

1 Introduction

This article describes a simple version of the Fantunes system. It is based on the system as played by Italian superstars Fulvio Fantoni and Claudio Nunes, nicknamed Fantunes. There are also some Polish Club elements included. The system is very flexible and most of all very natural.

The advantage of the Fantunes system is experienced in several ways. The extremely solid 1-bids make both competitive and uncontested auctions much easier than standard opening bids because responder can bid more with less and still control the auction. On the other hand, the 2-bids are very frequent and although they preempt the auction for us too, even more so for the opponents.

1.1 Opening Bid Structure

The opening bid structure is very natural:

1♣	13+ 5+♣ unb. / 4414 / or 15+ bal.
1♦	13+ 4+♦ unbal. (4♦5♣ possible)
1♥	13+ 5+♥
1♠	13+ 5+♠
1NT	12 – 14 (semi)bal., 5422, 5M poss.
2♣	9 – 12, 5+♣
2♦	9 – 12, 5+♦
2♥	9 – 12, 5+♥
2♠	9 – 12, 5+♠
2NT	21 – 22 balanced
3suit	Natural preempt

The most interesting feature of this system is that the 1-level opening bids are forcing and unlimited. The minimum required strength is best described by the Rule of 22, i.e. the length of the two longest suit added to the HCP is at least 22. If you prefer Zar evaluation, the minimum opening strength is about half a level more than a standard minimum opening bid, i.e. at least 29 Zar. Opposite a 1-level opening bid a balanced 11-count or an unbalanced 10-count is usually enough to force to game.

Opening a 1-bid you will categorize your hand in one of the following strength classes: A normal hand which is worth about 13 – 17 points, a strong hand, worth about 18 – 20 points, a semi game forcing hand or a game force.

Opening bids on the 2-level can be approximated by the rule of 18. Since these bids are located around the average strength of a bridge hand they are extremely frequent, and yet the range is very small so that partner will usually have an idea about the potential of the hand. However, the opponents have been robbed of valuable bidding space and examples from international play have shown that even world class opposition have found it hard to defend against these natural bids.

1.2 Passed hand bidding

If partner is a passed hand the minimum 1-level opening strength is increased by one point. As even a passed hand might be strong enough to force to game, the response structure is not changed after the 1-level opening bids.

In 3rd seat the 2-level bids can be very wide ranging, in principle 0 – 13. In 4th seat these bids show approximately 10 – 13 HCP.

2 1♣ opening bid

The opening bid 1♣ shows either a balanced hand with at least 15 HCP which may include even up to 5 Diamonds, or 5 cards in a major if 15 – 17 HCP, or an unbalanced hand with 4 or more Clubs. 4441-hands with a short major should be opened 1♦. 1♣ is unlimited and forcing.

2.1 Responses to 1♣

1♦	0 – 5 any distribution up to 8 without 4-card major or 14+ balanced
1♥	6+ 4+♠, longer minor possible
1♠	6+ 4+♥, longer minor possible
1NT	8 – 10 bal., no 4-card major
2♣	GF, 5+♣
2♦	GF, 5+♦
2♥♠	Invitational, 6+card
2NT	Invitational, 5+4+ minors
3♣♦	Invitational, 6+card
3♥♠	11 – 13 bal. no stopper in other major
3NT	11 – 13 bal. stopper in both majors

2.2 After 1♣ – 1♦

The 1♦ response is Polish style as are the responses. With a minimum balanced hand one should rebid the longer major, which can be 3 cards. With stronger hands bid 2♦, the strongest response, 2NT unusual or naturally.

1♣ – 1♦ – ?

1♥/♠	Can be 3 cards if 15 – 17 bal. Almost forcing, may pass with 0 – 3
1NT	18 – 20 balanced
2♣	13 – 17, 6+(5)♣
2♦	23+ bal. / GF
2♥♠	SGF, 5+♣, 4+card
2NT	18+ both minors
3♣	18 – 20, 6+♣
3x	Semiforcing with ♣, short suit

After the 1NT rebid the system used for the 1NT opening bid is used.

After the 2♦ rebid, 2♥ is the relay bid, then: 2♠: GF 3-suited, 2NT = 23 – 25 NT (see the 2NT opening bid for further bidding), higher = natural and GF.

2.3 After 1♣ – 1♥/♠

Responses are natural, except 2♦ which shows a GF hand with at least 3-card support.

1♣ – 1♥(♠) – ?

