

ARA Event Observer Report

Observer Name:

Bichen Wang

Observer State of Residence:

California

Event Name:

Riichi Nomi Open 2025

Event Location:

Honors Bridge Club

110 East 55th Street, New York, NY

Event Date:

July 26th-27th, 2025

Number of Participants:

212

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

Day 1 - Saturday, July 26th

Registration: 9:00 am – 9:45 am

Opening Ceremony: 9:45 am – 10:00 am

Hanchan 1: 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Break: 11:30 am – 11:40 am

Hanchan 2: 11:40 am – 1:10 pm

Lunch Break: 1:10 pm – 2:10 pm

Hanchan 3: 2:10 pm – 3:40 pm

Break: 3:40 pm – 3:50 pm

Hanchan 4: 3:50 pm – 5:20 pm

Break: 5:20 pm – 5:30 pm

Riichi Nomi Group Photo: 5:25pm, Floor 6

Hanchan 5: 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Free Play: 7:00 pm Onward

Riichi Nomi Afterparty: 8:30pm Onward

Day 2 - Sunday, July 27th

Check in: 9:15 am – 9:45 am

Hanchan 6: 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Break: 11:30 am – 11:40 am

Hanchan 7: 11:40 am – 1:10 pm

Lunch Break: 1:10 pm – 2:10 pm
Hanchan 8: 2:10 pm – 3:40 pm
Break: 3:40 pm – 3:50 pm
Hanchan 9: 3:50 pm – 5:20 pm
Break: 5:20 pm – 5:40 pm
Hanchan 10: 5:40 pm – 7:10 pm
Award Ceremony and Group Photo: 7:20 pm – 7:45 pm
Free Play: 7:45 pm - 11 pm

Names of Officials/Judges:

TO: Claire P
Head Judge: Rob C
Judges: Erik K, Melissa F, Vinny T, Sam D, Neil C, Max S
Staff: Josh, Dennis, Vince, Caroline, Sophie, Corgi, Nolan, Amy, Michael, Cristi, Charlem

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

With a microphone before each round. Standings and pairings were available at

 RNO25 Standings and Pairings

Prizes:

Championship ring awarded to First place and medals for top 4.
1st Place: Summon Scroll ×5 + 50K Coppers + \$550 + giant check
2nd Place: Summon Scroll ×3 + 25K Coppers + \$320
3rd Place: Summon Scroll ×2 + 15K Coppers + \$220
4th Place: Summon Scroll ×1 + 10K Coppers + \$170
5th Place: Purple Gift x1 + 5K Coppers + \$120
6th-8th Place: Purple Gift ×1 + 5K Coppers + \$100
9th-12th Place: \$80
Top 20 Players: Each will receive an exclusive Mahjong Soul T-shirt!
Top NYC: Box of chocolates
Bottom NYC: Box of chocolates
Sportsmanship: Plaque
Someone who should have done better: Riichi Book 1 and autographed book by Jenn Pro
1st at every table: Compass for the table

Catering:

There was breakfast, lunch, and snacks throughout the day. There were also lots of drinks like coke and seltzer.

Tournament Atmosphere:

The vibe was competitive and people were playing well.

The ruleset used was the 2022 WRC ruleset with optional modifications 2.1 - Red Fives, 3.2 - Nagashi Mangan, 4.1 Uma (30/10), and 4.4 Kazoe Yakuman.

Honba was worth 1500 points rather than the usual 300, a rule also known as basengo or "big honba."

Complaints and Issues:

