



## Observer report for Hrodna Christmas Tournament 2019 (RCR, MERS 1)

**Observer:** Łukasz GRZYBOWSKI

**Date:** December 21st 2019

**Place:** Hrodna, Belarus

**Website or other source(s) of information:** All information on the facebook event page (<https://www.facebook.com/events/974897076196711/>): registration, agenda, list of participants, fee. The event page lacked information about the referee and ema observer, the info was also provided only in Belarusian language, so I had to use google translate. However the organisers were very friendly and I got most of the info directly from them, also they helped me with getting the permission paper to go to Belarus without Visa.

**Participants:** 24 players

		
19	4	1

**Playing schedule:** 1 days, 5 hanchans of 90 minutes

**Location:** PORTAL Recreation and Development Center (ПОПТАЛ центр отдыха и развития), which is a place where you can play all kinds of board and mental games, the room we played in probably cannot hold more than 28 players, but there are multiple rooms. The place has a kitchen, 1 toilet and multiple smaller rooms for players to hang out after their finished their games.

**Equipment:** Junkmats or non-automatic mahjong tables and quality mahjong sets on each table. Each player had to register on the Pantheon app website to know on which table to play, during the gameplay 1 phone was enough.

**Refereeing:** Dominik Kolenda was playing referee.

**Complaints:** None.

### **Information / communication during the tournament:**

Visible clock projected on Pantheon application on every phone. The hanchans started immediately after administrator, who also played in the tournament, started the hanchan, also many applications did not refresh automatically when the timer started, which might have delayed few games by few seconds. I recommend to the app creators to add at least 5 seconds countdown. Ranking up to date between each session, which could be seen on the Pantheon tournament website.

**Sessions:** The tournament was held in more friendly manner than in high level play like in some other European tournaments. Most of the people spoke only Russian/Belarusian, which only I could understand nothing. Constant laughing is also not good manner, and it was not done only by the local players. The tournament used Pantheon application which is more detailed but slower to input than Mahjong Tracker, which my region is used to. To the app a player on the table had to input whether hand is open or closed, what yaku did they get and how many fu did they get. In cost of time, the tournament statistics were splendid, as we could browse things such as how many rons did we do, what yaku did we collect, how many times did we deal into a hand, how many was it caused by riichi, and so on. There was a problem however, as the application was set to 90 minutes, it locks however on 75minute to play this and one more, but there was a problem that the app was locked on this and one more but the dices were not thrown before 75minute mark, which meant that there should be only last game to finish, but we could not finish it manually. I believe the game was finished by making it all noten, but I am not sure.

**Catering:** Borsch, chicken fillet with potatoes and I believe it was radish-tomato salad, compote to drink. I believe it was some kind of mushroom salad for vegetarians.

**Prizes:** A trophy, a plate with a wind on it and a bag of sweets 1<sup>st</sup> place, medals and plates with wind on it and bags of sweets for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place. There were also additional rewards of chocolate Santas for different achievements in the tournament such as the most different yakus collected.

**After the tournament:** There was an after-party in a pub, where we could drink 1l beer glass or even 3l one. We had few ranking games (Hrodna ranking) in the same place as the tournament, entry was 4 BYN (around 2euro), after the place closed we all went to Belarusian cuisine restaurant.

**Conclusion:** Very friendly tournament in Hrodna, Belarus. Still most of the players need to work on their manners during the tournament, as well as to talk less during the hanchan. Despite that people here are always really helpful and friendly, however you might have trouble to get by with just English. I advice the app creators of Pantheon to implement 5 seconds of countdown to start, as well as ability to finish the game manually – at least for the administrator. I wish also for EMA to care a bit more fore the rules they have set, I was asked to be observer on the same date, as the tournament, which did not bother me this much, but some tournaments do not even announce the observers which EMA should deal with.

I definitely recommend Hrodna tournament for people who wants to come there for holidays, however I do recommend basic knowledge of Russian. Belarus is developing mahjong country with a lots of promises.