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MAH JONG: Foster Discusses the Management and Value of Sequences

By R. F. FOSTER.

In previous articles we have dealt with the proper management of two of the more valuable kinds of sets, punks and kongs. The student of mah jong tactics should now be ready to take up the less valuable, but often much more important, and more difficult to handle, the sequences.

The pung and kong are valuable in two ways. They not only count

something in the final score, win or lose, but they fill one of the four spaces in our little garden plot, and make just that much progress toward completing the hand for a woo.

The sequence has no scoring value at present, but it is on all fours with punks and kongs in the matter of completing the hand, so as to get the essential four sets and a pair.

Mathematically considered the pro-

gress you make toward something that has a fixed value is the ratio of proportion between the amount of progress and the value the value depending upon whether the completion of the progress is or is not a factor.

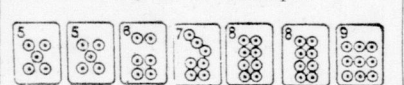
To illustrate: If a man agrees to build fifty feet of fence to keep out his neighbor's cows, and he builds only twenty-five feet and quits, the fence is useless, because it is not long enough to fulfill its purpose, which was to keep out the cows. On the other hand, if a man agrees to put \$50 worth of coal in your cellar, and puts in only half of it, that much coal is worth \$25 to you, whether he ever puts in any more or not.

Sequence Is All Or Nothing.

The same is true of sequence and punks. If the sequence does not accomplish its full purpose and the hand is not completed, the sequence is worth nothing at all, but the punks and kongs have a certain value, whether the hand is completed or not. This value is not added to by the completion of the hand, but the completion of the hand is simply a value added to the value of the punks.

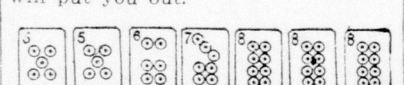
Although it may not seem so at the first glance, sequences are more difficult to manage than punks. This is because the pung is a thing in itself, a single set. A kong does not make any further progress toward a woo than a pung. The difficulty begins with sequences is in the failure to see their possibilities and to take proper advantage of them, when there are two or more sequences forming in the same suit.

Most of the oversights occur when there are seven tiles left in the hand, all of the same suit, two sets having been grounded, or already formed in the hand, in other suits. To illustrate the way in which these seven-tile situations must be watched, take the following as an example:



You are "calling" for one tile, the seven, which is the only one that will complete the hand, by filling out the 7-8-9 sequence, leaving the pair of 5s for the eyes.

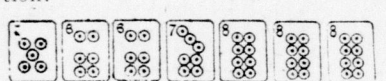
Now, suppose that while you are waiting for the 7 you get a chance to take a third 8, whether from a pung, or by drawing it does no matter, except that in hand the triplet is worth 4 points. If you draw and keep the triplet or ground it, you are calling for two tiles instead of one only, as the fourth 8 or the 7 will put you out.



As an illustration of the advantage of not having to take punks, which was explained in the last article, suppose you drew that third 8, and could keep it in your hand instead of grounding it, discarding the 9. You are still calling for the same two tiles to woo, but suppose that instead of getting either of them you happened to draw from the wall another 6.

With the 8s grounded, this would be of no use to you, unless you wished to change your chance to filling one of two pairs as better than waiting for a fourth 8 or a 5. But if the triplet of 8s are in your hand you can keep the 6 you draw and discard one of the pair of 5s. This

will leave your hand in this condition:



The difference this exchange makes is that you are now calling for three tiles, instead of two only, as a 4, 6 or 7 will put you out. A 4 would leave the 5s for the eyes, a 6 would leave the 7s, and a 7 would leave the 8s. This shows us how getting two tiles and keeping them in hand, discarding others in their places, may sometimes advance your chances from a single tile to two or three. It is situations like this that are constantly overlooked by inexperienced or careless players; yet no part of the game is more important.

There are many cases in which a hand that is calling for only one particular tile to woo may be suddenly transformed into one that any of four or five different tiles would fill. Take this part of the hand for example, two sets having been grounded:



The 1 is the only tile that will fit to complete this hand. But suppose that while you are waiting for that tile you should draw the 5 from the wall. Keeping that in your hand and discarding the one, you leave your hand in this condition:



If you will look over these tiles carefully, you will find that instead of depending on a single tile to woo, the 1, you are now "calling" five tiles. That is, you can woo with any one of five different tiles. Those are the 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9.

