## Play These

# Hands With Me 

## - A Guided Tour To Mahiong Competition Rules



## Introduction

Since I started playing Mahjong, I have always wished there were more literature about Mahjong theory - especially for MCR (Mahjong Competition Rules), which is the rule set I personally prefer. Here is my contribution to filling that void.

I have assumed that you as a reader already have a basic knowledge of MCR and it's scoring system, so I will not explain that further in this book.

This book is a set of 16 hands where I have collected and condensed the discussions between myself and my fellow club members in Uppsala Mahjong. It was inspired by Morten Andersen who started discussing Riichi hands with the Danish players, and I wanted to do something similar for MCR.

The format of the book is that we follow a "real" game of between four players: $A, B, C(=u s)$, and $D$, and every time we get to an interesting choice we stop for a question, followed by an "answer" - or at least a discussion about the possible options, since there might not be a clear correct answer to each situation. This Q\&A format is what we used in the group discussions, and I decided to keep that also for the book.

I have played the other three hands but tried to do so without using the knowledge about the hidden tiles, and the same goes for the discussions. Sometimes when the choices are rather obvious, I have skipped a few turns in order to focus on the interesting situations.

Mahjong is a game of incomplete information and in many cases, there are no clearly correct or wrong answers - more a matter of playing style. So bare with me and understand that it in many ways are influenced by my own personal preferences. In my opinion, in every situation there might always be one choice that is slightly better than the others, even if the difference is marginal, and if you make the right decision in those situations, you will improve your results in the long run.

Mahjong is also a game of speed, so you will not have time to fully analyze every situation at the table. Therefore it is useful to analyze the situations afterwards if possible, like I have done here, in order to get a better intuition for similar situations at the table.

The scoring system of MCR rewards speed before greed, i.e., in most situations it is better to go for a fast and cheap Mahjong instead of something more expensive. Therefore, I have in most hands focused on the fastest way to get to an 8-point Mahjong.

The things to consider when making your decisions will in most cases depend on the following aspects: 1) How far are you from ready? 2) How many of the tiles that you need are available, and how likely is it that your opponents will discard those?, and 3) How dangerous are the tiles you need to discard? I suggest that you keep these things in mind when answering the questions.

Enjoy!

## About the illustrations




Discarding
the tile picked
from the wall

## $=$ italic



Seat winds


Discard from the hand = non-italic


Number of tiles left in the wall

The winning hand and the Mahjong tile are enclosed by dashed boxes.
$\qquad$ .ttf from Fonts2u.com

## Hand 1

婳in困 Round

| 西 |
| :---: |



East started by discarding 国 and South punged it．Then South discarded 偊． Shall we make a chow？


| 西 |
| :--- |
| 19 |
| 19 |



No, it is too early to open the hand. We don't know in which direction this hand will go.

(4) E1

## 

Instead we picked 臿. What shall we discard?



| 西 |
| :--- |
| 61 |
| 61 |



The best plan is probably to discard the honor tiles and see how things develop．Since we know that we don＇t want to keep the honor tiles it is best to start with the non－played ones first，because it is better that an opponent makes a pung from us rather than from someone else since then we might lose a turn．Here 猤 is a good choice．




We discarded our honor tiles and then some more honor tiles that we got.






Now we have come closer to either Outside hand or Mixed triple chows. 關 does not fit in this plan, so let's discard it.


We picked the last 圈. Shall we make a Kong, or what shall we do otherwise?



No．If we make a Kong now，we will destroy our potential Mixed triple chows，and also the possibility to use 睩風 as a pair．Instead we should discard one of the 3 s －but which？：looks more dangerous since South might go for Half flush．（But maybe it might be better to discard it before South is waiting？）Well，let＇s discard fit



If we think : is too dangerous to discard, then we need to build our hand around it. Outside hand is still an option, but we could also do a concealed hand with small points. 圈 does not look that dangerous so let's discard it.



明日日昌（


## 花思花花荡花思思 <br> （萬

Then followed two laps when we picked and discarded 由 and 兆．
Meanwhile North and South have discarded one ©each and East has made



## 園園園 <br> 

 also the chance of getting a chow is quite small，so we play it safe by discarding


Q
 to chow－if we had discarded 眚 or 圈instead of 娄．Instead we picked 園． What next？


Now the only realistic chance is to do Fully concealed + Concealed kong + Terminal pung + No honors. Thus, we can make the kong now and see what we will get.
花荡花荡

Till

We did the kong and picked［筚 as replacement tile．What shall we discard now？


$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { 四 } \\
& \text { [1IIT }
\end{aligned}
$$

Now it is probably best to abandon the hand and make a safe discard．Since North just discarded 囦，that should be the safest．


We discarded 睢 and the game ended by East discarding 蒮 to Norths Mixed shifted chows.

Analysis: We got some difficult situations, and maybe did not make the best choices, but at least we managed not to discard the winning tile.

As we suspected from the discards, South was going for a Half flush, and since none of the had been discarded, that looked like a dangerous tile. However, in this case it would not have given South the Mahjong, but instead a possibility for South to make a Kong and thus get the extra point needed for 8 points. It was way more difficult to figure out what East and North were doing, so this is worth thinking about when you go for Half flush.

## Scores after hand 1



## Hand 2

固 in困 Round

## 

What is your opinion of the starting hand? What shall we discard?


## 

We have some different possibilities：All types，Outside hand，Knitted and honors，Mixed straight，Mixed shifted chows．In order to keep as many as possible of those options open，we discard 㴔（開 is also an option in that case，but that gives slightly less chance for Chicken hand）．


West discarded 困 and then North discarded 兆．Shall we make a pung？


No，I don＇t think so．If we do that，the only options left are All types or Outside hand．Besides，we risk having a 7－point hand，since a 班班班 only gives us one point．The hand is too flexible and too far away to do a pung at this point．But I often see players pung as soon as they have a pair of winds and a dragon on the side－or the other way around．


## 

We passed on the pung and instead we picked 聞. What shall we do now?


