



# Mahjong 101

*American Mahjong Made Simple*

”From First Tile to First Win”



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— MAHJONG MASTERY —

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*May your tiles be favourable and your jokers plentiful.*

# A Letter to the New Player

*Welcome, and well met.*

You're holding this guide because someone invited you to a Mahjong table – or perhaps you heard the click of tiles from across a room and felt inexplicably drawn toward the sound. Either way, you've arrived at exactly the right place. This guide was written for you: the person who is curious, a little nervous, and ready to learn one of the most beautifully layered games ever invented.

American Mahjong is not complicated. It feels complicated at first – the tiles, the card, the Charleston, the jokers – but these are simply the vocabulary of a language you haven't learned yet. And like any language, once the words start making sense, you'll find yourself immersed in it without even thinking about the rules.

What makes this game special isn't just the strategy. It's the table. Mahjong has a way of turning strangers into friends and friends into something closer. There's a rhythm to it – the shuffling, the drawing, the passing, the calling – and when you're inside that rhythm with three other people, something lovely happens. Time slows down. Conversation flows. You forget to check your phone. You're just *there*, playing, laughing, thinking.

This guide will walk you through every part of the game, from setting up the wall to calling "Mahjong!" with your winning hand laid flat on the table. We won't rush you. We won't assume you already know anything. And we'll revisit the tricky parts – jokers, the NMJL card, defensive play – until they feel as natural as sorting your tiles after the Charleston.

By the end of these pages, you won't just understand Mahjong. You'll be ready to sit at any table with confidence, play your first full game, and – with a little luck and a lot of good sense – win it.

Let's begin.

*With warmth,*

***Mahjong Mastery***



# Welcome to American Mahjong

*“Every expert was once a beginner who refused to give up.”*

American Mahjong is a tile-based game for four players that combines luck, strategy, social intelligence, and a healthy dash of joy. It descended from Chinese Mahjong — a game with centuries of history — and was adapted for American audiences in the early twentieth century. Over the decades it evolved its own distinct rules, its own card system, and its own devoted culture, particularly among women who have carried the game forward with remarkable passion and loyalty.

This guide is for anyone who is new to the game — whether you've never touched a Mahjong tile in your life, or you've watched a game at a family gathering and thought *I want to do that*. It's for the friend who got dragged along to a game night and ended up fascinated. It's for the person whose mother or grandmother played and who wants to carry that tradition forward. It's for anyone who loves a good puzzle.

By the time you finish reading, you'll know how to set up the game, participate in the Charleston, select a hand to chase, draw and discard strategically, use your jokers wisely, defend against other players' winning attempts, and — the best part — lay your tiles down flat and declare "Mahjong!" with a grin on your face.

## A NOTE ON AMERICAN MAHJONG

American Mahjong is different from Chinese, Japanese, and other international variants. The primary differences are the use of jokers, the annual NMJL card with pre-set winning hands, and the Charleston tile-passing ritual before play begins. If you've seen other versions of the game, set that knowledge aside for now — American Mahjong has its own beautiful logic.

What makes Mahjong so enduring is the balance it strikes between luck and skill. On any given day, the tiles you draw could be remarkable or terrible. But skill — knowing which hand to chase, when to expose tiles, how to read what other players are doing — has a compounding effect over dozens of games. The best players win more often not because they get better tiles, but because they make better decisions with the tiles they receive.

American Mahjong is also, at its heart, a social game. It is played at kitchen tables and in community centers, at retirement villages and college dorm rooms, at elegant home games and noisy tournament halls. The tiles create a shared focus, and around that focus something wonderful grows: connection. People talk, laugh, share advice, tease each other gently, and build friendships that last long after the tiles are back in their case.



*Mahjong is not just a game. It's the sound of tiles clicking. It's the joy of the perfect discard landing in your favor. It's four people sharing an afternoon.*

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You are entering a tradition. Welcome to it.

## Your Mahjong Set: What You're Working With

*"Know your tools. The craftsman who understands their materials builds with confidence."*

Before you play a single turn, you need to become familiar with what's in the box. A standard American Mahjong set is a beautiful, tactile collection of tiles and accessories that may look overwhelming at first — but within a few minutes of handling them, the system becomes clear and intuitive.

### The Tiles: Three Suits

The heart of the game is the tiles, and the tiles are organized into suits. American Mahjong uses three numbered suits, each running from 1 through 9, giving you 9 different tiles per suit with 4 copies of each tile — 36 tiles per suit, 108 suit tiles total.



**Cracks (Characters/Craks):** These tiles show Chinese characters with a number. The "crack" nickname comes from the stylized appearance of some of the character tiles. They are typically identified by the large Chinese numeral in the center.

**Bams (Bamboo):** These tiles show bamboo stalks in varying quantities. The 1 Bam traditionally depicts a sparrow or bird rather than a single bamboo stalk — one of Mahjong's delightful quirks.

**Dots (Circles):** These tiles show colored circles — simple, clean, and easy to read at a glance.

### Honors: Winds and Dragons

Beyond the three suits, a set includes **honor tiles**. There are four Wind tiles — East, South, West, and North — with four copies of each (16 tiles). There are three Dragon tiles — Red (Chun), Green (Hatsu), and White (Haku) — with four copies each (12 tiles). In American Mahjong, these appear frequently on the NMJL card and are simply referred to by their name or initials: N, S, E, W, R (Red), G (Green), or White (sometimes called Soap).

### Flowers and Jokers

A standard American set includes **8 Flower tiles** (decorative, used in some hands) and **8 Joker tiles**. The jokers are among the most powerful tiles in the game — capable of substituting for any tile in groups of three or more. We'll cover joker strategy in detail in Chapter 8. For now, know that your 8 jokers are your secret weapons.

#### TIP: WHAT TO BUY

A complete American Mahjong set typically comes with all the tiles, four racks for holding your tiles upright, two or three dice, and sometimes a wind indicator. You do *not* need a Charleston tray — a simple table surface works fine. Sets range from \$40 (basic) to \$200+ (luxury). For beginners, a mid-range set around \$60–\$80 is perfect.

## Racks and Accessories

Each player uses a rack — a long, narrow stand — to hold their tiles upright and hidden from other players. Tiles are placed face-inward on the rack so you can see them but your opponents cannot. The dice are used to determine the starting player and the point in the wall where dealing begins. Some groups use a small scoring tray or chips for payment; others simply use coins or keep a running score on paper.

