



# ASIA PACIFIC MAHJONG

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## ---Overview---

The Asia Pacific Mahjong Rules consist of four chapters:

- Mahjong Rules: This chapter, covering the basic playing rules of mahjong.
- Scoring System: Describes how to compute the value of the winning hand, and how this score is to be paid by the three other players (the Payoff Scheme).
- Tournament Format: The tournament schedule and the elimination system.
- Code of Behavior: General code of behavior, and rules concerning penalties.

In addition to the four chapters, there are two appendixes:

- Appendix A: The Pattern List Card
- Appendix B: How to use the Score Record Sheet

These rules serve as a guide to players and judges, in order to facilitate a fair competition. The head judge has the final decision on all matters.

Players should obey the rules and compete in a fair manner, and should not violate any rules deliberately. Most penalties in these rules are meant to be applied to inadvertent violations; against deliberate violations the judge has the right to correct any irregularity, or to impose additional penalties.

Many of the rules (in this chapter, and also in the "Code of Behavior" chapter) serve as guidelines for the players to play a fair and pleasant competition. When a player feels offended by another player's violation or bad etiquette, he may point it out to the offender, or summon the assistance of a judge.

## --- The Mahjong Tiles ---

The Asia Pacific Mahjong uses a set of 136 tiles. The bonus tiles (Flowers and Seasons) are not used.

The 136 tiles are composed of 34 different designs, with 4 tiles for each design.

The 34 designs are separated into two groups: the number tiles, and the honor tiles.

Number tiles: The number tiles are in three suits: Bamboos, Characters and Dots. Each suit has nine designs, numbered 1 to 9. Thus there are a total of 27 different designs of suit tiles, with 4 tiles for each design.

Honor tiles: Honor tiles consist of four Winds: "East", "South", "West", and "North", plus three Dragons: "White", "Green", and "Red", for a total of seven different designs, with 4 tiles for each design.

Terminal tiles: The "1" and "9" number tiles (total 6 designs) are summarily called terminal tiles, and the "2" to "8" number tiles (total 21 designs) are called middle tiles. In common usage, the term "terminal tiles" is sometimes meant to include the honor tiles, and sometimes not. In these rules, when there is a need for clarity, the terms "terminal number tile" and "terminal and/or honor tile" will be used.

## --- Game Objective ---

The mahjong competition consists of a number of hands. (See the "Tournament Format" chapter for details.) In a hand, through a process of drawing and discarding, the players compete to be the first to complete a winning hand. (Refer to "Drawing and Discarding" and "Winning Hand" below.) The winner of the hand receives points from the other players, but the amount of points earned



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varies greatly according to the content of the winner's hand. (See the "Scoring System" chapter.) Therefore, winning high-scoring hands (and preventing the opponents from winning high-scoring hands) is the key to victory. A player's result and ranking is determined by his total points won and lost over a number of hands.

## --- Play Procedure ---

When play begins, the four players go through the "selection of seats" procedure to assign their seats and choose the starting East player. After that, the specified number of hands is played. Each hand follows these steps:

- Shuffle, break the wall, deal the tiles
- Draw and discard
- If someone wins the hand, perform scoring for the winning hand.
- If the wall is exhausted without anyone winning, the hand is a draw, and all players score zero for the hand. (See "The Dead Wall and the Seabed Tile" below.)

## --- Sequence, Triplet, Kong, Pair ---

When play begins, the four players go through the "selection of seats" procedure to assign their seats and choose the starting East player. After that, the specified number of hands is played. Each hand follows these steps:

### Sequence:

A sequence is three tiles of consecutive numbers in the same suit. Three such tiles in the concealed hand is a "concealed sequence"; an "exposed sequence" is formed by claiming a "chi".

↳ Example:



### Triplet:

A triplet is three identical tiles: either three same-numbered tiles in the same suit, or three identical honor tiles. Three such tiles in the concealed hand is a "concealed triplet"; an "exposed triplet" is formed by claiming a "Pong".

↳ Example:



### Kong:

Four identical tiles can be declared to form a Kong. (See the section "Kong" below.) Four identical tiles in the concealed hand are not considered a Kong; they constitute only a concealed triplet (plus an extra tile). (Since "Kong" is a Chinese word, its plural form should be conjugated the Chinese way: just "Kong".)

↳ Example:



### Pair:

Two identical tiles are called a pair.



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👉 Example:



A hand must conform to either a regular hand or an irregular hand in order to win (go out). All patterns listed in the "Scoring" chapter, except for the irregular hands under category 10, are not definitions of the winning hand. In other words, one cannot win just by meeting the condition of a pattern, without meeting the requirements of a winning hand. (Such will be considered a "false win".)

