

Arizona Riichi Mahjong

Competitive Rules and Penalties



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Preface

This document presents the rules that every player is expected to follow in competitive matches, as well as the corresponding penalties for failure to follow these rules. The rules are tailored to typical tournament standards. These rules are intended to better prepare our players for in-person tournaments.

The rules are adapted from various authoritative sources, including the [2025 WRC Rulebook](#) and the [Saikouisen Rules](#).

For any questions or concerns, please contact competitive@azriichi.org.

John Mahjong

April 14, 2026

Chapter 1 Basics

1.1 Basic competitor mindset

All players must follow the basic competitor mindset listed below during matches.

- All players must strive to be fair to everyone during a match.
- All players must maintain a judge mindset at all times.
- A judge's rulings must be followed during a match.
- All players must play for their own benefit.
- Every effort must be made to ensure that the game proceeds promptly.

1.2 General principles

Penalties should be proportional to the level of disturbance, and no one should benefit from committing a foul. Judges have the ultimate authority to determine whether a penalty is assessed in response to a foul, and the severity of such a penalty. Intentionally committing a foul is considered cheating and can lead to more serious consequences.

When a problem arises, the match must halt until the problem is resolved. For minor offenses, the game may proceed after all four players have agreed on a resolution. In more serious cases or when a consensus cannot be reached, a judge must be called to resolve the problem.

To call a judge, a player should raise their hand and say "judge" until a judge comes to the table. Then the player must clearly explain what happened that led to the current situation. If a player disagrees with the ruling, they are encouraged to politely contest it without arguing.

The judge can award extra time to a table delayed by an incident.

1.3 Definitions and general procedures

The general procedure of the game is outlined in the [WRC Rulebook](#) and its addenda. The terms defined in the WRC Rulebook apply. However, some concepts may use alternative naming in this document. Any such words are capitalized in this document. A Glossary is available for these words.

1.4 Types of penalties

Note: one Season Point (SP), commonly written as 1P, is equivalent to 1,000 points at the table. The points are removed from the offending player's SP, and the table's score is not changed.

Every foul that is not a Warning or a Minor Chombo (continue) will result in a Strike on the offending player's profile.

Warning – minor offenses.

Minor offenses that are warned but not penalized. Repeated cases or refusal to follow a judge's requests may cause more serious penalties.

Minor Chombo (continue) – the state of the game is impacted, but not severe enough to require a Kyoku restart.

The offending player gets a 10P penalty, but the game may continue after necessary remediations are made.

Minor Chombo (Dead Hand) – when the offending player's hand cannot continue normally.

The offending player gets a 10P penalty. The offending player can no longer make a call (Chii/Pon/Kan/Riichi) or declare a win (Ron/Tsumo). If the player has not declared Riichi yet, they may still choose the tiles they discard. They may not retrieve their Riichi deposit. If the player has declared Riichi, they are required to display their hand so that valid tenpai can be checked. Their hand is considered noten.

Minor Chombo (Kyoku restart) – when the state of the game is impacted and the game cannot continue normally.

The offending player gets a 10P penalty, and the Kyoku is restarted as if it never happened. The seat winds do not change, no Honba is added, and Riichi deposits are returned to their respective owners.

Chombo – when the state of the game is significantly impacted and the game cannot continue normally.

The offending player gets a 30P penalty, and the Kyoku is restarted as if it never happened. The seat winds do not change, no Honba is added, and Riichi deposits are returned to their respective owners.

Suspension – when more than 2 Strikes are recorded against a player in a single day, or more than 5 Strikes are recorded over a rolling 1-month period (30 days, inclusive of both end days).

The offending player is disallowed to play in competitive games for 2 weeks, starting on the day of suspension and including the end date.

Ban – when more than 2 Suspensions have been issued to a player.

The offending player is disallowed to play in competitive games permanently.

The club president and their designated officials have the ultimate authority to impose a Suspension or a Ban, or revoke such a Suspension or a Ban.

Chapter 2 Shuffling and Drawing

2.1 Errors during the deal

配牌時のトラブル

Minor incidents during the deal are corrected without penalty.

If an incident prevents the game from continuing normally, the tiles are shuffled again, and the Kyoku is restarted without penalty.

If the East player discards before all players have drawn their tiles, they will get a Warning. The deal must be completed before proceeding. However, if the South player has already drawn or called, the East player will receive a Chombo, and the Kyoku is restarted.

