THE MAHJONG OPEN

EST. 2026

HOLIDAY LEAGUE 2026

An updated handbook is *on the way*

You're reading the current edition of The Mahjong Open Handbook, effective September 15, 2026.

New rules and additions for **Holiday League** are coming in the next few days, so parts of this handbook will change.

Please check back for the Holiday edition before your first Holiday table.

The latest edition is always at
themahjongopen.com/rulebook

THE MAHJONG OPEN HANDBOOK

OFFICIAL RULES & LEAGUE POLICIES

2026 EDITION

EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

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THE MAHJONG OPEN HANDBOOK

2026 Edition

Version 2026.4

Effective September 15, 2026

This handbook contains the official playing policies and league procedures for The Mahjong Open. It is intended to provide members with a clear understanding of league play and may be updated periodically as the league grows.

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Welcome

We're so glad you're here.

The Mahjong Open was created for one simple reason—we wanted more opportunities to play Mahjong, meet new people, and build stronger Mahjong communities.

Whether you're a seasoned player or recently discovered your love for the game, you'll find a welcoming community waiting for you.

Our hope is simple.
Play often.
Meet new friends.
Improve your game.
Most importantly...**Have fun!**

Because at the end of the day, Mahjong is more than a game—it's about the friendships built around the table.

Welcome to The Mahjong Open!

We'll see you at the table!

About

The Mahjong Open is a flexible American Mahjong league where players can enjoy organized play while meeting new people and building friendships.

Instead of playing with the same group every week, members can join or host official rounds throughout the current league. You choose when you play, where you play, and how often you play.

Whether you're new to Mahjong or have years of experience, you'll find a welcoming community, friendly competition, and plenty of opportunities to play.

Our goal is simple:

- Play More Mahjong
- Meet More Players
- Have Fun

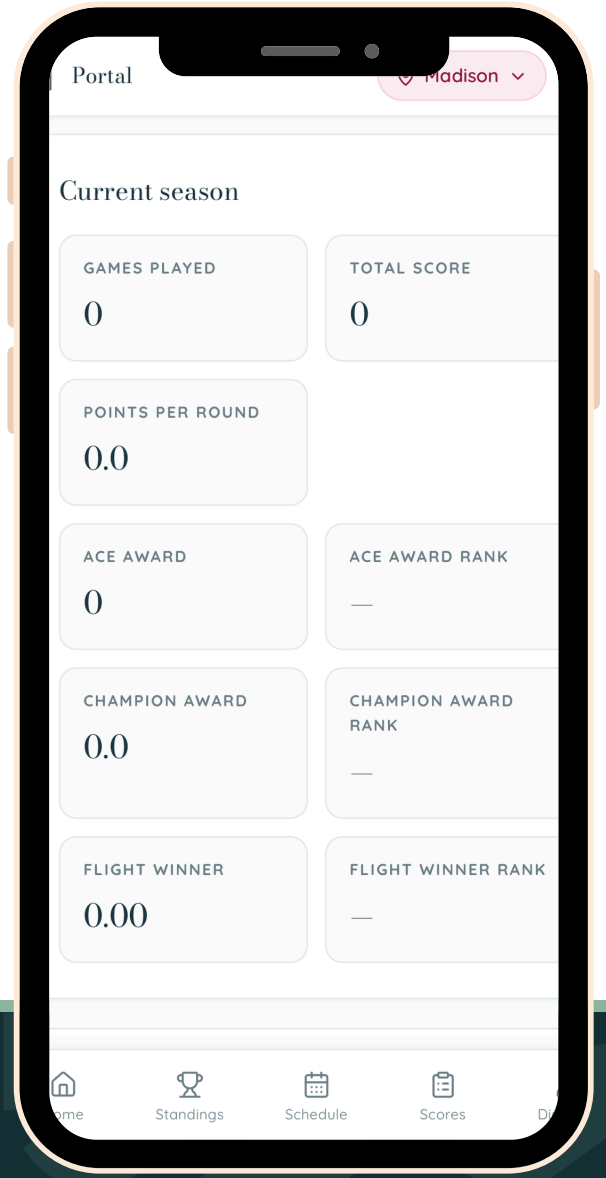
Welcome to The Mahjong Open!

