

Learn to Play Riichi Mahjong

WRC Rules (Home Play Edition)



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1) Introduction

Riichi Mahjong is a 4-player game of drawing and discarding tiles to build a winning hand. You can win by:

- **Tsumo** (winning on a tile you draw), or
- **Ron** (winning on another player's discard).

Objective

Win hands by making a **valid** hand and having **at least 1 yaku** (a scoring pattern that allows winning).

Ruleset used in this booklet: WRC Rules

This booklet follows the World Riichi Championship (WRC) ruleset (Home Play Edition).

This booklet is designed for home play and provides enough guidance to get started.

A full game (hanchan) consists of an East round and a South round. Each round plays through multiple hands as the dealer rotates. Players accumulate points across all hands; the player with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Tournament rules may update over time, so competitive players should confirm the current WRC rules before official play.

To keep your home games consistent, agree on these rules before the first hand:

WRC Ruleset Lock (Home Play)

- No red fives (aka-dora are not used).
- Dora are used (including kan dora; ura dora apply only if the winner declared riichi).
- No abortive draws (hands end by win or exhaustive draw only).
- Only one winner if multiple players call ron (resolved by turn order).
- Kuikae (swap-calling) is forbidden. This means you may not call a tile and immediately discard the same tile, or an equivalent tile from that sequence.
- Open tanyao is allowed. This means an all-simples hand can still be valid after calling tiles.
- Atozuke is allowed. This means you can call a tile even if you don't yet have a yaku — as long as you have a yaku when you win.

Beginner Tip: If your group is new, focus on turn order, calling rules, and what “yaku” means first. Scoring details can come later.

How a hand works: build the wall, deal the tiles, East discards first, then players take turns drawing or calling a discard. A hand ends when someone wins by tsumo or ron, or when the live wall runs out.

2) What's Included

Your set may include:

- Mahjong tiles (standard riichi set)
- 2 dice
- Wind indicator / dealer marker (optional)
- Score sticks or scoring accessories (varies by set). If your set includes score sticks, each player typically starts with 30,000 points. See Section 8 for scoring.

If your set includes red fives:

- Default (WRC): treat red fives as normal 5s, without bonus value.
- Optional house rule is listed in Section 10.

3) Tiles & Hand Basics

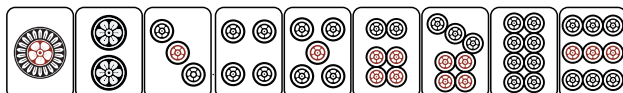
Tile groups

Suits (1–9):

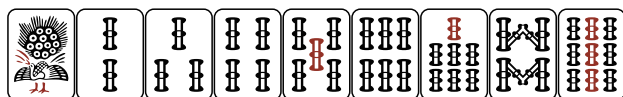
- Characters (Man / 万)



- Circles (Pin / 筒)



- Bamboos (Sou / 索)



Honors:

- Winds: East, South, West, North

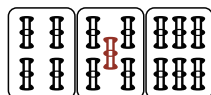


- Dragons: White, Green, Red



Sets (groups)

- **Sequence (Chi):** 3 consecutive tiles in the same suit (ex: 4–5–6 Bamboo)



- **Triplet (Pon):** 3 identical tiles (ex: three Red Dragons)



- **Quad (Kan):** 4 identical tiles



Valid hand shapes (most common)

Most winning hands use the standard hand shape: 4 groups + 1 pair. Groups can be any mix of sequences (chi) or triplets (pon). The single pair is called the 'head' (jantai).

Some special winning hands use a different shape, such as:

- Seven Pairs
- Thirteen Orphans (rare, advanced)

Closed vs Open hands

- A closed hand is one you build without calling another player's discard. (Declaring riichi does not open your hand.)
- An open hand has one or more called groups displayed in front of you.

