

**Board 2**

East Deals

N-S Vul

	♠ 4											
	♥ A K J 10 8 5 3											
	♦ 7 6											
	♣ 7 5 4											
♠ 6 5 3 ♥ 7 6 4 ♦ A Q J ♣ K Q J 8	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"><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		♠ A Q J 9 8 7 ♥ Q 9 ♦ K 10 3 ♣ A 10	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ K 10 2											
	♥ 2											
	♦ 9 8 5 4 2											
	♣ 9 6 3 2											
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>									
		1 ♠	Pass									
2 ♣	3 ♥	3 ♠	Pass									
4 ♠	All pass											

**Auction Commentary:** West bids 2 ♣ at their first turn intending to show a forcing hand with spade support at their next turn. North's 3 ♥ bid is preemptive.

**Opening Lead:** ♥ 2.

**Defensive Commentary:** North will win two rounds of hearts and continue with the ♥ J. If East ruffs low, South can overruff with the ♠ T and ensure a defeat. What if East over ruffs with the ♠ Q or ♠ J?

It is a curious thing, but South must discard, rather than overruff, to guarantee two tricks. Look closely. If South overruffs with the ♠ K, the two and ten will fall under East's Ace and Jack. If South doesn't overruff, East can lead the ♠ A next, but South will be left with the ♠ KT over East's ♠ J. Do you see it?

This is an important principle relating to **uppercuts** in the trump suit. It is very often correct to decline to overruff immediately, because overruffing nets only 1 trick, while discarding nets two tricks.

**Takeaway:** An UPPERCUT in bridge is a defensive play. It's a type of trump promotion, and it happens when one defender ruffs high, hoping that an overruff by declarer will promote a trump card in partner's hand.

Spend some time analyzing this uppercut and the implications of declining to overruff. It can be a difficult concept to come to grips with, but you'll be glad you did.

**Board 7**  
 South Deals  
 Both Vul

	♠ Q 8 7 6		
	♥ 9 8 7 5		
	♦ A Q J		
	♣ 9 8		
♠ A K 9 5 2	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">             N              W     E              S           </div>	♠ 4 3	
♥ Q 2		♥ J 6	
♦ 10 9 2		♦ K 7 5 3	
♣ 10 7 6		♣ Q J 4 3 2	
	♠ J 10		
	♥ A K 10 4 3		
	♦ 8 6 4		
	♣ A K 5		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♥
1 ♠	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♥
All pass			

**Auction Commentary:** North's 2 ♠ bid is a cue-bid of the overcall; it shows a limit raise or better for partner's opening suit. I would definitely say that North is a minimum for this action, since the ♠ Q should not seem like a particularly useful card. Still, I'm all for aggressive bidding.

**Opening Lead:** ♠ A.

**Play Commentary:** If East correctly plays the ♠ 4 to the first trick, West should be able to work out that South has at least one more ♠. If East started with J43 or T43, they'd have played the 3 to the first trick. When everyone follows to the second ♠, West will likely play a third, hoping that East can provide an uppercut. West leads a third ♠, and East dutifully produces the ♥ J.

Does everyone remember the loser-on-loser play? If we overruff the ♥ J, we will still lose a trump unless we are lucky enough to have the ♥ Q fall on the next round. Then, if the ♦ K is offside, we will go down.

If we have to lose a trump trick anyway, why not lose it now? If we pitch a diamond from our hand, East is left without resource. We can win any return, draw trump, and pitch another diamond from our hand on the good ♠ Q in the dummy! Two clubs, one club ruff, one diamond, five hearts and one spade is ten tricks. We went from probably losing a trump and possibly losing a diamond to definitely only losing one heart. What was I saying earlier about the ♠ Q?

**Takeaway:** Hopefully, you still have the tools you've acquired earlier in your toolbox. You'll need them if partner keeps bidding this aggressively (and you want to keep impressing them). Remember the loser-on-loser play. Don't rely on finesses (like here in ♦s) if you can avoid them. Remember that finesses have ONLY a 50% chance of success. If you've got another way to eliminate losers, choose that first!

**Board 10**  
 East Deals  
 Both Vul

	♠ J 5 3											
	♥ A K 9 7 5											
	♦ 2											
	♣ A K 9 3											
♠ A K Q 10	<table style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center; font-size: 10px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 9 2	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ 10 3		♥ J 4 2										
♦ Q J 3		♦ 10 9 7 6										
♣ 7 6 4 2		♣ Q J 10 5										
	♠ 8 7 6 4											
	♥ Q 8 6											
	♦ A K 8 5 4											
	♣ 8											
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>									
		Pass	Pass									
1 ♠	2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥									
All pass												

**Auction Commentary:** In 3rd chair, West knows that their side could end up on defense. Rather than opening 1 ♣, the "book" bid, West opens 1 ♠. If partner winds up on lead, West will be much happier with a spade lead than with a club lead.

When North overcalls 2 ♥, South has an excellent hand with support, a singleton, and a strong five-card side suit. A good jump to game.

**Opening Lead:** ♠ 9. East would have led the ♣ Q, but it is appropriate to start with partner's suit, trying for a ruff.

**Play Commentary:** Well, we've been down before. Since dummy has four spades, West can win the first three rounds and then continue with a fourth. North has plenty of winners, but they cannot escape losing a 4th trick via an uppercut. If North ruffs the 4th spade low, East can overruff. If North ruffs with an honor, East will score the ♥ J later.

Take a look at what happens if West opens 1 ♣ and East starts with a normal ♣ Q. North wins the ♣ AK and ruffs a club. Now the ♦ AK, pitching a spade, and ruffs a diamond. North can ruff the 4th club, cash the ♥ Q, and play a 4th diamond. If West ruffs low, North can overruff and draw trump. If West ruffs high, North can discard another spade. If West doesn't ruff, North can ruff low and draw trump. In every case, North makes 11 tricks on a ♣ lead instead of 9 tricks on a ♠ lead.

**Takeaway:** With a minimal opener in 3rd chair, it is fine to open a four-card major that contains the bulk of your strength. It serves the same purpose as an overcall; it gets partner off to the right lead.