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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

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Dealer : South Vul : None	NORTH ♠ K 9 7 4 ♥ K 9 5 4 ♦ K 6 4 ♣ A J	
WEST ♠ Q 5 3 2 ♥ 10 8 ♦ A 8 ♣ Q 6 5 4 3		EAST ♠ 8 ♥ Q 7 6 3 2 ♦ Q 10 9 7 5 2 ♣ 7
	SOUTH ♠ A J 10 6 ♥ A J ♦ J 3 ♣ K 10 9 8 2	

South	West	North	East
1 Club	Pass	1 Heart	Pass
1 Spade	Pass	4 Spade	All Pass

Opening lead: Ace of ♦

Nothing makes you look more foolish than to glance at the score sheet of a duplicate event only to discover that, on one of the boards, you were the only pair in the event to go down in the popular contract. That was the case on this deal from a Scandinavian Pair Championship.

Every North-South pair in the event reached either four spades on an auction such as the above or three no trump. Every pair made game — except you!

The opening lead was the ace of diamonds and the suit was continued to dummy's king. You elected to play the hand on crossruff lines. As is mandatory in such cases, you must first cash your side-suit winners. It is slightly better technically to first cash the ace and king of hearts, but here you elected to start with clubs. The ace of clubs lived, but East ruffed the second club. That was not yet fatal.

When East continued with the queen of diamonds, you ruffed with the knave. Instead of overruffing, West innocently discarded a heart. Now you see an alternate line — cross to the king of spades, take the "marked" trump finesse, draw the outstanding trump and set up the clubs via a ruffing finesse, which would produce an overtrick.

Unfortunately, when you lead a spade to the king East shows out. The contract can still be saved had West started with at least three hearts — but you know this is not your day. West ruffs the second heart, and eventually scores the queen of trumps for the setting trick. Ah well..

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