The most important accessory you'll need beyond the set itself is the **NMJL card** — which we'll cover in the very next chapter.

## The NMJL Card: Your Roadmap to Winning

*"You don't need to memorize the map — you just need to know how to read it."*

If the tiles are the vocabulary of Mahjong, the NMJL card is the grammar. Published annually by the **National Mah Jongg League**, the card lists every legal winning hand for that year's play. You cannot win with a random collection of matching tiles — you must complete one of the specific hands on the card. This is what gives American Mahjong its unique structure and why experienced players spend the first weeks of a new card year studying and re-learning the hands.

Here's the reassuring truth: **you never need to memorize the card**. Every player at the table has their card open during play. Consulting it is not cheating — it's expected. The card is your constant companion, not a test you have to pass from memory.

### How to Read the Card

The NMJL card is organized into sections, and each section contains a family of related hands. Each hand is displayed as a sequence of tiles using letter abbreviations. Here's what those letters mean:

Symbol	Meaning
C	Crack (Character suit)
B	Bam (Bamboo suit)
D	Dot (Circle suit)
F	Flower tile
J	Joker
N, S, E, W	Wind tiles (North, South, East, West)
R, G	Dragon tiles (Red, Green; White is sometimes "Wh")
Numbers	The number on the tile within a suit (1–9)

A hand like **FF 111 222 333 B** means: two Flowers, three 1-Bams, three 2-Bams, three 3-Bams, and any Bam tile. The number in brackets or at the end of the line is the **point value** of the hand — typically 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, or higher for harder hands.

### Concealed vs. Exposed

Each hand on the card is marked as either **Concealed** (no exposures allowed — you must draw every tile yourself) or can be played with exposures. Concealed hands generally pay more because they're harder to achieve. We'll cover concealment strategy in Chapter 14.

#### HOW THE CARD CHANGES

The NMJL releases a new card every spring, typically in late March or April. The hands change each year, which means even experienced players spend time re-learning the card at the start of each season. This annual refresh keeps the game fresh and levels the playing field slightly – even veterans face new hands each year. Purchase the current card directly from the NMJL website for \$14 (or \$9 for the digital version).

#### CARD READING PRACTICE

Spend 10 minutes with a fresh card just reading through the hands, not memorizing them – just getting familiar with the patterns. Notice which sections involve only one suit (single-suit hands), which mix suits, which require winds or dragons. After a few sessions, you'll start to recognize hand families instinctively.

As a beginner, focus on hands that look familiar – ones with clear numerical runs (1-2-3, 2-4-6, etc.) or lots of the same tile in groups. These are often the most achievable early in your Mahjong career. The exotic hands will become accessible as your eye for the card develops.

## Setting Up the Game

*"A well-built wall is the foundation of a fair game."*

American Mahjong is played by exactly four players seated around a square table, one player on each side. The physical setup is part of the ritual — and once you've done it a few times, it takes only a few minutes. New players are often surprised by how enjoyable the setup itself is: the shuffle of tiles, the building of the wall, the excitement of drawing your starting hand.

### The Wall

All 152 tiles are turned face-down and mixed thoroughly — this is called "washing" the tiles, and it produces the satisfying clicking sound that is one of Mahjong's most distinctive features. Each player then takes tiles from the pool to build their section of the wall. Each side of the wall is 18 tiles wide and 2 tiles high, creating a rectangular structure in the center of the table. When all four sides are built, the wall forms a complete square:  $18 \text{ tiles} \times 4 \text{ sides} \times 2 \text{ rows} = 144 \text{ tiles}$  in the wall, with 8 remaining aside for flowers/special use.

#### WALL BUILDING VARIATION

Some groups build the wall by having each player push exactly 18 stacks of 2 tiles into a neat row in front of them. Others simply make an approximate row. Either way works — the goal is a communal pool that all four players draw from in turn.

### Who Goes First

To determine the first dealer (East), each player rolls the dice. The highest roll wins. The winning player is designated "East" for this game, and play proceeds counter-clockwise (in American Mahjong, turns go right, not left as in some Chinese variants). East sits as the "dealer" and has a slight advantage in that they begin with one extra tile (14 instead of 13) before the Charleston.

### Dealing

The dealer rolls the dice again to determine where in the wall dealing begins. Count that many stacks from the right end of the dealer's wall to find the starting point. Then deal tiles in the pattern **3-3-3-3-2**: go around the table three times giving each player 3 tiles per pass (12 total), then give each player 2 more tiles on the final pass. East receives 14 tiles; everyone else receives 13.

### The Charleston Begins

Once all tiles are dealt, players arrange their tiles on their racks, hidden from opponents. Take a moment to look at what you have — but don't agonize yet. The Charleston is about to happen, and it will dramatically change your hand. We'll cover the Charleston fully in the next chapter.

 **BEGINNER TIP: TAKE YOUR TIME**

When you first sit down to set up a game, it may feel chaotic. Tiles go everywhere, the wall looks wobbly, and you're not sure who goes first. That's completely normal. Within three or four games, setup becomes second nature. Don't rush — enjoy the ritual.

# The Charleston: Passing Tiles with Purpose

*“The Charleston is where hands are made and broken – long before a single tile is drawn.”*

The Charleston is the feature that most distinguishes American Mahjong from other variants, and it is, by a wide margin, the most misunderstood part of the game for new players. Once you understand it – truly understand it, including the strategic layer beneath the mechanics – the game opens up in a completely new way.

The Charleston is a ritual of tile-passing that occurs *before play begins*. After everyone has their starting tiles and has had a moment to look at them, the passing begins. The purpose is simple: to move unwanted tiles away from you and – with luck and strategy – receive tiles that help your hand.

## The First Charleston

The First Charleston proceeds in three mandatory passes. In each pass, every player simultaneously passes exactly three tiles to a neighbor.

**Pass 1 – Right:** Every player passes 3 tiles to the player on their right.

**Pass 2 – Across:** Every player passes 3 tiles to the player directly opposite.

**Pass 3 – Left:** Every player passes 3 tiles to the player on their left.

After each pass, you pick up the tiles you received before passing again. This is important – you must incorporate what you received before deciding what to send next.