## 旦昭 萬 葛 罩

Now we are one step closer to Knitted and honors．We can still keep some of the other options open，e．g．All types or Mixed chows（straight／shifted）． The choice is between 周 and 蘭，and I would prefer to discard 周，since
 we cannot use ${ }^{\text {xixy }}$ ．


## 中荀燤贎旦时明明

We discarded 四 and in the next two rounds we picked two uninteresting
 the plan now？


## 

Our main options are to go for Knitted and honors or Pung＋Pair＋Knitted straight．We can keep our pairs in 四 and 用and keep both options by discarding 關．



We discarded 開 and in the next two rounds we picked two uninteresting tiles．Then we picked 圆and we discarded 園．After that we picked several uninteresting tiles until we picked 鷭．What is the plan now？


Now we need to decide between Knitted and honors or Knitted straight＋ Pung＋Pair．We have 12 tiles in both cases but there are only two 闦 left， which is needed for Knitted straight and no more 侊 left，so we need two specific tiles for that option．And we have a safe discard in 兆，so I would go for Knitted and honors．


We discarded 聞．Then we picked a ${ }^{\text {Ro8 }}$ that looked quite safe，so we dared to discard it．Finally we picked a 聧 and since East just discarded 用，we dared to get rid of the 用 to get a wait．Unfortunately，the game ended by East discarding 戠so that West could win．

Analysis：We had a tricky hand with some different options，but gradually the hand turned into Knitted＋honors，which could be a slow hand since you need to pick many tiles yourself．The positive side is that you will get to a triple wait when you get to the wait．

It was difficult to see what the others were waiting for，especially West who hadn＇t opened the hand．

## Scores after hand 2



## Hand 3

困 in困 Round


What is your opinion of the starting hand? What shall we discard?


I think it is best to get rid of the honor tiles and see how the hand develops.



## 

We discarded our honor tiles and instead we picked another and then罟．What shall we do now？


| $B$ | 交 | 䓪 | 萬 | 萬 | 日 ${ }^{\text {B }}$ | 甼 | (8) | (8) | $\begin{array}{\|c\|c\|} (3) \\ (8) \end{array}$ | （8） |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |

There are several possible combinations：Knitted straight，Mixed shifted chows，Mixed straight，Pure straight，Concealed hand＋All Chows＋All simples，All pungs．If we discard 圈，then we keep all those options open －except for All pungs，which probably is not so close anyway．



## 昌昌

 What shall we do now？

 that we need three specific tiles 園盧雨 and we need to pick two of them ourselves before we get to a wait．We are also 3 away from Concealed＋ All chows＋All simples，and then there are four tiles that we can use：
 Short straight，Mixed double chows or Closed wait．And it is also possible to improve the hand into e．g．Mixed shifted chows or Mixed straight．The extra points that the Knitted straight gives does not compensate the fewer options．We can discard圈 or 四，but 國is slightly better since we keep the possibility for Mixed straight．


We discarded 聞．West made a pung of 班班兆 and then North discarded图．Shall we make a chow？


No. Making a chow will lock ourselves to one specific combination either Mixed straight or Mixed shifted chows, depending on which chow we make and what we decide to discard.


Instead of making the chow, we picked 園ourselves! What shall we do now?


The best chance is still Concealed + All chows + All simples, and thus we don't have any use for 疋. Further, there are still possibilities to improve the hand.

## 



After a couple of rounds North discarded 症. Shall we make a chow?

 All chows (2) + All simples (2) + Short straight (1) + Mixed double chows (1) $\times 2+$ Closed wait (1), so this is the perfect tile for us to chow and get to a wait.

 which we discarded immediately, and South made a pung. Then West discarded so that we could make a Mahjong.

Analysis: We had a flexible hand, and in the end, we could go for a hand with small points. It is important to be able to count the small points so that you can be sure to get 8 points.

## Scores after hand 3



## Hand 4死 in 困 Round





What is your opinion of the starting hand？What shall we discard？


## 

We have a chance to make something in Characters, e.g. Pure straight or Pure shifted chows. Other options are to do Concealed + All chows + All simples, or some Mixed chows combination. All types is also a possibility. Let's start by discarding 田, and see how things develop.


Next, we picked 窎. What shall we do now?


All types is now less likely so we can discard 珑.


West discarded 番. Do we want to make a chow?


No, then we will destroy two of our ready chows, and we risk that it will be obvious that we play Mixed straight. It is better to keep the hand concealed for the moment.


Instead we picked 闐. What shall we discard?


## 

We have pairs in both 囲 and 聧，so we can get rid of both the 聧．


## 

While discarding the two 聧，we first picked 閩 and then 㣎．What shall we discard now？


## 



## 

It looks more and more like All simples, so we don't have any use for ( [ might still be useful for Mixed shifted/triple chows, so we can keep it for now.



In order to continue with the plan of Concealed＋All chows＋All simples，I think the best discard is 霛．


Next time we got a 兆 that we let go immediately．Then West discarded圆．Shall we make a chow？


No，we need to keep the hand concealed in order to have enough points．


We decided not to chow, and instead we picked 圈. What shall we discard?

 discard 滴 and thereby keep the possibility of Mixed triple chows 678.


We picked . What shall we discard, and do we have enough points to win on a discard?


## 

Now we have enough points with Concealed＋All chows＋All simples $+2 x$ Mixed double chows＋Closed wait．Thus we can discard 营 and wait for 閬．



East chowed our 關．Unfortunately，the game ended when West discarded 䛜 and South made Mahjong．

Analysis：We managed to get to a wait with a concealed hand＋small points．East went for a rather expected Pure straight，and West got unlucky as the 滴 got dangerous right after we had discarded it．

## Scores after hand 4



## Hand 5

## 死 in南 Round



Here we come into the game after having discarded several uninteresting tiles．In the meantime，South has already punged $\square$ and 爽聧联，but fortunately there is only one 用 left，so at least it cannot be Little three dragons．We have just picked 睅．What is the plan？


We are just missing one tile for Mixed shifted chows，but then we also need a pair and a side combination．Even though we have four pairs，we need all these tiles for the Mixed shifted chows．We can make the side
 chowing 四園，or 番．Otherwise we might get a single wait for the pair． Another option is 7 pairs，but I think that is too far away since we have such a flexible chow hand．The tile that we have the least use of is 橉．

One small detail：we can discard either the 蛋 that we just picked，or from the hand．If we make the switch，then we give away the information that we preferred it before the other tiles that we already discarded，so in my opinion it is better to discard the tile that we just picked．


We discarded 疄．After three more rounds we picked 橉．The bad news is that South has made a kong $\square \square \square$ and a pung 蹋量品．What is your opinion of the situation？


South is obviously very close to Mahjong now．However，it does not look like Half flush，but instead one voided suit is quite likely．In any case the hand will not be very expensive．We want to get rid of 圈 and 隐，and both look quite safe against South．The extra 营 can be used in a chow窶富園，but the extra園 is not really useful，so we can discard it first．


Q
We discarded 園 and the next time we picked 國．What shall we do now？


If we discard 恩，then we wait for 窧．But we need to pick it ourselves in order to get 8 points：Fully concealed（4）＋All chows（2）＋Mixed double chows（1）＋Closed wait（1）．We have also the chance of improving the hand by picking 副，since then we have enough points on discard．
Another option is to discard 圈 or 比 and go for Mixed straight，but since there are only two 眆left，that gives a lower likelihood．

 Mahjong since we only have 6 points. Next time we picked . What shall we do now?

