



Observer report for Vienna Riichi Open 2026 (MCR, MERS 3.5)

Observer: Christopher Endicott

Date: September 26th - 27th 2026

Place: Vienna, Austria

Website or other source(s) of information: <https://www.riichimahjong.at/neuigkeiten-terminen/vienna-riichi-open-2026/>

Participants: 72 players

Represented Countries: 19

Playing schedule: 2 days, 8 rounds (4+4) of 75 minutes

Location: HI Hostel Vienna Brigittenau - we were hosted in a large function room with plenty of space and ventilation. There was a breakout area adjacent as well as outside space.

Equipment: We played with standard sets and junk mats - all equipment seemed to be in good condition.

Refereeing: 3 non-playing referees who were very responsive to enquiries

Complaints:

There were some comments received about the Pantheon system:

- Inflexibility of the system when encountering edge cases - these were resolved by manual intervention by the organisers.
- The disadvantages of not requiring players to learn scoring by not having Tenbo and not having to do manual score calculations that usage of the system encourages.
- Organisational challenges if no-one at the table is willing or able to use their phone as the scoring device (for example, low on battery or privacy concerns). An added problem here is being able to login to the system on another device - an better example cited was the way Mahjong Tracker does verification codes per table.

There was also a comment received about the lunch voucher system (see below), such that it would have been preferred simply to receive a discount on entry fee if no group booking discount is being obtained.

Information / communication during the tournament:

Relevant announcements were made before each round, including a countdown to each start. The tournament's management was run via the on-line Pantheon system, which recorded scores and showed round timings. This required someone to have their phone on the table for each game.

Sessions: Excellent playing atmosphere, all players encountered played respectfully and with due consideration for others. The atmosphere in the room was usually quiet and any disruption was dealt with quickly by the organisers.

Catering: Vouchers were provided for the nearby Millennium Mall, offering a wide variety of options to ensure everyone could eat something they wished. After some teething issues with voucher acceptance at some restaurants on the first day, things worked well. There was an optional evening meal organised which was well attended at a classic Viennese location.

Prizes: Trophies for individual ranking (1st, 2nd and 3rd), as well as various “achievement” awards for stats tracked via the digital score system.

Conclusion: Lena ran her usual high standard of event in Vienna. The tournament ran precisely on schedule, with a high standard of play - and with sufficient referees, substitute players and good facilities. I look forward to returning for a future event!