The Deschapelles Coup

By Rich Waugh

The Deschapelles Coup, named after a 19th-century French chess and whist player Alexandre Deschapelles, is the lead of an unsupported honor to create an entry in partner's hand. It should not be, but often is, confused with the Merrimac coup, the lead of an unsupported honor to kill an entry in an opponent's hand.

Geir Helgemo executed this Deschapelles Coup in a 1998 tournament.

Board 14
East Deals
None Vul

	♠ J 6 ♥ A J 10 8 3 ♦ Q 6 2 ♣ K J 8	
♠ 5 4 3 2 ♥ Q 5 ♦ J ♣ 10 9 7 5 3 2	N W E S	♠ K Q 10 8 7 ♥ K 9 6 2 ♦ K 9 7 ♣ A
	♠ A 9 ♥ 7 4 ♦ A 10 8 5 4 3 ♣ Q 6 4	

Helgemo was East against South's four diamonds. West led a small spade, Helgemo put up the queen and South won the ace. South then returned a spade to Helgamo's king. Helgemo cashed the ace of clubs and switched to the *king* of hearts (the coup). Dummy won the ace and played the queen of diamonds to the king, ace, and jack.

Now declarer tried to enter dummy with the king of clubs, but Helgemo ruffed, put West in with the queen of hearts, and ruffed the club return for down two.

It would not have helped South to duck the king of hearts because Helgemo would simply have continued hearts, winding up with a trick in each suit.

And it would not have helped Helgemo to switch to a low heart at trick four. South wins West's queen with the ace, leads the queen of diamonds, covered and won, and then leads another heart to endplay Helgemo.

This is a particularly unusual Deschapelles coup, because it is combined with a Merrimac coup. The same play of the king of hearts both establishes an entry for West and takes out an entry to dummy.