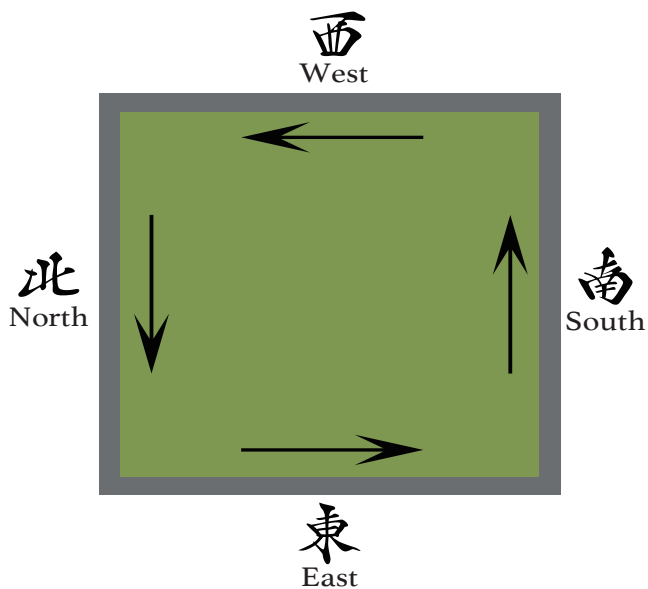
Many yaku require a closed hand, and riichi requires a closed hand.

4) Starting the Game (Setup & Dealing)

Step 1 — Choose seats / assign winds

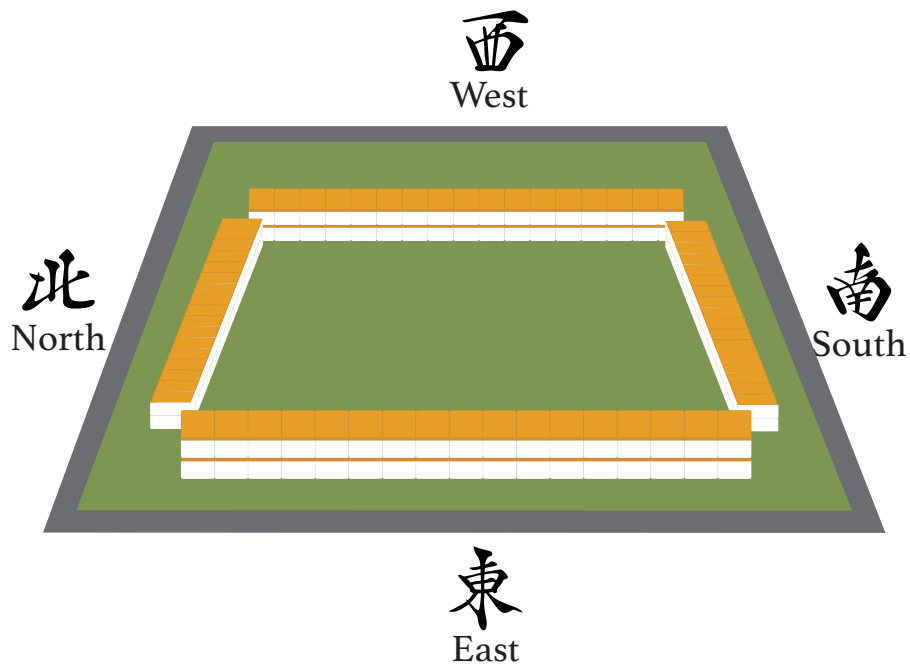
Assign each player one seat: East (dealer), South, West, North. Your seat determines your “seat wind” for the hand (East, South, West, North).

A simple home method: each player rolls dice; highest roll is East. Assign the remaining seats in turn order: the player to East's right is South, the player directly across is West, and the player to East's left is North. (Turns run counter-clockwise: East → South → West → North.)



Step 2 — Build the wall

1. Shuffle tiles face-down.
2. Each player builds a wall section 17 stacks long and 2 tiles high.
3. Push the four walls together to form a square.

