

DANGEROUS CROSS RUFF

You are the dealer with this hand:

S	South
♠	KQ62
♥	Q
♦	10643
♣	K863

You have only 10 HCP and your ♥Q is not worth the 2 points it was made with. You pass as does your LHO. Your partner opens 1♥. Now your ♥Q has become more valuable. It works with partner's heart honors and has more potential for taking a trick. You respond 1♠ and partner raises to 2♠. RHO comes in with a double, showing the minors. Your hand may have more potential in defense of the opponents' minor suit contract, so you should pass and let partner make the decision to re-enter the bidding. LHO bids 3♣ and partner now rebids 3♠. RHO passes and it's back to you.

Is partner just being competitive or does he have extra values? He is probably short in clubs and your heart singleton might mean extra tricks in cross ruffs. You take the gamble and raise to 4♠ which is doubled by East. This becomes the final contract.

West leads the ♣Q and you see this dummy:

N	North
♠	A9873
♥	KJ9532
♦	Q
♣	9

West leads ♣Q

S	South
♠	KQ62
♥	Q
♦	10643
♣	K863

You were right about the club shortage, but you didn't suspect a 6-5 distribution in the majors. This hand seems to beg for cross ruffs. But before settling on this plan, you wait to see what East has in store for you. He wins the opening lead with the ♣A and plays the ♥A and ♦A in succession. You have to take all the rest of the tricks.

There is a danger in cross ruffing. There are 6 hearts outstanding and the normal distribution is 4-2. That means you can be over ruffed early in the process, since the ♠J and ♠10 are outstanding.

A better plan exists. You have 9 spades, and if they break no worse than 3-1, you can take them out in three rounds. That will give you enough entries to set up dummy's hearts. You expect them to break no worse than 4-2, giving you two good small hearts in addition to the ♥KJ. You also have the ♠K. That makes 3 top spades, 4 hearts, 1 club and two diamond ruffs for a total of 10 tricks.

East plays his top club at trick 4 which you win with the ♣K and pull trump in 2 rounds, ending in your hand. Now you get to the dummy by ruffing a diamond and play the ♥KJ and ruff a heart. Now all the remaining hearts are good and you claim your 10 tricks.

This is the entire deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">3</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">D</div>		N North ♠ A9873 ♥ KJ9532 ♦ Q ♣ 9	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>P</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>X</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♣</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>X</td> <td>P</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	1♥	P	1♠	P	2♠	X	P	3♣	3♠	P	4♠	P	P	X	P
W	N	E	S																				
P	1♥	P	1♠																				
P	2♠	X	P																				
3♣	3♠	P	4♠																				
P	P	X	P																				
W West ♠ 105 ♥ 74 ♦ KJ95 ♣ QJ542		E East ♠ J4 ♥ A1086 ♦ A872 ♣ A107																					
	S South ♠ KQ62 ♥ Q ♦ 10643 ♣ K863		4♠ S NS: 0 EW: 0																				

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You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/ybrsj26q> , or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.