

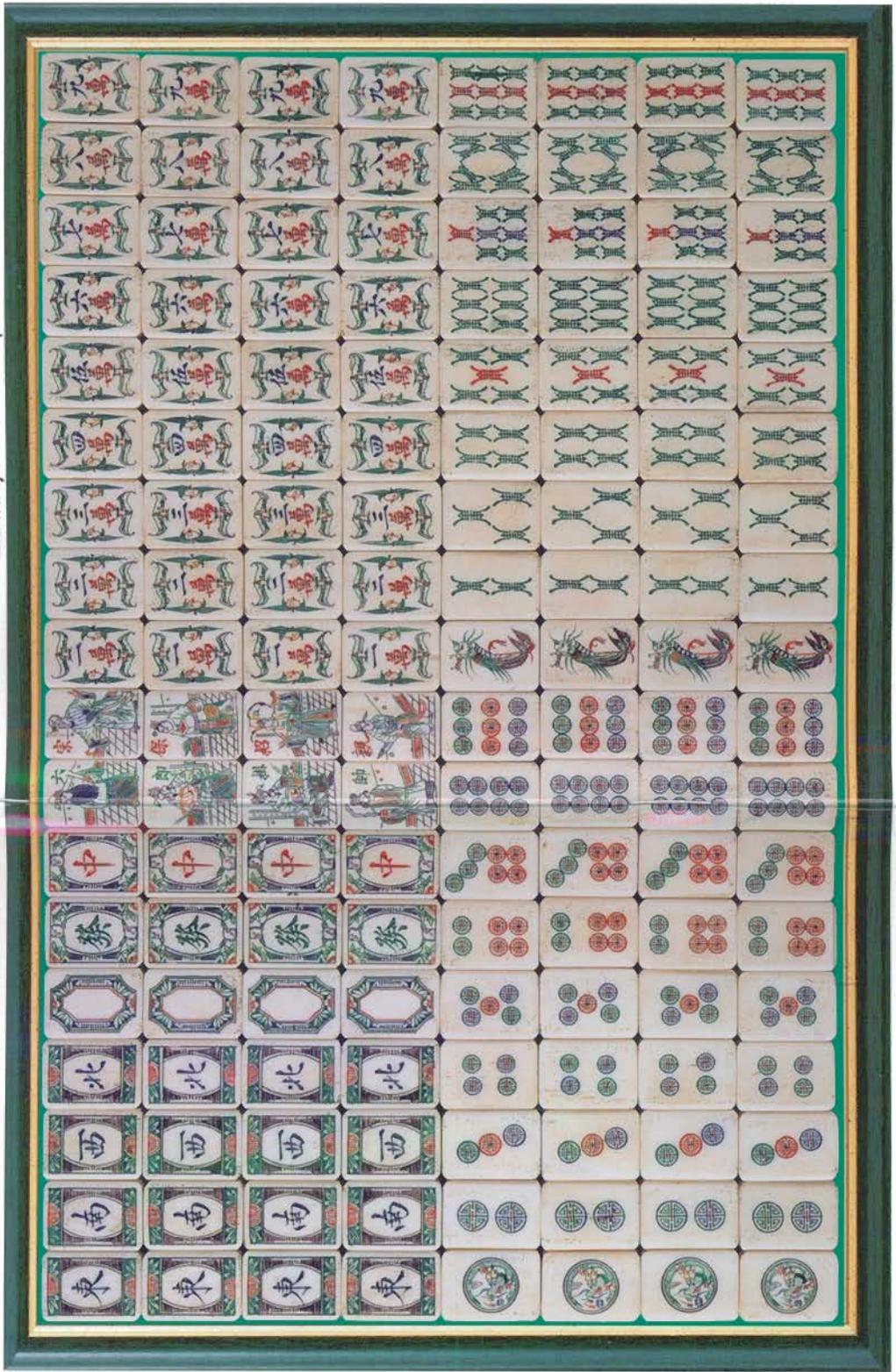
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Competition Mahjong Official International Rulebook

Enacted by the China State Sports Commission



Gorgeous decorated special tiles of "Gods of Wealth and Longevity" representing the essence of techniques. Owned by the Mahjong Museum.