## --- Dice Count ---

In the "picking seats" and "breaking the wall" procedures below, the "dice count" is needed. The count is taken anti-clockwise around the table, starting with the thrower of the dice as "1", and finishing with the number which is the sum of the dice. That seat is the result of the dice count. In other words, a dice roll of "5" and "9" gives the dice thrower; "2" "6" and "10" gives his lower seat; "3" "7" and "11" gives his opposite seat; "4" "8" and "12" gives his upper seat.

## --- Picking Seats---

As specified by the Tournament Format, at the beginning of each quarter or half, the four players at the table will pick their seats randomly (and also determine the starting East) according to the following procedure:

- The four players sit around the table arbitrarily.
- Take one each of the Wind tiles (East, South, West, and North). Turn the four tiles face down, shuffle them, and arrange them in a line.
- Take an odd number tile and an even number tile, and add them (face up) to the two ends of the line, sandwiching the Wind tiles and making a row of six tiles.
- An arbitrary player throws the dice. The player indicated by the dice count throws the dice again. The player indicated by the second dice count will be the one who first takes a Wind tile.
- If the second dice throw is an odd number, the Wind tiles will be taken starting from the end with the odd number tile; if it is an even number, the Wind tiles will be taken starting from the end with the even number tile. Starting from the player indicated by the second dice count and going counter-clockwise, each player in order takes a Wind tile.
- The player who gets the "East" tile is the starting East player, and takes the seat at the table indicated as "East". The player with the "South" tile takes his lower (right) seat; the player with the "West" tile takes his opposite seat; the player with the "North" tile takes his upper (left) seat.

## --- The Dealer and the Seat Wind ---

- In a hand, each seat (player) belongs to a certain Wind direction: East, South, West, and North (in counter-clockwise order).
- Seat Wind: The Wind tile which corresponds to one's seat direction is one's Seat Wind. The other winds are called "Non-Seat Winds". "Seat Wind" is a category 3 (Honor Tiles) pattern, and is worth points. When the deal passes (see below), the Seat Wind rotates accordingly.
- Dealer: The East player is sometimes also called the "dealer". The other players are called "non-East players".
- Cycle: The tournament is played in cycles, each cycle being four hands. In the first hand in a cycle, the player who has picked the East seat becomes the starting East (unless otherwise specified), who is the dealer for the first hand.
- Passing the deal: After a hand is completed, the South player in the previous hand becomes the new East player in the next hand. In this way, in a cycle each player has one chance to become the dealer.



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- In the Asia Pacific Mahjong Rules, the "Prevailing Wind" (Round Wind) is not recognized. Also, the deal always passes (East never repeats the deal). The dealer has the advantage that he plays first in the hand, but enjoys no additional privileges in scoring.

#### --- **The Shuffle** ---

The procedures for shuffling the tiles are as follows:

- First, turn all tiles face down.
- The four players shuffle the tiles with both hands for at least 20 seconds. The players should endeavor towards a thorough, random shuffling of the tiles. Each player should from time to time lift his hands off the tiles, and must not deliberately retain certain tiles with his hands.
- If any tiles are exposed face up during the shuffle, these tiles should first be turned back face down before continuing the shuffle. The shuffle should be extended to at least 3 seconds after any tiles have been exposed; the shuffle cannot end without at least 3 seconds of shuffling without any tiles being exposed.
- When a player feels that he has finished shuffling, he should indicate so by withdrawing his hands from the center of the table (where the tiles are). The building of the wall can commence only after all four players have withdrawn their hands and agree that the shuffling is finished. A player may not on his own begin to build the wall, without waiting for the agreement from the other players that the shuffling is finished. If any player does so, his opponents have the right to tear down his wall and shuffle in those tiles, and the judge has the right to examine his wall to check for any suspected cheating. A player who has withdrawn his hands may resume shuffling at any time.
- Each player builds 17 stacks of two tiles each in front of himself. (If all four players at the table consent, they need not stack the tiles on top, but instead may place them as two rows flat on the table.) If any tiles are inadvertently exposed face up during the building of the wall, some tiles should be taken and shuffled with the exposed tiles; any other players may also take some tiles from their own walls and add them to the tiles to be shuffled.
- The four players push their walls into a square formation. The area surrounded by the wall is called the "river", into which discarded tiles are placed. In order to make enough room for the river, the walls should be placed end-to-end to form a large square (not end-to-edge which would make the river smaller).

Parts of the competition will take place on automatic mahjong tables. Please follow the judge's instructions concerning their use.

#### --- **Breaking the Wall** ---

East throws the dice. The player indicated by the dice count is the "wall breaker".

The wall breaker throws the dice again. The total sum of the two dice throws is the "break count".

From the wall in front of the wall breaker, count a number of stacks off the right end (in a clockwise direction) equal to the break count. These stacks should be shifted away slightly, and their (left) end become the "Kong box". The stacks to the left of the split become the live wall.