© is a dangerous tile, but at least we know that it will not be very expensive if South makes a Mahjong. Let's gamble and discard it.



Wrong decision！South called Mahjong on our
Analysis：In retrospect，there are several things that indicates that is a dangerous tile．South has three main options：Half flush，All pungs，Two dragons＋small points．It does no look like Half flush since South has discarded 四and 闒 at an early stage．If South is going for small points， then Voided suit is very likely，and in that case，it looks like Characters since South discarded 圈 and 圈 after another（before making the kong）． If South has anything in Dots，then it is probably not in the neighborhood of 巤 and 関，since those were discarded early．The only remaining tiles are 国！Elementary my dear Watson，as Sherlock Holmes would have said．Or is this conclusion too much guided by the view of all hands．．．？

## Scores after hand 5



## Hand 6

## 西 in南 Round




What is your opinion of the starting hand? What is the plan and what shall we discard?


We have some possible plans：All types，Chicken hand，Pure straight．The tile that fit the least into any of those is 冨，so we start by discarding that．


## 

We discarded 園 and then we picked 睅．What shall we do now？




葛


Many players would go for All types in a situation like this where we have a pair in winds or dragons, but we are quite far away from Mahjong if we do that. We can discard a dragon and see what happens. Then it will not be so obvious if we decide to go for All types later.


## 

We discarded $\square$ and then we picked賔. What shall we do next?



## 

We don't really have any use for 圈, so we can discard it before we decide to discard the second dragon.


## 

We discarded 圈 and then we picked 図．Is it time now to discard聧，or shall we wait further？


## 

We have too many useful Dots to go for All types (but too few for half flush), so I think it is time to discard 聧 now.
登 䜤 登


［
We discarded 聧 and East called pung．Next time we picked 聞。 What shall we do now？


We have several different options:

- 7 pairs. 3 tiles away. Need to pick the first two ourselves.
- Pure shifted chows. 4 tiles away. Need to pick or chow 3 specific tiles R? 2 and make a side combination.

 we have enough points.

 need to make sure that the hand is not concealed.
(continued on the next page)


These tiles are candidates to be discarded：
－聞爵 keeps the possibility of 7 pairs and Pure shifted chows．Decreases the chance for Mixed shifted／triple chows．
－destroys the possibility of Pure shifted chows．
（cont）－困 destroys the possibility of 7 pairs and Chicken hand．
－園 destroys the possibility of 7 pairs and decreases the chance for Chicken hand．

When considering the options I think we should mainly focus on the odds for the different possibilities and not look the differences in points． Speed is more important than a slightly higher value．Therefore，the best option is to discard in this situation．
花花花思



## Til



Let＇s look at the options again：
－ 7 pairs． 3 tiles away．Need to pick the first two ourselves．
開闌 to improve the hand．We need to make sure that we have enough points．
 improve the hand．We can also pung 関 or 園．We need to make sure that the hand is not concealed，and we need to make a pung， otherwise we get either Mixed double chows or Mixed shifted chows．
－Concealed hand＋small points． 3 tiles away．Need to combine with Fully concealed and／or All simples＋two more points．
（continued on the next page）

## 背（2）

These tiles are candidates to be discarded：
 shifted／triple chows．The following tiles will improve the hand：
 chowed／punged．
 improve the hand $=5$ different（19 physical）， 5 can be chowed．
－園 destroys the possibility of 7 pairs and decreases the chance of Chicken hand．［［ix physical）， 6 can be chowed／punged．Note that we cannot chow［i］ since we then cannot get 8 points on Mixed shifted chows，and that


It is quite clear that we will have the best possibilities if we discard 触 in $^{\text {in }}$ this situation．Of course it is difficult to have time do this type of calculations at the table，but by doing it in an exercise like this will give you a better intuition when you need to make a quick decision in a real game．


We discarded 触 and the next time we picked 四，which we let go immediately．North picked and discarded 圈，which East chowed．Then East discarded 園．Shall we make a pung？


## 

 Yes, this is a good opportunity to make the pung, discard 睢 and go for a Chicken hand. Then we will have 5 different tiles that will give us a wait: wait. Now we have locked ourselves to a specific path and the only thing that can make us change our minds is if we draw tiles that seem very dangerous.



We made the pung and discarded 緟．Then we picked and discarded The next time we picked 政．Shall we discard it or something else？


 tiles left to improve the hand．If we discard
 safer since East has recently discarded it．Thus，the best discard is 閽。




We discarded 蘭，but unfortunately the game ended when East discarded 䀝 and North made a Mahjong with a Mixed straight．

Analysis：We had several options，but none of them let us come to a wait．How you play this type of hand is much a matter of playing style． Some players would early decide to go for either All types or Half flush， but in my opinion，you would then often end up with a rather obvious hand．

## Scores after hand 6



## Hand 7

## 南in南 Round



西

We started by discarding our only honor tile and then we picked a second [II. What are our options and what shall we discard?



北苯


西思
 was between 围風風園．Are these still the candidates，or are there more？ What is the best plan now？


西思


北苯

（2）（8）


西田窝

We discarded 兔 and then West discarded 图．Shall we make a kong？


## (36) (8) (8) (8) (8) T2虽

You should never make a kong if you don't have a good reason why. In many cases you will open your hand, decrease your possibilities and give information to your opponents. However, the current situation is an exception. We are aiming for Mixed shifted chows and we are currently missing one point. By making the kong, we are guaranteed to have at least 8 points if we get the Mixed shifted chows.