TAKESHOBO

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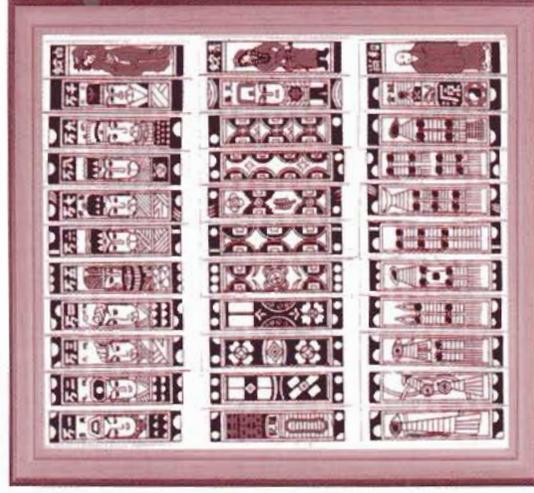
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Mahjong playing cards, Shui - huo Ti Pal. Owned by the Mahjong Museum.

An Introduction to Official International Rules

In January of 1998, the State Sports Commission of China officially recognized Mahjong by designating it as the 255th sport. The Official International Rules for this newest sport were defined in September of the same year, and they are what is included here.

Traditionally, rules for Mahjong have varied greatly across China, partly due to the country's vast size. Beijing, Tianjin, Qingdao, Shanghai, Ningbo, and Guangzhou are all very different places - and as such, each has its own form of Mahjong. However, after Mahjong was designated an official sport, it became necessary to define an official set of rules to be used for tournaments held within China, as well as in international tournaments such as the one to be held in October of 2002.

For this purpose, Mahjong researchers from across China were gathered together in one location and divided up into groups of nine to begin a laborious and in-depth debate concerning what would constitute Official International Rules. The rules presented here are the product of two years of their hard work. Needless to say, it was a difficult task - for one thing, 440 hands from across China had to be reduced to a manageable number. First they were cut down to 200, and finally to 81.

Some of the hands included in these rules may seem peculiar to you, but we assure you that none of the hands were included on a whim - on the contrary, each and every hand was considered carefully before earning its inclusion.

The Rules

In order to become proficient at Official International Rules, it is crucial that you first put aside any preconceptions about Mahjong that come from the version of the game that you play. Once you have prepared yourself for what may be a very different game of Mahjong for you, feel free to read on and find out more about this fascinating new Mahjong standard.

The number of hands designated in these rules is 81; each hand, depending upon its difficulty, is scored from between 1 to 88 points. There are no doubling schemes, but rather, the points for each hand are added together in

a simple sum. In Official International, there is a minimum of 8 points needed to go Out - for example, one adds the 2 points from All Chows to the 2 points from All Simples, and so on, until he or she has at least 8 points.

One game consists of 4 rounds (East, South, West, North) of 4 games each. Also, 8 flower tiles are used, each scoring 1 point when obtained. However, flower tiles are counted apart from the 8 point minimum - this means that 8 points outside of the flower tiles are necessary to go Out, and also that the flower tiles do not count against the Chicken Hand (which is a hand that otherwise has 0 points). Points for flower tiles are simply added to the final score after going Out. In some forms of Mahjong, the player who discards the winning tile is solely responsible for the payout to the winner. However, in Official International Rules, when the winner goes Out off a player's discard, he or she receives 8 points each from the 3 opponents, as well as a separate payment, equal to the points scored for the value of the hand, from the player who discarded the winning tile. When the hand is self-drawn, add 8 points to the value of the hand. The winner receives this amount from each of the three opponents.

Rule Summary:

1. Eighty-one different hands, each assigned a value of 1 - 88.
2. Minimum 8 points to go out.
3. One game consists of 4 rounds (16 hands).
4. Use a simple sum to calculate combinations of hands.
5. Japanese "Reach" rule is not included.
6. Dealer does not receive additional payment when winning, nor repeat his or her deal.
7. No "Sacred Discard" rules apply. A player may go out on a tile that he or she has previously discarded. A player may claim an already-completed Chow or Pung and discard the remaining portion of it (for example, holding 2-3-4 and then claiming 1 to change the already-completed Chow to 1-2-3, then discarding the 4. For Pungs, it is acceptable to hold 8-8-8, steal the last 8 to create 8-8-8 again, and then discard the remaining 8.).
8. All Chows hand can finish with any type of Wait (Single, Closed, Edge, etc.).
9. A player goes out by announcing "hu (Mandarin Chinese, 2nd tone)" and revealing his or her hand.
10. No Dead Tiles will be designated. Play continues until the last tile has been used.

