



O B S E R V E R R E P O R T
for

1st Irish Riichi Championship

(RIICHI, MERS 3.0)

Observer:  Krzysztof DĄBROWSKI, *Founder of ChiiThorn Toruń club*

Date: 10-11 August 2024

Place:  Cork, Republic of Ireland

Source(s) of information:

Main source of information is the website of the organizer (<https://mahjong.ie/cork2024/>). The website itself had information about registration, tournament agenda, list of participants, location, transportation and accommodation tips. Additionally, the organizers were sending emails to the competitors with updates.

Participants: 48 competitors, representing 8 countries

 United Kingdom	 Ireland	 Netherlands	 France	 Germany	 Poland	 Denmark	 Ukraine
14	13	8	3	3	3	2	2

Three players (all UK) had to withdraw before the tournament. Their spots were filled by reserve players (all Ireland).

Playing schedule:

2 days, seven hanchans, with four sessions played on Saturday and remaining three on Sunday. Each hanchan followed a well established 75min + 1hand system (once 75 minutes have passed, players have to finish the currently ongoing hand and play an additional one, if available).



Location:

The Crow's Nest is an apartment complex, serving students of University College Cork. Well communicated with the city center. Competitors were able to rent a room in one of the apartments here or in Victoria Lodge which was nearby.



Tournament took place in the Recreation Room of the complex - the room was big enough to provide very comfortable conditions for 12 tables and still gives the opportunity to expand the tournament a little bit in the future, if there would be enough interest and equipment.

Room itself is well lit. Location near the street would suggest that cars going nearby would generate a lot of noise and disrupt the competition, but nothing like that happened.

Equipment: Two types of rounded square tables were used, both providing more than enough space for a junkmat. Each table was equipped with a reusable all-last sheet, yaku sheets, junkmat, tile set and colored point sticks with a value of 30 thousand points for each player (1x10k, 3x5k, 4x1k, 1x500, 5x100). The sets were in pristine or very good condition - for many of them it was the very first tournament ever.

Refereeing: There were no non-playing referee and four playing referees: 🇺🇦 Maksym Ivanov, 🇳🇱 Jacqueline Oudshoorn, 🇬🇧 Martin Lester and 🇩🇪 Ben Thomas. Mostly they were taking part in confirming chombo, as each chombo had to be confirmed by the referee. There was one situation on Hanchan 3 which had a longer discussion among the referees, but all the other things were solved quickly.

In case any of the referees would be unable to do the duty, 🇺🇦 Sveta Yaremenko was prepared to step up as a backup referee.

Complaints:

- There was a scammer trying to sell entries to the tournament via social media. It was dealt with - organizers acted swiftly, taking the fake ticket proof and exposing the scammer.
- It turned out that the seeding algorithm may need some improvements. There were cases of:
 - one competitor playing all hanchans at one table
 - one competitor playing five hanchans as the same predetermined wind
 - competitors playing not evenly as each wind
- One of the sets was a bit difficult to handle during building the wall process, according to one of the players. It turned out that the player was supposed to play the whole tournament on that table - the situation was patched by changing the numeration of tables for Day 2.

Information / communication during the tournament:

Tournament was following the predetermined round robin format. Schedules for each competitor were provided earlier via Organizer's application available on iOS and Android - the app itself was simple, but did its job - showing the schedule and results - perfectly. Remaining time for the hanchan was fully visible on the large screen, with additional overtime function prepared in case the referees had to sacrifice some of their normal gametime to solve tournament issues.

There was some minor confusion regarding the "Penalty" column, but the purpose of it (the column was for non-chombo penalties) was explained by the organizers as soon as questions appeared.

Sessions:

You could feel a friendly, positive and supportive atmosphere given both by foreign guests and local competitors.

Debutants got support and helpful explanations from more experienced players.

Catering:

Drinks, both hot and cold, were available throughout the whole tournament.

Lunch was made in the form of a buffet - players were taking as much as they wanted, and then consumed it in the recreation area. The available options were sandwiches, tortilla-like rolls, various salads, and fruits.

I was told by multiple competitors to write in a report that the day 1 cole slaw was amazing.

Prizes:

There were prizes for Top 3 competitors in the form of boardgames. Top 4 Irish players got a qualification to the first All-Ireland Championship which will happen later this year.

The player with the biggest improvement between days got the Comeback Award - handmade compass for the riichi play.

The whole Referee team (including the backup) also got gifts.

Other notable information:

After both tournament days, as well as on Friday, in the tournament room, there was time for more casual play. This time was well used by the competitors, voiding some requests to have 8 hanchan tournaments in the future.

Conclusion:

Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome a new country alongside Riichi Mahjong tournament hosts! Ireland begins their organizer story on a high note with a very pleasant, two-day tournament. If you are looking for a well-done tournament and amazing community behind it, definitely put the Emerald Isle tournaments into your calendar.

Enjoy the Ireland! Enjoy the Competition!

Bain sult as Éire! Bain taitneamh as an gComórtas!