



HICKORY
GOLF MASTERS

13th-14th May

Hickory Masters 2026

Circolo Golf Villa d'Este



Dear Players, Guests and Friends of Golf

It is a great honour and pleasure to welcome you to the Hickory Masters 2026 at the Circolo Golf Villa d'Este.

This year holds a very special meaning for us. In 2026 we celebrate the centenary of our club, founded in 1926 with the vision of creating a golf course that would respect and enhance the beauty of the surrounding landscape. For one hundred years, this course has welcomed generations of golfers who have shared the same passion for the game and the same respect for its traditions. Hosting the Hickory Masters during our centenary year therefore carries a deep symbolic value. Hickory golf invites us to rediscover the origins of our sport – the elegance, the spirit of sportsmanship and the timeless connection between the player, the course and the history of the game. Playing with original clubs and in period attire is not only a tribute to the past, but also a reminder

Antonio Munafò

President - Circolo Villa d'Este



that the essence of golf lies in tradition, respect and authenticity – values that have guided our club for a century.

We are delighted to welcome players from many countries to Villa d'Este and to share with you the beauty of this historic course, surrounded by forests, mountains and the unique atmosphere of Lake Montorfano. On behalf of the entire club and its members, I wish you an unforgettable experience and a wonderful tournament.

Welcome to Villa d'Este, and welcome to our centenary celebration.



Dear Hickory Players

I welcome you to our inaugural Hickory Masters in Como, Italy on the Golf Course of Villa D'Este. The course was established 100 years ago and remains one of the finest golf courses in Italy. We will be playing on a course layout which is reminiscent of the original course of 1926 with similar yardages, facing narrow tree-lined fairways and well-protected, bunkered greens. I am convinced you will enjoy the outstanding beauty of the area, whilst having the opportunity to share our passion for Hickory golf. The course with its rich traditions and history will allow us to walk in the footsteps of past champions.

You are invited to share this moment and establish the Hickory Masters as 'THE EVENT' to be played.

Looking forward to seeing you all there. Best wishes.

Claus Mühlfeit

Event Manager of the Hickory Masters 2026

The Hickory Masters 2026

The Hickory Masters is the first major golf championship for hickory golfers. It is the best event in the world for hickory golfers with the ambition to compete in the highest available field of original hickory club players. It will be played for the first time in May 2026, marking the birth of a legendary new tradition. Become part of it for a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The best hickory golfers of our time strive to lift the trophy, the «silver Rake Niblick». It is a matter of honour, tradition and love for the great old game.

Unlike other hickory tournaments, the Hickory Masters is played exclusively with original hickory golf clubs built before 1935. Not only will the tournament be played with original clubs, but the players will also be dressed in period clothing from the early 1930s.

The Hickory Masters features a diverse range of specially invited players and offers a professional prize fund of 30,000 euros. As it is an invitational event designed to provide a great experience for both players and spectators, the field is smaller than at the major championships in modern golf.

«Although it's about the sport, the game of golf, it's also about the attitude of the participants. The dress code is part of that – we dress up for the tournament», Sergey Sarkisants, a Hickory Golf Masters SA partner, says. By adhering to the dress code, hickory golfers show respect for the game and their fellow players. Something that was taken for granted in the sport 100 years ago – and is still justified today.





The Trophy

The Silver Rake Niblick

A handmade, one-of-a-kind item, created from a more than 100-year-old idea for a golf club that works both in sand and tall grass. The first hybrid club – decades ahead of its time.

A special Challenge full sterling silver club handmade by Italian silversmiths, which will bear the name of each year's winner, has been created as a 1:1 replica of the very rare and valuable Higgs Delivered by Stewart Rake Niblick made by Willie Aveston, originally a member of the PGA and professional to the Marquis of Northampton at Castle Ashby 1908-1917. This particular club had a provisional patent no. 1904 issued in 1895, but was never marketed as Mr. Higgs decided not to pursue the patent for this particular Niblick, which was designed to work in sand or tall grass. (A handful were produced, one of which is owned by the Hickory Golf Masters Company and can be seen in the museum in Lugano.) This makes the club a rare historical item and the Challenge a unique and extraordinary testimony to the Hickory Golf Masters Company's commitment to the history of golf.

