



## Observer report for French Riichi Championship 2023 (Riichi, MERS 3,5)

**Observer:** Szymon Lasota

**Date:** 21-22 Oct 2023

**Place:** Paris, France

**Website or other source(s) of information:** All information on the website and facebook of club organizing this event (Tri Nitro Tiles) : registration, program, list of participants, venue, entry fee, prizes, list of referees and information regarding finals. Partial results online (only facebook) during tournament (only after 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> hanchan).

**Participants:** 75 players +1 substitute

### Represented countries

FRA	BEL	POL	GBR	NED	GER	SWE	POR	ESP	UKR	ITA	CAN	---
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43	9	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1

**Playing schedule:** 2 days, 9 rounds (5+4) of 90 minutes

**Location:** Tournament was held in Conference Room of Paris VIII Cityhall – nice and prestigious location in city center with good commutation options. Conference rooms were in basement and could hold even more players – but with 80 participants limit it was ideal setup for tables and space between them. Air condition was working good but not perfect (maybe due to some automatic setting?) and sometimes temperature went little hot, but air atmosphere was good most of time. Playing area and resting/snack zone was not separated (as there was no other possibility in this venue) so sometimes it started to get loud – but referees were up to their tasks and reacted immediately asking for silence (and it worked).

**Equipment:** Most of sets were same type (yellowback tiles, standard size), only with 2 or 3 different sets – but all good quality and without any signs of extensive usage. All tables had junk mats in good shape, and tables used were Bridge tables in perfect size for playing. 25k Tebou were provided including 500 stick (nice!) and was laying in junk mat bands. “Borrowed” tebou was different colour so it was clear and helpful for counting scores. All tables had laminated score cards for support any counting doubts, pens and markers, and orasu card to put score for last hand. Chairs were ok.

(Almost) Each hanchan had one table transmitted online with commentary (players could decide if they are ok with it or not). This was quite amazing setup that would be fine addition to all tournaments – making tournaments closer to Japanese standards. It was far from perfect, as such transmissions are difficult technical to setup, but it was not distracting players or tournament itself.

Final table was played on brand new automatic table and was streamed online – which was also very nice innovation for this tournament.

**Refereeing:** 3 non-player referees: Sylvain Malbec, Yulong Zhao, Manuel Tertre – did really great job assisting any doubts and where present around tables all the time.

On top of that, 3 substitute players where available for the tournament which is also well planned feature not seen on all tournaments.

**Complaints:** None complains submitted to observer.

**Information / communication during the tournament:**

All announcements where provided in English and French.

All tables communicated in language that all players at table could understand.

Visible clock was displayed from projector, loud gong and loud announcements were always in place.

Organizers and referees made clear about any delays and gathered all players at tables before gong in time to prepare table for game.

Only unclear thing was related to Semi Finals and Finals – as information form webpage and information shared by referees was not in sync about scoring – but it was sorted out in due time by organizers.

Results where presented after each hanchan (with small delays for manual entry)

Ranking was not available online (even results after tournament where not published for few hours and final results where not showed after announcement of top 10).

Good idea to help with above might be implementing use of mahjong tracking application that are common in many EMA countries - proving to help with counting (limiting mistakes) and immediately publishing results online to all interested.

**Sessions:**

Time for registration with drawing numbers and filling them to system turned out to be too short, but registration started before announced time which helped with limiting delay of first hanchan. In general there where few minor delays of games start during the 2 days of tournament but at first day - only at beginning and those got fixed after lunch break. Second day some more delays happened due to counting issues at one table – which could be avoided by using app instead of tenbou.

But what is most important: it was really great playing atmosphere, created by most of players and all organizers/referees. There will always be some minor issues with players that burst out in emotions but in most cases referees reacted well to that.

Also fair play was on its highest standards among players in this tournament.

**Catering:**

Each morning participants could eat famous and delicious French pastries, with a lot of king of pastries – Croissant.

Tea and coffee – to make – was available at all time. Also bottled water was available to grab at any time.

Lunch in boxes was delivered to eating area during breaks on both days. Lunch food was very plain but warm and portions were right in size. At that time also soda was available.

For day-end hanchans there where sweet snacks provided as well.

**Prizes:** 1st reward : Trophy, French products, poster, artbook

2nd reward : Trophy, poster, artbook

3rd reward : Trophy, calendar, poster, puzzle

Special rewards :

French championship trophy for Best French player,

Drinks and games for referees,

## Games for top10 players

All players got Tri Nitro Tiles club (organizer) Cups at registration and there were some mahjong and Paris souvenirs available to take at exit.

**Conclusion:** Very well organized and very fun to play tournament without any major (or medium) issues. Looking forward to next championship with lessons learned and maybe even bigger in size!

Worth to mention that day before there was referee seminar that certified 8 new referees: 4 French players, 1 Polish, 1 Italian, 1 Portuguese and 1 Canadian.