We made the kong，in order to secure 8 points if we get Mixed shifted chows．Unfortunately，we did not manage to improve the hand further， and the game was ended by East discarding 嵬 and North made a Mahjong．

Analysis：Again a flexible，but somewhat slow hand．Two things to note here：1）Only make a Kong if you really know why．In this case it was justified by the potential need for the extra point．2）The combination嵬窨gave us four tiles 園置園園 that we could pick to get closer to Mixed shifted chows．

## Scores after hand 7



## Hand 8

困 in田 Round

We started by discarding our only honor tile，and the next time we picked 雚．What possible plans do we have and what shall we discard？


We have a flexible hand with several possibilities．The best option is Mixed




 discard 蕰，we keep all these options and also Mixed triple chows 謥園園

 5 away．


## 䔍鹳西



北影娄


We discarded［匽，and the next time we picked 朿，which we discarded immediately．Then we picked 䆲．What shall we do now？




玭国

 discard 嵬，we give up the possibility of Pure straight or Pure shifted chows，or 瞩偊國as side combination，but instead we get the possibility
 side，i．e．，we get 3 extra physical tiles that we can use for our side combination．There are also the possibilities to pung 娄 or 圈 as a side combination，so 㽧 has still value．Therefore，圃is the best discard．



We discarded 瞩，and then we skip forward some rounds since we got some quite obvious discards．In the meantime West made a pung 困 ${ }^{*}$ 困




Yes，it is good to make the chow and thus move closer to ready．If we chow［50［ix（and go for Mixed shifted chows），we will have to discard 暍
 might lead to a situation where we don＇t have enough points if we get the chow 開聞開 ${ }^{\circ}$ before we get the pung．A better option is to make the chow Fexitit（and go for Mixed triple chows），since then we will always have enough points and we will have a double－sided possibility for our side combination with 娄窧．Thus，the best thing is to make the chow ［xix



We made the chow（10 South．The next time we picked and discarded it immediately（we still want to hide that we had a choice before to make a chow with（ punged also our $\square$ ．The following round we picked and discarded $\square$ ，and then we picked 四，which might be useful，so we let go of the ${ }^{(0}$ ．Then
地喼園 and what shall we discard？


This is not a trick question - but rather an example of how small decisions can increase your chances slightly. In this case there is no
 but it affects how the opponents view our hand. If we decide to discard



 cannot hesitate regarding which tiles to put on the table after we have called 'Chow', and that we should have sorted the tiles in advance so that we can make both chows by picking tiles next to each other, e.g.

(continued on the next page)


I don＇t think the 2 extra points for Mixed triple chows matters when making the decision．Instead，focus on 1）Which tile gives the best chance？，and 2） Which tile is most dangerous？
For 1）there is nothing that indicates that there is a bigger chance－strictly mathematically－to get 聞 or ${ }^{\text {間，but in general the opponents might be }}$ more reluctant to discard a 5 than a 7 ．But we also need to consider what

 table，then both look equally dangerous．
Regarding 2）we have early on discarded 畼 and North has more recently discarded 閣．This in combination with that a 4 in general is more flexible than an 8，makes 閭 a safer choice．
I think both 1）and 2）indicates that it is better to discard（and thus make the chow as 地窶窝）and sacrifice the 2 extra points．

## 



We made the chow 地寉國 and discarded 蘭．This gave us an immediate reward since West discarded 菛 for us to make Mahjong．

Analysis：South also could have made Mahjong on 闃，but we were the first in turn．If we had discarded 盛，then both South and North could have made Mahjong！In this hand some small details could become quite important， e．g．how you sort the tiles in order to chose which chow to put on the table without giving away information，and the importance of not hesitating when doing it．It is also interesting to note the we initially decided to discard 四，but later when the hand had changed，葍 became an important tile．

## Scores after hand 8



## Hand 9

困 in国 Round

申


We started by discarding our only honor tile 中．The next time we picked鳃．What possible plans do we have，and what shall we discard？


中

The best option is Knitted straight with 嵬倳 as the pair and a chow with
 a possibility for Mixed shifted chows with 亚㝯 as the pair，but that is 5 away．I think we should optimize for Knitted straight and keep both chow
 whether we should discard the 風 that we just have drawn or the one from the hand？In this situation it is a matter of what information we want to give the opponents．In both cases we are telling that either we already have a 莟，or that we are not interested in anything in its neighborhood．If we discard the one that we just picked，we also tell that that tile did not get us closer to Mahjong．Is that good or bad to reveal？In my opinion it is most often better to discard the tile we just picked，since then we don＇t give the information that we kept it before other tiles we already have discarded．


中 time we picked a second 四．Is that useful to us？Which tiles would be useful for us to call or pick ourselves？


甲夌

The following tiles would improve our hand：
－Pick／chow 䦔 or 闃 and discard 閣 or 夏。


－Pick 图 and discard 圈．

If we pick 圈，then we should rather use it for the Knitted straight than in the side combination，so therefore it could be better to discard 撚 and keep
 discard is 比．



Now when we have decided which tiles are useful for us then the game will be very much on auto－pilot for us．The game continued and we managed to get one step closer as we picked 開，but finally South discarded \＆and North made Mahjong．

Analysis：We could decide rather early that we should go for Knitted straight＋pair＋side combination．The drawback is that we need some specific tiles，so it might be slow．

## Scores after hand 9

UPPSSLA MAHNONG
Round $\square$ Table 1


## Hand 10

班 in国 Round


What is your opinion of the starting hand? What shall we discard?



We have many options of building a chow-based hand, e.g. Mixed shifted chows, Mixed straight or a Concealed hand + All chows + All simples. I think it is best to discard our honor tiles first and see how the hand develops.


We discarded our two honor tiles and instead we picked two useful tiles：圈 and 㞔．What is the plan now and what shall we discard？

（B）
This hand is very ideal for Concealed hand＋All chows＋All simples．We
 regardless of which we pick we will have a double sided wait that always will give us the two extra points that we need（I leave it as a practice for you to calculate the small points for those four cases）．Thus，we don＇t have any use for 䦓 and［［ can be best to get rid of the tile that is most useful for the opponents first， before it becomes dangerous，in this case 比。


葛 We discarded 鬯 and after having picked and immediately discarded 聧，we picked 类．Is that tile useful to us？Are there any tiles that we can pick or call that would make us change the main plan of doing Concealed hand＋All chows＋All simples？



No, there are no tiles that could make us change the plan - unless anything
 wait. We don't want to chow any of those tiles, since then we would not have enough points.

