.

Cue-bids in Fantunes show first or second round control, with an ace-asking device (TURBO or Blackwood) to then check that there are not two aces missing. In this auction however, West's encouraging 4♠ bid must be based on the ace, given his certain weakness in the minors.

♠ x ♥ Qxxx ♦ AKxxx ♣ AQx	W E	♠ Kxx ♥ Kx ♦ Qx ♣ KJ10xxx
1♦ 2♥ 4♣ 4NT Pass		2♣ 3♣ 4♥ 5♣

Opener shows hearts. There is little point in responder relaying further ... he switches to descriptive mode to show his club one-suiter. Opener raises, responder cue-bids, but then a TURBO 4NT (even number of key-cards) tells responder that there are two aces missing.

This is not a great matchpoint contract: perhaps at matchpoints, opener would bid 3♠ over 3♣, the fourth suit asking for a stopper. This gives up on the hunt for 6♣ in order to focus on a final contract of 3NT, a frequent dilemma at matchpoints.

1♦ – 2♥/♠ (10+ natural)

This is the same response as is used after a 1♣ opening: it also denies 5332 shape (2NT is there for that) or 5–5 shape (a direct response at the three level is used).

The continuations are mostly natural, but here the 2NT rebid by opener is not required to show a balanced hand, because the 1♦ opener does not have one. I suggest you use the 2NT rebid for a hand that simply wants to find out more about responder's pattern and strength. Responder's rebids would then be similar to those after 1♣ – 2♥/♠ – 2NT:

- 3♣ any hand with 13+ points
- 3♦/♥/♠ natural, but limited to 10–12: 3♦ would show 3-card support for opener
- 3NT 10–12, after a 2-major response, this implies a side suit of clubs (responder cannot be 5332)

1♦ – 2NT (10+, 5332 with a major)

Again, this has identical meaning to the 2NT response to 1♣. Opener's follow-ups are similar: he will usually want to find out what suit and strength responder has, via a 3♣ rebid. Alternatively he can rebid 3♦ to insist on diamonds as trumps, or bid 3NT with no interest in either major (probably 2263 or 2254 pattern).

As a reminder, here are responder's rebids after 1♦ – 2NT – 3♣:

- 3♦ 10–12 with *hearts*
- 3♥ 10–12 with *spades*
- 3♠ 13–15 with *hearts*
- 3NT 13–15 with *spades*
- 4♣ 16+ with *hearts*
- 4♦ 16+ with *spades*

1 ♦ – 3 ♦ (0–5, 4+ diamonds)

This auction is similar to the same auction playing Standard methods including pre-emptive jump raises. Opener can make his own arrangements: 3 of a major is asking for a stopper.

1 ♦ – 3 ♠ (10–15, 5–5, hearts and spades)

1 ♦ – 3 ♥ (10–15, 5–5, hearts and clubs)

1 ♦ – 3 ♣ (10–15, 5–5, spades and clubs)

These auctions pan out identically to the equivalent auctions after a 1♣ opening.

Passed hand variations

The only passed hand variation worth noting is that 1♦ – 2-major indicates a 6-card suit and around 8–9 points. Similarly to the same auction after 1♣, opener's only non-forcing continuation would be 3♦.

Interference over 1♦

Because 1♦ is such a natural bid, there is no need for any special Fantunes-specific agreements after interference. Here briefly is what Fantunes play.

1♦ – (D'ble)

Similar to when 1♣ is doubled, the strength-showing redouble has a different concept of what 'strength' means: a minimum of just 7 points.

As for other bids, the choice is yours. One sensible approach is to remove all system, and play that 1♥ and 1♠ are natural and forcing with no upper limit, 2♦ is a simple raise and higher bids are natural but non-forcing.

1♦ – (1♥)

Consistent with their general transferring philosophy, Fantunes bids as follows:

D'ble	4–5 spades
1♠	denies spades or good heart stoppers, so typically interested in clubs
1NT	natural, non-forcing
2♣	natural, 10+ points, forcing to game
2♦	natural raise of diamonds
2♥	6 spades
2♠	diamond raise, invitational or better

1♥ and 1♠ auctions

1♥ and 1♠ show 11+ points, with at least a 5-card suit.

We can deal with the 1♥ and 1♠ openings in one chapter, as the auctions develop similarly. Specific differences will be noted where required.

There is no upper limit to the strength of these openings, just as with the 1♣ and 1♦ openings, but the lower limit varies. 1-major can be opened with as few as 11 points if the hand *also has the other major*. If it does not, then the minimum strength is 14 points.

This glitch ruins the symmetry of the 1-level opening bids, and adds some complexity to the 1♥/1♠ openings, but it is a necessary evil. The reason for it is that the 2♥ and 2♠ openings cannot handle the added burden of possibly including four cards in the other major. Therefore the minimum opening hands with both majors must be opened with 1 of a major. Oh well.

Here are the responses to the 1-major opening:

1♥ – 1♠	0–9, 4+ spades
1NT	0–9, (after 1♥, 1NT denies spades)
2♣	10+: clubs, or balanced or a major suit raise
2♦	10+, 5+ diamonds
1♥ – 2♥	
1♠ – 2♠	3–6, 3 or 4-card support
1♥ – 2♠	
1♠ – 2♥	10+, 5+ card suit, game forcing (5322 shape allowed)
2NT	limited 3 or 4-card raise
3♣	10–15, 55 pattern, clubs and the other major
3♦	10–15, 55 pattern, diamonds and the other major
1♥ – 3♥	
1♠ – 3♠	weak, distributional, 4 or 5-card support

1♥ – 3♠

1♠ – 3♥ 10–15, 55 pattern, clubs and diamonds (use this response with caution, in case opener is relatively weak with both majors)

There are a few points to note about this list. First of all, the single raise is quite weak: about 3–6 points. You might also ask, what do I do with 0–2 points and support? Not too many systems worry about what to bid with 0–2 point hands, but Fantunes does! You respond 1NT with that hand, to prevent partner getting any ideas that you might have something. Depending on how the auction develops, you may get the opportunity to show your extremely moderate support.

With a slightly stronger raise than 3–6 points, you jump to 2NT. This looks a little unwieldy and indeed there is some possibility that it carries you too high, forcing you to the three-level when you might belong in only 2-major. However in the cut and thrust of real bridge, the cost of this is miniscule.

You will also see that a jump to 3 in a new suit shows a 5–5 shape. This is consistent with the responses to 1♣ and 1♦.

Weak responses to 1♥/1♠

We start with an auction that can only occur in one of the 1-major opening bids:

1♥ – 1♠ (0–9, 4+ spades)

Opener's rebids are:

1NT	15–17, balanced
2♣	Gazzilli: either 14–17 with clubs, or some 18+ hand
2♦	14–17, natural, non-forcing
2♥	14–17, natural, non-forcing
2♠	11–15, spade support
2NT	game force: a two-suiter in hearts and a minor, or a heart single-suiter or a 4-card spade raise
3♣	16–17, 5–5 in hearts and clubs, good playing strength
3♦	16–17, 5–5 in hearts and diamonds, good playing strength
3♥	about 8 playing tricks in hearts, like an Acol 2
3♠	16–17, 4-card raise
4♣/♦	splinter raise of spades

You will see a lot of consistency here with these 0–9 responses to 1♦/♥/♠. Opener can:

- make a Gazzilli bid (usually 2♣, but 1NT after 1♦–1major), either limited and natural or some 18+ point hand
- make a non-reversing bid at the 2-level, 14–17 and natural
- reverse at the 2-level or bid 2NT to force to game
- make a strength-showing, strongly directional, but non-forcing bid at the 3-level

1♥ – 1♠ – 1NT (15–17 balanced)

Because everyone has named their suit, there is not a lot of complexity required here, as there was for the auction 1♣ – 1♥ (showing spades) – 1NT. Moreover, responder cannot have much more than invitational strength, as he is limited to 9 points.

However, it is worth making opener declarer in a possible minor suit contract:

- 2♣ invitational hand, or sign-off in diamonds. Opener bids 2♦: responder can pass or show the nature of his invitation.
- 2♦ checkback for 3-card spade support
- 2♥ to play
- 2♠ to play
- 2NT puppet to 3♣, preparing to sign-off there

1♥ – 1♠ – 2♣ (Gazzilli: natural or 18+)

As with all the other Gazzilli auctions, the next new-suit bid is artificial, showing 6–9 points and establishing a game force if opener has the 18+ hand. In this auction, that is 2♦:

2♦ any 6–9.

Opener now bids 2♥ to show 14–17 with hearts and clubs. Responder can sign-off with 2♠ or 3♣ (or of course, by passing 2♥) or invite game with 2NT, 3♥ or 3♠.

With the 18+ hand, opener makes another bid, and the partnership proceeds to at least game. For example, opener could rebid 2♠ to show 3-card spade support (or 3♠ with 4-card support), or bid 2NT with a balanced 18–20. 3 of a minor shows that suit, and 3♥ shows 6+ hearts.

2♥ 0–5, sign-off in hearts

2♠ 0–5, sign-off in spades

2NT 0–5, with both minors: perhaps 4144 or 40(54) shape

3♣ 0–5, sign-off in clubs (typically 4 spades and 6 clubs)

3♦ 0–5, sign-off in diamonds (typically 4 spades and 6 diamonds)

After the various weak rebids by responder, opener can continue to invite game with a natural bid if he wishes, with the 18+ hand.

1♥ – 1♠ – 2NT (game force)

Responder ‘puppets’ with 3♣, to find out the nature of the game force. Opener then describes as follows:

3♦ heart – diamond two-suiter

3♥ sets hearts for cue-bidding

3♠ sets spades for cue-bidding

3NT heart – club two-suiter

1♥/1♠ – 1NT (0–9)

This is a slightly uncomfortable auction, because opener might have around 16–17 points and some 5332 shape. Passing with that could result in missing 3NT: the compromise is to use Gazzilli, even though you do not have clubs and you do not have 18+ points.

Apart from that, opener's rebids are similar to the auction 1♥ – 1♠:

- 2♣ Gazzilli: 14–17 with clubs, or 16–17 balanced, or some 18+ hand
- 2♦ 14–17, natural, non-forcing
- 1♥ – 1NT – 2♥
- 1♠ – 1NT – 2♠
 14–17, 6-card suit
- 1♠ – 1NT – 2♥
 11–17, 4+ hearts (but note the 3♥ rebid option)
- 1♥ – 1NT – 2♠
 natural and game forcing
- 2NT game force: one or two-suited
- 3♣ 16–17, 5–5 in the major and clubs, good playing strength
- 3♦ 16–17, 5–5 in the major and diamonds, good playing strength
- 1♥ – 1NT – 3♥
- 1♠ – 1NT – 3♠
 about 8 playing tricks in the major, like an Acol 2
- 1♠ – 1NT – 3♥
 16–17, 5–5 in the majors, good playing strength

The Gazzilli auction unfolds similarly to the others. If responder shows 6–9 with 2♦, opener rebids his major to show 14–17 and the side club suit, or 2NT to show 16–17 balanced. All other responses confirm 18 points and commit to game.

There is one auction that gets some extra tender loving care:

1♠ – 1NT – 2♣ – 2♦ – 2♥ (18+, at least 3 hearts)

Intuitively you would expect that a 2♥ bid by opener in this auction shows at least a 4-card suit, but there is a problem. Because opener rebids 2NT with 16–17, he must rebid 3NT with a balanced 18–20. It is then impossible to reach 4♥ reliably on a 5–3 fit. To avoid this issue, 2♥ is chosen with as few as 3 hearts after 2♦ by responder, and 3NT therefore usually shows 5=2=3=3 shape warning responder off a possible heart contract.

In order to diagnose a potential heart fit properly, responder now bids as follows:

- 2♠ a relay bid, denying 4 hearts, asking for a further description from opener (who can show a 4-card minor, bid 3♥ with 5–5 shape, etc.)
- 2NT exactly 4 hearts: opener can confirm a heart fit by rebidding 3♥; with only 3 hearts, he makes a different descriptive bid
- 3♣/3♦ natural 5+ suit, denies 4 hearts
- 3♥ 5+ hearts, confirming the heart fit

Example auctions

♠ Kx		♠ xxxxxx
♥ AKJxx		♥ Qx
♦ QJx		♦ Kx
♣ KJx		♣ Axx
	W E	
1♥		1♠
2♣		2♦
2NT		3NT
Pass		

Opener uses Gazzilli, and when responder shows 6–9 points, bids 2NT to indicate 18–20, but without 3 spades. Responder decides against a spade contract.

♠ AQJx		♠ xxx
♥ AKQJx		♥ xx
♦ Kx		♦ AJxxx
♣ Ax		♣ Kxx
	W E	
1♥		1NT
2♠		2NT
3NT		4NT
6NT		Pass

Opener makes a natural game force of 2♠. Responder marks time to see if opener can pattern out with a 3-card minor. When opener suggests 4522 shape, responder makes a quantitative raise to 4NT and opener accepts.

♠ KQxxx		♠ x
♥ AQx		♥ xxxxx
♦ AKQx		♦ xxx
♣ x		♣ xxxx
	W E	
1♠		1NT
2♣		2♥
3♥		Pass

After Gazzilli, responder shows 0-5 with hearts. Opener invites game, and responder is at last able to put a green pass card on the table.

♠ AJxxx		♠ x
♥ AJx		♥ Kxxxx
♦ Qxx		♦ Axxx
♣ AQ		♣ xxx
	W E	
1♠		1NT
2♣		2♦
2♥		3♥
4♥		Pass

Responder shows 6-9, and opener reveals at least 3 hearts. Responder raises to show 5 hearts, and the correct 4♥ contract is reached played by the strong hand.

♠ Ax		♠ Kxx
♥ KQxxx		♥ xx
♦ x		♦ Axxxx
♣ AJxxx		♣ Qxx
	W	E
1♥		1NT
2♣		2♦
2♥		2NT
3♣		Pass

This time opener reveals the hand with clubs, and 14–17, with his 2♥ rebid. Responder invites game with 2NT, but opener isn't interested.

Finally, here is one from real life, a French event in 2010:

<i>Nunes</i>		<i>Fantoni</i>
♠ AQJ53		♠ 862
♥ 5		♥ 643
♦ A10		♦ Q543
♣ AKQ54		♣ 972
	W	E
1♠		1NT
2NT		4♠
Pass		

Fantoni had one of those 0–2 hands with spade 'support', so he responded 1NT. When Nunes showed some sort of game-force, Fulvio jumped to 4♠, not bothering to find out about the nature of partner's hand (and not revealing it to the opposition) because his hand was so worthless.

A little surprisingly, this was a 10-imp pickup for Fantunes. At the other table, a strong artificial 1♣ was opened, and this attracted a 1♥ overcall. After a pass and 3♥ pre-emptive raise, West bid just 3♠ and was stranded there (a 4♥ bid to suggest spades and a minor might perhaps have been wiser).

1♥/1♠ raise structure

There are three levels of supporting bids for the 1♥/1♠ opening:

- 1) Weak raises are shown via a simple raise to the 2-level: 1♥ – 2♥ or 1♠ – 2♠.

The simple raise indicates about 3–6 points with 3-card support, or 2–4 points with 4-card support.

Alternatively, you can make a pre-emptive raise to the 3-level with a distributional 0–5 count (at least 4 trumps); or a jump to game with a little bit more, in particular 5-card support.

For all of these responses, it is up to you how you choose to continue as opener: for example long and/or short suit game tries.

- 2) Mildly invitational raises respond 2NT. This shows 7–9 points with 3-card support, or 5–9 points with 4-card support, or 8–11 points, 4-card support and a shortage.
- 3) Strongly invitational or game-forcing raises begin with a 2♣ 10+ point relay response.

1 ♥/1 ♠ – 2NT (*limited raise*)

The 2NT raise can be one of three hand types:

7–9 points, 3-card raise

5–9 points, 4-card raise

8–11 points, 4-card raise with a shortage somewhere

These are essentially hands that are too strong for a simple raise to the 2-level (which you will recall is limited to about 6 points), but not strong enough to bid a game should opener have an 11–13 point hand.

Opener's rebids are as follows:

- 3 ♣ shows at least some interest in game, and asks responder to clarify the nature of his bid. Responder now can:
 - bid 3 ♦ to show the 3-card raise
 - rebid the major to show the 4-card raise and a minimum
 - bid 3NT to show the 4-card raise and a maximum
 - otherwise, show the 8–11 point hand by bidding the singleton
- 3 ♦ invitational values, typically about 14–16 points. Responder accepts or rejects according to the nature of his hand.

