

World Riichi Championship
—
Penalties for World Championship
2025



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Preface

This document presents the penalties to be applied at the World Riichi Championship. As such, they are tailored to a professional level of play. Other events can use a different set of penalties to suit their player base best.

References to chapters point to the main WRC rulebook 2025.

The most notable differences with WRC 2022 penalties are:

- It is now permitted to declare riichi when less than four tiles remain in the live wall.
- Problematic situations where a player incorrectly draws and mixes the tile into their hand typically result in a dead hand, as the player cannot put the tile back.
- The penalty for wrongly revealing tiles has been simplified.
- Clarification on incidents at the end of the hand.

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12 Fouls and penalties

12.1 General principles

The penalties presented in this rulebook assume the offending player is solely responsible for their actions. In case it's not the case, the penalty should be adapted to the actual situation, at the referee's discretion.

Penalties should be proportional to the level of disturbance, and players should not benefit from committing a foul. Referees have authority to adapt a penalty to the actual situation, using the *12.2 Types of penalties* section as a guide. Intentionally committing a foul is cheating; players should call a referee if a foul might benefit its perpetrator.

As a general ruling, once a player has discarded they can no longer cancel declarations or otherwise correct their hand. A player is always allowed to take a claimed tile until their next draw.

When a problem arises, the four players at the table must halt the game until it is solved. If any player is unsure on how to handle the situation, or thinks it will take them too long, they must call a referee.

To call a referee, the player should clearly say "referee" and raise their hand until a referee comes to the table. Then the players must speak one at a time to explain what happened that led to the current situation. If a player disagrees with the referee's ruling, they are encouraged to politely point out any circumstances they deem to be of importance, without arguing.

The referee can award extra time to a table delayed by an incident out of the responsibility of its players.

If a player has some disability or trouble making it hard or impossible for them to follow the rules as written, they should inform the tournament organisers as soon as possible and remind the referees before the beginning of the tournament. The head referee will do their best to accommodate any reasonable adjustments to allow smooth and fair play.

12.2 Types of penalties

WARNING — For minor offences.

Minor offences are warned but not penalized. Repeated cases or refusal to follow requests may lead to obstruction penalties at the referee's discretion.

POINT PENALTY — For moderate to major offences, or particular cases.

The points are removed from the offending player's tournament score. They are not added to the opponents' scores. It doesn't change the table's score.

(A tournament score of 1P is equivalent to 1,000 points at the table.)

For example, if a player ends the first hanchan with a table score of 40,000 points and is the best ranked at the table, their hanchan score will be $(40,000 - 30,000) / 1,000 + \text{uma } 15 = 25\text{P}$.

Since it's the first hanchan, their tournament score will also be 25P for now.

The player will start the second one with a table score of 30,000 points (new hanchan) and a tournament score of 25P.

If the player gets a 30P point penalty, their tournament score will become $25 - 30 = -5\text{P}$, but they will still have a table score of 30,000 points.

DEAD HAND — When the offending player's hand cannot continue normally.

The offending player can no longer make a sequence, triplet, quad, declare riichi nor win during this hand. This includes the interdiction to declare a concealed quad. If the player has not declared riichi, they can still choose the tiles they discard. The hand is noten.

CHONBO — When opponents's hands are significantly impacted or the game cannot continue normally.

The offending player gets a 30P point penalty, and the hand is re-dealt as if it never happened. The seat winds remain the same, no continuance counter is added nor removed, and riichi deposits made during that hand are taken back by the corresponding players. There is no "reverse mangan payment".

Some particular cases must be observed:

- If a chonbo occurs simultaneously with a win, the penalty is voided and the winning hand is scored. The seat winds rotation and continuance counters are resolved normally. The offending player is warned but not penalized.
- If a chonbo occurs simultaneously with an exhaustive draw, the penalty is applied normally. There is no tenpai payment and no continuance counters are added. The hand is re-dealt.
- If several players make a chonbo at the same time, they all get the 30P point penalty and the hand is re-dealt.

DISQUALIFICATION — When the tournament cannot continue normally.

The offending player is not allowed to play anymore for the whole tournament.

They will not be listed in the ranking.

Relevant organizations, such as the national federation the player depends on, will be informed.

12.3 Fouls

12.3.1 Shuffling and drawing

Errors occurring during the deal

Minor incidents happening during the deal are corrected without penalty.

However, if the incident is too important to overlook, the tiles are shuffled again and the hand is re-dealt without penalty.