## The Second Charleston (Optional)

After the First Charleston is complete, the player to the right of East may choose to initiate a Second Charleston. This is optional – if any player does not wish to continue passing, the Second Charleston does not happen. If it does proceed, the direction reverses:

**Pass 1 – Left:** Pass 3 tiles to the player on your left.

**Pass 2 – Across:** Pass 3 tiles to the player opposite.

**Pass 3 – Right:** Pass 3 tiles to the player on your right.

## The Courtesy Pass

After the Charleston (whether one or two rounds), players may optionally negotiate a **Courtesy Pass** – passing 1, 2, or 3 tiles to the player opposite them, with both players agreeing on how many tiles to exchange. This is done face-down; neither player sees what the other is sending before agreeing to the exchange. The courtesy pass is entirely voluntary.

#### WHAT TO PASS

Pass your least useful tiles — tiles that don't fit any hand you're considering, isolated tiles that have no companions, tiles from suits you're not pursuing. Never pass tiles you need! It sounds obvious, but in the confusion of a first Charleston, beginners sometimes accidentally pass tiles central to their best hand. Always look before you pass.

## The Strategy Layer

Here's what separates good Charleston players from great ones: they pay attention to what they *receive*, not just what they send. If you pass 3 Dots and receive 3 Cracks, the table is telling you something. If the player across from you keeps sending you wind tiles, they may be pursuing a wind-heavy hand. This information — gathered through the tiles that flow around the table — is the first layer of intelligence-gathering in Mahjong.

#### NEVER LOOK AT PASSES EARLY

You may not look at incoming tiles until your passing partner has released them. Peeking — even accidentally — is considered poor etiquette. Keep your incoming tiles face-down until the pass is complete.

# Reading Your Hand: The Art of Choosing

*“Every hand tells you something. The skilled player listens.”*

The Charleston is complete. You have 13 tiles on your rack (or 14 if you're East). Now comes the most intellectually engaging moment of the game: reading your hand against the NMJL card and choosing which hand to pursue. This decision — made in the first few minutes of each game — will shape everything that follows. Choose well, and the game flows. Choose poorly, and you'll spend the next hour fighting uphill.

## Start With What You Have

Before you look at the card, look at your tiles. Sort them by suit: all Cracks together, all Bams together, all Dots together, then honors. Now look for patterns. Do you have a cluster of tiles in one suit? Multiple pairs? A run of consecutive numbers? These clusters are the raw material of your winning hand.

### EXAMPLE

You have: 2-2-3-3-4 Bam, 5-5-5 Dot, 2-2 Crack, plus two random tiles. You have a strong foundation in Bams and Dots, and a pair in Cracks. Look for hands on the card that use Bams and Dots prominently, that include pairs, or that require groups of three identical tiles (called *pungs*).

## Understanding the Groupings

Winning hands are built from specific tile groupings. Knowing these terms will help you read the card:

**Pair:** Two identical tiles (e.g., two 3-Bams). Pairs cannot include jokers.

**Pung:** Three identical tiles (e.g., three 5-Dots). Jokers may substitute.

**Kong:** Four identical tiles. Jokers may substitute.

**Quint:** Five identical tiles (requires jokers). Jokers may substitute.

**Sextet:** Six identical tiles (rare). Jokers may substitute.

## Flexibility vs. Commitment

The key tension in hand selection is between **flexibility** and **commitment**. Early in the game — after the Charleston, before many tiles have been drawn — staying flexible is almost always the right move. Keep your best two or three possible hands in mind. Don't commit to one until you've drawn a few tiles and seen what the wall has to offer.

As the game progresses (roughly 10–12 tiles drawn per player), it becomes time to commit. Spread too thin and you'll still be chasing three different hands when someone else calls Mahjong. Pick your best fit and go all-in.

#### \* THE TWO-HAND RULE

After the Charleston, aim to identify exactly two candidate hands on the card that fit your tiles reasonably well. Hold both as options through the first several draws. When you've drawn 3–5 tiles and it's clear which hand is closer, drop the backup and commit fully. Two hands = flexibility. Three or more = confusion.

Remember: the NMJL card is your guide, not your prison. Not every tile grouping has a perfect match. Your job is to find the closest fit, then draw toward making it real.

# Drawing and Discarding: The Rhythm of Play

*"Every discard is a gift to the table. Choose yours wisely."*

After the Charleston and hand selection, the game enters its central rhythm: drawing and discarding. This is the heartbeat of Mahjong, and it continues until someone wins or the wall runs out. Once you settle into this rhythm — once the mechanics are automatic — you'll find that this is where strategy, observation, and intuition all come together beautifully.

## How a Turn Works

East begins by discarding one tile from her hand (she started with 14). She names the tile out loud as she discards it — "Five Bam!" or "East Wind!" — and places it face-up in the center of the table. This is crucial: **naming your discard is mandatory**, not optional. It allows other players to hear what's being thrown and decide whether to claim it.

After a discard, any player may claim that tile *if* it completes an exposure (a group of three or more tiles in their hand). If no one claims the discard, the next player in turn draws a tile from the wall and adds it to their hand. They then discard one tile — keeping their hand at 13 — and the rhythm continues.

## Drawing From the Wall

The wall is drawn from one end — the "live wall" — and tiles are taken from the top of each stack as you progress along the wall. When a player draws a tile, they look at it privately (on their rack) before deciding to keep or discard it. If the drawn tile is exactly what you need to complete your hand, you win — you've achieved a **self-draw Mahjong**, which pays a bonus over a discard win.

### THE WALL RUNS OUT

If all tiles in the wall are drawn and no one has won, the game ends in a **wall game** — no one pays, no one wins, and the tiles are reshuffled for a new game. Wall games are more common in highly competitive or defensive games. They're not a failure; they're just part of the game's natural variety.

## Pace of Play Etiquette

Mahjong has an expected pace. When it's your turn, make your decision within a reasonable time — typically 15–20 seconds. Deliberating for minutes on every discard is poor etiquette and slows the game to a crawl. It's fine to pause when a critical decision moment arises, but habitual slow play frustrates the table. When in doubt, discard the tile you've been holding longest without using.

### THE NAMING RULE

Say your discard clearly and loud enough for everyone to hear. "Three Crack" is better than a mumbled noise. This isn't just courtesy — it's the rule. If a discard isn't named and the next player has already drawn from the wall, the discard cannot be claimed. Name it every time, no exceptions.

The rhythm of drawing and discarding will become second nature quickly. By your second or third game, you'll barely notice the mechanics — your mind will be freed to focus on strategy, observation, and the delightful uncertainty of what the next tile might bring.

