

**What Are the "Jobs" of Dummy's Trump Cards?:
An Interview with Quintuple Emerald Life Master
Esmerelda Klingkenklonken**

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Editor's Note: Today we have the extraordinary honor to be able to interview world-famous ACBL Quintuple Emerald Life Master, **Esmerelda Klinkenklonken**. She will be discussing 2 of the Boards played in the 99er BBO game in the Savannah Duplicate Bridge Center on Tuesday, 3/2/21.

Editor: Esie, thank you so very much for being with us today to discuss these Boards with a view toward addressing the question every new Bridge player asks: **"What exactly are the jobs of Dummy's trump cards when Declarer is playing a suit contract?"**

Esmerelda: Well, thank you very much, indeed! But do not ever again call me, "Esie." My name is Esmerelda. And you may call me, "Ms. Klinkenklonken."

Editor: Yes, well, sorry about that. But, **what exactly are the jobs of Dummy's trump cards when Declarer is playing a suit contract?**

Esmerelda: Yes, well, put simply, the primary (and sometimes only) job of Dummy's trump cards is to reduce the number of trump cards in the opponents' two hands. And that is a pretty important job.

But we usually do not expect Dummy's trump cards to win tricks that we would otherwise lose, except perhaps when Dummy contributes a top trump honor, which helps us to draw trump.

However, if we really want to do well in duplicate bridge, whenever possible, at least in non-slam suit contracts, is to try to convert some (or all) of Dummy's trump cards into winners while at the same time converting losing tricks in Declarer's hand into winners! This means that ideally Dummy will have a void, a singleton, or a doubleton that we can employ to allow Dummy to trump Declarer's losers in the same suit.

This requires discipline, and thought. And we want to be able to do this early in play, while the opponents still both have cards left in Dummy's short suit. The discipline that is required is to resist drawing trump at the first opportunity, at least if it is early in play.

What we have to realize is that Declarer usually will win all or at least most of the trump tricks. Dummy's trump cards, and especially Dummy's low trump cards, **do not add new unique tricks to our trick count**, unless we can use Dummy's low trump cards to trump Declarer's losers!

Board #3

Vul: E/W

		NORTH (11 HCPs)		
		S: A 3		
		H: T 8 6 5 3		
		D: A Q 9 7		
		C: J 5		
WEST (11)			EAST (5)	
S: Q 9 5			S: J 7 6 4	
H: A K Q 5			H: 9 4	
D: T 6 4 3			D: K J 8 5 2	
C: 7 2			C: 6 4	
		SOUTH (12)		
		S: K T 8 2		
		H: 7 2		
		D:		
		C: A K Q T 9 8 3		

Bidding

SOUTH: 4C WEST: PASS NORTH: PASS EAST: PASS

Play of the Hand

1. W: <u>H</u> K	N: H 3	E: H 4	S: H 2
2. W: <u>H</u> A	N: H 5	E: H 9	S: H 7
3. W: <u>D</u> 3	N: <u>D</u> A	E: D 2	S: S 2
4. N: C J			

Esmerelda's Thoughts

Editor: Well, Ms. Klinkenklocken, what do you think of WEST's lead of the Heart King?

Esmerelda: A high Heart lead is probably a very good idea. WEST knows that SOUTH holds at least 6 (because SOUTH can't bid 2C as showing 6) and probably 7 Clubs, and with all or most of the top honors. This suggests shortness elsewhere, and possibly in Hearts. So, it is probably good to take winners early in this suit since SOUTH may otherwise slough Hearts to be able to trump Hearts.

Now when holding Ace, King, I always lead the Ace to promise the King, to see what partner's "attitude" is toward Hearts. But this is a matter of partnership agreement. And once SOUTH doesn't play the Ace of Hearts on the led King of Hearts, EAST will then know anyway that WEST holds the Ace.

By the way, although it is a very advanced topic, in a NT contract, leading the Ace of Hearts promises the King. But leading the King of Hearts, followed immediately by then leading the Ace, tells Partner: "I have a long Heart suit. If you hold the Queen of Hearts, dump your Queen on my Ace, because then you will 'unblock' me and I can run the bejesus out of Hearts, and we will crush our opponents in a vicious fashion!"

Editor: Well, what do you think about WEST's signal of "attitude" toward Hearts?

Esmerelda: Well, the **MOST CRITICAL THING TO DO ON DEFENSE** is to signal "attitude" toward Partner's led suit, saying either "I like this suit. Keep playing it." or "I don't like this suit. I can't help you in this suit. I don't have a Queen, and I won't be able to trump this suit if you lead it a third time."