List of Hands and their Point Values

1

point hands 13 hands

1 point hands

1. Pure Double Chow

Two runs of the same suit and same numerical sequence.

2. Mixed Double Chow

Two runs, one in each of two suits, of the same numerical sequence.

3. Short Straight

Two Chows in the same suit that run consecutively after one another (ex: 3-4-5 + 6-7-8 of Bamboos)

4. Two Terminal Chows

Runs of 1-2-3 and 7-8-9 in the same suit.

5. Pung of Terminals or Honors

Each Pung of 1, 9, or Honor tile scores 1 point.

6. Melded Kong

A Kong that was claimed from another player or promoted from a melded Pung.

7. One Voided Suit

A hand that lacks tiles from one of the three suits (either Characters, Dots, or Bamboos).

8. No Honors

A hand formed entirely of suit tiles.

9. Edge Wait

Waiting for a 3 or 7 when holding 1-2 or 8-9, respectively. This hand is invalid when the edge wait is combined with any other waits. Combinations which do not add to the variety of tiles are acceptable (such as 1-2-3-3, which is a combination of an edge wait and a single wait, but only a 3 tile completes the hand).

10. Closed Wait

Going out on a closed wait (for example, holding 2-4 and waiting on 3). This hand is invalid when the closed wait is combined with other waits (for example, the combination wait 2-4-4-4 counts for neither Single Wait nor Closed Wait). Combinations which do not add to the variety of tiles are acceptable (such as 1-2-2-3-4, which is a combination of a closed wait and an edge wait, but only a 3 tile completes the hand).

11. Single Wait

Going out on a single wait (finishing a head). This hand is invalid if the wait is any type of combination wait (as in 1-2-3-4 waiting on the 1 and 4). Combinations which do not add to the variety of tiles being waited on are acceptable (such as 4-5-5-6, which is a combination of a single wait and a closed wait, but only a 5 tile completes the hand).

12. Self-drawn

Going out with a tile drawn from the wall.

13. Flower Tiles

Each flower tile is worth 1 point. When a flower tile is drawn, set it to the side and draw a replacement tile. If the player goes out off this replacement tile, then Self-drawn (1 point) is added to the hand.



20. Double Pung

Two Pungs of the same numbers in two different suits (2-2-2 Bamboos + 2-2-2 Dots).

21. Two Concealed Pungs

Two Pungs which are achieved without claiming.

22. Concealed Kong

Created when four identical tiles, all drawn, are declared as a Kong.

23. All Simples

A hand formed without Terminal or Honor tiles.

14. Dragon Pung

One Pung of Dragon tiles. May be concealed or melded.

15. Prevalent Wind

A Pung of the Table Wind which corresponds to the round in progress. May be concealed or melded.

16. Seat Wind

A Pung of that player's Seat Wind (always East when the player is the dealer; for the other players, proceeds in the order South-West-North to the right of the dealer). May be concealed or melded.

17. Concealed Hand

Having a concealed hand (no melded sets) and going out off a player's discard.

18. All Chows

A hand consisting of all runs and no honors.

19. Tile Hog

Using all four of a single suit tile without declaring them as a Kong. A Concealed Kong or Melded Kong does not also count as Tile Hog.

memo



24. Outside Hand

A hand that includes Terminals and Honors in each element, including the head.



Example 1

* Combined with Lower Three, Tile Hog, Double Pung, and Pung of Terminals or Honors (2).



Example 2

* Combined with Mixed Double Chow, Two Terminal Chows, Pung of Terminals or Honors, and One Voided Suit.

25. Fully Concealed Hand

A hand that a player completes without any melds and self-draws to finish.

26. Two Melded Kongs

Finishing a hand that contains two claimed Kongs.

27. Last Tile

Going out off a tile which is the last of its kind. This fact must be clear to all players, i.e. the first three tiles of its kind are in the discard piles or are used in claimed sets. Points for Robbing the Kong are not added.



28. All Pungs

Formed by four Pungs (or Kongs) and a head.

29. Half Flush

Formed by tiles from any one of the three suits in combination with Honors.

