



HICKORY
GOLF MASTERS

Press Release No. 3

The line-up for the Hickory Masters is complete – players from 16 countries compete for the title Hickory Golf Masters SA

Lugano, 24-04-2026

A total of 37 golfers from 16 different countries have entered the Hickory Masters 2026 at Villa d'Este in Italy. On 13–14 May, they will make golfing history when they crown the first-ever Hickory Major champion on the 100-year-old Lake Como course. The winner will have his name engraved on the 'Silver Rake Niblick'. The 14 professionals competing will also be vying for a share of the €30,000 prize fund. Among those entered are eight former European Tour winners and three Hickory World Champions.

The Hickory Masters 2026 is the first major tournament for hickory golfers of the third millennium. It is a milestone in golfing history. The hand-picked participants will have the unique opportunity to be part of the creation of a new tradition. The tournament will take place on 13 and 14 May 2026 at Circolo Golf Villa d'Este on Lake Como in Italy. Specifically, it will be played on a course whose layout closely resembles the original 1926 course. Measuring 5,032 metres in total, the course has a par of 69. While this may seem short by today's standards, it presents a challenge well suited to a major tournament when played with original clubs from before 1935. Unlike other international Hickory tournaments, the Hickory Masters is played exclusively with original Hickory golf clubs manufactured before 1935.

The traditionalists are the Hickory World Champions of 2010, 2013 and 2015

Fourteen professionals, including three former Hickory World Champions, will be teeing off at this world premiere. They are all remaining coy about their sporting ambitions. Britain's **Andrew Marshall**, who won the Hickory World Championship in 2015 and currently plays on the Legends Tour, is playing it down: "I've played very little hickory golf over the last three years, but



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I hope I can keep up with Paolo Quirici.” Nevertheless, he is looking forward to playing on this historic course with clubs dating from before 1935. “It will be a great pleasure.”

Paolo Quirici, the 2013 Hickory World Champion and CEO of the organising body Hickory Masters SA, is something of a host figure as well as the creator of the Hickory Masters. He is certainly among the leading favourites in the race for the ‘Silver Rake Niblick’. This is all the more significant given that he has fond memories of the venue; in 1987, the Ticino native won the Italian Amateur Championships at Villa d’Este. However, he remains cautious: “Winning this tournament would be a great honour for any player, as we have the strongest field in Europe, and possibly the world, for this first Hickory Major tournament in history.”

Perry Somers, the German-Australian 2010 Hickory World Champion, is one of the most successful hickory golfers of the last two decades. In addition to his world title, he has won numerous national hickory championships and has been crowned European champion twice. Although the 67-year-old has not described his game as ‘competitive’ for some time, he still wants to take part in the Hickory Masters at Villa d’Este, as it is exactly the tournament he has been waiting for: “For me, as a staunch traditionalist, the appeal clearly lies in the fact that the Hickory Masters’ playing conditions have finally been set strictly and without compromise. This ensures that the event is conducted in a manner befitting the Hickory Golf era we are honouring.”

These words have been met with approval from the other hickory champions present. **Iain Forrester** (Scotland/Netherlands), who supplied Quirici with his first set of hickory clubs many years ago, is looking forward to “playing hickory golf on a historically significant golf course”. **Brian Gee** (England/Netherlands) believes that “the tournament honours the history of hickory golf, expecting precision and authenticity from participants in terms of their equipment and clothing”. **Per G. Nyman** of Sweden sees it as “an opportunity to compete against really good golfers in the true spirit of the game”. Above all, he wants to have fun and enjoy the game, but he admits “that it’s more enjoyable when you play well”. **Heinz Peter Thül** (Germany) echoes this sentiment. The former tour winner and coach to several Ryder Cup players has been an enthusiastic hickory golfer for six years. “Traditional golf is great fun, especially at such a historic venue on one of Italy’s most beautiful courses”. Much anticipation surrounds **David Cai**’s (China) first appearance in Europe. The captain of the Hong Kong Hickory Golf Team is a teaching professional.



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The challengers: European Tour winners aim to play under par

At the Hickory Masters 2026, experienced hickory golfers will be challenged by several former winners of the European Tour. Several of these players are currently competing on the Legends Tour. The big question, therefore, is how these seasoned professionals will cope with the historic golf clubs and how quickly they will adapt to this slower-paced style of golf. Can they compete with the Hickory world champions?

Markus Brier of Austria made his first attempt with hickory clubs two years ago and is looking forward to repeating this special experience. He says, "You have to play differently with these historic clubs than with modern equipment. That's what makes it interesting and exciting." Emanuele Canonica (Italy) is looking forward to his Hickory debut: "Trying out the clubs and materials from the past has always fascinated me. Now I have the opportunity to do so, and at a fantastic tournament on one of the most beautiful courses in my home country."

Gary Orr (Scotland) shares this view: "I'm taking part in the Hickory Masters because it's important to keep the traditions of golf alive." His sporting ambitions are modest: "My aim is to stay under par in one of the rounds and enjoy the competition." **Jean-François Remésy** (France) also appreciates that golf is being preserved in its traditional form. "I find it very exciting and appealing that the players dress as they did back then, and that we all compete with hickory clubs."

Thomas Gögele (Germany) gave careful consideration to signing up for his first hickory tournament. "Playing a tournament with such classic equipment now seems extremely appealing to me. It will test my skills in a completely different way." He also welcomes the opportunity to compete against experienced hickory golfers and his Legends Tour colleagues. "My game is generally very adaptable. I think I'll be able to adjust well to the old clubs," he says confidently.

Hickory Masters 2026

13th & 14th of May 2026

Circolo Golf Villa d'Este, Lake Como, Italy

Visitors are welcome. Free entry.

www.hgm.golf



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ABOUT HICKORY GOLF MASTERS SA

Hickory Golf Masters SA (HGM) 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. Through its four divisions (museum, tournaments, club, shop), HGM upholds hickory golf's rules of play, etiquette, materials, and cultural heritage, while building a global community that shares its devotion. We do not merely preserve history; we continue it.

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 Sarkisians, fellow enthusiast and strategic mind behind the company's development. Together, they embody our dual pursuits: heritage and excellence.

For further details and information, please visit the website of Hickory Golf Masters SA <https://hgm.golf/press> or contact:

Mirjam Fassold
Press Officer

Phone number: +41 79 430 70 85
Email address: media@hgm.golf

Hickory Golf Masters SA
Via Peri 11
CH-6900 Lugano

media@hgm.golf
www.hgm.golf