In case the East player discards before every player has drawn their tiles, they will get a warning. The deal is completed before proceeding to the normal gameplay.

However, the East player will instead get a chonbo if it is discovered after the South player has drawn or called.

Too many or too few tiles

A player's hand must have 14 tiles during their turn, and 13 otherwise. The extra tiles in quads are not counted toward the size of a player's hand.

A player having too many or too few tiles cannot correct it and receives a chonbo.

A player failing to take a called tile before their next draw can no longer take the tile ; they will receive a chonbo for having too few tiles.

Wrongly drawing tiles

In case a player draws from the wrong place in the wall, or out of turn, they must place it back without penalty.

If the player has already included the tile into their hand, so that they can't prove which tile it was, they will receive a chonbo.

Wrongly revealing tiles

The impact of knocking over tiles is very situational, however the penalties are kept simple to ensure their ease of application.

Wrongly revealed tiles are placed back where they came from.

In case the incident happens during the deal, and if it's considered a problem, then the tiles are shuffled again without penalty.

| Situation | Penalty |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Knocking over 1 or 2 tiles | Warning, 5P point penalty if repeated |
| Knocking over 3 to 6 tiles | Dead hand |
| Knocking over 7 or more tiles | Chonbo |

12.3.2 Speed of play

Drawing too fast / Calling too late

In case a player draws too fast for the other players to have time to call, they should be reminded to adjust their speed to the table. The draw takes priority and the call is voided.

Calling too fast / Calling too late

Even if a player calls too fast, the other players can still make calls for a win as they will take priority. Multiple calls for a win are resolved by turn order.

If there is no call for a win, then the first call takes precedence.

Only the call having precedence is resolved, other calls are voided.

12.3.3 Calls and declarations

Empty call and changing a call

An empty call is the action of making a call or a declaration then cancelling it, either because the player changed their mind or is unable to make the called action.

Players are not allowed to change their calls, even with a quick correction. They get a warning and must complete the first call, or will be penalized for an empty call.

Empty calls for groups, as well as empty concealed quad and riichi declarations, result in a dead hand.

Empty winning declarations are serious offences, and result in a chonbo.

Confusing call and silent call

Players should use a valid term relative to the call they wish to make.

The valid terms are:

- For calling a sequence: "chii"
- For calling a triplet: "pon"
- For calling or declaring a quad: "kan"
- For declaring riichi: "riichi", "reach"
- For winning by calling a tile: "ron"
- For winning by self-draw: "tsumo"

A player using an alternative term (e.g. from Chinese mahjong), or not speaking clearly, must make clear what they intend to do by showing the correct tiles. The call is still valid; the player will get a warning.

For example, in case it's unclear if a player called "pon" or "ron":

- If the player reveals two tiles from their hand, it is assumed they called "pon".
- If the player reveals their whole hand, it is assumed they called "ron".

In both cases, they can perform the assumed action but no other.

Calling when having a dead hand

A player having a dead hand and making calls for groups, as well as empty concealed quad and riichi declarations, will get a 30P point penalty and the call is voided.

This point penalty does not apply if the offending player did not know their hand was dead at the time of the call. The player will instead get a warning, their hand is dead (obviously), and the call is voided.

It is recommended to point out dead hands as soon as they are spotted.

A player declaring a win with a dead hand will get a chonbo, even if they were not aware of their hand status.

12.3.4 Melds

Invalid group

A player melding a group that is neither a sequence, triplet nor quad, or declaring a false concealed quad, can correct it as long as they haven't discarded. After discarding, the invalid group cannot be changed and the player has a dead hand.

In the case of an invalid quad discovered after discarding, the player will instead get a chonbo. This is because invalid quads interfere with replacement tiles and the maximum number of quads, so the game cannot continue normally.

Swap-calling

Swap-calling is determined when the player discards, and results in a dead hand. The melded group and the discarded tile cannot be changed.

However, if the player already had a dead hand, the call is voided and they are penalized for calling with a dead hand, as described in the *12.3.3 Calls and declarations* chapter.

Wrong placement of the called tile

The tile called to make a group must be placed sideways to indicate the player discarding it. If the caller places it incorrectly, or rotates the wrong tile, it must be pointed out and corrected immediately without any penalty.

It is very important for all players to check, because the way the group is displayed serves as evidence to know who had discarded the tile. So if it is left uncorrected, it may lead to a player being considered furiten on a tile they haven't actually discarded.