1♠	13+, 4♠ unbalanced, F1R
1NT	15 – 18- balanced no fit
2♣	13 – 17, 6(5)+ ♣
2♦	GF, 3+card support
2♥(♠)	minimum, 3/4-card support
2♠(♥)	GF unbal. no 3-card support
2NT	GF bal. (18+) no 4-card support
3♣	Invite, 6♣ + 3-card support
3♦	GF, 6+♣ + 4♦
3♥(♠)	Invite, 4-card support
3♠(♥)	GF, 6+♣ + 4♠(♥)
3NT	Solid ♣ with stoppers

2.3.1 After 1NT rebid

2♦ is to play, 2♣ is Checkback, after which opener shows his strength and support:

2♦	minimum, no 3-card support
2M	minimum, 3-card support
2oM	maximum, 3-card support
2NT	maximum, no 3-card support

2.3.2 Odwrotka

In the sequence 1♣ – 1♥/♠ – 2♦, opener shows a GF hand and at least 3-card support of partner's major. Partner will now bid like this:

2♥	6 – 9, 4 cards
2♠	10+, 4 cards
2NT	6 – 9, 5 cards
3♣	10+, 5 cards
3♦	6 – 9, 6+ cards
3♥	10+, 6+ cards

2.4 1♣ – 1M – 2otherM

This shows an unbalanced GF hand with less than 3 cards in partner's major. It also denies a 6 – 4 distribution or solid ♣. After this responder will describe his hand without much extra strength, or ask opener to do so with a 2NT relay, which shows slam interest.

3 1♦ opening bid

The opening bid 1♦ shows an unbalanced hand with at least 4 cards in Diamonds. It includes 4441-hands with any shortness except ♦, and may include hands with 4♦ 5♣ if the ♣ suit is bad. 1♦ is unlimited and forcing.

3.1 Responses to 1♦

In contrast to the responses to the other opening bids, the responses 2♣/♦ are not forcing to game but since fewer possible final contracts have to be considered this is not a problem. Notice the Bergen-style 3♣-response that covers the gap between the preemptive 3♦ and the inverted 2♦.

1♥	0+ 4+♥, longer minor possible
1♠	0+ 4+♠, longer minor possible
1NT	0 – 8, no 4-card major
2♣	Inv+, 5(4)+♣
2♦	Inv+, 4+♦
2♥	Invitational, 6+♥
2♠	Invitational, 6+♠
2NT	9 – 10, bal.
3♣	6 – 8, 4+♦
3♦	0 – 5, 5+♦
3NT	11 – 13 bal.

3.2 After 1♦ – 1♥/♠

There is a difference here to the responses to 1♣ in that there is no lower limit to the 1♥/♠ responses. However, the 1NT rebid has become free because opener denies a balanced hand. 1NT now shows any hand worth 18+ that cannot be bid in any other way.

1♦ – 1♥(♠) – ?

1♠	13 – 20, 4♠
1NT	18+ any distribution
2♣	13 – 17, 5+4+ minors
2♦	13 – 17, 6(5)+♦
2♥(♠)	13 – 17, 4(3)-card support
2♠(♥)	18 – 20, 6+♦ 4♠(♥)
2NT	18 – 20, semisolid ♦
3♣	15 – 17, 5 – 5
3♦	18 – 20, 6♦ and 3-card support
3♠(♥)	18 – 20, 4-card support
3NT	Solid ♣ with stoppers

After the 1NT rebid a weak responder can either bid 2♦ which just confirms 0 – 5 HCP but says nothing about ♦, or rebid his major naturally. The third option is to rebid 2♥ after showing ♠ with 1♠, this shows 5♠ 4♥. Over a weak response opener can force to game by bidding 2NT.

With enough values to force to game responder can bid a Checkback-like 2♣ or naturally higher than 2 of his major.

3.2.1 Responder has a 6-card major

With a 6-card major in response to 1♦ and opener's rebid, with 0 – 6 HCP rebid your major. This will be a signoff as partner did not rebid 1NT. A jump to the 3-level is GF. The inbetween hand would have jumped to 2♥/♠ right away.

3.3 After 1♦ – 1NT

1NT shows 0 – 8 without a 4-card major or a suitable hand to raise directly. It may be passed, which will normally show a near-minimum hand without 6♦ or 4♣. With 13 – 20 opener will either rebid 2♣ or 2♦. With SemiGF hands opener can choose between 4 natural bids: 2♥, 2♠, 3♣ and 3♦. 2NT is a general GF hand, 3♥/♠ shows both minors and a splinter in the bid major.

3.4 After 1♦ – 2♣

This sequence is invitational or better, opener will describe if he is minimum or not. Responder will always bid 2♦ with a minimum.

3.5 After higher responses

1♦ – 2♦ shows an invitational hand or better with ♦-support. To show a minimum, opener bids 3♦.

After the invitational jump shifts in a major, 2NT is a relay asking for a feature. Other bids are natural and GF.