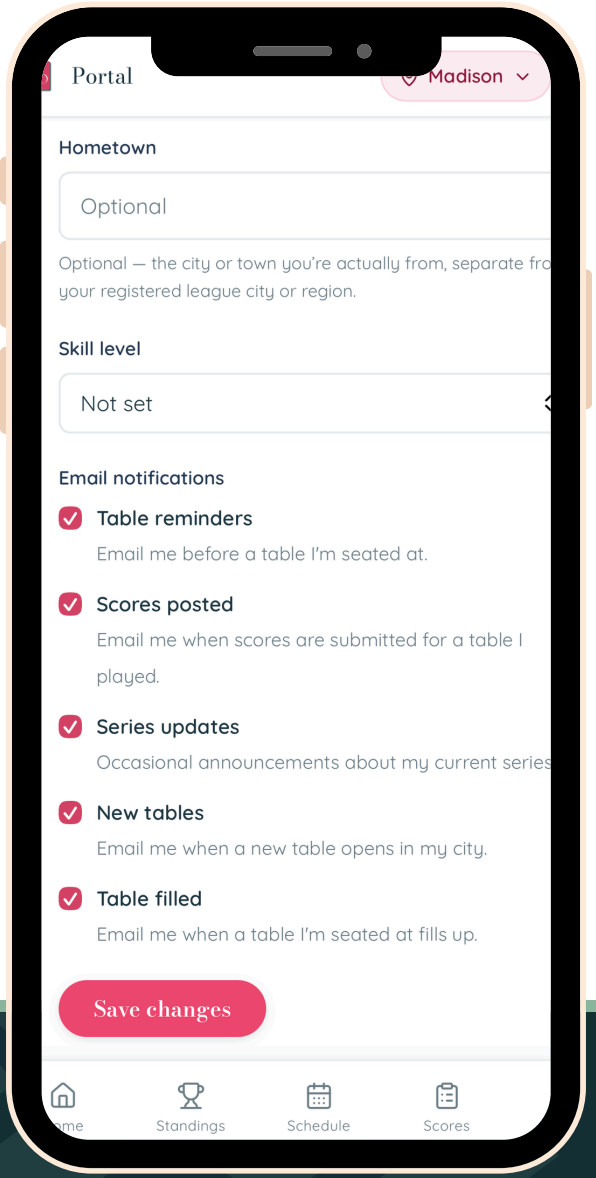
Using the Portal

Before joining a round, take a few minutes to review your player profile in the Mahjong Open Portal.

YOUR PLAYER PROFILE

Your profile includes your contact information, skill level, notification preferences, playing statistics, completed rounds, league standings, all time stats. Please keep your information up to date so other members can easily connect with you.





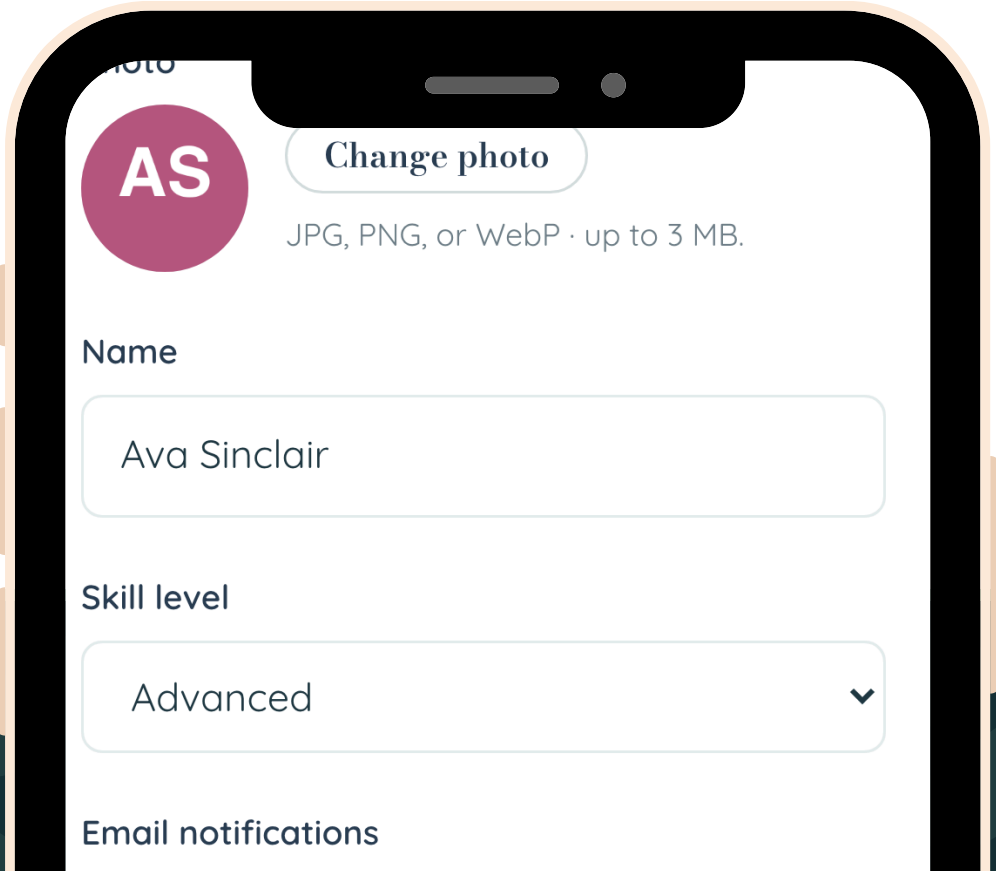
Using the Portal

SELF RANK

When setting up your profile, you'll choose the self-rank that best matches your experience and comfort level.

- **Beginner** – You're learning the game, becoming familiar with the NMJL Playing Card, or simply enjoy a more relaxed pace of play.
- **Intermediate** – You have a good understanding of the game and the NMJL Playing Card and are continuing to build your confidence and strategy.
- **Advanced** – You're comfortable with all areas of the NMJL Playing Card, enjoy a quicker pace of play, and have significant playing experience.