# Jokers: Your Most Powerful Tile

*"The joker is the wild card in every sense — master it, and the game becomes yours."*

Of all the unique features of American Mahjong, the joker is perhaps the most powerful and most misunderstood. Used correctly, jokers can complete impossible hands, accelerate your win, and give you flexibility that no other tile can match. Used incorrectly — or forgotten about entirely — they become deadweight on your rack. Let's get this right from the start.

## What a Joker Can Do

A joker may substitute for **any tile** in a group of three or more identical tiles. This means a joker can be part of a pung, kong, quint, or sextet — but **never in a pair**. Pairs must always be two genuine matching tiles. This is one of the most important rules in American Mahjong, and forgetting it is one of the most common beginner errors.

### ✦ JOKER EXAMPLES

**Valid:** 5-Dot, 5-Dot, Joker → this counts as a pung of 5-Dots.

**Valid:** N, N, N, Joker → this counts as a kong of North Wind tiles.

**Invalid:** 3-Crack, Joker → this does NOT count as a pair. Pairs require two real tiles.

## Joker Swapping

Here's where jokers get fascinating. If another player has made an **exposure** (tiles laid face-up on the table) that contains a joker, you may swap the joker out by placing the real tile it represents in the exposed set and taking the joker for yourself. This is called a **joker swap** and it's entirely legal — encouraged, even. The only rule is that you must have the genuine tile to swap in, and you can only perform the swap when it is your turn to discard.

Joker swapping is a critical skill. Those jokers in other players' exposed sets are not locked away — they're available to you if you hold the right tile. Experienced players are constantly scanning the table for swap opportunities.

## Joker Strategy

Should you expose tiles that contain jokers? Generally, **no** — at least not early in the game. An exposed joker is a joker that other players can potentially steal via swap. Held privately, your joker is completely safe. The exception is when you're so far along in your hand that getting that exposure on the table (and committing your hand) is worth the risk.

### ✦ THE GOLDEN JOKER RULE

Never use a joker in a pair. Ever. Say it out loud right now: "Jokers cannot be in pairs." Make this rule automatic. Players who know this rule don't need to think about it — it's reflexive. Players who forget it lose hands they shouldn't.

With eight jokers in the entire game and four players competing for them, jokers are a scarce and precious resource. Treat them accordingly. Every joker you hold is a tile no one else can use — and every joker you expose is a tile someone else might reclaim.

# Exposures: When to Show Your Hand

*"Showing your hand is a declaration. Make sure you're ready to commit."*

An exposure occurs when you claim a tile that another player has discarded, and in exchange, you lay a set of matching tiles face-up on the table for everyone to see. Exposures are powerful — they advance your hand quickly — but they come with real costs. Understanding when to expose, and when to keep your tiles hidden, is one of the most nuanced skills in American Mahjong.

## How to Make an Exposure

When a player discards a tile you need, you have a brief window to claim it. Speak up clearly: *"I'll take that for a pung of 5-Bam!"* (or whatever your set is). Then lay those tiles — including the claimed discard — face-up on your rack, visible to all players. You do **not** draw from the wall on this turn; instead, you discard one tile to return your hand to the proper count.

Important: you can only claim a discard if it completes a group of three or more on the table. You cannot pick up a discard simply because it fits into your concealed hand without forming an immediate exposure.

## When to Expose

Exposures make the most sense when: you are **deeply committed** to a specific hand on the card, the tile is genuinely rare and hard to draw from the wall, you already hold the other tiles you need for that set, and you have enough remaining tiles to close out the hand. Exposing a kong of 7-Cracks when you already have two 7-Cracks and a joker? That's efficient. Exposing a pung in round two when you still need 6 more tiles? That might be premature.

### WHEN NOT TO EXPOSE

Don't expose when: you're still weighing between multiple hands (an exposure locks you in), you're too early in the game and could change direction, the exposure reveals information that helps your opponents, or your remaining needed tiles are all very scarce on the table.

## What Exposures Tell Others

Every exposure you make is information. A kong of North Winds tells your opponents exactly which section of the card you're working from. A pung of 5-Bams narrows your hand considerably. Skilled defensive players will see your exposure and immediately stop discarding tiles that could complete your hand. The more you expose, the more they know, and the more carefully they'll discard around you.

✿ THE COMMITMENT RULE

Once you make an exposure, you are locked into any hand on the card that includes that exact set. You cannot change hands. Before you call for a tile, make absolutely sure you know which hand you're committing to — and that you have a realistic path to completing it.

# Defensive Play: Stop Donating Wins

*“The best offense is knowing when to stop attacking.”*

Mahjong is not just about winning — it's also about not *losing*. More precisely, it's about not being the player who throws the tile that hands someone else the victory. In Mahjong, the player who discards the winning tile pays a penalty, and paying someone else's win is one of the most preventable losses in the game. This is why defensive play — reading the table and protecting your discards — is as important as any offensive strategy.

## Reading the Table

Every exposure your opponents make is a window into their hand. When player across from you lays down a kong of 6-Dots and a pung of 8-Dots, you now know she's working on a Dot hand, probably in the 6-8 range or an even/odd pattern. Stop discarding 6-Dots and 8-Dots immediately, even if you don't need them. They're hot.

**Hot tiles** are tiles that are dangerous to discard because another player clearly needs them. They might be tiles that match an exposed set, tiles adjacent to an exposed run, or rare honor tiles that only appear in specific hands. As you read the table, develop a running mental list of tiles you shouldn't discard.

## Safe Tiles

A tile is **safe** when you're reasonably certain no one can win on it. Tiles that have been discarded several times already (and not claimed) are generally safe. Tiles that don't appear in any hand that would fit what you see exposed on the table are safe. Jokers are never discardable — you'd never throw a joker.

### ✿ THE LATE-GAME RULE

In the final third of the wall (roughly the last 20 tiles), defense should take priority over offense. If you have a choice between discarding a safe tile and an uncertain one, always choose the safe tile — even if the uncertain tile fits your hand better. Finishing second is better than paying the winner.

## When to Abandon Your Hand

Sometimes the right move is to stop trying to win and focus entirely on not losing. If two players have multiple exposures and the wall is running low, and your hand still needs 4+ tiles, it may be time to abandon your offensive strategy and shift to pure defense: discard only tiles that are clearly safe, draw tiles without committing, and wait for the wall to run out. A wall game — where no one wins — is infinitely better than paying another player's Mahjong.

