

# 2024 WSPC - Beijing

Feedback survey – Synthesis based on 62 responses  
Most questions asked on a 1-to-9 scale

# Overall key insights from survey

- 5h30 to 6h of solving (excl. pauses) per day seems like a good number (days 1 and 2 of WPC seen as too dense). Of these, ca. 30% of solving time spent on Team rounds is fine, as Team rounds are a unique feature of in-person events
- Overall quality of both Sudoku and Puzzles was judged good, but lower than in Toronto. Analysis of possible reasons:
  - “Finish” too hard to reach brought some frustration, esp. in Team rounds
  - Too few rounds with a nice concept well-executed (as a counter-example: Quadruple happiness & Little happiness were judged the best rounds)
  - Too many puzzles where brute force was the best option
  - Some felt there were too many hard Sudoku/Puzzles
  - Level of innovation not a key issue
- Little consensus on format of WSC and WPC playoffs: fine on average, but with very diverse views. Audience experience was rated as better than in Toronto, though with room for improvement
- GP Finals were also rated higher than in Toronto. Camera quality and hint sheets helped, even if live commentary would be appreciated. Side tournament was overall judged as an interesting innovation – there is an appetite for “fun” competitive events that help meet people
- WPF GA was not perfect but the switch to a 2-phase format (Open GA then Formal GA) seems to be an improvement
- Excursions (both free and paid) were not highly rated and felt overall disappointing. Probably better to target the “big” usual touristic sites even if it means some bus time (eg Niagara Falls in 2023)
- The effort to make opening/closing ceremonies special moments were noted. May have seen too formal to some participants, but overall well received
- While hotel rooms exceeded expectations, feelings were mixed on hotel location and amenities & common areas (lack of place to hang around). Food was judged better than in Toronto, with wide choice and good quality, but it remains a sensitive issue and small issues were noted (eg not hot enough)
- Respondents truly enjoyed the week overall and thanked the organizers, they are well aware of the levels of energy required for hosting such an event, and know it’s not easy to plan everything perfectly

# WSC – Key points (1/2)

Individual rounds

Question	Average	Comments
How did you feel about the <b>density of the schedule</b> ? (5h15 on Day 1) (5=fine as it was, 9=more solving time please)	5.5	5h30 or a bit more would be OK
<b>Relative weight</b> of <b>Team</b> rounds vs Individual rounds (5=fine as it was)	5.2	~30% of time on Team rounds seems fine
<b>Overall quality</b> of Sudoku	7.0 86% >=6	Lower than in 2023 (7.9)
Would you have preferred more numerous <b>hard</b> Sudoku? (5=fine as it was)	4.6	Slight frustration with too many « hard Sudoku »
Would you have preferred more numerous <b>innovative</b> Sudoku? (5=fine as it was)	5.6	Slightly more innovation could be good
Number of “ <b>finishers</b> ” was quite low. What is your view? (5=fine as it was, 1=there should be more “finish”)	4.5 34% <=3	« Finish » should be accessible to more solvers, as it was in 2023
<b>Most enjoyed</b> rounds: Complete library... (1h40mn round) (42%), 9 chapters on math arts (38%), Along the river... (35%)		Not much love for Classics... 10% and 16% resp. for those 2 rounds

# WSC – Key points (2/2)

Team rounds

Question	Average	Comments
Overall <b>enjoyment</b> of team rounds	6.3 74% >=6	Lower than in 2023 (7.4 with 94% >=6)
Would you have preferred more numerous <b>innovative</b> Sudoku? (5=fine as it was)	5.3	Level of innovation not a key issue
Number of “ <b>finishers</b> ” was quite low. What is your view? (5=fine as it was, 1=there should be more “finish”)	3.8	« Finish » should be accessible to more solvers, as it was in 2023. Explains some frustration
<b>Most enjoyed</b> rounds: Interlocked stratagems (57%), Sudokurve (49%)		Issues with Bamboo slips stickers mentioned repeatedly
<u>Play-offs</u> - Interest of <b>format</b> (reminder: 7-10 competing to join 4-6, the winner joining 1-3, with start time based on scores)	5.8 48% <=5	Little consensus on WSC play-off format used, but OK overall
<u>Play-offs</u> - <b>Audience experience</b> (cameras, commentaries...)	6.0	Better than in 2023 (5.8) but still room for improvement

