

HAND TYPES: (HIGH) CROSS RUFF

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Some hands lend themselves to a high cross-ruff. It is important to recognize these hands *before* you start to play, as sometimes pulling even one round of trumps is too many!

Clues that a Cross Ruff Might be the Way to Go:

- 1) You have high trumps (really good spots) in both hands
- 2) You have a singleton or void in both Declarer's hand and Dummy.
- 3) There is no long side suit that is a candidate for setting up.
- 4) Trumping losers in the short-trump hand (only) will not generate enough tricks for your contract.

Tips for a Successful Cross Ruff

- 1) Cash all your essential side-suit winners BEFORE embarking upon your high cross-ruff.
- 2) Cash enough side-suit winners to ensure your contract. If playing Swiss Teams or other imp scoring games, cash ONLY enough winners to ensure your contract. Don't risk having one of your side-suit winners ruffed and the opponents being able to lead a trump. A trump lead deprives you of TWO tricks.
- 3) If you have one or two low trumps in either hand, take those ruffs as early as possible to try to avoid being over-trumped.

EXAMPLES:

You hold: AKQ109 Ax void A65432 opposite J872 KQ32 8765 2 Lead is Ace of diamonds.

Note that the entry situation is not really conducive to setting up your club suit. (The clubs are most likely to break 4/2 which means you would have to ruff clubs THREE times in dummy and still get back to your hand to pull trumps and cash the other two. You don't have the entries to manage that.)

If the contract is 6 spades, cash ONLY TWO top hearts (item #2 above) and then play the Ace of clubs and trump a club with the 2 of spades in dummy (item #3 above). If that lives, you can cross-ruff the next 8 tricks. Making 6.

If the contract is 7 spades, you must hope that THREE rounds of hearts will cash (item #2 above). Then, play Ace of clubs and trump a club with the 2 of spades in dummy (item #3 above). Etc.

You hold: KQ9532 AKQ A32 3 opposite AJ104 45 7 A76543 Lead is King of diamonds.

Note that this hand is not really a high cross-ruff. This hand is the type in which you should be trumping **losers in the short-trump hand**. The safest play is to take the Ace of diamonds and immediately trump a diamond with the Ace of spades. (You can afford it.) Now play the 4 of spades over to King of spades. Trump another diamond with the Jack of spades. Overtake the 10 of spades with the Queen and play another round of spades (with the 9) if the opponents' trumps break 3-0. Note that there is absolutely NO NEED to trump clubs in Declarer's hand. It won't generate extra tricks, but it would entail extra risk. (If you trump high in both hands, you could end up losing a trump trick to the 8. If you trump a club with a low trump, you risk being over-ruffed.) Again, look at the differences between this hand and the hand above it.