The champion will receive the same 1:4 scale miniature golf club in gold plated silver. In the Amateur and Senior's Amateur categories, the best gross score & net will be awarded the same 1:4 scale miniature golf club in silver. The silver trophies are handmade by Guanziroli Giorgio & C., Argenteria Artistica Artigianale, Alzate Brianza (Como/Italy), five kilometres from Villa d'Este Golf. It is also a reference for the appreciation of traditional craftsmanship.



The Venue

Circolo Golf Villa d'Este

The first Hickory Masters will enjoy the scenery of a prestigious and historical golf course that has maintained a design and layout which are the perfect test for any hickory player.

We are privileged to be hosted by Circolo Golf Villa d'Este near Lake Como for its 100th anniversary, and to be able to share our passion with its members.

This is a rare opportunity to walk in the footsteps of great champions that have participated in past Italian Opens and International Amateur Championships.

The course was designed in 1926 by Peter Gannon, it covers a distance of 5,760 metres with a par of 69 strokes. 18 holes, dotted with carefully designed natural obstacles, challenge the skills, offering an unforgettable experience. Circolo Golf Villa d'Este is one of the most evocative natural and scenic settings in the world: over 30,000 trees – pines, chestnuts, birches – the Pre-Alps in the background and glimpses of Lake Montorfano.



Hickory Masters 2026

The Tournament

THE COMPETITION

The Hickory Masters unfolds over two consecutive days of 18-hole stroke play. The tournament features a limited field where sporting ambition, enjoyment and the joy of playing are all equally important. Players compete in three main categories: Professionals, Amateurs and Senior Amateurs. Each round is played with original hickory clubs and supported by caddies, just as it was in major tournaments 100 years ago. Final standings are determined by cumulative scores over the two days.

THE RULES

All participants must use authentic hickory-shafted clubs manufactured prior to 1935; modern replicas are not permitted. Period attire from the early 1930s is mandatory throughout the competition. The event is played from the original tees when available, with a maximum course length of 6,200 yards. Caddies are required for all players. The pace of play and etiquette will follow traditional standards of sportsmanship, in line with the spirit of historic golf.



The Programme

Tuesday 12 May

- 9:00 AM** At the Club House of Circolo Golf Villa d'Este
Registration and individual practice round to be booked in advance
- 7:00 PM** At the Hotel Castello di Casiglio, Erba
Welcome Dinner

Wednesday 13 May

- From 9:00 AM** At Circolo Golf Villa d'Este
1st Round of the tournament

Dinner & evening free

Thursday 14 May

- From 9:00 AM** At Circolo Golf Villa d'Este
2nd Round starting in ranking order (best out last)
- 5:30 PM** At the Club House of Circolo Golf Villa d'Este
Prize Giving and Gala Dinner will close the event
- 10:30 PM** At the Club House of Circolo Golf Villa d'Este
End of event. Official greetings and closing of the event

JOIN THE TRADITION

Share the pleasure, embrace emotions, enjoy the walk, play the game:
The Hickory Masters 2026!

Save your spot in the small field of this unique invitational event that offers a professional
purse of 30'000 Euros and is designed to provide a great experience for players and spectators.



Register now

Hickory Golf in the 21st Century



Hickory golf has enjoyed a worldwide revival since the 1990s. In recent years, major events have been organised using historic equipment. The late Lionel Freedman created the World Hickory Open in 2005, the world championship for hickory golfers. The tournament has grown considerably in a short space of time, from a few dozen players in 2005 to a field of 156 today. The tournament has attracted attention beyond the hickory community when Sandy Lyle was crowned World Hickory Champion in 2014 and 2016. (Lyle won The Open at Royal St George's in 1985 and the US Masters at Augusta National in 1988.) In 2015, Andrew Marshall, another former European Tour player, won this Hickory World Championship.