If the break count is greater than 17, continue counting into the wall breaker's upper (left) seat. The rightmost stack in that wall is counted as the 18th stack.

Notice that tiles are taken off the live wall in a clockwise direction, which is different from the counter-clockwise direction of play.

#### --- **The Deal** ---



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After breaking the wall, the players will be dealt their initial hands.

- East starts by taking two stacks (four tiles) from the live wall. Then South, West and North, in order, each takes two stacks.
- The above is repeated two more times, so that each player now has 12 tiles.
- East now takes the first and fifth tiles from the live wall. Then South, West and North, in order, takes one tile each.
- At this point, East should have 14 tiles, and every non-East player should have 13 tiles. The deal is complete, and East commences play.
- Until the deal is finished and the players have confirmed that they have received the right number of tiles, one should not look at their tiles or feel their bottom surfaces. Otherwise, one may be penalized for making a mistake in the deal. (This rule is to prevent someone from deliberately claiming a misdeal after seeing that his tiles are not good.)

### --- Irregularities in the Deal ---

This section covers irregularities in the deal. These rules apply to errors which are the results of inadvertent mistakes. The judge has the right to impose additional penalties against deliberate violations.

- Wrong dice thrower: If the wrong player has casted the dice, the dice should be re-cast should this be discovered immediately. Once the players have started taking the tiles from the wall, the dice roll stands.
- Wrong wall break: If the wall has been broken in the wrong place (or the wrong wall has been broken), this should be corrected if discovered immediately. Once every player has taken their first four tiles from the wall, the wall break stands.
- Wrong dealer: If the wrong East player has started taking the first tiles from the wall, and the error is discovered before the correct East player takes his first four tiles, a misdeal is called and the tiles should be re-shuffled and re-dealt. If the error is discovered before the correct East player takes his 9~12th tiles, the deal continues (with the wrong East) until each player has taken 12 tiles, then the correct East takes his 13th and 14th tiles, and play proceeds thereafter with the correct East player as dealer. If the error is discovered after the correct East player has taken his 12th tile, he forfeits his right to be the East this hand, and play continues with the wrong East player as dealer. The deal passes normally after this hand to the lower seat of the correct East player, but if all players at the table agree, they may compensate the correct East player with a chance to become East in a later hand.
- At this point, East should have 14 tiles, and every non-East player should have 13 tiles. The deal is complete, and East commences play
- Until the deal is finished and the players have confirmed that they have received the right number of tiles, one should not look at their tiles or feel their bottom surfaces. Otherwise, one may be penalized for making a mistake in the deal. (This rule is to prevent someone from deliberately claiming a misdeal after seeing that his tiles are not good.)

### --- The Play ---

East starts the hand by discarding a tile.

The players then, in turn, draw a tile from the live wall, and then discard a tile.

The above sequence is interrupted when someone claims a discard.

Play continues until either someone wins the hand, or the hand ends in a draw with the wall being exhausted.



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## --- Regulations for Drawing and Discarding ---

Before one's upper seat discards, one may not draw a tile, or stick out his hand into the river area to obstruct the vision of the other players. Drawing out of turn may be ruled as a "long hand".

A player should look carefully at what the upper seat has discarded before drawing a tile. Once a player has touched the tile in the live wall with his hand, he is considered to have forgone his right to claim the discard. However, in case another player is claiming the discard, one may still claim the discard for a win, according to the "Precedence of Claims" rules (since in this case his action of drawing is cancelled by the rival claim).

"Discarding before drawing" is strictly prohibited. Such may be ruled as forgetting to draw, resulting in a "short hand".

After a tile has been discarded, once the next player has drawn a tile, and has either mixed the tile into his hand or has discarded, or declared a win or a Kong, the other two players forfeit the right to claim the (former) discard.

If after a tile has been discarded, the next player has drawn a tile (picked it up, away from its place in the live wall), but another player claims the discard before he mixes the drawn tile into his hand, he should replace the drawn tile into the live wall. But the next player to draw that tile, (provided that he is not the same player who has once drawn it) may elect to (before he takes the tile) either draw the tile as normal, or to designate that tile to be the next draw for the player who has once taken it, and instead take the next tile from the live wall for himself (because the other player has already seen the tile, which would be unfair to him).

A player should draw at a reasonable pace (at least 1~2 seconds after the upper seat has discarded), and should not draw too fast with the intention of depriving other players' rights to claim the discard. A player should claim quickly without undue delay. Violators may receive a warning from the judge, or be penalized (especially by giving the benefit to the other player).

A tile should be discarded to the center area enclosed by the walls (called the river). One's discarded tiles should be orderly arranged in the area in front of oneself, from left to right in rows of six. When a row is filled with six tiles, start a new row below it. (Just like writing a poem with six words in each line.)