#### THE DEFENSE MINDSET

Defense feels passive – but it's actually a form of aggressive play. When you successfully withhold the tile a desperate opponent needs, you've just defeated them. You didn't need to win to beat them. Good defenders save money across hundreds of games, even when they're not winning hands themselves.

# The FAST Framework: Choosing Hands You Can Finish

*“Strategy without a framework is just guessing with extra steps.”*

After years of watching new players struggle with the same recurring problems — chasing unachievable hands, committing too early, making defensive errors — we developed the FAST framework: a four-question checklist to apply when selecting your hand after the Charleston. FAST doesn't make the decision for you. It sharpens your instincts and gives you a reliable process to lean on when the tiles are confusing and your heart is pulling you in too many directions.

## F

### Fit

Do my current tiles actually fit this hand? How many tiles do I already have in place?

## A

### Accessibility

Can I realistically get the tiles I still need? Are they common tiles or rare ones?

## S

### Safety

If I pursue this hand and fail, how badly will I be exposed? Do I have safe tiles to discard?

## T

### Timing

How many tiles do I still need? Is there enough wall left to realistically draw them?

## Applying FAST at the Charleston

Right after the Charleston ends and before you draw your first tile, run through FAST for your top two candidate hands. The hand that scores best across all four questions is your choice. A hand that fits beautifully but requires rare tiles (low Accessibility) may be riskier than a slightly weaker fit with very common tiles (high Accessibility). A hand that needs 7 more tiles (poor Timing) should be abandoned in favor of one that needs only 4.

### FAST IN ACTION

**Hand A:** F = 8/10 (great fit), A = 6/10 (needs two 9-Craks, somewhat rare), S = 7/10, T = 5/10 (needs 5 more tiles). Score: reasonable but risky on Timing.

**Hand B:** F = 7/10 (decent fit), A = 9/10 (needs common Bam tiles), S = 8/10, T = 8/10 (needs only 3 tiles). Score: choose Hand B.

### ONE HAND. ONE COMMITMENT.

The FAST framework isn't just for hand selection — it's for generating the discipline to choose *one* hand and commit to it fully. The most common mistake in Mahjong is half-committing to three hands and winning none of them. FAST forces you to make the call.

As you gain experience, FAST becomes automatic – a rapid mental calculation you perform in seconds. Until then, use it deliberately. Write it on a card. Ask yourself the four questions every Charleston. It will change how you play.

# Calling Mahjong

*"Mahjong! – two syllables that change everything at the table."*

This is the moment you've been working toward. Your hand is complete. Your tiles line up perfectly with a hand on the NMJL card. Whether you drew the final tile from the wall yourself or a mercifully oblivious opponent just discarded exactly what you needed, you now have a winning hand. Here's how you handle it with grace, confidence, and correctness.

## Saying It Clearly

When you win – whether by drawing from the wall or claiming a discard – announce "**Mahjong!**" clearly and immediately. Don't whisper it, don't wait, don't hesitate. The call must happen before the next player picks up a tile from the wall or makes any play. If you miss the window, you may forfeit the win. Say it confidently: you've earned it.

## Laying Out Your Hand

After calling Mahjong, lay all your tiles face-up on the table. If you have exposures already on your rack, they remain in place. Your concealed tiles join them face-up. Point to the specific hand on the NMJL card that you've completed. The other three players are required to verify that your hand is correct and complete. This verification is not adversarial – it's collaborative. Mistakes happen even to experienced players.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF THE HAND IS WRONG?

If you call Mahjong but your hand doesn't correctly match a hand on the card, you have declared a **false Mahjong**. In most rule sets, this means you pay each of the other three players the highest hand value on the card. It's a serious penalty – always double-check before you call.

## Self-Draw vs. Discard Win

There are two ways to win: by drawing the final tile from the wall yourself (**self-draw**) or by claiming another player's discard. A self-draw win means all three opponents pay you – not just the discarder. This is a significant bonus. A discard win means only the player who discarded your winning tile pays you (in many common rule sets). Self-draw wins are rarer and more satisfying for exactly this reason.

## Payment

Payment happens immediately after the win is confirmed. The losing players count out the appropriate chips or coins and pass them to the winner. We'll cover the exact payment structure in the next chapter. For now, just know: if you discard the winning tile, you pay. If someone self-draws, everyone pays. The math is clear, and the social expectation is to pay promptly and cheerfully. Today's loss is tomorrow's win.

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*"Mahjong!" — said with confidence, followed by tiles laid flat and a smile. There's nothing like it.*

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## Scoring and Payment

*“Understanding the scoring turns every hand into a calculated decision.”*

American Mahjong uses a point-based payment system that is clean, consistent, and — once you understand it — genuinely elegant. The point value of each hand is printed directly on the NMJL card beside the hand. Harder, rarer hands are worth more. Simpler hands are worth less. And several bonus factors can increase the payout above the base value.

### Hand Point Values

NMJL hands are assigned point values that typically range from **25 to 75**, in increments of 5. A 25-point hand is a relatively simple hand, accessible and achievable early in your career. A 75-point hand is exotic, complex, and rare — but extraordinarily rewarding to win. Most hands cluster in the 30–55 range.

Points	Typical Hand Difficulty	What to Expect
25	Beginner-friendly	Common tiles, simple groupings
30–35	Moderate	Achievable with good Charleston
40–50	Intermediate	Requires specific tiles or concealment
55–65	Advanced	Joker-heavy or rare tile combos
70–75	Expert	Rarely seen; pays handsomely

### Who Pays Whom

**Discard win:** Only the player who discarded the winning tile pays the winner. The other two players owe nothing.

**Self-draw win:** All three opponents pay the winner the full point value. This is why self-draw wins can be extremely lucrative — you collect from everyone.

### Joker Bonus

In many league and home game rule sets, the winner receives an additional bonus for each joker in their winning hand. A common structure is +1 point per joker, or a fixed bonus (e.g., 10 points per joker). Some groups don't use this bonus at all. Agree on the joker bonus policy before the game begins and apply it consistently.

### Other Bonuses

Some groups award a **Charleston bonus** if you completed a hand using only tiles you received during the Charleston — an extremely rare occurrence. Other groups add bonuses for specific hand types or for certain milestone moments (first Mahjong of the day, etc.). These are all house rules; the core NMJL rules simply use the card point value.

#### ✿ PAYMENT ETIQUETTE

Pay promptly, accurately, and without complaint. Everyone at the table will win and lose across many games. The generosity you show in paying a loss will be noticed and appreciated — and it sets the tone for a warm, enjoyable table. Mahjong is not about the money. The money is just how you keep score.