30. Mixed Shifted Chows

Three runs, one in each suit, each shifted over one tile up from the last.



Example 3

* Combined with All Chows and Short Straight.

31. All Types

A hand in which each of the five elements is composed of a different type of tile (Characters, Bamboos, Dots, Winds, and Dragons).



Example 4

* Combined with Mixed Shifted Chows and Dragon Pung.

32. Melded Hand

Every element of the hand must be completed with tiles discarded by other players. This means that all four sets must be claimed, and the

6 point hands

player goes out on a single wait off another player. Points for Single Wait are implied.

33. Two Concealed Kongs

A hand including two concealed Kongs.

34. Two Dragons

Two Pungs (or Kongs) of Dragon tiles.

memo



35. Mixed Straight

A straight (tiles 1-9) formed by Chows from all three suits.

Example 5



* Combined with Pure Double Chow and All Chows.

Example 6



* Combined with All Chows, Short Straight, and Mixed Double Chow.

36. Reversible Tiles

A hand created entirely with those tiles which are vertically symmetrical. The point for One Voided Suit is implied.

Example 7



* Combined with Full Flush and Pure Shifted Chows.

Example 8



* Combined with All Pungs, Dragon Pung, Double Pung, and Pung of Terminals or Honors (2).

37. Mixed Triple Chow

Three runs of the same numerical sequence, one in each suit.

Example 9





44. Lesser Honors and Knitted Tiles

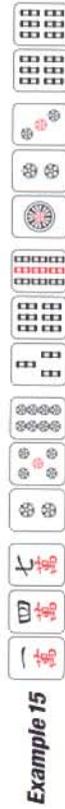
A hand made of singles of the following tiles: Any Honor tile, along with Suit tiles that belong to different Knitted sequences (for example, 1-4-7 of Characters, 2-5-8 of Bamboos, and 3-6-9 of Dots – each of the 3 suits must belong to a different Knitted sequence, but not necessarily in the order above). When finished with 7 honor tiles, the hand becomes Greater Honors and Knitted Tiles (see below). When drawn from the wall, only 1 point from Self-drawn is added (points for Fully Concealed Hand are not added). Points for All Types are not added.



* Combines with Knitted Straight.

45. Knitted Straight

A special Straight which is formed not with standard Chows but with 3 different Knitted sequences. For example, 1-4-7 of Dots, 2-5-8 of Characters, and 3-6-9 of Bamboos – but not necessarily in this order.



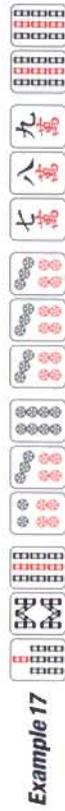
* Combined with All Chows.



* Combined with All Types and Pung of Terminals or Honors.

46. Upper Four

A hand created with suit tiles 6 through 9. The point for No Honors is implied.



* Combined with Tile hog and Mixed Double Chow.



* Combined with Mixed Triple Chow, Pure Double Chow, and All Chows.

47. Lower Four

A hand created with suit tiles 1 through 4. The point for No Honors is implied.



* Combined with Mixed Triple Chow, Pure Double Chow, and All Chows.

48. Big Three Winds

A hand that includes one Pung (or Kong) each of three winds.



* Combined with All Terminals and Honors, and One Voided Suit.



* Combined with Half Flush.