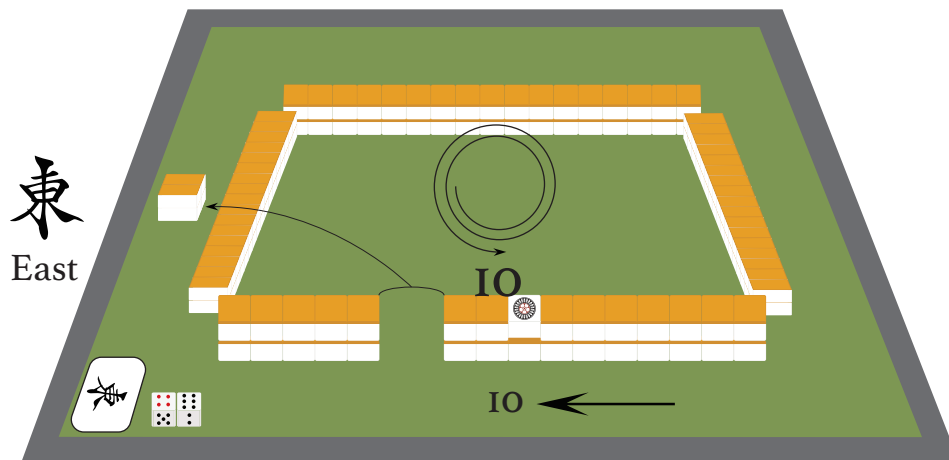
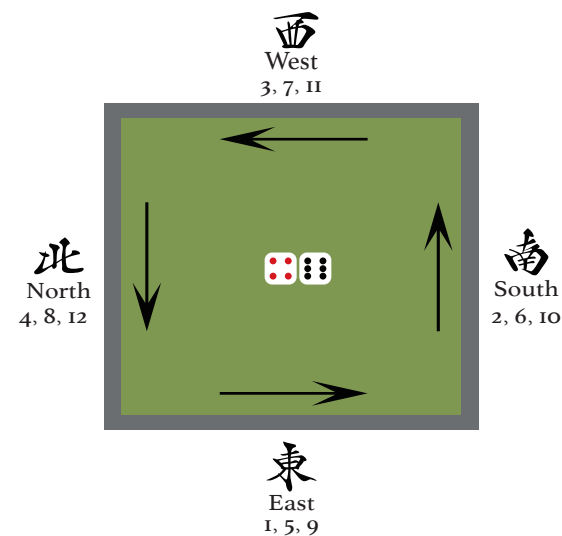


Step 3 — Break the wall (dice)

East rolls both dice:

1. Count **counter-clockwise** from East to choose which wall is broken.
2. Then count **clockwise** from the right end of that wall section to find the break point.

Example: East rolls 10. ① Select the wall — count counter-clockwise from East: East=1, South=2, West=3, North=4, East=5, South=6, West=7, North=8, East=9, South=10. → Break the South wall. ② Find the break point — starting from the right end of the South wall, count 10 stacks clockwise. The break falls between stacks 10 and 11.

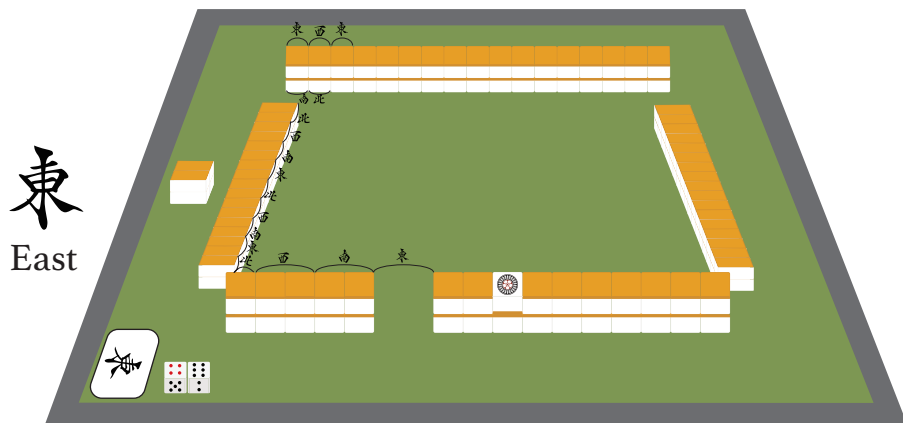


Step 4 — Deal tiles

Tiles are drawn from the live wall clockwise starting at the break. This means East draws first from the stack immediately to the left of the break gap, and drawing continues clockwise around the wall from there.

