

M.LEAGUE x World Riichi U.S. Tour Shatters Viewership Records and Finalizes Historic Global Pro Alliance

Recapping the M.LEAGUE x World Riichi U.S. Tour: record overseas viewership, sold-out venues, and a monumental 5-party global alliance for World Riichi.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, July 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The first-ever multi-city professional mahjong tour in the United States concluded this week, marking a massive, unprecedented success for the globalization of the mind sport. The [M.LEAGUE x World Riichi 2026 U.S. Tour](#) brought 11 high-profile Japanese professionals directly to American fans, culminating in sold-out events, a dramatic tournament finale, and historic organizational changes for the professional game.

The Las Vegas tournament, hosting over 100 competitors, ended in a nail-biting, back-and-forth final table. Ultimately, North American Yuhao L. captured the championship title, narrowly defeating M.LEAGUER Sayaka Okada. History was also made for the World Riichi Professional Mahjong (WRPM), as its members shared the stage with Japan's elite for the first time in North America. WRPM's Erik Karhan secured an impressive 4th place finish, while fellow competitors and WRPM pioneers Tianshen He, Jimmy Lai (Hong Kong),



M.LEAGUE x World Riichi U.S. Tour Las Vegas Venue: HyperX



Various Scenes from the M.LEAGUE x World Riichi U.S. Tour

Arthur McNally and Tamas Erdos played valiantly for placements in the top 25.

The tournament was also broadcasted live on Youtube, bringing the action to an international audience of approximately 40,000 each day. The livestream brought English-language mahjong coverage to even greater heights than before, with special/legendary commentary from Yusong Liu, a beloved streamer in the community. Right alongside Liu were Sayaka Miyatani and JPML pro, Jenn Barr, the dynamic duo behind the Sukeban International podcast who served as live MCs. Additionally, Barr, a staple of the commentary booth, provided professional insight to each streamed game while Miyatani handled ceremony duties on top of exclusive post-game interviews.



World Riichi signs iconic agreement with four major professional organizations in Japan

“This tour has been a year in the making and to see everything finally come together was an incredibly rewarding. I'm thrilled that we were able to provide such a unique experience for the growing M.LEAGUE fanbase in America. This was another important step in our long relationship with our counterparts in Japan and we look forward to many future collaborations with M.LEAGUE and our partner professional organizations.” - Dave Bresnick, President, USPML

The tour operated flawlessly on state-of-the-art Alban Slim Score Voice automated tables—the premier made-for-home tables that are also utilized in the Japan Professional Mahjong League studio in Tokyo. Despite the heavy logistics, the tournament ran without a single table malfunction. Six of these premium tables were awarded to top tournament performers and raffle winners.

The excitement carried over to the East Coast with the NYC Exhibition matches, featuring highly anticipated clashes between Japan's top professionals and WRPM talent. These special exhibition games were proudly sponsored by gaming hardware leader Redragon. Enhancing the broadcast, Redragon supplied high-fidelity headsets for the live commentary team and gifted their premium Artemis Pro keyboard and KING ULTRA mouse sets to raffle winners in the Eastside Showdown.

Local club partners and world-class venues were pivotal to the tour's success. In Las Vegas, the HyperX Arena served as the central hub for the tour, hosting the main tournament, managing the high-production live stream, and providing the venue for the sold-out After-Hours fan meeting. Additionally, Bluebird Studio in Las Vegas provided critical support in hosting North America's first-ever M.LEAGUE press conference. On the East Coast, Sparrow's Nest Studio in

Manhattan anchored the festivities, hosting the After-Hours fan meeting and the Eastside Showdown. Highlighting the immense demand, the exclusive, 50-person capped events sold out within days of their announcement.

Adding to the experience, M.LEAGUE provided invaluable support to operate a Pop-up Shop at the events. Through this partnership, fans were able to purchase authentic merchandise that is typically exclusive to Japan. Additionally, M.LEAGUE provided two different, limited-edition trading cards featuring the six participating M.LEAGUERS, printed exclusively for this U.S. Tour.

In addition to the live events, this U.S. Tour served as the launchpad for two massive industry initiatives:

-The 5-Party Global Alliance: World Riichi's Gemma Sakamoto and Dave Bresnick and JPML's Shigekazu Moriyama formalized a historic contract-signing ceremony with four major Japanese organizations (JPML, NPM, MU, and RMU). This monumental accord officially guarantees that WRPM members qualify for all tournaments and leagues hosted by these prestigious Japanese institutions.

-World Riichi Publishing: In partnership with Mynavi, the tour celebrated the launch of World Riichi Publishing. English translations of highly anticipated strategy books—Riichi Mahjong: Balance Your Game by Yoshihiro Matsumoto and Riichi Mahjong: The Essential Playbook by Kotaro Uchikawa—were released at the event. Global digital releases for these titles are slated for later this month, with an expanded lineup of translated strategy books already in the pipeline for future release.

The tour featured a legendary delegation of 11 Japanese professionals: Shigekazu Moriyama (President of JPML), Yoshihiro Matsumoto, Kotaro Uchikawa (Reigning World Champion), Megumu Aikawa, Sayaka Okada, Mari Takamiya, Sho Shiratori (Reigning Hououi), Hiroshi Yamai (2014 World Champion), Yuumi Uotani, and Ryoei Hirano.

The remarkable success and enthusiasm generated by this U.S. Tour will carry forward into the 2028 World Riichi Championship, scheduled to be held in New York City. As one of the most highly anticipated tournaments by riichi mahjong players worldwide, the 2028 World Riichi Championship will build on this tour's incredible momentum to become the largest and most prestigious championship in riichi mahjong history.

"The passion and energy across both the Las Vegas and New York venues far exceeded our expectations. Seeing so many fans outside of Japan, gathered around the tables with such genuine dedication, surprised and moved the participating M.LEAGUERS more than anyone. We extend our deepest gratitude to World Riichi and everyone involved for inviting us to take part in this historic tour. We have full confidence in the success of the 2028 WRC event in New York, and M.LEAGUE is committed to supporting and cooperating in every way possible." — Nobuyuki Hata, Secretary General, M.LEAGUE

Fans looking to relive the action or follow ongoing professional riichi mahjong coverage—including English broadcasts of the Sankei Shimbun Cup, the Saikyosen Team Battle, and WRL events worldwide—are encouraged to subscribe to the official [World Riichi YouTube Channel](#). Stay tuned for upcoming announcements regarding future international tours and tournaments.

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