Hickory golf is big in the USA and growing fast in Asia; in Europe, the hickory golf strongholds are in Scandinavia, Switzerland, Germany, France and the Netherlands. National Hickory Golf Championships are held in these countries. Switzerland is becoming a Hickory Golf hotspot: Paolo Quirici (2013) and Roberto Francioni (2024, photo), two winners of the World Hickory Open, come from Switzerland. With the motto 'Turn Back Time' in mind, Miguel Ángel Jiménez, Lee Westwood, Danny Willett and Paolo Quirici showcased their impressive golfing abilities using historic clubs as part of the Hickory Golf Challenge at the 2016 European Masters in Crans-Montana.

Interest in the history of golf and fascination with the traditions of this sport are growing. In December 2025, the (maybe) largest hickory golf museum in Central Europe opened in Lugano. This permanent exhibition showcases the work of Scottish club maker Tom Stewart. The Lugano museum has a comprehensive collection of Stewart clubs.

Preserving the origins of Golf

Hickory Golf Masters SA is a Swiss company devoted to honoring golf's earliest traditions. From materials to etiquette, we uphold the authentic spirit of the game – without compromise.

FOUNDED BY TRUE BELIEVERS

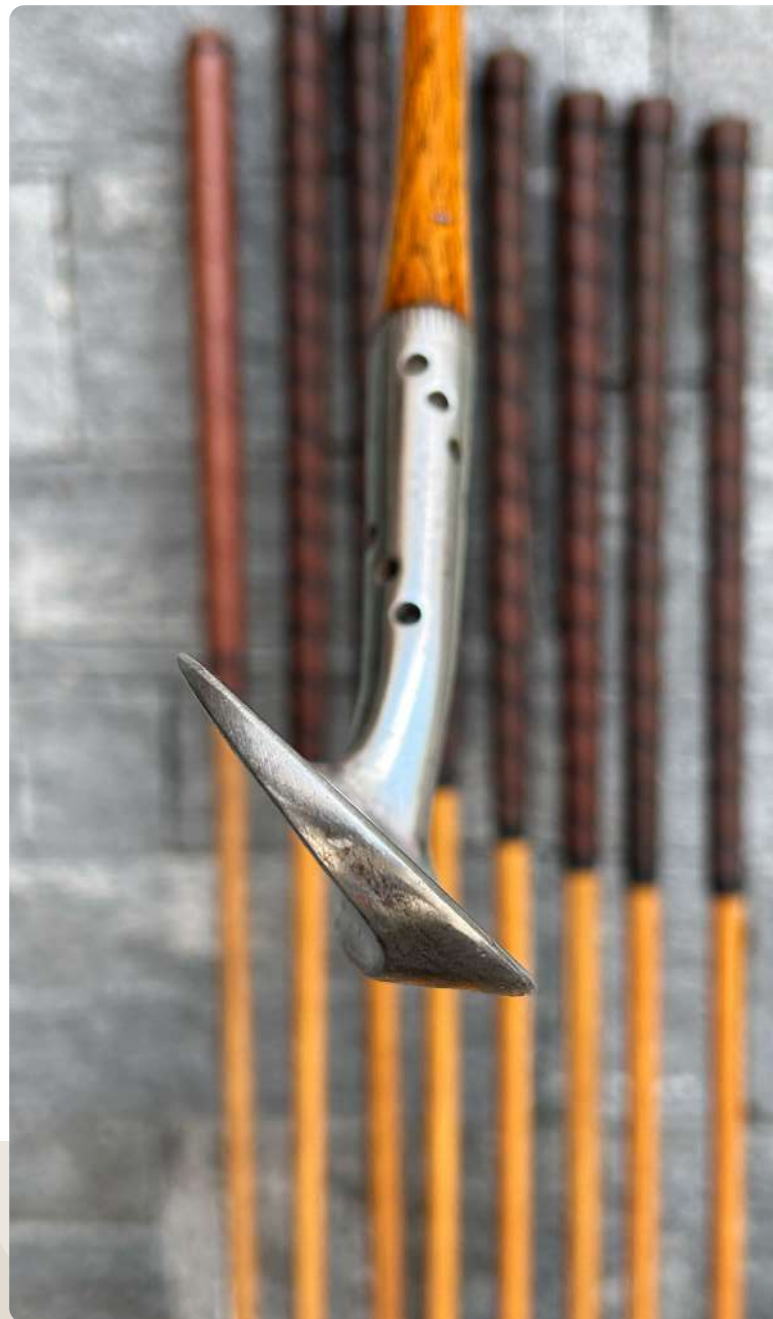
HGM was co-founded by Paolo Quirici, Switzerland's most accomplished professional golfer and 2013 World Open Hickory Champion. His deep passion for hickory golf defines our vision. Alongside him stands Sergey Sarkisants, fellow enthusiast and strategic mind behind the company's development. Together, they embody our dual pursuits: heritage and excellence.

