

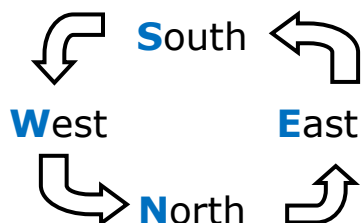
# Balsall Common U3A Mahjong Rules

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## A Mahjong set contains 144 tiles:

Suits:	Bamboo, Characters and Circles	(36 x 3 = 108)
Honours:	Winds (East, South, West and North)	(4 x 4 = 16)
	Dragons (White, Green and Red)	(4 x 3 = 12)
Flowers:	Red for round and Blue for seat	(4 x 2 = 8)

## Seat Positions:



“Eat Soup With Noodles”

## Choose First Dealer:

Each player throws one dice and the player with the highest number becomes East (first dealer). If more than one player throws the same highest number, those players throw again until only one player has the highest number. The First Dealer shall be given the dice and the Round compass.

## Hands, Rounds and Matches

A Match consists of four Rounds of which each Round represents a “prevailing wind” starting with East. In each Round at least four Hands are played with each player in turn taking the position of Dealer. In the first Hand, the First Dealer is selected as described above. In the second Hand, the Dealer (East) position is shifted counter-clockwise. The players don’t physically move their chairs, but instead the dice are passed to the new Dealer (East). The Round compass remains with the First Dealer.

In the event a player in the Dealer (East) position wins the Hand (aka Mahjong) or if there is no winner (a draw or “goulash hand”) an extra Hand is played with the Dealer repeating as East and the other players remaining in the same wind position as the previous Hand.

The East (1<sup>st</sup>) Round is completed when all four players have been Dealer (East). The Round compass should be changed to reflect South and the South (2<sup>nd</sup>) Round begins. The next Round is West (3<sup>rd</sup>) Round, and finally North (4<sup>th</sup>) Round completes the match.

After completion of a Match, the “East Seat” selection process should take place all over again with the dice tossed before the new Match begins. Good Mahjong players attribute significance to position and direction of their seat!

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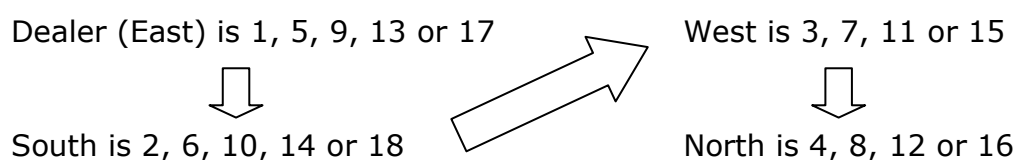
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## Building the Wall

All the tiles are laid face down on the table and shuffled around. Each player takes 36 tiles and builds a wall of 2 tiles high by 18 tiles long in front of them. Players then push their wall forward to form a square (with the other three players' walls). It is considered bad luck to have any breaks in the wall — keep the tiles connected even during the game and there will be extra luck to go round.

## Breaking the Wall

To begin, the Dealer (East) throws the dice and sums up the total. Counting counter-clockwise (East, South, West, North) to determine whose wall is to be broken. This applies to three or four players.



When three dice are thrown, the maximum number is 18.

The numbers above show which wall is to be broken depending upon the number determined by the throwing of the dice.

Using the same total on the dice, the player whose wall is broken then counts the stacks of tiles from right to left (of their section of the wall) to determine where to break the wall, placing the last stack of two tiles on top of the wall to the right and this becomes the Flower wall.

The Dealer takes four tiles immediately to the left of the break (clockwise) and players in counter-clockwise order take blocks of four tiles until all players have 12 tiles. The Dealer takes two more tiles, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tiles from the top of the wall to make a 14-tile hand. The other three players in turn take one last tile each to make a 13-tile hand.

Each player now sets aside any Red or Blue Flower tiles they may have drawn. These must be replaced with tile(s) from the Flower wall, starting with the Dealer, then in counter-clockwise order of players. If any player draws another Flower tile, this is replaced in the same manner.

## The Game Begins

The Dealer begins the game by discarding one of their 14 tiles.

## To Pass or Not to Pass the Dice

**If the Dealer wins (Mahjongs)** — Dealer keeps the dice and toss again. No wind positions change from the previous hand.

**If another Player wins** — Dealer passes the dice to the player on their right who now becomes the Dealer (East) and tosses the dice. Other Players accordingly become South, West and North.

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**No winner** — no wind positions change from the previous hand. Dealer keeps the dice and tosses again for an extra game of “goulash/Chop Suey hand”, see explanations on page 8.

## Play with 13 tiles and win with 14 tiles

During play, each player should always maintain 13 tiles (meaning in each turn a tile must be picked up and one discarded). Not included in the count of 13 tiles are Flowers (which are always immediately set to the side) and the fourth tile that makes a Kong. If a player declares to have more or fewer than 13 tiles, the player is allowed to rectify during their next turn by either making up the number with tiles from the tile wall or discarding surplus tiles. (\*\* In more serious games in Hong Kong, players who do not have the right number of tiles must continue to play and cannot Mahjong!)

