



PLAYING THE *Game*

PAI GOW TILES

Pai Gow is a game of Chinese dominoes. It originated in Ancient China and is played in most Asian Countries. Translated into English, Pai Gow means “to make nine.” It is played with 32 dominoes (also referred to as tiles) – 11 of which are identical pairs.

OBJECT OF PAI GOW

The Object of Pai Gow is to make 2 “ranking” hands using 4 dominoes (2 dominoes per hand). The 2 hands consist of the “high hand” and the “low hand.” In order to win, the player’s rankings in both hands must be higher than the bank’s. For the bank to win, its rankings must be higher than the players. If the banker wins one and the players the other, the hand is a standoff (“push”). If the bank and player have the same ranking hand and their highest ranking individual dominoes (tiles) are also the same, then the banker wins. This is known as a “copy hand”.

THE GAME OF PAI GOW

A unique feature of Pai Gow is after each hand the bank will be offered among the players counterclockwise beginning with the player to the farthest right of the dealer. Any player can accept or pass the bank. The banking player must be able to cover all bets made by the other players and must have wagered in the previous round that the dealer acted as banker.

The dominoes are shuffled by the dealer and then placed in 8 stacks of 4 each. The players then place their bets. The dealer will announce “no more bets” prior to shaking the pai gow shaker (containing three dice) at least three times then remove the lid, total the dice and announce the total. This determines which player will get the first stack of dominoes. The dealer will then deal one stack (4 dominoes) to each player’s position, whether there is a player seated there or not including himself or herself and a dead hand. The players then rank their dominoes and place two hands face down immediately behind the player’s betting area. Each player at the table shall be responsible for setting his or her own hand and no other person except the dealer may touch the tiles (dominoes) of that player. Each player shall be required to keep the 4 tiles (dominoes) in full view of the dealer at all times. Once each player has set a high hand and a low hand and placed the two hands face down on the layout, the player shall not touch the tiles (dominoes) again. The dealer will always set his or her hand using a set of rules known as House Way. The banker’s hand is shown first and then the dealer reveals the player’s hands. The dealer collects the losers and pays the winners at even money less a 5% commission for the house.

Only players who are seated at the Pai Gow table may place a wager and receive tiles (dominoes), that player must remain seated until the completion of the round of play.

RANKING THE DOMINOES

In order to play Pai Gow, it is necessary to know the ranking of the dominoes. The ranking does not follow a number sequence (i.e., highest to lowest) but are symbols to the Chinese. For example, the highest ranking domino is twelve while the second highest is the two (see Single Ranking Chart). The highest ranking hand in Pai Gow is a combination of domino six (white 2 red 4) and domino three (white 2, red 1). This pair is called “Supreme” (Gee Joon). The 2nd through the 12th ranking hands are the “Matched Pairs” (Bo) and the 13th through the 16th ranking hands are the “Mixed Pairs” (Chop Bo) (see Pair Ranking Chart). These pairs rank in the same order as the individual dominoes. “Wongs” are ranked next, 17th and 18th. A “Wong” is a twelve (teen) domino and any domino having a value of nine, or a two (day) domino and any domino having a value of nine. “Gongs” are the next ranking 19th and 20th. A “Gong” is a twelve (teen) domino and any domino having a value of eight, or a two (day) domino and any domino having the value of eight.

If none of the above rankings can be made, hands are formed by ranking dominoes from nine to zero. This is done by adding the dominoes together. If the value of the two dominoes (tiles) totaled is a two digit number, the left digit is discarded and the right digit constitutes the value of the hand. For example, the dominoes 8 and 11 added together make 9. The dominoes 7 and 6 make 3. These types of rankings are the most common in Pai Gow. When the banker and player have the same ranking hand by number, the hand that has the higher ranking single domino will win (see Single Ranking Chart).

The dominoes 6 (2-4) and 3 (1-2) together make the highest ranking hand; the “Supreme Pair”. If the tiles which form the “Supreme Pair” are used separately, the numeric total of the 6 (2-4) may be counted as a 3 and the numeric total of the 3 (2-1) may be counted as a 6. When the 3 (1-2) is counted as a 6, its individual ranking shall be fifteenth instead of seventeenth. When the 6 (2-4) is counted as a 3, its individual ranking shall be seventeenth instead of fifteenth. Remember, look for these two dominoes when trying to make 9’s.

HINTS FOR SETTING UP PAI GOW HANDS

PAIRS

Always look for pairs first. Don’t forget Gee Joon (1-2 and 2-4) and mixed pairs.

WONGS AND GONGS

Play a 12 or 2 domino with any 9 or 8 domino.

NINE OR EIGHT

Play any domino that total nine or eight.

AVERAGE

If none of the above can be found, average the dominoes by playing the highest domino with the lowest domino.

RANKING

If possible, try to play the highest ranking domino in the low hand.

HOUSE WAY

If undecided, ask the dealer to set up the hand the house way.

