



O B S E R V E R R E P O R T
for
VIENNA RIICHI OPEN 2024
(RIICHI, MERS 3.5)

Observer:  Krzysztof DĄBROWSKI, *Founder of ChiiThorn Toruń club*

Date: 28-29 September 2024

Place:  Vienna, Austria

Source(s) of information: Information about the tournament was published on the Organizers website (<https://www.riichimahjong.at/neuigkeiten-terminen/vienna-riichi-open-2024/>). The website had all the necessary information: agenda, participants list, location, transport information. Additionally, Organizers were sending emails to competitors with reminders and additional information.

Participants: 64 competitors, representing 12 countries

											
Austria	Poland	Germany	Ukraine	France	Switzerland	Slovakia	UK	Ireland	Netherlands	Portugal	Romania
20 <small>including 1 EMA Guest</small>	14	9	6	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1

Playing schedule:

Two days, nine hanchans. Five sessions were played on Saturday, four on Sunday. Each hanchan followed a well established 75min + 1hand system (once 75 minutes have passed, players have to finish the currently ongoing hand and play an additional one, if available).

Location:



The tournament took place in Young Guest House in the twentieth district of Vienna - Brigittenau, sandwiched between Danube river and Danube canal. As the name suggests, competitors were able to rent a stay in a location, which (considering that one bed in a dorm room for a two-night stay costed less than 60€) is a big argument to go to Vienna with a team, rent a whole room and have fun together, also enjoying breakfast, provided by the location.

Location itself is decently connected with the rest of town via both U-Bahn and Tram systems. Sightseers will also have a bit of fun, as about 10 minutes by foot there is the Millenium Tower - the second highest building in Austria.



We were playing in one of the conference rooms within the Jugentgasthaus. There was more than enough space for sixteen tables and the location itself may easily contain up to 18 tables in a comfortable environment. Pushing to 20 tables sounds risky, but should be also possible.

Room itself is well lit, Little to no noise from the outside, so the only thing which could interrupt others were other players and their telephones. The referees expected this and informed competitors about a penalty system regarding phone calls.

Equipment: Sixteen tables, with roughly the same play area on each of them, equipped with a junkmat, reusable all-last sheet, yaku sheet, tileset and white sticks with a characteristic green addition. The 30k setup was mixed on tables, alternating between (1x10k, 2x5k, 9x1k, 1x500, 5x100) and (1x10k, 3x5k, 4x1k, 1x500, 5x100). Sets in a very good condition, although there were single tiles (less than five at 16 tables) which had to be cleaned a bit.

Refereeing: There were two non-playing referees: 🇨🇭 Peter Hamilton and 🇦🇹 Lena Weinguny. In case of need, 🇩🇪 Manuel Kameda-Schlich was designated to join in as a backup playing referee. Referees acted swiftly when needed, sometimes even having a good laugh. According to statistics, there were way less chombos than expected, no special penalties due to filling scores or misbehavior, and one question about ryanhan shibari in EMA.

Complaints:

- One player complained that “it is unfair for the EMA Observer to get a yakuman”. I am flabbergasted because I am not sure how that sort of complaint is related to the quality of a tournament, but that was the only complaint that I’ve got through the whole tournament and I wanted to be informed about any complaints to prepare a trustworthy report. *Mea culpa*.

Information / communication during the tournament:

Tournament was divided into two parts: Predetermined round robin for seven rounds (with players being divided into four baskets to ensure they will not face competitors from their own country). Two remaining hanchans followed the swiss system. Schedule cards (with space to let players write their post-hanchan score) were given to each competitor. Also, the schedule table was put in visible places in the room.

Information about the remaining time visible on the screen at any time.

Results after each hanchan were published and presented to the competitors in a form of QR code, leading to the organizers website (<https://www.riichimahjong.at/neuigkeiten-termine/vienna-riichi-mahjong/>).

Sessions: Tournament went positive. New players got fun and experience, European veterans got new challenges. Probably many new friendly rivalries were made along the way.

Catering: Warm meal for the first day in an eastern food serving bistro. Bottled water was available at all times - there was also a refrigerator if players wanted to keep their beverages chilled. Snacks, fruits and pastries available in early rounds, later replaced by sandwiches.

For the second day a warm meal was served in a local cuisine restaurant.

Prizes:

Small trophies and bags of prizes (varying size and value) for top 3 players. Snacks for rare yakus which happened on the tournament (kokushi musou, sankantsu). Free entry consolation prize for first place from the other side of the standings.

Conclusion:

They say, Vienna means history. They say, Vienna means culture. They say, Vienna means quality. Many of you saw that already at the WRC 2022 or other tournaments in the Austrian capital. I have experienced that for the very first time. And after this tournament I want more. Despite trying to play a devil’s advocate, I cannot find any reasons to not recommend this tournament for other competitors worldwide.