

Review: Budapest III - Nagy Gergely

Minesweeper World Championship – Insider

For the third consecutive year I organized a minesweeper tournament – this time I was able to get some prizes for the best players. Doing all the setup was tiring, but that was worth it. The two weeks before the tournament was all about arranging the little things: collecting the prizes, getting all the arrival information, printing the certificates and so on. I hardly had time to train for the competition.

Then it was the 10th and I was on my way out to the airport to meet Joni. His plane was scheduled at 3 p.m. and at 2 p.m. I checked the site of the airport and there was no sign of it being delayed or canceled. So I took the bus only to learn that the plane hadn't even left Sweden! So that was a completely wasted trip. Next day Gabriel, Joni and me met at the airport to welcome Wee Pin, only none of us were sure how she looked (although Gabriel insisted he knew). Then finally she recognized us guys. We were talking on the way to the city and that's how Wee Pin and Gabriel forgot to validate their tickets at the subway, so they got fined, just like some participants last year.

After Christoph arrived Friday afternoon, we set up the technical aspect of the event. (Christoph did a very good job with the software.) After many hours of work and testing (where we had plenty of help from the others, who were also there practicing for the next day), it seemed to be all right. We prepared two rooms to play, because there were still 26 sweepers registered at that time.

Come Friday evening we decided to go out together as many sweepers were already in town. Being the host I should have autocratically decided where to go, but I had some options in my mind. So arriving at the meeting point I planned to survey the others, but then Damien approached me with the idea of going to a tea house where some of us already had been before. So we headed to the nearby place, where we caused a bit of trouble for the lonely waitress as there were some other guests, too. So it was a semi-self order thing, with me being the one collecting the orders. Then, just like two years ago, after the first-ever tournament, we played a bit of pool. I learned that Bertie was kind of pro at this game (too), so I was very fortunate to be able to team up with him (I was the destructive force of the team). It was quite a sober evening – as far as I know. Whatever happened that evening after I left is obscure for me.

The Competition

The next day I learned that neither Elmar nor Stevan made it to the tournament, as well as Dániel, who participated at the first one. The good thing was that we only needed one room this way. When I arrived at the scene I found that some people were occupying the computer room! After some short debate they left of course. Everyone arrived on time so we were able to start according to schedule, but just then the uploading part of the program decided to cause some bitterness as only half of the players' scores were shown real-time on the homepage.

The competition was very tough. At the tournaments before there were no sub-50s scored, but not too much into the 3-hour session Manu had the first. Later on he had some more and Roman scored a personal best 42 of his own. A total of 23 players from 14 countries competed for the cups and other prizes – or to beat their best times, like some (including me) did. The competitive fire was obvious in the room: full silence except the clicking of the mouses (and four-letter words, occasionally). It sounded like 23 chirping crickets in a room.

There were very close finishes, some were separated by less than a half second only, after 3 hours and 5-5 intermediate and expert games (see the full results at <http://www.minesweeper.cc>).

The players were well prepared as everyone reached their best results regarding the tournaments. Manuel Heider (GER) came in first, with Roman Gammel (RUS) and Lukasz Malinowski (POL) taking the second and third places, respectively. The first two results were better than any during the past tournaments, and the first seven here would have been in the top three at any competition before.

I had ambivalent feelings after the session. I started with intermediate just to warm up but struggled with getting low 20s. However, my speed was quite good as shown by the 3bv/s stats. I had no luck and kept getting high-3bv boards. I spent more time than I planned reaching near my goal of 110 total after 5 intermediates. The expert part was better than expected, though, and I reached my best score at the tournaments just after 2 hours of sweeping. I took a little break and went back but luck evaded me in the remaining time. It was about 30 minutes before the end of the session when my monitor broke down. It still showed the picture but did so in some strong yellow shade which was quite disturbing, so I was unable to further improve my score. Fortunately it was the only failure the computers had that afternoon. So after 3 hours I had mixed feelings because I got a score I would

have had accepted before the tournament but also I had no luck with the intermediate and with my monitor. But as the organizer I felt all right.

After presenting the results everyone had a little time off to regenerate their hands before we went bowling, just as usual at the tournaments. Luck still wasn't part of the day as the lanes were a bit shaky, but I think we still had a good time. Me and my girlfriend said goodbye to the others, but just missed the last tram so we had to wait some for the bus. This way the others caught us at the bus stop, so we said goodbye twice that evening.

It was quite a long day and week with some obstacles but it was worth it because I was able to meet with so many sweepers. I like challenges and thus I enjoyed time spent with organizing the Minesweeper World Championship.

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