



Observer report for the HAMbaiman Riichi Open 2025

Observer: GHERMAN Vasile

Date: Novembre 8-9 2025

Place: Hamburg, Germany

Website or other source(s) of information: All information was available on the website of the Peicha Hamburg Riichi Mahjong Club at the following link:

<https://www.peicha-mahjong-hamburg.de/hambaiman-riichi-open-2025> (including registration, venue location, tournament format and scoring, schedule, entry fee, list of participants, seatings, and recommendations).

Participants: 84 players.

Countries represented: Germany (51), United Kingdom (7), the Netherlands (6), Sweden (4), Austria (3), Switzerland (3), Belgium (2), Denmark (2), Spain (2), France (1), Italy (1), Poland (1), plus one Substitute.

Playing schedule: 2 days, 9 rounds of 75 minutes each: finishing the current hand plus one more.

The first five hanchans were drawn at random. In hanchans 6 and 7, players were divided into six groups and seeded according to their current ranking after the previous hanchan.

For the final two hanchans, players were seeded according to their ranking; i.e., 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th played together.

Location: Horner Freiheit – Das Stadtteilhaus, Am Gojenboom 46, Hamburg.

It was easy to reach by taking metro line U2.

The venue was very spacious and consisted of one floor with several rooms.

The playing room, which contained all the tables, was on the ground floor. It was spacious, well-lit, and had large windows.

The break rooms were located upstairs and were used during breaks and for lunch.

Equipment: We played with standard Riichi mahjong sets, all of good quality. One riichi stick was used and additional honba sticks were provided to players who needed them.

The Pantheon system was used to record and track the game results. A link with instructions on how to use it was available on the club's website.

The guide was created by Berlin's Mahjong Club. Each table used the app on one of the players' phones.

Refereeing: Julius Tonner (non-playing), Kenneth Chan, and Junyu Wang (playing).

Complaints: Some players complained that the lunch room was too small and lacked enough chairs, so people had to take their lunch boxes and eat standing in the corridors or downstairs. Also, the food portions were a bit too large, which led to some waste, especially for the vegetarian meals. Some players argued that a buffet would have helped prevent that. Moreover, no proper breakfast was offered, according to some participants, even though the tournament started early (8:30 on Sunday).

In addition, some players did not like the use of smartphones for scoring, but they appreciated that the organisers provided enough power outlets for everyone to charge their phones. One player complained that after pressing the "send results" button on the app, the scores should not have been changed, which may have happened.

Information / communication during the tournament:

A visible clock was projected on a large screen. There was no gong, but an oral announcement was made to start each hanchan, and at the end of the round, players were told to play the last hand plus one additional hand. Scores and rankings were available on the Pantheon system through a link sent by email, and the updates were fast enough.

One break room was available only from 1 pm on the second day, but everything was clearly explained, and there were no issues with that.

Sessions: There was an excellent playing atmosphere, FFF (Fair play, Friendly, and Fun).

Catering: Snacks such as cereal bars, Haribo candies, vegetables, and fruits were offered in the break rooms. Lunch consisted of hot Asian meals served in individual boxes, with some spring rolls to share at the tables.

Prizes: Trophies for the top three individual rankings (1st, 2nd, and 3rd).

A scarf and a huge chocolate bar were given to the first player who made a sanbaiman. Some local food products from Hamburg were given to the referees, the EMA observer, Berlin's club for their help with the organisation, the player who made a 10-han hand without doras, and the player ranked 84th.

Conclusion: A very nice tournament, for their first EMA event, it was a real success.

The organisation led by Tessa was excellent. She handled everything kindly and with great attention, and people really noticed it.

Julius was a wonderful referee, providing updates on yakuman and chombo statistics at the start of each round.

Overall, it was a delightful weekend in Hamburg. Although it rained on Sunday, the warm mahjong atmosphere created by everyone made the rain easy to forget.