



Dear Board,

It is with great regret that I am writing to inform you that the World Riichi Championship 2020 has had to be postponed.

This has not been an easy decision to come to and we are well aware that some players will have made arrangements, including travel and holiday time, to attend the event. By the time the pandemic was announced, we were already so close to the event that we did not want to act in haste. However, as the days went by, it became clear that not only would proceeding be difficult but also perhaps impossible.

I'm sure everyone will appreciate how quickly the situation escalated. Trying to see the future has become a dark art and we had to make a call. The safety of players is, of course, paramount. We also remain concerned that international travel restrictions will not be fully lifted before August. Further, we do not expect social distancing measures to end soon, which would cause particularly severe problems for a game like mahjong.

I have sent the following information to almost all EMA players who are registered with their email addresses. Please also disseminate this information through your communities....

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## **What will happen next?**

### **New dates**

We are in discussion with the Intercontinental and sponsors who have all been extremely understanding of the situation. As soon as the new dates are confirmed, we will publicize these. It is expected these dates will be in 2021.

### **Refunds**

We are still holding any money paid to us and we can offer two options:

- 1) Let us continue to hold the money for the future date

2) We can give you a full refund (via your national organization) minus the bank transfer fee

For both options, we have experienced some delay from the Austrian authorities in receiving the proper tax number because of the coronavirus pandemic and this may cause a small delay in issuing refunds.

The delay in the number is why you have not received receipts yet. For option (1), we will of course give you a receipt as evidence that you have paid.

For option (2), we will only refund to the national organization's account we received the money from to reduce the potential for fraud.

Please let me know in the coming days how you would like to proceed.

### **Player lists are frozen**

We started player qualifications before the coronavirus was declared a pandemic and so those who have already qualified will have this stand. I will not be able to accept any substitutions for the time being. The list on the website is out of date and we will concentrate on updating that and completing the process with our international partners. We will be able to accept substitutions at a later date.

### **InterContinental hotel bookings**

If you did make a booking with the hotel, we will be able to cancel or move these. We're just negotiating with the hotel now and I will email further instructions out as soon as I receive them. If you have any particular concerns, please email [players2020@worldriichichampionship.com](mailto:players2020@worldriichichampionship.com)

(Some players may not have received a booking link as we held off on emails as the magnitude of the pandemic became clearer - sorry!)

### **Any other questions?**

Please email: [players2020@worldriichichampionship.com](mailto:players2020@worldriichichampionship.com). We may be slow in responding to some queries. We were already fairly far forward with the organization process which we will now have to unpick, including our legal agreements with sponsors and media partners.

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Once more, please accept our apologies for this postponement. We understand that it is a far from ideal outcome, but given the circumstances we hope you can appreciate why myself and Lena came to this difficult decision.

Stay safe. Mahjong is only a game and your health is priority.

Gemma and Lena