

To 'Steal' or not to 'Steal' .. that is the question

In Levels 3 & 4, when East/West have the majority of points, you will note that you are given the option of either 'defending' their contract, or 'stealing' it from them.

Stealing is only available to you, (the only 'human' player in this game) When the hand is replayed, the computer 'south' does not have this 'stealing' option, and the contract will be defended by the computer N/S. So the question is ... when to 'steal' and when to 'defend'

The whole essence of WIZBridge+ is to outscore the Robot.

Have a look at this hand:

East/West have bid to 2D, and they will score 100Pts if they make the contract (possibly more with overtricks)

The screenshot shows a bridge game interface for 'Practice Mode - Level 4', 'Hand 3 of 8'. The current bid is 'East bid 2 DIAMONDS' with a 'Score 100'. A central box offers two choices: 'Steal' (blue button with a running figure icon) and 'Defend' (green button with a standing figure icon). To the left, a 'Penalty points' box lists: 1 under = 100, 2 under = 300, 3 under = 500, 4 under = 700. To the right, a diamond-shaped score display shows 9 at the top, 14 on the left, 6 on the right, and 11 at the bottom, with a right-pointing arrow in the center. At the bottom, the hand is shown as four groups of cards: Spades (J, 9, 3), Hearts (K, 9, 8, 5, 2), Diamonds (4, 2), and Clubs (A, K, 9).

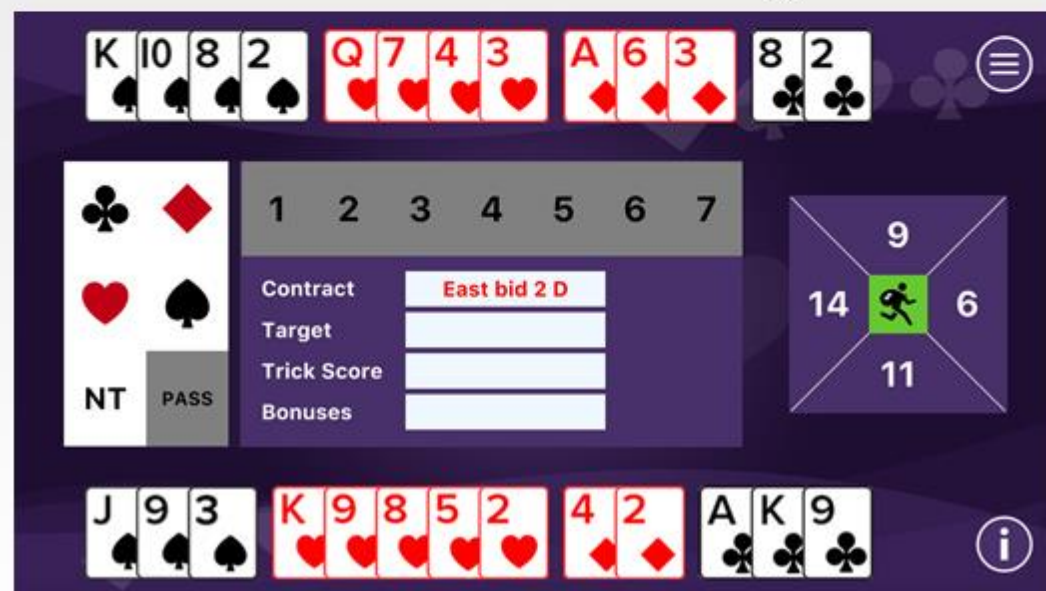
Can you do better by 'stealing' ?

Its important to remember that you are making this choice without the benefit of seeing your partners hand. All you know is partners point count, and the East/West point count.

Let's look at the possible scenarios;

