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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch 21st September 2010

Both vulnerable. West deals.

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	South
Pass	1Spade	2 Diamond	2 Heart
4 Diamond	4 Heart	All Pass	

Opening lead: King of ♦

Study this deal from the recent European Championships. Would you rather play or defend four hearts after the lead of a top diamond?

Suppose you elect to play. At the table, declarer ruffed the opening lead and led a low heart to the queen. When that held, declarer ruffed another diamond, returned to hand with the king of spades and led a heart to East's ace.

The defender now locked South in dummy by returning a spade, and the contract can no longer be made — either East will ruff a spade continuation or, if a club is led, East plays low and the defenders get three club tricks — down one.

However, you should elect to play, although the winning line is not easy to find. Before touching trumps, declarer should play two rounds of spades, removing the defenders' exit cards, and then play a heart. Now East cannot lock declarer in dummy and declarer coasts home with an overtrick.

In the trade this technique is aptly named a "Dentist's Coup."

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