Rebid the major

signing off: 11–13 points, remembering that this shows the other major

3 ♥, after a 1 ♠ opening

natural and forcing; responder can return to 3 ♠ if minimum

3NT

5332 shape, 17+: offering 3NT as the final contract in case responder has the 3-card raise and balanced pattern

Strong responses to 1♥/1♠

1♥/1♠ – 2♣ (10+: natural or balanced or raise)

Two-over-one responses in Fantunes are not dissimilar to their counterparts in Standard American. The one-level opening is natural (albeit unlimited in strength), and the 2-suit response shows at least 10 points. You could play familiar standard methods.

Needless to say, Fantoni and Nunes do not. They play a combination of natural and relay bids that can be quite complicated. The methods presented here are a mild simplification of what Fantunes actually play, but extensive use has shown that they work well.

It is important to understand that the 2♣ response to 1-major does *not* force the partnership to game, unlike in the auction 1♦ – 2♣. This is because the opening bid can be as weak as 11 points, if it includes the other major. However there is only one very specific auction that allows the partnership to stop short of game, and once that auction has not happened, we are in a game-force. We will come to that auction shortly.

Opener's rebids are:

2♦ shows the *other major*, so this is the only rebid in which opener could be 11–13 points. However, there is no upper strength limit to this bid.

1♠ – 2♣ – 2♠
1♥ – 2♣ – 2♥
14+, single-suited

1♠ – 2♣ – 2♥
1♥ – 2♣ – 2♠
diamond side suit, any strength

2NT 18–20, balanced (5332 shape)

3♣ natural, 4+ clubs, 14+ points

3♦ 18+, typically 6322 shape, not a strong suit (compare with a jump rebid in the major)

1♠ – 2♣ – 3♠
1♥ – 2♣ – 3♥
strong hand, strong suit: sets the suit for cue-bidding

1♠ – 2♣ – 3♥
 1♥ – 2♣ – 3♠

natural and distributional, about 15–17

In some of these auctions, responder now has the opportunity to make a further relay-style bid to find out more, but it is not mandatory. Responder can support one of partner's suits, to set that suit for cue-bidding, or he can bid a new suit of his own, indicating that the 2♣ response was actually a natural bid, and revert to natural bidding.

For example, consider the auction 1♠–2♣–2♠, where opener is showing a one-suiter. 2NT is now the next relay bid by responder, but he has other options. He can bid 3♠ to set spades as trumps, or rebid 3♣ to show a long club suit, or even bid 3♦ or 3♥ to show primary clubs and a secondary suit or stopper. Even though opener has denied a side suit in this auction, that doesn't mean responder might not want to continue naturally. For example, responder might have 6–5 shape.

Anyway, the key point to take away from this set of opener's rebids is that 2♦ shows the other major, 2-other-major shows diamonds, and 2-major shows a one-suiter.

Minimum 3NT

Now might be a good time to mention how Fantunes deals with 'serious' and 'non-serious' slam tries. When a *major* has been set as trumps below the level of 3NT, then a 3NT bid by either party indicates minimum strength: it can be regarded as a 'non-serious', or mild, slam try. By-passing 3NT and making a 4-level cue-bid shows extra values, a 'serious' slam try. Bidding game directly shows the worst possible hand in the context of the auction.

For example, consider the auction:

1♥	2♣
2♥	3♥
?	

Opener has at least 14 points but there is no upper limit. If he has a spade control, then 3♠ is his next bid. Lacking spade control, 3NT shows minimum values, about 14–16 points. 4-minor would be a cue bid, confirming extra values whilst denying spade control.

If opener does continue with 3♠:

1♥	2♣
2♥	3♥
3♠	?

responder has the same options. 3NT would show minimum values, 4-minor is bid with extras.

What about this auction?

1♥	2♣
2♦	3♥
?	

Here opener has shown both majors, so his range is 11 points or better. He has the option to simply raise 3♥ to 4♥ to show a rock-bottom minimum, say 11–12 points.

1♥/1♠ – 2♣ – 2♦ (both majors)

Here is the auction that takes in all the 11–13 point openers with both majors: hands that mean the partnership might not belong in game. Responder can offer 2-major or 3♣ as a final contract: this is the only way to stop short of game after a 2♣ response.

Responder's rebids are:

- 2♥/2♠ 10–12 points, offering that contract to play (with no absolute guarantee of an 8-card fit). Opener can pass, or continue on (game-forcing) with a descriptive bid.
- 2NT further relay for shape information: opener can show a minor-suit fragment, or extra length in a major, or bid 3NT with 5422 shape and up to about 17 points
- 3♣ natural, non-forcing, about 10–12 points with 6+ clubs
- 3♦ natural, showing longer clubs
- 3♥/3♠ sets that suit for cue-bidding

Fantoni and Nunes play a more complex set of continuations after 1 major – 2♣ – 2♦ to further clarify opener's high-card strength, but this is not essential for the effective operation of the system.

1♥ – 2♣ – 2♥, 1♠ – 2♣ – 2♠ (14+ *single-suiter*)

Once again, responder can relay with 2NT, or alternatively make a natural bid: raising the major to set the suit, or bidding something else to indicate that the original 2♣ bid was natural.

After the 2NT relay, opener clarifies to show a side *shortage* (this is a bit like the auction 1♦–2♣–2♦ ...):

- 3♣ club shortage
- 3♦ diamond shortage
- 3 other major
 shortage in the other major
- 3 opened major
 6322 or 7222 shape
- 3NT 15–17, 5332 shape

1♥ – 2♣ – 2♠, 1♠ – 2♣ – 2♥ (2-*suiter with diamonds*)

Again, responder can relay with 2NT, or alternatively make a natural bid: raising the major or diamonds to set the suit, or bid something else to indicate that the original 2♣ bid was natural.

After the 2NT relay, opener once again makes a descriptive bid:

- 3♣ club fragment, about (51)43 shape
- 3♦ 5-card diamonds
- 3 other major
 major fragment, about (53)41 shape
- 3 opened major
 6-card major, so about 6–4 shape
- 3NT 14–17, (52)42 shape (if stronger, bid higher!)

♠ KQJxx		♠ x
♥ Qxxx		♥ Kx
♦ x		♦ Axxx
♣ Axx		♣ KQJxxx
	W	E
1♠		2♣
2♦		2NT
3♣		4♣
5♣		Pass

Opener shows both majors, responder enquires further. Opener admits to a club fragment, responder sets the suit as trumps for cue-bidding, but opener refuses to cue-bid with his revolting hand.

♠ AKQxx		♠ x
♥ Ax		♥ Kxxx
♦ Kx		♦ AQxx
♣ AKxx		♣ Jxxx
	W	E
1♠		2♣
3♣		3NT
5NT		6♣
Pass		

Opener shows clubs, and responder suggests 3NT. But opener has a monster and insists that responder 'pick a slam'. Responder picks.

♠ KQxxx		♠ AJxx
♥ KQJx		♥ Axx
♦ Qxx		♦ AKx
♣ Q		♣ xxx
	W	E
1♠		2♣
2♦		3♠
3NT		4♦
4♥		5♦
6♠		Pass

Opener shows both majors, responder sets spades as trumps. Opener shows minimum, but not sub-minimum values with 3NT. Responder cue-bids in diamonds, denying a club control, opener returns the compliment in hearts, implying club control as well as in hearts. Now, with TURBO in action, 5♦ is a cue, and shows an *odd* number of key cards, and West has enough data to bid the slam.

♠ KQJxx		♠ Ax
♥ Kx		♥ QJxx
♦ QJxx		♦ AKxx
♣ Kx		♣ xxx
1♠		2♣
2♥		3♦
3NT		Pass

Opener shows diamonds, and responder sets the suit. Opener has nothing special further to say and suggests 3NT.

♠ x		♠ KQJx
♥ AKxxxx		♥ xx
♦ KJx		♦ Q10xx
♣ Axx		♣ KJx
1♥		2♣
2♥		2NT
3♠		3NT
Pass		

Opener shows a one-suiter, and then a 6-card suit with a spade shortage.

1♥/1♠ – 2♦ (10+, natural)

We depart again a little from how Fantoni and Nunes treat this response. They make 2♦ a game-force, even though opener may have 11 points with only the majors and nothing in diamonds. We prefer to allow some auctions to finish in a part-score, and this is what will be described here.

Here is a hand from the White House tournament in 2008 to illustrate how the Italians do it:

<i>Nunes</i>		<i>Fantoni</i>		
♠ J10765	<table><tr><td>W</td><td>E</td></tr></table>	W	E	♠ Q4
W		E		
♥ AQ873		♥ 2		
♦ A		♦ KQ9865		
♣ Q6	♣ A943			
1♠		2♣ (!)		
2♦		2♠		
Pass				

Fantoni rightly decided he lacked sufficient values to force to game, so he responded 2♣. When Nunes showed both majors with 2♦, Fantoni offered 2♠ as the final contract and there they were in the right place. It made an overtrick for 8 IMPs, as at the other table, the German pair wandered up to 3NT, two down.

Using the methods described in this book, you cannot respond 2♣ with that East hand, because you will never be able to show your diamond suit. A later diamond bid would mean that you had clubs and a secondary diamond suit. We find that suppressing the diamond suit on that White House deal is just too hard to swallow. We respond 2♦, but our methods will then give us an exit to a 2♠ (or 3♦) final contract.

Opener's rebids are:

1♠ – 2♦ – 2♠
 1♥ – 2♦ – 2♥
 14+, single suited

1♠ – 2♦ – 2♥
 1♥ – 2♦ – 2♠
 natural, showing at least 5–4 in the majors, any strength

2NT 18–20, balanced (5332 shape)

3♣ natural, 4+ clubs, 14+ points

3♦ natural raise

1♠ – 2♦ – 3♠
 1♥ – 2♦ – 3♥
 strong hand, strong suit: sets the suit for cue-bidding

1♠ – 2♦ – 3♥
 1♥ – 2♦ – 3♠
 1♥/♠ – 2♦ – 4♣
 splinter raise of diamonds

The bidding can develop naturally from there. Everything is game forcing, except when opener has responded in the other major, and therefore could have the 11–13 point hand. In that auction, we allow responder to sign off in 3♦, or, specifically after the auction 1♠ – 2♦ – 2♥, he can rebid 2♠ to offer a final contract (that is the auction we would recommend for the White House tournament hand above).

1♠ – 2♥ (10+, natural, game-force, 5+ hearts)

This particular two-over-one is certainly game-forcing. Even if opener has 11–13 and both majors, there is at least a 5–4 heart fit, and therefore game should be reached. If you are looking for a system that successfully stops in 3♥ if both opener and responder are at the minimum ends of their bids, then you will have to look elsewhere.

The bidding develops naturally. We recommend a ‘fast arrival’ approach: the auction 1♠ – 2♥ – 4♥ should show an original 11–13 point hand with no great distributional feature.

1 ♥ – 2 ♠ (10+, natural, game-force, 5+ spades)

This is the direct equivalent of 1♠-2♥, but with the suits reversed. Again a direct leap to 4♠ by opener would suggest the 11-13 point hand.

1 ♥/1 ♠ – 3 ♣ (10-15, 5-5, clubs and the other major)

1 ♥/1 ♠ – 3 ♦ (10-15, 5-5, diamonds and the other major)

1 ♥/1 ♠ – 3-other-major (10-15, 5-5, clubs and diamonds)

Opener can sign off in a game, or set a suit for cue-bidding.

Passed hand variations

There are no notable changes when responder is a passed hand. The responses at the one-level are unaffected. The 2♣ response is still 10+ points, and opener's rebids are unchanged.

The auction Pass – 1♥ – 2♠ still shows 10+ points and a 5-card suit; however as a passed hand it will tend to be *exactly* 5 spades, otherwise the hand would have been opened at the 2-level in the first place.

Interference over 1♥/1♠

There is nothing special in Fantunes about what to do if an opponent overcalls or doubles a 1-major opening. You do have to decide how strong you must be to make a redouble if an opponent doubles.

After 1♣ and 1♦ openings, we recommended that a redouble shows 7+ points, because those openings are based on a minimum of 14 points.

However, the 1-major opening has a 'weak' option, should opener have both majors. The fact that a takeout double has been made perhaps reduces the chance of opener having that weak option, so we would still recommend redoubling on as few as 7 points.

What should you do if an opponent intervenes after the artificial 2♣ response? We think you should ignore a double of 2♣ and continue with the system rebids (for example 2♦ to show both majors), but revert to natural methods after an overcall. A redouble can be used to indicate clubs and hope to penalize the intervener.

Intermission

What makes a bidding system 'good'? Put simply, a good system will get you to the correct part-score, game or slam most of the time. All established systems achieve this. The rate at which you reach the correct contract will depend not on the basic system, but how comprehensively you and your partner have discussed it, honed it and practised it.

In uncontested auctions, it really does not matter much what system you play. As long as you play it well, you will usually arrive at a good final contract.

But nowadays, less than half of all auctions are uncontested. It is the competitive auctions which result in most of the bidding swings. The real test of 'goodness' for a bidding system comes when the auction gets competitive.

There are two aspects to this. Firstly, you open the bidding, the opponents intervene, but the final contract belongs to your side. You have to shrug off the opponents and reach the right spot, or penalize them effectively.

How well you cope depends not only on your agreements, but also on what information has been transmitted before the intervention begins. Auctions that start with an ambiguous bid are the ones most susceptible to disruption. The Precision 1♣ and 1♦ openings and the Standard American 'could-be-short' 1♣ are examples of opening bids that can be easily disrupted. The Standard strong 2♣ opening is another example of a disrupt-able opening – although overcalls of this bid are less frequent due to the higher level and greater strength of the opening. More often, the Standard 2♣ opening pre-empts itself without any assistance from the opposition.

Fantunes 1-level openings are reasonably resistant to intervention. Apart from 1♣, they promise a suit, and because the minimum strength shown is typically greater than normal, the opponents are less likely to have the values to take action.

The flip side of the competitive coin is when you open the bidding but the final contract belongs to your opponents. A typical example of this genre is the pre-emptive opening bid at the 3-level. There is every chance that the contract belongs to them, but by getting in the first bid, and at a high level, you make it very hard for them to reach their correct spot. Weak-two openings have the same objective.

Destructive opening bids are part and parcel of any good bidding system. Weak-opening (or HUM 'highly unusual methods') systems take the concept to a logical extreme. These involve an artificial 'fertilizer' bid, somewhere at the one-level, that promises nothing at all, for example any 0-7 point hand. Their objective is pure disruption, and consequently there are few events in which they are allowed.

Fantunes specialises in legal destructive opening bids. We are about to meet them. They are the heavy artillery weapons in the system, not because they lead their proponents to the correct contract, but because they prevent the opponents from reaching *their* correct contract. Keep that in mind as you read on ...

1NT auctions

1NT shows 12–14 points (could be 11 points non-vulnerable) and a balanced or semi-balanced hand.

1NT is by far the most frequent opening bid in Fantunes. It accounts for 28% of all the opening bids. It shows 12–14 points, but can be opened with 11 points, when non-vulnerable.

A number of semi-balanced hand patterns are included in the 1NT opening. As well as the normal 4333 and 4432 shapes, the following are opened 1NT, if the point count is right:

- 5332 shapes (any suit, but with 14 points and a major, can open 1-major)
- 5422 shapes, *except* if both majors are held (in which case open 1-major)
- 4441 shapes, 12–13 points (with 14 points, open 1♣ or 1♦)

Scary? Perhaps, but our records show that the 1NT opening is every bit as effective as the other Fantunes openings when it comes to winning IMPs. We will explore why this is so in this chapter.

We start with the obvious issue:

Objection! *You want me to open 1NT regardless of vulnerability and position on such weak hands. And with such strange possible shapes? The penalties are going to be horrendous! Get me out of here.*

Here is an extract from an interview⁵ with Norberto Bocchi, one of the top Italian stars. He can state the objection with more authority.

⁵ From the Neapolitan Club on-line bridge magazine

Question: In the system you played with Giorgio Duboin, the opening 1♣ and 1NT were integrated: 1NT varied between 12–14 and 15–17, depending on vulnerability and position: 1♣ covered the remaining balanced hands. Playing with Augustin Madala, your new partner, this feature vanished: now 1NT is fixed to 15–17. Why?

