

### 43. Overcalling on a four-card suit

Because the overcalling side have less time to explore for fits, they should bid suits only with five cards (decent ones, too). Do not bid a four-card suit as an overcaller — you may get left in it, or partner may support with three cards, leaving you in an awkward four-three fit.

#### What Happened

After South overcalled 1♠, North naturally competed to 4♠ over 4♥, presuming there was an eight-card fit. East won West's ♥J lead with ♥A and at trick two switched to her singleton ♣8.

Declarer won dummy's ♣Q and led ♠2 to ♠5 and ♠8, taking the deep finesse. West won ♠10 and led ♣J, East ruffing (with ♠K). Declarer won East's ♦4 with ♦A, ruffed ♥9 and led ♠6 to ♠A, East discarding. The best he could do from here was play minor-suit winners, giving West his ♠Q7. Two down and E-W +500.

#### What Should Have Happened

After South's take-out double, North bids 5♣ over East-West's 4♥ (which would go one down). East leads (say) ♥A and ♥4, declarer (North) ruffing. Declarer draws trumps (East has one) and cashes ♦AKQ (West discarding, revealing East has five).

It appears East's shape is 2♠5♥5♦1♣. When at trick eight declarer leads ♠2 and East plays ♠5, declarer knows East has only one more spade. He does not finesse, rather plays ♠A and another.

East wins his now bare ♠K but is endplayed to lead a red card. Declarer ruffs in dummy and dumps his remaining spade. Game

Dealer: East, Vulnerability: North-South

♠ 642 ♥ 2 ♦ KQ2 ♣ AQ7532	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		♠ K5 ♥ AQ754 ♦ J6543 ♣ 8
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ Q1073 ♥ KJ1083 ♦ 109 ♣ J10		♠ AJ98 ♥ 96 ♦ A87 ♣ K964									

#### What Happened

S	W	N	E
			1♥(1)
1♠(2)	4♥(3)	4♠(4)	Pass
Pass	Dbl	end	

(1) Opening on the rule of 20 (number of cards in two longest suits added to total high-card points reaching 20).

(2) Mistake. This overcalling bid guarantees a fifth spade.

(3) It pays to be bold in competition.

(4) Thinks partner has a fifth spade.

Contract: 4♠ Dbled (by S), Opening Lead: ♥J

#### What Should Have Happened

S	W	N	E
			1♥
Dbl(1)	4♥	5♣	end

(1) Opening hand with heart shortage and all the other three suits. South has a near-perfect minimum take-out double.

Contract: 5♣ (by N), Opening Lead: ♥A

made and N-S +600.

Did you spot that East can scupper declarer's cunning plan by rising with ♠K on the first round? Still, one down in 5♣ after a fine defence is better than two down doubled in a 4-3 fit 4♠.

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