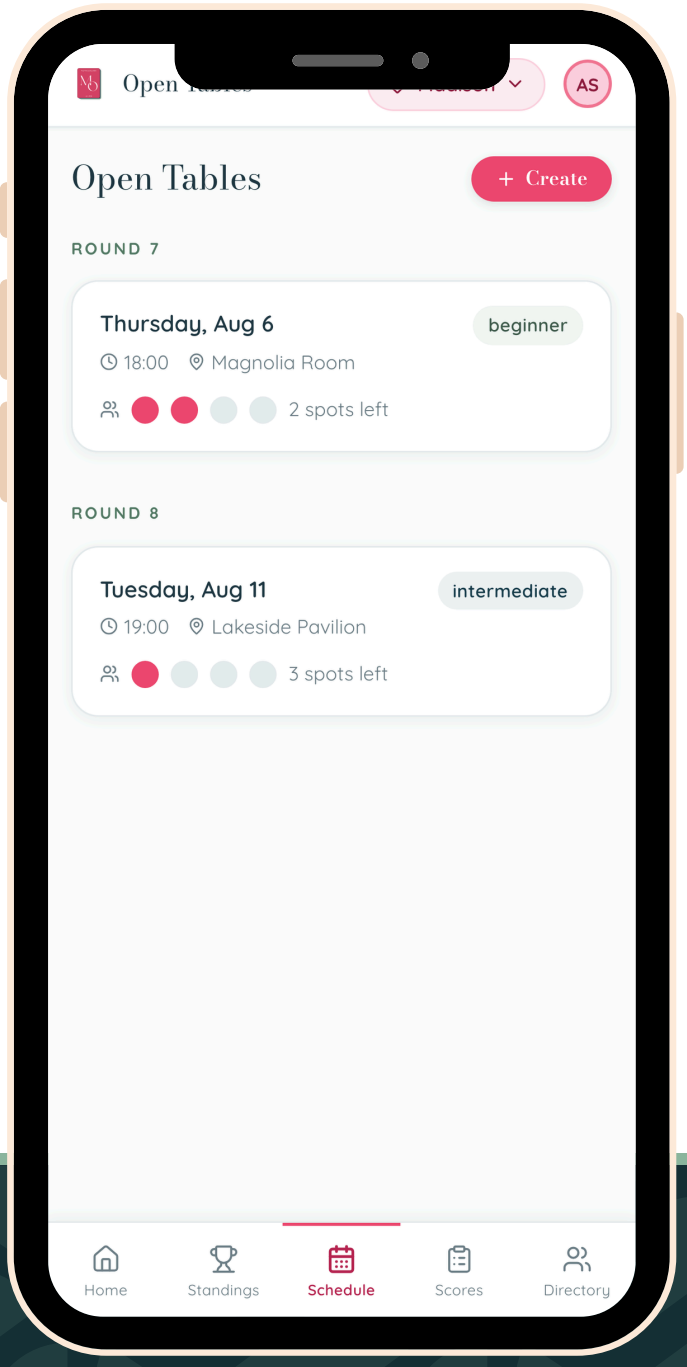
Your self-rank is simply a guide to help other members understand your experience level. It is not a rating or a measure of skill, and you may update it at any time.

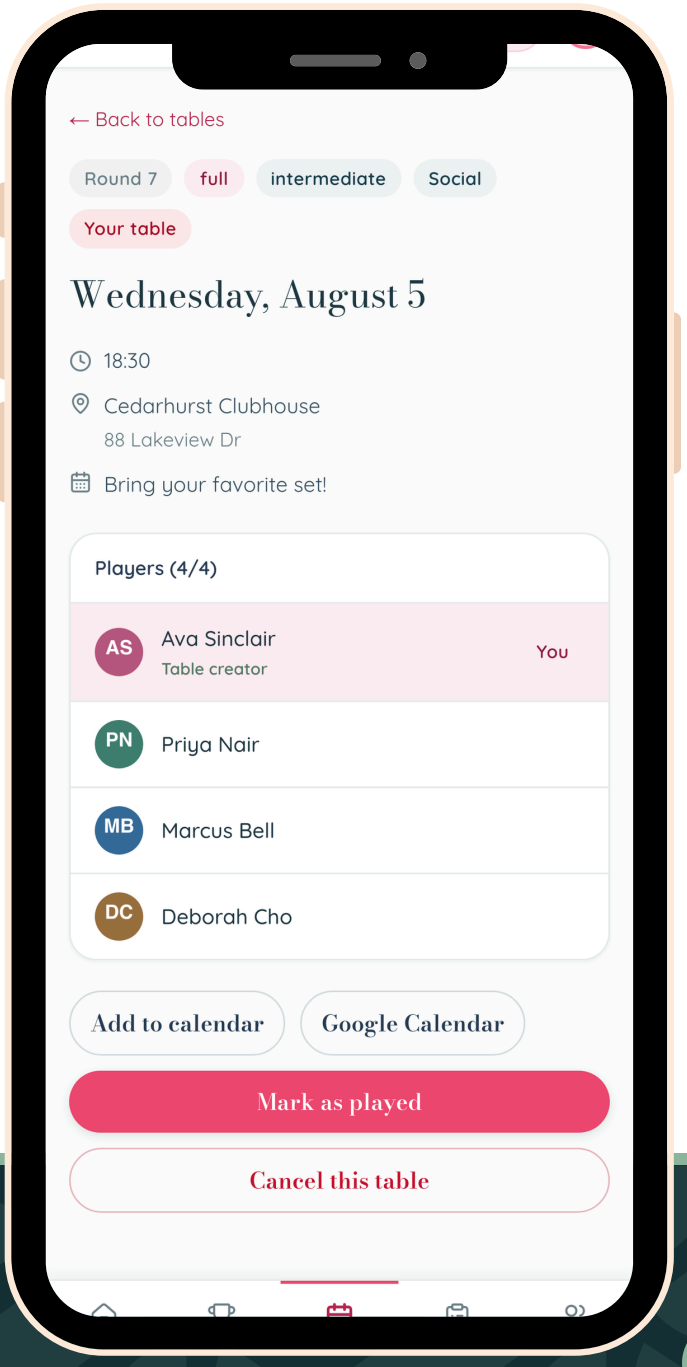


Using the Portal

JOINING A ROUND

Browse available rounds in the Mahjong Open Portal and join any round that fits your schedule. When viewing available rounds, you'll be able to see the self-rank of the players who have already joined. This helps you decide whether a round is a good fit for you.

