

2017 JFS Mah Jongg Tournament Rules

What Rules are followed for the JFS Mah Jongg Tournament?

The tournament is played in accordance with the current National Mah Jongg League card. We will be using the 2017 Card

NOTE: *Based on thoughtful review of feedback over the last several years, we have a wonderful, knowledgeable and experienced “Rules” Committee. You will notice some changes from past tournaments which may take some getting used to, but we hope you will trust us and give us a chance to demonstrate that the new rules are intended to improve and address many of the complaints and concerns received from past tournament players. The rules committee worked very hard to go by the KISS (Keep it Simple, Sweetie) rules as well as make our tournament rules and guidelines more consistent with other Mah Jongg tournaments. Please be patient and have fun! Remember, while indeed this is a competitive tournament with wonderful prizes, we are also here to show our support for Jewish Family Service of San Antonio and the great services they provide our community!*

We also have “Courtesy” Guidelines which we strongly recommend everyone review and follow to make the tournament experience more enjoyable for everyone!

Cell phones must be off or on vibrate. If a call must be taken, player will leave the room and receive “0” points for that hand. Game will continue until completed without player.

How many Games/Rounds will be played, and if time permits can a group play more games than required?

There are three groups of players:

- 1. For those playing 3 games per round per hour – There will be five (5) rounds of play. Each round is one hour and the scores of 3 games will be used for determining the winners. Time will be called after 55 minutes into each round. Each table will then have 5 minutes to complete the last game or everyone at the table will receive ZERO points for the hand. You are welcome to play more than 3 games in a round if time permits, HOWEVER ONLY SCORES FROM FIRST 3 GAMES WILL BE USED FOR SCORING PURPOSES.***
- 2. For those playing 4 games per round per hour -There will be five (5) Rounds of play. Each round is one hour and scores of 4 games will be used for determining the winners. Time will be called after 55 minutes of each round. Each table will then have 5 minutes***

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*to complete the last game or everyone at the table will receive ZERO for the hand. You are welcome to play more than 4 games in a round if time permits, **HOWEVER ONLY SCORES FROM FIRST 4 GAMES WILL BE USED FOR SCORING PURPOSES.***

- 3. For those playing at a social table** –We appreciate your support of Jewish Family Service and appreciate your participation. You do not have score cards and can play by your own table rules. We ask that you keep your breaks in accordance with the one hour play so as not to distract the other players. There will be five (5) Rounds of play and you will remain at the same table throughout the day.

Where do we sit and how do we know where to go for the four additional rounds?

For the first round, you are welcome to sit at any table you like! Once you sit at your table for the first round, you will notice you are assigned a “color”. You will keep that “color” for the entire tournament. Here is how it works!

Remember which table you were at after each round

Green designated player moves 1 table down

Red designated player moves 1 table up

Yellow designated player moves 2 tables down

Blue designated player moves 2 tables up

How do we determine who is East?

At the beginning of each round, when you first sit at your table and all four players are present, decide among yourselves who will be East for the first round. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THE PERSON WHO IS EAST FIRST WILL BE THE SCOREKEEPER FOR ALL OF THE GAMES IN THAT ROUND AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TURNING IN THE COMPLETED SCORE CARD!

So many people begin the Charleston and take the tiles differently. How will this work for the tournament?

We will use the dice, to break the wall. Players take their own set of tiles, four at a time.

When tiles are distributed, are there any rules about setting up the tiles on your racks?

Yes, please don't rack your tiles until each player has the requisite number of tiles. Do not look at tiles or place them on your rack until everyone has their tiles.

When can we “steal” tiles during the Charleston?

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*Remember, per National Mah Jongg League Rules you can only steal on first left and last right passes only, and **No looking at any stolen tiles (referred to as a "blind pass.")***

Other rules and guidelines:

- Before play begins, all players should look at and review the Flowers, 1 Bams, Winds, and Dragons.
- Remember that the second Charleston is not mandatory; all players must agree to continue.
- Remember to rack your tile to indicate the previous turn is over.
- When you call for a tile being discarded or asking for the game to stop, please speak loudly enough for everyone to hear you.
- If you touch a tile on the table either to draw from the wall or to call, the tile is yours. When in doubt – stop the game for a moment to decide. You touch it...it's yours.
- If you think a hand is dead, declare it; however, if you declare a hand "dead" in error, then your hand is dead.
- When declaring Mah Jongg, display the hand "as it appears" on the card.
- Do not expose or throw in your hand until Mah Jongg is verified.
- Each player must initial their final score after each round. East records but you must verify!
- Play steady but be courteous and patient enough to allow someone to call a tile – remember you may be playing with players who do not hear well OR with people who are playing their first tournament.
- Please **limit your conversation** during play. If you finish early either play another game for fun, enjoy a snack or leave the auditorium.
- Beginners or "slow" players – please try to make decisions quickly to help keep the game going and flowing...we want everyone to get all four games complete in each round to maximize their scoring opportunities...
- Expert or "fast" players – please have fun and have a little patience for the not so experienced or slower players...if we all compromise a little each way, the experience will be more pleasant for everyone!
- **Remember to turn off your cell phones or put them on vibrate. If you answer your phone during play your hand will be dead and play will continue without you.**