

Vienna Minesweeper Championship 2008 - a personal view

Note: This article is a personal view and NOT a report! Hence the title...

I went to Vienna on the Wednesday preceding the tournament. (for touristic purposes ;P) I stayed in the Wombat's City Hostel (The Base) It was really clean, but a little far from the Westbahnhof (west train station) - a 10- to 15-minute walk. There is, however, a newer branch that is closer to the station (called The Lounge) I'd recommend that one, especially if you're travelling alone. If you have company, I guess a few minutes' walk won't matter that much.

Later I went out to explore the city a little...I didn't plan on much sightseeing that day; I took the tram around the city centre (I had a weekly public transport ticket) and walked around...I didn't worry about getting lost 'cos I had a map and public transport was everywhere!

My second day in Vienna was kinda my sightseeing day; I walked all around the city of Vienna until I felt like my feet were about to drop off. It was so tiring that halfway through, I went to the university (where the championship was to be held) to see Christoph, rest my feet and use the internet :P

That night we met up with the other sweepers who had already arrived at the Centimeter. There was Christoph and his girlfriend Eva, Andreas, Tommy, Reid and his sister Sam, Johnny, Dave, Gergely and his girlfriend (I hope I haven't forgotten anyone)

After dinner some of us decided to go somewhere and get a drink and chat, since it was still pretty early. Christoph had to go to the university to finish some programming, so it fell to Tommy to take us somewhere. At first we were going to an Irish pub, but the first two we went to were too full (there were places but no table for seven) By that time we had already walked quite a bit, so even though Tommy said he knew another Irish pub, we decided not to take another long walk and go somewhere close by instead. So we ended up in a coffee house :P

Bratislava

Visiting Bratislava was such an adventure that I have to mention it here! ;) The four Americans - Reid, Sam, Johnny and Dave - together with Eduard and myself met at the Vienna south station (Sudbahnhof) on Friday morning to take the train to Bratislava. But unfortunately we missed a direct train by seconds and had to wait about an hour for the next one. So we took another train that went to another station where we could then take yet another train to Bratislava. (we bought a ticket for 14€ comprising the return train ticket and public transport in Bratislava)

After sightseeing (and conducting a few interviews for Johnny and Dave :P) we decided to go back to Vienna. Upon arriving at the station, we had about 5 minutes before the train left, so Sam and Eduard went to use the bathroom. The rest of us waited and waited...but they did not come back...so we missed the 3:50pm train. Then came the piece of information that made this such a great adventure: Sam and Eduard were already on the train! It seems that they expected us to be already there. We did contemplate going on first, but Reid insisted that we wait because "Sam wouldn't go on the train without us." :P

So we went into a nearby cafe while waiting for the next train, which was at 5pm. And those two who left us behind felt so guilty that they didn't go home, but waited for us to arrive at the Vienna train station :P

That night we met up again with the other sweepers, including those who had just arrived that day. (I think we were all there except Kamil)

The tournament

I did pretty well in the first session, completing my 18 games in a little less than 600 seconds. I came in 4th in points, behind Christoph, Reid and Gergely. (Tommy didn't do very well in the first session but he compensated that by winning every other session.)

However, the trouble immediately began. I started having a lot (and I mean really a LOT) of trouble finishing my expert games. On the next few sessions we played, I finished my intermediate boards faster and faster but was simply unable to finish my two (let alone one, in one of the sessions, I believe) Fortunately for me (and unfortunately for some others who played good sessions) there was a computer bug and most of these sessions were cancelled.

So it turned out that in the 2nd real session (where points were counted) I only managed to finish 17 games. After the points were counted, I tied with Arsen for 6th and 7th place.

At the end of the 3rd session I was 6th, and I knew that my only chance to catch up to the others was to complete the 18 games quickly. (since completion carried the most weight) In the 4th session I managed to do it in 569.48 seconds, only behind Jon who finished in 538.29 seconds. This put me in 5th place in points.

In the next session I finished slightly more quickly, in 527.51 seconds. But I was again behind someone - this time Tommy who managed it in 479.38 seconds. This 5th session was my last because Tommy had (yet again :P) reached a number of points that asked for the elimination of certain players. My final place was 5th and then there were the playoffs for the top three places.

Tommy came in first after leading almost throughout the whole tournament, Reid was second, and Christoph came in third.

After the tournament

It was my first time hanging out with the others after a tournament, even though it was the second tournament I've been to. In the previous Budapest tournament, I had to leave directly after the competition.

We went bowling (and for some, drinking beer ;)) I had never tried bowling before, and it was pretty fun, even though I hardly knew what I was doing, especially at first :P I didn't even know that the balls were of different weights until Robert told me! There were about ten of us on two lanes.

The next day I left Vienna after visiting the Schonbrunn Castle with Eduard in the morning.

Till next time, happy sweeping! ~ WP