## Concealed Hands: Hidden Power

*"A hand no one can see is a hand no one can defend against."*

In American Mahjong, certain winning hands on the NMJL card are marked as **concealed** — meaning every tile in that hand must be drawn from the wall or received in the Charleston. You cannot claim any discards. Every tile arrives from your own efforts, your own draws, your own patience. And for this discipline, you are richly rewarded.

### What "Concealed" Means

A concealed hand requires zero exposures. Not one set can be claimed from a discard. You draw, you draw, you draw — and when your hand is finally complete, you lay it all face-up for the first and only time as you call Mahjong. The other players, who may have been watching you draw silently for the entire game without revealing anything, are often surprised by what you've assembled.

It's worth noting: if a hand is marked as concealed on the card, even accidentally claiming a discard (and then changing your mind) can disqualify you from that hand. Concealment must be maintained from the very first tile.

### Why Concealed Pays More

Concealed hands are harder. Drawing every tile you need from the wall — without the benefit of calling any discards — requires both patience and favorable tiles. The game compensates for this difficulty by assigning concealed hands higher point values, and in some rule sets by adding a concealment bonus on top of the base value. Playing concealed and winning is one of the most satisfying experiences in Mahjong.

#### THE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE

Concealed hands are also defensively powerful for the winner — because your opponents have no exposures to read. A player who never exposes anything is essentially invisible. Other players don't know what suit she's in, what number range she's targeting, or how close she is to Mahjong. This invisibility can lull opponents into a false sense of security, making them discard tiles they shouldn't.

### Best Hands for Concealed Play

Hands that require pairs, or hands built entirely from one suit with common tiles, tend to work well concealed because you need fewer rare tiles. A hand that requires four kongs of highly specific tiles, however, is risky to attempt concealed because you need so many of those specific tiles from the wall.

#### \* WHEN TO GO CONCEALED

Attempt a concealed hand when: you started the game with excellent tile distribution across one or two suits, the hand value is significantly higher than what you'd earn from an exposed alternative, and you have the patience to draw steadily without committing to exposures. Don't go concealed out of stubbornness – go concealed because the math supports it.

# Joker Swapping in Practice

*“The swap is quiet, legal, and one of the most powerful moves in the game.”*

We introduced joker swapping in Chapter 8. Now let's go deeper, because the mechanics of swapping — when you can do it, how to do it correctly, and how to use it strategically — deserve a chapter of their own. Advanced players perform swap checks automatically on every turn. If you build this habit early, it will serve you for the rest of your Mahjong career.

## The Swap Mechanics: Step by Step

A joker swap can happen on your turn, during the discard phase. Here's the precise sequence:

**Step 1:** Before you discard, scan every exposed set on the table. Are any of them using a joker?

**Step 2:** Do you hold the genuine tile that the joker is representing in that set?

**Step 3:** If yes, place your genuine tile into the exposed set, removing the joker. Take the joker into your hand.

**Step 4:** The exposed set now has your real tile where the joker was. Nothing else about the set changes.

**Step 5:** Continue your turn normally — discard a tile and end your turn with the joker now in your hand.

### SWAP LIMITATIONS

You may only swap on your turn, during the discard phase. You cannot swap out of turn. You cannot swap a joker that is in a pair (but jokers can't be in pairs anyway). You can perform multiple swaps on a single turn if opportunities exist — scan all exposed sets before discarding.

## The Swap Check Habit

Before every discard, look around the table. Left opponent's exposures. Partner's exposures. Right opponent's exposures. Ask yourself: does any exposed joker represent a tile I'm holding? This check takes two seconds when it's habitual. New players often forget completely; intermediate players do it occasionally; advanced players never skip it.

## Blocking Swaps Strategically

If you've made an exposure with a joker in it, you're vulnerable to a swap. One counter-strategy: hold multiple jokers in your concealed hand and delay exposing them until you're close to winning, reducing the window of opportunity for opponents to swap.

#### SWAP ETIQUETTE

Announce your swap clearly: "Swapping your Six-Bam" as you place the tile. Don't do it silently and hope no one notices. Transparency is part of the game's integrity. Every player at the table should be able to see and confirm every swap as it happens.

# Common Beginner Mistakes (And How to Avoid Them)

*“The fastest way to improve is to understand precisely where you’re going wrong.”*

Every beginner makes the same set of mistakes. This is not an insult — it's simply the nature of learning a complex game. The good news: once you name the mistakes, you can catch yourself making them and correct course. Each of the following errors has cost players wins, money, and frustration. Don't let them cost you.

## Mistake 1: Chasing Unachievable Hands

You fell in love with a hand that needs 8 specific tiles, three of which are rare honors. The hand is beautiful on the card. The problem: you'll never get there. Use the FAST framework (Chapter 11) to assess Accessibility honestly. A hand that requires too many rare tiles is a hand you should not pursue, no matter how appealing it looks.

## Mistake 2: Exposing Too Early

You have two 5-Bams and someone discards a third — you call immediately. But it's only the second round of discarding, and you still need 6 more tiles. You've locked yourself into a hand you can't finish, given your opponents your game plan, and made yourself a target for defensive discarding. Wait. Draw. Expose when you're close to winning.

## Mistake 3: Not Defending Late Game

Your opponent has two exposures and the wall is running thin. You're still discarding tiles that match her exposed suits because you need to move your own hand forward. Stop. Your hand isn't going to win. Pivot to defense. Throw only tiles that are clearly safe. A wall game is a better outcome than paying her 50 points.

## Mistake 4: Forgetting to Swap Jokers

You sit through an entire game with a 6-Dot in your hand while your opponent has a joker in an exposed kong of 6-Dots. You never swap. The joker could have turbocharged your hand. Build the swap-check habit now, before it costs you a win.

## Mistake 5: Discarding Your Own Needed Tiles

You have two 3-Cracks and need a third. During the Charleston or in play, you accidentally pass or discard one of your 3-Cracks. This seems impossible — but in the early chaos of learning, it happens constantly. Look at your tiles before you discard. Every time.

## Mistake 6: Misreading the Card

You think you've completed a hand, but the "B" in the hand means Bam and you used Dots. Or the hand requires a specific number that you misread. The card notation takes time to become fluent. Read slowly. Point to each tile in your hand as you compare it to the card. Don't call Mahjong until you're certain.

