



## **Observer report for UK Riichi Spring Open Tournament 2024 (RCR, MERS zzz)**

**Observer:** Andrew Z.P. SMITH, EMA representative for Ireland

**Date:** Saturday 18th- Sunday 19th May 2024

**Place:** Cambridge, UK

**Website or other source(s) of information:** The website <https://richi.uk/> gave an area map of the venue, as well as a google streetview map of the entrance to the venue itself. It provided information on getting to Cambridge by air, train, coach and car, and on getting to the venue itself by walk, bike and taxi. It gave information on accommodation close to the venue, and on cheap accommodation in Cambridge, as well as the list of registered participants, and a registration form.

**Participants:** 60. One registered player did not turn up, 59 did. One substitute was used from the start of hanchan 1, and thus played as a full player. A second substitute was on standby for both days, but did not need to be called upon to play. All players who started on Hanchan 1, played through to Hanchan 8, so no mid-tournament substitutions were needed.

**Represented regions:** Canada: 1; China: 2; France: 3; Hong Kong: 5; Ireland: 2; Poland: 4; Portugal: 1; Spain: 1; Sweden: 1; Switzerland: 2; UK: 37; Ukraine: 1

**Playing schedule:** 2 days, 8 hanchan (5+3) of 75 minutes + finish current hand + 1 more.  
Optional social activities: social play took place on Friday evening; and punt-boating on the river on Saturday evening, followed by dinner.

**Venue:** Chesterton Indoor Bowls Club. Lighting, ventilation, and space were all very good. There was no noise from outside into the venue that could have disrupted play. There was a separate, spacious breakout area, well-screened and some distance from the play area, ensuring no noise disruption to players. On-site car parking was available, and it was a reasonable walk to public transport connections.

**Equipment:** All the equipment was of a good standard and in good condition. In-game scoring was done with coloured tenbo. Final game scores were reported on paper, which had been pre-printed with player names, seats, and a score table that was intuitive and easy to complete.

**Refereeing:** 3 playing referees: John Duckworth (UK), Benoit Dessort (France), and Arnaud Wolf (France). All calls for referees were met promptly. On each occasion, the table on which a called

referee was playing at, was given extra time to finish its game, to account for the specific time lost to refereeing duties.

**Complaints:** None. The host encouraged players to bring their complaints to me and to him, and no complaints were made. Quite the opposite: I heard lots of positive feedback on the food (the vegans in particular were delighted with theirs), the organisation, and the atmosphere.

**Information / communication during the tournament:** Tables and winds were pre-determined for all players. These allocations were provided on paper to players at registration on Day 1, in cute little envelopes. Standings were updated onto the website immediately, and players were informed as soon as they went live. The top 20 players and scores were also projected onto the wall in the play area between hanchan. The hanchan countdown-timer was projected onto the wall during play, and was clearly visible from all tables. A gong sounded at the start and end of the 75 minutes. At the end of each round, overall rankings, and individual scores for each table for each hanchan, appeared on the website. A profile page for each player, given their summary statistics, their schedule, and charts of their individual hanchan scores and cumulative total score, was also provided.

**Sessions:** Excellent playing atmosphere, fair, fun and friendly. No pair of players played together more than once, each player had each initial starting wind exactly twice; and for most players, they never sat at any one of the tables more than once.

**Catering:** A splendid buffet lunch was provided on both days, with special options for vegans and vegetarians. Bottled water was available at all times. Tea, instant coffee, and biscuits were available at all times when not playing.

**Prizes:** In addition to the prizes for the top 4 players and the last player, there were additional prizes for best hanchan, worst hanchan, best recovery on day 2, and “best” (rarest/prettiest) hand, which was won with an All-Honours yakuman.

**Conclusion:** The tournament went very smoothly, EMA guidelines on tournaments were observed, and the atmosphere was friendly and competitive, as well as nurturing and supportive to new and inexperienced players.