Some people play "High" = "I like it.", and "Low" = "I don't like it." Other people play "inverted" or "upside down" attitude, where "Hi" = "No", and "Low" = "Yes." In this case I assume E/W were playing "upside down" attitude, and EAST was telling WEST, "Play your low Heart on trick #3, assuming you have one, and I will trump it before the Declarer runs out of Hearts."

Now in this case it wouldn't have mattered, because SOUTH only had 2 Hearts to begin with, and will overtrump EAST's 4 or 6 of Clubs. But this would have been the correct way to play the hand, and in the long run (albeit not in this case), will yield the most positive results.

Editor: Well, assuming that WEST did not (for some inexplicable reason) want to lead the 5 of Hearts on the third trick, what do you think of the 3 of Diamonds lead?

Esmereida: Well, I don't think I would have done this. WEST has no reason to expect EAST to be strong in Diamonds. And WEST holding 4 Diamonds doesn't mean that EAST is super likely to have a Diamond void.

I think I would play this as if I was on lead at trick #1. I would have followed the "Top of nothing, bottom of something" precept, and I would have led 5 of Spades.

Editor: Well, assuming that the first 3 tricks had been played as they were here, what do you think of the Declarer leading the Jack of Clubs in the 4th trick in order to draw trump?

Esmereida: Well, first of all, I think we are both saying "well" way too much, and it is really irritating!!!!

I have to say, I don't like this lead. Declarer is going to make 7 Club tricks playing this way. Wouldn't it be better to take at least 8 Club tricks? Remember: *in duplicate bridge, you get a "top" Board, if you take even just 1 more trick than the other N/S pairs playing the same contract!!!!*

It would have been better for SOUTH to lead the 2 of Spades to Dummy's Ace, then Dummy's 3 of Spades to Declarer's King of Spades, and then lead Declarer's 8 of Spades towards Dummy's new void, and trump with the 5 of Clubs. Then lead Dummy's 7 of Diamonds toward Declarer's void, and trump the Diamond. Then lead the Ten of Spades toward the Dummy, and trump Spades again! That's cooking with gas!!!!

Board #10

Vul: BOTH

	NORTH (10 HCPs)	
	S: K J 7 6 5 2	
	H: A T 7 3	
	D: T	
	C: Q 7	
WEST (12)		EAST (7)
S:		S: Q T 9 4
H: K Q 6 4		H: J 8 5 2
D: 8 6 3 2		D: Q J 7 4
C: A K 6 5 2		C: J
	SOUTH (11)	
	S: A 8 3	
	H: 9	
	D: A K 9 5	
	C: T 9 8 4 3	

Bidding

EAST: PASS	SOUTH: PASS	WEST: 1C	NORTH: 2S
EAST: PASS	SOUTH: 3S	WEST: PASS	NORTH: 4S
EAST: PASS	SOUTH: PASS	WEST: PASS	

Play of the Hand

1. E: C J	S: C 3	W: C K	N: C 7
2. W: C 2	N: C Q	E: H 2	S: C 4
3. N: S J	E: S 4	S: S 3	W: D 2
4. N: S 2	E: S 9	S: S A	W: C 5
5. S: S 8			

Editor: Well, any thoughts about the play of the hand early on?

Esmereida: I don't understand why EAST failed to trump the Club lead on the second trick. EAST is holding 4 trump, so it's not like burning a trump card on this trick compromises EAST's Queen of trump, which will remain protected still by 2 other trump cards.

Editor: Well, any thoughts about NORTH leading the Spade 8 on trick #5? Here are the cards left in the hands after 4 tricks:

NORTH (10 HCPs)

S: K 7 6 5
H: A T 7 3
D: T
C:

WEST (12)

S:
H: K Q 6 4
D: 8 6 3
C: A 6

EAST (7)

S: Q T
H: J 8 5
D: Q J 7 4
C:

SOUTH (11)

S: 8
H: 9
D: A K 9 5
C: T 9 8

Esmerelda: ^%&^\$&&^!!! I thought we were going to stop saying, "Well"!!!!

I already know that WEST has "shown out" of Spades, and that therefore EAST holds Queen, Ten. And I don't like trading 2 trump tricks to draw one of EAST's 2 remaining trump cards. I know I am going to lose to EAST's protected Queen. What I want to do is use Dummy's Spade 8 to trump something, and then later take my punishment by losing to EAST's Queen of Spades.

So, on the Board I would lead my Heart 9 toward my Declarer's Heart Ace. I would then lead my low Heart toward Dummy's void, trump with the Spade 8, and play on from there.