



**Observer report for Rode Lotus Cup 2023 #1 Riichi  
(RCR, MERS 3 [Days=2, Countries=0,5, Players=0,5, Extra=0])**

**Observer:** Jasper Germeys

**Date:** 22-23 April 2023

**Place:** Leuven, Belgium

**Website or other source(s) of information:** All information on the website of Belgian Mahjong: registration, program, list of participants, results etc.

**Participants:** 48 players

Belgium: 27, Netherlands: 8, France: 6, Germany: 3, Ukraine: 2, Sweden: 1 & Italy: 1

**Playing schedule:** 2 days, 9 rounds (5+3) in alignment with the RCR specifications. At least 15 minutes break between the rounds.

**Location:** The bridgeclub Pieterman close to the center of Leuven. Playing area had ventilation and was well fitted for the maximum registration of 48, but is likely too small for a bigger group. The location has a separate bar area and additional room that can be used during the breaks/lunch. There was also plenty of toilets.

**Equipment:** We played with multiple different sets of games sourced from the local group using a junkmat ontop of the bridge tables from the venue. Every table had two smaller side tables. The scoresheet was had the playernumbers preprinted. Almost all tables had 2 5000-pts-sticks and 10 100-pts sticks per player making the junkmats pointcontainer easily overflowing but there was good with space outside of the mat without it being too long to reach to the opposite wall when drawing.

**Refereeing:** There was a total of four referee's;

Piti Phanpanich, Nathan Germeau and Henri Devillez as playing referees and additionally Pierre Beinstingel as nonplaying referee. Pierre is not mentioned on the website. Organizer Marieke Verheyden was also not playing and was doing most of the "referee assistance" task as well.

There was a total of 5 chombos during the event and no penalties given except for a case that got reduced (see the complaints section).

There was reminders to turn of the phones at the start of the days and additional announcements between the rounds [round 3: clean up your table] [round 7: please speak english when nonlocal at the table] etc.

**Information / communication during the tournament:** Visible clock on a screen on one of the walls. A gong that clearly informs players of the start and the end of sessions. Ranking up to date between each session, printed and posted on walls.

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

**Catering:** Lunch but days in the same place (sandwiches and soup) in a separate room. Water and snacks, both in form of sweets and fruits was available between the rounds. The bar was also manned where you could get fresh coffee, soft drinks, beer or alcohol. The coffee was free whilst the rest was sold for reasonable local prices.

**Prizes:** Trophies for individual ranking (1st, 2nd and 3rd), Tournament giftcard for the Last player, Some locally produced soft drink "Ritchie" for the biggest session results and some thank you gifts to the bartender and the referees.

**Complaints:** Overall there was not much complaints at this tournament and I heard more positive feedback from players than negative.

- **The penalty situation:** This was the only "big" complaint received which was that a Table got penalized for not cleaning up after themselves before leaving for lunch on the first day. The penalty was 8000pts for each member of the table. This was reverted by decision from the referees before the start of the second day as this happened before making a remark to the players that they will be penalized for not cleaning up the tables.

*Observers remarks;*

*Although it is correct that there is nothing explicitly written in the rules that players should leave the table in a cleaned up state, this has been the praxis for most tournaments for a while, and a warning should at least be given. The penalty of 8000 seems reasonable for the fault [imho]. Once the penalty was given, that be it. It makes little sense that you need to announce each and every etiquette rule at the start of each tournament.*

*As I heard one of the complaintants **threaten** with a **no-show** I sincerely hope that that was not the reason for reverting the decision as such behaviour is [imho] a **bannable** offence. I have no information if this threat was delivered to the referees or organizer or only to me as an observer.*

- **Referee situation:** There was quite a lot of playing referees and a non-playing referee at this tournament but yet was it multiple times (especially during the first day) where a referee request either took long to get fulfilled or that multiple referees jumped up from their table to handle the request, interrupting multiple tables at once. I do not remember if the the non-playing referee was present during the first day but as observer I did not notice his presence in the game room until the second day. Additionally can I not remember if there was one defined as the head referee.

*Observers remarks;*

*Although I know that many consider playing referees is a problem I do not think that was the issue here. Especially considering that there also was a non-playing organizer and additional helpers. I think this just was an effect of bad inter-referee organization. That could been solved with just a clearer hierarchy or something like; A handles this quadrant, B handles this etc.*

- **Noise levels:** I would not claim I received many complaints about this but the noise levels were definitely higher than than some other tournaments, in which players have been constantly complaining about it. There was also one instance

when a **phone** went of in one of the hanchans, which should have received a **penalty** as multiple players got distrubed by this during the game.

- *Tenbo sticks*: Its nicer if we can have less sticks at the table and the green 500-pts sticks are a good way to handle that.
- *Language*: Even after an announcement that you should keep a language (English) at the table when not all are local. Not much changed.
- *Bad results*: Probably the most frequent complaint heard but must be mentioned that they were always accompanied by laughter and a statement of how **good** the games been, and just bad luck.

**Conclusion:** Very nice tournament in Leuven, It is clear that the organization has experience in this kind of events although its their first RCR tournament. Almost all players expressed that they had a good time and the atmosphere was very good. It is also very nice that the score got submitted very rapidly to the EMA website. I will definitely go again.

**Note:** This tournament is part of a duo with the Rode Lotus Cup 2023 #2 MCR happening in september.