A player who places a discard in the wrong position may be held responsible and penalized if an opponent tries to claim the tile which seems to be in the position of the last discarded tile.

A player may not announce the name of the tile he is discarding. If one wrongly names a discard and causes an opponent to make an incorrect claim, one will be held responsible and penalized.

A player is not obligated to show to his opponents whether he is discarding the same tile he has just drawn or not, nor from which position in his concealed hand he is taking the discarded tile; one may deliberately conceal this information from his opponents (though one should make his discard within the time limit). The opponent may try to observe from where one is discarding, and may use such information to formulate his strategy, but he does so entirely at his own risk. Also, any such information has no legal validity. (For example, if one sees an opponent discarding the same tile he has just drawn, one may not use such observation to support an application of the "Rule of Same-Turn Immunity" against an earlier discarded tile.) It is strictly prohibited for players to collude and deliberately use the position from which one takes his discards as a means of illicit communication.



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## --- Irregularities when Drawing ---

This section covers irregularities when drawing a tile or during play. These rules apply to errors which are the results of inadvertent mistakes. The judge has the right to impose additional penalties against deliberate violations.

- **Wrong Tile Taken:** If a player has taken the wrong tile when drawing, or has taken a tile from the wrong end of the wall, play continues normally as if it were the correct tile due him. If the judge decides that other players are at least partially responsible for the mistake (such as the live wall being placed too far apart from the next wall around the corner), this may be pardoned without penalty. Otherwise, the judge may issue a warning, and in case the player wins on that tile, a point penalty may apply.
- **Exposed Wall Tiles:** If a player has exposed the immediate next tile in the wall, and it is his turn to draw, he must draw that tile (cannot claim a discard), and it is treated as exposed (i.e. live penalty tile). If a player has exposed the next tile in the wall when it is not his turn to draw, he receives a warning, and the next player to draw that tile has the option of either drawing that tile as normal, or having the tile shuffled with other wall tiles as explained below. If a player has exposed a tile in the wall other than the immediate next tile, he receives a warning, and the judge should take that tile and a suitable number of wall tiles (at least 12) near it, and shuffle those tiles and rebuild that section of the wall.
- **Exposed Opponent's Tiles:** If a player has exposed tiles in his opponent's hand, the judge will assign an appropriate penalty according to the situation.
- **Disruption of Game:** If a player has seriously disrupted the tiles on the table so that the game cannot continue, the judge will assign a heavy penalty according to the situation.

## --- Claiming a Discard ---

A discarded tile may be claimed by another player to complete a winning hand or a set.

Only the last discarded tile may ever be claimed. Once the next player has drawn and discarded, the previous discard may no longer be claimed.

When one claims a discard to complete a set, the entire set must be displayed as exposed. One may not take the discard into his concealed hand.

There are four types of claims: win, chi, pong, Kong (big exposed Kong). These will be detailed below.

One must verbally announce his claims (and also his win and Kong declarations). In particular, if one makes no verbal announcement, and discards before exposing the set, it may be ruled as forgetting to draw, resulting in a "short hand".

Please refer to Appendix C: "Pronunciation Guide".

## --- Winning the Hand ---

**Calling:** A hand which is one tile from completion of a winning hand is a calling hand, and it is said to be calling for the tiles which will complete the hand.

**Self-draw Win:** If a player completes his winning hand by drawing a tile from the wall, this is called a self-draw win. ("Win on Kong" is naturally a self-draw win.) The winner should announce "Hu" or "Zimo".

**Win on Discard:** If an opponent discards a tile one is calling for, one can announce "Hu" and claim the discard to complete his hand. This is called a win on discard, and the player who discarded the winning tile is called the discarder. ("Robbing a Kong" is considered a win on discard.)



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When a player wins, he should reveal his entire hand, so that his winning hand can be verified and scored. The three opponents should not reveal their hands or disturb any tiles on the table until they have verified the win; otherwise, should the hand be continued in case of a "false win", the opponent will be held responsible and penalized.

In principle, one can win in all cases provided he has completed a winning hand. While there is the "Rule of Same-Turn Immunity" in the "Scoring System" chapter, the Asia Pacific Mahjong does not adopt any "sacred discard" rule or such which prohibits the player from winning with a completed winning hand in certain cases ("penalty tiles" excepted). Similarly, there are no such prohibition rules for Pong or other claims.

### --- Pong ---

If an opponent discards a tile which matches a pair in one's hand, one may announce "Pong" and claim the discard to form an exposed triplet with the pair.

