

Example 3

Blocking plays in defence generally take the form of 'second hand high'. The object may be to prevent an entry-finesse. This is a common situation:

A J 6 3 10 9 2
K 8 7 5

Q 4

Needing entries to dummy, perhaps for a finesse in the trump suit, declarer leads the four, intending to finesse the jack. West can frustrate him by playing the king on the first round.

Sometimes a big card by the second player will interrupt the declarer's communications:

A K 10 9 3 2 Q 7 4
J 5 8 6

Suppose that the declarer in a no trump contract wants to establish this suit but cannot afford to let West obtain the lead. Lacking a side entry to the dummy, he leads low, intending to duck the trick to East. The play of the jack by West spoils this plan. South does not want to let West win the trick, and if he plays high from dummy his communications will be ruined. The same play is sometimes indicated when a defender holds K x in front of dummy's A Q 10 x x x.

The play of the club suit on the following deal has interesting variations:

<p>♠ Q J 4 ♥ 9 8 7 2 ♦ K 10 6 4 ♣ J 3</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td> </td><td>N</td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>E</td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </table>		N		W	E		S			<p>♠ A 5 3 ♥ A J 10 4 ♦ 9 ♣ A 9 8 7 6</p>
	N										
W	E										
S											
<p>♠ K 10 7 6 2 ♥ 6 5 ♦ Q 3 2 ♣ Q 10 2</p>											

South is in 3NT, and as hearts have been bid West leads the queen of spades. Declarer holds up until the third round, and from the play of the cards he judges that East is the danger hand with the long spades.

Hoping to establish the clubs without letting East into the lead, South may cross to dummy in hearts and lead a low club from the table. Now East must be sufficiently alert to play the ten, to prevent declarer from ducking the trick to West.

The defence is more difficult if South plays the king of clubs on the first round and follows with a low club from dummy. Now East must play the 'crocodile coup', opening his jaws and playing the queen of clubs, to swallow his partner's jack. East, of course, does not know that his partner holds the jack, but he must assume that if South holds A J he will finesse, so the play of the queen will not cost.

Example 3

Some remarkable effects can be achieved when the defenders are able to organize a double trump promotion. A declarer who has a strong trump holding such as K Q J 10 x x, with a singleton opposite, may easily lose two tricks if he has to overruff twice with the ten and jack. In this example let a defender with just A 5 2 in the trump suit was able to promote a trick for the 5!

<p>♠ 6 5 ♥ A 5 2 ♦ A K 10 9 3 ♣ K 8 5</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	<p>♠ K J 7 3 2 ♥ 8 ♦ 8 7 4 2 ♣ Q 9 3</p>	<p>♠ A 8 ♥ K Q J 10 4 3 ♦ Q 10 9 4 ♣ A 7 6 2</p>
N	E						
W	S						

With both sides vulnerable, the bidding went:

	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
	1♥	2♦	pass	pass
	2♥	pass	pass	pass

West won the first two tricks with the king and ace of diamonds, then played a third diamond. As there could be no advantage in discarding a spade or a club, East ruffed with the seven of hearts. South had no loser that he could usefully discard, so he overruffed with the ten of hearts and led the jack. West went straight in with the ace and led a fourth diamond. East ruffed with the nine of hearts and after South had overruffed again the position in the trump suit was:

	5 2	—	—
	K 4 3	—	—

West's five of hearts was now a winner, and South went one down, losing two hearts, two diamonds and two clubs.

Example 4

In the examples so far, the declarer has overruffed because he had no obvious loser to discard. It is normally good play for the declarer to dispose of a certain loser in preference to overruffing when this may cost a trick. The defenders, on the other hand, must aim to cash top winners before inviting the uppercut. This may call for accurate timing.

<p>♠ 10 8 5 ♥ A K J 10 7 ♦ 10 8 4 ♣ K 6</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	<p>♠ 7 4 ♥ 9 6 5 3 ♦ K Q 6 2 ♣ A Q J</p>	<p>♠ J 3 ♥ 4 2 ♦ A J 9 4 3 ♣ 9 7 4 3</p>
N	E						
W	S						

South is in four spades and West leads the king of hearts. East begins an echo with the four, so that even if South drops the queen West will know, since the two is missing, that he can cash a second heart. (East would not have dropped the four from 8 4 2.) However, it would be a fatal error for West to continue with the ace of hearts. He sees the possibility of a trump promotion, should his partner hold the jack of spades or better, but two hearts and a trump will not bear the contract. Since there are no prospects of a trick in clubs, West must hope that his partner has the ace of diamonds.

It is essential to play a diamond at once, because otherwise South will discard a singleton diamond in preference to overruffing the third heart. So the play must go: king of hearts, diamond to the ace, heart return, and a third heart ruffed by the jack of spades. Against this sequence, there is nothing the declarer can do.

Before leaving this subject, it is worth noting a few combinations where the possibility of an uppercut may be overlooked.

	K 10	A 8 5 3	9
	Q J 7 6 4 2	—	—

If East has a chance to ruff with the nine, West's K 10 will be promoted.

Suppose that South takes the force in dummy and plays on trumps. East holds off for two rounds, leaving the cards as follows:

♠ 10	♠ A 5
♥ —	♥ 9 7
♦ A K	♦ 8 5 4
♣ A Q J 7 3	♣ 6

immaterial

♠ J 9	♠ J 9
♥ —	♥ —
♦ J 7 3 2	♦ J 7 3 2
♣ K 9	♣ K 9

South is now in a hopeless position. If he plays on clubs he allows East to make his small trump, and if he continues spades he will go two down, as East in due course will make ace of spades, a low spade and his fifth heart.

Example 10

We return now to problems of communication that arise in no trump contracts. The deal below occurred in a team-of-four match. At one table North was the declarer in 3NT, at the other table South. This should have made no difference, but it did.

♠ 9 4	♠ A 8 3
♥ K 8 6 4	♥ Q J 10 9
♦ J 7 5 2	♦ A 10 6
♣ 9 5 3	♣ Q J 6

♠ Q J 5	♠ K 10 7 6 2
♥ 5 3 2	♥ A 7
♦ K 9 3	♦ Q 8 4
♣ A K 4 2	♣ 10 8 7

At the first table South opened one club and North responded 3NT, which was passed out. The play followed a normal course. East led the six of spades and dummy's jack held the trick. A low heart was led from the table and West made the excellent play of going up with the king to protect his partner's entry. A second spade from the West side now spelt doom for the declarer, the defence making three spades and two hearts.

At the other table North scientifically responded one heart to the opening one club, so South became the declarer after this auction:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♣	pass	1 ♥	1 ♠
pass	pass	2 ♣	pass
2NT	pass	3NT	pass
pass	pass	pass	pass

West led the nine of spades, East won with the king and returned a spade. Now the defenders could not achieve the same sequence as at the first table, because even if West had won the first round of hearts he would not have been able to lead a spade. South made ten tricks without difficulty.

You see what went wrong? East must duck the first round of spades. As North is now the exposed hand it is quite easy for West to go up with the king of hearts on the first round of this suit and lead his second spade, defeating the contract in the same way as before.