Norberto Bocchi: I have changed because, only at the very high level, the weak no trump could be dangerous. It is a very aggressive way of bidding, but let me explain better. We Italians are the strongest, so we do not need to be very aggressive to win. This kind of bridge is for weaker players, we have no more interest in it. We practised it because it was fun, but now we have got rid of it, also because such an intricate system calls for greater concentration: you must always be aware of the vulnerability or position because the system changes depending on this, and it all becomes very, very complex. So it had downsides for little advantage. We do therefore have many burdens on the 1♣ opening: it has become difficult to find room for new hands.

Bocchi is basically saying that the weak notrump is an aggressive opening that can work well, but is too dangerous, and his partnership is so strong that he can win IMPs in other ways. He is surely right about his own partnership! He is also concerned that varying the 1NT range adds a memory strain ... this is actually not a problem in Fantunes as 1NT is always weak. For Fantunes, damn the torpedoes, vulnerability and position: we open a weak 1NT whatever and whenever.

Here is what Fulvio Fantoni has to say about it all:

Question: I would like to discuss your weak 1NT opening when vulnerable. It is very risky, but what are the advantages?

Fulvio Fantoni: Certainly it is risky. But our system requires this opening. In fact, we cannot put a weak 12–14 balanced hand opening in any other part of our system. So we are obliged to open 1NT even when vulnerable, which certainly involves elevated risks. But in the end, we have seen that in any event the outcome is positive: more points are won than are lost. The player in first seat, vulnerable against not vulnerable, does not have to open with 12 points. Really, more me than Claudio: he is more agreeable to opening while I sometimes pass with 12 points.

Dir: South
Vul: N/S

♠ J85
♥ 1086543
♦ Q
♣ AQ6

♠ A1096
♥ J2
♦ AK65
♣ K72

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K3
♥ AKQ97
♦ J873
♣ 94

♠ Q742
♥ -
♦ 10942
♣ J10853

West	North	East	South
	<i>Nunes</i>		<i>Fantoni</i>
2♦	D'ble	Pass	1NT
2♥	D'ble	All Pass	Pass

Here we see the 5422 shape in action. OK, West did not have to come in over 1NT, but the vulnerability was favourable, and he did have a 6-card suit. Unfortunately, the vulnerability was not favourable enough: declarer was held to two tricks for a 1400 point penalty.

At the other table, South opened 1♥ of course, and N/S had the auction to themselves.

In both these examples, 1NT pre-empted the opponents: this is part of what I was referring to at the start of this book by describing Fantunes as a system of ‘mild pre-empts’. In the first case, the opponents needed to get into the auction; in the second, they needed to stay out. It truly is no picnic defending against the weak notrump. The BBO VuGraph records are littered with examples of top-class opponents stumbling after a Fantunes weak notrump.

Here is just one more:

Dir: South
 Vul: Both

♠ 7	♠ KQ65	♠ AJ842
♥ J1093	♥ A	♥ Q62
♦ 963	♦ 10842	♦ AJ75
♣ KQJ106	♣ 8542	♣ 7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 1093
 ♥ K8754
 ♦ KQ
 ♣ A93

West	North	East	South
	<i>Nunes</i>		<i>Fantoni</i>
Pass	Pass	2♦	1NT
2♥	D'ble	2♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
			All pass

It is not clear what the E/W bidding meant – perhaps they were playing DONT – but it did not much matter. Once East decided to come into the auction (and who can blame him?), E/W were heading for a minus. They ended up 4 down in the revolting 3♦ contract.

The auction in the other room clearly demonstrates the value of the weak notrump. South opened 1♥, North bid 1♠ and South rebid 1NT, which North passed. A sane and sensible auction to the same contract reached by Fantunes, but it told the opponents to stay out. 1NT went two down.

I have spent quite a lot of time here arguing the upside of the weak notrump opening, because it is needed to counter Norberto Bocchi's argument. These strong results in competitive situations are not isolated – they are frequent.

In terms of the 1NT system, we start with the area that is actually the most important of them all: what to do if 1NT is doubled. Over the years, there have been several methods suggested for wriggling out of 1NT doubled, but I think what Fantunes do is clearly best. They recognize that when 1NT is doubled, the right contract for them might well be right there in 1NT doubled, and so they do not play the method of automatic redoubles that is favoured by some.

Instead, responder has two simple options: he can transfer to a 5+ card suit if he has one, or pass otherwise. Redouble is a transfer to clubs, 2♣ is a transfer to diamonds, and so on.

If responder passes, and it is passed back to the weak notrumper, he has three choices. He can choose to stay right there in 1NT doubled, perhaps with 4333 shape. He can bid a 5-card suit of his own. Or he can redouble as a 'scrambling rescue', usually with some 4432 (or 4441) shape, but also possibly with 5422. With the 5422 he has the choice of exiting directly to his 5-card suit, or scrambling.

After the redouble, responder can start bidding suits up the line. Such bids could be on as few as 3 cards. For example, with 4333 shape, after opener's redouble, responder would bid 2♣ and expect to wriggle to a 7-card fit. With a decent hand, responder has the option of standing his ground in 1NT redoubled.

If 1NT is passed around to fourth seat, who doubles, then the methods are similar, but the personnel are flipped. The 1NT opener, who is next to bid, can run directly to a 5-card suit, but most of the time he will pass, to see what responder wants to do. Now *responder* has the option of making a scrambling redouble; alternatively he can bid a minor suit naturally ... he is unlikely to have a 5-card major as he would probably have transferred into it in the first place. Finally, responder can pass out 1NT doubled.

Here is an example of the Fantunes scrambling methods, which did not have a particularly happy ending:

Dlr: South

Vul: N/S

♠ 94

♥ 8752

♦ 1095

♣ 6532

♠ KQ763

♥ KJ4

♦ KQ8

♣ K8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J1052

♥ 963

♦ A72

♣ AQ10

♠ A8

♥ AQ10

♦ J643

♣ J974

West	North	East	South
<i>Gotard</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Piekerak</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
			1NT
D'ble	Pass	Pass	Red'ble
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
D'ble	Pass	Pass	Pass

Perhaps this was the hand Fantoni was thinking of when he said: *The player in first seat, vulnerable against not vulnerable, does not have to*

open with 12 points. Really, more me than Claudio: he is more agreeable to opening while I sometimes pass with 12 points.

Apparently, if the two players had switched seats, Fulvio would have passed that South hand, 12 points, in first seat, at unfavourable vulnerability. But Claudio was happy to open, and the axe fell. He then redoubled to show his shapely hand, poor Fulvio bid his clubs, and there they were in their least-worst contract.

2♣ doubled went three down for -800, an 8 IMP loss against the 450 scored in 4♠ at the other table. 1NT doubled would have been much worse, down 1400 on best defence.

North's hand was truly a nightmare after 1NT was opened, but it does not always have to be like that. I had a similar experience but with a happier ending on a board from an Australian national event:

Dlr: South	♠ 10952	
Vul: N/S	♥ 92	
	♦ 7532	
	♣ 963	
♠ 3		♠ AKQ74
♥ AJ8543		♥ K6
♦ A8		♦ J6
♣ KQ84		♣ J1075
	♠ J86	
	♥ Q107	
	♦ KQ1094	
	♣ A2	

I was North as my partner opened 1NT, once again in first seat at unfavourable vulnerability. I felt sick, although playing the Fantunes exit methods, we would fetch up in 2♦, which is down 3 on best defence: not a total disaster as our opponents could make a slam.

However, the auction did not pan out that way at all:

West	North	East	South
	<i>Jacobs</i>		<i>Thompson</i>
2♥	Pass	2♠	1NT
			All Pass

West's 2♥ was Multi-Landy: hearts and a minor. It was not clear to our opponents whether 2♠ was forcing, and they languished in a part-score with two making slams available. Our potential disaster had turned into a significant pickup.

All right, suppose instead we are left to ourselves after 1NT is opened. No doubt, you already have methods over your 1NT opening with which you are comfortable. You could probably use them with good effect for the Fantunes 1NT opening. We will not go into detail on the Fantunes method of responding to 1NT. If you would like to know the essentials, then they are listed in the *Fantunes system card* section.

There are however a few necessary features for your methods:

- 1. Simple Stayman is essential.** Stayman is a necessity after a weak notrump opening, because it forms part of the escape mechanism. If you are dealt, say, ♠ xxx ♥ xxx ♦ xxx ♣ xxxx (sorry to keep giving you horrible 0-point hands!), partner opens 1NT and RHO passes, you need to get out of there pronto. Your LHO is waiting with probably the biggest penalty double you have ever seen, but it becomes a lot more complicated for the opponents if you use Stayman. With any luck you will locate at least a 7-card fit, and your opponents may not have the mechanisms, or the hands, to penalize you there. Stayman is a must-have.

An example of escaping Stayman:

Dir: South
 Vul: All

♠ 763
 ♥ Q932
 ♦ 1084
 ♣ 732

♠ A984
 ♥ 854
 ♦ KQ7
 ♣ A98

N

W

E

S

♠ J2
 ♥ AK76
 ♦ J962
 ♣ K104

♠ KQ105
 ♥ J10
 ♦ A53
 ♣ QJ65

West	North	East	South
	Nunes		Fantoni
Pass	2♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♠

2♠ went down four, -400. Perhaps 1NT might have been passed out, perhaps not. It is just not so easy to nail the weak notrump.

At the other table, the 1♣ opening from South was doubled by West, and the making 3NT easily reached for 600.

2. **Find the 1NTer's 5-card major.** Your tools must be sufficiently advanced to locate a 5-card suit reliably, particularly a major, in opener's hand. There are a number of ways to achieve this; the Fantunes approach is just one of them. It is also preferable to find out this information without revealing too much else about opener's hand.

Fantunes has two options for discovering the 5-card major. An immediate 3♣ response is a direct enquiry for a 5-card major. If opener does not have one, 3NT will be reached with a minimum amount of data provided to the opponents.

Alternatively, after a 2-major response to Stayman, a second enquiry (2♠ over 2♥, or 3♣ over 2♠) will determine whether the major suit has 5 cards. This slower approach is necessary when responder has something like 4-3 in the majors. You need Stayman to discover a 4-4 fit in one major, but if partner responds in your 3-card suit, you need a further bid to discover whether there is a 5-3 fit.

3. **Responder can choose who plays 4-major.** Playing a weak notrump, it is not always certain who should be declarer. With strong 1NT openings, most of the time you want the 1NT hand to be declaring, but it is less clear with a weak notrump. Consider these two hands:

♠ AKJxxx ♥ xx ♦ Ax ♣ xxx

♠ AKJxxx ♥ Kx ♦ x ♣ xxxx

In both cases you know you are going to end up in 4♠, but who should be declarer? On the first hand, partner should declare: you have no tenaces worth protecting. On the second hand, you should declare: not only does this protect the heart king, but keeping your shape hidden will make it much harder for the defenders. Your methods should allow for two different ways of bidding to 4♠.

Fantunes uses South African Texas to make the opening bidder declarer in 4-major. A 4♣ response asks partner to bid 4♥; a 4♦ response demands 4♠. To have responder declare, Stayman is used, then the major suit is bid naturally after that. Of course, opener might respond to Stayman in responder's suit, but in that case, with at least a 6-4 fit, it is less likely to matter who declares.

We finish this chapter with an interesting deal that almost (but not quite) won Fantoni and Nunes the 2010 USA Spingold Championship.

Dlr: South
Vul: nil

♠ K98
♥ AK7
♦ KQ943
♣ 42

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 53
♥ Q10962
♦ 1052
♣ K93

♠ QJ742
♥ 85
♦ –
♣ AJ10765

♠ A106
♥ J43
♦ AJ876
♣ Q8

West	North	East	South
<i>Greco</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Hampson</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
Pass	3♣	D'ble	1NT
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♦	All pass	3NT

This was the third-last board of the final. With only this board to score, the Diamond team, which included Greco and Hampson, held a 5-imp lead.

Hampson's double saved the day for his team. Without it, South would have played 3NT, and West would have no reason to find the killing club lead: declarer has 9 tricks.

Meanwhile South's 3♦ denied a hand with 4 of a major and a 5-card minor, and also denied a club stopper. North bid 3♥ to show a 3-card suit, in case South had 5 hearts, and South's 3NT denied a 5-card major. Fantoni knew 3NT could not be the right spot if South did not stop clubs, so he ran to 4♦, correctly deciding to offer a partscore with his 15-count opposite partner's opening!

Right he was. 5♦ has no play: this was the contract reached (after a 1♦ opening and club interference from E/W) in the other room, down two. If Nunes could make 4♦, he would pick up 6 IMPs and win the match by 1 IMP. The defence started with two rounds of clubs followed by a trump. The winning play is to draw trumps, cash all the major suit winners, and endplay an opponent with a third round of either major. The resulting ruff-and-discard enables declarer to shed his remaining loser. Of course, that is a wildly anti-percentage line, working only because both majors break 5-2. Nunes made the

correct play of cashing the top two hearts and exiting with a third heart. This would make the contract whatever the major suit distribution if the spade honours were split between the opponents. Sadly they were not, and the resulting down one picked up only 2 IMPs, not enough.

For those who are into the deep philosophy of bidding theory, this deal provides much food for thought. Looking at just the North-South hands, what auction do you want to have, assuming your opponents stay silent? If you accept that there is no practical bidding system that can allow you to stop in a diamond part-score, then the auction you want is 1NT – 3NT (whoever is the dealer). There is a 50% chance that the player on lead has fewer than 5 clubs, and that player will likely have a major of at least 4 cards, and he will tend to lead the major in preference to the minor.

Many weak-notrumpers would have that auction, but not if they allow their 1NT opening to include a 5-card major, as Fantunes do. This was unfortunate for Fantoni and Nunes, because if they had bid 1NT – 3NT, the 2010 Spingold trophy would have undoubtedly been theirs.

2-Level openings

This is where Fantunes pays off.

The forcing 1-suit openings have their ups and downs: very good at handling super-strong hands, against some loss of precision at the low level. You could agree or disagree with my argument that the weak 1NT is a winner.

But make no mistake: the 10–13 2-level opening is a *big* winner. The statistics prove it, and the theory supports it.

Let's talk about the theory. The purpose of a pre-emptive bid is to force the opponents to start bidding at a high level when the hand belongs to them. It stands to reason then that high level opening bids are not effective if they are systemically too *strong*. Then the opponents are less likely to own the hand, and it is the opening side that is pre-empted. This is why Acol-2 openings and the like are out of favour, and rightly so. Such opening bids simply represent a lost opportunity to pre-empt the opponents.

What is less often realised is that pre-emptive openings are also less effective if they are systemically too *weak*. This is for two reasons. Firstly, very weak pre-empts are more likely to be penalized. Secondly, the opponents are less likely to go down when they do come in to the auction. It is a matter of simple arithmetic.

The 10–13 point 2-level opening is the Goldilocks of pre-empts: it is not too strong and not too weak, but just right. It is weak enough for it to be quite likely that the opponents want to, or need to, enter the auction, but it is also strong enough to give you a good chance that having come in, they will get too high.

Here are some examples from the highest levels:

Dir: South
 Vul: All

♠ J10632
 ♥ 84
 ♦ AJ
 ♣ K1096

♠ K954
 ♥ 1065
 ♦ K1092
 ♣ 52

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 7
 ♥ AJ973
 ♦ Q7643
 ♣ QJ

♠ AQ8
 ♥ KQ2
 ♦ 85
 ♣ A8743

West	North	East	South
<i>Helness</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Helgemo</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
			2♥
Pass	Pass	2NT	All Pass

2NT was a wretched contract, down 2. But what could Helgemo do? He could not let 2♥ play when his side might easily have a vulnerable game. At the other table South opened 1♥ and North responded 1♠. East was not tempted to come in against opponents who have opened and responded, and the eventual N/S 2♥ contract went down, for 7 Fantunes IMPs.

Dir: South
 Vul: All

♠ 1054
 ♥ J10954
 ♦ J73
 ♣ J3

♠ J
 ♥ AK2
 ♦ A108
 ♣ KQ10874

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K8632
 ♥ 6
 ♦ KQ52
 ♣ A92

♠ AQ97
 ♥ Q873
 ♦ 964
 ♣ 65

West	North	East	South
<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
			2♠
D'ble	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	5♣	All Pass

1♠ was opened at the other table, and with an extra level available, E/W had no difficulty in navigating to the superior 3NT contract for 10 tricks and 13 IMPs.

