

DECLARER PLAN 4 – CROSS-RUFF

	♠ 6	
	♥ A987	
	♦ 654	
	♣ A6543	
♠ Q108		♠ KJ97
♥ 432		♥ 65
♦ AQ10		♦ KJ98
♣ KQJ10		♣ 987
	♠ A5432	
	♥ KQJ10	
	♦ 732	
	♣ 2	

4H by South. West leads the CK which you win in dummy with the CA. What is your general plan?

Counting losers from the South hand, we have no club losers, 3 diamond losers, no heart losers and 4 spade losers. Clearly, we can't draw all the trumps as you will have at least 2 spade losers at the end to add to the 3 diamond losers.

Superficially, this looks like a trump spades in dummy or set the spade suit up before you draw trumps. However, the only way to get back to hand is by trumps, and if you do this in trumps you are drawing the trumps you need to ruff spades.

The answer is a complete cross ruff where you NEVER draw trumps.

After you win the CK, ruff a club. Now play SA and ruff a spade. Ruff clubs in hand and spades in dummy until all the trumps are gone. You get SA, CA, 4 club ruffs and 4 spade ruffs for 10 tricks.

Note that the defence couldn't overruff us at any stage. This is one of the 2 pre-conditions of a crossruff: **YOUR TRUMPS NEED TO BE NUMEROUS AND STRONG ENOUGH THAT THE DEFENDERS CAN'T OVERRUFF YOU AT A CRITICAL POINT AND LEAD A TRUMP TO BREAK UP THE CROSSRUFF.**

The other pre-condition is that you have a shortage in dummy in one side suit, and a shortage in hand in another side suit so you can ruff backwards and forwards.

One further point – any side winners should be cashed BEFORE you crossruff. In the above example, if we had the diamond ace, we should play it first before ruffing clubs or spades. We do this because a defender who can't overruff spades or clubs might succeed in throwing all their diamonds away, and when you come to play the DA at the end you find it getting ruffed.

	♠ 6	
	♥ A543	
	♦ KJ54	
	♣ KJ65	
♠ KQJ10		♠ 987
♥ 10987		♥ KQJ6
♦ 10986		♦ AQ7
♣ 9		♣ 1087
	♠ A5432	
	♥ 2	
	♦ 32	
	♣ AQ432	

5C by South. West leads the SK. What is the best plan?

This is a much trickier hand. We have no club or heart losers, but 2 diamond losers and 4 spade losers. It's probably not a good idea to test the diamonds as there is no assurance of saving a loser and it gives the opposition the chance to lead trumps if they win and cut down on our cross ruffs.

A cross ruff will work so long as the early rounds of spades and hearts hold up. If spades are 4-3 and hearts 4-4 we will get home.

Aim to get SA, HA, 4 spade ruffs, 3 heart ruffs and CAQ at the end for 11 tricks:

1. Win SA, ruff a spade, play HA and ruff a heart
2. Ruff a spade, ruff a heart, ruff a spade.
3. Lead the final heart, if East discards you ruff small and must get home. If East ruffs, you can discard a small diamond and East can't beat you with any return.