



EMA requirements and guidelines for MERS tournaments

In promoting international tournaments (and rankings based on their results), we need to ensure that tournaments are executed in an orderly and uniform manner. For this reason we have compiled the requirements and guidelines below.

1. MERS certification procedure for a tournament	2
1.1. Application.....	2
1.2. Tournament planning.....	2
1.3. Decision.....	2
2. Number of participants and quotas for a tournament	2
2.1. Number of participants.....	2
2.2. Quotas.....	2
2.3. Player eligibility.....	2
3. Tournaments requirements and guidelines	3
3.1. Location.....	3
3.2. Playing room and playing conditions.....	3
3.3. Information.....	3
3.4. Registration fee for tournaments.....	3
3.5. Tournament rule sets.....	3
3.6. Tournament format.....	4
3.7. Drawing lots.....	4
3.8. Play materials and tournament equipment.....	4
3.9. Substitute players.....	4
3.10. Referees.....	5
3.11. EMA observer.....	5
3.12. Prizes - Trophies.....	6
3.13. Submitting results.....	6
4. Sanctions	6

1. MERS certification procedure for a tournament

1.1. Application

Any EMA member organization or applicant country can apply for certification of a tournament. The application should be expressed by an application form sent by the EMA board member of the member organization or applicant country to the board of EMA at latest 2 months ahead of the tournament, and at the earliest one year in advance. A template for this application form is available on the EMA website.

1.2. Tournament planning

Coinciding tournaments cannot be completely avoided, but co-scheduling should be kept at a minimum. Organisers should always consult the EMA calendar before applying for certification. MERS 2 tournaments should never coincide with a European championship or a world championship that was announced at least one year in advance.

National championships (weight 2) of the same rule set should not be co-scheduled. In case of simultaneous applications for the same date, EMA should try to resolve the case by negotiating with the two applicants. If both insist on the same date, the date of receipt of the application at EMA is decisive.

1.3. Decision

MERS certification is granted to the tournament automatically after two weeks (since the date of receipt of the application form) if no protests were raised by board members. In case protests are raised, certification is granted after the decision of the board.

2. Number of participants and quotas for a tournament

2.1. Number of participants

Tournaments must have a minimum number of participants depending on their weight:

- MERS 1 must have at least 16 participants
- MERS 2 must have at least 16 participants
- MERS 5 must have at least 80 participants

2.2. Quotas

In local and national tournaments (MERS weight 1 and 2) up to 50% of the seats can be allocated to the local national organization.

EMA is responsible for player quotas for European championships (weight 5).

Quotas are based on the strength and presence of players in the ranking system. The details of determining quotas are found on EMA's web site.

These quotas are dynamical and the quotas are finalized 6 months before events. Until finalization, the quotas are continuously updated on the EMA web site along with the ranking, allowing constant monitoring of the current preview of country quotas.

2.3. Player eligibility

Certified tournaments must be open for participation for all players over the world. Any limitations regarding the number of players must be mentioned to and approved by EMA in the certification procedure (application form).

3. Tournaments requirements and guidelines

This paragraph contains requirements and guidelines on tournament organization. Requirements are phrased as 'must', all other types of phrasing are guidelines or recommendations.

3.1. Location

The place should be easily accessible for players. Organizers should choose a venue well served by public transportations and/or ample parking places.

3.2. Playing room and playing conditions

The playing room should be big enough to play in comfortable conditions. Table with a minimum area of 70cm x 70cm should be used and the space per table should allow referee to move easily between players.

Take care about having ventilation or air conditioning when organizing a summer tournament, heating system when organizing a winter tournament.

Take care to consider quiet conditions. Provide a cloakroom and adequate toilet facilities for the number of participants.

3.3. Information

The tournament must be announced on the website of the organizing EMA member state and/or on a specific website for this tournament. A link to this website must be available on the tournament calendar on the EMA website. These webpage(s) must include:

- Dates, location, name of event
- Registration procedure and fee
- Time schedule
- Prizes (e.g. prizes for individual ranking 1st, 2nd, 3rd. Team prize for best team.)
- Referees
- EMA observer (when decided)
- List of participants (regularly updated)
- Catering
- Info on accommodation and local transport is convenient for foreigners

This information must at least be available in the English language.

3.4. Registration fee for tournaments

Registration fee for a tournament should be as low as possible and only cover the costs directly related to the organization of the tournament.

3.5. Tournament rule sets

MERS tournaments must adhere to the official EMA rules for the respective rule set. Mahjong Competition Rules are published by the World Mahjong Organization and amended for European competitions by the MCR Tournament Regulations and the Referee Manual published by EMA. The EMA Riichi Competition Rules (RCR) for Japanese Mahjong are published by EMA.

3.6. Tournament format

MCR tournaments must contain at least the minimum number of sessions and minimum length of sessions stated below.

Weight = 1: At least 4 sessions of 90 minutes
Weight = 2: At least 6 sessions of 120 minutes
Weight = 5: At least 8 sessions of 120 minutes

MCR tournaments must not have more than 4 sessions per day.

RCR tournaments must contain at least the minimum number of sessions and minimum length of sessions stated below.

