The Tale of the Four of Hearts

South Deals

- ♠ A 10 7 2
- ♥ J 5
- ♦ K J 8 7 2
- ♣ 10 7

North

- ♠ 8 6 5
- ♥ K 10 6 3
- ♦ Q 5
- ♣ Q 6 4 3

West

- ♠ J
- ♥ A Q 9 8 7
- ♦ A 9 3
- ♣ K J 8 2

East

- ♠ A 9 5
- ♥ 4 2
- ♦ 10 6 4
- ♣ A 9 5

Pete

- 1 ♥

North

- Pass

Pass

- 2 ♥

South

- All pass

2 ♥ by South

Lead: ♠ 5

My story comes from a matchpoint pairs event (where overtricks can be everything), in Bethesda, MD. North and South both had maximum hands for their bidding to the normal 2 ♥ contract. Pete produced the ♠ 5 (low from an odd number), and dummy appeared. How frustrating for me, the best trump in Gary's hand: I could not even overruff dummy's five, should it come to that!

The lead was won by the ♠ A in dummy, as Gary encouraged with the ♠ 3 (upside down). Declarer ran dummy's ♠ 10 to Pete's queen, and the ♠ 8 was led, ruffed by declarer with the ♥ 7.

Declarer led the ♥ J, won by the ♠ A, and Gary led my companion, the ♥ 2; declarer rose with the ♥ A, Pete following with the ♥ 6. Declarer cashed the ♠ K, and ruffed his last club with the ♥ J, while Gary discarded a diamond. Declarer now ruffed the third round of spades with the ♥ 8, cashed the ♠ A, and then the ♥ K. Here was the layout, with the lead in dummy:

- ♠ 10
- ♥ K 10 3
- ♦ Q 9
- ♣ 9

Declarer chose the wrong play, the ♥ J from dummy, and Gary pounced: he played me, the ♥ 4! Pete underruffed the ♥ 3, letting me win the trick. This let Gary lead next, producing all three of these tricks for the defense. With all those cards and the ♠ Q in the slot, declarer was held to making only two, a fine result. Double dummy, four hearts can be made.

- Pete Matthews