

1. Preface

They say you can divide the world of bridgers into two groups : those who stick to the system they have learned and hardly question it, and then those, who asked themselves regularly whether certain aspects can not be improved. One thing is sure : the perfect bridge system does not exist and the existing systems are as good as the way you use and control them. On the average you will reach with any system the correct game contract but in part scores and slam contracts it can differ.

This book is meant for the advanced bridger who is not afraid for new ideas and who is willing to leave old dogma's on a road of *creative thinking*.

Convinced that one does not has to be a bridge world champion in order to able to think and discuss about bridge , the brothers Vannuten took the challenge a few years ago to start a huge journey in the world of bridge systems, hoping that an optimal mix could be defined and also aiming for bridge tools for reaching the optimal end-contract. All this led to a new modular bridge system allowing people to adjust it to own taste. Existing conventions were screened and tested and sometimes new conventions were born and thoroughly tested and tuned.

These 'system-engineers' learned on their way that 'simplicity has it own rights' . Therefore,

- a balance has been sought between what theoretically is optimal or efficient and what can be reproduced at the table.
- Algorithms and patterns have been sought to improve the controllability while the whole stayed complex and untransparent for the opponents

It became a long journey with many obstacles, traps and accidents. The brothers realize very well the unique context of their journey : 2 brothers with a similar interest in a fascinating brain sport, as they worked in the same firm : a lot on the road together to discuss the many small and big details. Many books and sites were consulted but the many many hours at the bridge table delivered the fundamentals for a new and modern bridge system.

Convinced of the added value of multi-bids and the transfer technique it is logical to baptize this new system as MUTOS : **M**ulti and **T**ransfer **O**riented **S**ystem.

The starting point is Strong Clubs, similar to Precision. There are other books of this author which describe the Strong Club system and also the evolution towards the MUTOS version 2007. At the end of 2007 a thorough evaluation was done resulting in a MUTOS version which is described here. From the original version little was left . The MUTOS trip came to an end. The end of a journey.

Eventually, bridge literature is not a roman. It remains a brain sport in which every event, every sequence, every card has its importance. It makes the reading and capturing of the information difficult. Take your time, reread paragraphs , let things enter your world , and a new view can open.

This book has been made in order that also others can enjoy the result .

1.1. Notations/Abbreviations

Because bridge literature is difficult to read it is useful to have some agreements about notations

1. When building a bridge system one must constantly make choices . Besides the description of openings ,rebids and defence we will also argument the choices made.
2. Zar-count (zp) : the sum of the honor strength (A=6,K=4,Q=2,J=1) and the length of the 2 longest suits and the difference between the longest and shortest suits of a hand.
3. Balanced hand : 5332,4432,4333 , no singleton
4. The dealer is put in South.
5. When small cards become unimportant we denote them with x.
6. Double becomes 'dub'. Redouble becomes 'Red'.
7. With low suits we mean ♣♦, with high suits ♥♠. Used alternatives are also minors and majors.
8. Multi : a bid with multiple meanings

Used abbreviations :

5+	At least 5
om	other minor
OM	Other Major
chx	Void in x
dp	Distribution points
Hp	honorrpoints
F	Forcing
C	card
vul	vulnerable
HRS	Highest remaining suit
LRS	Lowest remaining suit
MRS	Middle of remaining suits
n-vul	Non vulnerable
GF	Game forcing
NF	Non-forcing
JNB	Just Next Bid
P/C	Pass/correct
RF	forcing for one round
RO	Rule Of
snx	singleton = one, single card in suit x
s1,s2 ..	Step1 , step2, ...
Ov	overcall
X	Small card
Zp	Zar-points
NT	No trump

Tabel 1 Abbreviations

In this book new conventions are created. We group them in a separate chapter and we will refer to them when we use them .As such we will not have to interrupt the story to explain the convention

1.2. Statistics

Bridge is a brain sport where statistics rule. A basic knowledge of important figures is welcome and useful when playing or defending. Also here, at the design of MUTOS, we let us guide by statistics to make certain choices.

Below a list of distribution probabilities which we will use throughout this book .

