



## Observer report for Hatsumi Taikai 2026

**Observer:** Ivar Bouwman

**Date:** February 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Place:** [Klaster Innowacji Społeczno-Gospodarczych Zabłocie 20.22, Zabłocie 20, 30-701 Kraków](#)

**Website or other source(s) of information:** All information on the website <https://chombo.club/en/tournaments/2025/12/15/hatsumi-taikai-2026/> : registration, schedule, list of participant

Scores were updated during the rounds on the [Mahjong Tracker](#) app, and also visible [live.chombo.club](https://live.chombo.club)

**Participants:** 62 + 2 substitute players

**Participating countries:**

POL	UKR	GER	ROM	SWI	AUT	NED	GBR	EMA Guest
37	7	6	3	3	2	2	1	1

**Playing schedule:** 2 days, 8 rounds (4+4) of ~ 90 minutes (session of 75min, then finish the hand + 1 more)

**Location:** The location has separate rooms for playing and breaks, the playing room was easily big enough to host 64 players and leave enough space to move around between the tables. The location was in the centre of Kraków, easily accessible by tram. Instructions to get to the location were clearly stated on the tournament website.

**Equipment:** We played on standard square tables with a variety of sets. Almost all sets were of good quality. One set had to be switched out after two rounds of play because there was a variation of colour of the tilebacks between different suits.

**Refereeing:** Mateusz Maćkowski and Jakub Bacic as non-playing referees, with Łukasz Grzybowski as playing referee.

## Complaints:

- Multiple players noted that the level of play by the substitute players was sub-par. For example, on one table the substitute player made two chombo's, and on another table the substitute player announced "it didn't matter what they did since they were just a substitute" continuing to play uncompetitively. This was brought up with the organisation on the second day and communicated to the players in question.
- One player noted that people on their table were talking in a language that not everyone on the table understood. The organisers made an announcement about this after the first hanchan.
- The food on the first day arrived 40 minutes late, delaying the schedule by 20 minutes.
- Some players noted they would have preferred playing with regular payment sticks instead of the Mahjong Track app, as this would make game information more clear (honba and riichi sticks) and would leave less room for errors during scoring.

## Information / communication during the tournament:

Visible clock on a big smart screen, clearly visible for all tables. Additionally, the time was visible in the Mahjong Tracker app. Players were notified of the end of the round by a pop-up on the app, and an announced by the organisation. Ranking was updated through the app after every hand played and frozen during the last hanchan. The seating for the players was both available in the app and posted on the doors of the playing and break area.

**Sessions:** A good, friendly and competitive playing atmosphere with a healthy mix of experienced and newer players. Scores were tracked using the Mahjong Tracker app, with a separate riichi-stick for each player.

**Catering:** Throughout the day water, a variety of specialty tea's, and snacks were available in the break room. For the lunches there were lunch boxes from [a local restaurant](#) with options of "non-vegetarian", "Vegetarian", "Vegan". The lunch boxes included Vietnamese food including rice, a variety of vegetables, an egg, and for the non-vegetarian options chicken and pork.

As beforementioned, the lunch on the first day was late by 40 minutes, outside of the control of the organisers. The lunch was perfectly on time for the second day.

**Prizes:** Trophies and a small locally made set of hanafuda playing cards for individual ranking (1st, 2nd and 3<sup>rd</sup>), a small gift for notable achievements (Closest to 0, most dealer baimans, highest hanchan, most riichi sticks lost), a scroll with Japanese calligraphy for all the people that got a yakuman.

The referees and EMA-observer were also presented a small locally made set of hanafuda playing cards by the organisers.

**Conclusion:** This was my first time at this tournament, and I was very impressed by the effort the organisers put into the tournament. The location and organisation we're both very good, and I'll surely be back for later iterations of this tournament.