

ARA Observer Report for the DC Riichi Mahjong Open 2025

The tournament was organized and run very well. There were no complaints of any kind about the judges, rulings, the rules for the tournament, disruptive play from specific players, or the structure of the tournament itself. The only two complaints that were submitted to me were as follows:

- Several players commented that tables that fold in the middle of the play surface created issues with the junk mats, especially while building walls. While lodging this complaint, people did acknowledge that fixing the issue may be cost prohibitive and understand that clubs may not have the ability or resources to procure different tables but wanted to officially request tables that do not fold down the middle of the play surface anyway.
 - Reading into how the complaint was lodged, it very much seemed like a “it would be nice if the tables were better, but we know there’s only so much organizers can do” kind of comment.
 - In conversing with the couple of people who came to me about the tables, it was pointed out that players sitting perpendicular to the crease in the table have a higher likelihood of committing a wall related chombo (because the hump makes handling the tiles more difficult), but there was a little equivocation on the chombo point since the players sitting perpendicular to the crease in the table could avoid the risk by not taking certain actions with the wall that they otherwise do (e.g., sliding the wall closer to the middle as it is depleted in the middle of the hand, stacking the two layers of the wall simultaneously, etc.).
- One participant let me know that they believe no tournament should ever have prize walls. In their words, “They take fucking forever.”
 - To clarify, they didn’t have an issue with how this specific prize wall was run. They just hate them in general at all tournaments.

There was one complaint from a non-participant about the broadcasting of games before the finals (the finals broadcast was not mentioned in the comment).

- They reported that it was difficult to follow the progress of hands due to camera angles and some things, like the dora indicator, were not accounted for in the camera set up. They also, obviously, could not see the score.
 - I know that these issues were caused, at least in part, by the last-minute change from an automatic table for the broadcasted table to a hand-shuffled table, and I don’t think they were big issues. The way the comment was delivered basically seemed to be asking, “Why did they put all the time in to set everything up when it wasn’t really watchable?”
 - I wasn’t sure whether this comment should be included in the report or not, but I decided to include it for the sake of thoroughness.