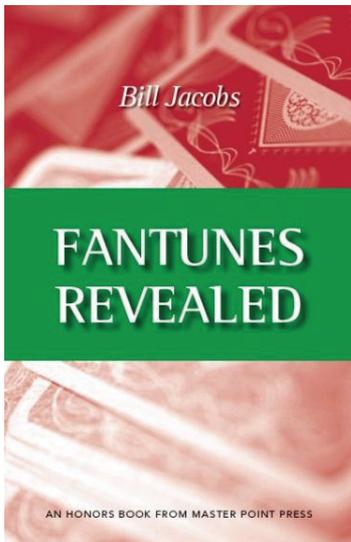


BOOK REVIEW

This book is a detailed exposition of the bidding system used by Italian stars Fulvio Fantoni and Claudio Nunes. This pair has been remarkably successful at the highest level: they are still at it, last July winning the Spingold teams in the USA.



Jacobs sets out the bidding machinery in comprehensive detail. This last adjective is well-merited - 95 auctions are indexed in the last pages. Players thinking of trying a new and successful system can start right here. Although auctions can become complicated, beginners can ease themselves in. Jacobs uses sign-posts to show where a treatment is optional.

Other readers may be primarily interested in the structure of bidding systems. Jacobs certainly is. The foundations of Fantunes are (1) Natural opening bids of 1 in a suit are unlimited and forcing, though 1♣ contains some balanced hands as well as clubs. This does away with the need in most natural systems to dedicate a special opening bid, 2♣, to showing a very strong hand.

The strong natural openings give an edge over this artificial 2♣ and also the opening strong 1♣ of systems such as Precision in that if intervening opponents begin a competitive auction, the Fantuner has announced his suit.

This deal is the first in the book, from the very top level, the World Mind Sports Games 2008. (See top of next column)

After the unlimited opening, Nunes' raise showed support and 3-6 HCP. Fantoni splintered and Nunes could cue-bid, having shown a very weak raise. Nunes slammed.

Dlr: North ♠ J832
 Vul: E/W ♥ 8654
 ♦ K87
 ♣ 96

| | | |
|---------|---|----------|
| ♠ AQ95 | N | ♠ K10764 |
| ♥ Q7 | W | ♥ 103 |
| ♦ Q65 | E | ♦ J1032 |
| ♣ J1085 | S | ♣ 73 |

♠ -
 ♥ AKJ92
 ♦ A94
 ♣ AKQ42

| West | North Fantoni | East | South Nunes |
|------|---------------|------|-------------|
| | Pass | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 2♥ | Pass | 3♠ |
| Pass | 4♦ | Pass | 6♥ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

At the other table the English auction began the same, North dredging up a raise opposite a non-forcing opener. His partner also splintered 3♠, but North, having already overstretched, signed off in 4♥.

(2) the second Fantunes specialty is that opening 2-bids are natural (again) and show a 5+-suit in the range 10-13 HCP, and unbalanced. Jacobs is convinced that they give Fantunes a remarkable edge, since they lay claim to the 2-level yet are semi-constructive. The weak opening 1NT assists.

Here is a 2-bid in action, against distinguished opposition:

Dlr: South ♠ Q873
 Vul: All ♥ A43
 ♦ J
 ♣ QJ864

| | | |
|----------|---|----------|
| ♠ AKJ104 | N | ♠ 965 |
| ♥ 102 | W | ♥ Q765 |
| ♦ Q982 | E | ♦ A10654 |
| ♣ K10 | S | ♣ 2 |

♠ 2
 ♥ KJ98
 ♦ K73
 ♣ A9753

| West Hamman | North Nunes | East Zia | South Fantoni |
|-------------|-------------|----------|---------------|
| | | | 2♣ |
| 2♠ | 3♠ | 4♠ | Pass |
| Pass | D'ble | All Pass | |

Nunes with a 10-card fit committed to the 4-level, and Zia, perhaps hoping for a misguided sacrifice, competed to 4♠, which cost 500 against 130 for 4♣. The opening bid had obliterated the one-level, leaving East-West with little room to manoeuvre. At the other table South opened 1♣, West overcalled 1♠ and North bid 1NT. North-South played in the club partial.

Jacobs' enthusiasm for Fantunes' opening bids is supported by his statistical tables on pp. 140-1, which show analyses of deals played by Nunes - Fantoni on BBO's Vugraph sessions. They opened the bidding in the range 1♣ to 2♠ on 2,723 hands, and gained an average of 0.67 IMPs per deal. Jacobs adjusts this tidily for superior card play, to arrive at an estimate of 0.29 attributable to superior bidding.

It was fitting that I should write this review. In the 1960s, when Italian teams dominated, Fred Altman and I taught ourselves Blue Club from a little book on the Italian systems by Edgar Kaplan. This took us all the way to an Olympiad, where we had the privilege of meeting, and beating, Italy, who won the championship. Fantunes is a better system than Blue Club, and Jacobs' book is more extensive.

Fantunes is the future - follow the star. I regret that a failing memory means that I am left behind.

Fantunes Revealed is available from <http://www.bridgeshop.com.au/>, \$16.99 digital or \$22.95 softcover.

... Ian McCance



SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Correction: The solution I gave for last month's second problem was second-best. Ben Thompson points out that if East cashes ♠A before exiting a club, declarer is trapped in dummy and must fail.

Problem 1

Dlr: South ♠ A
 Vul: E/W ♥ 10965
 ♦ J9876
 ♣ Q103

| | | |
|----------|--------------------------|---------|
| ♠ J10973 | N W E S | ♠ KQ62 |
| ♥ J74 | | ♥ AQ3 |
| ♦ 532 | | ♦ 10 |
| ♣ J7 | | ♣ K8653 |

♠ 854
 ♥ K82
 ♦ AKQ4
 ♣ A94

You should start, logically enough, by playing ♠K to trick 1, passing on the good news. Declarer plays ♦A, ♦K, ♦Q; partner had 3. What did you discard?

Playing ♠Q would serve to clarify, though you could leave that a while, trick 1 told enough. The faster you get ♥Q on to the table the better. To blazes with count/attitude, this is bridge. Partner has to be told to cling to clubs.

Problem 2

Dlr: North ♠ AK6
 Vul: All ♥ Q76
 ♦ QJ2
 ♣ J974

| | | |
|------------|--------------------------|--------|
| ♠ 10 | N W E S | ♠ 9842 |
| ♥ 92 | | ♥ A543 |
| ♦ K1087643 | | ♦ 9 |
| ♣ 852 | | ♣ AKQ6 |

♠ QJ532
 ♥ KJ108
 ♦ A5
 ♣ 103

There is no winning defence, but you can make it very hard for declarer. Don't win ♣Q. ♣K is probably best, to suggest ♣Q in West. You must switch at once to that diamond. That's where the setting trick must lie. If he runs it he's dead - partner will win ♦K and give you a diamond ruff for 2 down. The winning play for declarer is to win ♦A and play ♣10. You would win and having no more diamonds would return a trump. South can play ♠Q, then to ♠K and trump-finesse clubs for a discard. If you show him ♣AKQ at trick 1 he can rise on ♦9 and go for the discard. If he's good enough. If you cash 2 clubs you make it much easier. Now the winning play is much more obvious (and appealing).