4 1♥/♠ opening bids

The opening bids 1♥ and 1♠ show at least 5 cards in the bid suit and are unlimited and forcing. A standard 2/1 GF is used and the forcing effect can hardly be noticed. In principle one should ignore the possibility of 0 – 3 HCP for responder. In addition since the minimum opening strength is a Queen more than standard, opener should treat his hand as if it were a Queen weaker, responder as if it were a Queen stronger.

4.1 Responses to 1♥

1♠	0+, 4+♠, forcing
1NT	0 – 10, 3♥ possible, F1R
2♣	GF, 5+♣ or balanced
2♦	GF, 5+♦
2♥	6 – 8, 3+♥
2♠	Invitational, 6+♠
2NT	Jacoby: 12+, 4+♥
3♣	Bergen: 9 – 11, 4+♥
3♦	Bergen: 6 – 8, 4+♥
3♥	0 – 5, 4+♥

4.2 Responses to 1♠

1NT	0 – 10, F1R, 3♠ possible
2♣	GF, 5+♣ or balanced
2♦	GF, 5+♦
2♥	GF, 5+♥
2♠	6 – 8, 3+♠
2NT	Jacoby: 12+, 4+♠
3♣	Bergen: 9 – 11, 4+♠
3♦	Bergen: 6 – 8, 4+♠
3♥	Invitational, 6+♥
3♠	0 – 5, 4+♠

5 1NT opening bid

Opening 1NT shows 12 – 14 HCP and approximately balanced. It may include a 5-card major, even 5M422 hands. In principle you can use your favorite 1NT response scheme after this, for example this one:

2♣	Stayman
2♦	Transfer to ♥
2♥	Transfer to ♠
2♠	Transfer to ♣
2NT	Invitational
3♣	Transfer to ♦
3♦	Invitational, 6+♦
3♥	3♥ + Short ♠, GF
3♠	3♠ + Short ♥, GF
3NT	To play
4♣	5+♥ 5+♠, GF
4♦	Transfer to ♥
4♥	Transfer to ♠
4♠	5+♣ 5+♦, GF

6 2-level opening bids

The 2-level opening bids are the cornerstone of the system. These show approximately 9 – 12 HCP and at least a 5-card suit which need not be of good quality. Unbalanced hands in this range are usually always opened with a 2-bid. This makes them very frequent and although quite imprecise it puts even more pressure on the opponents.

2NT is the relay (except after 2♣, where 2♦ is the relay), asking for minimum or maximum and distribution. Responder will return to his suit with a minimum, other bids are natural.

6.1 Responses to 2♣

2♦	Relay, invite+
2♥	NF, 5+♥
2♠	NF, 5+♠
2NT	Invite to 3NT
3♣	Preemptive
3♦♥♠	Invitational, 6+card

6.2 Responses to 2♦

2♥	F1R, 4+♥
2♠	F1R, 4+♠
2NT	Relay, invite ⁺
3♣♥♠	Invitational, 6 ⁺ card
3♦	Preemptive

6.3 Responses to 2♥

2♠	Forcing, 5+♠
2NT	Relay, invite ⁺
3♣♦♠	Invitational, 6 ⁺ card
3♥	Preemptive

6.4 Responses to 2♠

2NT	Relay, invite ⁺
3♣♦	Invite, 6 ⁺ card
3♥	GF, 5+♥
3♠	Preemptive

6.5 Passed hand bidding

In third seat the opening bids are very wide-ranged, in principle 0 – 13 but vulnerable some values will always be present. The relay is now only bid on hands that have a fit for partner. Other bids are in principle fit showing and are either natural or lead directing.

In fourth seat the opening bids are more sound than in other seats, about 10 – 13 HCP.

7 2NT opening bid

This is an aggressive strong 2NT opening bid and should only be used on real balanced hands, all other bids are handled by the 1-level opening bids. It denies a 5-card major. Stayman and Transfers are on, a 3♠ response shows 5♠ + 4♥ and forcing.

8 After interference

After an overcall or double we no longer have the obligation to respond but we can do so with quite weak hands, using the fact that opener must have at least a Queen over a standard minimum opening bid (even a King more if responder is a passed hand).

8.1 Overcalls after 1♣

In principle assume that 1♣ shows a balanced hand and not a real suit, as this will be the case most of the time. Unlike after the other opening bids, there are no fit showing jumps or fit showing cuebids.

8.2 Overcalls after 1♦♥♠

The general strategy after these natural opening bids is to show a fit with many possible bids, Robson - Segal style.

8.2.1 Natural overcalls without jump

- 2NT shows an invitational hand with fit
- A bid in opponent's suit shows a GF hand with fit
- A new suit without jump is forcing
- 1♦ (1♥) 2♠ is a weak jump
- Fit jumps on the 3-level and higher
- Lebensohl is on after jump overcalls on the 2-level