A winning hand consists of 14 tiles, 4 sets of Chi, Pong or Kong and a pair. A pair is two identical tiles, which are an essential part of most legal winning hands; exceptions: Double Knitting, Triple Knitting and Little Snake hands do not require a pair. Some other hands do not require Chi, Pong or Kong, see special concealed hands on page 7.

The 14<sup>th</sup> tile is drawn either from the wall (Self-drawn Mahjong) or from a discard (Mahjong by discard). If more than one player needs the same [discarded] tile to Mahjong, the player sitting closest to the person who discarded it, in counter-clockwise direction (E-S-W-N) claims the winning tile.

## Chi, Pong & Kong — Conceal or Expose

For every hand, the basic goal is to be the first player to get a Mahjong hand composed of four sets and a pair, or other combinations described on pages 5, 6 and 7. Each set can be any of Chi, Pong or Kong and can be either concealed or exposed.

**Concealed** sets are made of tiles from your initial hand and tiles you draw from the wall and are not shown to other players until you Mahjong.

**Exposed** sets are formed by claiming a discard from other players and are shown immediately when formed.

**Chi** is a set of three tiles of the same suit in numerical sequence. A player may use a discard to complete a Chi only if the discard comes from the player on their left. If someone else needs the tile to Mahjong (to win) or to complete a Pong or Kong, they take priority over any Chi.

**Pong** is a set of 3 identical tiles (identical is same number in same suit or same honour tile). A Pong may be completed through draw from the wall or pick up a discard from any player. Self-drawn Pongs need not be revealed but if a player uses a discard, they must reveal the Pong immediately.

**Kong** is a set of 4 identical tiles. A Kong may be completed through self-draw or a discard from any player; however, a discard from another player

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cannot be added to an exposed pong. When a Kong is formed, the player must draw an extra tile from the flower wall and then discard a tile as usual to complete their turn. There are three ways to complete a Kong and receive chips from other players:

1. **Hidden Kong**, self-draw fourth tile to a concealed Pong. Lay the Kong face-down on table. Each other player pays three chips.
2. **Kong by discard** — the fourth discarded tile is added to a player's concealed Pong. The exposed Kong must be revealed immediately. Each pays two chips.
3. **Kong to an exposed Pong** — self-draw fourth tile from wall and added to an exposed Pong. Each pays one chip.

**Multiple Kongs** — A player is permitted to make multiple Kongs in a single turn. Must be sure to take a replacement tile from the Flower wall for each Kong formed and to collect corresponding chips as per above.

**Kong to Mahjong** — If the Kong replacement tile (from the flower wall) results in a winning Mahjong hand, the player does not collect Kong chips as above, but add two points to winning score (one for Kong to Mahjong and one for self-draw).

### Different Styles of Mahjong Rules

In the world of Mahjong there are six main versions of Mahjong Rules designed for competition, and mostly differ with regard to what types of hands form winning hands and how many points are scored. The six versions are:

- Competition Rules (Chinese Official)
- Hong Kong Mahjong
- American Style Mahjong
- Japanese Modern Mahjong
- European Classical Mahjong
- World Series of Mahjong

These rules provide for over 100 different ways to form a legal Mahjong hand. Other than competition play, most games are played by rules set by the "House" or just agreed to by the players themselves.

The Balsall Common U3A Mahjong Rules are based upon the Hong Kong Gateway Ladies Mahjong Rules. The Gateway Ladies play a game most consistent with Hong Kong Mahjong Rules.

Our House Rules have added a few scoring hands that are derived from British Rules (non-competition), namely the Knitting and Snake hands. These special hands are not recognised in any of the six competition versions but they are fun additions. The Gateway Ladies Mahjong scoring system is also much simpler than the competition rules.

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## Points to Mahjong:

Minimum three points needed to Mahjong.






(A three person game can be increased to five points minimum, if agreed by all.)

In the tables of winning hands below '+' means add one extra point to the winning hand for each of the following:

Pong/Kong of Dragons	Pong/Kong of Wind of round	Pong/Kong of Wind of your seat
Win on last tile of the wall	Win on last discard	Win on replacement tile from the flower wall
Self-draw to Mahjong (everyone pays, see *)	Concealed hand (if not in following list of concealed hands, page 7)	No Flowers
All 4 Red Flowers (Bouquet)	All 4 Blue Flowers (Bouquet)	Flower for Round (Red)
		Flower for Seat (Blue)

\* when a Mahjong hand is achieved by picking up a discarded tile, only the player who discarded the tile has to pay the winner; a chop suey hand is different from this, see page 8.

## Basic Mahjong Hands

<b>Chicken</b>	<b>0+</b>	Mixed Chi and Pong of different suits and a pair.
		
<b>Sequence</b>	<b>1+</b>	Four sets of Chi of mixed suits and a pair of any suit or Honours.
		
<b>All Pongs</b>	<b>3+</b>	Four sets of Pongs/Kongs or Honours and a pair.
		
<b>Semi-pure hand with Honours</b>	<b>3+</b>	<b>One suit</b> (Chi, Pong/Kong or pair) with Honour tiles (Pong/Kong or pair).
		
