

Observer Name: Stanley D.

Observer Residence: CA, USA

Event Name: Philly Riichi Open 2024

Event Location: Philadelphia, PA

Event Date: March 23rd to March 24th

Number of Participants: 100 Players

Event Schedule: 4 games a day, 8 games total, no cut tournament.

Tournament Organizer: Philadelphia Riichi Mah-Jawn

Communication to Players: Players were informed of all information via both email and official Discord tournament. During the event, all announcements are made before the first match of the day, or before the start of the match for any urgent information.

Prizes: Trophies, Medals, and Wawa Snow Globe

Catering: Water Dispenser

Tournament Atmosphere: Overall fun, friendly, and organized.

Complaints and Issues:

The following are a compiled list of complaints and issues that were brought up. Some urgent issues were immediately brought up with the TOs, and their responses are also listed. Many issues are not related to the TO, but generally the overall culture of tournaments and players.

Compass Problem:

This issue was brought up to me during the 2nd day. The compasses that the TO used were 3D printed using white filament. Additionally, the TO were using a mix of colored tenbou (point sticks) and non-colored (white) tenbou. The issue that occurred is that sometimes players would forget about their riichi stick and leave the stick on the compass due to the 1,000 point stick and compass blending in, making it hard for players to see. Point sticks were often lost, dropped on ground, and players would not remember whose riichi stick it belonged to.

Compass Solution: TO had extra blue 1,000 point sticks and immediately swapped them out during the lunch break for all tables that were using only white point sticks. Issue was resolved without any issues.

NARMA Observer Recommendation: Guidelines for TO to use official AMOS compasses. If using a 3D printed or self-created compass, make sure that the 1,000 point stick can be easily distinguishable from the compass.

Players Being Judges:

People have reached out to me that players will decide on a ruling without consulting a judge. Players will often be pushy and cut off other players who try to defuse the situation or call a judge. This behavior is actually more common than expected and sometimes will result in an incorrect ruling. Incorrect rulings may be due to incorrect understanding of the rules (due to lower penalties mod), or intentional.

NARMA Observer Recommendation: A proposed situation is for all future TOs to announce in the beginning that judges should be called over for ANY ruling. Players should be highly discouraged to make a ruling among themselves and even receive penalties if they attempt to do so. An official guideline of procedures should be released in regards to rulings and handling of players who attempt to create rulings for the table, whether their intention was good or bad.

Time Stalling:

There were MANY complaints about slow play. In fact, there were an irregular amount of complaints of slow plays, specifically targeting newer players and a few specific players that will not be named. Although people may be inexperienced, stalling for time is an official example of obstruction as listed in the WRC 2022 rules. Time stalling is a touchy subject since there is a fine borderline of being new and cheating.

NARMA Observer Recommendation: Players should be HIGHLY discouraged to draw and discard slowly. There should be an official time recommendation for how long thinking is normal, and how often is thinking reasonable. For example, a player should not be pausing several times for 15 to 30 seconds per discard in a hand. Players should be encouraged to call out judges when they think a player is playing slower than recommended, whether intentional or not.

Shuffling of Tiles During Their Draw:

Noted by a few people that a few specific players were constantly shuffling around their tiles after they drew a tile. It is hard to identify if they tsumogiri or tedashi, and the official WRC 2022 rules that the tile drawn must be easily distinguishable from the rest of the hand. This may be considered obstruction or cheating, whether the player intended to do so or not.

NARMA Observer Recommendation: TOs and judges should note such behavior when walking around and actively discourage such behavior if they see it occurring. Additionally, NARMA should release official guidelines for players on how to deal with these situations, and how TO and judges should do as well. Warnings should be issued first, and penalties or disqualification should be considered if players fail to comply with warnings.

Playing with Both Hand:

There were a few mentions of players using several hands. The official WRC 2022 rules clearly state that players should be using one hand instead of two. This made the game much slower since the usage of both hands obscured the vision of the tile discarded, as well as other issues.

NARMA Observer Recommendation: TOs should encourage play with one hand, though no official punishments should be issued as many players are new and/or unfamiliar with IRL play.

Verbal Declarations:

It has been brought up by a few people that players are not verbally enunciating their calls loud enough (or not at all during a chii). These players are often causing an obstruction during the games since sometimes people have fully drawn the tile because they cannot hear the call declaration. This causes people to have unnecessary information they should not have. Players generally will put back the tile they have drawn, even if they have seen it, and give priority to the call.

NARMA Observer Recommendation: An official guideline on what to do in these situations should be announced. Players should also be encouraged to make sure that their declarations can be heard by the entire table.

NARMA Personal Summary:

Philly Open 2024 was a great experience overall for most players. Players were very welcoming to the no top cut format that was adopted and the long lunch period that was given in the middle of the day. An issue that should be addressed though is that prizes for non-top cut should not be announced until the end since people will sometimes purposely aim towards such prizes and give other players an advantage that should not exist. For example, a player purposely not taking too high of a score to attempt to get the Saki award. Players there were also very verbal in their opinions to me and I was able to receive a good amount of feedback.

The staff were friendly, highly responsive, and ran the tournament without any major issues within my knowledge. Overall, I personally enjoyed the tournament and would love to come back another year to play.