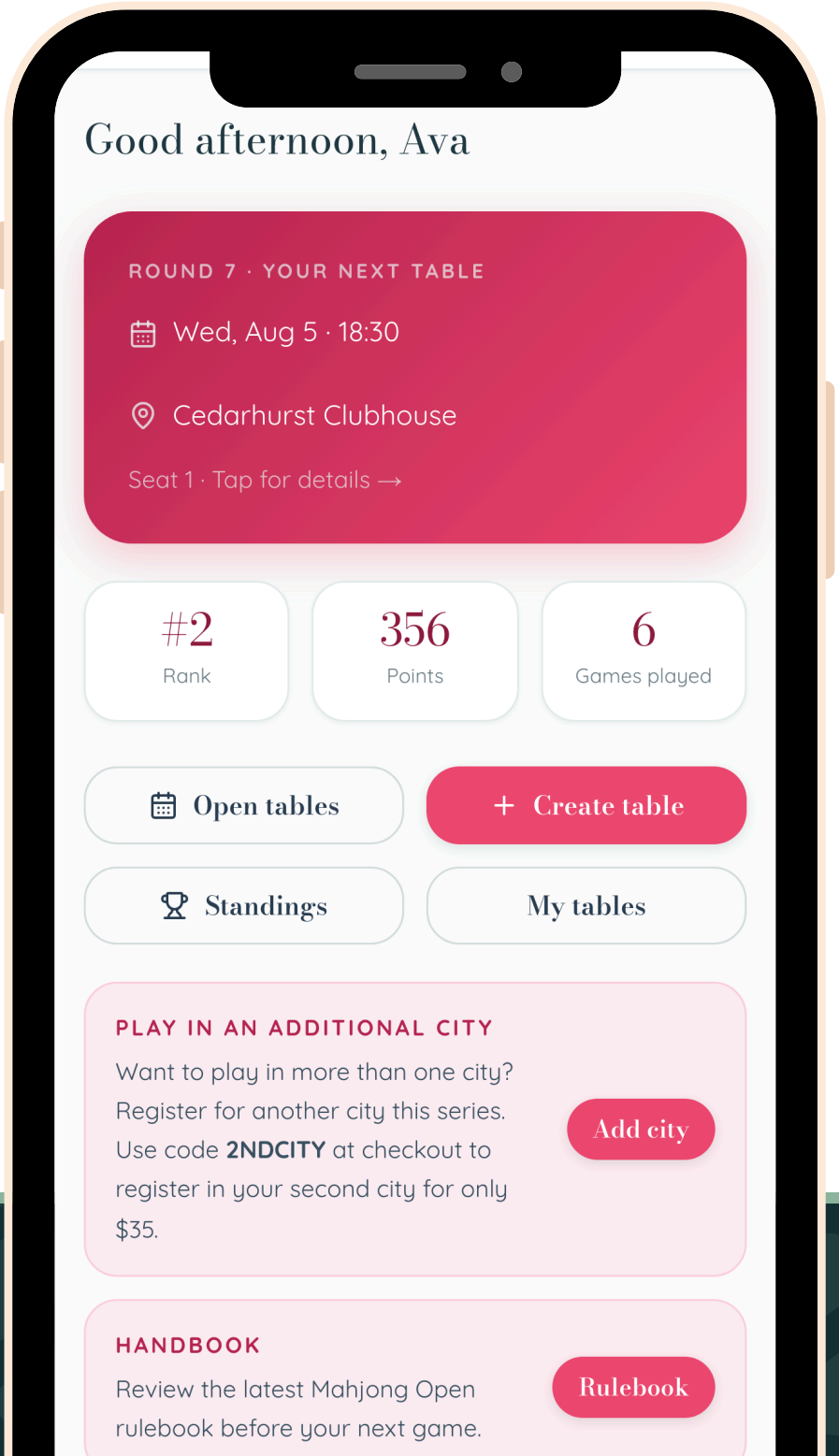




Using the Portal

HOSTING A ROUND

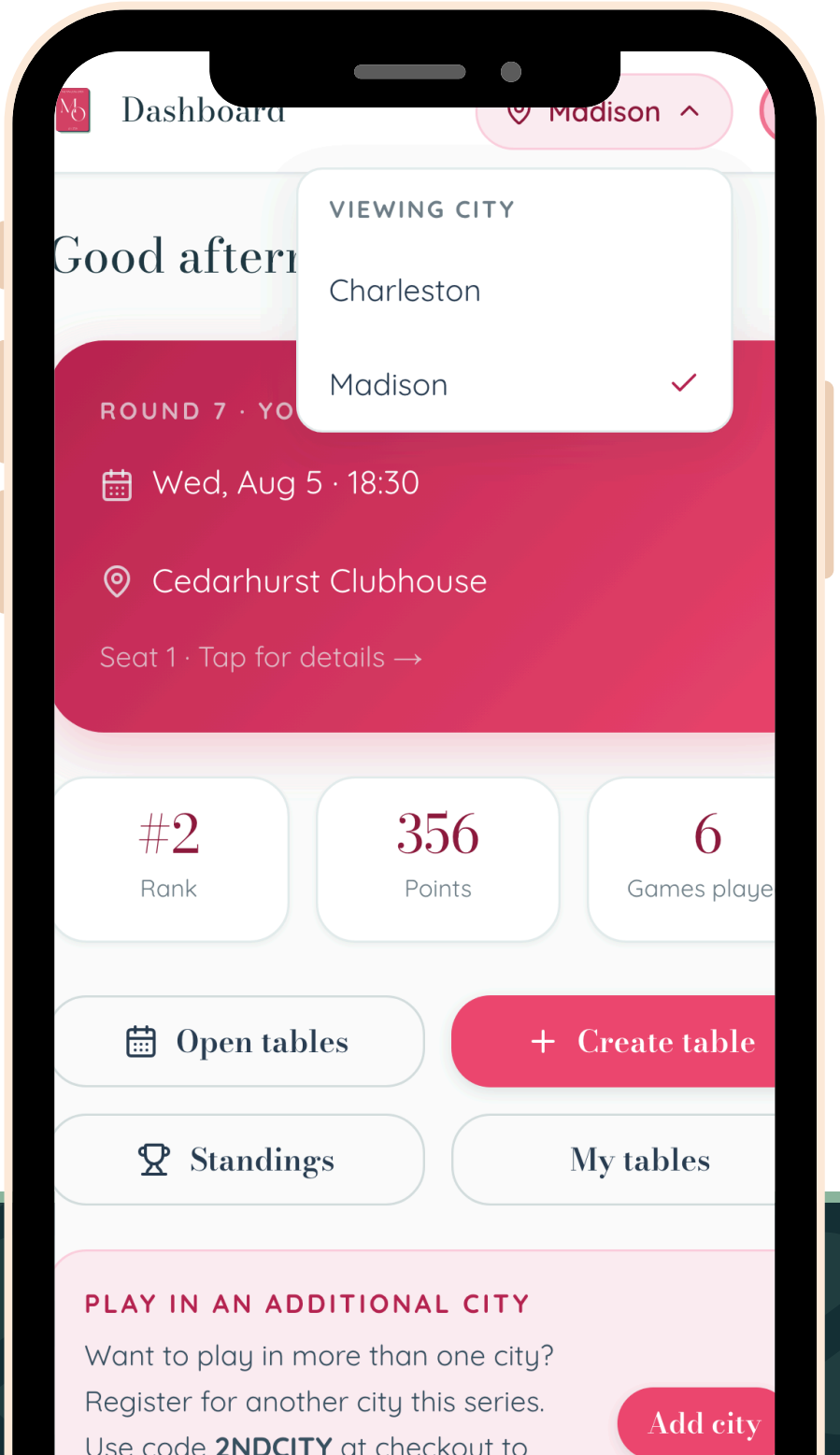
Don't see a round that works with your schedule? Host one! The more rounds available, the more opportunities everyone has to play.



Using the Portal

MULTI CITY PLAYERS

Please use the city toggle in the top right of the portal to ensure you are joining tables and creating tables in the correct city.



League Play

OFFICIAL ROUNDS

An official round consists of:

- Four registered Mahjong Open members
- Four games of American Mahjong
- The current NMJL Playing Card
- Scores submitted through the Mahjong Open Portal
- NMJL rules apply for play

Only official rounds count toward league standings and awards.

HOSTING A ROUND

Any member may host a round.
When creating a round in the Portal, you'll enter:

- Date
- Time
- Location
- The NMJL Playing Card being used (during the annual card transition period, if applicable)
- Round Type (Casual, Mindful, or Lightning)

As the host, you'll provide the Mahjong set, racks, dice, mat, and any other equipment needed for play unless otherwise decided.

JOINING A ROUND

Browse available rounds in the Portal and join any round that fits your schedule. Once four players have joined, the round is full.

If your plans change, please remove yourself from the round as soon as possible so another member has the opportunity to play.

League Play

INVITING A PLAYER

