



Observer report for Heiwa nomi no Majan taisen (Riichi, RERS 3)

Observer: Pieter Potmeer

Date: April 15th-16th 2023

Place: Cologne, Germany

Website or other source(s) of information: All information on website of Rinshan Kaihou Cologne mahjong club, registration, participants, schedule, etc.

Participants: 60 players from 7 countries

UA	GER	BEL	NED	FRA	SWE	POL
						
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Playing schedule: 2 days, 9 hanchan (5+4) total. The first seven hanchan were played round-robin, then all scores were halved and the final two hanchan played Swiss (seating according to tournament ranking). Pre-registration and social play on Friday evening.

Location: The Schützenhalle St. Sebastianus in Köln-Holweide. Venue easily fits the required number of tables and has a separate area for meals and breaks between rounds. Public transportation via the Stadtbahn immediately next door.

Equipment: Standard riichi mahjong sets and junk mats

Refereeing: Manuel Kameda-Schlich was head referee, supporting referees were Tian Hang on Saturday and Ken Nico Schultheiss on Sunday, all non-playing.

Complaints: The table seatings for the round-robin section of the tournament were automatically generated by a proprietary program that had been used for previous tournaments. This system malfunctioned which resulted in many players encountering multiple opponents multiple times, sometimes more than twice. Tournament organizers were aware of this problem prior to the start of the tournament and this was clearly announced before the start of the first hanchan. Organizers will rectify this problem before the next tournament.

There were several minor complaints about an excessive degree of proactive intervention by the supporting referees. The observer reported the situation to the head referee, who has indicated he will discuss this with the supporting referees. It should be noted that both supporting referees were refereeing their first tournament.

The reception of the chosen format of the tournament (last two hanchan Swiss with scores halved before) was mixed leaning towards positive. The observer would like to recommend that EMA Presidium consider implementing some sort of guidance for the use of tournament formats alternative to round-robin. There is a clear desire amongst seasoned players and organisers to come up with some sort of system that is more fair and competitive, but the lack of guidance results in experimentation, which is not always successful and can be detrimental to the quality of player experience.

Information / communication during the tournament: Visible clock projected from a computer on a screen. Start of each session was clearly announced verbally. End of session announced by ringing bell. Ranking updated between sessions on the tournament website and printouts between rounds.

Sessions: High standard of play, players often quoted "good vibes"!

Catering: Hearty German lunch supplied by the kitchen of the Schützenbruderschaft, snacks, fruit, water, hot drinks, soft drinks and beer all included in the registration fee!

Prizes: Trophies for individual ranking (1st, 2nd and 3rd), free registration voucher for the lowest ranked player, chocolate for highest score achieved in each hanchan.

Conclusion: Excellent tournament in Cologne, good location and great organization. Highly recommended.