



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

for

POTETO RIICHI TAIKAI 2024

(RCR, MERS 3.0)

Observer:  Thibaut ARNOLD

Date: November 9-10th

Place: Dom aukcyjny Adam's, Poznań, Poland

Source(s) of information: Most information could be found on potato.riichi.pl: registration, program, list of participants, etc. in both english and polish. Some others could be found on the Facebook event's webpage <https://www.facebook.com/events/1005041141414991>

Participants:

 Poland	 Germany	 Ukraine	 France	 Switzerland	 Netherlands	 Portugal
50	12	2	1	1	1	1

Playing schedule: 2 days, 8 hanchan (4+4) of 90 minutes

Location: The venue was surprisingly big enough to hold all of us + a supplementary table for referees and organisers in case some help was needed. The break room was also quite spacious, and had a few snacks and drinks every day available for all. The room was nicely ventilated, even if one player at one table would unfortunately always be seated directly under the AC.

Equipment: We played with standard games and mats. The Mahjong Tracker app was used to track scores during the games and tournament. One riichi stick per player at each table. As it's only an Android app, the organisers made sure to have some supplementary phones to help tables out.

Refereeing: Marta (head) and Jakub Bacic were non-playing referees, Jakub Titow was a playing referee.

Complaints: There has been quite a few complaints, but some are also more general to polish tournaments, and so I will make a separation between the two types.

To start with the complaints of this particular tournament:

- Complaints about the registration were made, as we had to buy tickets through a third-party platform (ekobilet.pl) that forced us to pay additional service taxes to the normal registration price. We couldn't make bank transfers to the organisers nor pay cash on site. For 200 PLN for each registration, we had to pay a supplementary 1.50 PLN for service taxes. Those charges could have been taken by the organisers. Some people were still allowed to pay via bank transfer, and didn't get to "buy a ticket", because they had the old bank coordinates of the club from a previous edition.
- A few people even had trouble buying tickets on that platform, as some usual credit cards weren't accepted.
- For polish players, since PLM covers part of a tournament's costs on players' request, no information about how they're taking this into account was mentioned anywhere.
- The agenda was put out very late.
- A complaint was made that the refereeing was a bit too lax at times, not strict enough.
- There has been a complaint that, while it is understandable to have less-skilled players in a tournament, the fact that one player was 2-shanten, got to the draw game, showed their hand and asked others if they were tenpai, because they didn't know themselves, is pushing it a bit too far. This kind of player participating could disrupt the smooth running of the tournament, and make it very not fun for some.

Now, for the more general complaints, that are common in all polish tournaments:

- A complaint was made about a common reoccurrence of polish tournaments, to allow nicknames on the registration list on the website, as MERS regulations dictate that participants agree to have their names published in online listings by registering to a tournament. This never happened pre-pandemic but suddenly one tournament decided to do it, and they all followed suit. By putting nicknames people have no idea who is registering, and cases like Marcin Bajman, Zrzutomur Czombowski, etc. can happen.
- The seat drawing was not public, and thus not transparent. We only got to know about it the evening before.
- The table rotation was also not equally arranged throughout the winds. Some people never got to start a hanchan as East. In 8 hanchan it's not impossible to have each player be assigned each wind twice, as some tournaments have proved it was possible in the past.

Information / communication during the tournament: Visible timer projected from a computer on a screen. An announcement clearly informed players of the start and end of each hanchan. Ranking up to date at any time during the tournament via the app.

Sessions: Overall good playing atmosphere, fair-play and friendly. Referees had to quiet down the players sometimes, but not often.

Catering: We were separated in two groups, to go at two different restaurants, and alternate the next day.

Prizes: Trophies for the first 4 places, and a prize for the last place. And a Poteto T-shirt for the observer.

Conclusion:

Not a bad tournament, per se. It was unfortunately victim of many problems faced in (polish) tournaments. There won't be an edition in 2025, as Yagi Taikai took that spot for Poznań. Hopefully those complaints will be addressed and corrected in following (polish) tournaments. Some tournaments like Toruń Taikai 2024 (or Copenhagen 2023), handled pre-emptive equal seat assignement well.

Reminder that all tournaments are susceptible to be counted towards a quota, whether it's WRC or ERMC, and while it is important to have fun, it is also important not to ruin others', by disrupting the tournament in some way. While we shouldn't discourage beginners to register to MERS tournaments, we as a community could at least make sure they know the basic rules, before they register to one.