



**Observer report for Great Wave 2026 (Riichi, MERS 3.5)**

**Observer:** Tom Pearson

**Date:** 11th-12th April 2026

**Place:** Espoo, Finland

**Website or other source(s) of information:** <https://aaltomahjong.github.io/#/turnaus-gw26>

**Participants:** 76 players

**Represented countries:**

FIN	SWE	GBR	LAT	UKR	POL	JPN	GER	FRA	EST	BEL	AUT
54	5	5	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

**Playing schedule:** 2 days, 8 rounds (4+4) of 90 minutes (75 minutes + 1 hand)

**Location:** Aalto Design Factory at Aalto University. The room fitted the 19 tables just perfectly and space was not an issue. There was ample break space and toilets.



**Equipment:** Junk mats and tile sets were all in good, serviceable condition.

**Refereeing:** 2 referees, both non-playing. Petteri Huuskonen was the head referee.

**Complaints:** There were times when there was not a shared language between all players at the table. One player raised a concern with some players chatting at the table in a language not understood by them, to which I advised that they were within their rights to ask for translation should it occur again.

**Information / communication during the tournament:**

Between sessions:

- Scores shown on a giant projector before the start of the next session for all sessions except one.
- Table assignments given on a paper slip to each player upon registration.
- All assignments posted on walls around the venue as a backup.

During sessions:

- Visible timer on a giant projector.
  - There were some technical issues outside of the organising team's control meaning that the timer display dropped out temporarily during one or two sessions. The organising team openly discussed potential solutions to this with myself, which were fortunately not needed as the technical issues resolved themselves.
- The end of each session was not always promptly or audibly announced, however I received no complaints from players about this.

**Sessions:** Excellent playing atmosphere!

**Catering:** A wide array of snacks and cold drinks provided as part of the entry price. Hot drinks available for a minimal fee from a machine on site. Lunches were not provided, but were easily findable in the local area.



**Prizes:** Trophies and chocolates for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place finishers. Chocolates given to the 4th place finisher for being the top-placing non-Finnish player. Perpetual trophy was passed on to the highest-placing Finnish player, i.e. the winner. Finally, a packet of “salty crackers” was given to the last-placed player who “must be feeling pretty salty”.

**Conclusion:** The organising team should be very proud of this excellent tournament - the largest ever in Finland! I am extremely glad that the decision was taken to expand the player cap from the original number of 60 to give as many people as possible the opportunity to play. The team should also be commended for keeping the price exceedingly low at just €15. The referee seminar held on the Friday before the event was extremely thorough and helpful, and will hopefully enable plenty more events, both in Finland and beyond. Bravo!