You can invite specific players to fill seats at your table. An invited player's seat is held for them for ONE HOUR, giving her time to see the invitation and respond.

If she hasn't accepted by then, the seat is released and opens to everyone in your city. Nothing is lost — you can invite someone else, or let the open seat fill on its own.

ROUND TYPES

Casual
A relaxed pace with plenty of conversation, laughter, and time to enjoy the company around the table.

Mindful
A quicker pace with limited conversation during active play. Great for players who want to sharpen their game and keep the rounds moving.

Lightning
Fast-paced play with experienced players who are looking for an efficient, competitive round. Conversation is kept to a minimum until breaks between games.

LIGHTNING ROUND GOAL: 15 MINUTE ROUNDS

During the Round

To help every round run smoothly, please keep these simple guidelines in mind.

FOUR PLAYERS

Official Mahjong Open rounds are played with four registered Mahjong Open members.

NO 3 PLAYER ROUNDS ALLOWED

CHOOSING EAST

At the beginning of the first game, each player rolls the dice. The player with the highest roll becomes East and begins the first game.

East rotates after each game so every player serves as East once during the round.

THE NMJL PLAYING CARD

Official rounds are played using the current National Mah Jongg League (NMJL) Playing Card. During the annual card transition period, the Round Host will indicate which card will be used.