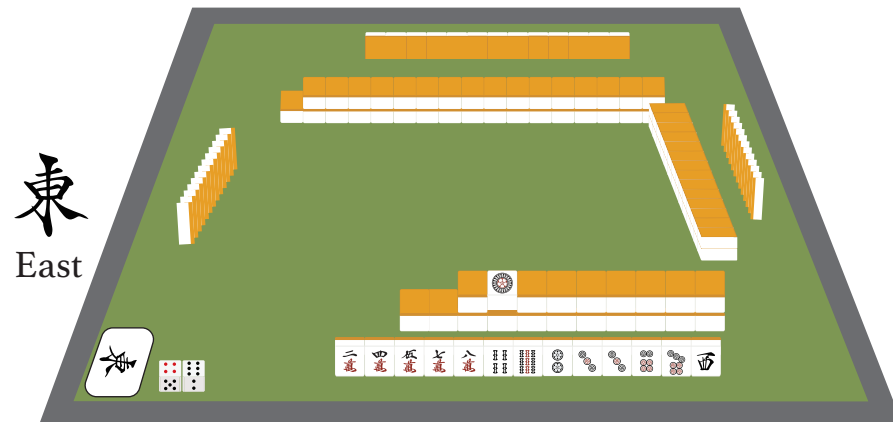
Dealing pattern (beginner-friendly):

1. Starting with East, each player takes **4 tiles** (two stacks) at a time, in turn order.
2. Repeat this for **3 rounds** (each player now has 12).
3. Then East takes 2 tiles, and each other player takes 1 tile.
4. East begins with **14 tiles**; the others begin with **13 tiles**.



Step 5 — Set up the dead wall + reveal the dora indicator

1. The dead wall is 14 tiles (7 stacks) to the right of the break.
2. Reveal the initial dora indicator: flip face-up the top tile of the 3rd stack from the right end (the far end) of the dead wall. As a cross-check, this is the 5th tile from the right when counting individual tiles along the top row.
3. Leave the rest of the dead wall face down until a kan or other rule requires another tile to be revealed.



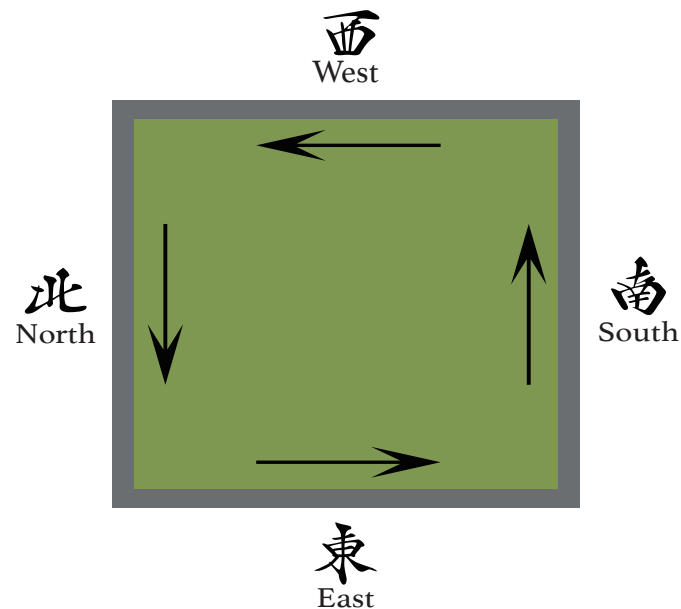
Step 6 — Start the hand

East begins the first turn, but **does not draw** (East already has 14). East starts by **discarding one tile**.

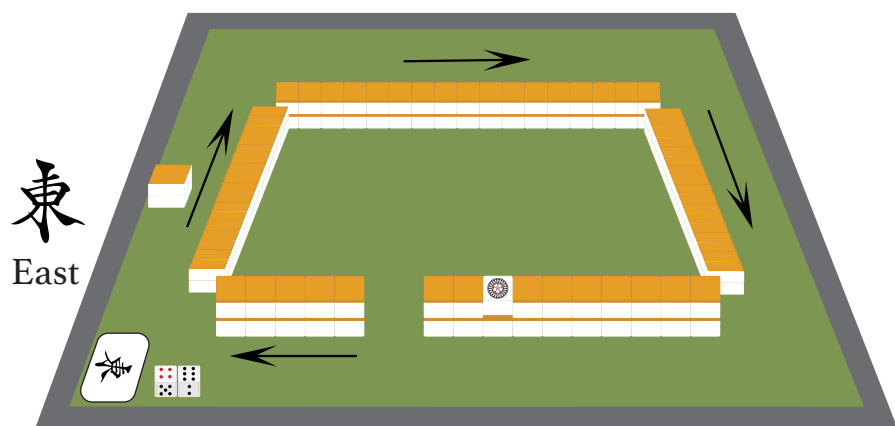
5) Gameplay (Turns & Calls)

Turn order vs draw direction (important)

- Turn order: counter-clockwise (East → South → West → North)



- Draw direction: clockwise from the live wall



What happens on your turn

1. Draw the next tile from the wall (unless you call a discard). Keep your drawn tile separate — hold it apart from your hand tiles or rest it in front of you — until you decide what to discard. This signals to other players that you are still deciding, so they know to wait.
2. Optional actions (when allowed):
 - declare **kan**
 - declare riichi
 - declare tsumo (win)
3. If you do not win: discard one tile face-up into your discard row. Place discards in neat rows (commonly 6 per row) so everyone can track what was discarded and when.

