



## Observer report for Riichi Rumble Mahjong Taisen (Riichi, MERS 3.5)











**Observer:** Henri Devillez

**Date:** April 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> 2025

**Place:** Cologne, Germany

**Website or other source(s) of information:** <https://riichi.cologne/en/tournaments/2025/riichi-rumble-mahjong-taisen/>

**Participants:** 72 players

GER	BEL	NED	FRA	UKR	GBR	AUT	SWE	SUI	ESP
									
30	21	5	4	3	3	3	1	1	1

**Playing schedule and format:** 2 days, 9 rounds (5+4) of 90 minutes.

The format was as follows (quoting the website of the tournament):

“The tournament matchings are done according to an adaption of the Dutch System (a subtype of Swiss System):

The first 5 Hanchan (= all of day 1) all players are placed in the same group. This phase would behave just as a limited round-robin.

After that, the next 2 Hanchan, players placed in groups and are seeded according to their current position after the previous hanchan: e. g. 1st, 5th, 9th and 13th play at the table 1. 2nd, 6th, 10th and 14th at table 2. Please note the details will be dependent on the number of total participants. There will be **no cutoffs**.

The final 2 Hanchan players are seeded according to their position with groups of 4: i. e. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th play at table 1 etc.“

**Location:** Schützenhalle der St. Sebastianus Bruderschaft, Cologne. There was plenty of space for the 18 tables, and a separate rest room that was also used for lunch. This is the same room as the previous years, and a great location for a tournament.

**Equipment:** Standard riichi sets. Each table has a score sheet and a cleanable “All-last” sheet. More unusually, the tournament used the “World Riichi” app to display the ranking after each hanchan and several information such as the schedule and the seatings. Some players prefers a more traditional system with paper, but most players I interacted with were very happy with the app.

**Refereeing:** Three non-playing referees: Manuel Kameda-Schlich, Ken Nico Schultheiss and Zheming Jin. It is great to have three non-playing referees for tournaments of this size. It should be encouraged more. I have not heard any complaint about the referees.

**Complaints:** I receive several complaints from the players:

- The room was a bit cold on Saturday morning.
- The room opened late on Sunday morning, and some players depending on public transport had to wait a bit outside (luckily the weather was sunny).
- There was some prize for rinshan kaihou and yakuman (a discount for the next tournament). Some players were surprized that it was not announced beforehand. I do not believe that this is an issue.
- The chairs are not very comfortable.
- There was a beginner participating at the tournament who was very slow at drawing tiles and not aware of some basic rules. While I believe this is perfectly fine to have newcomers in EMA tournament, there should be a minimum skill level that players should have as it can impedes the experience of the other players otherwise. That said, I'm not sure what a tournament organizer could realistically do to address this issue.
- The tournament started late on Saturday due to the removal of a table after the seat allocation. I believe it is better to remove a table instead of using four substitutes, and using the app made it doable without too much of an hassle.
- There are some crews on the tables that are a bit annoying for the players when building the wall. This is a know problem, and it seems that it will be solved next time if I understood correctly.

**Information / communication during the tournament:**

Visible clock projected from a computer on a screen. A gong clearly informs players of the start and the end of sessions.

**Sessions:** Excellent playing atmosphere, FFF (Fair-play, Friendly and Fun).

**Catering:** Lunch, snacks, water and coffee/tea. There were (good) warm meals for lunch and a special care for dietary restrictions.

**Prizes:** Trophies for individual ranking (1st, 2nd and 3rd), chocolate for the best hanchan at every session, discounts (for the next tournament) for players achieving a yakuman, a rinshan kaihou and the last place, and a gift for the observer.

**Conclusion:** Great tournament in Cologne, as the previous years. I personally liked the Dutch system for the seatings and the use of an app all the information. I am looking forward to next year.