During the Round

EQUIPMENT

The Round Host provides:

- Mahjong tiles
- Racks
- Dice
- Playing mat
- Pushers (if used)

Each player is responsible for bringing their own current NMJL Playing Card.

PACE OF PLAY

Please be mindful of the pace of play and the round type selected by the host. Whether you're playing a Casual, Mindful, or Lightning round, respect the expectations of the group and help create an enjoyable experience for everyone.

CELL PHONES

Please keep cell phone use to a minimum during play.

Scoring & Standings

Each official round you play earns points toward the league standings.

SCORING

Your score for each game begins with the point value of your winning hand as listed on the current NMJL Playing Card. Bonus points are then added, if applicable.

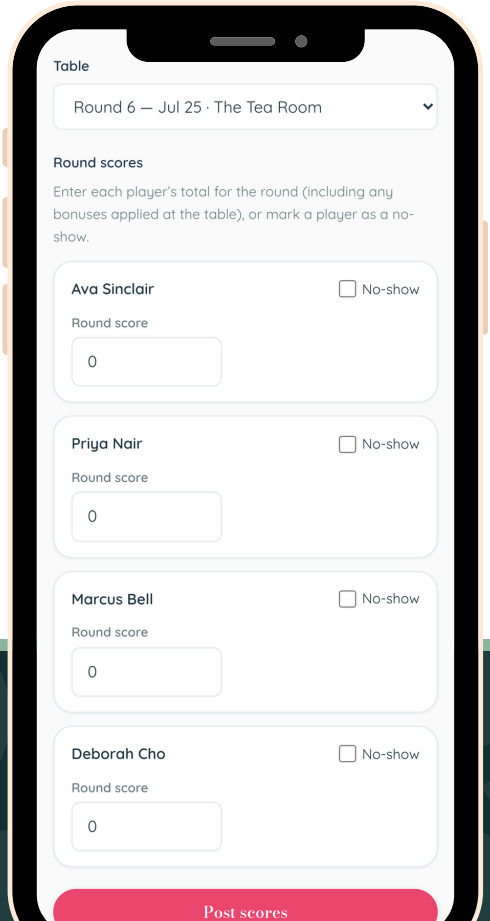
BONUS POINTS

- **Self-Picked Mahjong: +10 points** — Awarded when you draw your own winning tile.
- **Jokerless Mahjong: +25 points** — Awarded when your winning hand contains no jokers. (Does not apply to Singles & Pairs Mahjongs)
- **Wall Game: +10 points** — Awarded to every player if no one declares Mahjong before the wall is exhausted. **This applies to only the hands not declared dead.**

ENTERING SCORES

At the end of each round, the Round Host enters the scores into the Mahjong Open Portal.

Before leaving, all players should review the scores to ensure they are accurate and take a picture of the scorecard for their records.



Scoring & Standings

League Standings are determined by the following:

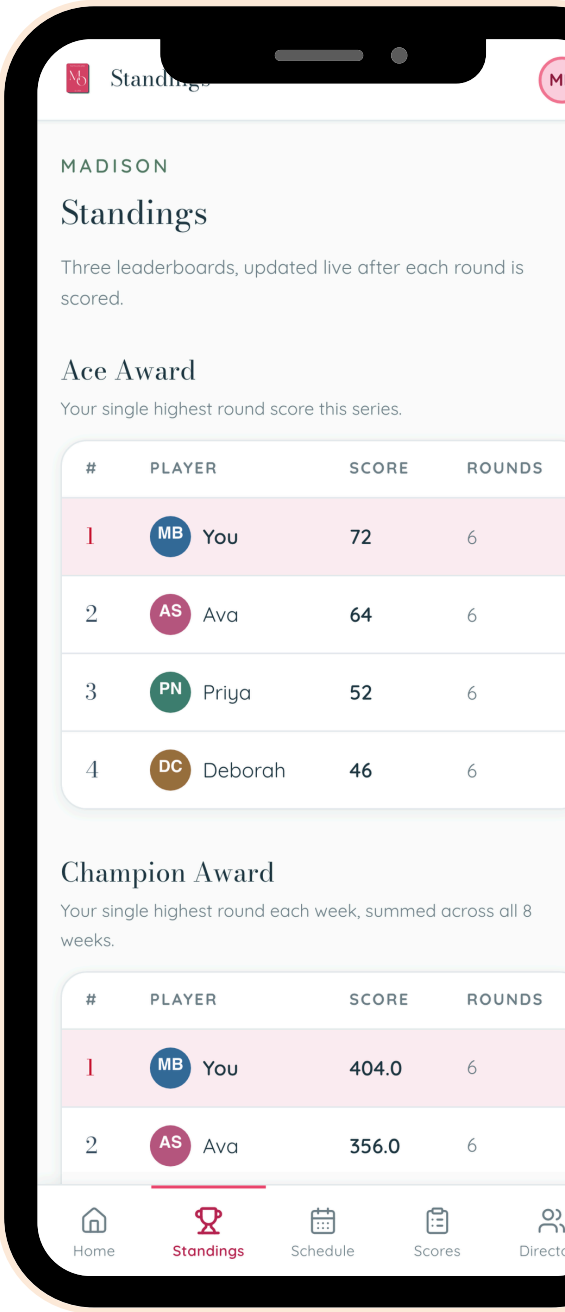
ACE AWARD

Your Ace Award is the single highest round score you post during the current league. There's no minimum number of rounds to qualify — one great round is all it takes to reach the top of the board. Ties share the same rank, so more than one player can hold the #1 spot at the same time.