Official International Mahjong Rule Scoring Chart

Type	Points	1	2	4	6	8	12	16	24	32	48	64	88
Honor Tile Based			Dragon Pung Prevalent wind Seat Wind		Two Dragons		Big Three Winds					Little Four Winds Little Three Dragons All Honors	Big Four Winds Big Three Dragons
	One-step-up Hands				Mixed Shifted Chows		Pure Shifted Chows			Four Shifted Chows			
Chow Based	Chow Hands	Pure Double Chow Mixed Double Chow	All Chows			Mixed Triple Chow			Pure Triple Chow		Quadruple Chow		
	Straight Hands	Short Straight				Mixed Straight	Knitted Straight	Pure Straight					
Terminal Based	Terminal Hands	Two Terminal Chows						Three-Suited Terminal Chows				Pure Terminal Chows	
	Pung Hands	Pung of Terminals or Honors	Double Pung Two Concealed Pungs		All Pungs	Mixed Shifted Pungs		Triple Pung Three Concealed Pungs	All Even Pure Shifted Pungs	All Terminals and Honors	Four Shifted Pungs	All Terminals Four Concealed Pungs	
Pung Based	Kong Hands	Melded Kong	Concealed Kong	Two Melded Kongs	Two Concealed Kongs					Three Kongs			Four Kongs
	Seven Pairs Hands								Seven Pairs				Seven Shifted Pairs
Suit based		One Voided Suit No Honors			Half Flush All Types				Full Flush				All Green Nine Gates
Terminal Based			All Simples	Outside Hand			Upper Four Lower Four	All Fives	Upper Tiles Middle Tiles Lower Tiles				
Knitted Tiles Based							Lesser Honors and Knitted Tiles		Greater Honors and Knitted Tiles				
	Types of Wait	Edge wait Closed wait Single wait Self-drawn	Concealed Hand	Fully Concealed Hand Last Tile	Melded Hand	Last Tile Draw Last Tile Claim Out with Replacement Tile Robbing the Kong							
Special Hands		Flower Tiles	Tile Hog			Reversible tiles Chicken Hand							Thirteen Orphans



Example 26

* Combined with No Honors.

52. All Fives

A hand in which every element includes a 5 tile.



Example 27

* Combined with Middle Tiles, Mixed Triple Chow, Tile Hog, Pure Double Chow, and All Chows.



Example 28

* Combined with Tile Hog and Double Pung.

53. Triple Pung

Three Pungs, one in each suit, of the same number.

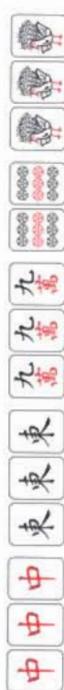


Example 29

* Combined with Lower Four, Tile Hog, and All Simples.

54. Three Concealed Pungs

Three Pungs achieved without claiming tiles.



Example 30

* Combined with All Terminals and Honors, All Types, and Dragon Pung. Can also combine with Prevalent Wind and Seat Wind.



Example 31

* Combined with Full Flush.

49. Pure Straight

A hand using tiles 1-9 from any one suit, forming three consecutive Chows.



Example 22

* Combined with Full Flush, Pure Double Chow, and All Chows.



Example 23

* Combined with No Honors and One Voided Suit.

50. Three-suited Terminal Chows

A hand consisting of 1-2-3 + 7-8-9 in one suit (Two Terminal Chows), 1-2-3 + 7-8-9 in another suit, and finally, a head of fives in the remaining suit.



Example 24

* Points for Mixed Double Chow, Two Terminal Chows, No Honors, and All Chows are all implied.

51. Pure Shifted Chows

Three chows in one suit, each shifted either one or two numbers up from the last, but not a combination of both.



Example 25

* Combined with All Chows, Mixed Double Chow, and One Voided Suit.

24

point hands 9 hands

Example 35

* Combined with Double Pung (2) and One Voided Suit.

55. Seven Pairs

A hand formed by seven pairs. Always finishes with a single wait. Does not combine with All Types, Fully Concealed Hand, or Single Wait.

Example 32

* Combined with Tile Hog, All Simples, and One Voided Suit.

Example 33

* Combined with Tile Hog and All Terminals.

56. Greater Honors and Knitted Tiles

Formed by 7 single Honors and singles of suit tiles belonging to separate Knitted sequences (for example, 1-4-7 of Bamboos, 2-5-8 of Characters, and 3-6-9 of Dots). Does not combine with All Types, Fully Concealed Hand, or Single Wait.

Example 34**57. All Even**

A hand formed with Pungs of 2, 4, 6 and 8 tiles and a head of the same. Points for All Pungs and All Simples are implied.

58. Full Flush

A hand formed entirely of a single suit. The point for No Honors is implied.

Example 36

* Combined with Four Pure Shifted Pungs and Pung of Terminals or Honors. All Pungs is not added, since it does not combine with Four Pure Shifted Pungs.

Example 37

* Combined with Quadruple Chow, Lower Four, and All Chows.

59. Pure Triple Chow

Three runs of the same numerical sequence and in the same suit. Does not combine with Pure Shifted Pungs.

Example 38

* Combined with Middle Tiles, All Fives, All Chows, Mixed Double Chow, and One Voided Suit.