2.2 Too many or too few tiles (Taahai/Shouhai)

多牌・少牌

A player's hand must consist of 14 tiles during their turn, and 13 otherwise (excluding the extra tile from Kan).

A player with Taahai or Shouhai will receive a Dead Hand penalty.

2.3 Incorrect draws

自摸の対象牌の間違い

When a player draws from the wrong place in the wall, they must place it back promptly without penalty.

However, if the tile is already included in the player's hand, they will receive a Dead Hand penalty.

2.4 Wrongly revealing tiles

見せ牌

Wrongly revealed tiles are returned to their original positions.

If the incident occurs during the deal, then the tiles are shuffled again and re-dealt without penalty.

If 1 or 2 tiles are affected, the offending player gets a Warning.

If 3 or 4 tiles are affected, the offending player gets a Dead Hand.

If more than 4 tiles are affected, the offending player gets a Chombo.

The penalty may be increased if the wall is affected.

2.5 Playing out of turn

手番間違い

If a player plays outside of their turn, and the turn order is irrevocably disturbed, the offending player receives a Minor Chombo, and the Kyoku is restarted.

If a player draws or calls prematurely, but the turn order is otherwise not affected, the offending player receives a Warning.

Chapter 3 Speed of Play

3.1 Drawing too fast / calling too late

先自摸

If a player draws too fast for the other players to have time to call, they should be reminded to adjust their speed. The draw takes priority and the call is voided. Repeated offenses can lead to penalties.

3.2 Calling too fast / calling too late

先吃/遅碰・遅大明槓

If a player calls too fast, the other players can still call for Ron as it takes priority.

If there is no call for Ron, then the first call takes precedence, and the other calls are voided.

In the case of simultaneous calls, the following precedence is used: Tsumo > Ron > Pon/Kan > Chii. As a reminder, the Atamahane rule is in place in case of multiple Ron declarations.

3.3 Playing too slow

過度な長考

Each player should take an appropriate amount of time relative to the table when they take their turns. Taking excessively long turns can be unfair to other players and may be considered delaying a game.

Chapter 4 Calls and Declarations

4.1 Empty Call and changing a call

空行為

An Empty Call is the action of making a call or declaration and then canceling it, either because the player changed their mind or is unable to make the called action.

A player is not allowed to change their calls, even with a quick correction. They will get a Warning and must complete the original call, or be penalized for an empty call.

Empty calls for Chii/Pon/Kan/Riichi result in a Dead Hand.

Empty calls for Ron/Tsumo result in a Chombo.

4.2 Confusing call and silent call

発声間違い・無発声行為

Players must use only valid terms when making a call. These terms are:

- To call for a sequence: “chii”.
- To call for a triplet: “pon”.
- To call for or declare a quad: “kan”.
- To declare Riichi: “riichi”/“reach”.
- To declare win by calling a tile: “ron”.
- To declare win by self-draw: “tsumo”.

If a player is not speaking clearly, they must make it clear what they intend to do by showing the correct tiles. The call is valid, and the player will get a Warning.

Silent calls are not allowed. The offending player will get a Warning, and if the game state is affected due to silent calls, the player will receive additional penalties.

4.3 Calling with a Dead Hand

和了放棄状態の者による副露もしくは立直の発声

A player with a Dead Hand is not allowed to make any call, or they will receive a Minor Chombo. The call is voided, and the game may continue.

A player declaring Ron or Tsumo with a Dead Hand will get a Chombo.

Chapter 5 Making Groups

5.1 Invalid group

晒し間違い

A player who, after making a call, reveals a group that is neither a sequence, a triplet, nor a quad, or who declares a false closed Kan, will receive a Dead Hand penalty. If the player discards afterward, they receive a Chombo instead.

If a player reveals tiles that are contrary to their call, they must reveal the correct tiles consistent with their call, and they will receive a Warning. If they are unable to, the call is considered an Empty Call. (§4.1)

5.2 Late reveal

副露時、開示前の打牌

Players are expected to reveal part of the hand that is relevant to their call *prior* to discarding. Failure to do so results in a Minor Chombo, and the game may continue.

5.3 Swap calling (Kui-kae)

喰い替え

Kui-kae is not allowed. Kui-kae is the act of discarding a tile that could have completed that call. Specifically, when a player calls Chii or Pon, they may not discard the same tile that they called on, or tiles that can complete the sequence they called on (in the case of Chii).

A player who commits Kui-kae receives a Dead Hand.