WHERE GOLF'S SOUL ENDURES

Hickory Golf Masters is more than just a brand. It is a custodian of tradition: a gathering-place for those who play, not to follow fashion, but to honor the game's timeless spirit. Our community welcomes all golfers who enjoy playing the game with style.

MISSION

Hickory Golf Masters is dedicated to the daily custodianship of golf's authentic form. Through its four divisions, HGM upholds hickory golf's rules of play, etiquette, materials (including clubs from the Phil Gibbs Collection, gathered over 30 years of dedicated collecting), and cultural heritage, while building a global community that shares its devotion. We do not merely preserve history; we continue it.



The Players



AUSTRIA

Markus Brier

Date of birth: **5th of July, 1968** | Residence: **Vienna (Austria)**

Since joining the European Tour, Brier has continued to play in his home event, the Austrian Open, winning it on two occasions during a period when it was a Challenge Tour event. In 2006 the tournament was promoted back onto the main European Tour schedule, Brier once again took the title, in the process becoming the first Austrian golfer to win a European Tour event.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	32 (2007)
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	10
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner Black Desert NI Legends 2025 (Legends Tour) • T8 Irish Legends 2024 (Legends Tour) • T29 Senior Open Championship 2024 	

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd Swiss Hickory Open 2023 • Winner Team Challenge Swiss Hickory Open 2023 (with Walter Ferrarini) 	



CHINA

David Cai

Date of birth: **29th of September, 1997** | Residence: **Hong Kong**

David is a PGA of America Class-A teaching professional based in Hong Kong, where he dedicates his work to coaching and developing golfers across different levels of play. Alongside his teaching activity, he serves as the captain of The Hong Kong Hickory Golf Team (HGT), contributing to the promotion and preservation of traditional hickory golf within the local and international community.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	-
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	-
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):
<i>Data not available</i>

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:
<i>Has not played in a Hickory tournament</i>



ITALY

Emanuele Canonica

Date of birth: **7th of January, 1971** | Residence: **Pavia (Italy)**

Despite his relatively small stature, Canonica has topped the European Tour driving distance statistics for three consecutive years from 1998 to 2000. In April 2009, he caddied for José María Olazábal at the Masters Tournament.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	27 (2000)
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	1
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runner-up Reignwood Legends Championship 2025 (Legends Tour) • T3 The Vattanac Legends Championship 2025 (Legends Tour) • T4 European Senior Masters 2024 (Legends Tour)

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:
<i>Has not played in a Hickory tournament</i>



SCOTLAND & NETHERLANDS

Iain Forrester

Date of birth: **4th of March, 1966** | Residence: **Belgium**

Iain Forrester was born and bred in Scotland, the 5th generation of a golfing family. He was the Dutch Professional Champion in 1992 and the National Senior Champion in 2018. Iain plays regularly in hickory Championships, and he is the official archivist of PGA of Holland. He has recently contributed, (as co-author) to the book "The History of Golf in the Netherlands", which was published in 2014 and *Colf, Kolf and Golf* in 2016.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	-
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	-
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner Dutch Hickory Open 2024 • Runner-up English Hickory Open 2024 • Runner-up Dutch Hickory Open 2025 • 4th German Hickory Open 2025 • 4th English Hickory Open 2025