# WSC – Selected representative quotes

- **The IB** was very pretty, but i strongly prefer a more **minimalistic** design (the WPC one was perfect for me), both for printing at home and to have more space for adding notes to it
- **Writing surface** should be **hard** (to write easy with pencil without perforating the booklet)
- I think the average **round length was pretty short** compared to other years, which i didn't really like
- The sudokus seemed **more difficult** than previous WSCs. Some of the sudokus seemed better suited to a WPC.
- **Very high-quality Sudoku**, good level of difficulty. Maybe more **innovation** (esp. on Team rounds) would have been nice
- **Bamboo slips** round -- the physical aspect of peeling off the stickers was far too big of a factor. There were also sudokus that were graded correctly despite not being stuck onto the bamboo, which was **inconsistent** with everything said beforehand.
- **Double-ring pendant** -- A one-puzzle round should have a more consistent progress curve. It's really bad for a round like that to hinge upon one central deduction; this results in scores that are very very bimodal. The harsh incorrect digit penalty does not help in this regard but is probably fine.
- **Team rounds** that mostly **split the team** up into individuals (so they cannot solve together) are not enjoyable as part of this event.
- The **cameras** this year were much better than usual, i really hope future organizers will be able to improve it further, and that might require more testing of the cameras before the WSC starts
- Play-offs audience experience: Had been hoping for **commentary** on the puzzles, with the contestants in a separate room, like in some past WSCs.

# WPC – Key points (1/2)

Individual rounds

Question	Average	Comments
How did you feel about the <b>density of the schedule</b> ? (6h15 per day) (5=fine as it was, 9=more solving time please)	5.1	6h15 seems perfect, at least for WPC (6h30 and 6h45 in 2023 were judged too dense)
<b>Relative weight</b> of <b>Team</b> rounds vs Individual rounds (5=fine as it was)	5.2	25-30% of time on Team rounds seems the best
All Team rounds were <b>scheduled on day 3</b> . Was it a problem? (5=not ideal but really not a big problem)	4.7	Team rounds should not be grouped if possible (but far from a full consensus)
<b>Overall quality</b> of Puzzles	6.2 76% >=6	Much lower than in 2023 (7.9), especially much fewer grades 8-9
Would you have preferred more numerous <b>hard</b> Puzzles? (5=fine as it was)	4.1	Too many hard puzzles was a source of frustration
Would you have preferred more numerous <b>innovative</b> Puzzles? (5=fine as it was)	5.5	Level of innovation was not a key issue
Number of “ <b>finishers</b> ” was quite low. What is your view? (5=fine as it was, 1=there should be more “finish”)	4.1	Difficulty to get a « finish » brought some frustration
<b>Most enjoyed</b> rounds: Quadruple happiness (66%), Little happiness (30%), Secret symmetry (28%)		Innovative formats well received

# WPC – Key points (2/2)

Team rounds

Question	Average	Comments
Overall <b>enjoyment</b> of team rounds	6.3	Slightly less enthusiasm than in 2023 (6.8)
Would you have preferred more numerous <b>innovative</b> Puzzles? (5=fine as it was)	5.3	Balance seemed fine
Number of “ <b>finishers</b> ” was quite low. What is your view? (5=fine as it was, 1=there should be more “finish”)	3.6	Making « finish » more accessible is even more important than for individual rounds
<b>Most enjoyed</b> rounds: Chinese knot (58%), Octahedron (46%)		No big differences. However, solving truly « together » is judged important
<u>Play-offs</u> - Interest of <b>format</b> (reminder: 7-10 competing to join 4-6, the winner joining 1-3, with start time based on scores)	5.7 44% <=5	Little consensus on WSC play-off format used, but OK overall
<u>Play-offs</u> - <b>Audience experience</b> (cameras, commentaries...)	5.9	On par with 2023, OK but still room for improvement