In both these examples, Fantunes did not make a bid other than the opening. The two-level opening did all the hard work for them, preempting the opponents into either bidding too much or missing the correct strain. The high cards in the opening bidder's hand then contributed to defeating the opponents' final contract.

Dlr: North
 Vul: All

♠ Q8		♠ A10972	
♥ A754		♥ K9	
♦ AQ7432		♦ 865	
♣ K		♣ 876	

N
 W E
 S

		♠ KJ3	
		♥ 1083	
		♦ KJ9	
		♣ J1054	

♠ 654
 ♥ QJ62
 ♦ 10
 ♣ AQ932

West	North	East	South
<i>Brink</i>	<i>Nunes</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>
2♦	2♠	3♦	2♣
			All Pass

You might criticize Drijver for bidding 3♦ rather than 2NT, but that would be harsh. After all, 3♦ was technically the correct contract: 3NT goes down on a heart lead, and he had two opponents both seeming to show values.

Dir: South
 Vul: All

♠ AKJ104	♠ Q873	♠ 965
♥ 102	♥ A43	♥ Q765
♦ Q982	♦ J	♦ A10654
♣ K10	♣ QJ864	♣ 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 2
 ♥ KJ98
 ♦ K73
 ♣ A9753

West	North	East	South
<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Nunes</i>	<i>Zia</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>
2♠	3♠	4♠	2♣
Pass	D'ble	All Pass	Pass

That was -500 for Hamman-Zia, to save 130. Perhaps Zia could have contented himself with doubling 3♠, but he had good distribution and was hoping to push his opponents into error.

At the other table, well ... this is getting repetitive. South opened at the one-level, West bid 1♠, North 1NT, and E/W were never in danger of getting too high. N/S bought the contract in 4♣, the double dummy result.

The Fantunes 2-level openings make double dummy results very hard to achieve!

In these examples, the fact that the 2-level opening had some genuine values was a factor. It improved the chances of Fantunes defeating whatever contract their opponents reached. In the case of the Dutch 3♦ contract, it also sowed the seeds of doubt into the opponents' minds over whether they could make a game. Weak-two openings (6–10 points) also pre-empt the opponents, but they are a little more likely to be able to make the contract that they ultimately reach. The fact that the Fantunes twos include defensive power is crucial to their effect.

Fantunes 2-suit openings give strong results in their own right, and also add solidity to the one-level openings by putting a floor of values (usually 14+ points) as a foundation for the auction. It is a win-win scenario, and is essentially what makes Fantunes a good bidding system.

The 2-level openings win not only when the opponents come in unsuccessfully, but also when they stay out:

Dlr: South
 Vul: nil

♠ J65
 ♥ 987
 ♦ 95
 ♣ AK1093

♠ Q87432
 ♥ 10
 ♦ K732
 ♣ Q2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ AK
 ♥ K4
 ♦ QJ84
 ♣ J8765

♠ 109
 ♥ AQJ6532
 ♦ A106
 ♣ 4

West	North	East	South
<i>Duboin</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
			2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

4♥ made easily enough. At the other table, 1♥ was opened and Versace overcalled 1♠, an option unavailable to Duboin. The upshot of this is that E/W competed to 4♠. Whilst this could be beaten two tricks on a diamond ruff, N/S misjudged slightly and continued to 5♥, down two for an 11 IMP swing. Or ...

Dlr: South
 Vul: All

♠ A87
 ♥ 4
 ♦ 10862
 ♣ 109652

♠ J103
 ♥ 107652
 ♦ KJ
 ♣ KQ4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ KQ
 ♥ AQJ983
 ♦ 94
 ♣ 873

♠ 96542
 ♥ K
 ♦ AQ753
 ♣ AJ

West	North	East	South
<i>Levin</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
			2♠
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

Same deal. At the other table, after 1♠ – 2♠, East came in with 3♥, reaching the making game.

Note the quality of the opponents in all these examples. Every single one of them would be in most peoples’ list of the top 20 pairs on the planet. These are not rabbits that are being baffled by the Fantunes two-level openings.

Well, enough of the sales pitch. Right now you might be thinking: “That’s all very well, but what about when the two-level openings pre-empt ourselves? You are just giving a biased sample.”

You would be right, to a degree. The two-level opening can rebound and pre-empt itself, but the accusation of biased reporting is unfounded: there are few examples where the two-opening pre-empting itself has actually happened, much fewer than the ‘pre-empt the opponents’ scenarios that we have looked at.

For truth in reporting, here is an example, from the 2007 Spingold event:

Dir: South
Vul: N/S

♠ A9
♥ A9543
♦ 96
♣ Q864

N
W E
S

♠ 1076532
♥ 10
♦ AJ3
♣ K92

♠ J8
♥ K6
♦ 10854
♣ AJ1073

♠ KQ4
♥ QJ872
♦ KQ72
♣ 5

West	North	East	South
Zhao	Nunes	Fu	Fantoni
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♥

Wrong spot, two down. North was helpless: there was no way he could safely extract himself from 2♥, and 2♥ could have been the correct contract, if South has 6 hearts and only one spade. What N/S really needed was for E/W to interpose in clubs (and South could make a takeout double of that), but E/W had been pre-empted as intended!

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At the other table, South opened 1♥ and North responded 1♠. Although E/W got into the auction and competed vigorously in clubs, N/S bid accurately to 3♠, which made. That was 9 IMPs away.

The 6-card fit was bad, but a 5-card fit was even worse:

Dir: South		♠ -	
Vul: N/S		♥ J1042	
		♦ KQJ9872	
		♣ 53	
♠ 975432		N W E S	♠ Q6
♥ K5			♥ Q986
♦ A10			♦ 643
♣ KQJ			♣ A1098
		♠ AKJ108	
		♥ A73	
		♦ 5	
		♣ 7642	

West	North	East	South
<i>Buratti</i>	<i>Nunes</i>	<i>Lanzarotti</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♠

At the other table, the 1♠ opening and 1NT response allowed N/S to find their 3♦ contract.

The poorest results for the Fantunes 2-level openings are typically when they are stranded in the opening bid, whilst belonging in a part-score in another suit. They are part-score losses.

The response structure to the opening bid gives us a fighting chance of reaching an improved part-score, as you will see, but it does not always pan out.

The other downside of the Fantunes twos is that a classic weak-two hand has to be passed initially. Weak twos are winning bids. For example, from a European Cup final:

Dir: East
 Vul: nil

♠ KJ54
 ♥ Q
 ♦ KQ83
 ♣ A763

♠ 102
 ♥ K62
 ♦ AJ5
 ♣ Q10942

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 876
 ♥ AJ10874
 ♦ 62
 ♣ J5

♠ AQ93
 ♥ 953
 ♦ 10974
 ♣ K8

West	North	East	South
<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Nunes</i>	<i>Brink</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Fantoni had to pass in second seat. Nothing terrible happened: he ended up in a normal 2♥ contract that went down one: losing three spades, a club, a diamond and a heart.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>Helness</i>	<i>Muller</i>	<i>Helgemo</i>	<i>De Wijs</i>
		Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	D'ble	Pass
3♣	D'ble	All Pass	

The weak two did its work. It got N/S to the same contract as in the other room, but quicker. Helgemo, thinking he might be being stolen from, made a light balancing double and the upshot was -300 in 3♣ doubled for 8 IMPs away. The weak two is a fine bidding weapon, just like the Fantunes two, but it is less frequent. According to our statistics, a Fantunes 2-suit opening is about 9 times more frequent than a weak-two in a major.

What about when responder has enough to bid, but because of the high level opening, not enough investigation can be made to find the right part-score, game or slam? That problem is much rarer, because of the tight constraints on what hand patterns can be opened at the 2-level.

The following hand patterns are disallowed for opening at the two level in first or second seat:

- 5332 (pass or open 1NT instead)
- 5422 (pass or open 1NT instead)
- both majors (pass or open 1-major instead)

This constrains the opening bid, pattern-wise. It will have either a 6-card suit, or a genuine shortage somewhere. Responder's relays will usually discover the full hand pattern, and a well-informed decision can be taken.

It is time to talk system again.

The Fantunes methods after all four of the 2-suit openings are based on the following principles:

- Responder bids the next step as a relay enquiry, asking opener to start describing shape. Responder will then have the opportunity to make a second relay bid (and possibly a third relay) which will complete the description of opener's shape.
- After the first response to the relay, responder can usually return to opener's initial suit at the three-level, which is *invitational*.
- After the first response to the relay, if responder now bids a new suit (other than a secondary relay), it is natural and forcing to game. In other words, there is always the option of reverting to natural bidding.
- After the 2♥ and 2♠ openings, the *second* step bid in response shows the *other* major, and the bidding proceeds naturally.

Therefore, 2♥ – 2NT shows spades, and 2♠ – 3♣ shows hearts.

- A simple raise is natural and implies no interest in game: basically a pre-emptive measure.
- A jump to a new suit at the 3-level shows a long suit and is invitational.

2♣ auctions

2♣ shows 10–13 points, unbalanced with at least 5 clubs.

The 2♣ opening is in some ways similar to a Precision 2♣. We will see that it is possible for responder to relay out most of opener's shapes: this may require up to 3 relay bids. Responder can at any time 'break' the relay by making a natural bid, and the auction reverts to a natural sequence.

Here are the responses to 2♣:

- 2♦ relay, asking for shape information: invitational or better values
- 2♥/2♠ natural and non-forcing, typically about 7 – 11 points.
This is one of the few 2-opening sequences where responder can hope to improve the part-score contract.
- 2NT 5+ spades, 4+ hearts, invitational values
- 3♣ non-invitational raise
- 3♦/♥/♠ invitational, with a one-suiter. typically a strong 6-card or 7-card suit

All the subsequent auctions, other than after the 2♦ relay, continue naturally.

2♣ – 2♦ (relay)

Opener's main duty is to reveal a three or four card major. These are his rebids:

- 2♥/2♠ at least a 3-card suit
- 2NT 2236, 2227 or (12)37 shape, maximum values. The 3-card suit in the 6322 is probably diamonds, but can be a major if the suit is weak, say 3-small, in which case opener decides not to show it with 2♥ or 2♠. This forces to game: responder can set clubs with 3♣, or bid a new suit, showing a strong suit there.
- 3♣ 6-card suit, minimum. Could also include 4 diamonds. Further continuations are natural.
- 3♦ 6 clubs, 4 diamonds, non-minimum
- 3♥ 0445 shape
- 3♠ 4045 shape

The most frequent (and least specific) rebid by opener is 2♥ or 2♠. Responder then bids:

- 2♠ (over 2♥) natural, 5+ card suit, forcing to game. Bidding develops naturally.
- 2NT the next relay for shape, continuations below
- 3♣ natural, non-forcing but invitational
- 3♦/♥ natural and game forcing
- 3NT to play

And after $2\clubsuit - 2\diamond - 2\heartsuit/\spadesuit - 2NT$:

$3\clubsuit$ 6 clubs

$3\diamond$ 4-card suit: so opener has (31)45 shape

$2\clubsuit - 2\diamond - 2\heartsuit - 2NT - 3\heartsuit$

$2\clubsuit - 2\diamond - 2\spadesuit - 2NT - 3\spadesuit$

confirms a 4-card major and singleton in the other major:
so opener has (41)35 shape.

$2\clubsuit - 2\diamond - 2\heartsuit - 2NT - 3\spadesuit$

$2\clubsuit - 2\diamond - 2\spadesuit - 2NT - 3\heartsuit$

3-cards in that major and 4-cards in the original major: so
opener has (34)15 shape.

3NT 4405 shape

There is one final relay possible, after opener has shown 6 clubs with a $3\clubsuit$ rebid. Responder can bid $3\diamond$, and opener describes further.

After $2\clubsuit - 2\diamond - 2\heartsuit - 2NT - 3\clubsuit - 3\diamond$:

$3\heartsuit$ 6 clubs and 4 hearts

$3\spadesuit$ 3316 shape

3NT 1336 or 2326 shape, i.e. denies 3 spades

After $2\clubsuit - 2\diamond - 2\spadesuit - 2NT - 3\clubsuit - 3\diamond$:

$3\heartsuit$ 4306 shape, or 3316 with three small hearts

$3\spadesuit$ 6 clubs, 4 spades and fewer than 3 hearts

3NT 3136 or 3226 shape

Essentially, the response to the final relay is a semi-natural bid. The 3NT rebid indicates no extra length in a major.

Example auctions

♠ Jxxx		♠ AQ
♥ Kxx		♥ Axxxx
♦ x		♦ Qxx
♣ AKxxx		♣ Qx
	W E	
2♣		2♦
2♠		2NT
3♥		4♥
Pass		

Opener shows spades in response to the relay. Responder relays again and opener shows 4315 shape with the 3♥ bid.

♠ Jxx		♠ AQ
♥ xx		♥ Axxxx
♦ Kx		♦ Qxx
♣ AKxxxx		♣ Qx
	W E	
2♣		2♦
2♠		2NT
3♣		3♦
3NT		Pass

This time opener shows 6 clubs, responder relays again, but when opener denies any extra length in a major, responder chooses 3NT.

♠ Kxxx		♠ Ax
♥ xx		♥ AQJxxx
♦ x		♦ Qxx
♣ AKxxxx		♣ Q
	W E	
2♣		2♦
2♠		3♥
4♥		Pass

After a similar start, responder reveals his strong suit. Opener raises.

♠ KQx		♠ Axx
♥ Axxx		♥ Kxx
♦ x		♦ AJxx
♣ Qxxxx		♣ Jxx
	W	E
2♣		2♦
2♥		3♣
Pass		

Responder has a generally invitational hand. He relays, then returns to 3♣. Opener has nothing extra, so passes.

♠ Kx		♠ AQ
♥ xxx		♥ Axxxx
♦ Jx		♦ Qxx
♣ AKJxxx		♣ Qx
	W	E
2♣		2♦
2NT		3NT
Pass		

Opener shows a balanced maximum, choosing to ignore the three small hearts. Since opener did not bid 2♥, responder has no interest in a possible weak 5-3 heart fit, and simply raises to game.

2♦ auctions

2♦ shows 10–13 points, unbalanced with at least 5 diamonds.

The Fantunes methods over 2♦ are a little different to those after the other 2-level openings. The relay response is 2♥, and opener continues the description of his hand by first showing a shortage, rather than a possible second suit.

What is described departs somewhat from what Fantoni and Nunes play: the rebids are more symmetrical, and therefore easier to memorise.

The responses to 2♦ are:

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2♥ | artificial relay |
| 2♠ | invitational values, with at least 5–4 in the majors |
| 2NT | one of three hand types: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- signoff in 3♣- 5–5 in the majors, game forcing- single suited, game forcing |
| 3♣ | natural and invitational, with clubs |
| 3♦ | pre-emptive raise |
| 3♥/3♠ | invitational, with a one-suiter, typically a strong 6-card or 7-card suit |

2♦ – 2♥ (relay)

Opener begins by identifying a side shortage (singleton or void), as follows:

- 2♠ short hearts.
- 2NT no short major, might have short clubs

The remaining bids all indicate short spades:

- 3♣ clubs, so approximately 1354 (or 1255, or 0364, etc.)
- 3♦ 5 diamonds and 4 hearts, so 1453 (or 0454)
- 3♥ 6 diamonds and 4 hearts, so 1462 (or 0463 or 1561, etc.)
- 3♠ 6 diamonds and 3 hearts, so 1363 (or 0373 or 1372, etc.)

Now consider the 2♠ rebid, showing short hearts. Responder can relay again with 2NT, and then opener's next rebid is symmetrically showing hands with short hearts:

- 3♣ clubs, so approximately 3154
- 3♦ 5 diamonds and 4 spades, so approximately 4153 (or 0454)
- 3♥ 6 diamonds and 3 spades, so approximately 3163
- 3♠ 6 diamonds and 4 spades, so approximately 4162

After opener's 2NT rebid, showing at least 2 cards in each major, responder's second relay is 3♣. Opener finishes his description:

- 3♦ club shortage (singleton or void), at least 3 cards in each major, typically (43)51 or 3361 shape. Responder can now bid a 4-card major to uncover a 4-4 major suit fit.
- 3♥ 6 diamonds and 4 hearts, so approximately 2461
- 3♠ 6 diamonds and 4 spades, so approximately 4261
- 3NT no shortage: 6322 or 7222 shape.

Example auctions

♠ Axxx		♠ KQxx
♥ x		♥ AKxxx
♦ AQxxx		♦ xx
♣ xxx		♣ Jx
2♦		2♥
2♠		2NT
3♦		4♠
Pass		

Opener shows short hearts, then about 4153 shape.

