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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

17th August 2010 North-South vulnerable. South deals.

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

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Pass	1 Club	X	1 Heart
2 Diamond	X	Xx	3 Club
3 Diamond	4 Club	5 Diamond	All Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♥

Some 20 years ago, two young Norwegians arrived on the international scene. Geir Helgemo and Tor Helness soon attracted attention and spearheaded Norway's drive to become a force in world bridge.

Helgemo (West) doubled two diamonds to show three-card heart support probably headed by an honor. The continuous activity in the auction by the Norwegians caused North-South to miss their 4-4 spade fit, but it would seem that five diamonds is an unbeatable contract since both the king of diamonds and queen of spades are well-placed for declarer. But there's many a slip between the cup and the lip.

Helgemo found the brilliant opening lead of the four of hearts, away from the ace! Declarer played low from dummy and, in light of the ramifications of the support double, Helness had no trouble in rising with the king. Now East returned the four of diamonds!

Consider what declarer thought he knew about the hand. The opening lead and the defense of Helness (East) suggested that he held the ace-king of hearts. That meant that West had to hold every other missing high card for his opening bid, including the king of diamonds. In that event, the only hope for the contract was to find West with a singleton king of diamonds, so South shot up with the ace and the contract went down! Declarer could not avoid losing tricks to the king of diamonds and ace of hearts in addition to the heart trick already banked by the defense.

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