The three tiles which compose the exposed triplet must be revealed and displayed as a set in front of one's concealed hand (in the space between the concealed hand and the wall). One of the tiles should be rotated 90 degrees (to a horizontal position) to indicate which player made the discard: if the upper seat discarded, rotate the left tile; if the opposite seat discarded, rotate the middle tile; if the lower seat discarded, rotate the right tile. The three tiles in the exposed triplet are thereafter locked in the set, and cannot be taken into the concealed hand or rearranged (except be extended into a "small exposed Kong").

After claiming a Pong, the player discards a tile. Then his lower seat takes his turn and draws a tile.

### --- Chi ---

If one's upper seat discards a tile which can complete a sequence with two tiles in one's hand, one may announce "chi" and claim the discard to form an exposed sequence with those two tiles. Unlike "pong" or "win", one may "chi" only a tile discarded by one's upper seat.

The three tiles which compose the exposed sequence must be revealed and displayed as a set in front of one's concealed hand (in the space between the concealed hand and the wall). The three tiles should be arranged in numerical sequence from left to right, and the claimed tile should be rotated 90 degrees (to a horizontal position) to indicate that it is the tile discarded by the upper seat. The three tiles in the exposed sequence are thereafter locked in the set, and cannot be taken into the concealed hand or rearranged.

After claiming a chi, the player discards a tile. Then his lower seat takes his turn and draws a tile.

After announcing "chi", it is permissible (but not recommended) to first discard a tile, and then to reveal the exposed sequence. The "chi" procedure is considered complete only when both steps are finished; until then, the clocking runs against the claimant. The other players should wait for him to display the exposed sequence before drawing a tile or claiming the discard (except for winning).

The claimant should first announce "chi", and then after a suitable time (about one second) display the exposed sequence or discard a tile. This way, once he has displayed the sequence or has discarded, the two other players forfeit their rights to claim the previous discard for pong or for Kong. If the player did not announce "chi", or if he displays or discards too quickly after his announcement, the other players have the right to claim the discard according to the "Precedence of Claims" rules.

### --- Kong ---





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Four identical tiles can be declared to form a Kong. There are three kinds of Kong declarations: "concealed Kong", "small exposed Kong" and "big exposed Kong". The claimant should announce "Kong".

**Concealed Kong:** If a player has four identical tiles in his concealed hand, he may declare and form a concealed Kong with them. One may declare a Kong on one's own turn, after having drawn a tile from the wall (or immediately after the deal for East, or after drawing a supplement tile), but not immediately after claiming chi or pong. The player first reveals the four tiles to show that they are indeed identical. Then he displays them as a set in front of his concealed hand (in the space between the concealed hand and the wall). The two middle tiles should be placed face up, while the tiles at both ends be turned face down (to indicate a concealed Kong). Then he draws a supplement tile.

**Small Exposed Kong:** If a player has a tile in his concealed hand which matches his own exposed triplet, he may declare and form a small exposed Kong with them. One may declare a small exposed Kong under the same timing as a concealed Kong: on one's own turn, after having drawn a tile from the wall (or after drawing a supplement tile). After announcing "Kong", the player reveals the hand tile and adds it to one end (not adjacent to a horizontal tile) of his exposed triplet to form an exposed Kong. Then he draws a supplement tile. Note that one must announce "Kong" before revealing his hand tile. Otherwise the judge may rule it as a discarded tile, in which case the lower seat may claim it for "chi".

**Big Exposed Kong:** If an opponent discards a tile which matches one's concealed triplet in hand, one may announce "Kong" and claim the discard to form an exposed Kong with the concealed triplet. The four tiles which compose the exposed Kong must be revealed and displayed as a set in front of one's concealed hand (in the space between the concealed hand and the wall). One of the tiles should be rotated 90 degrees (to a horizontal position) to indicate which player made the discard: if the upper seat discarded, rotate the left tile; if the opposite seat discarded, rotate one of the middle tiles; if the lower seat discarded, rotate the right tile. Afterwards, the player draws a supplement tile.

If an opponent discards a tile which matches one's exposed triplet, one may not declare a Kong with the discard.

Once a Kong is declared with four identical tiles, these four tiles are thereafter locked in the set, and cannot be taken into the concealed hand or rearranged.

**Supplement Tile:** After declaring a Kong, one should take a supplement tile from the "Kong box". (Because a Kong uses up 4 tiles for a set which is normally 3 tiles, the hand becomes one tile short and needs to be replenished.) After taking a supplement tile, the player discards a tile. Then his lower seat takes his turn and draws a tile. The player must first reveal the four tiles which constitute his Kong to be confirmed by the other players before drawing a supplement tile. Drawing a supplement tile before revealing the Kong is prohibited, and may be ruled as a "long hand".

Winning on the supplement tile is called "Win on Kong", and is a category 9 pattern which is worth points. "Win on Kong" is considered a self-draw win.