60. Pure Shifted Pungs

Three Pungs of the same suit, each shifted one up from the last. Does not combine with Pure Triple Chow.

Example 39

* Combined with Lower Four, All Pungs, All Simples, Double Pung, and One Voided Suit.

61. Upper Tiles

A hand consisting entirely of 7, 8, and 9 tiles. The point for No Honors is implied.



* Combined with Double Pung, All Pungs, and Pung of Terminals or Honors.



* Combined with Mixed Double Chow, Double Pung, and Tile Hog.

62. Middle Tiles

A hand consisting entirely of 4, 5, and 6 tiles. The point for No Honors is implied.



* Combined with Pure Shifted Pungs, Tile Hog (3), and One Voided Suit.

63. Lower Tiles

A hand consisting entirely of 1, 2, and 3 tiles. The point for No Honors is implied.



* Combined with Mixed Triple Chow, All Chows, Tile Hog, and Pure Double Chow.



64. Four Shifted Chows

Four Chows in one suit, each shifted over 1 or 2 numbers from the last, but not a combination of both.



* Combined with Full Flush and All Chows.



* Combined with All Chow and One Voided Suit.

65. Three Kongs

A hand containing three Kongs. They may be melded or concealed.



* Combined with Four Pure Shifted Pungs, All Pungs, Double Pung, One Voided Suit, All Simples, and Lower Four.

66. All Terminals and Honors

A hand consisting entirely of 1, 9, and Honor tiles. Points for All Pungs and Pung of Terminals or Honors are implied.



* Combined with All Types and Double Pung.

48

point hands 2 hands

67. Quadruple Chow

Four Chows of the same numerical sequence in the same suit. Points for Pure Shifted Pungs, Tile Hog, and Pure Double Chow are all implied.

Example 48 

* Combined with Full Flush, Lower Four, and All Chows.

68. Four Pure Shifted Pungs

Four sets in the same suit each shifted one up from the last.

Example 49 

* Combined with Lower Four, One Voided Suit, Reversible Tiles, and Pung of Terminals or Honors.

memo

64

point hands 6 hands

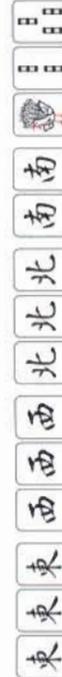
69. All Terminals

A hand consisting entirely of 1 and 9 tiles. Does not combine with Double Pung or No Honors.

Example 50 

70. Little Four Winds

A hand that includes three Pungs of Winds and a head of the fourth Wind. Combines with Prevalent Wind and Seat Wind, but points for Big Three Winds are implied.

Example 51 

* Combined with Outside Hand and Half Flush.

71. Little Three Dragons

A hand that includes two Dragon Pungs, and a head of the remaining Dragon. Points for individual Dragon Pungs are not added.

Example 52 

* Combined with All Terminals and Honors, and Half Flush.

Official International Rules

Basic Strategy

As described in the introduction, Official International Rules has its own unique characteristics. Naturally, it is necessary to devise a play strategy based upon such specific traits – the first and most basic of which is the 8-point minimum required to go Out.

In order to go Out, it is necessary to complete a Hand or combination of Hands that have a sum of at least 8. When you receive your initial draw of tiles, you must immediately begin considering what types of hands will be feasible from that starting point. Failing to do so invariably leads to a beautifully completed hand - that sadly lacks the needed points to go out.

For this reason it is especially important to familiarize yourself with the smaller hands, especially the 1 and 2 point hands. It is not uncommon to think that your hand lacks the necessary 8 points, when upon a second look, you realize you have missed a 1 or 2 point hand. It is thus highly recommended that the novice player should first memorize the 1 and 2 point hands.

Next, memorize the 4 and 6 point hands. Once you have done this, you will find it easy to begin creating combinations that add up to the minimal 8 points. The remaining hands – since they are all at least 8 points – may, temporarily, be considered part of the same group of “Hands that allow you to go Out.”

Take a look at the hand represented in **Figure 1**. You’ve scored 4 points for Fully Concealed Hand, and 2 points for All Chows – a total of 6. Seemingly it’s not quite enough, so you pass up your chance to go out. But wait!! Look closely, and you’ll find that the Pure Double Run scores 1 point, and the Closed Wait scores another. Now you’ve earned the 8-point minimum, and are free to show your hand and collect your winnings.