Distribution	8-24hp	0-7	25-37	Distribution	8-24hp	0-7	25-37
5332	11%			54xx	17,6%		
4432	15,28%			4432	15,28%		
4333	7,45%			5332	11%		
4441	2,13%			4333	7,45%		
54xx	17,6%			64xx	4,35%		
55xx	2,9%			6322	4%		
6322	4%			55xx	2,9%		
6331	2,48%			6331	2,48%		
64xx	4,35%			4441	2,13%		
65xx	1%			73xx	1,56%		
7222	0,37%			65xx	1%		
73xx	1,56%			74xx	0,55%		
74xx	0,55%			7222	0,37%		
8+xxx	0,5%			8+xxx	0,5%		
totaal	71,2%	28,6%	0,05%		71,2%	28,6%	0,05%

Tabel 2 handtypes and their probabilities

Not the absolute figures themselves are important at the bridge table but the relative order and frequency of appearance

2. General structure of the auction

Before entering in details we present first the complete opening scheme from low till high. MUTOS is based on Strong Clubs , an old bridge system still used in the area of Antwerp, Belgium but diminishing because

1. All new bridgers are trained in another basic system : Acol ,on which excellent courses and materials exist.
2. There is little or no literature about it
3. Convinced users are getting old and die....
4. Too much attention is spent on honor strength and less to the power of distribution.

Yet, Strong Clubs is a powerful system with several strong points. With MUTOS we try to improve this situation , and to make it more modern : “an old system in a new dress”.

OPENING	HP	ZP	MEANING
1♣	16+	32+	All distributions from 16hp or 32zp onwards
1♦	12-15	26-31	An unknown low suit 5+c, OR 22-25 zp (RO 18) with 6-4 high
1♥	12-15	26-31	5+k ♥
1♠	12-15	26-31	5+k ♠
1NT	12-15		no 5c, 4441 possible
2♣			Or 2 x 4+c high and 22-25zp (7-10hp) or 22-23hp (52zp), balanced hand
2♦			Or 6c high and 22-25zp (7-10hp) or 20-21 hp (48zp) , balanced hand
2♥	7-10	22-25	Muiderberg, 5k ♥ with 4+c low
2♠	7-10	22-25	Muiderberg, 5k ♠ with 4+k low
2NT	7-10	22-25	bicolor 5+-5+ in the low suits
3x	7-10	22-25	7+c ,
3NT			gambling
4♣/♦	12-15	26-31	Namyats : 8c high, constructive
4♥/♠	7-10	22-25	Namyats : 8c high preemptive

Tabel 3 Opening scheme

It's a typical MUTOS style to use to lowest bidding cards from the bidbox for the strongest openings. To create bidding space. Yes, it opens possibilities for opponents to intervene but that's more seen as an advantage :

1. The opponents reveal partly a part of their holdings what can be very useful in the play afterwards.
2. An overcall creates extra options like “pass” and “double” so that we can bid even more exact : in MUTOS we pay a lot of attention to the situations with overcalls in order to find to optimal answer.

The higher the opening, the weaker the hand.
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Bridge is a real sport. The target is to win the game. This can be done not only by own knowledge and expertise but also by being a difficult opponent , in the positive sense of the word. By doing so it happens that opponents make mistakes. That's why we have preemptive openings and/or defences, like DON'T and DOSC. They disturb the auction. Being difficult does not mean unfair : at all times we will ALERT correctly so the opponents are aware about the true meaning of a bid.

The decision to open with a given hand is mainly based upon the hand-evaluation as suggested by Zar Petkov. It is a relative aggressive approach where the distributional power of a hand is taken into account from the first moment. We refer to the internet site for the article and all the details: search for Petkov or Zar and you'll find all the details. We include this zar-reference in our table 3.

In the new chapters we'll discuss one by one all the openings, at first undisturbed , next with overcalls

Basically, we open **all strong hands (>= 32zp) with 1♣** . There are 2 exceptions : we also apply the (multi) 2♣/2♦ openings to show very strong but balanced hands In MUTOS we give up the 'classical' 1NT opening of 15-17hp : the 16-17hp hands disappear in the 1♣ opening. The exact 15hp –hands are covered by one of the other 1-level openings which all promise a 5 card suit : 1♦ shows an *unknown* 5 card , 1♥/♠ a 5 card in the mentioned suit.

