

## §43. The Crossruff.

**By the end of this chapter you should understand the following terms:**

**Crossruff:** A play whereby declarer makes his tricks by taking alternate ruffs in each hand (the closed hand and dummy).

**Ruffing in both hands:** Usually the wrong line of play unless declarer is going to embark on a *crossruff*. Certainly the wrong play if trumps need to be drawn.

This chapter is concerned with the play in suit contracts where the aim is to maximise the number of tricks that can be made from the trump suit.

Let's start this chapter with a cautionary warning, however. Many players are happy to ruff losers too early and, towards the end of the hand, realise that they have run out of trumps. When trumps need to be drawn sometime in the hand it is unwise to *ruff in both hands*.

Here is a tricky affair, played by South in 4♥. How would you play it after West leads the ♦K?

<p><b>Hand 1</b> South plays in 4♥. West leads the ♦K.</p>	<p>♠ Q 6 5 3 ♥ K Q 10 8 ♦ 7 4 ♣ A Q 8</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S	<p>♠ A K 7 2 ♥ 4 ♦ 10 6 3 ♣ 10 6 4 3 2</p>
N						
W     E						
S						
	<p>♠ J 10 4 ♥ 6 5 3 2 ♦ K Q J 9 ♣ 7 5</p>		<p>♠ 9 8 ♥ A J 9 7 ♦ A 8 5 2 ♣ K J 9</p>			

Your **Count and Plan** reveals a total of eight easy winners – four Hearts, one Diamond and three Clubs. That's insufficient for the contract, so it would be unwise to draw trumps, the more so as the 4-1 split would leave you woefully short of tricks. Essentially, you need *six* trump tricks, and the way to do that is to manoeuvre two ruffs – **either** in dummy **or** in the closed hand, but not in both.

Best play is to allow the ♦K to hold trick one, leaving the ball in West's court. Now the play is neat – if he plays another Diamond you win, ruff a Diamond, return to hand and ruff another Diamond, draw all of the trumps and cash three Clubs (making **six** Hearts, three Clubs and the ♦A). If, instead, West switches to Spades at tricks, two, three and four you'd change tack. You'd ruff the third Spade, cross to table, ruff another Spade, cross to the dummy, draw all the trumps and make your plain-suit high cards as before.

Note that *ruffing in both hands* would allow East to have longer trumps than you do, and you would be unable to make three Club tricks.

Bridge is a contrary game, however, and this chapter shows you that there are hands where ruffing in both hands is the right play. Sometimes. Take the wheel in 5♦, arrived at after East has opened 1♥.

<p><b>Hand 2</b> South plays in 5♦. West leads the ♥7.</p>	<p>♠ A J 7 6 2 ♥ J 6 ♦ Q 10 9 7 ♣ K 8</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S	<p>♠ K 5 ♥ A K Q 9 5 2 ♦ 6 4 3 ♣ Q 9</p>
N						
W     E						
S						
	<p>♠ Q 10 9 8 4 ♥ 8 7 3 ♦ 2 ♣ J 10 6 4</p>		<p>♠ 3 ♥ 10 4 ♦ A K J 8 5 ♣ A 7 5 3 2</p>			

East cashes two top Hearts and, for want of anything better to do, plays a trump at trick three. What does your **Count and Plan** tell you to do? You should see eight easy winners (one Spade, five Diamonds and two Clubs). Where are the extra three coming from?

To make 5♦ you require *eight* trump tricks, and that means obtaining three Club ruffs on table. To gain entry to hand, to keep ruffing Clubs, you can ruff Spades in hand. In practice, the play is very straightforward – you cash the ♠A, the ♣K and ♣A at tricks four, five and six and then embark on a spree of ruffing – whenever you are in dummy to trump a Spade in hand, whenever you are in the closed hand you ruff a Club on table.

East has the galling misfortune to have to *underruff* on the last two tricks.

