

Mah Jongg Mania Tournament Rules 2026 (updated 4/26)

Tournament Format:

4 games per round. East keeps score. All players must sign their score sheet before leaving the table. West verifies and signs for East

TABLE ROTATION:

EAST- Remains at their table for entire tournament / **NORTH Go UP 1** table after each round

WEST- Go up 2 tables after each round / **SOUTH - Go DOWN 1** table after each round

1. **THE CARD:** Players are required to display the 2026 NMJL card during tournament play.
2. **THE GAME BEGINS:** East rolls the dice to break the wall. **THE GAME DOES NOT BEGIN UNTIL EAST THROWS THE FIRST TILE.** If any hand has too few or too many tiles before this point the hands will be thrown in and the game restarted.
3. **CHARLESTON:** The first Charleston (three passes) is required; the second Charleston is optional. Any player may stop the Charleston after the first pass **if no one has yet racked their tiles** from the second pass. A player who wishes to stop should **promptly alert the others** to avoid making the second left pass. *Be mindful of not passing ahead to avoid confusion.*
4. **STEALING A TILE (BLIND PASS):** *If you steal a tile during the Charleston, you may not look at it. If you look at it, you will be penalized ten (-10) pts. at the end of that game.*
5. **PICKING A Tile** Each Player must pick a tile before discarding. A player's turn begins when they pick a tile from the wall or call a discarded tile for an exposure. Once you touch the next tile in play it is yours and you can no longer call the previous discard. A player's hand will be declared "Dead" for *a) discarding a tile before picking, b) picking out of turn or c) picking from the wrong end of the wall.* **If a player mistakenly picks the wrong tile and looks at it, that tile is returned to the wall. If that tile is racked, it remains with the dead hand.**
6. **PICKING FROM THE WRONG END OF THE WALL:** If a player picks from the wrong end of the wall, their hand is "Dead" However, if the mistake is not discovered until after more than one player has picked from the wrong wall or the wrong end of the wall, the game continues from the wrong wall and then proceeds to the correct wall. **To maintain the integrity of the tournament, no tails will be allowed at the end of the walls.**
7. **A DISCARDED TILE:** may be called for MJ or an exposure, until the next player either DISCARDS, RACKS, or FULLY NAMES the next tile. A tile is considered RACKED when it is placed in the rack, not on top of or in front of the rack. A player MUST use a discarded tile for their exposure if they pick up, touch or move the tile. This is called intent. **You are committed to discarding a tile, once you begin to name it or the tile touches the table. You cannot suddenly change your mind and decide to exchange it for a joker.**
8. **MIS-NAMING A TILE:** A tile cannot be called until it is correctly named. A player may **not call a mis-named tile** for an exposure. If a player calls a mis-named tile and exposes their hand, that hand is **declared dead.**
Penalty: -10 points to the mis-caller who mis-names a tile needed for an exposure. If a mis-named tile is the actual tile needed for Mah Jongg, there is **no penalty** to the mis-caller, and Mah Jongg is scored as usual. If the mis-named tile is **not** the actual Mah Jongg tile, the penalty is **-25 points** to the mis-caller and **+10 points** to each of the remaining three players. The game then ends.
9. **Calling a Tile:** You. Must Call a discarded tile by saying "call" or "take." You may say "wait" or "hold" before committing.
If two players call, the **player closest in turn** gets priority.
If you call but **don't touch or expose tiles**, you may **change your mind** with no penalty.
If a call happens simultaneously **as the next player racks**, the **caller** gets the tile.
10. **EXPOSURES:**
Once a discarded tile is picked up or touched, it must be used in an exposure.
The called tile must be placed **on top of the rack**, not in the rack. A player's hand is **dead** if the tile is placed in the rack slope instead of on top.
The caller may adjust the number of tiles in a pung or kong **until a discard is made.**

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11. **JOKERS:** A player must pick a tile from the wall before exchanging a tile for an exposed joker on another player's rack. When exchanging a joker, the player must **ask before taking** and may **not touch another player's rack**. Exposed jokers from a **dead hand** may be exchanged **only if** the exposure was valid before the hand was declared dead.
12. **DISPLAYING MAH JONGG HAND:** When declaring MJ, the hand should be displayed as it appears on the NMJL card. If you do not display the hand in proper order, and another player asks you to do so you must do so. If you refuse, your hand may be declared dead, and the game will continue. **Players should not throw in their hands until MJ is verified by all.**
13. **Calling an Opponent's Hand Dead:** A player may call another player's hand dead for a) *Picking ahead* b) *Discarding before picking* c) *Exchanging a joker before picking* d) *An incorrect exposure* e) *having more or less than 13 tiles in their rack* e) *If the tiles a player has exposed or discarded make it impossible to complete a valid Mah Jongg*. If there is a disagreement, the Tournament Director must be called to verify the claim.
Any player who incorrectly declares another hand dead will receive **-10 points**.
14. **Wall Rule-** When a player pushes out the wall for picking, the remaining tiles must be visible to the next player. If another player **picks from the wall without seeing those hidden tiles**, the player who pushed the wall prematurely will receive a **Minus 25**

SCORING:

- a. **PICK OWN MAH JONGG:** Add Ten points (**+10 POINTS**) to score on MJ card.
- b. **NO-JOKER HANDS:** Add additional (**+10 POINTS**) to score. **Except there is no bonus given on any of the hands listed under the Singles - Pairs Group.**
- c. **WALL GAME:** All players receive ten points (**+10 points**). If a player's hand was declared "dead", that player does not get ten points.
- d. **INCOMPLETE GAME:** If a game is not completed within the designated time, each player receives "ZERO." **NO POINTS GIVEN**
- e. **MAH JONGG IN ERROR – PLAYERS SHOULD NOT THROW IN OR EXPOSE A HAND UNTIL MJ IS VERIFIED.**
 - *If MJ is declared in error, and all players have exposed their hands, all players receive 0 (zero) points.*
 - *If players do not expose their hands, the game continues with remaining players.*
 - *If one player does not expose their hand but the others do, that player receives 10 points, and the others get 0 points.*
 - *If a player calls for MJ in error and the mistake is rectified before the hand is exposed or before the other players disturb their hands, play continues.*

PENALTIES:

- **NO PENALTY TO PLAYER THROWING TO 0 OR 1 EXPOSURE.**
- **Minus -10 POINTS TO PLAYER THROWING MJ TO 2 EXPOSURES.**
- **Minus -25 POINTS TO PLAYER THROWING MJ TO 3 EXPOSURES or 2 EXPOSURES OF A QUINT HAND**
- **Minus -10 POINTS FOR LOOKING AT TILE WHEN STEALING DURING EITHER CHARLESTON**
- **Minus -10 POINTS TO A MIS-CALLER WHO MISNAMES A DISCARDED TILE NEED FOR AN EXPOSURE**
- **Minus -25 POINTS TO A MIS-CALLER WHO MISNAMES A DISCARDED TILE WANTED FOR MAH JONGG.**
- **Minus -10 POINTS INCORRECTLY CALLING ANOTHER PLAYER'S HAND DEAD**
- **Dead Hands: NO POINTS GIVEN for wall games.**

ONCE THE SCORESHEET IS TURNED IN, NO OTHER CHANGES CAN BE MADE!

DIRECTOR'S RULING WILL BE FINAL: All decisions made by the Directors shall be based on the above rules. Any question about scoring or rules should be addressed by the Directors and not by the players.

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