



Bill Jacobs

FANTUNES REVEALED



AN HONORS eBook FROM MASTER POINT PRESS

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Master Point Press
331 Douglas Ave.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5M 1H2
(416) 781-0351

Email: info@masterpointpress.com
Websites: www.masterpointpress.com
www.bridgeblogging.com
www.teachbridge.com
www.ebooksbridge.com

ISBN: 978-1-55494-522-1

Layout and Editing: Bill Jacobs
Cover Design: Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

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Introduction

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

Dir: North	♠ J832										
Vul: E/W	♥ 8654										
	♦ K87										
	♣ 96										
♠ AQ95	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K10764
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q7		♥ 103									
♦ Q65		♦ J1032									
♣ J1085		♣ 73									
	♠ -										
	♥ AKJ92										
	♦ A94										
	♣ AKQ42										

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

Closed room (England North/South):

West	North	East	South
	<i>Justin Hackett</i>		<i>Jason Hackett</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Open room (Italy North/South):

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	

The auctions were strikingly similar. Both Souths opened with a natural 1♥, North gave a single raise, and South made a slam try by jumping to 3♠, a splinter bid showing shortage in spades.

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.

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.