Is there a catch? Yes, but it's a small one. If you were to ruff Spades in hand too early on this deal, then East would be able to ditch a Club. So, let's establish a major principle of playing a crossruff. Which is:

**Before embarking on a crossruff, cash sufficient outside winners first.**

Now try this: Somehow or other, you and your partner have wound your weary way to 7♠ (yes, **seven** Spades). A startled West leads the ♦A and you have to play this one:

<p><b>Hand 3</b> South plays in 7♠. West leads the ♦A.</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 6 5 ♥ K Q J 10 5 ♦ None ♣ Q J 10</p>		<p>♠ 3 2 ♥ 7 6 3 ♦ Q J 10 9 7 ♣ 7 5 3</p>								
<p>♠ 4 ♥ A 9 8 4 2 ♦ A K 4 ♣ 9 8 6 2</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ A K 9 8 7 ♥ None ♦ 8 6 5 3 2 ♣ A K 4</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

You have only three top tricks outside of trumps, so need **ten** trump tricks to make the grand slam. That is actually possible as you can ruff five Diamonds on table and five Hearts in hand. Happy days!

However (there's always a "however" or a "but", isn't there?), if you were to embark on a premature crossruff both East and West would pitch Clubs when they could, and you would be unable to score three Club tricks. To make your ambitious contract you must cash the ♣A K Q at tricks two, three and four. Once they stand up you are home and dry, crossruffing the red suits to make your grand slam.

"I had two Aces and a King, and they make a grand slam against me. Nothing I could do, partner", says West, morosely. No? Try leading a trump. That upsets the applecart in a big way. Can you see **why**?

Can you make your more modest small slam here? This time you find yourself as South in 6♠ after West has bid Clubs and leads the ♣K:

<p><b>Hand 4</b> South plays in 6♠. West leads the ♣K.</p>	<p>♠ A 10 9 8 ♥ A J 6 4 3 ♦ A K Q ♣ 7</p>		<p>♠ 6 5 4 2 ♥ Q 10 9 8 5 2 ♦ 9 2 ♣ 6</p>								
<p>♠ 3 ♥ K ♦ J 10 7 6 3 ♣ K Q 10 9 5 4</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ K Q J 7 ♥ 7 ♦ 8 5 4 ♣ A J 8 3 2</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

Your **Count** and **Plan** shows you that there are five plain-suit winners (one Heart, three Diamonds and one Club) and it's possible to make **eight** trump tricks on a complete crossruff (four Heart ruffs in the closed hand, four Club ruffs on table). A grand slam awaits, then? Not so fast!

In 7♠ you'd have to try to cash three Diamond tricks. In a more modest 6♠ the play is risky. Why? Because if the third Diamond got ruffed, a trump lead from the defence would wreck your slam. Having taken the ♣A, you should cash *two* top Diamonds and the ♥A and then crossruff for twelve tricks.

## §43. Quiz on The Crossruff.

Here are three full deals for you to try.

In each case you are South, declarer. Obviously, your first act is to **Count** and **Plan**.

The Preliminary Analysis talks you through the first trick or two. What is your best subsequent play?

The answers are overleaf.

### Q1.

How should you play in 6♠?

West leads the ♥J.

#### Preliminary Analysis.

West leads the ♥J, which holds. A second round of Hearts is ruffed in hand with the ♠3.

What next? Should you draw trumps? Aim to ruff a Club in the dummy? Play to ruff Clubs on table and Hearts in hand?

What is the best line of play?

♠ A J 10 8  
♥ K 5 4 3 2  
♦ A 7 6  
♣ 2

Dummy	
W	E
Declarer	

♠ K Q 5 3  
♥ 8  
♦ K Q J 10 3  
♣ A J 7

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

6♠ by South      Opening lead: ♥J

### Q2.

How should you play in 4♠?

West leads the ♥K.

#### Preliminary Analysis.

Despite your 2♥ bid West still leads the ♥K.

After due consideration you duck this. West now switches to a trump.

What is your best line of play now?

