



TOP MOVE: CRADLE (CROSS-FACE)

A cross-face cradle is a basic hold that most wrestlers learn early in their career.



Once an opponent is broken flat, a cross-face cradle can be used. Here the wrestler cross-faces with his left arm, getting his hand in front of and past the elbow.



At the same time the top man plants his hand palm down behind the down man's knee.



The top man wants to drive the head and knee together and lock near the bottom man's head.



Notice that the top man is actually grasping or controlling the bottom man's right arm, staying in front of it.



Staying in front of the arm with the cross-face actually captures the arm inside of the cradle when the lock is established.



The strongest lock for a wrestler to have in this position is the butterfly lock, grasping one's own forearms.



The top wrestler lifts and pulls the bottom man back toward him to expose his back to the mat.



The top man must drive with his feet toward the down man's head, using short, choppy steps.



The top man finishes by pressing his low knee into the side of the opponent while burying the top of his head in the side of the top man's head or temple.

The best cross-face cradle is one where the wrestler controls the far arm of his opponent. The cross-face hand should go past the face and capture the triceps of the far arm, then the other hand can grab the wrestler's own wrist. Keeping control of that far arm can make the difference between a near fall and a pin.