Starting in the Holiday League, the tiebreaker for the Ace Award will be the player with the fewest rounds.

CHAMPION AWARD

Your Champion Award is built week by week. Each week you play, your single highest round score that week counts toward your total. At the end of the current league, all 8 weeks are added together — no week is dropped. Any no-show penalties are subtracted from the total, even if they happened in a week that otherwise scored well. There's no minimum number of rounds to qualify. Ties are broken by total points scored across every round you've played.



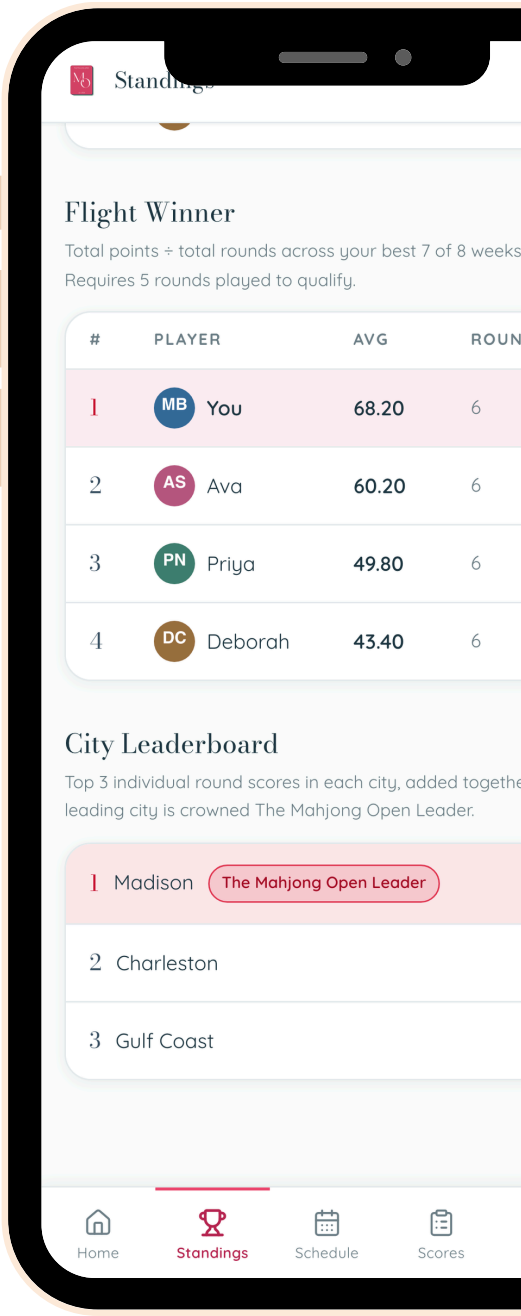
Scoring & Standings

League Standings are determined by the following:

FLIGHT WINNER

Your Flight Winner score rewards consistency. Each week, we total the points you scored and the rounds you played. Your one lowest-scoring week is set aside, and the rest — your best 7 of 8 weeks — are combined into a single points-per-round average. That average is your Flight Winner score. You need to have played at least 5 rounds across the series to qualify. Ties are broken by most rounds played, then by total points scored.

Starting in the Holiday League, the minimum rounds for the Flight Winner will be increased to 10 rounds.



CITY LEADERBOARD

Cities compete too. Each city's score is the weekly sum of the three highest individual round scores posted by anyone registered there for the current league — even if the same player posted more than one of them. Those weekly totals are added together to create the city's total score. There's no minimum to qualify, and the city with the highest score is crowned The Mahjong Open Leader of the current league.

The City Leaderboard Winner will receive a $500 donation to give to a local charity of their choice.

League Etiquette

The Mahjong Open is built on respect, sportsmanship, and having fun. Every member plays a part in creating a welcoming experience for others.

BE ON TIME

Arrive a few minutes early so everyone is ready to begin at the scheduled time.

COMMUNICATE

If you're running late or can't make a round, let the other players know as soon as possible. Life happens—we simply ask that you communicate.

RESPECT YOUR HOST

If you're playing in someone's home or at a business, please respect the space, follow any house guidelines, and leave the playing area as you found it.

WELCOME EVERYONE

Whether someone is brand new to Mahjong or has been playing for years, make everyone feel welcome.

PLAY WITH INTEGRITY

Play honestly, keep accurate scores, and always show good sportsmanship.

MOST OF ALL...

Have fun! The standings will change from league to league, but the friendships you build around the table can last a lifetime.

League Policies

NEED TO CANCEL?

If you need to cancel a round, please remove yourself from the Portal and notify the other players as soon as possible.

LATE CANCELLATIONS

A late cancellation is cancelling within 24 hours of the scheduled start time.
If you cancel within 24 hours, you are responsible for finding a replacement player. If a replacement is not found, the No-Show Policy will apply.

NO-SHOWS

A no-show occurs when a player fails to attend a scheduled round without notifying the other players, arrives more than 20 minutes after the scheduled start time, or cancels within 24 hours without securing a replacement player.

NO-SHOW POLICY

- The no-show player receives a 20-point deduction (-20 points).
- The remaining players will not be penalized. No scores will be entered for these players. This will NOT count as a round on the leaderboard.
- This policy applies to every no-show occurrence.
- Repeated no-shows will be reviewed by the City Commissioner and may be subject to additional action.

