



O B S E R V E R R E P O R T
for
YAKITORI RIICHI OPEN 2025
(RIICHI, MERS 3.5)

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

Date: 7-8 June 2025

Place:  Berlin, Germany

Source(s) of information: Information about the tournament was published on the Organizers website (<https://berlin-mahjong.club/yakitori-open-2025/>). The information included: agenda, participants list, location.

Participants: 74 competitors, representing 15 countries (including 1 EMA Guest from the Philippines and 2 EMA Guests from PR China). There were 2 substitute players from the very beginning. During the tournament (after hanchan 4) one additional player had to be subbed out.

												
GER	SUI	UK	POL	NED	UKR	FRA	AUT	ESP	SWE	BEL	ISR	USA
40 incl 3 EMA Guests	5	5	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1

Playing schedule:

Four hanchans on Saturday, four hanchans on Sunday. Each hanchan followed a well-established 75+1 system (once 75 minutes have passed, players have to finish the currently ongoing hand and play an additional one, if available), with the end of those 75 minutes announced by a gong.



Location:

For the third time Berlin welcomes us in a Sports Center in Schoeneberg district. This time, the Athens room served as a competition area and the London room as a rest area. As the main building serves also as a sports school, there were other events happening. These events however did not disturbed the tournament.

The school complex itself is well connected within the city. It is located in close proximity to Schoeneberg and Suedkreuz train stations. and even has its own designated bus stop.

The competition room itself is very spacious with each table having more space than needed. 23 tables would fit without any problem. Light was alright and there were no outside noises reaching the competition zone. As an addition, a fridge in the room, full of water and Schorles.

Equipment:

Each of the 19 tournament setups consisted of a gray folding table, a junkmat and a set with size between 25-28mm prepared even way before. All sets in a good condition, with the only things making some sets stand out was their color and "the bird [1sou] design". One **1k** stick for a player on each table - more were not necessary, as hanchans were managed via club rendition of the Pantheon system. In case the table wanted to use additional sticks to help visualize the number of counters currently on the table, the Organizer team was ready, willing and able to provide them.

Additionally, the Gong itself, handled by one of the Organizers. That thing can sound and that fact was very well put to use at the end of hanchan's default time.

Refereeing:

There were two non-playing referees: 🇩🇪 Julian Nowakowski and 🇩🇪 Noah Schaar. With quick reaction and efficiency to a point, while also being fair towards less experienced players., Main task being chombo confirmation, special events tracking (chombo, yakuman, yakitori) and minor tutorials to Pantheon. Information about the current number of chombos and yakumans before each hanchan was a nice additional touch.

There was one small change in Hanchan 7 matchmaking system, which was announced during the tournament.

Complaints:

- There was a complaint regarding the clarity of a drawing. It looks like some competitors are unsure if the random number generator responsible for drawing was fair.

Positive remarks:

- I have got information that player badges are a great way to let players know each other more. Berlin shows good examples to other competitions.

Information / communication during the tournament:

Big screen showing remaining time and seating for the upcoming hanchan. Schedule cards given to each competitor with an additional field, if the player was keen on keeping achieved scores on a card.

Results were available at any point in time on the organizers Pantheon, which was also used to manage the tournament and tables.

Sessions:

Players were from various skill levels, both experienced and rookies. Rookies were getting support and hints, veterans were getting their 8 doses of F.U.N. The tournament went smoothly and in a positive atmosphere. Almost all sessions started on time.

Catering:

Warm Asian-style bistro on both days with 3-4 meals to choose, as well as with a lot of rice and noodles. Water available both in the playroom and in the resting area. Resting area also . Organizers forbid bringing coffee to the playroom - which, considering a cozy carpet in it, was a splendid decision. Additionally, the resting area filled to the brim with various snacks, both healthy and not-quite healthy. On day 2, on players request, the Organizer team secured more vegetables.

Prizes:

Prizes for Top 3 players. Additional award for the Yakitori Master. A lot of chocolate bars serving as rewards for various achievements, both serious (top10, yakuman) and not so serious (most chombos). Also, an opportunity to see the trophy for the German Champion, who will be decided later this year.

Conclusion:

They say "Third time's the charm", but this very tournament makes that saying null and void. Berlin Mahjong Team not just took the tournament guidelines - they rewrote them anew, with stable improvement, precision and attention to details. I am certain that this is a good tournament to visit regularly both by players and organizers alike - many regions would highly benefit from implementing ideas introduced on Yakitori Riichi Open.

Ausfahrt, Germany, 2025-06-08

K. Dąbrowski