

# A Couple of Uppercuts

by [Brian Gunnell](#)

Today we take a look at "trump promotion". Put yourself in the West seat, defending 4♠.

<p><b>Board 7</b></p> <p>South Deals</p> <p>Both Vul</p> <p>♠ J 8 7</p> <p>♥ A</p> <p>♦ 9 8 7 5 4</p> <p>♣ A K 10 8</p> <p>West</p> <p>Pass</p> <p>All pass</p>	<p>♠ 10 9</p> <p>♥ J</p> <p>♦ A Q J 3 2</p> <p>♣ Q 5 4 3 2</p> <p>North</p> <p>2 ♦</p>	<p>♠ 6 4</p> <p>♥ K Q 9 8 6 5 3 2</p> <p>♦ 6</p> <p>♣ 7 6</p> <p>East</p> <p>4 ♥</p>	<p>South</p> <p>1 ♠</p> <p>4 ♠</p>
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As West, your opening lead is the ♣A on which partner plays the ♣7 and declarer the ♣9. Next, you cash the ♣K (everyone following the suit), then the ♥A. You've cashed your three winners, where's the setting trick? A diamond ruff? No, partner had two clubs, and can hardly have more than two spades. He cannot have 2-9-0-2 distribution, with that shape he would surely have pushed on to 5♥. The only other possibility is a trump trick.

<p>♠ J 8 7</p> <p>♥ A</p> <p>♦ 9 8 7 5 4</p> <p>♣ A K 10 8</p>	<p>♠ 10 9</p> <p>♥ J</p> <p>♦ A Q J 3 2</p> <p>♣ Q 5 4 3 2</p>	<p>♠ 6 4</p> <p>♥ K Q 9 8 6 5 3 2</p> <p>♦ 6</p> <p>♣ 7 6</p>	<p>♠ A K Q 5 3 2</p> <p>♥ 10 7 4</p> <p>♦ K 10</p> <p>♣ J 9</p>
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Yes, indeed! The magic card here, amazingly enough, is the ♠6! You lead another club, and if East ruffs with the ♠6 he forces declarer to overruff with an honor, promoting a trick for your ♠J! This form of trump promotion is known as an upper-cut, and East must ruff with the Smashing Six to deliver the knock-out blow. Ruffing with the Feeble Four would be no more than a tickle under declarer's chin.

**A Second Upper-Cut!** Next, imagine that *East* is declarer, playing in 4♥. South cashes the ♠A, ♠K, and leads a third spade, which North ruffs with the ♥J. Another upper-cut, promoting South's ♥10? No, Declarer simply pitches away his diamond loser and makes his contract. Let's have a do over. After cashing the top two spades, South cashes the ♦K, and *then* leads the third spade. Now declarer really is done for, this time the upper-cut sets the contract.