There will be updates made to the No Show Policy prior to the Holiday League start date.

League Policies

HOW A WEEK IS COUNTED

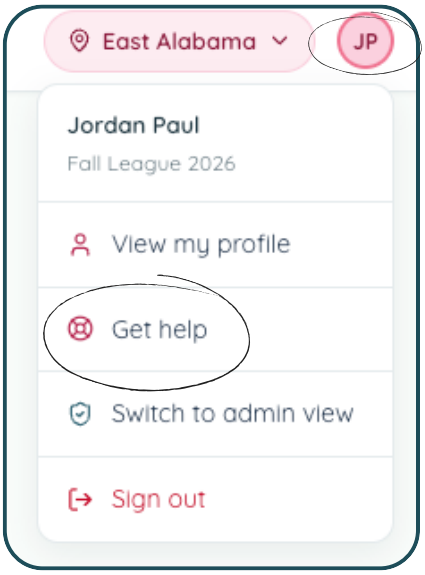
A league week runs Monday through Sunday.
Your Champion Award and Flight Winner scores are built week by week on that schedule, so a round played on a Sunday and a round played the next Monday count toward different weeks.

SCORE SUBMISSION

The Round Host is responsible for entering scores into the Mahjong Open Portal. Before leaving, all players should verify that scores are correct and take a picture of the scorecard.

SCORE CORRECTIONS

A picture of the scorecard must be submitted in order for a score to be changed. The table host can edit the scores for up to 24 hours. If a change is needed after 24 hours, please submit a request by tapping the menu in the top right corner of the portal then tapping Get Help.



MEMBERSHIP

The Mahjong Open reserves the right to refuse, suspend, or terminate membership at its sole discretion when a member's conduct is determined to be inconsistent with the mission, values, or best interests of the league.

League Policies

PLAYER MINIMUMS

A league only runs in a city once 20 players have registered for that season.

If your city doesn't reach 20, the season doesn't run there — and every player who registered is refunded in full. There is no risk in being one of the first to sign up.

REFUNDS

You may request a refund through the seventh day of the league. You will be refunded your registration fees minus payment processing fees.

After the seventh day of the league, registrations are non-refundable, because the season is underway and city rosters are set.

Registration stays open after the refund deadline has passed. If you register during that window, your registration is non-refundable from the moment you pay — this is shown to you before you check out.

To request a refund, use the refund request form linked in the Get Help section on the portal. You can also find this form linked on the Contact page of our website.

League Policies

PRIZES

A player may win only one prize per season. If you place first in more than one award, you'll choose which award/leaderboard you would like to be named the winner, and the next eligible player takes the other.

City Commissioners play and appear in the standings like everyone else, but are **not eligible to receive prizes** should they be the winner of a leaderboard. The next leading player on the leaderboard will be awarded the prize.

Frequently Asked Questions

How often can I play?

Play as often as you'd like! There is no limit to the number of official rounds you may play.

Do I have to host rounds?

No. Hosting is optional, but it's a great way to create more playing opportunities for everyone.

Can I change my self-rank?

Yes. You may update your self-rank at any time through your player profile.

What NMJL Playing Card is used?

Official rounds are played using the current NMJL Playing Card. During the annual card transition period, the Round Host will indicate which card will be used.

How many rounds do I need to qualify for Flight Winner?

You must complete at least 5 official rounds across the current league before your Flight Winner score appears on the leaderboard.

T**his minimum will increase to 10 rounds in the Holiday League.**

Frequently Asked Questions

Who enters the scores?

The Round Host enters the scores into the Mahjong Open Portal. All players should review the scores before leaving the round.

What happens if I cancel within 24 hours?

You are responsible for finding a replacement player. If a replacement is not found, the No-Show Policy applies.

What counts as a no-show?

Failing to attend a scheduled round, arriving more than 20 minutes late, or cancelling within 24 hours without finding a replacement player.

Who do I contact if I have a question?

Please contact your City Commissioner for assistance with league questions or concerns or email us at themahjongopen@gmail.com.

Where can I view my standings?

Current standings, statistics, upcoming rounds, and completed rounds are available in the Mahjong Open Portal.

Quick Reference Guide

The Mahjong Open at a Glance

Official rounds consist of 4 registered Mahjong Open members.

Each round includes 4 games of American Mahjong.

Play as often as you'd like throughout the current league.

Ace Award: your single highest round score of the current league. No minimum, ties share the top rank.

Champion Award: your single highest round score each week, summed across all 8 weeks — no week is dropped, no-show penalties subtracted.

Flight Winner: your best 7-of-8 weekly points-per-round average. Requires at least 5 rounds played to qualify. (Increasing to 10 in the Holiday League)

City Leaderboard: your city's top 3 individual round scores totaled each week. Weekly totals summed across league. Highest-scoring city is crowned The Mahjong Open Leader.

Self-Picked Mahjong: +10 points.

Jokerless Mahjong: +25 points (excluding Singles & Pairs hands).

Wall Game: +10 points.

Cancel within 24 hours? You are responsible for finding a replacement player or accepting the -20 points no show penalty

More than 20 minutes late is considered a No-Show.

Thank You!

Thank you for being a part of The Mahjong Open!

Whether you're joining your first round or your fiftieth, we're grateful you've chosen to spend your time with us.

We hope you meet new friends, improve your game, and enjoy every opportunity to gather around the table.

Have a great league, and we'll see you at the next round!

the mahjong open team