

THE MAJIC OF VOIDS AND SINGLETONS

You are in the North and your RHO opens the bidding 1♣. You hold:

♠KQ983 ♥AK ♦A10543 ♣4.

You overcall 1♠, your LHO passes and partner raises to 3♠, You are the declarer in 4♠.

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

East leads the ♣K and you see this lovely dummy in South:

North ♠KQ983 ♥AK ♦A10543 ♣4	East ♣K
South ♠7652 ♥----- ♦872 ♣AJ10732	

Let's talk about the bidding. North, with 17 HCP was at the top of his range for an overcall. With any more than his 17 points, he would have doubled and then bid spades. South counted dummy points and gave his void 5 points. With a good 10 total points and 4 spades, he made a limit raise of 3♠.

Now that his partner supported his suit, North's hand gets much better. His singleton and ♥AK tight doubleton increases the value of his hand to about 20 points. He knows there is enough strength for a spade game, and there might be enough for a slam. However, he stops at 4♠.

This declarer made 6♠. Can you spot the best line of play?

North has a lot of losers. He must lose one spade and maybe two if they don't split normally. He also has 4 diamond losers. But he has a potential hidden asset in his dummy. South has a quality 6-card club suit. He should concentrate on developing that suit on which to dump diamond losers. This will require developing some entries to the dummy. He can void the dummy in diamonds by discarding the two remaining diamonds after he plays the ♦A. Now he can enter the dummy by ruffing his own diamond.

However, it is essential that he start the clubs immediately – before he pulls any trump. He wins the lead in the dummy and ruffs a club in his hand. East drops the ♣Q. He started with two clubs and dummy’s remaining clubs will take out all the outstanding clubs. He plays the ♦A and the ♥AK, discarding the rest of dummy’s diamonds. Now he pulls one round of trump with the ♠K. He notices East plays the ♠J and West plays low, indicating East may have started with only one spade. And that means West still has the ♠A10.

Next he plays a diamond to get into the dummy with a ruff. He plays the top clubs, discarding the diamonds from his hand until West is out of clubs. He will ruff with one of his two remaining trump. If he ruffs with the ♠10, declarer will win this ♠A and concede one spade to West. If West instead wins the ♠A, declarer will trump whatever he leads back and pull his last trump.

Notice that the declarer took 12 tricks with a combined high card count of 22 points. It was the power of the short suits – a void, a singleton and a doubleton – that allowed this unusual coup.

Here is the whole deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">♠ 8</div>	N North ♠ KQ983 ♥ AK ♦ A10543 ♣ 4	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♣</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S	1♣	1♠	P	3♠	P	4♠	P	P	P			
	W	N	E	S														
1♣	1♠	P	3♠															
P	4♠	P	P															
P																		
W West ♠ A104 ♥ Q874 ♦ KJ ♣ 9865	E East ♠ J ♥ J1096532 ♦ Q96 ♣ KQ																	
	S South ♠ 7652 ♥ ♦ 872 ♣ AJ10732																	
		4♠ N NS: 0 EW: 0																

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

<http://tinyurl.com/ov7zgkq> . 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.