

Open European Mahjong Championship

Introduction

This is the first newsletter about the forthcoming Open European Mahjong Championship. The initiators – a Dutch and a Danish mahjong team – intend to send these letters from time to time to mahjong organizations in Europe as well as in other countries.

We are sorry that it is not possible for us to compose this letter in all European languages. (Although we are able to reply to your e-mails in German, French, Italian or Dutch.) Since English will be the official language on the European Championship we decided the newsletter to be written in English.

We welcome your comments. You can send them to us by mail (see address below) or by e-mail, to ecmj@mahjongnews.com. If you have any suggestions, for this newsletter or for the tournament, do not hesitate to let us know.

We hope you will enjoy.

Martin Rep, editor

World Championship in Mahjong

In October 2002, for the first time in history, a World Championship in Mahjong was organized. Thanks to the Japanese Mahjong Organizing Committee (JMOC), the city council of Ningbo (People's Republic of China) and the Mahjong Museum (situated in Chiba, Japan) one hundred mahjong players from all over the world came to Tokyo, Japan. All those involved – players, officials, spectators – were very enthusiastic about the perfect organization but also about the sportive atmosphere. Here, mahjong was played not in a way that gamblers do, but in the first place as a sport.

Chinese Sport Rules

Until then, mahjong did not have a real international standard. The game as it is played in the streets of China differs a lot from the way that it is played in Japan; in Taiwan, the 16-tiles game is extremely popular, in the United States the game has been extended with jokers, and every European country has its own – many – variants. During the World Championship, however, the Chinese Official Sport Rules as established in 1998 by the State Sports Commission of China were applied. It was the first time these rules were acknowledged as an international standard.

A European Championship

Thanks to the internet, mahjong players from everywhere nowadays find it easy to meet. They play mahjong against each other on game servers, whether situated in Hong Kong, Singapore or Los Angeles. They discuss the rules in the mahjong newsgroup and they easily find

information about the 'Game Of A Thousand Wonders' while surfing over the World Wide Web. One of the many internet contacts was between the Danish mahjong group *Mahjong Danmark* and the Dutch mahjong newspaper *Mahjong News*. The Danish suggested that it would be great to have a European Mahjong Championship. A couple of weeks later the outline was ready. So far for the easy part.

Nijmegen, Holland, 2005

Just as in Tokyo, 2002, mahjong players from all over the world should be welcome on the convention. So the initiators decided it should be an Open European Championship. Also, they agreed that the Chinese Official Sport Rules would be used. Since the Dutch are rather experienced in organizing mahjong tournaments, it was decided that the EC would take place in The Netherlands, i.e. the city of Nijmegen, situated near the German border. Originally, we hoped the tournament could be held in 2004. But since Nijmegen will celebrate its 2000th birthday party in 2005, it is more likely to organize it in that year.

Outline of the EC

organizer	European Mahjong Organizing Committee (being founded); Dutch Mahjong Team, assigned by the Dutch Mahjong Committee.
participants	64 ~ 100. Players from all over the world are welcome. There will be no formal qualification.
subscription fee	Unknown.
number of rounds	During two days 7 or 8 rounds will be played, each 90 minutes. During these rounds all winds will be played unless the players run out of time.
official language	The official language is English. NB: discarded tiles are displayed in rows so it is not necessary to name them.

EMOC

It is necessary to form a European Mahjong Organizing Committee, in which all participating European countries will be represented. Some mahjong players have already agreed to sit in the EMOC. At this moment, however, other tasks have taken priority over the foundation of the EMOC, such as sponsorship. So we will return to this subject later.

More about the European Championship in our next newsletter. You can also find information about the tournament on the internet website *Mahjong News*.
www.mahjongnews.com