

♠ Q9865
♥ J1072
♦ K732
♣

♠ -
♥ AKQ94
♦ A98
♣ QJ984

4♥ by South. Opening lead ♠A. How should South play the hand?

DECLARER PLAY 15 – CROSSRUFFING

	♠ Q9865	
	♥ J1072	
	♦ K732	
	♣	
♠ AK32		♠ J1074
♥ 653		♥ 8
♦ J4		♦ Q1065
♣ K1065		♣ A732
	♠	
	♥ AKQ94	
	♦ A98	
	♣ QJ984	

4♥ by South. Opening lead ♠A. How should South play the hand?

A full cross ruff (ie where declarer never draws trumps) is a bit of a rare beast. There are 2 things that suggest it might be the way to play a hand:

1. A shortage in a side suit in dummy and a shortage in a different side suit in hand, and
2. You have most of the high trumps. This prevents the opponents overruffing you at a critical point and leading trumps to thwart your plans.

You can see on the above hand we have a club void in dummy and a spade void in hand satisfying the first point. We have all the high trumps down to the ♥9 satisfying the second point.

A critical step in setting up a cross ruff is to play any side suit winners early. The reason for this is that if you leave side suit winners to the end, the defenders might have thrown this suit as you were cross ruffing and then trump your winners at the end.

Putting that all together on the above hand, I would:

1. Ruff the opening spade lead in hand and ruff a club in dummy,
2. Play ♦K and then lead to ♦A. This cashes the side suit winners early,
3. Now ruff another club in dummy.

You now have only high trumps left and the opposition can't interrupt your cross ruff. You simply ruff spades in hand and clubs in dummy until you run out of trumps.

You make ♦AK, 4 club ruffs in dummy and 5 spade ruffs in dummy for 11 tricks.