♠ xxxx		♠ Axx
♥ Kx		♥ xx
♦ AKxxxx		♦ xx
♣ x		♣ AKQJxx
2♦		2♥
2NT		3NT
Pass		

Opener shows at least two cards in each major. Responder likes the idea of being dummy in 3NT, with the defenders having little clue of partner's shape. It is easy for me to give an example hand which leads to the perfect contract from the correct side. I could just as easily have chosen a hand where opener's 2NT rebid places the resulting 3NT contract from the wrong side. You cannot have everything.

♠ x		♠ AKxxx
♥ Axx		♥ Kxxx
♦ QJxxx		♦ x
♣ Axxx		♣ Kxx
2♦		2♥
3♣		Pass

Opener describes approximately 1354 shape. Responder drops him in 3♣, which is about as well as he can do on this misfit hand.

2♦ – 2♠ (invitational, both majors)

Responder must have at least 5-4 shape for this bid. There is just enough wriggle room to engage in a sensible auction from here. Opener can rebid as follows:

- 2NT shows interest in a major suit contract, depending on responder's exact shape. Responder now rebids:
3♣: approximately 5 hearts and 4 spades
3♦: approximately 5 spades and 4 hearts
3♥: approximately 5-5
Opener should now be able to choose a good contract.
- 3♣ both minors, short majors, pleading to get out in 3 of a minor
- 3♦ 6+ diamonds, no interest in a major suit contract

Bids higher than 3♦ are selecting a contract. Finally of course, opener can also pass 2♠, with a minimum hand and at least 3 spades.

Example auctions

♠ Jxx		♠ Kxxx
♥ x		♥ AKxxx
♦ AKxxxx		♦ Jx
♣ Axx		♣ xx
2♦		2♠
2NT		3♣
3♦		Pass

After responder shows both majors, opener is interested in 4♠ if responder has a 5-card suit. However responder shows 5 hearts and only 4 spades, so opener offers 3♦ as an alternative. If responder had, say, 4513 shape, he could have removed 3♦, knowing that opener must have some major suit interest for his 2NT bid.

♠ x		♠ KQxxx
♥ Qx		♥ AKxxx
♦ KQxxxxx		♦ –
♣ Axx		♣ xxx
2♦		2♠
3♦		3♥
Pass		

After responder shows both majors, opener tries to sign off in 3♦: responder reveals his dislike of diamonds. This setup is no picnic for any system: try bidding it in Standard, with a 1♦ opening.

2♦ – 2NT (club signoff, or game force: single suited or both majors)

Opener must bid 3♣ here, whatever his hand, so that responder can pass with the club sign-off.

Then responder has two choices. He can bid 3♥, 3♠ or 4♣, which shows a powerful suit, typically at least 6 strong ones. After 3♥ or 3♠, opener can rebid 3NT to show a singleton or void in partner's suit and suggesting 3NT as a final contract, or rebid diamonds with 6+ strong diamonds – any other rebid is a cue-bid.

If responder rebids 3♦, opener next bids 3-card majors 'up the line'. Responder does this with both majors, or with one 5-card major, where he simply wants to find a 5-3 fit.

Example auctions

♠ xx		♠ AKQJxx
♥ AQx		♥ Kx
♦ KQxxxx		♦ Ax
♣ Qx		♣ xxx
2♦		2NT
3♣		3♠
4♥		4♠
Pass		

Responder shows a strong 1-suiter in spades. Opener cue-bids, but responder signs off, lacking a club control.

♠ x ♥ Kxx ♦ QJxxx ♣ KJxx	W E	♠ AQxxx ♥ AQxxx ♦ x ♣ Ax
2♦ 3♣ 3♥ 4♥		2NT 3♦ 4♣ Pass

Responder asks for a 3-card major, and this reveals the heart fit. Responder tries for slam, but opener has what my partner always has: the wrong hand.

♠ xxx ♥ x ♦ AQJxx ♣ AQxx	W E	♠ Kxx ♥ KQxxx ♦ Kx ♣ KJx
2♦ 3♣ 3♠ Pass		2NT 3♦ 3NT

Responder asks for a 3-card major, simply happy to play 4♥ or 3NT.

2♥ auctions

2♥ shows 10–13 points, unbalanced with at least 5 hearts, and fewer than 4 spades.

Auctions starting with 2♥ or 2♠ are a bit simpler than the 2-minor openings. There is less room for relaying, but fortunately there is also less for opener to show, because he is not allowed to have the other major. The 2-major openings are essentially either a one-suiter, or have a minor as a side suit.

We will deal with 2♥ and 2♠ openings separately, even though the system is very similar for both.

- 2♠ artificial relay, at least invitational values
- 2NT 5+ spades, at least invitational values
- 3♣ clubs, at least invitational values
- 3♦ diamonds, at least invitational values
- 3♥ pre-emptive raise
- 3♠ splinter raise of hearts (as would be 4♣ and 4♦ responses)

There is nothing much further to be said about the natural 3-level responses. After a 3♣ or 3♦ response, a later 3♥ bid would be non-forcing. On all other continuations, the partnership is committed to game.

2♥ – 2♠ (relay)

Opener will reveal a minor or show a 1-suiter. After most of these responses, responder can return to 3♥ to show only invitational values ... all other auctions force to game.

- 2NT no minor, therefore at least 6 hearts
- 3♣ clubs
- 3♦ 4 diamonds
- 3♥ 5-card diamond suit

Each of the 2NT, 3♣ and 3♦ rebids have follow-up relays. After 2NT, showing a 6-card heart suit, responder can bid:

- 3♣ asks opener to show a shortage (3♦ and 3♠ show a shortage in that suit, 3♥ shows a club shortage, 3NT denies a shortage, therefore 6322 or 7222 shape)
- 3♦ sets hearts as trumps for cue-bidding
- 3♥ invitational values

After the 3♣ rebid, responder can relay again with 3♦ to discover more about opener's shape. Opener rebids:

- 3♥ 5-card club suit
- 3♠ 4 clubs, with a spade fragment, approximately 3514
- 3NT 4 clubs, with a diamond fragment, approximately 1534

Note the symmetry here with the auction 2♥ – 2♠ – 3♥: in each case, the 3♥ bid is describing a 5-card minor.

After opener's 3♦ rebid, 3♥ is the secondary relay (this is the one auction where responder's return to opener's main suit is a relay, rather than depicting invitational values). Opener rebids:

- 3♠ spade fragment, approximately 3541
- 3NT club fragment, approximately 1543

At this time, you might ask: how should opener describe his hand holding a 6-card suit and a 4-card minor? Well, he has to decide what is the main feature of the hand. Perhaps with a strongish 6-card major, he ignores the minor; conversely, with a weak 6-card suit, treat it as a 5-card suit and show the minor.

It is vitally important to also have an understanding of your next action when opener has revealed all the shape he can. In other words, 'what happens then?'.

Obviously, responder can select a game contract, but what about slam investigations? Our rules are:

- New suit bids made before all relays have been exhausted are natural, and the auction reverts to natural bidding.

Once the relay bids have finished:

- Bidding a suit where opener has denied a shortage sets that suit as trumps for cue-bidding.
- Bidding the suit where opener has shown shortage (singleton or void) is an artificial slam try in opener's major.
- Bidding the other major, where opener has not shown any length in that major, is also an artificial slam try in opener's major, *if no other artificial slam try is available*.
- In all other cases, a new suit bid is natural.

These principles apply also to auctions starting with 2♣ or 2♦.

Here are some examples to clarify this important point:

2♥	2♠
3♣	3♦
3♠	4♦

Opener has revealed approximately 3514 shape. Responder is interested in a heart slam. Opener can sign-off in 4♥ with a minimum hand, or bid past 4♥ with extras.

2♥	2♠
3♥	?

Opener has shown at least 5-5 in the red suits. What are opener's options? He could sign off in 3NT, 4♥ or 5♦. A 4♦ bid would clearly

set diamonds for cue-bidding. 4♣ is natural, showing at least a 6-card suit. 3♠, the other major, depicts a slam try in hearts.

2♥
2NT
3♥

2♠
3♣
?

Opener has shown a 6-card heart suit, and short clubs. This makes 4♣ available as a slam-try in hearts; other new suits by responder are natural.

Here is a real-life example from the 2011 Italian Open Teams Championship, which demonstrates all the advantages of the Fantunes 2-level openings.

Dlr: East
 Vul: N/S

♠ Q1062
 ♥ Q9
 ♦ AJ
 ♣ KQ1082

♠ AK54
 ♥ 832
 ♦ K943
 ♣ 96

N

W

E

S

♠ 3
 ♥ AK764
 ♦ 105
 ♣ AJ754

♠ J987
 ♥ J105
 ♦ Q8762
 ♣ 3

West	North <i>Nunes</i>	East	South <i>Fantoni</i>
		Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Fantoni first showed his club side-suit, then over the 3♦ secondary relay, revealed 5–5 shape. Nunes set clubs as trumps, Fantoni cue-bid hearts (denying diamond control). Nunes denied spade control and his 4NT bid was TURBO, showing an even number of club key-cards.

Now Fantoni knew that diamonds were under control, and he had two key-cards himself, so he leapt to the laydown 26-point slam. Notice how control of the auction flip-flopped between the players. This is a feature of TURBO, where either party can finalize the contract. In this

case, it was not the player issuing the early relays who ultimately decided the contract.

At the other table, the old master, Benito Garozzo, perhaps the greatest ever bridge player, sat West. South opened 1♥, and he overcalled 1♠! What a timely intervention this was. North bid 2♣ and East jammed the auction with a pre-emptive raise to 3♠. N/S now lacked the room to investigate slam, and they settled in 5♣.

Garozzo's beautifully judged overcall (at favourable vulnerability opposite a passed partner, so he was in defensive mode) saved the day. However, we should not forget the Fantunes 2♥ opening, which made any intervention by E/W impossible. Not only were the Fantunes relay methods sufficient to bid the slam confidently, but the opening bid essentially pre-empted the opponents from making pre-emptive bids of their own! A showcase hand for Fantunes.

Example auctions

♠ Ax		♠ Jxxx
♥ KQxxxx		♥ Ax
♦ Kx		♦ AJxx
♣ xxx		♣ Jxx
2♥		2♠
2NT		3♥
3NT		Pass

Opener shows 6 hearts, responder indicates that he started with invitational values. Opener, with a maximum balanced hand, offers 3NT, and responder is happy with that.

♠ AQx		♠ Jxxxx
♥ Qxxxxx		♥ K
♦ QJxx		♦ AKx
♣ -		♣ Axxx
2♥		2♠
3♦		3♥
3♠		4♠
Pass		

Initially responder did not want to bid the spades with such a weak suit, so he relayed instead. Opener then had to decide how best to describe his hand: the weak hearts and strong spades convinced him to show approximately 3541 shape. Responder was happy with 4♠. The auction looks natural, but it is not.

♠ xx		♠ AKQx
♥ AKJ10xxx		♥ x
♦ xx		♦ Qxx
♣ Kx		♣ AQxxx
2♥		2♠
4♥		Pass

Relay bidding should not always get in the way of playing common-sense bridge. Opener has one thing to say about his hand, and he says it.

♠ Jxx		♠ Qxxx
♥ AK10xx		♥ x
♦ Axxx		♦ J10xx
♣ x		♣ AKxx
	W E	
Jacobs		Thompson
2♥		2♠
3♦		Pass

This deal is from the 2012 NEC Cup. It demonstrates how it is possible to scramble from one part-score to a better one. Thompson was happy to play in 3-minor if I bid it, or, a little less happily, play in 2NT if I showed a 6-card heart suit.

2♥ – 2NT (*spades*)

Nothing fancy is wanted here. Opener can attempt to sign off with any suit at the three level. 3♣ and 3♦ show a side minor; 3♥ a 6-card heart suit. 3♠ indicates at least two spades, but not enough strength to commit to game. 3NT is natural, implying spade support, perhaps 3622 shape.

Bidding a minor at the 4-level is a splinter raise of spades. For example, in the auction 2♥ – 2NT – 4♣, opener would typically have about 3541 or 3631 shape.

The same natural continuations apply to the auction 2♥ – 3♣ and 2♥ – 3♦. If opener rebids in the other major, which cannot be a natural bid, it indicates a probe for 3NT.

2♠ auctions

2♠ shows 10–13 points, unbalanced with at least 5 spades, and fewer than 4 hearts.

As with the 2♥ opening, the next step is the relay, and the step after that shows the other major, in this case hearts:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 2NT | artificial relay, at least invitational values |
| 3♣ | 5+ <i>hearts</i> , at least invitational values (opener rebids 3♦ to simply deny any heart support or 6 spades, so typically 51(43) shape) |
| 3♦ | diamonds, at least invitational values |
| 3♥ | <i>clubs</i> , at least invitational values |
| 3♠ | Pre-emptive raise |

2♠ – 2NT (relay)

Opener's rebids are similar but a little bit different to those after the 2♥ opening.

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 3♣ | clubs |
| 3♦ | 4 diamonds |
| 3♥ | 5-card diamond suit |
| 3♠ | 6 card spade suit, no minor to show, minimum values |
| 3NT | 6 card spade suit, no minor to show, maximum values |

As you can see, the loss of the one step, as compared with the 2♥ opening, does carry a cost. Responder can no longer find out about opener's shortage, when opener is one-suited.

There are symmetric follow-up relays after the 3♣ and 3♦ rebids. After the 3♣ rebid, opener can relay again with 3♦ identically to the equivalent 2♥ auction. Opener rebids:

- 3♥ 5-card club suit
- 3♠ 4 clubs, with a heart fragment, approximately 5314
- 3NT 4 clubs, with a diamond fragment, approximately 5134

And after the 3♦ rebid, 3♥ is the follow-up relay. In this case, there are only two possible rebids by opener, as the hand with 5 spades and 5 diamonds has already been covered:

- 3♠ heart fragment, approximately 5341
- 3NT club fragment, approximately 5143

Here is a particularly satisfying example from the 2011 Australian National Open Teams:

<i>Jacobs</i>		<i>Thompson</i>
♠ A10542	W E	♠ 7
♥ 873		♥ AKQ94
♦ A		♦ K1042
♣ Q876		♣ AK5
2♠		2NT
3♣		3♦
3♠		4♣
4♦		4NT
5♠		7♥
Pass		

With my first three bids, I showed approximately 5314 shape. Now Ben Thompson cleverly set *clubs* as trumps. I cue-bid in diamonds, and Thompson bid key-card Blackwood. When I showed two key cards and the club queen, Ben knew my entire hand, and revealed the final contract of 7♥, the suit being bid for the first time at the 7 level! He could have recited the play before the opening lead: ruff two losing diamonds in dummy, using club honours and spade ruffs for communications.

With hearts 3–2 and clubs 4–2, 7♥ rolled home.

Passed hand variations

Everything changes in third seat. The upper limit, 13 points, for a 2-level opening remains about the same: it cannot be significantly reduced as it would put too much pressure on the forcing 1-suit opening.

However the *lower* limit drops from 10 points down to ... well, as far as you like:

Dlr: North	♠ 42		
Vul: E/W	♥ 9532		
	♦ J3		
	♣ KQ1085		
♠ A106		♠ Q753	
♥ A		♥ KQ10	
♦ AK10975		♦ Q864	
♣ AJ2		♣ 73	
	♠ KJ98		
	♥ J8764		
	♦ 2		
	♣ 964		

West	North	East	South
	<i>Nunes</i>		<i>Fantoni</i>
	Pass	Pass	2♥
D'ble	3♣	D'ble	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

5 points perhaps?

The ultra weak two did its job: the opponents missed their laydown diamond slam – they failed even to mention the suit. At the other table, the auction started with three passes, and Lauria – Versace had no difficulty in reaching 6♦.

In third seat, your side is unlikely to have a game opposite a 10-13 point hand. In that case, there is nothing wrong with significantly dropping the lower limit for the 2-level opening. There are no relay responses: everything is natural. I recommend that a 2NT response from the passed hand responder should be invitational *with a fit for the opened suit*. The only genuine possibility for a game is if there is a fit: so 2NT is an idle bid, and you can use it as an invitational raise.

In third and fourth seat, the shape rules are also off. You can open at the 2-level on any shape you like, including 5422 or even 5332, or holding both majors, because there are no relay responses to embarrass you subsequently.