## Mistake 7: Keeping Too Many Options Too Long

Midway through the game, you're still "keeping your options open" across four possible hands. You're drawing tiles, not committing, not pursuing anything specifically. Meanwhile, another player has picked a hand and is three tiles away from winning. Pick your hand. Commit. Execute.

### THE SELF-DEBRIEF

After each game, spend 60 seconds thinking about which of these seven mistakes — if any — you made. Don't beat yourself up; just name them. Players who do this honestly improve dramatically faster than those who chalk every loss up to bad tiles.

# The Dallas/Blanks Variation

*"Regional variations keep the game alive and evolving."*

American Mahjong is not monolithic. Across different regions, different cities, and different social groups, the game has developed local variations that adjust the rules in ways the players find more exciting or accessible. One of the most popular and enduring variations — particularly in Texas and across the American South — is the **Dallas variation**, also known as "playing with Blanks."

## What the Dallas Rules Are

In Dallas-style Mahjong, the game is played with an additional set of tiles called **Blanks**. Blank tiles are exactly what they sound like: tiles with no number, no suit, no markings. In the Dallas variation, Blanks function as additional wild card tiles — essentially extra jokers, giving each player more flexibility and the entire game more dynamism.

The precise rules for Blanks vary by group, but the most common version treats them exactly like jokers: they can substitute for any tile in a group of three or more, they cannot be used in pairs, and they can be swapped out of exposures by a player who holds the genuine tile the Blank represents.

## Why This Variation Is Popular

More wild cards means more completed hands, faster games, and a slightly lower barrier to entry for new players. Groups that play with Blanks often find the game more forgiving — there's more flexibility in the tiles, more opportunities to pivot when your primary hand isn't developing, and more swapping action that keeps experienced players engaged throughout every game.

### BLANKS AND SCORING

Some Dallas-variation groups adjust scoring when Blanks are used — for example, adding a bonus for winning with Blanks in your hand, or reducing the payout because the game is "easier" with extra wilds. These are house rules; establish them before play begins.

## Playing in Mixed Groups

If you sit down at a table where some players know Dallas rules and others don't, the host should declare the rules clearly before anyone touches the tiles. "We're playing standard NMJL rules tonight" or "We're using Blanks today" should be stated at the start of every game, not assumed. Rule disagreements mid-game are avoidable with a clear declaration upfront.

 TRY BOTH VARIATIONS

If you've only played one version, try the other. Standard rules and Dallas rules feel genuinely different. Many players have a clear preference; others enjoy both. Exposure to multiple rule sets will make you a more adaptable, well-rounded Mahjong player.

# Your First Game: A Walkthrough

*“Seeing the game played from start to finish brings every rule to life.”*

Let's walk through a complete fictional game. Our four players are Ann (East/Dealer), Beth (South), Carol (West), and Diane (North). This walkthrough will show you every major concept applied in sequence — setup, Charleston, hand selection, drawing, exposing, defending, and winning.

## The Deal

Ann rolls the dice and wins East. All tiles are dealt. Ann has 14 tiles; Beth, Carol, and Diane each have 13. Ann notices she has three 5-Bams, two 7-Dots, a pair of East Winds, some Cracks she doesn't want, and a joker. She feels good about a Bam-heavy hand or something involving winds.

## The Charleston

**First pass right:** Ann sends her three worst Cracks to Beth. She receives from Carol: two 6-Dots and a North Wind. Interesting — her Dot count is growing.

**Across pass:** Ann sends the North Wind and two tiles she doesn't need. Carol sends her two more 5-Bams. Now Ann has five 5-Bams and a joker — a kong of 5-Bams is almost certain.

**Left pass:** Ann passes three Cracks. She receives two more Dots. Her hand is becoming clearer: she's going for a Bam/Dot combination hand.

After the Charleston, Ann uses FAST: her hand has excellent Fit for a 5-Bam kong plus Dot pairs hand. Accessibility is high — 5-Bams aren't especially rare and she already has four plus a joker. Safety is fine — she can pivot if needed. Timing looks good; she needs only 4 more tiles. She commits.

## The Game Unfolds

Early turns are quiet. Beth draws and discards without exposures. Carol claims a 3-Crack from Diane for a pung, laying it face-up — she's working on a Crack hand. Diane is watching, discarding carefully. Ann draws a 7-Dot that fits her hand perfectly. She draws two more turns, getting a 5-Bam on her second draw (her kong is now real tiles, no joker needed — she keeps the joker for later).

## The Exposure

Beth discards a 9-Dot. Ann doesn't need it. Carol doesn't move. On the next turn, Diane discards a 5-Bam — and Ann calls it: "I'll take that for a kong of 5-Bam!" She lays down 5-5-5-5-Bam on her rack, discarding a Wind she no longer needs. Her hand is now partially visible, but she's close to winning.

## The Defense Moment

Three turns later, Carol has two exposures in Cracks. Diane, watching carefully, stops discarding Cracks entirely — even though she has several. She's playing defense. Beth, not yet reading the table well, throws a 7-Crack. Carol calls it — but it's not her winning tile. She needed an 8-Crack. She discards something safe.

## **Mahjong!**

Two turns later, Ann draws her final tile from the wall – a 7-Dot that completes her pair. "Mahjong!" she says, laying her hand flat. The table verifies: a kong of 5-Bam, a pung of 7-Dot, a pair, and the remaining set matches the hand on the card. It's a 40-point hand. Self-draw! All three players pay Ann 40 points each. Ann pockets 120 points, grins, and starts shuffling tiles for the next game.

# The Social Side of Mahjong

*“The tiles bring you to the table. The people keep you coming back.”*

Mahjong is, at its heart, a social game. The rules and strategy are important, but they exist within a larger context: four people sharing time, laughter, and connection. The social dimension of Mahjong — its etiquette, its culture, its role as a community builder — is just as important to understand as the mechanics of play. In many ways, it's why the game has survived and thrived for generations.

## Table Etiquette

Good table etiquette is simple and non-negotiable. Announce your discards every time. Don't peek at tiles before your turn. Pay promptly and cheerfully when you lose. Congratulate the winner genuinely. Avoid taking phone calls at the table — your full attention is a gift to the other players. And perhaps most importantly: never tell other players what to discard, even if you're just trying to be helpful. Each player's hand is their own.

Pace matters, too. Play at a reasonable speed. Long deliberations on routine discards slow the game and drain the energy from the table. Make decisions and make them reasonably quickly. When a genuinely complex moment arises, the table will understand a pause — but it shouldn't be the default.