♠ K Q J 8  
♥ 10 8  
♦ A 7 5 2  
♣ K 9 4

Dummy	
W	E
Declarer	

♠ A 10 9 7  
♥ A 6 4 2  
♦ J 4  
♣ A 7 2

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♠ <sup>1</sup>
Pass	Pass	Pass	

4♠ by South      Opening lead: ♥K

1. North must have four Spades to employ Stayman and yet have no interest in Hearts.

### Q3.

How should you play in 4♠?

West leads the ♥A.

#### Preliminary Analysis.

Dummy is something of a shock; it has the right values for a raise, but is a trump underweight. Still, no other game has a prayer.

West cashes the ♥A and switches to a trump. Plan the play from here.

♠ K J 10  
♥ 8 5 4 2  
♦ A 8 6 3  
♣ K 4

Dummy	
W	E
Declarer	

♠ A Q 8 5  
♥ 9  
♦ K 7 4  
♣ A 8 6 5 3

West	North	East	South
			1♣
1♥	Dble <sup>1</sup>	2♥	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

4♠ by South      Opening lead: ♥A

1. A *negative Double* showing a four-card Spade holding...

...in theory, anyway.

## Answers.

A1.

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

This is **not** a crossruff deal. You have a side-suit to cash (those lovely, luscious Diamonds), so must aim to *draw trumps*. Your **Count** and **Plan** shows you that you have five Spades (that's four in dummy plus the Heart ruff already taken in hand), five Diamonds and a Club. That's a total of eleven. You can't generate an extra trick by ruffing Clubs in dummy; besides, you'd fatally weaken your trumps.

You need to score **six** trump tricks, and to do that you need to take a second Heart ruff in your hand, keeping four good Spades on table so that you can draw trumps.

Thus: ruff the Heart at trick two, play a Spade to the ♠10, ruff a Heart with the ♠Q, cash the ♠K, cross to the ♦A, draw the remaining trumps and run the Diamonds.

A2.

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

West leads the ♥K and you allow him to hold the trick (often the best play with this type of hand). West switches to a trump, so you should win and aim to take some ruffs.

To clear the path it is best to duck a Diamond next. Suppose East wins and plays a second trump (best defence). Now the stage is set for a crossruff – trumping Hearts on table and Diamonds in hand.

However, there is a trap. You must *cash your outside winners* before embarking on a crossruff – in this case that's the ♣A K. If you fail to do this, East will discard his Clubs when you ruff Hearts on table and you won't make a Club trick. Played correctly you make **six** trumps, the ♥A, the ♦A and the ♣A K.

A3.

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

These 4-3 fits (known as *Moysian fits* after the writer Alphonse "Sonny" Moysie who was fond of such things) are often awkward to handle. This one, though, is not so hard.

West takes the ♥A at trick one and switches to a trump, won by the ♠10. Provided that you obey the "rule" of *cashing outside winners* before embarking on a crossruff you will be able to score six trump tricks and four outside winners. Thus (having won trick two): cash the ♦K, the ♦A, the ♣A and the ♣K and then embark on a veritable orgy of ruffing – Hearts in hand and Clubs on the table. A frustrated East can do nothing but watch as you romp home with the first ten tricks.

## §43. Example hands 1 to 4.

**Hand 1** Love all, dealer North

<p>♠ 7 6 4 ♥ K 5 ♦ A 6 5 ♣ K 10 9 8 2</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	<p>♠ A K Q 10 2 ♥ A J 6 2 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ J</p>	<p>♠ 3 ♥ Q 10 9 7 4 3 ♦ Q J 10 9 ♣ 7 6</p>
N		E							
W		S							

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♣	All Pass
4♣ by East		Opening lead: ♦Q	

East reaches 4♣ by an invitational auction and South leads the ♦Q. That neatly traps the ♦K on table and North-South take the first three tricks, quietly getting off lead with a trump. East's **Count** and **Plan** reveals seven top winners (five Spades and two Aces, so three Heart ruffs in the dummy are needed to swell the total to ten. That's easy enough to achieve; the necessary entries to hand can be found by ruffing Clubs. Thus, the play should proceed: win the trump switch at trick four (it doesn't matter where) cash the ♥A and the ♣A and successively ruff Hearts on table and Clubs in hand. This deal illustrates one of the simpler examples of a crossruff – declarer ending up with eight trump tricks and two Aces.