Tile count (quick check):

- Usually you will have **14 tiles on your turn**, and **13 tiles when it is not your turn**.

Calling tiles (Chi / Pon / Kan / Ron)

- You may only call the most recently discarded tile.
- You cannot call your own discard.
- The next player in turn order — the player to the discarder's right, since turns run counter-clockwise — may call chi, pon, kan, or ron.

- Any other player may call pon, kan, or ron, but not chi.

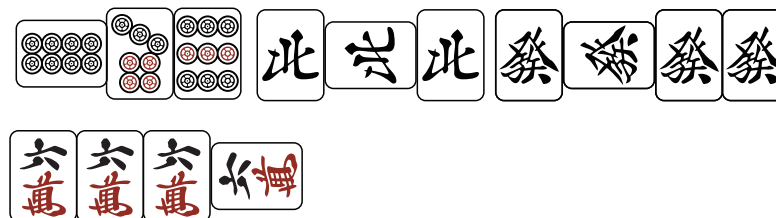
After you call a discard for chi or pon, you take the discarded tile, make the meld, and then discard one tile immediately (no draw). After your discard, play continues with the next player in turn order after you, so players between the discarder and caller may be skipped.

If you call or make a kan, follow the kan replacement-tile rule below.

Displaying called groups (melds)

When you display a called group:

- Place the group in front of you.
- The called tile is placed sideways to show which player discarded it:
 - Sideways tile on the left = came from the player on your left —
 - Sideways tile in the middle = came from the player across from you —
 - Sideways tile on the right = came from the player on your right



Call priority (when more than one player calls)

When multiple players call the same discarded tile, use this priority order:

1. **Ron** — winning on the discard
2. **Pon/Kan** — making a triplet or quad
3. **Chi** — making a sequence; only the next player may chi

If more than one player can call ron, WRC allows only one winner: the player closest in turn order.

Note: Tsumo happens on your own draw, so it does not compete with calls on another player's discard.

Quads (Kan) and replacement tiles

When you make a kan:

- You draw a replacement tile from the dead wall.

- A kan dora indicator is revealed.
- If the replacement tile completes your hand, you may declare tsumo. Otherwise, discard one tile to end your turn.

										
		R ₃	D	K _I	K ₂	K ₃	K ₄	L ₂	L ₄	
R _I	R ₂	R ₄	U ₀	U _I	U ₂	U ₃	U ₄	L _I	L ₃	

Kan replacement tile and dora indicator reference

6) Riichi & Furiten

Tenpai (ready hand)

A hand is **tenpai** when it is one tile away from becoming a valid winning hand.

Riichi (declaration)

You may declare **riichi** when:

- your hand is **closed**, and
- you are in **tenpai**.

Common riichi procedure:

1. Declare “Riichi.”
2. Discard one tile sideways to mark the riichi discard.
3. Pay the riichi bet, typically a 1000-point stick if you are using point sticks. Riichi deposits stay on the table and are collected by the next winning player (they remain if the hand ends in a draw).

After declaring riichi:

- You may not freely change your hand.
- On later turns, discard the tile you draw unless it wins by tsumo.
- A closed kan after riichi is only allowed if it does not change your winning tiles (your 'wait'). If you are unsure whether it changes your wait, skip the kan and discard the drawn tile normally — this is always a safe choice.
- You may still win by ron, unless you are furiten.

Furiten (cannot win by ron)

Furiten means you cannot win by calling a discard (ron) in certain situations. While furiten, you may still win by tsumo.

Common furiten situations:

- If any tile in your own discard row would complete your current hand, you are furiten. You cannot ron on any winning tile until your wait changes (the tiles that would complete your hand are different).
- If you pass on a winning discard before declaring riichi, you are temporarily furiten until your next draw.
- If you pass on a winning discard after declaring riichi, you remain furiten for ron for the rest of the hand.