<b>Pure</b>	<b>6+</b>	<b>One suit</b> mix of Chi, Pong/Kong including the pair. NO Honours.
		

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## Special Mahjong Hands

<b>3 Big Dragons</b>	<b>6+</b>	Pongs/Kongs of all three dragons, any Chi, Pong or Kong of any suit and any pair.
		
<b>Little Winds</b>	<b>8+</b>	Pongs/Kongs of three Winds AND a pair of the fourth Wind, and a Pong or Chi of any suit.
		
<b>Big 4 Winds</b>	<b>10+</b>	Pongs/Kongs of each Wind and any pair.
		
<b>All Honours</b>	<b>10+</b>	All Honours Pongs/Kongs and a pair.
		
<b>All Terminal</b>	<b>10+</b>	Pongs/Kongs of 1's and 9's only and a pair of 1's or 9's.
		
<b>All Kongs</b>	<b>10+</b>	Four sets of Kong and any pair.
		
<b>Jade Dragon</b>	<b>10+</b>	Pongs/Kongs and a pair of <b>Bamboo</b> suit only, and Pong/Kong of the <b>Green</b> Dragon.
		
<b>Ruby Dragon</b>	<b>10+</b>	Pongs/Kongs and a pair of <b>Character</b> suit only, and Pong/Kong of the <b>Red</b> Dragon.
		
<b>Pearl Dragon</b>	<b>10+</b>	Pongs/Kongs and a pair of <b>Circles</b> suit only, and Pong/Kong of the <b>White</b> Dragon.
		



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## Special Concealed Mahjong Hands

### Revealed Only When You Mahjong

Pongs/Kongs of Honour tiles and concealed hand do not earn extra points to these special concealed hands. Cannot pick up discards except final tile.

<b>7 Pairs</b>	<b>6+</b>	Any seven pairs	
<b>Double Knitting</b>	<b>6+</b>	Using <b>two suits</b> only to make seven pairs. No Honours. Each pair must be both suits.	
<b>Triple Knitting</b>	<b>6+</b>	Using <b>three suits</b> to make four groups plus a pair. No Honours. Each group of three must be the same number in all three suits, and the pair must be the same number in any two suits.	
<b>9 Gates (Gates of Heaven)</b>	<b>10+</b>	Using <b>one suit</b> . Three 1's, a sequence of 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 and three 9's and any one other match tile from the same suit. Reveal the Mahjong hand as shown with match tile to one end.	
<b>13 Orphans</b>	<b>10+</b>	1 & 9 of <b>each suit</b> , one of each Honours. The match tile can be a 1 or 9 or Honour. Reveal the Mahjong hand as shown with match tile to one end.	
<b>Hidden Treasure</b>	<b>10+</b>	Any four Pongs, no Kongs, and any pair. Win by self-draw. <b>All 14 tiles must be from wall only.</b>	
<b>Little Snake</b>	<b>10+</b>	1 to 9 of <b>one suit</b> plus five different Honours.	
<b>Great Snake</b>	<b>10+</b>	1 to 9 of <b>one suit</b> , plus a Pong/Kong of an Honour, and a pair of Honour.	

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## Goulash/Chop Suey Hand

If all the tiles are drawn from the wall without anyone calling Mahjong, then the game is declared a draw. The game is re-started with the same player as East Wind, but then played in a slightly different way called "Goulash/Chop Suey".

Players contribute five chips each into "the pot" totalling 20 chips; winner takes the pot money only. The winning hand must be five or more points to win.

The building of the wall and the dealing are the same as the normal game and any flower tiles replaced from the flower wall, but then the players have to exchange a number of tiles before they start to play.

There are six tile exchanges, during which players try to improve their hands by keeping their best tiles and exchanging their least-wanted tiles.

1. **East** takes three least-wanted tiles face down and exchanges with **West** seat (the player directly across) while the players in the **North** and **South** likewise exchange three least-wanted tiles with each other.
2. **East** exchanges three least-wanted tiles face down with **South** seat (the player to their right) while the **West** and **North** exchange three tiles.
3. **East** exchanges three least-wanted tiles face down with **North** seat (the player to their left) while the **West** and **South** exchange three tiles.

You then repeat the above exchanges with one tile. So, when you have completed all six exchanges you're ready to play.

The game is played the same as a normal game except that it **requires at least five points to win**. Regardless of who wins the Goulash hand, the Dealer passes the dice to the player on their right for the next game.

In a three-person Goulash, when a player is required to exchange tiles with the missing player, they should instead exchange their tiles with tiles picked at random from the missing player's section of the wall (if it's still there). Be sure to keep the tiles concealed from other players' view.

On rare occasions, the Goulash game may end without a winner. In this case, the players can play another Goulash hand. No need to add any more chips to the pot.

## Have fun!

Our Mahjong sessions are opportunities not only to enjoy playing Mahjong but also for getting to know other group members. This is best done by sitting with different players each week. To help this along the co-ordinator may at times introduce a random method to determine who sits where and with whom.