## （



We discarded the 国 and soon after that we picked 葍 and got to a wait，but unfortunately the game ended by East discarding 窑 for South to make Mahjong．

Analysis：We got to a perfect double－sided wait for Concealed＋All chows＋ All simples +2 more points，but unfortunately South also had a hand that was quick and difficult to read．

## Scores after hand 10

UPPSALA MALHONG neome $\square 1 \square$ rome $\square$


## Hand 11

国 in 固 Round


What is your opinion of the starting hand? What shall we discard?


Here is an analysis of our options：

－Chicken hand． 4 away．Need two pungs and 2 chows．Wait for a pung．

－Knitted straight＋pair＋chow／pung． 4 away．Need 3 specific tiles＋a double－sided chow．Discard（aisi

－Mixed straight／shifted chows． 5 away．Need 3 chows and pick 橉，固，䕎 or 聞．Discard 围胃国園。
－All types． 6 away．Need to pick winds and make chows／pungs．Discard園國。
The tile that will keep most of those options open is probably 围．


We discarded 嵬，and the next time we picked 四．What shall we do now？


The least useful tile is 園．If we discard that，we have still the same options open as before and the chances of Mixed straight／shifted chows，and Chicken hand have increased．


We discarded 園 and North made a chow．The next time we picked 比， which we discarded immediately．Then South discarded Shall we make a chow，and in that case what shall we discard？


If we make the chow，we will give up the possibility of making 7 pairs，but we will get closer to Mixed shifted chows and Chicken hand（also 3 away）． Those hands are probably faster since we can call chows and pungs．The drawback is that we either need to make sure that we have enough points （Mixed shifted chows）or no points at all（Chicken hand）．The best discard is 目，since we cannot use that for a pung in a Chicken hand，whereas 塁 can be punged and might be more flexible．


We made the chow and discarded ．The next time we picked 由，which we discarded immediately and then we picked 薥．What shall we do now？



We discarded 品 and then North discarded $\square$. Shall we make a pung?


Yes, if we make the pung we are one step closer to Mixed shifted chows, and the dragon pung gives us the two extra points that we need. We can either discard with mixed chows, than something in Characters, so more dangerous. Is it better to keep the dangerous tile as long as possible or discard it as soon as possible? Since we are quite close to waiting and thus probably will discard both those tiles, I would prefer to discard the more dangerous tile first before it becomes even more dangerous.


We made the pung and discarded 圈．The next time we picked and discarded 闃．Then South discarded


If we make the chow（and discard 畨）we will probably have to pick 園 since most likely，no one will discard 娄（or 曾）．The advantage is of course that we will come to a wait．Another small advantage is that it could also look like we are waiting for all types，but in both cases，it would look like anything close to the 圈 is dangerous．On the other hand，if we don＇t make the chow，we need to pick the 园 or 娄 ourselves first．The advantage is that it is more difficult for the opponents to see what we need．There is also the possibility that we will get the chance to chow 眚 and then they might not think that we need ${ }^{\circ}$ ．This situation is very much a matter of playing style．In any case，it is very important that we do not hesitate before making the decision．（If we do，then we might as well make the chow，since it was obvious that we could do it．）


We decided not to make the chow（and no one noticed that we hesitated）． Then we skip ahead a few rounds where the only interesting thing that happened was that we picked 国and discarded 蝈．（国 could be useful for All types if we pick another，and also for pretending like going for All types．）We also picked 窧，which we discarded．Then South discarded 堅． Shall we make a chow？


This development is ideal－at least almost．If we make the chow and discard 国，it could look like we are going for All types and have a single wait for a wind．Unfortunately，this was destroyed when we discarded 賜． Now it only looks like Mixed shifted chows．However，we are in a better position than before，since there are four different Dot tiles that look
 them．


We made the chow and after a couple of rounds North discarded so that we could get our Mahjong.

Analysis: Of course this example does not prove that it was the correct decision not to chow in the first time, but at least it shows the difference in what the opponents can tell about our hand and what tiles they might be willing to discard.

## Scores after hand 11



## Hand 12

固in国 Round

We start this game with a quite mediocre starting hand. What do you think about the situation, and shall we make a chow with the 園that East initially discarded?


## 

Tough situation．I am not sure what is the best thing to do here，but with a poor starting hand it is easy to feel stressed and start calling anything that comes in your way．In this case I think we anyway will need to have a chow園㝨睎— either for a Mixed straight，or as a side combination to Mixed shifted chows．There are also possibilities for Chicken hand or All types if the hand develops in any of those directions．Therefore，I tend to want to make the chow．We can discard 厮 or one of the honor tiles，and in that case 四 first，since it will only give one point as a pung for All types．


|  |  |  |  |  |  | 噶南紖 |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
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We made the chow 地風風 and discarded 四．Then West discarded $\square$ ，which was punged by East．East discarded 圈．Shall we make a chow？




No, I don't think so. That would not really get us closer to Mahjong and it will destroy the only pair that we have.

 honor tiles, or keep them for another while?

(8)

Our best option is still Mixed straight. Since it looks like East might be going for either Half flush or All types, the honor tiles might become dangerous. I think it is best to get rid of them before they become more dangerous.



We discarded our honor tiles，first固 and then 聧，and then also 菛，which was chowed by West．In the meantime we have picked two useful tiles： and 聞．Then East discarded another 妻．Is this a better time to make the chow？


国

 the chow．We don＇t have much use of 㸓 anymore so we can discard that．


田風国


We made the chow and discarded 总．Then East chowed ${ }^{\text {：}}$ and discarded



Previously in this game, there has not been a clear answer what was the best thing to do, but here we do have a best choice: discard 鹭 and hope to pick any of (ibe bey to get to a wait.


After a couple of rounds we picked 迅 and could thus discard and wait
 Do we dare do discard it?