Beginner Tip: Furiten is one of the most important rules to learn early. If you are unsure, ask the table to confirm before calling ron.

7) Ending a Hand (Win / Exhaustive Draw)

A hand ends when:

- a player wins (tsumo or ron), or
- there are no tiles left in the live wall and nobody wins on the final discard (exhaustive draw).

WRC note: WRC does not use abortive draws (special early draw conditions).

Winning Checklist (Beginner)

- Your hand must be a valid hand shape.
- You must have at least 1 yaku to win.
- Dora are bonus han, but dora are not yaku.
- If your hand is closed and you are in tenpai, you can declare riichi.

Note: A hand with only dora cannot win — dora add to your score but do not count as yaku.

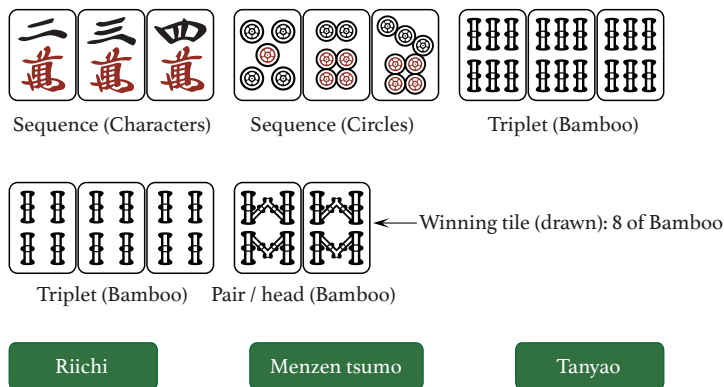
Common beginner yaku examples:

- Riichi: closed hand, in tenpai, with a riichi declaration.

- Menzen Tsumo: winning by self-draw with a closed hand.
- Tanyao: all simples — no terminals (1s or 9s) or honor tiles anywhere in your hand, including called melds. Under WRC home play rules, open tanyao is allowed: tanyao remains valid after calling chi or pon.

Example winning hand - tsumo

14 tiles: 4 groups + 1 pair, drawn to complete the hand



This hand is closed, was won by self-draw after declaring riichi, and contains no terminals or honor tiles — so it scores riichi + menzen tsumo + tanyao (3 yaku, before dora). All tiles are 2–8, so tanyao applies. Use the scoring table to calculate the final payment.

- Yakuhai: a triplet or quad of dragon tiles, or wind tiles that match your seat wind or the current round wind (usually East or South).

Yakuhai examples: Either of these triplets alone is worth 1 yaku —



Dragon yakuhai - always scores



Seat/round wind yakuhai - only counts if the wind matches your seat wind or the current round wind

Winning by Tsumo

If you draw your winning tile:

1. Say “Tsumo.”
2. Reveal your hand.
3. Score the hand.

Winning by Ron

If another player discards your winning tile:

1. Say “Ron.”
2. Reveal your hand.
3. In WRC, if multiple players could ron the same discard, **only one** winner is chosen by turn order.

Exhaustive draw (no one wins)

When the live wall runs out:

- Players check whether they are **tenpai** or **noten**. In WRC-style play, tenpai hands are shown face-up at an exhaustive draw.
- Apply the noten penalty/tenpai payment if your group is using full WRC scoring.

(For a casual first game, many groups simply record “draw” and move on.)

8) Scoring Basics (Beginner Method)

Riichi scoring can be detailed. For a beginner-friendly approach:

Step-by-step beginner scoring

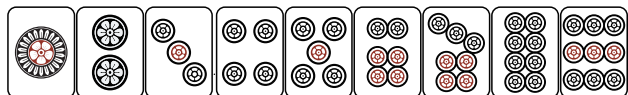
1. Confirm the hand has at least 1 yaku.
2. Count han (yaku + dora).
3. For your first games, use a riichi scoring app. If your group is ready to use the WRC scoring table, count both han and fu to find payments.
4. Dora are bonus han, but dora are not yaku. You still need at least 1 yaku to win.

Dora basics (by indicator):

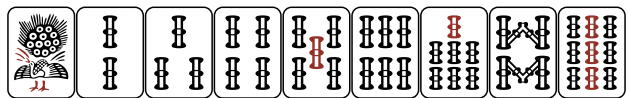
- Suit tiles: next number (9 wraps to 1)



If the dora indicator is 9 of Man, then the dora is 1 of Man.



