



Masterminds: A Mah Jongg Minds League

Serious about the rules. Not serious about ourselves.

League Overview

Masterminds is designed for players who are comfortable with National Mah Jongg League (NMJL) rules and ready for structured, spirited competition in a welcoming environment. If you can play an entire game from setup to Mah Jongg without guidance, you are ready for league play.

We recommend at least one month of regular play, either online or in person, or completion of Mah Jongg Minds' The Practice Table (Guided Play class) before joining.

The season includes four regular-season Mondays followed by a Championship Monday.

All play follows NMJL rules using the NMJL 2025 card and our standardized league scoring system. Each regular-season session counts the first three games toward league standings.

Logistics & Registration Details

- Card Used: NMJL 2025 Card (players must bring their own card each week, including Championship night)
- Format: 4 regular-season weeks plus Championship Night
- Price: \$150 for the full season
- Schedule: Mondays in April, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM; Championship Night May 4
- Location: Mah Jongg Minds Studio, 5 Plant Avenue, Webster Groves, MO 63119
- Register: <https://wix.to/yecmuhh>
- Capacity: Limited enrollment
- Cancellation Policy: All registrations are final. No refunds will be issued.

Weekly Format & Table Procedures

- Players will receive assigned tables each week upon arrival and must play at their assigned table.
- MJM may adjust table assignments prior to the first game due to attendance changes.
- All tables begin the first game at the same time.
- The first three completed games each week count toward league standings.
- League play concludes at 9:00 PM. If Game 3 is not completed by 9:00 PM, that game will not be counted toward weekly standings.
- If time remains after Game 3, tables may continue playing for fun.

Attendance & Arrival Policies

Regular Season Standings are based on each player's best three of four weekly scores.

- One excused absence may serve as your dropped week. Additional absences beyond the first excused absence will result in a score of 0 for missed weeks.
- Excused Absence: Provide at least 12 hours' notice via email.
- Unexcused Absence: Less than 12 hours' notice results in a score of 0 that will count toward your final total.
- Tardiness: If you arrive after the first game has begun, you will sit out that game and join the second game at your assigned table.

Arrival Time: League begins promptly at 7:00 PM. We allow 10 minutes for check-in and announcements. Please arrive 5–10 minutes early if you would like time to review table materials.

Official Rules of Play

Masterminds follows official National Mah Jongg League (NMJL) rules for American Mah Jongg.

- No house rules and no do-overs. Mistakes stand once tiles are fully released.
- If a rule dispute occurs, Mah Jongg Minds' League Director will make the final decision.

Deal & Assignment of East: For the first game each night, players roll dice and the highest roller is East. For subsequent games, East rotates counter-clockwise.

Materials & Equipment

Each table will use a different tile set and rack style. Tile sets may vary in design and brand. This variety is intentional and reflects real-world Mah Jongg play, where players encounter different tile styles. Table assignments rotate weekly, so players will experience a variety of tile sets throughout the season.

Players are encouraged to arrive a few minutes early to review their assigned tile set's flowers, dragons, and one bam prior to beginning.

Masterminds does not use blank tiles. All tables will use a standard American Mah Jongg set including 8 jokers and 8 flowers.

Rack styles may vary and may include hinged pushers or magnetic pushers.

League Scoring System

- Base Hand Value: The winning player receives the point value listed on the NMJL 2025 card.
- Self-Picked Bonus: +10 points when Mah Jongg is self-drawn from the wall.
- No-Joker Bonus: +20 points for hands declared without jokers. Not applicable to Singles & Pairs category.
- Wall Game: If no player declares Mah Jongg and the wall is exhausted, each eligible player receives +10 points. Players with a declared dead hand receive 0.

Scorekeeping: The player serving as East for Game 1 will record scores for the first three games. Each player must review and initial the scorecard. Only submitted scorecards are included in standings. The League Director will photograph submitted scorecards for recordkeeping.

3-Player Table Procedure

If a table has three players, the following Charleston procedure will be used:

- Build walls and self-deal to the three present players.
- Create a 'patio' of six passes of three tiles each using the absent player's wall.
- The absent player ('Mary') passes tiles sequentially during the Charleston.

- Tiles passed to Mary are set aside until after the Courtesy Pass.
- During the Courtesy Pass, all players may trade up to three tiles with Mary's unused tiles.
- Unused tiles are combined with used tiles to rebuild Mary's wall before the first tile is discarded.
- Mary may pass jokers; players may not pass jokers during the Charleston.

Final Table Qualification & Seeding

At the conclusion of week 4 of the regular season, the top four players based on cumulative standings (best three of four weekly scores) will advance to the Final Table.

If a tie affects advancement to the Final Table, the following tie-breakers will be applied in order:

1. Highest total score across all four regular-season weeks (before dropping the lowest week)
2. Highest total number of Mah Jonggs declared across all four weeks
3. Dice roll

Regular-season standings determine Final Table seeding (1st through 4th).

The #1 seed will begin Game 1 of Championship Night as East. For Games 2 and 3, East will rotate counter-clockwise in standard NMJL fashion.

No additional advantages are granted based on seeding.

Awards & Championship Night

At the end of the regular season, the Top 4 players (based on best 3 of 4 scores) advance to the Final Table.

Championship Night:

Championship Night uses the same league scoring system and tie breaker process.

Final Table plays 3 official games.

Highest cumulative score across those 3 games = League Champion.

Non-finalists:

Play redemption tables for fun and remain for the awards presentation. Redemption tables are not included in official standings.

If fewer than four players are eligible to compete on Championship Night, the League Director may adjust the Final Table format as needed.