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Hickory Champion 2013 & 2018 • 4-times French Hickory Champion • 4-times German Hickory Champion • 4-times Dutch Hickory Champion



ENGLAND & NETHERLANDS

Brian Gee

Date of birth: **18th of March, 1958** | Residence: **Dieren (Netherlands)**

Gee worked as a coach and a teaching professional. He trained talents such as Robert-Jan Derksen. Since retiring, he has been collecting hickory golf clubs. He has turned a former bedroom in his house into a small Hickory Museum. Two antique children's golf clubs from his collection are now on display at the Nederlands Golf Museum. The inscriptions make it clear that these are original clubs: One iron bears the name 'Boys' and the other 'JUV', short for 'Juvenile'.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	-
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	-
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner International Dutch Hickory Open 2025

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German Hickory Open Champion 2019, 2021, 2022 • International Dutch Hickory Open Champion 2015, 2018, 2025 • French Hickory Open Champion 2021 • Austrian Hickory Open Champion 2016 • Winner Swiss Hickory Championship Days 2015



GERMANY

Thomas Gögele

Date of birth: **17th of November, 1970** | Residence: **Bernried am Starnberger See (Germany)**

He turned professional at the age of 15 and was the youngest professional in Germany at the time. He is married to Nicole Gögele; the couple run their own golf school in Bavaria, working as national coaches for the German Golf Association.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	46 (1998)
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	5
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner Italian Senior Open 2024 (Legends Tour) • Runner-up European Senior Masters 2025 (Legends Tour) • Runner-up Costa Navarino Legends Tour Trophy 2025 (Legends Tour) • T3 India Legends Championship 2024 (Legends Tour) • T5 English Legends 2025 (Legends Tour) • T8 Swiss Seniors Open 2025 (Legends Tour)

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:
<i>Has not played in a Hickory tournament</i>



ENGLAND

Andrew Marshall

Date of birth: **24th of August, 1973** | Residence: **Dereham (England)**

He first appeared on the Legends Tour in August 2023, just as he turned 50 and it was an impressive start to his time on the Tour with two top ten finishes in the four events he played. He finished 16th during his birthday week at the Staysure PGA Seniors Championship in his first event. He also took the honours at the 2021 Farmfoods British Par 3 Championship finishing ahead of Mark Moulard and Peter Fowler at Nailcote Hall.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	73 (2006)
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	5
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner of the Senior Italian Open 2025 (Legends Tour) • Runner-up India Legends Championship 2024 (Legends Tour) • T4 Vattanac Legends Championships 2025 (Legends Tour) • T5 MBC Mauritius Legends 2025 (Legends Tour) • T40 Senior PGA Championship 2025 (Champions Tour) • T58 US Senior Open (Champions Tour)

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Hickory Champion 2015 • World Hickory Revival Champion 2023 • US Professional Hickory Champion 2016 • Winner Masters of Hickory 2018



SWEDEN

Per Göran Nyman

Date of birth: **3rd of May, 1974** | Residence: **Växjö (Sweden)**

Born in Växjö, Nyman was an ice hockey goal minder from the age of four, he began playing golf as a 13-year-old. After retiring from the tours in 2006, he started playing a lot of hickory golf. He currently serves as the course manager at Växjö Golfklubb.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	274
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	4
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner Welsh Hickory Open 2025 • Winner Scottish Hickory Open 2025 & 2024 • Winner Swedish Hickory Open 2024 • Winner Växjö Hickory Open 2024 	

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Hickory Champion 2023, 2024, 2025 • Swedish Hickory Champion 2009, 2010, 2023, 2024 • Welsh Hickory Champion 2025 • Winner Växjö Hickory Open 2024 	



SCOTLAND

Gary Orr

Date of birth: **11th of May, 1967** | Residence: **Weybridge (England)**

Gary Hamish Orr was named Rookie of the Year 1993 (European Tour). He played in 475 European Tour tournaments. In the run-up to the 2018 Scottish Senior Open, Orr won a four-hole hickory show event against Paul Eales and Jarmo Sandelin. He then went on to claim his first Legends Tour title!

