

TRUMP PROMOTION

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Hand #1. ♠QJ74
 Dir E ♥1075
 NS vul ♦K1063
 ♣A5
 ♠AK985 ♠106
 ♥Q2 ♥J3
 ♦A982 ♦QJ4
 ♣87 ♣QJ6432
 ♠32
 ♥AK9864
 ♦75
 ♣K109

W	N	E	S
1♠	P	1NT	2H
P	2NT	P	3H
P	4H	All pass.	

West's 1♠ showed 5 cards so South knew that at the most East had two spades. Play went ♠A, ♠K and then ♠9 (to 'kill' dummy's now spade winners.). East ruffed with the ♥3, over-ruffed by South. South drew trumps, led up to the ♦K and proceeded to make his 10 tricks. Next board.

Nobody realized that East, with the worst and seemingly useless hand, had made a major error. See what happens if he ruffs the third round of spades with his ♥J, not the ♥3. Now South must ruff with his K or A. Now when South leads trumps West's ♥Q becomes good. Almost magically East has managed to establish a trump trick for his side. When West cashes his ♦A, EW now have four defensive tricks.

East's play of the ♥3 would be described by my old Scottish auction bridge mate as 'sending a boy on a man's errand'. My, that seems a lifetime ago. (Come to think of it, it was a lifetime ago).

Looking at all four hands on this page, this is easy to see. At the table it is not quite so obvious. This sort of play is known as the 'uppercut'. Always be aware of the possibility, and often it will arise when you seemingly have a useless hand. Particularly when you are short in trumps, and you have the chance to ruff, always think 'uppercut'. It usually pays to use your highest trump. Take this next hand. Have you ever seen a worse hand than East's? The bidding:

Hand #2 ♠KQ103
 Dir: N ♥Q9
 Vul: Nil ♦J98
 ♣KQ94

W	N	E	S
	1♣	P	1♥
3♦	P	P	3♥
P	4♥	All pass.	

♠A98 ♠7654
 ♥J102 ♥83
 ♦AKQ632 ♦74
 ♣3 ♣J10876
 ♠J2
 ♥AK7654
 ♦105
 ♣A52

West leads diamonds, and East peters (high / low) to show a doubleton. West can see two diamonds and a spade in defence. Almost certainly East doesn't hold the ♠A. A trump promotion, however unlikely, seems to be the best chance for the setting trick. So he makes the message clear to partner, not by continuing with the ♦Q, but with the ♦6, demanding that partner ruff and by inference with his best trump. East ruffs with the ♥8, forcing the ♥K from declarer. Now West's ♥J will

come good, and the defense gets 4 tricks. With East's useless hand, the ♥8 is the vital card! If he lazily ruffs with the ♥3, South overruffs, draws trumps and makes game.

West is the ideal partner. He has made life easy for you by forcing you to ruff by not playing the ♦Q. The only reason for this tactic is as a trump promotion.. But, even if he had played the ♦Q, you should still ruff with the ♥8. It can't cost. The next hand shows a somewhat different approach to trump promotion.

Hand #3

Dir S ♠8765
 Vul NS ♥643
 ♦K974
 ♣A6

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	2♠	4♥	4♠
All pass			

♠K104 ♠ -
 ♥2 ♥AKQJ1075
 ♦QJ653 ♦108
 ♣9842 ♣QJ107
 ♠AQJ932
 ♥98
 ♦A2
 ♣K53

With the West hand, you lead the ♥2. West plays three rounds of hearts. South ruffs the third round with the ♠J which you over-ruff with the ♠K. Now whatever you return South wins and draws your last two trumps. But see what happens if you don't over-ruff, but simply discard a club. Now, however he wriggles, South must lose two spades and is one off. This is an excellent example of promoting your own trumps by *not* over-ruffing.