5.4 Placement of called tiles

指示牌間違い

The tile called to make a group must be correctly placed to indicate which player discarded it. It is the responsibility of all players at the table to correct any misplaced tiles.

Chapter 6 Riichi

6.1 Riichi declaration

立直の手順

A Riichi declaration consists of the following steps, in order:

1. Say “riichi” or “reach”,
2. Pick up and discard a tile sideways, and
3. Place a 1,000-point stick deposit at the designated location.

A Riichi declaration is established if the declaration tile is not won by Ron and either:

- a) all three steps above are completed; or
- b) one of the three steps is missing, provided that the player’s intent to declare Riichi is clear from the other two steps.

If one step is missing, the Riichi declaration remains valid, and the player receives a Warning. The missing step must be corrected immediately when possible.

If the sideways discard is missing, the Riichi still stands only if the Riichi declaration tile can be identified without reasonable doubt. If more than one tile could be the Riichi declaration tile, the earliest possible tile is treated as the Riichi declaration tile for all purposes.

If two or more of the three steps are missing, the Riichi declaration is invalid and is treated as an Empty Call. (§4.1) A Riichi declaration cannot be retracted once the declaration tile has been placed in the discard area.

When a tile is discarded sideways by accident, the player must correct it immediately.

6.2 Noten Riichi

不聴立直

A player declaring Riichi with a noten hand will receive a Chombo. However, this is determined only if the player declares Ron or Tsumo, or if the game ends in an exhaustive draw (Ryuukyoku).

The noten Riichi penalty does not apply if the hand is noten solely because of a Dead Hand foul committed after the Riichi declaration, and the player can demonstrate that the hand was in tenpai at the time Riichi was declared.

6.3 Riichi with an open hand

門前清でない立直

A player declaring Riichi with an open hand is penalized with a Dead Hand. The Riichi declaration is invalid, and no Riichi deposit should be paid.

6.4 Calling during Riichi

立直後の副露

A player making Chii/Pon/Kan calls after they have declared Riichi is penalized with a Dead Hand. The call is voided.

The only exception is when a closed Kan is called, provided that:

- The fourth tile used to complete the Kan is drawn *after* the Riichi declaration.
- The interpretation of the hand does not change after the Kan.
 - i.e., the original tiles that Kan was called on can only be interpreted as a triplet.
 - As a result, the waiting shape cannot be changed after the Kan.

6.5 Discarding from hand during Riichi

立直後の手出し

A player discarding a tile from their hand after declaring Riichi will get a Dead Hand. In the case of Ryuukyoku, the offending player is assessed with a Chombo for noten Riichi. (§6.2)

6.6 Invalid closed quad

立直後に正当ではない槓

A player declaring an invalid closed Kan (ref. §6.4) after declaring Riichi is penalized with a Chombo. This is determined only if the player declares Ron or Tsumo, or in the case of Ryuukyoku.

Chapter 7 End of a Kyoku

7.1 Mixing the winning tile into the hand after Tsumo

自摸牌を手牌に入れてからのツモ発声

When the winning tile cannot be reliably determined after a player calls Tsumo, the player gets a Minor Chombo, but the game may continue. In this case, any ambiguous yaku and fu cannot be scored.

If no valid yaku can be scored in this circumstance, the Tsumo declaration is considered an Empty Call, and the player will get a Chombo. (§4.1)

7.2 Playing after the end of the Kyoku

和了・流局成立後の行為

A player who draws or calls after a winning declaration or after Ryuukyoku will receive a Warning.

However, if the player mixes the drawn tile into their hand, they will get a Dead Hand.

Any calls after the end of the Kyoku are void.

7.3 Premature tenpai/noten declaration

聴牌・不聴の先行宣言

A player declaring tenpai or noten before the end of the Kyoku, without revealing their tiles, will get a Dead Hand.

However, if their hand is revealed, or if this causes another player to declare tenpai and reveal their hand, the player will receive a Chombo instead.

7.4 Tenpai/noten declaration order

流局時の開示順番違い

After Ryuukyoku, players shall declare their tenpai status in the following order: East > South > West > North.

If a player declares tenpai or noten out of order, they will be given a Warning, and they may not change their declaration after it has been made. (§7.7)

7.5 Silent tenpai/noten declaration

It is not required to vocally declare tenpai or noten. However, players are required to turn their hands face up or down to indicate whether they have tenpai.

7.6 Incorrect tenpai declaration

不聴での聴牌宣言

A player declaring tenpai when their hand is in noten gets a Warning.