**Hand 2** North-South game, dealer East

<p>♠ A K 5 4 ♥ J 9 6 3 ♦ K ♣ K 6 4 3</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	<p>♠ J 10 7 3 2 ♥ 2 ♦ J 5 2 ♣ Q J 10 8</p>	<p>♠ 9 8 ♥ A K Q 10 ♦ 10 9 6 4 ♣ A 5 2</p>
N		E							
W		S							

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	
4♥ by South		Opening lead: ♥4	

North-South arrive in 4♥ after a Stayman sequence and West finds the awkward lead of a trump (best defence). Declarer can see four black-suit winners in the guise of the two Ace-Kings, so needs six trump tricks. That's easy enough if he can manage two ruffs in either the closed hand or the dummy. There is a trap, though, that is common to many crossruff type hands. Suppose South cashed the ♠A K and ruffed a Spade early; West would seize the opportunity to chuck a Club, and now it would be difficult to make the ♣A K. First things first. Win the trump and concede a Diamond. Win the next trump, cash the ♠A K and then (and only then) crossruff.

**Hand 3** East-West game, dealer South

<p>♠ None ♥ A K Q 6 4 ♦ K J 9 6 4 ♣ 7 4 2</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	<p>♠ K J 9 6 ♥ J 10 8 ♦ 2 ♣ K 10 8 6 5</p>	<p>♠ 8 4 3 2 ♥ 9 3 2 ♦ A 7 ♣ Q J 9 3</p>
N		E							
W		S							

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♠	2♥	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	Pass	Pass
4♣ by West		Opening lead: ♥A	

West plays in 4♣ after an aggressive auction. North cashes two top Hearts and tries his luck with the ♥Q. Now what? Declarer (as ever) should **Count** and **Plan** – he has five Spades and two Clubs so needs three ruffs in the dummy. To pave the way for that he must concede a Diamond and the best time to do that is now – at trick four. (True – he could cash the ♣A first, but that's splitting hairs). Pulling a round of trumps is wrong – if West does so, South will gain the lead with a Diamond and play a second round and there will be insufficient trumps in the dummy. After conceding a Diamond declarer should cash the ♣A and ruff a Diamond, cash the ♣K and crossruff.

**Hand 4** Game all, dealer West

<p>♠ A J 9 8 6 ♥ 8 4 ♦ A 9 6 3 ♣ K 3</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	<p>♠ 5 4 3 2 ♥ 10 7 ♦ K J 8 5 2 ♣ J 8</p>	<p>♠ K Q 10 7 ♥ A K J 3 ♦ Q ♣ A 9 6 2</p>
N		E							
W		S							

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♦	Pass	7♣
7♣ by North		Opening lead: ♠2	

South bashes a grand slam in thoroughly uncouth fashion and East leads an approved low trump. Recovering from the shock of the 4-0 trump break, declarer applies his **Count** and **Plan**. North can see five trumps and five top tricks in the outside suits. Three ruffs in the dummy will get the total up to thirteen. Any problems? Well, as with Hands 2 & 3, it is necessary to cash the top tricks in the outside suits immediately. If declarer plays off the ♦A, ruffs a Diamond and plays three rounds of Hearts to return to hand East will throw a Club. Oops! One off. However, if declarer cashes the ♣A K first, before playing the crossruff, he will make his grand slam.

