

PROFILING PLAYERS

UNDERSTANDING ADVANTAGES

During the pick-and-discard phase of the game, there are three advantages:

- Skill
- Strategies
- Position

Between games, study and practice

At the table, leverage the power of position!

Mah jongg, like poker, is a game of observation. Fully reading the table requires both reading hands and identifying playing styles.

If you pay attention, you can gather information that can be used to gain a competitive and strategic advantage at the table.

PLAYING STYLES

There are two important variables to consider:

- A player's personality makes them unique, and their playing style may change as they build their skills.
- A player can adjust their playing style based on:
 - Their opponents (i.e., level of experience, playing styles)
 - The strength of their hand (i.e., no weaknesses, no gaps)
 - The format of the game (i.e., social, competitive)

There are distinguishing factors on two spectrums:



PROFILING PLAYERS

PASSIVE

ASSERTIVE

ADAPTIVE



Adaptive-Passive
Dolphin

General Characteristics

- Risk-averse
- Noncompetitive
- Plays in a state of caution

Likely Tactics

- Does not pick a hand until there are no tiles outside their category
- Is slow to call for a discard to make the first exposure to delay commitment to a hand
- Is quick to call for exposures to expedite hand development after making the first exposure
- Makes exposures with jokers when there is minimal exchange potential
- Switches to defense early

Advantages

- Lots of options
- Flexibility

Disadvantages

- Miss out on needed tiles

Maneuvers Against Them

- Play assertively
- Hand reading
- Middle-game sabotage



Adaptive-Assertive
Shark

General Characteristics

- Risk-tolerant
- Competitive
- Plays in a state of confidence

Likely Tactics

- Gathers tiles and does not pick a hand until there are no tiles outside their category
- Is quick to call for a discard to make exposures to expedite hand development, especially if there are no gaps and few weaknesses
- Makes exposures with jokers regardless of exchange potential
- Plays to win if waiting for one tile in the end-game

Advantages

- Lots of options
- Flexibility

Disadvantages

- May get stuck due to early commitment

Maneuvers Against Them

- Hand reading
- Middle-game sabotage
- Early fold
- Disqualification

ADAPTIVE

FIXED



Fixed-Passive
Stingray

General Characteristics

- Risk-averse
- Noncompetitive
- Plays in a state of uncertainty

Likely Tactics

- Limits hands
- Picks a hand before the Charleston and stays with it
- Is slow to call for a discard to make the first exposure to delay commitment to a hand
- Makes exposures with jokers when there is minimal exchange potential
- Switches to defense early

Advantages

- Decision making is simple because of a narrow focus

Disadvantages

- Miss out on needed tiles
- Limited switchability
- Least likely to win

Maneuvers Against Them

- Play assertively
- Hand reading
- Middle-game sabotage



Fixed-Assertive
Orca

General Characteristics

- Risk-tolerant
- Competitive
- Plays in a state of belief

Likely Tactics

- Picks a hand before the Charleston or early in the game and stays with it
- Is quick to call tiles for a discard to make exposures to expedite hand development
- Makes exposures with jokers regardless of exchange potential
- Plays to win if waiting for one tile in the end-game

Advantages

- Decision making is simple because of a narrow focus

Disadvantages

- May get stuck due to early commitment
- Limited switchability

Maneuvers Against Them

- Hand reading
- Middle-game sabotage
- Early fold
- Disqualification

FIXED

PASSIVE

ASSERTIVE