### --- Robbing a Kong ---

When an opponent declares a "small exposed Kong", and one is calling for the tile which is being declared as a Kong, one can announce "Hu" and claim the declared tile to complete his hand. This is called "Robbing a Kong". Robbing a Kong is considered winning on discard, and the player who tried to declare the Kong is the discarder.

"Robbing a Kong" is a category 9 pattern, and is worth points.



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Only a small exposed Kong can be robbed. A concealed Kong cannot be robbed, with any exceptions. Against a big exposed Kong, the "win" claim takes precedence according to the "Precedence of Claims" rules, and the "Kong" claim is cancelled.

A player can announce "Hu" and rob the Kong as soon as the opponent adds his tile to the exposed triplet; one needs not (and should not) wait for the opponent to draw a supplement tile before robbing a Kong. If a player wants to discard a tile without declaring a Kong, he should place the tile cleanly in the designated position in the river, and not ambiguously in the area of his exposed tiles.

### --- Precedence of Claims ---

When two or more players want to claim the same discarded tile, the below order of precedence is observed.

The claim with the highest precedence alone gets the discard, and the other claims are cancelled.

The order of precedence, from high to low, is as follows:

- 1a. win by the discarder's lower seat
- 1b. win by the discarder's opposite seat
- 1c. win by the discarder's upper seat
- 2. Pong, Kong (big exposed Kong)
- 3. Chi

When two players announce "win" together, the single winner is determined as above; this is called interception. Note that 'mahjong points scoring sheet rule 49 One discard a tile three players win at the same time' is the only one exception to this rule.

Only a legal claim may take precedence. An illegal claim has no precedence, and can always be overtaken by a legal claim. The verbal announcement marks the claim; one who does not announce his claim in time has no precedence.

For a Pong or Kong claim to take precedence, it should be announced promptly. Once a player has announced "chi" and subsequently displayed his set or discarded a tile, the two other players lose their rights to claim the tile for Pong or Kong. The rule for a "win" claim is less strict (because the tiles involving a win claim might be more complicated than those for a Pong or Kong claim, and also the win claim is more important): a "win" claim enjoys its precedence over a "chi" claim until the opponent has, after announcing "chi", completed both displaying his set and discarding a tile.

### --- The Dead Wall and the Seabed Tile ---

Dead Wall: The last 14 tiles in the wall are called the "Dead Wall", and are not played.

Late in a hand, any player may request that the "wall breaker" pushes the 14-tile Dead Wall slightly to the left, separate from the live wall, so that it is easier to tell how many tiles are left to play. If, due to a supplement tile having been taken, a lone tile stands as "half a stack" in the Kong box, the 7th stack from the end should be broken up, with the lower tile in the stack placed with the Deal Wall, and the upper tile in the stack placed at the end of the live wall, as the seabed tile.

Seabed tile: The last tile in the wall before the Dead Wall (i.e. the 15th last tile in the wall) is called the seabed tile. The player who draws the seabed tile may not declare a Kong, and must discard a tile unless one is winning. This discard is called the riverbed tile.

Riverbed tile: The riverbed tile may not be claimed for chi, pong or Kong; it may only be claimed for a win.



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Winning on the seabed tile or the riverbed tile are category 9 patterns, and are worth points.

No Win: If no one wins on the riverbed tile, the hand is a draw, and all players score zero for the hand. The deal (East) always passes after each hand.

### --- Scoring the Winning Hand ---

After the winning player reveals his hand, he should arrange and sort his hand, so that his winning hand can be verified and scored.

A regular hand should be separated into the 4 sets and the pair of eyes. If winning on discard, the winning tile should be rotated 90 degrees to indicate an exposed triplet.

A "Seven Pairs" hand should be sorted into the 7 pairs. A "Thirteen Terminals" hand should be sorted by the suits, the Winds and the Dragons.

The winning hand is scored according to the chapter "Asia Pacific Mahjong Scoring System".

Each player is issued a copy of the "Pattern List Card" (Appendix A), to which they may refer during play and when scoring a winning hand. It is recommended, though, that the player familiarize himself with the major patterns, as time spent studying the Pattern List Card during play would count against the player's play time limit.

Responsibility of Scoring: In principle, the winning player is responsible for counting the score of one's own hand. One may ask the opponents or a judge for help, but they are not responsible for any mistakes in the counting. If the winning player has not requested, others should keep silent and not distract him.

The three non-winning players are responsible for making sure that the winning player has not over-scored the hand. They may ask a judge for help, but the judge is not responsible for any mistakes in the counting. If the winning player has under-scored his hand, the three other players or the judge are not obligated to remind him; but any person has the right to point out and enforce that the winning player scores the correct, maximum value for his hand.

It is the discarder's responsibility to mention the "Rule of Same-Turn Immunity" when applicable.