# WPC – Selected representative quotes

- **All team rounds on day 3** is a HUGE problem. It was done only out of necessity in Toronto, but to have it be intentionally scheduled is a clear mistake.
- I **liked** having the team rounds **on the last day**.
- **[Team rounds were] too hard and too difficult**, so more than half of the round, we solved puzzles **INDIVIDUALLY**. I think it's not ideal team round.
- Generally, puzzle weighting was rather all over the place. **Bashier puzzles felt very underweighted** particularly on Day 1, while others with smoother logical solvepaths and number placements felt overweighted.
- Found the puzzles **too hard / bashy**. Points did not match the actual difficulty -- possibly due to **test solvers who are too good in bashing...**
- There are too many puzzles that **required brute force**. That is, it was not possible to come to a decision by logical conclusions
- I would have preferred **more finishes** and a **lowered overall difficulty**. Still, puzzles were of high quality and really enjoyable to solve in a non-competitive format. Only hard puzzle on competitive format is stressful and less enjoyable, especially if the finish is not even close.
- In general it felt like most rounds could have done with a **longer time limit**.
- The main shame was that in **Reunion**, it seemed almost impossible for most teams to **reach the actual reunion stage**.
- What I also must say: in advance I really thought I would dislike team round D: **Marathon** as it would just be a bunch of leftover puzzles, but the concept was actually **way more fun than I expected!** (I did not select it as one of my favorite rounds, but I actually like all team rounds a lot)
- Round 12 would have been my favourite round if the hardest puzzles were just a touch easier- I really **liked the idea of rounds 11 & 12 combined**



# Side events – Key points

Question	Average	Comments
Sudoku GP finals - length (5=ideal, 9=too long)	5.4	Sudoku GP Finals OK, maybe slightly too long
Sudoku GP finals - experience for viewers	5.8	Much improved vs Toronto
Sudoku GP finals – side tournament	6.3	Good level of satisfaction for a start
Puzzles GP finals - length (5=ideal, 9=too long)	5.3	Puzzles GP Finals slightly too long
Puzzles GP finals - experience for viewers	5.9	Much improved vs Toronto (camera, hints sheet)
Puzzles GP finals – side tournament	6.5	Good level of satisfaction for a start
Free excursion	4.2	Somewhat disappointing
Paying trip	4.0	Disappointing: no major sights, and did not fit the description
WPF General Assembly	5.3	Better than in Toronto, separating « Open » and « Formal » sessions helped
Opening and Closing/Awards ceremonies	5.9	Much more formal, maybe too formal for some participants, but more appreciated than the low-key version in Toronto (5.1)
Karaoke night	5.6	Less appreciated than in Toronto or at other previous WSPCs (lack of energy and/or alcohol ??)

# Side events – Selected representative comments

- The GP finals were fairly **boring**. We **couldn't see what was happening** with the solvers. Having most of it done the month before is a good idea to keep it shorter.
- **Solving sheets with hints** is good. But finding a way to have **live commentary** feels essential
- I thought that the PGP final contains **too many number-like puzzles** (I mean, few loops / shadings). The puzzle genre should be more balanced.
- Very disappointed with the **lack of diversity in genres**, especially in Puzzle GP.
- **Keep the side event**, it was great fun. The best thing of it was **meeting more people** who I wouldn't have talked to otherwise.
- "I'm against the side tournament being the same time as the finals. The whole point of the finals is to maintain the aura that these solvers deserve a spotlight for their prowess. We are **normalising our stars**, which no other sport does
- Also, more should be done to **stream the finals on YouTube** and promote that. The people who are at WSPC are already enthusiasts - we want others to look at this.
- "Opening and closing ceremonies were a bit too formal, still **fun to have ""real"" ceremonies**.
- With awards ceremony etc. it very much felt like the **WPC** was the poor relation to the **WSC** - gifts for attendees etc.
- The **karaoke ended too quickly**, would have been ideal to have it similar to WSPC in Poland.
- Karaoke was a bit far from the bar.
- **Excursion** should be devoted to **famous places**. In Beijing, we expected either the Great Wall or the city itself, not the surroundings.
- The **paid** excursion trip was both **shorter than announced** and some of the announced program points have just **not been included** (Like the cave, the AAA view, the tea drinking session). This was **very disappointing**.
- It felt **weird being excluded from the GA**. I understand the desire to free up the space, but maybe there could have been a choice?
- **Side events could be more social** as there isn't a lot of time to see everyone in person.
- **Football game** :/