- It was quite hot, especially on floor 12. That is until there was an electrical fire on that floor which forced everyone to move the tables and sets to floor 7. The A/C on 7 was much better. Props to tournament staff for getting that done so quickly. The temperature on floor 6 was permanently pretty warm both days.
- Hanchan 4 was delayed by about 26 minutes because staff had to move all of the tables from floor 12 to 7. Hanchan 5 was delayed 33 minutes. All other hanchan started reasonably on time (within 10 minutes of the scheduled time). The line for the bathroom was generally pretty long between rounds, but despite that, most rounds started on time. One round was started with 2 people missing, but time was given back and/or subs placed.
- Round 1, East on table 17 called ron but did not show their tiles. It was declared a dead hand. Later, a judge came over and said it should have been a chombo, but since the points were already paid out for the round, we can't undo it.
- Table 17 started with 3 blue 1k sticks short.
- There was no timer for the room with tables 11-15 until the screen was used at which point there was only 30 minutes left in the round. For the 12th floor, there was a general lack of timers and judges were constantly asked how much time was left in the round. Also in general, on 6, there were a couple blind spots for timers due to pillars or being too far away to see the timer.
- On table 41 hanchan 2, a person took their tiles and made a motion to show, but stopped and asked "is that a 7?" (of manzu). The table said, no, that's a 6. No judge was called, and they dealt in later.
- Quote from a participant: "the tiles at table 36 are unevenly sized. not enough to be a serious issue but could present "marked tile" concerns if people are really paying attention"
 - Resolution: staff looked at the tiles and saw that in general, the tiles had small variations in color and size. It was deemed not possible to know what tile was what by looking at the tile backs (specifically the red 5s were pulled out and it was impossible to determine which ones were the reds because a quarter of the tiles were just slightly taller, so you didn't know for sure it was a red 5. And only one of the red 5s was taller anyway, so it basically was random which tile is what).
- Round 2 had eleven chombos, and in general, there were 42 (25 day 1, 17 day 2) chombos not counting the ones that a judge was not called for a chombo-y situation and the 5 that were applied for missing a hanchan or dropping.
- Notable chombos:
 - Someone attempting to kakan a 789 chi with a 9. They drew the rinshan tile, discarded, and only then did the next player realize that wait, that's super not legal.
 - Double chombo for early ryukyoku reveal.

- Someone called chi, discarded, took the chi tile, then discarded again, making them shouhai, which is a chombo.
- Spill under table 46 before Hanchan 4
- There was a triple drop for Hanchan 5, but there were enough subs so pairings did not have to get redone.
- Pairings were redone for Hanchan 6 as there were quite a few day 1 drops.
- During hanchan 8, table 37 a chi of 2s was attempted with 13m. The person then tried to show the two tiles and put the 2s between the 13m. A judge was called, the call was reversed, and the player was dead handed. They then proceeded to discard without drawing, but the table let the player just draw a tile. Then, another player was touching the next tile and then called chi. Another player called a judge and had him dead handed, too. The call was also reversed. This *should* be correct, but would like to double check with WRC rulings on this.
- Complaint that the purple taobao set that has a more “cursive” font that makes it hard to read.
- Three direct comments to the observer that they hate basengo (big honba)
- Singular complaint about head bump being off and it should be on.
- During round 3, there was a guy who was shouting to not use the service elevator. He was full on yelling for almost 5 minutes saying that we aren’t allowed to use the service elevator while a guy was just waiting for *an* elevator to use. Unfortunately this was mid round and rather distracting. Received a complaint someone missed their call because they were distracted. Also elevators in general dinging all the time was a bit distracting.
- Complaint around how someone discarded a tile calling riichi but then took the discard back and changed their discard. They were dead handed for this. The person who filed this report said they think this should be a bigger penalty. The person who reported this then subsequently in the very next hanchan discarded a tile but had a finger covering the tile and took it back. This person initially said that’s different because they haven’t shown the tile yet. However, later, the person admitted it should have been a chombo. The pairings were already made by that point, and the judge ruled it would have been silly to chombo them at this point since the table didn’t even care that much that it happened. Ruling should have been that the tile hit the table so that’s an unchangeable discard.
- Sometimes the spreadsheet wouldn’t load for some people. Recommendation to make a website with a widget that holds the results / pairings so it pulls once from the google sheet instead of having 200 people all pull from the google sheet.

Observer Personal Summary:

Riichi Nomi Open 2025 was the biggest open in the US, and for all the things that went wrong, it still went incredibly smoothly. A huge shoutout to all the staff that made this event possible.

It was rather unfortunate to have the electrical fire happen, but the staff handled it like a champ.

The rounds generally went on time as much as reasonably possible, and it seems like most people had a great time. There were a few complaints about how few games finished, but as the observer finished 9/10 hanchan, sounds like a personal issue. There also were several complaints about basengo. Lots of people didn’t like how it made it too easy for anyone at the table to get a large hand

with no intrinsic value otherwise. There were complaints about how it makes no sense for an event that feeds into a WRC qualification system can even run such things as big honba. And then as an observer, they ask if red 5s are more meaningful and they always say yes. And then the observer asks if red 5s should be allowed and they always say yes so not sure what they are fighting for or complaining about.

The side events and after party were also some of the best put together non-mahjong events at a mahjong event. Huge props to the staff that got all the equipment for that.

Overall, this tournament deserves its spot as the number one premiere riichi mahjong tournament every year. Go Riichi Nomi!