



Observer report for Oranda Sai Kou 2025

Observer: VAN GOMPEL Kai

Date: November 29th – 30th

Place: IJsselstein, The Netherlands

Website or other source(s) of information: All information was available on the website of the Niji Riichiclub (<https://niji-riichi.nl/oranda/>) for registration, program, list of participants. Results were published online (<https://niji-riichi.nl/oranda/uitslag-results/>).

Participants: 40 players

Countries represented: The Netherlands (30), Belgium (8), Germany (1), United Kingdom (1)

Playing schedule: 2 days, 9 rounds of 75 minutes each: finish the current hand plus one more.

Location: Wijk Service Centrum De Oase, Benschopperweg 342, 3401 BZ IJsselstein.

Ample parking was available at the venue, and the organization provided clear instructions for additional parking spaces in the vicinity as well as roadworks in the vicinity which could cause problems when navigating via GPS.

The venue was spacious and was all located on the ground floor. The playing room, which contained all the tables, was well lit, spacious and had sturdy tables and very comfortable seating for the players.

Equipment: We played with standard Riichi mahjong sets, all of good quality. Depending on the table, point stick assignment could differ slightly with the use of 500-point sticks.

Refereeing: Bert Claessen was non-playing referee, and Jacqueline Oudshoorn was a playing referee. Throughout the tournament Bert was able to handle any questions that came up, and Jacqueline did not need to assist, leading to smooth gameplay during all sessions.

Complaints: As is customary with a group of players that is very familiar with each other, discussions at the table at the end of a hand or the round did cause a noisier environment for competitive play from time to time. The referee was asked a few times to quiet the more rambunctious of tables.

A small complaint was made with regards to the free beverages on the first day as not enough were made available and only a paying alternative was possible at the time. The second day no such issues arose.

With regards to the catering, some players noted that the availability of the vegetarian option for the warm lunch on the second day was more limited in portion, while non-vegetarian players were able to refill, for vegetarians the provided portion was smaller.

Information / communication during the tournament:

Visible clock at the front of the room, announcement with 15min remaining and at the end of the timer with instructions to finish the hand and play one more. Communication with regards to referee decisions at the table was clear and concise and responsiveness to enquiries was fast.

End of round scores were published online and on the entrance to the play area, easily visible to everyone.

Sessions: Excellent playing atmosphere, a little noisy from time to time but FFF (Fair-play, Friendly and Fun) was maintained. On the first day, lunch was shortened by 15 minutes as the second session finished early for almost all tables. This was maintained for the remainder of the day and clearly communicated by the organizer.

Catering: Lunch was served in the adjoining room to the play area in a buffet style. A modest cold lunch (sandwiches and milk) was provided on the first day, with a warm lunch provided on the second day. Two free beverages (coffee or tea) were provided to each player on each day. A selection of sweets and fried snacks was provided at the end of each day as well.

Prizes: Trophies for individual ranking (1st, 2nd and 3rd) as well as small gifts for the EMA observer, playing referee and the local staff.

Conclusion: A very cosy and enjoyable tournament in Ijselstijn. The organization by Menno, Bert and the local staff was handled excellently. The atmosphere was friendly, welcoming and pleasantly competitive as one has come to expect from a tournament organized in The Netherlands.