## §43. Example hands 5 to 8.

**Hand 5** North-South game, dealer North

♠ A 8 7 ♥ A K Q ♦ A ♣ A J 8 6 4 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ None ♥ 10 7 4 2 ♦ K 10 8 7 ♣ K Q 9 5 3	♠ 6 5 4 3 2 ♥ J 9 6 ♦ J 9 5 3 ♣ 7
N		E							
W		S							
♠ K Q J 10 9 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ Q 6 4 2 ♣ 10									

West	North	East	South
	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	6♠	All Pass	
6♠ by South		Opening lead: ♠2	

Another slam, another trump lead, another crossruff; South to play the hand this time. As ever, declarer must **Count** and **Plan** on the sight of dummy – here there are five trumps, three Hearts and two Aces, so two ruffs in the dummy will do. However, if declarer is going to ruff Clubs in hand for entries, West will take the opportunity to slough off his Hearts. To prevent this, declarer must play off his Heart winners first. Again, *before starting a crossruff, cash the outside winners first*. After West follows to three rounds of Hearts and the two minor suit Aces the winning post is in sight – declarer can just ruff everything in sight.

**Hand 6** East-West game, dealer East

♠ None ♥ K Q J 8 6 5 ♦ K Q 9 7 4 2 ♣ 6	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ A Q J 5 ♥ A 10 3 ♦ 8 ♣ A Q 10 8 2	♠ K 10 9 8 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ A J 6 5 3 ♣ 7
N		E							
W		S							

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♦	1♥	1♠	Pass
2♠	3♥	4♠	All Pass
4♠ by East		Opening lead: ♠2	

(A deal from 1974 – reported in the *Chicago Tribune* by the renowned American author Charles H Goren). South preferred a trump lead to his partner's suit and East started on a crossruff. Win the ♠8, ♣A, ruff a Club, ♦A, ruff a Diamond – curtains! South discarded his Heart and declarer was dead. The count of tricks shows that declarer needs three Aces and seven trump tricks (he can't make more after the Spade lead). So, East has to take the precaution of cashing the ♥A before embarking on the crossruff; nothing can damage him now. Was he unlucky? Well, yes, but this game rewards good technique and players who neglect textbook plays are often "unlucky".

**Hand 7** Game all, dealer South

♠ Q 8 ♥ 7 6 5 4 2 ♦ J 9 ♣ Q 9 6 3	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ 4 ♥ A 9 8 3 ♦ A 8 7 3 ♣ A 5 4 2	♠ A K 9 5 3 2 ♥ K Q J 10 ♦ K 2 ♣ 7
N		E							
W		S							

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
6♥ by West		Opening lead: ♥2	

West gets a shock at trick one when South shows out of trumps. However, the contract can still make. There are two Spades, two Diamonds and a Club, so West needs to make seven trump tricks. Three ruffs in the dummy should suffice. Any problems? Well, obviously... If declarer plays off two top Spades and ruffs a Spade early North will discard a Diamond and the crossruff will fail. *Before starting a crossruff, cash the outside winners first*. Best play is to cash dummy's plain suit Aces, then (from hand) the ♦K, the ♠A K and – finally – embark on a high crossruff.

**Hand 8** Love all, dealer West

♠ J 7 6 3 ♥ 10 ♦ A J 7 5 ♣ 10 8 6 3	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ K ♥ Q 9 4 3 ♦ K 10 8 4 2 ♣ K Q J	♠ Q 10 9 8 ♥ K J 6 5 ♦ Q 9 6 3 ♣ 9
N		E							
W		S							

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	Dble
1♥	1♠	2♥	4♠!
4♠ by North		Opening lead: ♣K	

This incredible deal shows that anything is possible. South's bidding stands up to no sort of scrutiny – the initial take-out Double is fine but the jump to 4♠ is absurd with three empty suits. Still, it's results that count. East leads the ♣K and North's **Count** and **Plan** reveals a host of losers (two trumps, two Clubs and loads of red cards). Nonetheless, a crossruff brings home the bacon. ♠A, ♥A, Heart ruff, ♦A and then an orgy of crossruffing takes the first nine tricks with the ♠A to come. Weirdly, East is left with two Club winners and West with three trump tricks, but these five winners coalesce in the last three tricks. East-West may not see the funny side of that. Amazing hand. Even a trump lead doesn't beat 4♠.