After agreeing on the value of the winner's hand, the players should summon a judge, who records the score for the hand on the "Score Record Sheet". Alternatively, if the players know how to record the scores properly, they may appoint one among themselves to record the scores. Each player then, after verifying that the scores have been recorded correctly, signs the Score Record Sheet in the space designated for him. By signing the card, the player officially acknowledges that the record is correct, and takes responsibility for such, releasing the judge or player who made the record of any liability for any mistakes.

If the four players do not agree on the scoring, they can request an official ruling by a judge. (A request for an official ruling will be entertained only if the players propose two different scoring methods, such as two different pattern lists, hand values or payoff schemes. If the players do not know how to score the hand at all, they can only request unofficial assistance, for which the judge is not responsible for any mistakes.) The decision by the head judge is final.

Freedom of Count: If there are multiple ways of arranging the concealed tiles in order to compose the winning hand, the winning player may freely choose an arrangement which one feels is best for one, and score the hand according to that arrangement. A hand may only be scored according to one arrangement; patterns from different arrangements cannot be both counted. (For example, a hand cannot score both "Three Identical Sequences" and "Three Consecutive Triplets", nor both "Two Identical Sequences Twice" and "Seven Pairs".)



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"Nine Gates" Self-draw rule: When a "Nine Gates" hand wins on self-draw, the winning tile must be displayed separately from the rest of the hand. If the winning tile has been mixed with the hand tiles before it has been displayed and confirmed, "Nine Gates" cannot be counted. East starts a hand with 14 dealt tiles, and no tile is considered "drawn". Thus, "Nine Gates" cannot be counted for a "Blessing of Heaven" hand; only "Blessing of Heaven" can be counted.

### --- **Penalty Tiles** ---

If a player illegally exposes his hand tiles, those tiles will remain open on the table as live penalty tiles. Penalty tiles should be placed in the area to the right of the player's concealed hand, clearly separate from one's exposed sets.

A live penalty tile may be discarded on the player's current or next (if the player is not currently playing) discard. Once the player discards any other tile (even another live penalty tile), any live penalty tiles in front of him become dead penalty tiles, which may not be discarded thereafter. (This rule is to prevent collusion, by preventing another player from taking advantage of seeing what tiles one might discard in the future.)

Penalty tiles (whether live or dead) cannot be melded (including melding when winning on discard) into an exposed sequence, an exposed triplet, or an exposed Kong (big or small), and may not form the pair of "exposed" eyes with a discarded tile when winning. In other words, penalty tiles may only constitute concealed sets, and may not be used to claim discards to constitute exposed sets. (This rule is to prevent collusion, to prevent another player from seeing the exposed tiles and deliberately discard useful tiles for the offending player.)

In a "Seven Pairs" hand, a penalty tile may not form an "exposed" pair with a discarded tile when winning. In a "Thirteen Terminals" hand, a player may not win on a discarded tile which matches any of his penalty tiles; and if he has three or more penalty tiles, he may not win on any discard at all, and can win only on self-draw.

Trying to claim a discard with a penalty tile, in violation of the above rules, should be considered a "wrong claim".

During the deal, before (or when) the player organizes his tiles, if one inadvertently exposes some tiles, one of the exposed tiles is exempt from penalty. If one exposes two or more tiles, he may pick one up and put it back into his hand, and the rest become (live) penalty tiles.

When a live penalty tile is discarded, it ceases to be a penalty tile. If a penalty tile is used to form a concealed Kong, it ceases to be a penalty tile.

The above rules apply to inadvertently exposed tiles. The judge has the right to impose additional penalties against deliberate violations.

### --- **Long Hand and Short Hand** ---

If it is discovered that a player has the wrong number of tiles in his hand, he will be prohibited from winning the current hand.

A player should have 14 tiles when it is his turn to discard or 13 tiles when it is not his turn to discard. For the purpose of this rule, a Kong counts as a set of 3 tiles.

If a player has too few tiles, it is called a short hand. The player's hand is dead, and is prohibited from winning.

If a player has too many tiles, it is called a long hand. The player's hand is dead (cannot win), and also he may not claim any discard or declare a Kong.



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Once a player is discovered to have a long hand or a short hand, his hand is dead. Even if the hand later reverts to the correct number somehow, it remains dead.

The above rules apply to an incorrect hand as a result of an inadvertent mistake. The judge has the right to correct any irregularity or to impose additional penalties against deliberate violations (such as deliberately drawing more tiles, refusing to discard, or discarding multiple tiles at once).

### --- Wrong Claims ---

This section covers the handling of wrong claims. These rules apply to wrong claims which are inadvertent mistakes. The judge has the right to correct any irregularity or impose additional penalties against deliberate violations.

