



## Observer report for Silesian Riichi Open 2025 (Riichi, MERS 3.5)

**Observer:** Henri MÄKELÄ


**Date:** February 15th – 16th 2025

**Place:** Katowice, Poland

**Website or other source(s) of information:** All information on the website of Upper Silesian Mahjong Association (<https://mahjongbilesia.wordpress.com/sro2025/>): registration, program, list of participants...

**Participants:** 48 players

**Represented countries:**

									
POL	FIN	UKR	SPN	GER	BLR	AUT	GBR	CZE	MYS
37	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

**Playing schedule:** 2 days, 8 rounds (5+3) of 90 minutes

**Location:** Katowice International Congress Centre. 20 minutes walk from Katowice Central Train Station. Large premium venue with plenty of space and good sound isolation. Another similar room was reserved for post-game talk and drinks / snacks.

**Equipment:** Equally sized square tables. Junkmats. Riichi mahjong sets. Good chairs. Players' phones were used in the middle of the table for keeping track of points during the game and the total scores, using the "Mahjong Tracker" app. Physical point sticks were not used for score tracking. Only a physical riichi stick was given for declaring riichi.

**Refereeing:** Łukasz Grzybowski was the non-player head referee.

**Complaints:** Nothing substantial. As someone without prior experience with the Mahjong Tracker app, it would've been good for the app language to be in English when there are non-Polish speakers in the table, but players were also kind enough to translate.

**Information / communication during the tournament:**

Visible clock shown on multiple large screens in the venue. A visible timer + gong clearly informed players of the start and the end of sessions. Ranking was kept up-to-date automatically with the Mahjong Tracker app and could be viewed at any point by anyone using the app.

**Sessions:** Excellent playing atmosphere, FFF (Fair-play, Friendly and Fun). Players were respectful to each other. During play, local TV came to film some players, but this did not seem to bother anyone, and players were asked for consent about being filmed beforehand.

**Catering:** Snacks and drinks (juice, coffee) were always available for free in the break room. On Saturday, lunch was served by the staff of the building in the break room, offering both non-vegetarian and vegetarian options. On Sunday, lunch was served downstairs in the congress centre café and waited by the staff of the building.

**Prizes:** Trophies for individual ranking (1st, 2nd and 3<sup>rd</sup>). Chocolates were given out to certain players and organizers for their support in organizing the tournament.

**Conclusion:** Overall, a very nice tournament in Katowice in terms of organization and player spirit. Venue was excellent and easily accessible. As my first visit to Poland, I found the local players to be kind and welcoming to overseas players. Will gladly come back again.