



Observer report for UK RCR Spring Open 2026 (RCR, MERS 3)

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Date: May 9th – 10th 2026

Place: Cambridge, Great Britain

Website or other source(s) of information: <https://riichi.uk/>

Participants: 80 players

Represented countries

GBR	SUI	GER	SWE	POL	IRL	HKG	BEL
							
67	4	3	2	1	1	1	1

Playing schedule: 2 days, 8 rounds (5+3) of 90 minutes (75+1 hand). The final hanchan was seeded by ranking.

Location: Chesterton Indoor Bowls Club, Logan's Way, Cambridge CB4 1BL . This is a spacious, clean and well equipped venue. It is conveniently located in the city and has its own parking.

Equipment: Clean, complete sets were used. Many sets borrowed from UKMA. Tiles, junk mats, and point sticks were all satisfactory. Furniture worked. Side tables were provided and appreciated. EMA rules and scoring sheets were available.

Refereeing: Philip Bielby was non-player referee. There was no shortage of playing referees.

Complaints: Players in certain seats found it difficult to read the projector, since there was only one. A second or third screen would solve this. Some players did not enjoy the seeding of the final round, while others found it interesting.

Information / communication during the tournament:

Table assignments were on paper in individual envelopes at registration and players were given a name badge. The tournament was managed with confidence and professionalism. Everything was clearly explained and apparently well understood by the players. Clock projected from a computer on a screen. A sound clearly informed players of the start and end of sessions. Scores were quickly updated between each session and printed as hand outs. The score tracking in particular was *extremely* smooth and quick. The website was popular with players and I heard nothing but praise in that regard.

Sessions: Players complimented the friendly playing atmosphere. Noise levels were well within reason. No attendees complained of combative or aggressive behaviour from other players. Everyone was very well behaved. The tournament roster included new and more experienced players and these two groups were able to mesh well and play with good sportsmanship. Penalties were dealt sensibly and accepted with good grace. These sessions indicate a healthy RCR community in the UK.

Catering: Lunch was served in a separate room in the venue and did not disturb play. It included a good variety of sandwiches and desserts. Those with dietary requirements had no trouble finding something to eat. Ample free tea and coffee. Lots of free water available. There were plenty of snacks in between rounds. No complaints.

Other: Social activities were also hosted in Cambridge and well attended. Issues were handled quickly and substitutes were available. There were quite a few chombos on the second day. The tournament was fairly priced and places filled up quickly. Seems the appetite for RCR is only growing in the UK. 108 players next year? D'you fancy that Philip?

Prizes: Prizes for individual ranking: 1st, 2nd, 3rd . Additional prizes for lowest overall score, best hanchan, best hand and most improved.

Conclusion: Cambridge Riichi tournaments are a highlight of the UK RCR calendar. Good location, good players, good venue and always a joy to attend. The tournament is highly anticipated and well-loved by home players. Compliments must be paid to Philip for his instrumental role in RCR's adoption in the UK. He single handedly wrangled an 80 player tournament with unflappable professionalism and a friendly, supportive demeanour. UK RCR Spring Open 2026 was an excellent representation of competitive play in the United Kingdom.