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	10 (2000)
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	5
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T5 WINSTONgolf Senior Open 2024 (Legends Tour) • T9 Paul Lawrie Matchplay 2024 (Legends Tour) • T12 Staysure Marbella Legends 2025 (Legends Tour) 	

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:	
<i>Has not played in a Hickory tournament</i>	



SWITZERLAND

Paolo Quirici

Date of birth: **9th of November, 1967** | Residence: **Magliaso (Switzerland)**

He finished fourth in his home event, the Ebel European Masters 1989, in his first year on the European Tour. Quirici was runner-up in the 1999 Sarazen World Open – his best result on the European Tour. In 2025, he won the German Hickory Open Championship, achieving a final record round of 63 (-9). Quirici runs his own golf school in Lugano. He is also the co-founder and CEO of Hickory Golf Masters SA.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	54 (1998)
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	-
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner China Hickory Open 2024 & 2025 • Winner German Hickory Open 2025 • Winner Swiss Hickory Open 2025 	

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Hickory Open Champion 2013 • US Professional Hickory Champion 2013 & 2014 • China Hickory Open Champion 2024 & 2025 • Swiss Hickory Open Champion 2021, 2022, 2023, 2025 • German Hickory Open Champion 2025 • Winner Swiss Hickory Golf Matchplay 2022 	



FRANCE

Jean-François Remésy

Date of birth: **5th of June, 1964** | Residence: **Martigny (Switzerland)**

In 2004 Remésy became the first Frenchman in 35 years to win the Open de France, and he retained his title in 2005 by beating fellow Frenchman Jean van de Velde in a play-off. He made the cut at the 2004 PGA Championship and finished tied for 17th place.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	19 (2004)
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	13
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T5 Swiss Seniors Open 2025 (Legends Tour) • T5 English Legends 2025 (Legends Tour) • 7th WINSTONgolf Senior Open 2024 (Legends Tour) 	

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:	
<i>Has not played in a Hickory tournament</i>	



AUSTRALIA

Perry Somers

Date of birth: **1st of March, 1959** | Residence: **Köln (Germany)**

Perry Somers was one of the leading players in international hickory golf for over 15 years. In 2012, Somers and Randy Jenson – the best American hickory golfer of the modern era – re-enacted a legendary 1870 match between Old Tom Morris and Willy Park Snr, played on successive days over the Old Course St Andrews Links, Prestwick Golf Club, North Berwick Golf Club and The Musselburgh Golf Club. Somers persevered to win 3&2 after being 7 down on the first day.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	-
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	-
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):
• Runner-up International Dutch Hickory Open 2025

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Hickory Champion 2010 • 2-times European Hickory Champion • 5-times Dutch International Hickory Champion • 4-times German Hickory Champion • 3-times English Hickory Champion • 2-times Australian Hickory Champion • 2-times Berlin Hickory Open Winner • Czech Hickory Champion • Danish Hickory Champion



GERMANY

Heinz Peter Thül

Date of birth: **23rd of July, 1963** | Residence: **Overath bei Köln (Germany)**

Thül has played in more than 350 national and international tournaments. He works as a teaching professional and used to coach Colin Montgomerie and Francesco Molinari. He is a member of the Hickory Society Cologne and works as a commentator for Sky Sports Germany.

BEST CAREER RANKING (DP WT):	132 (1992)
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NR. OF WINS OF ANY TOUR:	4
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BEST SEASON RESULTS (2024/2025):
• Runner-up World Hickory Open 2024

BEST HICKORY RESULTS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runner-up World Hickory Open 2022 & 2024 • Runner-up Swiss Hickory Open 2022 • Runner-up German Hickory Open 2021



*Discover the atmosphere, heritage and spirit of
the Hickory Masters 2026.
A celebration of timeless golf traditions at the
historic Villa d'Este.*