One should not be reluctant to apply a very wide range to a third seat opening 2-bid. Suppose you play Standard American with normal weak twos in the majors. You pick up:

♠ Qx ♥ Axxxxx ♦ Jxx ♣ Ax

You are in third seat, no-one vulnerable, and it goes Pass – Pass to you. What do you open? Most people would open 1♥, saying “what’s the problem?”, but consider the merits of opening 2♥, a weak two. After all, you are likely to be bidding 2♥ sooner or later: over most responses to 1♥, you will rebid 2♥. In that case, you might as well do it sooner, and potentially put more pressure on your opponents. The chances of your missing game after a 2♥ opening are negligible: your hand has 8 losers, so your passed partner would need to cover five of them to make 4♥: not impossible, but highly unlikely.

Here is that hand in real life:

Dir: South		♠ Q9	
Vul: nil		♥ A87543	
		♦ J72	
		♣ A9	
♠ A5		NE WS	♠ K103
♥ 10			♥ KQ962
♦ K10854			♦ Q96
♣ QJ1052			♣ 84
		♠ J87642	
		♥ J	
		♦ A3	
		♣ K763	

West	North	East	South
	<i>Nunes</i>		<i>Fantoni</i>
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
3♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

3♦ was down two. The equivalent Standard auction might be 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♥ – Pass: same contract, but in *that* auction, West gets a chance to make his mark over 1♠. One way or another, E/W will probably go plus against opponents playing Standard. On the Fantunes auction, it was much harder for E/W to go plus.

At the other table, South had an option unavailable to Fantunes: he opened 2♠. That is the perfect contract, but ... North raised to 4♠! Another down two.

If you can see the merit in a third seat 2♥ opening on that North hand, playing ordinary weak twos, then you will have no problem with the very wide range of the Fantunes third seat 2-level openings.

Interference over the two level openings

If an opponent bids over the opening, then all relays are cancelled: bidding reverts to natural. A redouble shows points, typically at least 10, and further doubles are penalties. One of the main goals of the two-level openings is to push your opponents too high, and so it is useful to be able to double them at times.

New suit bids by responder at the two-level are non-forcing, but new suits at the three-level are forcing, and if higher than 3 of the opened suit, they force to game.

What about if fourth hand bids over the relay response? We ignore a double and make the normal response to the relay: perhaps that is not best, but perhaps also life is too short to worry about the extra options provided by the double. If, however, fourth hand makes a bid, then the relays are off: opener describes if he wants to, or passes, or makes a take-out double.

It is worth noting that occasionally the relay bid may be made on quite a weak hand in an attempt to improve the contract. That is why many of the responses to the relay bid are natural. When fourth hand bids over the relay, it behoves opener to tread warily.

In competitive auctions, opener should not think twice about coming back into an auction after the opponents overcall. After all, he has shape by definition. Competing against a Fantunes 2-level opening auction is dangerous for opponents, because they can be just about guaranteed bad breaks! For example:

Dir: South ♠ 74
 Vul: N/S ♥ A1042
 ♦ K985
 ♣ K108

♠ 3	N	♠ QJ965
♥ KQJ983	W E	♥ 65
♦ Q2	S	♦ J63
♣ Q764		♣ A32

♠ AK1082
 ♥ 7
 ♦ A1074
 ♣ J95

West	North	East	South
<i>Madala</i>	<i>Nunes</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>
3♥	Pass	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	D'ble

E/W did nothing wrong, but they suffered a 500 point penalty. At the other table, 1♠ was opened of course. West overcalled 2♥, North made a negative double, and N/S settled in a comfortable 3♦ contract. 9 IMPs to the Fantunes team.

Another example of re-entering the auction, this time invited by responder:

Dir: South ♠ J8
 Vul: N/S ♥ K8432
 ♦ A1094
 ♣ A3

♠ AK97542	N	♠ Q106
♥ QJ9	W E	♥ A65
♦ –	S	♦ J62
♣ Q74		♣ 9865

♠ 3
 ♥ 107
 ♦ KQ8753
 ♣ KJ102

West	North	East	South
<i>Babickas</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Tyla</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
3♠	D'ble	4♠	2♦
Pass	5♦	All Pass	5♣

Here is that rare beast: a vulnerable-versus-not sacrifice. Fantunes did not really know that, and after all, if the heart ace had been on-

side 5♦ would make. The Lithuanian E/W did all they could: bidding the theoretically making 4♠, but look at Nunes' aggressive mindset. First of all, he borrows a point to make the 10-13 opening, then he comes back in fearlessly at the 5-level.

At the other table N/S never bid! E/W conducted the auction 1♠ - 2♠ - 4♠. Declarer was not required to find the doubleton ♥10 because North, faced with a blind opening lead, started with a low heart.

Fantunes by the numbers

Internet records provide a wealth of statistical information about Fantunes. In this section, we provide a brief summary and analysis of these numbers.

At the time of writing, Fantunes have played 410 sessions on Bridge Base Online, ranging from 8 boards to 20 boards each. They opened the bidding with bids from 1♣ to 2♠ on 2,723 deals. (We ignored opening bids of 2NT or higher.)

This is how they have fared:

	1♣	1♦	1♥/♠	1NT	2♣/♦/♥/♠	Total
Deal count	603	177	512	754	677	2723
% of deals	22%	6%	19%	28%	25%	100%
Average IMP swing per deal	3.8	5.0	4.4	3.6	4.4	4.1
Net IMPs won	300	161	403	459	494	1817
Net IMPs per deal	0.50	0.91	0.79	0.61	0.73	0.67

It is no great surprise that Fantoni and Nunes have picked up IMPs when they have opened the bidding, whatever the opening bid. It is valid statistical evidence of the power of the system.

“But wait,” I hear you cry. “Might these results not be due, in part or in full, to the superior *card play* of Fantunes, and of their teammates at the other table?”

This is a valid point: and fortunately, the card-play effect can be quantified to a degree. On many hands, in fact about 30% of all deals, the same contract (with the same declarer) is reached at both tables. Any resulting swing will be essentially due to differences in the card play, both by declarer and the defenders.

Fantunes have played 1,676 deals on vu-graph where the identical contract has been reached at both tables. The results are:

Board count	1676
Average IMP swing per board	1.76
Net IMPs won	645
Net IMPs/deal	0.38

This table can be used to calibrate the results of the original analysis. It tells us that at the highest levels, card-play differences generate about 1.76 IMPs per deal. Given that on average, 4.1 IMPs are scored per board (at least when Fantunes opens the bidding), this means that card-play is responsible for a little less than half the IMPs scored.

In terms of *net* IMPs won by Fantunes and their team-mates, card-play appears to yield them about 0.38 IMPs per deal. When Fantunes open the bidding, they are averaging plus 0.67 IMPs per deal. Therefore, just under half of their gain is due to superior bidding (a combination of bidding judgment and system), and the remainder relates to superior card-play.

All the Fantunes opening bids do well, however you will see that the 1♣ and 1NT openings yield a significantly smaller IMP swing per deal, and a smaller net overall advantage for Fantunes, than do the other opening bids. Perhaps this is due to the fact that these opening bids cover all the *balanced* hand patterns, and that balanced hands generate fewer swing situations than unbalanced hands.

However you slice these numbers, there can be little doubt that the Fantunes bidding system generates a net IMP gain for its proponents.

Fantunes system card

Here is a summary of the Fantunes system, like a pseudo system card. It also includes some basic Fantunes system not covered in the body of the book, after their 1NT and 2NT openings.

1♣	14+ with ♣, or 15+ balanced.
1♦	0-11, 4+♥, could have a longer minor.
1♥	4+♥ or 23+ balanced. Then 2♥ = 0-5; 1NT = 6+ and 3433 shape; new suit = shortage.
1♠	5+♣, 4+♠, forcing. Then 2♣/2♥/2♠ = 0-5, natural; jumps are invitational; 2♦ is 4 th suit forcing.
1NT	15-18, balanced. Then 2♣ = artificial invite or better (opener rebids 2♦ with a maximum); 2♦ = retransfer; 2♥ = 4+♠, weak; 2NT = puppet to 3♣.
2♣	14-17, 5+♣.
2♦	18+, 6+♣ OR 4+♦. Then 2♠ = game-force, 2NT = weak with preference for diamonds over clubs.
2♥	19-20, 3♥. Then 2♠ = puppet to 2NT; 3♥ = 4-4 in majors; other suits short-suit tries.
2♠	6+♣, 4+♠, GF
2NT	19-20, balanced, <3♥. Then 3♣ = enquiry; 3♦ = retransfer; 3♥ = 4+♠, weak.
3♣	8 playing tricks in ♣, NF
1♥	0-11, 4+♠, could have a longer minor.
1♠	4+♠ or 23+ balanced.
1NT	15-18, balanced. Then 2♣ = artificial invite or better; 2♦ = 5+♠, 4+♥; 2♥ = retransfer.
2♣	14-17, 5+♣.
2♦	18+, 6+♣ OR 4+♦.
2♥	18+, 5+♣, 4+♥.
2♠	19-20, 3♠.
1♠	0-11, no major.
1NT	15-18, balanced. Then 2♣/2♦ = natural, non-forcing; 2♥/2♠ asks for stopper for NT; 2NT = natural raise; 3♣/3♦ = natural, invitational; 3♥/3♠ = shortage, 5-4 in minors.
2♣	14-17, 5+♣.
2♦	18-20, 4+♣, 4♦, non-forcing.
2♥	23+ bal, or 18+ 5+♣. Then 2♠ = 4+; 2NT = 1-2♣, 6♦ weak; 3♣ to play.
2♠	18-20, 5+♣, 3+♦ or 21+ 5+♣, no shortage.
2NT	19-20, balanced. Then 3♣/3♦ to play; 3♥/3♠ = shortage, 5-4 in minors.
1NT	10+ balanced, GF.
2♣	15+ balanced. Then 2♦ = 13+, other bids natural.

	2♦	18+, unbalanced. Then 2♥ = relay for further description.
	2♥♠	14-17, 5+♣, 4+major.
	2NT	14-17, 5+♣, 4+♦.
	3♣	14-17, 6+♣.
2♣		10+, 5+♣, not 5332, GF.
	2♦	15+ balanced.
	2♥♠	5+♣, 4+major.
	2NT	15+, balanced, 5♦.
	3♣	Raise.
2♦		10+, 5+♦, not 5332, GF, bidding develops naturally.
2♥♠		10+, 5+major, not 5332, GF, bidding develops naturally.
2NT		10+, 5-card major, 5332 shape.
	3♣	Enquiry. Responder rebids 3♦ = 10-12♥; 3♥ = 10-12♠; 3♠ = 13-15♥; 3NT = 13-15♠; 4♣ = 16+♥; 4♦ = 16+♠.
	3♦	6+♣, not interested in a major
3♣		10-15, 5-5, ♣ and another.
	3♦	Enquiry. Responder rebids 3♥/3♠ to show that major, 3NT with diamonds.
	3♦	10-15, 5-5, ♥ and ♠.
	3♥	10-15, 5-5, ♥ and ♦.
	3♠	10-15, 5-5, ♠ and ♦.
1♦		14+, 5+♦ (not 5332) or 4=4=4=1 or 1=4=4=4 shape.
	1♥	0-9, 4+♥, could have a longer minor.
	1♠	14-17, 4+♠, non-forcing.
	1NT	18+ unbalanced. Then 2♣ = 6+, GF; 2♦/♥/3♣ = 0-5, natural; 2♠ = 6-9, 44 in majors; 2NT = 6-9, 3433.
	2♣	14-17, 5+♦, 4+♣.
	2♦	14-17, 6+♦.
	2♥	14-16, 4♥.
	2♠	GF, 6+♦, 4+♠.
	2NT	GF, one suited in ♦, or two suited in ♣ and ♦, or heart raise.
	3♣	16-17, 5-5 in minors.
	3♦	8 playing tricks in ♦, non-forcing.
	3♥	17-18, 4♥.
	1♠	0-9, 4+♠. See 1♦ - 1♥ for continuations.
1NT		0-9, no major.
	2♣	Gazzilli: 14-17 with ♣, or 18+ unbalanced. Then 2♦/3♣ = 0-5, natural; 2♥ = 6-9 (opener rebids 3♣ with 14-17, otherwise describes, game-forcing, 2♠ shows clubs).
	2♦	14-17, 6+♦.
	2♥♠	5+♦, 4+ major, GF.

	2NT	GF, one suited in ♦ or two suited in ♣ and ♦.
	3♣	16-17, 5-5 in minors.
	3♦	8 playing tricks in ♦, non-forcing.
2♣		GF, 10+, clubs, or diamonds, or balanced.
	2♦	6+♦, one suited, or 5+♦, 4+♣, 14-17. Then 2♥ enquires. Opener rebids 2♠ = 6+♦, 18+; all other rebids show 14-17: 2NT = 6+♦, exactly 3 ♣; 3♣ = clubs, 14-17; other = 6+♦, and a shortage (3NT = no shortage, 3♦ = short clubs).
	2♥♠	Natural. Then 2NT enquires for further shape.
	2NT	18+, 6+♦, exactly 3 ♣.
	3♣	18+, 5+♦, 4+♣. Then 3♦ relays for further shape.
	3♦	18+, sets diamonds as trumps.
	2♦	0-5, 5+♠, 4+♥.
	2♥♠	10+, 5+major, not 5332, bidding develops naturally.
	2NT	10+, 5-card major, 5332 shape.
	3♣	Enquiry. Responder rebids 3♦ = 10-12 ♥; 3♥ = 10-12 ♠; 3♠ = 13-15 ♥; 3NT = 13-15 ♠; 4♣ = 16+ ♥; 4♦ = 16+ ♠.
	3♦	6+ diamonds, not interested in a major.
	3♣	10-15, 5-5, ♥ and ♠.
	3♦	0-5, 4+♦.
	3♥	10-15, 5-5, ♥ and ♣.
	3♠	10-15, 5-5, ♠ and ♣.
1♥		5+♥, 11+ if including ♠, 14+ otherwise.
	1♠	0-9, 4+♠.
	1NT	15-17, 5332. Then 2♣ = puppet to 2♦ with an invitational hand or a sign-off in 2♦.
	2♣	Gazzilli: 14-17 with ♣, or 18+ unbalanced. Then 2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦ = 0-5, natural; 2NT = 0-5, both minors; 2♦ = 6-9 (opener rebids 2♥ with 14-17, otherwise describes, game-forcing)
	2♦	14-17, 5+♥, 4+♦.
	2♥	14-17, 6+ ♥.
	2♠	11-15, spade support.
	2NT	GF, one suited in ♥ or two suited in ♥ and a minor, or spade raise.
	3♣	16-17, 5-5 in ♥ and ♣.
	3♦	16-17, 5-5 in ♥ and ♦.
	3♥	8 playing tricks in ♥, non-forcing.
	3♠	16-18, 4 ♠.
	1NT	0-9, <4 ♠.
	2♣	Gazzilli: 14-17 with ♣, or 18+ unbalanced. Then 2♥/3♣/3♦ = 0-5, natural, 2NT = 0-5, both minors; 2♦ = 6-9 (opener rebids 2♥ with 14-17, otherwise describes, game-forcing).
	2♦	14-17, 5+♥, 4+♦.