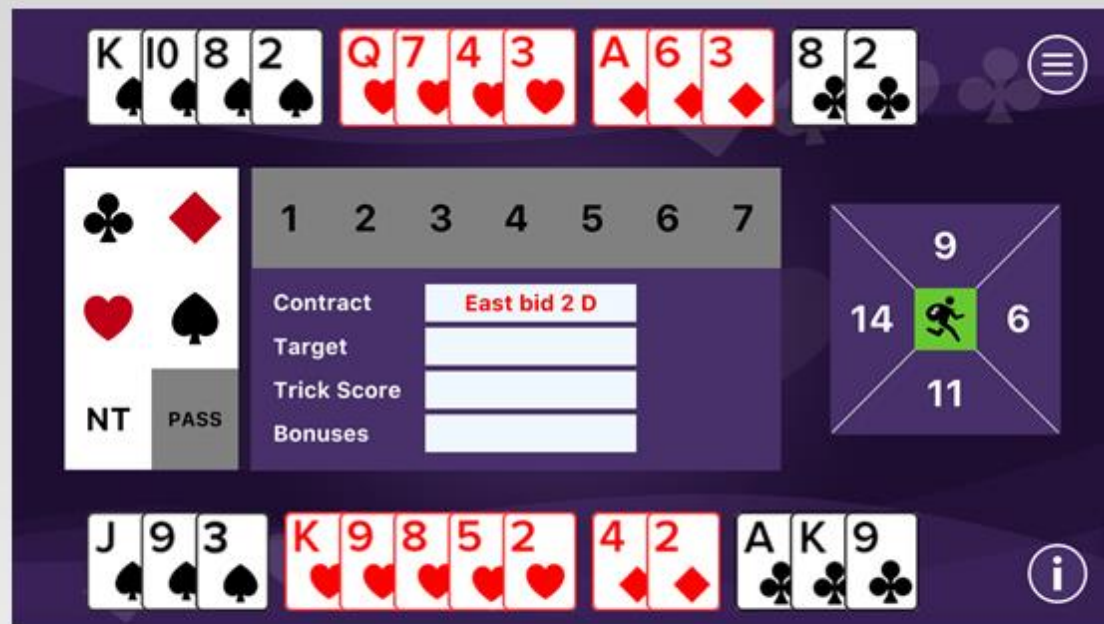
The points are split 20/20 between the two sides. East has bid to the 2 level, so is likely to be relying on length in Diamonds rather than sheer HCP power. You've got a 5 card Heart suit ... partner has 9 points ... and you only need to make 7 tricks to 'break even' – as 1 under scores -100Pts – exactly the same as E/W making 2D.

Worth the gamble - let's go for it!
 Touch 'Steal', and 'BINGO'
 North has come up with a gem of a hand!



You couldn't have asked for more. North has 4 Hearts, and it's likely that every one of his 9 points will be useful. You can easily see 3-4 tricks in hearts, 2 tricks in Clubs + one Club ruff; 1 diamond trick, and 1 or possibly 2 tricks in Spades

So you'll be extremely unlucky for this not to be a worthwhile 'crime' – Bid 2H with some degree of confidence!



E/W did indeed make their 2D, scoring 100Pts. You made 9 tricks, and as all successful 'stolen' points are doubled in value (plus an additional 50Pts) You've amassed 330Pts ... a swing of 230 to the cheeky thief!

Here's another one.

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!

You've got 16 combined points with North. You haven't got a suit worth mentioning. Simply defend and hope that you defend it as well ... or better than ... the computer North/South

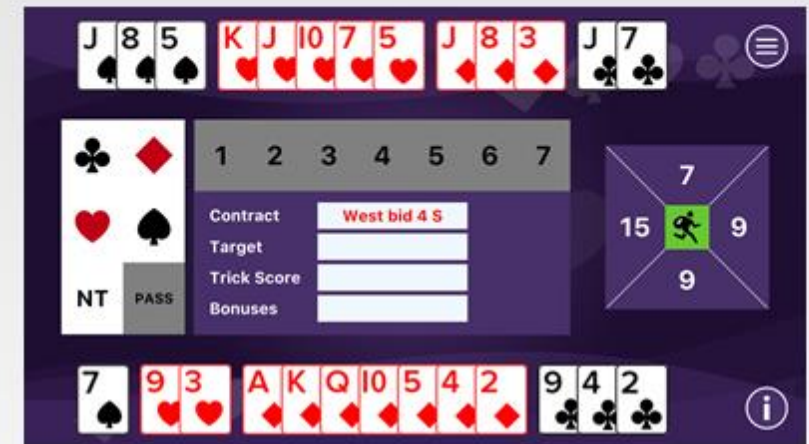


EDITORS NOTE: The 'steal' is offered for every E/W contract. Probably 50% are like this one ... pure madness to even consider. Of the remaining 50%, the majority should probably also be rejected. Only 10% or so of E/W contracts should be stolen with any degree of confidence for a profitable 'steal'.



Lastly ... have a look at this hand. You've only got 16Pts between you. E/W have bid to game, you can afford to go 2 down ... but ... your suit is Diamonds, so you need to bid 5D (unmakeable target of 11 tricks) However, can this hand produce 9 tricks ?

You can see probably 7 in Diamonds. Partner does have 7 points ... they could provide 2 tricks ... let's have a go!



Well stolen! N/S did make 9 tricks (-300Pts) but E/W made 4S + 3 overtricks, scoring 510Pts. In fact had you (NS) made only 8 tricks (-500) it would have still been a profitable steal !!



Steal

In conclusion, 'crime' can indeed pay, but only if you steal judiciously and not indiscriminately.

Remember these pointers:

- What minimum level do you have to come in at (if they are in Diamonds, and your suit is Clubs, you have to go up one level to compete)
- Are Norths' points likely to be working for you. If East has the majority of the EW points, the answer is likely to be no!
- You are making the decision PURELY on your hand. If North has a suitable one, then it's a bonus ... but be prepared for the worst.

Enjoy 'Stealing' ... and enjoy **WIZ**Bridge⁺