If the dora indicator is , then the dora is .



If the dora indicator is , then the dora is .

- Winds: East → South → West → North → East



If the dora indicator is , then the dora is .

- Dragons: White → Green → Red → White



If the dora indicator is , then the dora is .

WRC Scoring Table

For exact payments, use the WRC scoring table below.

For easiest scoring, use a riichi scoring app (search “riichi calculator” in your app store).

East					Non-East			
4 Han	3 Han	2 Han	1 Han	Fu	1 Han	2 Han	3 Han	4 Han
2600 all 7700	1300 all 3900	700 all 2000	400 all	tsumo tsumo 20 ron ron	200/ 400	400/ 700 1300	700/ 1300 2600	1300/2600 5200
4000 all 12000	2000 all 5800	1000 all 2900	500 all 1500	tsumo tsumo 30 ron ron	300/ 500 1000	500/1000 2000	1000/2000 3900	2000/4000 8000
	2600 all 7700	1300 all 3900	700 all 2000	tsumo tsumo 40 ron ron	400/ 800 1600	700/1300 2600	1300/2600 5200	
	3200 all 9600	1600 all 4800	800 all 2400	tsumo tsumo 50 ron ron	400/ 700 1300	800/1600 3200	1600/3200 6400	
	4000 all 12000	2000 all 5800	1000 all 2900	tsumo tsumo 60 ron ron	500/1000 2000	1000/2000 3900	2000/4000 8000	
		2300 all 6800	1200 all 3400	tsumo tsumo 70 ron ron	600/1200 2300	1200/2300 1500		
	Han						Han	
4000 all 12000	5	2600 all 7700	1300 all 3900	tsumo tsumo 80 ron ron	700/1300 2600	1300/2600 5200		2000/4000 8000
6000 all 18000	6 - 7	2900 all 8700	1500 all 4400	tsumo tsumo 90 ron ron	800/1500 2900	1500/2900 5800		3000/6000 12000
8000 all 24000	8 - 10	3200 all 9600	1600 all 4800	tsumo tsumo 100 ron ron	800/1600 3200	1600/3200 6400		4000/8000 16000
12000 all 36000	11 - 12	3600 all 10600		tsumo tsumo 110 ron ron		1800/3600 7100		6000/12000 24000
16000 all 48000	13 +							8000/16000 32000
4 Han	3 Han	2 Han	1 Han	Fu	1 Han	2 Han	3 Han	4 Han
3200 all 9600	1600 all 4800			tsumo tsumo 25 ron ron			800/1600 3200	1600/3200 6400

East wins	Legend	Non-East wins
All	tsumo tsumo paid by	Others/East
Discarder	ron ron	Discarder

After finding the base payment in the table, add honba (continuance counters) and collect any riichi deposits.

Example: You win by ron as Non-East with 1 han and 30 fu. In the Non-East column, find the 30 fu row under 1 Han: the discarder pays 1,000 points. If there are 2 honba sticks on the table, add $2 \times 300 = 600$, so the discarder pays 1,600 total. Collect any riichi sticks from the table.

9) Continuing the Game (Dealer & Rounds)

Dealer continuation (Renchan)

In WRC-style play, the dealer (East) may keep the dealership in certain results (commonly: if East wins, or if East is tenpai at an exhaustive draw).

How long is a game?

A common structure is to play a **hanchan** (East round + South round). For home play, you may also set a time limit (example: “we’ll play for 60–90 minutes”) and declare the leader the winner.

Home Play Note: Use the scoring and payment guidance in this booklet for casual games. Tournament groups should confirm current WRC numbers before official play, especially starting points, counter values, and noten payments.

10) Optional House Rules (Common Variations)

These are optional and are not part of WRC default rules unless your group agrees.

Optional House Rule: Red Fives (Aka Dora)

Default (WRC): No red fives (aka-dora are not used).

If your set includes red fives and your group wants the common online style:

- Treat each red five as a normal 5 and as **one dora**.

If you use this option, announce it before the first hand.

Optional: Beginner “Mistake Rule”

WRC tournament penalties may be detailed. For home play:

- If a mistake cannot be fixed cleanly, **redeal the hand** and keep the same dealer.



Version 1-29

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