

The Crossruff

One way to get rid of a loser, when playing in a Suit contract, is to ruff (trump) it in the hand with the short Trump suit, usually the Dummy. To ruff in the hand with the long suit, usually Declarer's, will not usually produce an extra trick, except in the case of a “**Dummy Reversal**.”

A. Definition: A “*crossruff*” is a playing strategy, used in Suit contracts, in which Declarer plans to use all or most of his/her Trump cards, both in his/her own hand and in the Dummy, for the purpose of ruffing losing tricks occurring in both hands. The Partnership's Trumps are used separately, creating ruffing tricks by utilizing two side suits of grossly dissimilar lengths.

A “*complete crossruff*” occurs when Declarer exhausts his/her combined Trump holding entirely by ruffing.

A “*partial crossruff*” occurs when Declarer draws one or more rounds of Trumps, either before or after using the remaining Trump cards for individual ruffs in both hands.

Example:

Suppose the King of Clubs led against your 4S contract and you hold the following hands:

AJ98	KQT7	If you win the Ace of Clubs and then draw four rounds of Trumps, you
642	753	will take only six tricks. If, instead, you cash the Ace of Clubs, then the
6	A5432	Ace of Diamonds, and then ruff back and forth in the Minor suits, without
A5432	6	ever leading Trumps, you will accumulate a total of ten tricks.

B. The Basic Conditions for a Crossruff:

(1) Declarer must have two side suits with misfits, length in one hand opposite shortness in the other, and no obvious tricks to establish in lieu of the crossruff.

(2) Declarer must have the ability to ruff back and forth without interruption. This requires Trump length in both hands, enough cards capable of being trumped in order to carry out the individual trumping, and good quality Trumps to reduce the likelihood of an over-ruff by one or the other Opponent.

C. Important Considerations When Crossruffing:

(1) Trump leads are the biggest threat to Declarer's crossruffing potential.

a) Whenever Trumps are led, Declarer must commit two Trump cards to the same trick. This is counterproductive to a crossruff, which is based upon using each Trump card separately.

b) Declarer must avoid leading the Trump suit himself/herself, unless the crossruff is intended to only be a partial one.

c) If Declarer must lose the lead before an attempt is made to crossruff, he/she must be prepared for a switch to Trumps by the Opponents. If possible, Declarer must try to absorb losers early, hopefully, before the Opponents become aware of what Declarer is planning to do.

(2) If one of Declarer's side suits is not involved in the crossruff, but contains some sure winners, Declarer must be certain to cash them **early in the play**. Otherwise, as the crossruff progresses, the Opponents may run out of cards in the suits Declarer is trumping, and, by discarding properly, they might be able to ruff Declarer's side-suit winners, when he/she tries to cash them later in the play of the hand. **CROSSRUFF**

RULE: It is imperative to take winner(s) in the side suit(s) **before** starting any crossruff.