



Observer report UK Open 2017 (RCR, RERS-2)

Observer: Nicole Haasbroek

Date: August 12th – 13th 2017

Place: Godalming, United Kingdom

Website or other source(s) of information: All information on tournament website <http://ukrc2017.com> : registration, program, list of participants, tips on travelling and accomodation, schedule. Two additional mails were sent out to inform players of the upcoming problems with public transportation, the name of the EMA observer, how to get in touch with the organizers in case of emergencies and to invite players to the social gathering on Friday (social play).

Participants: 40 players

Represented countries: China: 1; Denmark: 1; Germany: 1; Italy: 1; Switzerland: 2; The Netherlands: 3; United Kingdom: 31

Playing schedule: 2 days, 9 sessions (5+4) of 90 minutes.

Location: ‘The Broadwater Pavillion’, Godalming. The room was large enough to accommodate all players and properly lit.

Equipment: Japanese mahjong sets and junkmats one every table (exception: one table had a different kind of ‘mat’). Because score was kept on paper no scoring sticks were used, except a few in order for players to declare riichi. Poker chips were used to indicate any renchan.

Refereeing: Martin Lester and Philip Bielby acted as playing referees.

Complaints:

- 1) One participant complained about the unexpected leave of a player. After hanchan five on Saturday the latter voiced his decision not to return on Sunday.

- 2) One player made a complaint about the absence of pens on several tables, and complained about the fact the seating was not available on paper at the tables. Players were given a card stating their table seating, but this lacked their assigned wind seats (this information was however available online).
- 3) My complaints: A) the use of score sheets; B) the pre-seating of players (pairing incl. assignments of wind seats); C) using playing referees – ad A) At EMA tournaments the use of score sheets has become nearly obsolete in favor of using scoring sticks: fast and transparent payment, and no more errors in math (saving time), are huge benefits. - ad B) Even though I have no problem with pre-assigning tables it doesn't comply with EMA tournament guidelines regarding transparency (art. 3.7). Recording the seating procedure would have solved this (similar to the practice prior to ERM2016). Another option would be to prepare a pairing using numbers in stead of player names. Instruct participants to draw a number during registration and substitute the numbers in the schedule for names. Needless to say the pre-assignment of wind seats is done with the best of intentions, but this heavily impacts the luck factor in the game, which is an integral part of mahjong. – ad C) as stated in the EMA tournament guidelines for MERS2 tournaments a non playing EMA certified referee is a must (art. 3.10).

Information / communication during the tournament: During the tournament a clock was present. Organizers informed players at the beginning and at the end of the sessions. An interactive website informed players (and other interested parties) of the current ranking, seating, individual results, etc: <http://live.ukrc2017.com>. There were three screens displaying the current ranking: one in the tournament room, two in the adjacent bar area.

Sessions: Excellent playing atmosphere, FFF (Fair-play, Friendly and Fun).

Catering: Very tasty hot lunch on the premises. Throughout the tournament tea, coffee, and sweets were available at no extra charge. Additional (alcoholic) drinks were available at the bar.

Prizes: All top-3 players received glass/crystal trophies and a plaque. In addition, the winner received the UK Champion challenge cup (glass trophy), and the player who made the most progress on the second tournament day was awarded the 'Better 2Day' prize (glass trophy).

Possible Learning Points: transparent seating method, non-playing referee

Conclusion: Great crew, excellent food, and an awesome interactive tournament website keeping us all up-to-date (all credit goes to Nick Dyer). Players were friendly and fair; a nice mix of veterans and players who made their tournament debut. Besides having fun during the tournament I really enjoyed the social play, incl. 'crashing' in a nearby restaurant for a bite. Overall a great experience!