- **Wrong display corrected immediately:** If a player displays an exposed sequence, an exposed triplet or a Kong, but it is immediately discovered that the claim is incorrect (the exposed set is incorrect, or trying to "chi" a tile discarded by the lower seat or the opposite seat, etc.), he may correct it immediately. Afterwards, any illegally exposed tiles become penalty tiles. Example: A player claims "chi" on a "2 Dot" tile discarded by his upper seat, but he mistakenly displays his "4 Dot" and "5 Dot" tiles. An opponent points out the mistake immediately. The player displays his "3 Dot" to compose the "2 3 4 Dot" exposed sequence. The illegally exposed "5 Dot" becomes a live penalty tile, which he may either discard immediately, or retain as a dead penalty tile.
- **Change of Claim:** If a player, after announcing a claim for "chi", "pong" or "Kong", changes his mind and wishes to change his claim into one of another type (or to "win"), this is usually allowed without penalty. (Unless the player has already exposed his set, in which case any illegally exposed tiles become penalty tiles). The player should not do this too frequently; otherwise the judge may impose a penalty.
- **Cancelled Claim:** If a player, after announcing a claim for a discarded tile for "chi", "pong", or (big exposed) Kong, but before revealing any tiles, changes his mind or realizes that he does not have the correct tiles to complete the claim, then he may cancel his claim, but he must not do this too frequently, otherwise the judge may impose a penalty.
- **Cancelled Kong:** If a player, after drawing a tile on his turn, announces a Kong, but before revealing any tiles, changes his mind or realizes that he does not have the correct tiles to complete the Kong, then he may usually cancel the Kong without penalty. The player should not do this too frequently; otherwise the judge may impose a penalty.
- **Improperly displayed set:** If a player claims (chi, pong, Kong) and displays a set, but later (after his discard is claimed, or the lower seat has drawn a tile, or he has taken a supplement tile) discovers that the displayed set is incorrect and does not conform to the specification of a set, this cannot be corrected, and the player's hand is rendered dead (cannot win). If a Kong is discovered to be incorrect after taking a supplement tile, then the player is further prohibited from claiming discards or declaring a Kong (in addition to the hand being dead, just like a "long hand"). If a player discards before displaying his set, and the discarded tile is claimed or the lower seat has already drawn a tile, then the player must display a set, and may not apply the "cancelled claim" rule above to cancel the claim. For this reason, it is not encouraged to discard before displaying a set.
- **False Win:** If a player declares a win (self-draw or win on discard) and reveals his entire hand, but then discovers that he does not have a correct winning hand, this is called a "false win", and is handled just like a case of "wrong display corrected immediately": the play of the hand continues, and all illegally exposed tiles become penalty tiles.
- **Cancelled Win:** If a player declares a win, but before revealing his tiles, changes his mind or realizes that he does not have a correct winning hand, then he may cancel his claim, but he must reveal three tiles to become penalty tiles. (If his hand has fewer than three tiles left, they all become penalty tiles.) Alternatively, the judge may designate which tiles should become penalty tiles.



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- It is the responsibility of the three opponents to verify that the winning player has a correct winning hand. The three opponents, before verifying that the winning hand is correct, should not reveal their hands or disturb any tiles on the table. In case of a false win, the play of the hand continues; any illegally exposed tiles will become penalty tiles, and anyone who disturbed the tiles on the table will be penalized.

### --- Play Time Limits---

In a hand, each player has 3 minutes total for all his plays. The penalty for exceeding the time limit is 5 points per 15 seconds (or part thereof).

For each turn, a player has 15 seconds to make his play. The penalty for exceeding the time limit is 5 points per 15 seconds (or part thereof, per occasion).

For the purpose of these rules, a player's turn starts when one's upper seat discards (if one draws from the wall) or when the claimed tile is discarded (if one claims a discard), and ends when one discards (and completes displaying any exposed set). When one makes a Kong, a new turn is started when one draws the supplement tile.

For the above time limits, the timing clock starts 15 seconds after the dealing of the tiles has been complete. The first 15 seconds in a hand is free time, for the players to organize their hands and consider their initial plans. Within these 15 seconds, if East has discarded, West or North may request South to wait before drawing a tile, so as to give oneself enough time to prepare; similarly, after South discards, North may request West to wait.

The above penalties are cumulative: a player who spends more than 3 minutes in a hand because one takes longer than 15 seconds to play some of one's turns will be penalized for both violations.

Which players should be timed is at the judges' discretion. Player who feel that an opponent is taking too long to play, should call the attention of a judge.

A player who is penalized for over 80 points in a hand for play time limit violations will be considered as having resigned for not completing the required playing, unless he has a reasonable explanation.

See the "Session Time Limits" section under "Tournament Format" for the time limit over a session (half or quarter).