It is allowed to declare noten when the hand is in tenpai.

7.7 Changing tenpai/noten declaration

聴牌・不聴宣言の変更

It is not allowed to change a tenpai or noten declaration after it has been made. Doing so results in a Minor Chombo.

Chapter 8 Score Reporting

8.1 Incorrect score report

点数申告の過り

All players are responsible for accurately reporting their own score as well as making sure the table's total score adds up to 100,000 points.

If a discrepancy is discovered, the player must report it immediately to a judge.

Failure to provide accurate scores can result in penalties. Intentionally misreporting scores can be seen as cheating at the judge's discretion. (§9.4)

If the total score does not add up correctly, or if a score is reported incorrectly, and the actual scores cannot be recovered, the scores will be entered as-is, and all four players at the table will receive a 2P penalty.

Chapter 9 Obstruction and Cheating

9.1 Obstruction

妨害行為

Any act of obstruction will be penalized depending on the severity of the offense. This includes any action preventing or hindering the smooth progress of the game. This is not limited to time during play; a player can be penalized for their behavior during the break.

Repeated or serious obstructive behavior can result in escalated penalties or Suspensions.

Examples of obstruction:

- Discarding in a way that not every player can see the tile clearly at the same time.
- Placing tiles face down.
- Using incorrect terminology after being asked to correct it.
- Revealing other players' hands or the wall after the end of the Kyoku.
- Putting foreign objects on the table.
- Chatting (table talk).
- Making loud sounds.
- Repeatedly tapping on the table.
- Repeatedly tapping or fidgeting with the tiles.
- Stalling for time.
- Refusal to proceed with the game or adhere to instructions from the judge.
- Repeatedly asking for score recounts without a good reason.
- Unsportsmanlike behavior, such as taunting other players.

Examples of obstruction with suspicion of cheating:

- Touching other players' point sticks.
- Touching the wall outside of the player's turn or during scoring.
- Hiding the tiles during play or while scoring.
- Resting your hand in the middle of the table.
- Speaking a language other than English at the table.
- Commenting on the game as a spectator or speaking to a player as a spectator.
- Failure to stop playing when a player raises an issue, or resuming play before the issue is resolved.

9.2 Foreign objects

持ち込み禁止物

Foreign objects, including phones, smartwatches, smart glasses, notebooks, tablets, or anything that can hide the tiles are forbidden.

Yaku lists, scoring tables, score sheets, and other materials may be consulted between Kyoku, but not during.

Players must ensure their mobile devices are turned off or muted when playing. During a game, it is not allowed to use any electronic device, including headphones and smartwatches.

The only exception is when there is no official timekeeping. In this case, a player may be designated to keep track of time prior to the start of the game, and they may only look at their phone for time tracking purposes.

Circumventing this rule, such as using smart glasses, is considered cheating. (§9.4)

9.3 Passing information

情報伝達

Communication at the table is expected to be limited to mahjong actions like calls, declarations, and resolving incidents.

It is encouraged to correct a player who is about to commit a foul, so they can correct their actions in time. It is encouraged to point out when a player has a Dead Hand.

Scoring and payment errors must be pointed out and corrected as soon as they are discovered.

Revealing information meant to be kept secret is penalized at the judge's discretion. It does not matter whether the disclosed information is accurate or not.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Safe and dangerous tiles.
- Players' strategy.
- Yaku aimed for.
- Tenpai/noten status of a hand.
- Furiten status.
- Tiles in a hand.
- Whether the hand is "good" or "bad".

9.4 Cheating

不正行為

A player caught cheating will be banned immediately.

Intentionally committing a foul, as well as tricking a player to commit a foul, is cheating.

If a player performs an unnatural action, the other players should call a judge, as it may be a distraction intended to conceal sleight of hand.

Examples of obstruction with a high suspicion of cheating:

- Moving a tile away from or under the table.
- Switching identical tiles among the discards.
- Using any communication or computing device not sanctioned by the club.
- Giving false information about the rules.
- Speaking to spectators.

Chapter 10 Leaves and Abandonment

10.1 Temporarily leaving during hanchan

局中の中座の要求

In general, it is not allowed to take breaks during a hanchan. If a player needs to leave the table for any reason, they are required to call a judge.

A quick restroom break may be allowed between Kyoku, after informing the other players.

Otherwise, leaving the table during a hanchan can lead to penalties, at the judge's discretion.

