

# ARA Event Observer Report

**Observer Name:**

William Robert Slusarz

**Observer State of Residence:**

Ohio

**Event Name:**

Riichi Nomi Open 2024

**Event Location:**

Honors Bridge Club

110 East 55th Street, New York, NY

**Event Date:**

06/22/2024 - 06/23/2024

**Number of Participants:**

208

**Event Schedule Summary:** *(Days played, number of rounds, finalist rounds, time per round, etc.)*

2 days played, 5 rounds per day, 10 hanchans total with 75m+0 timers, no finalist rounds, swiss format

**Names of Officials/Judges:**

Head Organizer: Claire Pozniak

Head Judge: Robert Carmosino

**Communication to Players:** *(How were announcements, standings, pairings etc. communicated to players during the event?)*

Announcements were done via megaphone by Claire in the main room in floor 6, this required repetition by Claire or by another judge for the side rooms for floor 6 as the glass wall made hearing nigh impossible.

On floor 12 announcements were handled by other judges.

This happened once at the start of the day, and after that people used their phones to check the pairings for their next table.

**Prizes:***Placement based*

1st: 600 USD, trophy  
2nd: 400 USD, trophy  
3rd: 300 USD, trophy  
4th: 200 USD, medal  
5-8th: 80 USD, medal  
9th: Skill Issue Sticker

*Luck based*

Best Ranked Player Online with the Worst Performance: Riichi Book 1 in physical copy  
Raffle Prizes: Candy, RNO membership, oil and cooking supplies.

**Catering:**

Constant: Water, hot water, coffee, assortment of snacks (crackers, nuts, ect..)  
Lunch Break: Pizza, deli meats, salad, bread, a typical spread one would expect from baseline catering.

**Tournament Atmosphere:**

A general excitement to try out swiss pairings, with also some concern about the heat. Most players stayed in the venue even during lunch break which was understandable with the powerful heatwave. I'd say most individuals were pumped day 1 due to the size of the venue and amount of players around them. Day 2 there was less overall excitement which was to be expected, but I'd gauge it as high still.

The divide between floor 6 and 12 created an interesting dynamic where player attitude changed quite drastically. Which makes sense with the swiss formatting, for example: a player at table 40+ would take the table less seriously than a player at table 10.

Both floors were serious when it was game time though from my observations, as to say floor 6 still looked like a tournament.

**Complaints and Issues:**

- Three complaints about dirty sets: main issues -> smudges and yellowing.
- Four complaints about sets: The diversity made things confusing, a standardization of some degree would be appreciated. Stand out examples: The rainbow set found at table 31 I believe. Also sets with heavily italicized manzu suits.
- Four complaints about the initial start for hanchan 1. They found it confusing, most folks could not hear Claire announce it and wasted some time before starting their game behind schedule. This was remedied after hanchan 1.
- At least 8 complaints about bathrooms:
  - Wished for more stalls, they were used to a convention center bathrooms it would seem
  - Two individuals talked about wanting a female only area so they could clean their lady products. The stalls felt like improper places to do this as they were general

neutral and people peep into stalls to see if they are occupied. They made it very clear they do not blame the people, nor mind neutral bathrooms. This space apparently existed but they were not aware of it and this complaint was given to me at the end of day 2.

- Four complaints: Turn headbump off
- Chombo complaint, heard twice, the person drew out of order (as in drawing the wrong tile on their turn), and discarded this tile in tsumogiri. They argued this should be a dead head with tsumogiri discard or tedashi.
- Three complaints on day 1: Lunch break was short
- Chombo complaint, heard many times, Shouhai should not be a chombo but a dead hand.
- Four complaints, they were unsure about what to do about slow play
- A rude and loud player disturbed a game due to another player slow playing. It was described to me that the atmosphere was quite tense, but thankfully the organizer helped diffuse the situation. The player who disturbed the game and the player accused of slow playing were both talked to individually after the game.

### **Observer Personal Summary:**

I would personally say this tournament was handled neatly for a 200 + player tournament, especially for this being the first swiss tournament ever in the United States. The major complaint I heard was based around slow play and the bathroom situation. I'll tackle the bathroom issue first.

Too many people congregated to the sixth floor bathroom, which makes sense as that is where most of the tables are located. This created a long line there, but there were bathrooms to be utilized on the 8th floor and the 12th. The 7th floor was also given to the public later due to a very long line, this was the staff's floor. Typically Claire would come by once the line was long and remind folks that other bathrooms existed nearby. I think assigning a judge to the area after and right before a hanchan would have been a wise remedy, as this problem persisted all tournament.

The second major complaint: slow play. I found most individuals were uncertain of what to do when they thought another player was intentionally or unintentionally slow playing at their table. They found the option of mentioning to the player rude, but they also found the option of calling a judge over rude and also worried about losing even more time on the clock by doing so. This tournament had more players than most tournaments by a large margin, so it makes sense that inexperienced players would be playing in it. I think at tournament's this size or perhaps in general there should be an announcement of what should be done when a player thinks slow play is occurring.

Also concerning the issue I stated above with the player disagreement about slow play I talked to the head judge, organizer and two individuals about the situation. Afterwards I judge that the judge/organizer handled this in a professional manner, very well done.

My personal opinion should count for very little on the matter, but I believe just calling a judge over to inspect the table's play speed for a hand without mentioning the player in question is a fine routing. However, that may cause issues with tournaments with too few judges.

The other general issue I saw most folks had were with the chombo settings. I think they all understood this method had to be used with the +30/+10/-10/-30 uma settings, but they found it

too harsh. Over 50 chombos happened in this tournament, and I'd say the harsh settings are to blame. A relaxed format with -30 penalties needs to exist. I'd argue if there is a demand for harsher chombos, then simply raise the penalty to -50 and keep the relaxed chombo rules.

The only rules I heard complaints about were head bump, and chiitoy with a kan. The former they wished disabled, and the latter they wished enabled.

Less important, but still worth mentioning the venue was open after the tournament games and nothing went too crazy, which is a good thing. There was a DJ with an impressive set up that helped the general mood.

Overall I'd call this a tournament a success. The swiss format had an interesting structure that was a breath of fresh air in the tournament season where every tournament is nearly the same structurally. I would enjoy seeing this repeated, but not replacing the standard for other tournaments.