With a three, you form a sequence, and have the 4s for your eyes. With a 5 you get two eyes between two sequences. With a 6 you get a 4, 5, 6 sequence, and have the 4s for your eyes. With an 8 you get two eyes, and have the triplet of 8s and the sequence, 5, 6, 7. With a 9, you get two sequences and have the 4s left for the eyes.

Nothing is more valuable than the exercise of laying out various combinations of tiles in the same suit and studying their possibilities in the way of enlarging the number of tiles that would complete the hand. The jump from calling one tile to five is not as uncommon as one might imagine, and the jump from one to two or three is very common, and also very commonly overlooked.

JUVENILE BRANCH OPPOSED IN ORDER

Oddfellows' Grand Lodge Goes On Record—Session Is Closed.

Special to The Advertiser. Guelph, June 20.—By a vote of 164 to 143, the Grand Lodge L. O. O. F., which closed the annual meeting here today, decided on Windsor for next year's place of meeting.

At the final session Grand Master Potter and Grand Secretary Fuller, of Massachusetts, Grand Master Cooper of Connecticut, P. G. M. Peabody, and Grand Secretary Townsend of Maine, gave addresses. Fraternal addresses were given by Fred Rogers, Grand Secretary, and Homer Carr, Grand Guardian, of the Grand Lodge of Michigan, Grand Master Burley of Saskatchewan, Grand Master R. C. Waller of New York, Grand Master MacKay of Maritime Provinces.

Nominations for grand warden were: Dr. Andrew Gray, Chippewa; Dr. Harrison, Pt. Arthur; J. R. Scott, Chifford; H. Weeks, Toronto; S. A. Marshall, Toronto; F. B. Freed, Forest; Rev. A. C. Cummer, Thorncliffe; Dr. J. W. Smuck, Toronto; J. B. Rowland, Midland; W. H. Ryan, Merrickville; W. A. Robinson, Cannington; W. Guthrie, Sarnia; G. H. Davey, Iroquois; C. A. Byam, New Liskeard; C. J. Parker, Brantford; A. H. Bowman, Sandwich; F. C. Pothick, Bowmanville; A. S. Rennie, Tilsonburg; C. Morrison, Walkerville; A. C. Bricker, Barrie; W. Duncan, Elora; J. McDonald, Tara; E. Brooke, Toronto; C. E. Steel, Pt. Colborne.

The finance committee recommended that the amount to the credit of the voluntary patriotic relief fund be transferred to the general fund. During the year \$7,152.35 was received on account of the home building fund, which at the end of the year amounted to \$128,883.75.

In regard to the juvenile branch of the order, a recommendation was made that the grand lodge place itself on record and instruct its representatives to sovereign grand lodge to oppose any further action that may be taken to organize a juvenile branch.

HOOVER TELLS CABINET OF DEEP WATERWAYS

U. S. Secretary of Commerce Explains Results of the Recent Survey.

Associated Press Despatch. Washington, June 20.—Result of the survey completed this week by the St. Lawrence Waterways Commission were laid before President Coolidge and the cabinet today by Secretary Hoover.

Mr. Hoover, as chairman of the commission, reported on the general phases of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence project, and announced that the next step was the survey begun yesterday by the American engineering board assigned to work in conjunction with a similar Canadian

SIR HENRY QUESTIONED ON PARIS HOTEL BUY

C. N. Chief Tells Commons Committee He Had Informally Talked Matter.

Canadian Press Despatch. Ottawa, June 20.—A week previous to signing of the contract with Mr. Aronovitch, who acted for the Canadian National Railway in the purchase of the Scribe Hotel in Paris, Sir Henry Thornton discussed informally with the prime minister the general intention of procuring property in Paris, the president of the Canadian National Railway told the House of Commons committee examining the accounts of the national lines today.

Sir Henry Thornton, under examination by Sir Henry Brayton, said that the prime minister saw no objection to the plan. The contract with Mr. Aronovitch was signed on April 29, 1923. The information was conveyed to Hon. G. P. Graham, minister of railways, in a letter of May 31, 1923.

Sir Henry Thornton thought that he had probably discussed the matter with Mr. Graham before the letter had been sent. The project was confirmed at a meeting of the directors of the railroad on May 21.

Sir Henry Thornton told of Mr. Aronovitch's coming to Canada with the option on the Scribe Hotel property in April, 1923. After a month, he returned with instructions to close the deal.

Mr. Aronovitch's recommendations apply to all civil servants in any department of the civil service.