## Helping Newer Players

When a newer player joins your game, calibrate your help carefully. It's kind to explain the rules and remind them of the basic mechanics. It's not appropriate to tell them what to discard, suggest hands to pursue, or coach them while you're in active play against them. The line between helpfulness and game interference is delicate but real. Offer help between games; let them play their own hand during the game.

## The Culture of Mahjong

American Mahjong has a remarkable culture — vibrant, warm, and specifically beloved by women, who have carried the game forward through generations and communities. Mahjong leagues, tournaments, and regular home games create bonds that extend far beyond the tiles. It's a space where friendships form, where conversations happen that wouldn't happen elsewhere, and where regular gatherings become anchors in people's social lives.

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*The best part of Mahjong isn't the win. It's the same four women at the same table, every Tuesday, for thirty years.*

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Mahjong builds community because it requires presence. You can't play while distracted. You can't multitask. The game demands your attention, and in demanding it, it gives you something rare: genuine shared focus with the people around you. That is a gift in any age, and particularly in this one.

#### FIND YOUR COMMUNITY

Most cities and towns have Mahjong groups – at community centers, senior centers, synagogues, churches, and private homes. Search for Mahjong groups on Nextdoor, Meetup, or Facebook. The NMJL website also has a club directory. Don't wait until you're "good enough" to join – no group expects perfection from a newcomer. Just bring your card and your enthusiasm.

## Building Your Game: How to Improve

*“Improvement in Mahjong is steady, measurable, and deeply satisfying.”*

You've now learned every major concept in American Mahjong – the tiles, the card, the Charleston, jokers, exposures, defense, scoring, and strategy. What comes next is the most rewarding part: the actual playing. The transformation from "person who knows the rules" to "player who wins consistently" happens in the hours at the table, and it's faster than you might expect.

### The Three Pillars of Improvement

**Pillar 1: Card Familiarity.** The NMJL card is the engine of the game. The more fluently you can read it – scanning quickly for hands that match your tiles, understanding which hands require what – the better your hand selection will be. Spend time with the card outside of games. Look at it in the morning over coffee. Notice which hand families appear in each section. Within a few weeks, you'll find yourself scanning the card in seconds rather than minutes.

**Pillar 2: Defensive Awareness.** Winning is fun. Not paying is also winning. Players who develop genuine defensive awareness – who watch exposures, read discards, and identify hot tiles consistently – save enormous amounts of money across a season of play. Make it a habit to scan the table before every discard. What has each player exposed? What tiles are they hungry for? What can you safely throw?

**Pillar 3: Charleston Strategy.** The Charleston is where games begin, and it deserves more deliberate attention than most beginners give it. What are you receiving? What does that tell you? Are you passing tiles that serve your opponents? A strategic Charleston can put you tiles ahead before the wall is ever touched.

### Solo Practice

You can practice Mahjong alone by dealing yourself a hand, running through the Charleston with all four positions, selecting a hand to pursue, and then drawing through the wall solo. This isn't quite the same as a real game – you're not competing, not reading opponents – but it builds card familiarity and hand-selection instincts rapidly.

### Tracking Your Progress

Keep a simple log of your games. Which hand did you attempt? How many tiles did you need? Did you win or not? What defensive moments occurred? Patterns emerge quickly. Maybe you always chase Bam hands but rarely finish them – your Accessibility assessment is off. Maybe you win frequently but always pay on losses – your defense needs work. The log shows you the truth about your game.

✿ THE PROGRESS MINDSET

Don't measure progress by wins and losses alone. A game where you played exceptional defense, identified hot tiles perfectly, and made no false calls is a good game — even if someone else won the hand. Celebrate process improvements, not just outcomes. The wins will follow.

# Quick Reference Sheet

Cut out or fold this page for use at the table.

## American Mahjong Quick Reference


MAHJONG MASTERY · MAHJONGMASTERY.COM


### Suit Symbols

 **Cracks (C)** 1-9

 **Bams (B)** 1-9

 **Dots (D)** 1-9

 **Winds: E · S · W · N**

 **Dragons: R · G · White**

### FAST Framework

**F** – Fit: do tiles match this hand?

**A** – Accessibility: can I get needed tiles?

**S** – Safety: what's the exposure risk?

**T** – Timing: how many tiles do I still need?

Choose **ONE** hand. Commit. Execute.

### Payment Quick Reference

**Discard win:** Discarder pays only

**Self-draw:** All 3 opponents pay

**False Mahjong:** You pay everyone the max hand

**Wall game:** No one pays, no one wins

### Joker Rules

- Jokers substitute for any tile in a group of 3 or more
- Jokers **NEVER** used in pairs
- Swap a joker from any exposure on your turn
- Announce all swaps clearly out loud

### Turn Order Reminder

1. Draw from the wall (or claim a discard)
2. Perform any joker swaps
3. Discard one tile – name it out loud
4. Others may claim the discard

*First turn: East discards (no draw)*

### When In Doubt...

- Name every discard out loud
- Check for joker swaps before discarding
- Late game: safety over offense
- Pairs need two real tiles – no jokers
- Read the card slowly – it's always there

# First-Game Tracker

*Track your first five games here. Reflection accelerates growth.*

## Game 1

Date:	_____	Jokers in my hand:	_____
Location / Group:	_____	Biggest mistake:	_____
Hand I chose:	_____	What I'll do differently:	_____
Did I win?	_____	Notes:	_____

## Game 2

Date:	_____	Jokers in my hand:	_____
Location / Group:	_____	Biggest mistake:	_____
Hand I chose:	_____	What I'll do differently:	_____
Did I win?	_____	Notes:	_____

## Game 3

Date:	_____	Jokers in my hand:	_____
Location / Group:	_____	Biggest mistake:	_____
Hand I chose:	_____	What I'll do differently:	_____
Did I win?	_____	Notes:	_____

## Game 4

Date:	_____	Jokers in my hand:	_____
Location / Group:	_____	Biggest mistake:	_____
Hand I chose:	_____	What I'll do differently:	_____
Did I win?	_____	Notes:	_____

## Game 5

Date:	_____	Jokers in my hand:	_____
Location / Group:	_____	Biggest mistake:	_____
Hand I chose:	_____	What I'll do differently:	_____
Did I win?	_____	Notes:	_____



*Every great player has a first game. Yours begins now.*