# Venue & logistics – Key points

*“Grade above 5 where you would have liked more budget, but grade below 5 elsewhere, making sure the average is (approximately) 5”*

Question	Average	Comments
Hotel location	4.7 35% >=6	OK on average though little consensus (some do not care at all, some would have liked to be able to just walk around or access sites on excursion day)
Hotel amenities	4.7 25% >=6	No consensus but hotel amenities & services judged OK (some wished for better bar or other place to hang out)
Hotel rooms	4.2 8% >=6	Hotel rooms exceeded expectations (some complaints on hard beds)
Food	5.6 39% >=6	Meeting (diverse) expectations on food remains tough, but fewer complaints than in Toronto

# Venue & logistics – Selected representative comments

- Better to have all (from breakfast through solving hall until hotel room) **in one building**
- For me personally, the main goal of participation in WSPC is to meet with puzzle enthusiast from all over the world and spend quality time sharing our passion for puzzles. This year, I really missed having **nice meeting areas outside of the competition hall**. It would be great to at least have a decent **bar**.
- I'd always recommend having a **cheaper nearby hotel option**. That's the ideal
- I think an ideal hotel would be somewhere in between Toronto's and this year's. Toronto's rooms and food were notably lacking while in an okay location, while this year's hotel was **very nice** with an absolutely **horrendous location**.
- The hotel should have been located so that either it would be possible to **travel to the city**, visit some place and go back on Tuesday afternoon, or there would be some nice place for a walk.
- Location also was **just about fine** probably, but I definitely wouldn't like anything even further from the airport."
- The hotel also was fine, it doesn't need to be too fancy. But the **beds** were sooooo uncomfortable...
- The **food** was also **amazing**, with plenty of **options** to choose from every day.
- "The **food options were fine**, there was a good variety, it just **wasn't hot enough**.
- The **transfers** to/from hotel were very **smooth and easy** -- appreciated
- I would have preferred to not have to **wait 5 hours** on the airport on the way home.

# Other selected representative comments

- I would still put up a general suggestion to give people a certificate where they want to opt for it, containing their **rank**. I keep using my achievements to **try and get in the door for meetings with sponsors**
- Thanks to everyone involved in making WSPC happen every year!
- THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR EVERYONE!!! I really enjoyed WSPC2024!!!
- Obviously, even if it isn't perfect, it's still the most fun week of the year, so thanks to everyone!
- **Qin Jiaqi** is the saviour doing everything behind the scenes, much appreciated
- Thanks to organizers for putting on this event. I know how difficult it can be to organize such a long event, and even when not everything goes right it is a heroic effort to put together.
- One of the best championships I have been . Thank you
- This was my first WPC and I felt very welcomed by the puzzling community and competitors from other countries. It was a well organised event and I had a lot fun solving the puzzles both during and after the competition.
- Only minor negative feedback is that it took **quite long before results were available**, but furthermore a well organized event. Thanks a lot!
- "Thank you to **Tawan** and **Matus** (and possibly others) for facilitating our member org's renewal just a few months before WSPC. Thank you to the Chinese organizers who handled logistics: **Ms. Li Ying**, **Mr. Yuan** who met us at the airport, and others. We had some unexpected issues which no doubt caused them some trouble, but they were very gracious about it."
- Thanks to all staff but Special thanks to **Mr. Haijun**
- My biggest disappointment was that there was no cheese for breakfast :)