Self-Drawn

Next, see **Figure 2**. Six of Characters hits the table from an opponent. Obviously, you’ve scored 2 points for Concealed Hand and 2 points for All Chows - but 4 points is only half of what you need. Is there anything else? In fact, there is - Closed Wait (1 point), Short Straight (1 point), Terminal Chows (1 point), and One Voided Suit (1 point). Now you have just enough to go out!

FIGURE 2



Claimed Tile

But be careful - announcing “he” and revealing your hand without the minimum 8 points will cost you a penalty of 30 points (10 to each player).

Let’s go over calculation of payment for the previous two examples. With the hand in Figure 1, an 8-point self-drawn hand, 8 points is added to the 8-point hand, for a total of 16 points. The player receives 16 points from each player for a total of 48. With the hand from Figure 2, the player receives 8 points from each player, as well as 8 points for the value of the hand from the player who discarded the winning Six of Characters tile (payment total of 32 points).

The Efficiency of Chow-based Hands

You might consider concentrating on those Chow-based hands which are relatively easy to finish while at the same time yield a hefty number of points. These include such hands as Mixed Shifted Chows (6 pts.), Mixed Straight (8 pts.), Mixed Triple Chow (8 pts.), and Pure Straight (16 pts.).

Take a look at **Figure 3**. In this case, you have the advantage of being able to pursue the Mixed Triple Chow in 3-4-5 (which would have been possible if you had drawn the 5 or 7 of Bamboos) as well as the Mixed Shifted Chows centering on the 4 (2-3-4 Bamboos + 3-4-5 Characters + 4-5-6 Dots). As it turns out, you drew 2 of Bamboos, which is not a problem - simply discard the 8 of Bamboos, and you can go Out on the 6 of Dots.

FIGURE 3



Draw Discard

If you draw 5 of Bamboos later in the game, you can switch back to the higher-scoring Mixed Triple Chow. In that case, you can go out off 6 of Dots provided that it is self-drawn (6 of Dots is sufficient since it creates Fully Concealed Hand (4pts.) + All Chows (2 pts.) + Mixed Double Chow (2 at 1 point each = 2 pts.) for a total of 8 points). Also, since there is no Sacred Discard rule, you could discard 6 of Dots in the case that it did not create a hand with sufficient point value, and wait on the 3 of Dots.

In contrast with the Chow-based hands, there are a number of hands which are worth similar amounts, but that tend to reveal your actions to opponents, making such hands more difficult to complete. These include such hands as Half Flush (6 pts.) and All Pungs (6 pts.), seen in **Figures 4 & 5**.

FIGURE 4



Claimed Chow Claimed Chow



Many finished configurations are combinations of various different hands. As an example, try calculating the hand shown in **Figure 6**: All Simples (2 pts.) + All Chows (2 pts.) + Mixed Triple Chow (8 pts.) + Short Straight (1 pt.) + Closed Wait (1 pt.) for a total of 14 points. The winner here receives $14 + 8 = 22$ from the throwing player, and 8 points from the remaining two players. In the case of self-drawn, add 1 point for self-drawn for a total of 15. Then, add 8 points to the 15 for the hand, and receive 23 points from each of the three opponents. This illustrates the tremendous advantage to finishing a hand self-drawn.



Other Advantageous Hands

Strategically speaking, Pure Straight (16 pts.) and Seven Pairs (24 pts.) are both relatively easy despite their high point value. Pure Straight is about as difficult as Mixed Triple Chow, but earns twice the points. Seven Pairs just takes a bit of patience - be careful not to hastily claim to make Pungs out of pairs.

Often bad starting hands can quickly advance toward one of the many hands that are not Chow or Pung based, such as Thirteen Orphans (88 pts.) or Seven Pairs (24 pts.). In addition, there is Lesser/Greater Honors and Knitted Tiles (12 pts and 24 pts., respectively), shown Ready with a 3-sided Wait in **Figure 7**. This hand is created by singles of Honor tiles combined with singles of knitted tiles. When the hand is achieved with a single of each of the 7 Honors, then it becomes Greater Honors and Knitted Tiles (24 pts.).



The great variety of possible hands creates potential for a variety of fascinating strategies. Experiment with different combinations of hands to find out which ones are right for your own personal Mahjong strategy.

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