For example, in case a player places the central tile of a sequence sideways, then the table situation indicates that the player sat opposite is the discarder and so is furiten on that tile. It also indicates the caller made a wrong call, since it's forbidden to call from the player sitting opposite for a sequence, and thus has a dead hand.

12.3.5 Riichi declarations

A riichi declaration is completed when the player either says "riichi" (or "reach"), discards a tile sideways, or pays the 1,000 points deposit.

Forgetting to say "riichi" or to pay the deposit

The declaration is valid. The player gets a warning.

Forgetting to rotate the discarded tile

In case a player forgets to place their discard sideways and if the tile to turn is unknown, the earliest discarded tile among the supposed ones is chosen regarding furiten. The player gets a warning.

Noten riichi

A player declaring riichi on a noten hand is penalized with a chonbo. This is only determined if the player declares a win or in case of an exhaustive draw.

The noten riichi penalty does not apply if the player's hand is noten solely due to a dead hand penalty occurring after the riichi declaration. The player will have to show their hand to prove it was tenpai before the dead hand penalty, else they would be penalized normally for noten riichi. The player still pays for being noten, and if they are East the deal rotates.

Declaring riichi with an open hand

A player declaring riichi on an open hand is penalized with a dead hand. The riichi declaration is not valid, so they don't pay the deposit.

Opening the hand

Calling for a sequence, triplet or called quad after having declared riichi is penalized with a dead hand. The call is voided.

The player can declare a concealed quad with the tile drawn this turn, in accordance to *8.9.1 Concealed quad after riichi*.

Discarding a tile from the hand

A player discarding a tile from their hand after having declared riichi will get a dead hand. In case the hand ends in a draw, the offending player would get a chonbo for noten riichi, since they cannot prove their hand was valid when they declared riichi.

Invalid concealed quad

A player declaring an invalid concealed quad after having declared riichi is penalized with a chonbo. This case is only determined if the player declares a win or in case of an exhaustive draw.

12.3.6 End of the hand

Winning by self-draw after mixing the winning tile into the hand

In case the winning tile is ambiguous, the player gets a warning and ambiguous minipoints and yaku cannot be scored.

Of course, the player still scores minipoints and yaku for which the hand would qualify no matter which tile is the winning tile.

See the *11.1 Keeping the winning tile apart* section.

Confusing win / tenpai declaration

When winning on the last tile, players should be careful to make their win declaration explicit, to not be mistaken with a tenpai declaration.

- If the player reveals their hand and immediately declares a win, the win is valid.
- If the player clearly first declares tenpai and then a win, the win declaration is voided because the hand is already over.

Playing after the end of the hand

A player mistakenly drawing or calling after the live wall is exhausted will get a warning.

However, if the player mixes the drawn tile into their hand, they will get a dead hand (i.e. their hand will be noten for the tenpai / noten payment).

Any calls, including win declarations, are voided without further penalties.

Tenpai / noten declaration before the end of the hand

A player declaring tenpai or noten before the end of the hand, without revealing their tiles, will get a dead hand.

However, they will get a chonbo if they reveal their hand, or if it tricks another player to declare tenpai and reveal their hand.

Tenpai / noten declaration out of order

It is tolerated if a player declares tenpai or noten before their turn, but they cannot change their declaration.

Silent tenpai / noten declaration

There is no obligation to vocally declare tenpai or noten.

In any way, players have to turn their hands respectively face up or down.

Incorrect tenpai / noten declaration

A player declaring their hand tenpai when it is not gets a warning.

Repeated offences will lead to a 5P point penalty.

However, it is allowed to declare the hand noten when it is tenpai.

Changing a tenpai / noten declaration

Players are not allowed to change their tenpai / noten declaration, even if done before their turn.

The first declaration is used, and the player gets a warning.

12.3.7 Incorrect score reporting

Incorrect all-last sheet

In case the all-last sheet is completed wrong, and if it has impacted the game, the offending player will get an 8P point penalty.

Incorrect report sheet

All players must make sure the report sheet is filled correctly, including other players' scores.

In case a report sheet is submitted with incorrect information, and the players have already reset their scoring sticks before the referee could check it, then each player will get a 2P point penalty.

The scores are corrected if possible.

12.3.8 Obstruction and cheating

Obstruction

Obstruction covers any action preventing or hindering the smooth processing of the game or tournament. It is not limited to the playing time; a player can also be sanctioned for their bad behaviour during break time.