10.2 Abandoning a hanchan

対局放棄

A player who leaves the table and abandons the game during a hanchan will not receive any points and will be given a Chombo penalty. The game may continue with a substitute player.

At the judge's discretion, a player who intentionally abandons a hanchan without good reason may receive a Suspension or a Ban for obstructing the game. (§9.1)

Chapter 11 Miscellaneous

11.1 Accommodation

If a player has a disability or other condition that prevents them from following the rules, they should inform a judge or other designated official before the hanchan starts. The club will do its best to make any reasonable adjustments needed to allow smooth and fair play.

11.2 No implied completeness

The rules set forth in this document are not exhaustive and should not be construed as an exhaustive list of all applicable rules.

11.3 Changes and modifications

The club reserves the right to add, remove, suspend, change, and otherwise modify the rules in this document at its discretion. It is the responsibility of players to familiarize themselves with the most up-to-date rules. Occasionally, an announcement will accompany major rule changes, but this should be considered a courtesy.

11.4 No circumvention of rules

Players are expected to follow the rules as they would be interpreted by an average, well-informed mahjong player.

It is encouraged to contact a judge or a club official regarding clarifications, questions, or concerns about a rule.

It is not allowed to circumvent a rule by misinterpreting its intended effects. It is not allowed to make use of loopholes in the rules. Violators may be penalized at the judge's discretion.

11.5 Judge's final authority

The judges and other officials designated by the club president have final authority over rulings and interpretations of the rules.

Once a ruling has been made and not contested at that time (§1.2), it is considered final. Finalized rulings cannot be challenged or overturned.

11.6 Contact

For any questions, concerns, or comments, or to report misconduct, please contact competitive@azriichi.org.

Glossary

The Japanese column is not intended as a translation into Japanese, but rather as a list of corresponding concepts used in established Japanese professional scenes.

Concept	Japanese	Definition
Atamahane	頭ハネ	A rule that allows only one winner per hand. When two or more Ron declarations are made on the same tile, the player closest in turn order to the discarder wins. Also known as “head bump” colloquially.
Ban	N/A	See §1.4.
Chii	吃/チー	The act of taking a discarded tile from one’s Kamicha to complete a sequence.
Chombo	錯和/チヨンボ	See §1.4.
Empty Call	空行為	See §4.1.
Honba	本場	Identical to the definition of “continuance counter” in the WRC rules.
Kamicha	上家	The player before one, or to one’s left.
Kan	槓/カン	The act of having four of the same tiles to complete a quad. This includes Closed Kan, Open Kan, and Added Kan.
Kui-kae	喰い替え	See §5.3.
Kyoku	局	Identical to the definition of “hand” (gameplay division) in the WRC rules. Colloquially called “round”.
Minor Chombo (continue)	小錯和 (続行)	See §1.4.
Minor Chombo (Dead Hand)	小錯和 (和了放棄)	See §1.4. Used interchangeably with Dead Hand in this document.
Minor Chombo (Kyoku restart)	小錯和 (局の終了)	See §1.4.
Pon	碰/ポン	The act of taking a discarded tile from one’s opponent to complete a triplet.
Riichi	立直/リーチ	The act of declaring “riichi”, as defined in §6.1.
Ron	ロン	The act of declaring a win by using an opponent’s discard.
Ryuukyoku	流局	A situation where a win does not occur when the last tile in the live wall is discarded. Known as “exhaustive draw” or “terminal draw” colloquially.

Season Point	N/A	Also known as SP. It is a tournament-like score that tracks a player's performance in a season at AZRM.
Shouhai	少牌	The state of a hand where it has less than 14 tiles right after drawing, or 13 tiles otherwise.
Strike	N/A	See §1.4.
Suspension	N/A	See §1.4.
Taahai	多牌	The state of a hand where it has more than 14 tiles right after drawing, or 13 tiles otherwise.
Tsumo	ツモ	The act of declaring a win by self-drawing a required tile.
Warning	注意	See §1.4.

Revision History

Revision	Date	Changes
0.4	April 20, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added a contact email.• Thorough proofreading done.• Applied a more consistent formatting.
0.3	April 16, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarifications on accommodation.• Minor wording changes.
0.2	April 15, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added a Glossary and a Revision History.• Added Japanese subtitles to English subsections.• Made terminology more consistent throughout the document.• Revised some penalties to be in line with WRC rules.• Grammar fixes.
0.1	April 13, 2026	Initial release.