



Observer report for the Rode Lotus 2026 Riichi tournament

Observer: Stéphane COMMANS

Date: 12 - 13 September 2026

Place: Leuven, Belgium

Website or other source(s) of information: All information on the website of <https://www.mahjongbelgium.be/rode-lotus-cup-2026-2riichi-eng/> (the registration, the location of the tournament, the schedule, the fee and the list of participants).

Participants: 48 players*

Represented countries: Belgium (27*), France (11), Germany (3), Ireland (2), Netherlands (2), Sweden (1), Spain (1), Poland (1).

*One player had a car accident going to the venue on the second day (thankfully no injuries from the player), a substitute took his place for the remaining 5 games (hence the "Substitute" at the end of the score sheet).

Playing schedule: 2 days, 10 rounds (5+5) of 75 minutes (finishing the hand + one more).

Location: In the center of Leuven, at the bridgeclub Pieterman, Brusselsestraat 61. The playing room was spacious, with plenty of space to move around. The club also had 2 rooms for lunch and taking breaks. There were social plays on Friday and Saturday evening.

Equipment: We played with standard Riichi mahjong sets, all in good quality.

Refereeing: Nathan Germeau and Joël Linh Van Leuven, both were playing referee.

Complaints:

- Some players were talking a bit loudly while playing, it mostly stopped once the referee made an announcement before the beginning of the next game.
- Some players were declaring their Riichi in the wrong order. The referees (when called) were lenient about it and only gave a warning since this was introduced in the new 2026 ruleset, except for the last game in which one player made that mistake and made another one quite annoyed and wanted a dead hand for that mistake, the referee stepped in and replaced the dead hand by a warning which was contested by the annoyed player. Unfortunately, it made

the player who made that mistake gave in to pressure and left the table resulting in a forfeit to their last game, a substitute had to step in to replace that player.

In my opinion, while I do understand players need time to adapt to the new ruleset, at which point the referees need to be stricter about that part of the rules?

Information / communication during the tournament:

- Visible clock projected from a computer on a screen.
- The start was done vocally by the organizer with a countdown.
- Ranking up to date between each session, printed and shown at two locations in the venue.
- It was announced to the players who had finished their game to be respectful to the players that were still playing and go to the other two rooms instead of chatting in the playing room.
- It was also reminded to all players to rearrange all the sticks, tiles and having the winds out when the game is finished; failing to do so came with penalty to all 4 players from that table.

Sessions: Excellent playing atmosphere, FFF (Fair-play, Friendly and Fun).

Catering: Snacks in the corridor next to the playing room. 4 coupons were given to the players for free drinks. Lunch was sandwiches and a soup taken in the non-playing rooms.

Prizes:

- Trophies for individual ranking (1st, 2nd and 3rd).
- A local drink brand called "Ritchie" for the highest amount of points gained per game.
- A yakuman pin for those who made a yakuman (1 player).
- A trophy for the winner of the Rode Lotus Cup 2026, the best ranked player out of the MCR and Riichi tournaments.

Conclusion: It was a very nice tournament with a friendly atmosphere. Great organization as always.