Weight = 1: At least 4 sessions of 90 minutes
Weight = 2: At least 6 sessions of 90 minutes
Weight = 5: At least 8 sessions of 90 minutes

RCR tournaments must not have more than 5 sessions per day.

A break should be present between 2 sessions. The duration of this break, at least 15 minutes, is depending on the number of the participant and should permit to all players to rest a bit and to consult the results of the previous session. Lunch breaks should be at least 30 minutes.

During the tournament results of previous sessions must be clearly displayed before the beginning of the next session.

During the tournament the remaining time of the current session must be clearly displayed on a countdown clock visible from all tables.

3.7. Drawing lots

Drawing lots for player seating in the tournament must be done in a transparent and random manner, in the presence of the player at the start of tournament or at an event before.

3.8. Play materials and tournament equipment

Mahjong tile sets should be standard sets. For special occasions, flower tiles and bamboo 1 and dot 1 could be redesigned as long as they are clearly identifiable.

The sets should be of a good size and homogeneous from one table to another, preferably without Arabic numbers.

The following equipment has to be present in all tournaments:

- Countdown clock visible from all tables
- Gong (or equivalent for sounding beginning and end of sessions)
- Tables, tiles, incl. spares in case of breakdown/loss
- Sheets for keeping score at tables
- Player programs: indicating starting time and table number for each session.
- Sign at each table identifying the table number
- Sign displaying the direction of East (for MCR tournaments only)
- IT equipment for keeping scores and displaying or printing results before each session (an EMA Tournament Organizer Software is available)

3.9. Substitute players

The organisers are responsible for always having substitute players present during sessions. In case of illness, absence or other unforeseen events, the referee must be able to replace missing players with substitute players.

If the substitute player is in position to replace a player from the beginning of the tournament, organizers must ask the substitute, before the first round starts, if he wants his results taken into

account in the ranking.

Settlement of table points and ranking result of a substitute player are described in the "MERS Tournament Regulations" document for MCR and in EMA Riichi Rules for RCR

3.10. Referees

Tournament organizers are responsible for appointing referees to manage issues during the tournament. The names of referees must be announced at the beginning of the tournament (before the first session starts).

For all tournaments, one referee should be available for each 32 players.

EMA encourages appointing non-playing EMA-certified referees. For MERS 2 and MERS 5 tournaments appointment of non-playing EMA-certified referees is a must.

For European championships, will request countries to appoint referees.

In the procedure for calculation of EMA member quota, a number of extra seats will be reserved in the invited player section, the so called referee bonus seats. Their number is equal to the number of referees necessary for the championship. Following the call for referees by EMA, every member state that *voluntary* provides a referee, will be distributed an extra seat from the referee bonus seats. If after some period not all referee seats are filled, countries will be *requested* to provide a referee (and receive a bonus seat as a reward), according to their ranking in the player quota list. Member states that have already provided a volunteer for this tournament or for the previous tournament in this rule set may pass the obligation to the next on the list.

For European championships, countries are requested to appoint referees.

The organizing committee should provide benefits for the referees. This should include as a minimum: accommodation from the night before the tournament to the last day of the tournament and catering and benefits during the tournament on the same level as the players. The funding of part of the travel price would be much appreciated.

3.11. EMA observer

Tournament organizers are responsible for appointment of an EMA observer, and announcing his name to the EMA at least two weeks before the event. The observer should preferably be an EMA board member from another country, or an experienced tournament player from another country.

The role of the EMA observer is to report to EMA whether the tournament organisation was satisfactory, and to report any complaints or irregularities communicated by players. His name must be announced to the players at the beginning of tournament.

The EMA observer should submit a small report shortly after the tournament containing:

- Name of the EMA observer
- Tournament name, location and dates.
- Rule system and MERS weight.
- Playing schedule: Number and length of playing sessions
- Number of participants and number of countries represented
- Names of the referees and whether they were playing or non-playing
- Number of prizes and what they are awarded for
- A few comments on the overall organisation, like playing venue, the equipment (tiles, tables), catering
- Information and communication before and during the tournament. Was a clock clearly visible during sessions, and were results clearly communicated between sessions?
- Irregularities experienced, if any
- Complaints received or questions raised, if any
- Brief conclusion

The observer should speak English and the report should be written in English language. A template for observer reports is available on the EMA website. EMA observer reports will be publicly available on the EMA website.

3.12. Prizes - Trophies

The tournament must have at least one prize for the three best players.

For MCR tournaments, team prizes are customary, either for the winning team, or for several teams, e.g. top 3 teams.

The tournament prizes cannot consist of money prizes or equivalent.

3.13. Submitting results

Organizers must submit tournament results to the ranking manager in the correct format with EMA ID numbers for players, as described on the EMA website.

Organizers are responsible for correct EMA-id's when submitting results to the EMA database manager.

4. Sanctions

Failure to meet these requirements can lead to sanctions. The sanction and its level will be decided by the General Assembly.

Sanctions may include:

- Warning
- Loss of the MERS certification for one year
- Loss of quota or guaranteed seats for European and World Championships
- Loss of the affiliation to EMA