2


So，how dangerous is this situation？I would say that it is almost $100 \%$ sure that East has a single wait for either 固 or 国 to the All types．East has made two chows and discarded 兆 and 困 and has in between discarded the same tiles as were picked．It is not very likely that East does not have a ready combination in Characters，since several of them were discarded early． Thus，it is in principle a $50 \%$ risk to discard 固 in this situation．Is it worth to take that risk？How should you think？In my opinion，this is something of the most difficult things in MCR．MCR is a much more offensive game than e．g．Riichi，but you still need to decide when to choose to gamble，and when not．


These factors will affect your decision：
－How big is the risk that the tile is the winning tile？
－How much is the opponent＇s Mahjong worth？
－How big is your chance of winning？
－How much is your Mahjong worth？
－What is the situation in the game（scores，hands left etc．）？
I have tried to summarize some basic principles for situations like this．Of course it is difficult to make exact calculations，but here are some thoughts：
－If you pay the Mahjong you will lose at least 48 points compared to the winner（ $4 \times 8+2 \times$ value），and you will lose the value of the Mahjong compared to the other players．But if you defend and do not pay，you will still lose at least 40 points to the winner（ $4 \times 8+$ value）．
－If it is better to pay to the dangerous player，than that someone else makes the Mahjong，then it is correct to take the risk，e．g．if the dangerous player is far behind（or far ahead）．
－If it is worse to pay to the dangerous player，than that someone else makes the Mahjong，then you should not take the risk．
－Otherwise your hand should be worth at least as much as the dangerous hand，and your chances of winning should be at least as good as for the other players（after you have successfully discarded the dangerous tile），i．e．，in most cases you should have come to a wait and the wait should be good．

So，what shall we do in the current situation？Our risk of discarding the winning tile is close to $50 \%$ ．The dangerous hand is cheap，but so is ours． The situation in the game is tight，so it does not really matter which of our opponents that wins．Our chance of winning（if we survive discarding 固）is pretty good，since we have a wait that is not obvious．I think it is a close call，but I would tend to defend here．If we discard the two 毗（which might be dangerous for West and North），we still have a chance to improve the hand．If we pick another 固 we can make a Chicken hand，or if we first get



We discarded 闒，and since that went well，we could discard the other 爾 the next time．Then we picked国 and窨，which also seem quite safe to discard，so we could let them go as well．The game ended by East discarding 蘭 and North made Mahjong．

Analysis：In this game we would have lost if we had discarded 固．In that case the results would have been East +33 ，South（us）-17 ，West -8 ，North -8 ．Instead it became East -22 ，South（us）-8 ，West -8 ，North +38 ．The main difference was that North got the Mahjong instead of East，but for us the difference was only the value of the All types that East would have had．In this situation，the total scores in the game might be more important than our chance of winning when deciding if we should take a chance or not．

## Scores after hand 12

UPPSSLA MAHONGG neome $\square 1 \square$ rome $\square$


## Hand 13

固in 北 Round

## 

What is your opinion of the starting hand？What shall we discard？


## 

A quite mediocre starting hand, but there is potential for some different combinations, e.g. Chicken hand, All types, Mixed shifted chows or Mixed straight. We can't see any real use for 固, so we can start by discarding that.


## $\square$ 國

We discarded 固，and the others also discarded wind tiles．The next time we picked $\square$ ．What shall we do now？



南

Now we have come 4 away from All types，but we need to keep other options open as well，e．g．Chicken hand（4 away），Mixed straight（5 away）， Mixed shifted chows（5 away）．If we want to keep $\square$ ，we should discard one of the ones，but which？For All types we have a good combination in
 a risk that we cannot use straight we need a chow in either 偊偊薏 or 閶胃思．Thus，the best discard is （3）in this situation．




## 

We have now 4 pairs，so 7 pairs is also an option． 7 pairs is only 3 away，but then we need to pick two pairs ourselves first before we get to a wait．The choice for discard is either 橉 or 冨．Which is the best？In both cases we are equally far away from using them in a Mahjong（ 5 from Pure shifted chows，or 5 from Mixed straight）．For Pure shifted chows we need to pick
 tiles for 国国國 and then we can chow 四 and 風．Further，there is already one 犀 at the table，so there is a smaller chance to use that for 7 pairs．In this situation I don＇t think it matters that Pure shifted chows gives a few more points，so the best discard is 橉．


## 䓊

We discarded 藿，and then we picked 畨．What shall we do now？You can also think about which tiles you would pung or chow with this hand．



## 

We have several possibilities that we want to keep open．Chicken hand and All types are both 4 away．We also have 7 pairs，which could perhaps also turn into All pungs．Then we can also make Mixed shifted chows，but that is further away．If we decide to open the hand we should keep as many of those options as possible open，e．g．if we make a chow or pung in Dots or Characters，then we can still go for either All types or Chicken hand，but then we have closed the door to 7 pairs．
The tile that we have the least use for is 䨓。


 picked another朿，which we discarded immediately．Then East discarded四．Shall we make a pung（and in that case，what shall we discard）？



If we make the pung in this situation，there is a risk that we will end up having an obvious single wait for $\square$ ．I would prefer to go for Chicken hand， since then it is more difficult for the opponents to see what we are waiting for．And if you compare the chances for All pungs and 7 pairs，it is most often best not to pung if you don＇t already have a pung．


## 

We decided not to make the pung and after a few rounds we picked 중ํ앙․ What shall we do now？


## 風

Now we are in a situation where we need to make a choice and give up some of our options： 7 pairs（discard from one of the pairs），All types （discard $\square$ ），or discard e．g．荧 and go for Mixed shifted chows together with 7 pairs．I think the best option is to discard $\square$ ．Then we keep the possibilities for Chicken hand， 7 pairs and Mixed shifted chows，which all are more flexible than All types，and probably more difficult for the opponents to read．


## 

We discarded $\square$ and then East discarded 簂. Shall we make a chow, and in that case, what shall we discard?


## T1T

 Mixed shifted chows．We also need another combination＋a pair，e．g．
 chow both those tiles．The problem is that we will risk to get a bad wait． E．g．if we get a chance to chow（or pick）淘，then we need to self draw 圈 to have enough points．Alternatively，if we first get to chow（or pick）凨，then we can win on 圈 for a Chicken hand．But if we are going for chicken hand，

 instead wait until we pick something that will make the hand go in a certain direction．


We decided not to make the chow, and in the next round everybody picked a tile that was discarded immediately. Then we picked a third 圆. What shall we do now?


## 贎 时 明

Now when we have a pung 罟㯰圌，we are closer to All pungs，but we still want to keep the possibilities for 7 pairs and Chicken hand open．Therefore


 chow，since then we will either have tile hog of 罩 or a Mixed double chow

花尽

 discarded immediately，and next East discarded 齙．Shall we make a chow？


## 

 to complete a Chicken hand. Unfortunately, cannot do that (and would give a Double chow). Thus, we should not make the chow.