From 32 zp onwards : open 1♣. It limits all other openings till 31 zp.
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That's how we arrive to the second MUTOS corner stone : **the five card**. In other words : a suit, freely mentioned, is a five card. Other books discuss advantages and drawbacks of such approach . Fact is that 5-3 fits are found more rapidly

Where do we put the 12-15hp hands without 5 card ? Yes : **1NT** or the 3th cornerstone of MUTOS. We'll handle all details in the corresponding chapter. Note that we here use the term honor points rather than zar-points as there is little or no distributional strength present in these hands.

The 1♣-opening is the most complex of all MUTOS openings . The reason is that we want to explore the distributional strength of a hand which was not really done in the traditional strong club system. We chose to discuss this opening first not because it is the first opening in the bidding box but because some aspects will be re-used in the other openings. These other openings are clearly more simple

Table 3 Opening contains only the MUTOS-openings but we do not neglect the defence in this book. Although the defence is in principal not related to the opening schemes of a system , we want to document our defence agreements here as well, for the sake of completeness and as a documented ending point , after trying out may different defences.

We use in this book regularly the term "leader of the auction" . We give this "status" to the partner who's hand is less limited. He knows in the meantime strength and distribution of his bridge partner and is best placed to take initiatives.

3. Zar-Hand Evaluation

It has always been a goal to try to define as accurate as possible the strength of a bridge hand. The challenge is to define a method that is accurate and yet, at the same time, simple enough to be applied at the bridge table. An experienced bridger knows that one hand of 12hp have not necessarily the same values as another hand of 12hps. The difference is made by accounting the distributional strength. Zar Petkov has developed such a method based on >200000 games from world and other tournaments: the ZAR method, (Penkov, 2003)

In stead of pure honor strength he considers as well the control-aspect: an ace is honored with 2 extra points and a king with one: A=6, K=4, Q=2 en J=1. (p1)

Next he measures the distributional strength by adding the length of the 2 longest suits (p2) and in addition the difference between the longest and shortest suit. (p3)

These 3 parameters are summed (zp=p1+p2+p3) as together they give indication to the value of the hand. With zp >=26 you have enough combined values to open.

ex. ♠AK1074 ♥Q7321 ♦6 ♣92 : 12+10+4 = 26

This combined method of honor strength with distributional values and control values makes it sometimes possible to open very aggressively. An extreme case:

♠10xxxx ♥Axxxx ♦- ♣- : 6+13+7 = 26

If you would count the total of possible hands then you would see that 44,62 % of them are hands between 7 and 11hps, while *only* 34,8% is covering 12-37 hps. (The remaining 20% is for hands 0-6hp). It is especially in this domain of 7 till 11hp (what others call "aggressive") that the Zar-counting proves to be useful. You will reach more a playable contract where others pass.

I refer again to the article of Zar Petkov to learn about additional points and corrections and also to compare the results with other hand evaluation techniques.

As partner you can join the auction from 16 zar-points onwards. In fact you need 5zp per level: 26+16=42 zp = 2-level.

With together 52 ZAR-points (opening+opening) you have enough for game. The 5 level requires 57 zp and slam 62 zp.

By the way: even a balanced hand with zero hp equals a value of 8 zp.

Let's integrate this in MUTOS.

- The openings of 1♦/♥/♠ are done from 26 zp onwards. With sufficient hp (12-14) you simply open. When holding 15hp or less than 12hp it might be useful to reconsider. Zar counting becomes useful in the border lines.
- We open 1♣ from 32 zp onwards. Partner answers 1♦ with 8-19 zar points. From 20 zp (equivalent 8hp) onwards you reach together 52 and it is correct force for game. It means also that with a lousy 16hp-hand like KJ108 QJ75 AQJ Qx, where we used to open 1♣, we will now, according to Zar recommendations, open 1NT.
- The preemptive openings (2x/3x) are OK from 22-25 zp's. The message is simply "I do not have 26 zar points".
- The Zar-methods knows in fact a simplified version in the Rule Of (RO): add to the honor points the length of the 2 longest suits. At the one level, you can open from 18 onwards. The strong 1♣ opening is done from RO 25.