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APPEAL FOR CIVIL WORKERS WHO SERVED IN GREAT WAR

Canadian Press Despatch. Ottawa, June 20.—That civil servants who served in any theatre of the Great War should be credited with their term of war service when their status under the superannuation act is being taken into account was recommended by W. F. Parkinson, deputy minister of re-establishment, in his evidence before the parliamentary committee on superannuation this afternoon.

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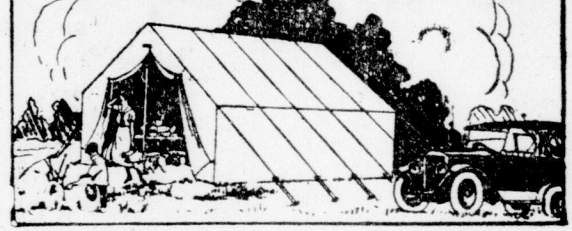
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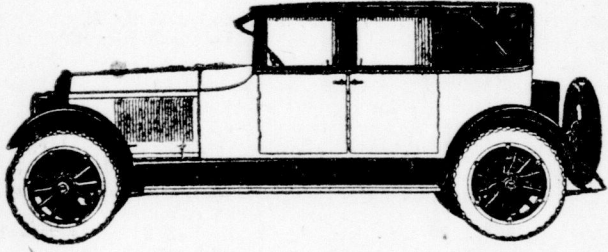
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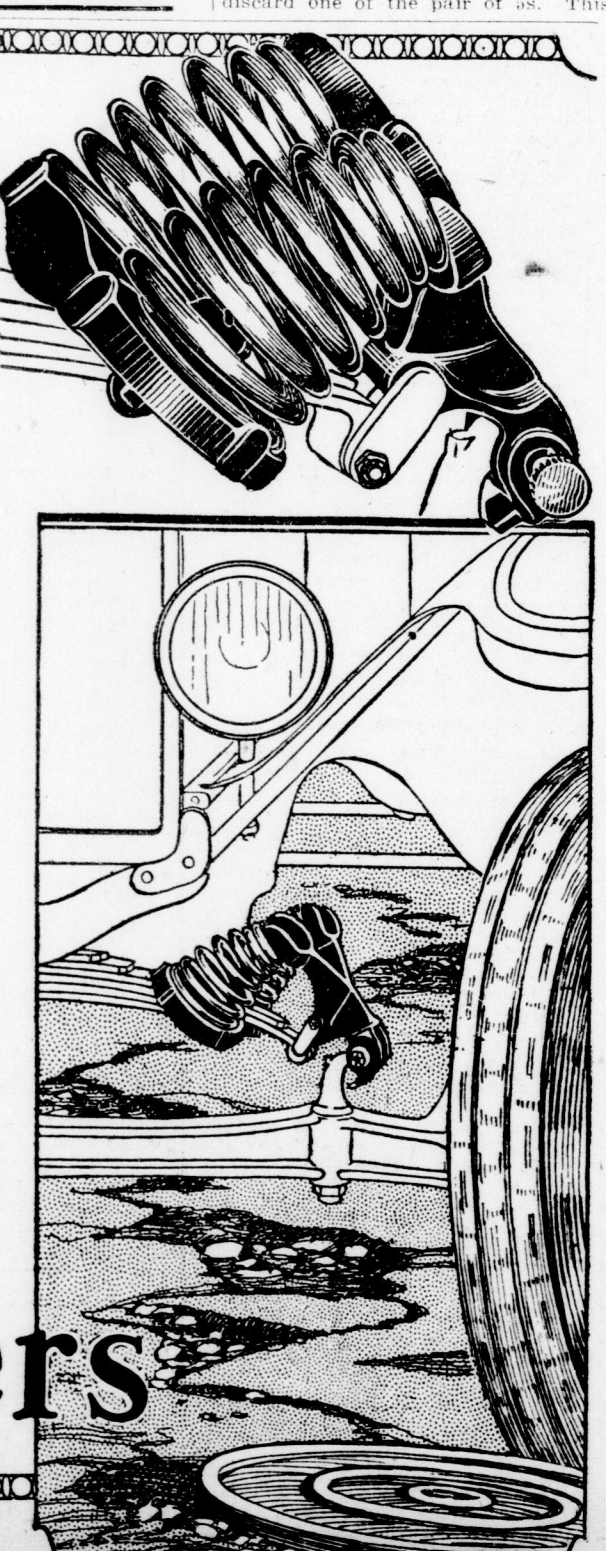
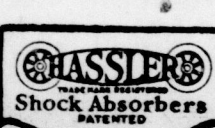
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