Obstructions are subject to penalties at the referee's discretion, depending on the situation.

Repeated or very serious obstructive behaviour can result in disqualification.

Don't abuse the rules.

Don't exploit loop-holes in the rules.

Examples of obstruction:

- Discarding in such a way not every player can see the tile at the same time.
- Placing tiles face down after having declared riichi.
- Repeatedly using incorrect terms after being asked to use the official terminology.
- Revealing other players' hand or the wall after the end of the hand.
- Revealing the ura dora despite not having declared riichi and won.
- Putting foreign objects on the table.
- Chatting.
- Making overly loud sounds.
- Tapping on the table outside your turn.
- Repeatedly tapping, twirling or fidgeting with tiles.

- Stalling for time.
- Refusing to count your points when asked.
- Repeatedly asking to recount the score beyond reason.

Examples of obstruction, with suspicion of cheating:

- Touching other players' sticks.
- Touching the wall outside your turn or during scoring.
- Hiding the tiles with your hand or arm during play or while scoring.
- Resting your hand in the middle of the table.
- Chatting in a language a player or referee doesn't understand.
- Not stopping the game when a player raises an issue. Or resume playing before the issue is resolved.

Foreign objects

Foreign objects like phones, smart watches, smart glasses, notebooks, tablets, or anything hiding the tiles are forbidden. The penalty is at the referee's discretion, depending on the level of disturbance and the risk of cheating.

Racks are typically discouraged. Where a player has a compelling personal requirement for a rack, the player must get prior approval from the head referee to ensure they don't obscure tiles.

Yaku lists, scoring tables, simple calculators and a sheet of paper to record the score are allowed, but should be consulted between hands and not during.

Players must make sure to turn off or mute their phone. Phones and electronic devices of any kind should not be at the table. This includes wearing a smart watch.

A player wearing smart glasses will be disqualified for cheating.

Passing information

Please note communication at the table is expected to be limited to mahjong actions like calls, declarations, and resolution of incidents.

It is good manners to correct a player who is about to commit a foul, so they can correct or cancel it in time.

It is recommended to make it clear if a player has a dead hand.

Scoring and payment errors must be pointed out and corrected.

Revealing information meant to be kept secret is penalized at the referee discretion, depending on how much it impacts the game.

It does not matter whether the disclosed information is accurate or wrong.

This includes notably, but is not limited to:

- Safe and dangerous tiles.
- Players' strategy.
- Yaku aimed for.
- Tenpai/noten status of a hand (outside of an exhaustive draw).
- Furiten status (as it would give info on the waiting tiles).
- Anything that would disclose the face of concealed tiles.
- Whereas the discarded tile is the one the player has drawn or not. (Seeing and memorising the tiles is considered to be a mahjong skill.)

Cheating

A player caught cheating will be disqualified immediately.

Intentionally committing a foul, as well as tricking a player to commit a foul, is cheating.

In case a player performs some unnatural action that supposedly changes nothing to the game, the other players should call a referee, as it could very well be a distraction to hide a sleight-of-hand.

Examples of obstruction, with severe suspicion of cheating:

- Moving a tile away from or under the table.
- Switching identical tiles among the discards.
- Using any communication or computing device not sanctioned by the tournament organizers.
- Giving false information about the rule.

12.3.9 Being late and missing a hanchan

Being late for a hanchan

A player being late for a hanchan gets a 1P point penalty per minute.

After ten minutes, they forfeit the hanchan.

Forfeiting a hanchan

A player not showing up in time to play, or leaving during a hanchan, will not get any point and will have a 30P point penalty; they are replaced by a substitute player for the hanchan.

This penalty is not cumulative with the 10P point penalty for being late ten minutes. A player who is late by ten minutes and is substituted will only be penalized 30P points for missing the hanchan.

At the head referee discretion, a player intentionally missing a hanchan without good reason can be disqualified for obstruction; especially if they leave the table when their score is below the penalty, or if the penalty doesn't make a real difference regarding their current tournament score.

Substitute players

Substitute players are scored normally and then not included in the ranking.

They are expected to play normally, so as to not give any advantage or disadvantage to the ranked players at their table toward players at other tables.

Temporary leaving during a hanchan

Players are not allowed to take breaks during a hanchan. The penalty is at the referee's discretion, depending on the situation.

However, a quick toilet break can be tolerated between hands, after informing the other players.