We did not chow (ixise . After a couple of rounds we picked 比. What shall we do now?



## 

Now we are one step closer to Chicken hand, so in order to follow that path, we discard 䁶.
㬸


We discarded 蠉，and then West discarded and North made a chow． North discarded 憣．Shall we call it？


THAT
Yes, we should say 'pung' and discard the same tile 貔 again (this "swapcalling" is allowed in MCR, but not in e.g. Riichi). We are waiting for a Chicken hand, but we need to open the hand in order not to have points
 have made it obvious to our opponents that we are going for Chicken hand, but it is still difficult for them to see what we are waiting for.

Note that we could also have made a kong and hope to win on the replacement tile, but then we only have a one-shot chance, so going for Chicken hand is a better option.


We made the pung and discarded the same tile 涵 so that we could wait for a Chicken hand．Unfortunately，the game ended by us discarding 國for West to do Mahjong．

Analysis：If you have a pair in winds or dragons and some tiles of the other kind，you can often keep the possibilities for both All types and Chicken hand open for quite a long time．I prefer to do this than to rush into All types by making the pung early．It will in many cases be more difficult for the opponents to see what you need for a Chicken hand than for All types． In both cases you need to be careful to make sure that you get no points， or enough points，respectively．In this case we got to a nice double－sided wait for a Chicken hand，but ended up discarding the winning tile，which was not easy to see．

## Scores after hand 13

UPPSSLA MAHVONG Round | 1 |  |
| :---: | :---: |
|  | 1 |



## Hand 14

困 in 兆 Round

What is your opinion of the starting hand? What shall we discard?


## 

Mixed shifted chows is the most realistic option. We can make a chow

 useful later, but we have no real use for the honor tiles, so we can start by discarding them.


中 東

We decided to discard our honor tiles first．In the first round we picked 臤， and before our next turn North discarded 毗．Shall we make a chow？


中困


No，the hand is too flexible to lock for a certain combination at this point．


## 

（8）©
Instead we picked ．What shall we discard now？


## —國



Mixed shifted chows is still the main option，and we have got a new candidate for our side combination in 国国，so then we don＇t have any use for 菨．


中困暴


We discarded 偊，which was chowed by South．The next turn we picked another 緗，which we discarded immediately．Then North discarded 急． Shall we make a chow，and in that case what shall we discard？


There is one specific tile that we really need for our Mixed shifted chows，
 don＇t need to have two 羂，since we already have a pair in 橉，and it is likely that our side combination will be using 圆远，so we can discard a ［1］．

 discarded 固, which was punged by North. North discarded : Shall we make a chow, and in that case what shall we discard?


| Es |
| :---: |
| 南 |



Yes，I think it is good to make the chow since it takes us one step closer to Mahjong，and it doesn＇t make the hand that much easier to read．But what shall we discard？The choice is between 四and 䡡，but if we discard 四，we

跸．



We made the chow 쿨ํ and discarded 扁．The next time we picked and discarded 猤．Then West discarded 關 and North made a chow．North discarded ．Shall we make a chow？


Yes，make the chow and discard 周．Now we are waiting for a 毗．It is still not obvious what we are waiting for．It could be either 정ํ


We made the chow discarded 固．Then West picked and discarded 眯 and North made a chow． North discarded 用．Then we picked 芭，which should be safe against North， but maybe dangerous against the others．We discarded it anyway，and South made a chow 區： made a concealed kong and has now one single tile left．The next time we also picked 眴，but unfortunately it is not Last tile yet（Last tile＋All chows＋ Mixed double chows + Self picked $=8$ points）．South once again played dangerously by discarding $\square$ ．Then we picked 園 which we discarded immediately．The others also picked and discarded the same tile and then we picked 癸．Shall we discard it？


It is quite obvious that North has a single wait for 畋．North made a chow and discarded 用，and after that North has made a kong and all the time discarded the same tile as was picked．And since South then has discarded $\square$ ，it is quite sure that the single tile is 聧．Thus，if we discard 聧，we will lose．It might still be a good idea to give the Mahjong to North，but that depends on the total score in the game．In this case it is a tight game，so we decide not to give it away and since 傫 seems to be safe，we can discard it．



We continued to play safe tiles, and after a while the game ended when South self-picked for a Mixed straight.

Analysis: North had a very obvious single wait for 聧, and we decided not to give that tile away. One risk by abandoning your hand like that is that the chance for the other players to self-draw increases, which was what happened in this case. Depending on the scores, it might be OK to give away the winning tile to a cheap Mahjong - especially if that opponent is far behind.

## Scores after hand 14

| UPPSALA | Yahong |  |  |  |  |
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## Hand 15死 in 尼 Round



We started this hand by deciding not to pung 眶 and instead we picked 国． What is your opinion of the starting hand？What shall we discard？


We have some different options, e.g. Mixed straight, Mixed shifted chows, Chicken hand, Outside hand, Knitted straight. The two least useful tiles at
 more tiles left around for outside hand, and 圈 could also be used for Knitted straight.


We discarded 圄 and then East discarded 田 and South made a pung．Next， we picked 周．Which tile is the least useful，周 or 圈，or another tile？



Now we have one main option：Knitted straight＋pair＋chow．This is 3 away and we need to pick 2 specific tiles and make a double－sided chow
 options which all are 4 away：

－Mixed shifted chows，double sided chow＋one of two 789 can be chowed，Need to pick for the third chow．Discard 圈 or 㽧。 Need to make sure that we have enough points．
－Chicken hand：Double sided chow＋edge wait another chow．Cannot have double／terminal chows，edge／closed wait． Discard 犗。
I think the most flexible is to discard 圈．



## 

 immediately. Then we picked 偊. What shall we do now?


## 

Now we have got the side combination for the Knitted straight, so we need
 likely to become dangerous later, so I think it is best to discard it as early as possible.