	2♥	14–17, 6+ ♥.
	2♠	Natural, game-force.
	2NT	GF, one suited in ♥ or two suited in ♥ and a minor.
	3♣	16–17, 5–5 in ♥ and ♣.
	3♦	16–17, 5–5 in ♥ and ♦.
	3♥	8 playing tricks in ♥, non-forcing.
2♣		10+, natural, or ♥ raise or balanced.
	2♦	11+, 5+♥, 4+♠. Then 2♥/2♠/3♣ = non-forcing; 2NT = relay for shape; 3♦ = 5+♣, 4+♦; 3♥, 3♠ sets suit for cue-bidding.
	2♥	14+, one-suiter. Then 2NT = relay for shortage.
	2♠	14+, 5+♥, 4+♦. Then 2NT = relay for fragment.
	2NT	18–20, 5332.
	3♣	14+, 5+♥, 4+♠.
	3♦	18+, 6+♥, spread-out values.
	3♥	Sets ♥ for cue-bidding.
2♦		10+, 5+♦.
	2♥	14+, one-suiter, GF
	2♠	11+, 5+♥, 4+♠. Then 3♦ = non-forcing.
	2NT	18–20, 5332.
	3♣	14+, 5+♥, 4+♠.
	3♦	14+, raise.
2♥		3–6, heart raise.
2♠		10+, 5+♠.
2NT		7–9, 3 ♥, or 5–9, 4 ♥ or 8–11, 4 ♥ and a shortage.
	3♣	Enquiry. Responder rebids: 3♦ = 3-card raise; 3♥ = 4-card raise minimum; 3NT = 4-card raise maximum; new suit = 8–11 and a shortage.
	3♦	Invitational, 14–16.
	3♥	Signoff, 11–13.
	3NT	5332, offering 3NT.
	3♣	10–15, 5–5, ♣ and ♦.
	3♦	10–15, 5–5, ♦ and ♠.
	3♥	0–5, 4+♥.
	3♠	10–15, 5–5, ♠ and ♦.
1♠		5+♠, 11+ if including ♥, 14+ otherwise. Sequences similar to 1♥ opening, except where noted below:
	1NT	0–9.
	2♣	Gazzilli. Then after 2♦ (6–9), 2♥ = 3+♥. Then 2♠ denies hearts; 2NT = 4 ♥; 3♥ = 5+♥.
	2♥	11–17, 5+♠, 4+♥
	3♥	16–17, 5+♠, 5+♥
	2♣	10+, natural, or ♠ raise or balanced.
	2♦	10+, 5+♦.
	2♥	11+, 5+♠, 4+♥ (then 2♠/3♦ non-forcing).

1NT	12-14, balanced (could be 11 non-vul): 4333, 4432, 5422 (not both majors), 5332, 4441 if 12-13.
2♣	Stayman.
2♦	No 4-card major. Then 2♥ = puppet to 2♠; 2♠ = enquiry for 5-card minor; 2NT = natural, invitational; 3-suit = natural, GF.
2♥	4+♥. Then 2♠ = enquiry for 5♥ or 4♠ or 5-card minor. Other bids as for 2♦ response.
2♠	4+♠, <4♥. Then 3♣ = enquiry for 5♠ or 5-card minor. Other bids natural.
2NT	4441, singleton club.
3♣	4414, singleton diamond.
2♦	Transfer to hearts. 5+♥ (weak or strong), or 5+♠, GF, or invitational with 4♥, 5-card minor.
2♥	<4♥. Then 3♣/3♦ show the 4♥, 5 minor hand; 2NT/3♥ = invitational; 2♠ = puppet to 2NT to further describe responder's hand, including the hands with 5 spades; 4♣/4♦ = hearts and that suit, slam try (5-5).
2♥	Transfer to spades. 5+♠ or invitational with 4♠, 5-card side-suit.
2♠	<4♠. Then 3♣/3♦/3♥ show the 4♠, 5 side-suit hand. 2NT/3♠ invitational. 4♣/4♦ = natural slam try (5-5).
2♠	5-5 invite (touching suits), or 5-5 GF in the minors.
2NT	Forced. Then 3♣ = ♣♦; 3♦ = ♦♥; 3♥ = ♥♠; 3♠ = ♠♣ (all invitational). 3NT or higher = minors, GF.
2NT	Sign-off in a minor, or 5-5 invite (non-touching suits).
3♣	Forced. Then 3♦ = to play; 3♥ = ♥♣; 3♠ = ♠♦ (invitational).
3♣	Enquiry for 5-card major, or 4-major + 5-minor.
3♦	Denies 4-major + 5-minor. Then responder bids 3-card majors up-the-line to look for a 5-3 major fit.
3♥	5♣, 4 major. Then 3♠ asks for major.
3♠	5♦, 4♠.
3NT	5♦, 4♥.
3♦	4441, 4414 or 56xx shape. Then 3♥ enquires: 3♠=4414, 3NT=4441, higher=5-6 in the majors.
3♥	31(54). Short ♥, 3♠, 5-4 in minors.
3♠	13(54). Short ♠, 3♥, 5-4 in minors.
4♣	Puppet to 4♥.
4♦	Puppet to 4♠.
4♥	Strong slam try in ♣.
4♠	Strong slam try in ♦.

2♣	10-13, 5+♣, not 5422, not 5332 shape (in 1 st /2 nd seat).
2♦	Forcing enquiry, normally at least invitational values.
2♥	3+♥. Then 2♠ = 5+♠, GF; 2NT = further enquiry for shape, GF; 3♣ = invitational; 3♦/3♥ = natural, GF.
2♠	3+♠. Responder's rebids as above.
2NT	6+♣, no 3-card major, non-minimum.
3♣	6+♣, no 3-card major, minimum.
3♦	6♣, 4♦, maximum.
3♥	0445.
3♠	4045.
2♥	Natural, non-forcing, about 7-11.
2♠	Natural, non-forcing, about 7-11.
2NT	5+♠, 4+♥, invitational.
3♣	Natural, non-invitational raise.
3♦	Natural, invitational.
3♥	Natural, invitational.
3♠	Natural, invitational.
3NT	To play.
2♦	10-13, 5+♦, not 5422, not 5332 shape (in 1 st /2 nd seat).
2♥	Forcing enquiry, at least invitational values.
2♠	0-1♥. Then 2NT = further relay, and opener rebids, as below, except with short hearts rather than short spades.
2NT	No short major. Then 3♣ = further relay. Opener rebids 3♦ = (43)51 or (33)61; 3♥ = 2461; 3♠ = 4261; 3NT = some 6322.
3♣	1354 or 1255 or 0364.
3♦	1453.
3♥	1462.
3♠	1363.
2♠	Invitational, at least 5-4 in the majors.
2NT	Interest in a major suit contract. Responder rebids 3♣ with longer hearts, 3♦ with longer spades, 3♥ with 5-5.
3♣	♦ and ♣, no interest in a major.
3♦	6+♦, no interest in a major.
2NT	One or both majors, or clubs (sign-off or strong).
3♣	Forced. Then 3♦ asks for a 3-card major; 3♥/3♠/4♣ = natural, 6-card suit.
3♣	Invitational, 6+♣.
3♦	Natural, non-invitational raise.
3♥	Natural, invitational.
3♠	Natural, invitational.
3NT	To play.

2♥		10-13, 5+♥, <4♠, not 5422, not 5332 shape (in 1 st /2 nd seat).
2♠		Forcing enquiry, at least invitational values.
	2NT	One-suiter. Then 3♣ asks for shortage, 3♦ sets hearts for cue-bidding, 3♥ = invitational.
	3♣	4+♣. Then 3♦ asks for more shape information.
	3♦	4♦. Then 3♥ asks for more shape information.
	3♥	5-5 ♥+♦.
	2NT	5+♠, invitational or better, opener rebids naturally.
	3♣	6+♣, invitational or better.
	3♦	6+♦, invitational or better.
	3♥	Natural, non-invitational raise.
	3♠	Splinter raise of hearts.
2♠		10-13, 5+♠, <4♥, not 5422, not 5332 shape (in 1 st /2 nd seat).
	2NT	Forcing enquiry, at least invitational values.
	3♣	4+♣. Then 3♦ asks for more shape information.
	3♦	4♦. Then 3♥ asks for more shape information.
	3♥	5-5 ♠+♦.
	3♠	One-suiter, minimum.
	3NT	One-suiter, maximum.
	3♣	5+♥, invitational or better. Then 3♦ = <2♥ and <6♠, other rebids natural.
	3♦	6+♦, invitational or better.
	3♥	6+♣, invitational or better.
	3♠	Natural non-invitational raise.
2NT		21-22, balanced.
	3♣	Muppet Stayman.
	3♦	At least one 4-card major (then 3-major shows the other major).
	3♥	No major (then 3♠ puppets to 3NT, 3NT = 5♠, 4♥).
	3♠	5♠.
	3NT	5♥ (then 4♦ puppets to 4♥).
	3♦	Transfer to ♥.
	3♥	Accepting transfer, no big fit.
	3♠	Fit with cue (4♦ = re-transfer).
	3NT	Fit, but spread out values (4♦ = re-transfer).
	3♥	Transfer to ♠.
	3♠	Accepting transfer, no big fit.
	3NT	Fit, but spread out values (4♥ = re-transfer).
	3♠	Minors.
	4♣	Puppet to 4♥.
	4♦	Puppet to 4♠.
	4♥	Strong slam try in ♣.
	4♠	Strong slam try in ♦.

Getting started with Fantunes

You have read the book – now you and your partner want to give Fantunes a try. I suggest you jump in at the deep end. Start playing it wherever and whenever you can. All of it. Or at least most of it: we have indicated throughout the text areas where you can initially take a simpler approach. Certainly you will have some ‘oopses’, but you might find that they are fewer than you think, due to the natural basis of the system.

Let me tell you about a hand from the very first session that Ben Thompson and I played Fantunes: it was a minor event at our local club.

Ben opened 2♠ and I held:

♠ xx ♥ Ax ♦ Kxx ♣ AKxxxx

I thought to myself: “well, I suppose I need to show my clubs, so we can investigate whether to play 5♣, 4♠ or 3NT”, and so I bid 3♣. I had completely forgotten that the second step response to the 2-major opening shows the other major, so in fact my 3♣ was showing hearts!

Did we then have some ghastly auction to fetch up in a ridiculous final contract? Not a bit of it. Ben had also forgotten about the artificial 3♣ response, so he rebid as though I had clubs. Which I did. We ended in an entirely normal contract: it was serendipity that we simultaneously forgot this aspect of the system.

Oopses are a part of bridge life. Everyone has them, even the best of us ...

<i>Fantoni</i>		<i>Nunes</i>
♠ AQJ3	W E	♠ 6
♥ Q42		♥ KJ63
♦ AQ7		♦ K3
♣ QJ6		♣ AK10752
1♣		2♣
2♦		2♥
2♠		3♠
4♦		4♠
Pass		

4♠ was an inelegant contract, down 1, compared to the making 6♣ in the other room. The auction was fine through to 2♥, then somehow

went off the rails with the spade bids. This was from the first session of the final of the 2009 Italy Cup. Needless to say, the Fantunes team recovered to win the match.

If you have an internet connection, the Partnership Bidding section of Bridge Base Online (BBO) is a great place to practise. The facility allows you to control the hands quite well, so you can set it up to bid 1♣ openings or 2-level openings, and so on.

There are three parts of the system that you should concentrate on so that they become completely familiar. The first is:

1♣ – 1♦/♥/♠ – 1NT

This auction is very frequent. If you look back at responder's rebids and follow-up auctions, you will see that they can be quite tricky. Learn them well: this part of the system is one I would happily take with me in the unlikely event that I ever switch back to Standard.

The second is all the auctions involving Gazzilli:

1♦ – 1NT – 2♣

1♥ – 1♠ – 2♣

1♥/♠ – 1NT – 2♣

Once again, these sequences come up often, and you need to become very familiar with them.

The third important area is how to bid when the opponents intervene over your 1♣ opening, either before or after responder has bid. You do not have to play what is described in this book (although I recommend that you do). What is important is that you discuss the ramifications of the intervention, and be totally confident of what your subsequent bids mean.

We finish up with two more hands that illustrate for me just why Fantunes is such a great system. First, from the semi-final of a major French event:

Dir: North
 Vul: All

♠ KJ1094
 ♥ KQ5
 ♦ 109
 ♣ 862

♠ A7632
 ♥ 73
 ♦ K73
 ♣ A103

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 5
 ♥ J94
 ♦ QJ862
 ♣ KQJ9

♠ Q8
 ♥ A10862
 ♦ A54
 ♣ 754

West	North	East	South
	<i>Nunes</i>		<i>Fantoni</i>
	Pass	Pass	2♦
2♠	Pass	3♦	D'ble
3♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

3♠ was three down, mercifully undoubled. At the other table, South opened 1♦ in third seat, West overcalled 1♠, East bid 1NT, and N/S ended up in 2♦, down 1, for 9 IMPs to Fantunes.

And finally, from the 2004 Olympiad, won by Italy:

Dir: South
 Vul: Nil

♠ K6
 ♥ AKJ8632
 ♦ J7
 ♣ 106

♠ J10743
 ♥ 1075
 ♦ 64
 ♣ 852

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A9852
 ♥ 4
 ♦ 10982
 ♣ AK4

♠ Q
 ♥ Q9
 ♦ AKQ53
 ♣ QJ973

West	North	East	South
	<i>Fantoni</i>		<i>Nunes</i>
			2♠
Pass	3♣	3NT	D'ble
Pass	Pass	4♣	D'ble
Pass	Pass	4♦	D'ble
5♣	D'ble	All Pass	

That was 1100. At the other table, after N/S started 1♠ – 2♥, East was able to show his minors at a lower level. E/W therefore got no higher than 3♣, and so N/S proceeded to the easy 4♥ contract.

You could certainly argue that Fantunes' opponents bid badly on these two boards. On the first, West did not have to overcall 2♠ opposite a passed partner, but he knew his partner had some values. On the second, E/W should not have bid higher than 4♣ (East should surely have redoubled 3NT), although that is still -800. Perhaps East might have contented himself with 3♦ in the first place.

However the evidence says this: time and time again, the 2-level openings give the opponents the rope with which to hang themselves. And even the best of them do just that. Frequently.

And that is why Fantunes works.

Quizzes

Opening bids

What do you open on the following hands? Assume you are the dealer, with both sides vulnerable, but you might consider other seats and vulnerabilities also.

1 ♠ xx
♥ KQxxx
♦ Jx
♣ KQxx

2 ♠ KQxx
♥ KQxxx
♦ Jx
♣ xx

3 ♠ x
♥ KQxxx
♦ Jxx
♣ KQxx

4 ♠ AQxx
♥ KQxx
♦ Axxx
♣ x

5 ♠ AQxx
♥ x
♦ Axxx
♣ KJxx

6 ♠ AQxx
♥ x
♦ Axxx
♣ Kxxx

7 ♠ AJ10x
♥ x
♦ xx
♣ AKJ10xx

8 ♠ x
♥ xx
♦ KQ10xx
♣ A109xx

9 ♠ xx
♥ QJ10xxx
♦ AJx
♣ xx

10 ♠ AQx
♥ Ax
♦ KQx
♣ AKQxx

11 ♠ AKQxx
♥ AQx
♦ KQx
♣ Ax

12 ♠ AQxxx
♥ AQx
♦ KQx
♣ Ax

13 ♠ xx
♥ AKQJxxx
♦ A
♣ AKQ

14 ♠ Qxxxx
♥ AQ
♦ Kxxx
♣ Qx

15 ♠ K
♥ Qxxx
♦ KQxx
♣ AJxx

Opening bids solutions

1. Pass. You cannot open 2♥ with a 5422 shape, and the hand is not strong enough for 1NT. In third seat, you might open 2♥.
2. 1♥. With both majors, it is acceptable to open at the 1-level with this 11-count. This is the rock-bottom minimum for a 1♥ opening.
3. 2♥. 5431 shape is OK for a 2-level opening. If partner relays with 2♠, you bid 3♣ showing clubs, and if he relays again with 3♦, you can round out your shape with 3NT.
4. 1♦. A 1♣ opening promises at least 2 clubs. If partner responds in a major, you raise. You pass a 1NT response, and bid 2♥, your first side suit, over a 2♣ response.
5. 1♣. You could open 1♦, but it is not needed. Over 1♦ (showing hearts), you can bid 1♠.
6. 1NT. This is not quite strong enough for a 1♣ opening, which requires 14 points. A 1NT opening is unpleasant, but the world will not end.
7. 1♣. Only 13 points, but what a 13! This is much too strong in playing strength for a 2♣ opening. Fantunes are quite happy to upgrade or downgrade as appropriate.
8. 2♦. Another upgrade. This well-upholstered hand is worth a 2-level opening. Over a 2♥ relay, you bid 3♣, showing short spades as well as clubs.
9. Pass. It is a lovely weak two opening, but we do not play them! In third seat, you can happily open 2♥. If you were at favourable vulnerability in first seat, you might consider a 3♥ opening: this is a matter of style.
10. 1♣. Balanced hands with 23+ points (too strong for a 2NT opening) are opened 1♣.
11. 1♣. Even if the balanced hand includes a 5-card major.
12. 2NT. 21–22. Puppet or Muppet Stayman can discover the 5-card spade suit.