## 

The game continued，but unfortunately，we did not get any closer．South discarded 橉 and West made Mahjong．

Analysis：At least we did not discard 葍 to Wests Pure shifted chows． Playing for Knitted straight could sometimes be slow，since you need to pick specific tiles，but once you have come to a wait in can be difficult for the opponents to see exactly what you need，especially when you are just going for Knitted straight and not Knitted＋honors．

## Scores after hand 15

UPPSALA MAANONG
Round $\square$ Table 1


## Hand 16

囸 in 四 Round


## 

This is the last hand of this game. The scores are: North +121 , West (us) 35 , East -38 , South -48 . What are your thoughts about the scores and the starting hand?


## 

We have four possible outcomes of this game:

1) If we win big, we can pass North and win the game.
2) If we win a cheap hand, or if North wins self-drawn or from one of the others, we will become second
3) If East or South wins self-drawn or from one of the others, or if we pay at most 12 points to North or East, we will become third.
4) If we pay to South or pay 14 points or more to North or East, we will become last.
(continued on the next page)

## 明

How big hand do we have to get in order to win the game? The difference between us and North is 156 points. The formula to use in this situation is based on the number 32.
First, we subtract 32 from 156, which gives 124 . This is how many points we need from any player. Then we divide 124 by $2=62$, which is the number of points needed if taken from North. Finally we divide by 62 by 2 again $=31$, and this is how much we need self-drawn. (Note that you need to round up after each division, in case of odd numbers.)

So what realistic chances to we have in order to get that many points? We have four pairs, so 7 pairs is a possibility. That would give 24 points, and if we do it self-drawn, we get Fully concealed, which is 4 more points. Then we can do All simples for 2 more points, and if we get at least one flower we have 31 points. Another option is Four concealed pungs, which gives 64 points and would be enough also taken from North. We want to keep these options alive, and at the same time also be able to go for a quick Mahjong to secure the second place. Then we also need to make sure that we don't pay the Mahjong and risk to come last. It is important to do these calculations of how many points you need before the last hand of the game.

For a quick hand, we have possibilities like Mixed shifted chows, Mixed straight, All Pungs, or Concealed + All chows + All simples.

We don't have any use for 直in any of the plans above, so let's discard that tile first.


南

We discarded 固，and the next time we picked 国．What shall we discard？

## 



It is more likely that we will become last，than that we will win．In both cases the difference is two points，so we should go for a quick Mahjong， but keep the possibility for the big hands open as long as possible．In the
蛹開聞．We can also make a Mixed straight，but then all the pairs will be used in the chows．There are also possibilities to make 7 pairs，All pungs， Concealed＋All chows＋All simples．The choice is between discarding 檌 or ［目，but since the 揓 can be used either in a side combination or in Mixed straight，it is better to keep it and discard ．


## 



田周園

## 

We discarded 固，and the next time we picked 偊，which we discarded immediately．Then we picked 番．What shall we do now？


## 



田周園

## 

The question is if we still want to keep the chance for 7 pairs and All pungs， or if we should optimize our chances for a chow－based hand．Or to put it in another way：shall we give up our chances to win the game and go for the best chance to become second？

I think the sensible play is to go for the chow－based hand now，and then
 pair and either 窒園 or 開闌 as basis for the side combination．Thus，we can discard one of the 四．




QWe discarded 罩，in order to optimize the chances for a chow－based hand， which means that we，in practice，have given up the possibility to win the game．The next turn we picked 周，which we discarded immediately．Then South discarded 閖．Shall we make a chow，and in that case，which chow shall we make and what shall we discard？


思国



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 shifted chows．Then we can discard either急 or 園．There is no clear clue of what is best，but I would keep園 and discard疾，since that makes the hand more flexible if it develops in another direction．


## 用開雨



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 two honor tiles，which we discarded immediately．Meanwhile East has discarded and South made a pung．Then we picked another 園．What shall we do now？


Now we have got the possibility to go for either Mixed shifted chows or Mixed straight, and we don't have any use for two 围 anymore.


We discarded and the next turn we picked and discarded 比，which was chowed by North．East picked and discarded 䀭，which South chowed．Then south discarded 聞．Shall we make a chow，and in that case what shall we discard？


Yes，we should make the chow in order to get to a wait，but then we can discard either or following：
1）Which tile is most likely to get，图 or ㅈ⿺ㅇ？
2）Which tile is most dangerous to discard，圈 or ？
3）Is there a bonus chance of a Last tile on ：or ？
Note：In this situation we should completely disregard the fact that Mixed straight is worth 2 more points than Mixed shifted chows：

1，2）One 圆 has already gone，so there are more left．But how likely is it that the other players will discard those tiles？It is difficult to figure out exactly what North and South are doing，but some kind of Mixed chows seems likely．


It also doesn＇t look like North is going for Half flush，since so many honor tiles were discarded early．In that case neither North nor South will need ： （South would probably have made a chow instead of a pung in that case）． It looks like East is going for Knitted and honors．If that is the case，we can know that（ the other three．Thus it is very likely that East will discard if that tile is picked．Further，if we discard $\mathscr{B}^{\circ}$ ，the other players will also see that East doesn＇t need 围远閶for Knitted，and thus it is also more likely that they will discard
3）We cannot get Last tile on ［圈，we will not have enough points（not even self drawn）．But it is always good to check this extra possibility．

Thus，I think the best discard is ：


We made the chow and discarded 图．The next time we picked 閪，which should be safe at least for East，so we discard that immediately．Then East discarded and we got our Mahjong，which gave us the second place．

Analysis：Before the last hand of a game，it is important that you calculate how many points you need in order to pass the opponents．It could also be good to calculate what the others need in order to pass you，so that you can figure out if they are going for big hands，self－drawn，or fast hands． In this specific hand it was possible to figure out that East was going for Knitted＋honors，and that East for sure would discard if that tile was picked．We also had the benefit of being able to use this information when deciding which tile to wait for．This is quite rare in a game of incomplete information like Mahjong，so I think that was a beautiful ending of the game．

## Final scores after hand 16



## Summary

Just like in a real game of Mahjong, there are situations where there is no correct answer to what is the best choice, and sometimes you make the best choice but get unlucky and lose anyway. In this game I think we had many quite interesting situations, even though we did not always make the winning choices. At least I have found it useful to go through these situations in more detail, which you can do when you are not forced to make fast decisions, as you are at the table. I hope you also have found this interesting and inspiring but please don't use it against me at the tables $;$

If you do not agree with the choices made or have other views on how to play in some certain situations, then I would love to hear your thoughts. You can contact me, e.g. by email to petter@rainfall.se or via Facebook.

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