13. 1♥. Forcing of course! Over a 0–9 response (1♠ or 1NT), you bid 2NT. Partner bids 3♣ and you bid 3♥, showing a game-forcing one-suiter. Now 3♠ would be a cue-bid by partner, and you can bid the slam. If he fails to bid 3♠, you settle in game.
14. 1NT. Fantunes considers this shape as balanced.
15. 1♦ is the system opening. If partner bids 1♠, you bid 2♣ non-forcing. If partner has 5 spades and 4 hearts, he would have responded 2♦ with 0–5 points, and with 6–9 points, he can now bid 2♥, natural and invitational. Therefore you can still find a heart fit. With the spade singleton being an honour, a 1♣ opening, planning to rebid 1NT over the spade-showing 1♥ response, is an acceptable alternative.

Responses to 1♣

Partner opens 1♣ ... how do you respond? What are your follow-up actions after the common rebids by partner?

16 ♠ Jxxx
♥ x
♦ Qxxxxx
♣ xx

17 ♠ Qxxx
♥ Axxx
♦ xx
♣ Qxx

18 ♠ AKx
♥ AQxx
♦ Jx
♣ xxxx

19 ♠ Kxxxxx
♥ Jxx
♦ Qxx
♣ x

20 ♠ QJxxx
♥ Kxxxx
♦ x
♣ Ax

21 ♠ xx
♥ xx
♦ Qxx
♣ AJxxxx

22 ♠ Axx
♥ KQJxxx
♦ Axx
♣ x

23 ♠ xx
♥ Axx
♦ KJxx
♣ J10xx

24 ♠ xxx
♥ Ax
♦ KQxxx
♣ Qxx

25 ♠ AKQJx
♥ xx
♦ Axx
♣ J10x

26 ♠ Qxx
♥ x
♦ AJ10xx
♣ QJxx

27 ♠ Q
♥ AKQx
♦ Jxxx
♣ xxxx

Responses to 1♣ solutions

16. 1♥. Start by showing the major (spades). If partner bids:
 - 1♠, rebid 2♠ to show 0–5 (the hand of misery).
 - 1NT (15–18), bid 2NT (puppet to 3♣) and then 3♦ to play there.
17. 1♦. Bid 4-card majors 'up the line'. If partner bids:
 - 1♥, rebid 2♦ to show shortage there, and 6+ points
 - 1♠, he has clubs and spades. You have fitting cards, enough to invite with 3♠
 - 1NT, bid 2♣ to start an invitational sequence
 - 2♥ (19–20, 3 hearts), bid 3♥ a transfer to spades, showing 4–4 in the majors
 - 2NT (19–20, 2 hearts), bid 3♣, effectively Stayman
18. 1NT. Balanced 10+ points. If partner bids:
 - 2♣, balanced, then 2♦ shows 13+
 - anything else, you will bid naturally, probably setting clubs as trumps, sooner or later
19. 1♥. Show the spades. Then after:
 - 1♠, rebid 2♣ showing shortage: your hand is quite good with a 6–4 fit
 - 1NT, rebid 2♥ transferring back to 2♠, then pass
 - 2♣ (natural, 14–17), rebid 2♠ seeking a better part-score
20. 3♦. Shows both majors, 5–5. If partner bids a major, then 3NT would show a minimum hand.
21. 1♠. 0–11 with no major. If partner rebids the likely 1NT, then an invitational 3♣ fits the bill nicely.
22. 2♥. 10+ natural. You plan to keep bidding a lot. If partner rebids 2NT, balanced, then your next bid is 3♣ to show 13+ points.
23. 1♠. If partner rebids 1NT, bid 2♠ to show a weakness there and at least invitational values. It sounds strange to 'bid' and 'rebid' spades with a low doubleton, but that is the system!
24. 1NT. 10+ balanced. 1NT includes 5332 shapes with a minor. If partner bids 2♣, also showing a balanced hand, then 3♦ by you describes 10–12 and 5 diamonds.
25. The system bid is 2NT, showing 5332 with a major. However you could be forgiven for treating those spades as a 6-card suit and bidding 2♠ instead.

26. 1♠. You could bid respond 2♦, but you have such nice follow-ups if you bid 1♠. If partner rebids 1NT or 2NT, then 3♥ by you describes 31(54) shape.
27. 1♦. The system bid is 1NT, but this hand should be downgraded to 11 points, with the doubtful ♠Q.

Notice how you often have options when responding to 1♣, and you can choose the bid that best matches your hand and gives you the smoothest follow-up auctions. Our experience is that when you respond 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠, then by far the most frequent rebid by partner is 1NT (15–18 balanced), so always plan ahead for that auction.

Responses to 1♦, 1♥ and 1♠

Partner opens 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠ ... how do you respond? What are your follow-up actions after the common rebids by partner?

28 ♠ Q10xxx
♥ AKxxx
♦ Ax
♣ x

1♦ ?

29 ♠ xxx
♥ xxxx
♦ xxx
♣ xxx

1♥ ?

30 ♠ Qxx
♥ Axxx
♦ Jxx
♣ Jxx

1♠ ?

31 ♠ Kxxxx
♥ Qxxxx
♦ x
♣ xx

1♦ ?

32 ♠ AKxx
♥ xxx
♦ KQxx
♣ xx

1♥ ?

33 ♠ A
♥ Qxx
♦ KQxxx
♣ xxxx

1♠ ?

34 ♠ xx
♥ xxx
♦ Jxxx
♣ Qxxx

1♦ ?

35 ♠ Axx
♥ KQJxx
♦ xx
♣ AQx

1♥ ?

36 ♠ Kxxx
♥ x
♦ Kxxxx
♣ Kxx

1♠ ?

37 ♠ Axx
♥ Qx
♦ Qxxx
♣ xxxx

1♦ ?

38 ♠ x
♥ QJxxx
♦ Kxxx
♣ xxx

1♥ ?

39 ♠ Qxx
♥ Qxxx
♦ xxx
♣ xxx

1♠ ?

Responses to 1 ♦, 1 ♥, 1 ♠ solutions

28. 3♣. Shows both majors, 10–15. If partner bids a major, setting that suit, you will cooperate with a cue-bid, by-passing the 'minimum 3NT' bid, because your hand is maximum. If partner rebids 3♦, you will also be enthusiastic about diamonds, cue-bidding 4♣ (not 3♥, which would remain a natural bid).
29. 1NT. The only possible alternative would be a weak jump raise to 3♥, but this is too weak. You want to slow partner down, not speed him up.
30. 2NT, the middling raise. Then after:
- 3♣, your 3♦ shows a three-card raise
 - 3♦, you reject the try, bidding 3♠: your hand is very minimum
 - 3♥, raise naturally to 4♥
 - 3NT, you pass, delighted with partner's suggestion
31. 2♦, showing 0–5 points, 5+ spades, 4+ hearts. If partner bids a major at the two-level, you pass; if he invites with a major at the three-level, you continue on to game. Of course, you might also find yourself putting down your hand as dummy in 2♦.
32. 2♣. 10 or more points, to see what partner has got. Unless partner shows spades (via 2♦), you will probably set hearts as trumps for cue-bidding. Suppose partner rebids 2♥, a one-suiter. You bid 3♥ (there is little point in checking for partner's shortage), and now he bids 3NT: no spade control and minimum values. Now you quite confidently sign off in 4♥, a good example of the usefulness of the 'minimum 3NT' convention.
33. 2♣. Not 2♦, as you will be stuck if partner then bids 2♥. After 2♣, if partner bids 2♦ (showing both majors), you can offer 2♥ as a contract. Any other rebid from partner leaves you in good shape. For example if he rebids 2♠, showing a one-suiter, you now bid 2NT to ask for a shortage. If he were to reveal a club shortage, you could steer clear of 3NT.
34. 3♦. 0–5 points and 4+ diamonds. You hope you are not called on to make a further bid, but if you are, it will be the least encouraging you can find.
35. 2♣. Your next bid will probably be 3♥, and you can cue-bid to slam from there.
36. 2NT. Obviously you will accept a 3♦ invitation. If partner bids 3♣, asking you to describe your hand, you bid 3♥ to show your shortage there.

37. 1NT. 0–9, no major. If partner rebids 2♣ (Gazzilli), 3♦ by you reveals the 4-card diamond support and 6–9. Similarly, if partner rebids 2♦, you can invite with 3♦.
38. 4♥. Simple bridge.
39. 2♠. 3–6 points and support. The hand might *look* bad, but it is well within the range for this bid.

Gazzilli

Test yourself on Gazzilli, planning your next bid and any likely follow-ups:

40 ♠ xxx
♥ xxx
♦ xxx
♣ Axxx

1♦ 1NT
2♣ ?

41 ♠ x
♥ Axx
♦ AKQxx
♣ AJxx

1♦ 1NT
2♣ 2♥
?

42 ♠ Qxxxx
♥ x
♦ Axx
♣ Jxxx

1♥ 1♠
2♣ 2♦
2♠ ?

43 ♠ xx
♥ AQxx
♦ xxx
♣ Kxxx

1♠ 1NT
2♣ 2♦
2♥ ?

44 ♠ x
♥ AJxxx
♦ Kx
♣ KQJxx

1♥ 1NT
2♣ 2♦
?

45 ♠ x
♥ xxxxx
♦ Qxxx
♣ xxxxx

1♠ 1NT
2♣ ?

46 ♠ AKQxx
♥ Qxx
♦ xx
♣ AKQ

1♠ 1NT
2♣ 2♥
?

47 ♠ KQx
♥ AJ10xx
♦ Kx
♣ Axx

1♥ 1NT
2♣ 2♦
?

48 ♠ Kx
♥ Qxxx
♦ AKJxx
♣ AJ

1♦ 1♠
1NT 2♥
?

49 ♠ KJ10xx
♥ x
♦ xxxxx
♣ Axx

1♥ 1♠
2♣ 2♦
2♥ ?

50 ♠ AKx
♥ AKxxx
♦ AQxx
♣ x

1♥ 1♠
2♣ 2♦
2♠ 3♦
?

51 ♠ Axxx
♥ x
♦ Jxxx
♣ Axxx

1♦ 1♠
1NT 2♣
2♦ ?

Gazzilli solutions

40. 2♦. 0–5 and diamond preference. This probably ends the auction, but if partner bids further, you will cooperate.
41. 2♠. Partner has shown 6–9, so you are going to commit to game. 2♠ shows 18+ with *clubs*, because a 3♣ rebid by you would have indicated the 14–17 hand.
42. 4♠. Partner has 18+ points and some spade support. Lacking any interest in slam, you choose the final contract.
43. 2NT. 2♥ shows at least *three* hearts, so you are yet to confirm an 8-card heart fit. 2NT shows 4 hearts. If partner bids 3♥, confirming at least 4 hearts, you can bid 4♥. If he bids 3♣, he has 5314 shape, and you know to stay away from 3NT (you would probably bid 4♣). If he bids 3♦, you know to *bid* 3NT, with your ♣K opposite his shortage. Finally, if he bids 3NT, then he has 53(32) shape and 18–20 points, and you play there.
44. 2♥. Confirms 14–17 points, with a club side suit. Do not fall into the trap of rebidding 3♣, which would show the shape correctly, but indicate 18+ points.
45. 2NT. 0–5 with both minors. It is unpleasant, but you might still land on your feet at 3-minor.
46. 3♥. Partner is showing 0–5 with 5+ hearts. You have enough to raise, invitationaly.
47. 2NT. 16–17 balanced. If partner bids 3-minor, he is trying to improve the part-score, and you will pass.
48. 4♥. Partner is showing 6–9 with 5+ spades and 4+ hearts. With a weaker hand and that shape, his first response would have been 2♦. Game in hearts is the obvious contract.
49. 2♠. Partner is showing 14–17 with hearts and clubs. You certainly prefer 3♣ to 2♥, but there is no reason not to suggest spades as well. If partner happens to be maximum with 3514 shape, you will get to 4♠.
50. 4NT? It seems partner has only 4 spades and longer diamonds. Your hand is a monster, and could Blackwood into 6♦. High scientists might simply raise to 4♦ investigating more deeply.
51. 3♥. Another monster. Partner is showing 18+ points and 6+ diamonds. A splinter bid seems appropriate.

2-level openings

Here are some auctions starting at the 2-level. Plan your next bid and any likely follow-ups:

52 ♠ Jxx
♥ x
♦ KQxx
♣ AQxxx

2♣ 2♦
?

53 ♠ AQxx
♥ x
♦ Axx
♣ AKQ10x

2♥ 2♠
3♦ 3♥
3NT ?

54 ♠ Qxx
♥ x
♦ KQxxx
♣ Kxxx

2♦ 2♠
?

55 ♠ KJxx
♥ Qxxxx
♦ Qxx
♣ x

2♣ ?

56 ♠ KJxx
♥ x
♦ AKxxx
♣ Qxx

2♦ 2♥
2♠ 3♦
?

57 ♠ Kxxxxx
♥ Jxx
♦ AKx
♣ x

2♠ 3♣
?

58 ♠ Jxx
♥ Qxx
♦ x
♣ KQxxxx

2♦ ?

59 ♠ Jxx
♥ K
♦ KJxxx
♣ AKxx

2♥ 2♠
2NT ?

60 ♠ Qx
♥ KQxxx
♦ xx
♣ AQ10x

2♠ (D'ble) ?

61 ♠ x
♥ Axxxxx
♦ KJx
♣ Qxx

2♥ (2♠) P (P)
?

62 ♠ Kxxx
♥ Axx
♦ AKxxx
♣ x

2♣ 2♦
2♠ 2NT
3♣ ?

63 ♠ xxx
♥ AKJxxx
♦ x
♣ xxx

Pass 2♦
?

2-level openings solutions

52. 2♠. Shows 3+ spades. If partner relays again with 2NT, you will bid 3♦, rounding out your 3145 pattern. If partner merely invites with 3♣, you have enough to accept, once again bidding 3♦, identifying the heart shortage.
53. 4♣. Partner is showing 1543 shape, so clubs is your fit. This deal is from the 2008 Mind Sports Games, the quarter-final against Poland. Partner had ♠ 7 ♥ AKJ86 ♦ KJ94 ♣ J73. Fantoni-Nunes cue-bid to the excellent 7♣, making, with 6♦ down at the other table.
54. Pass. Partner's 2♠ shows both majors, invitational, so your best spot looks to be right here in 2♠.
55. 2♦. You could take your lumps right here in 2♣, but there are good chances of wriggling to a better part-score. If partner bids a major, then you happily pass. If partner responds 2NT, you less happily pass, although 2NT might just play better than 2♣. If partner rebids 3♣, you unhappily pass: you have lost your bet. The fake relay might also be the best chance of avoiding a penalty.
56. 3♠. Partner has invitational values. You have a clear maximum, and accept via a natural 3♠ bid.
57. 4♣. 3♣ shows *hearts*, remember? With excellent support, you make a non-jump splinter bid.
58. 2NT, puppet to 3♣. You will pass this, and hope to have improved the part-score.
59. 3♣, asking for shortage. Partner has 6+ hearts and no minor to show. If he now shows short spades, you will select 4♥ in the 6-1 fit. Otherwise, 3NT might be the best contract.
60. Redouble. The relays are off, but your opponents might be in big trouble. You will double any runout to hearts or clubs, and hope partner can do likewise for diamonds. If left-hand-opponent bids 3♦ and this is passed back to you, then it looks like the opponents have escaped your axe. In that case, you would bid 3♠, encouraging but not forcing.
61. Double. A 2-level opener is welcome to come back into the auction, and here a takeout double fits the bill. Partner may well have a penalty pass.

62. 3♦. Partner has 6 clubs and 3 or 4 spades. A final relay of 3♦ will establish whether he has a 4-card spade suit. Then you will know whether to play 4♠ or 3NT.
63. 2♥. You had to pass originally with this hand, but now you can try to improve the contract with a natural, non-forcing 2♥ bid.

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And last, but hardly least, *Fulvio Fantoni* and *Claudio Nunes*, whose marvellous creation is perhaps now no longer the world's best-kept bridge secret.

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START PLAYING A WINNING SYSTEM

Not since the introduction of Precision has a new bidding system created such an immediate impact as Fantunes, the unique methods of Fulvio Fantoni and Claudio Nunes, the world's number one ranked pair. The Italians have several world championship wins to their name, and their system has played a major role in that success.

This book delves into the system, explaining how it works and, just as importantly, why it works. Two words best describe Fantunes: natural and fun. This is the definitive text for those who would like to try an innovative and proven new bidding system.



Bill Jacobs has won many Australian national championships, the most recent three playing Fantunes, and has twice represented his country at Open level. He regularly provides astute vugraph commentary on Bridge Base Online. For the past ten years he has been editor of the monthly bulletin of the Victorian Bridge Association.

