



Press Release No. 2

The Hickory Masters 2026 will see world champions and tour winners compete for the "Silver Rake Niblick"

Hickory Golf Masters SA

Lugano, 16-03-2026

From 13 to 14 May, up to 80 players in the Hickory Masters 2026 will take a step back in time at the Circolo Golf Villa d'Este, returning to the era of the 1920s. On the Lake Como course, which opened in 1926, they will compete for the "Silver Rake Niblick" prize using original, handmade clubs dating from before 1935. This inaugural Hickory golf major will also offer €30,000 in prize money to the ten professionals competing. Among the registrants are eight former European Tour winners and three Hickory World Champions.

One month after the US Masters in Augusta (Georgia, USA), the second major of 2026 will take place: the Hickory Masters, the first major hickory golf tournament of the third millennium. The inaugural event will be held on 13-14 May 2026 at the Circolo Golf Villa d'Este on Lake Como in Italy. Thereafter, the tournament will be held biennially at historic and traditional golf courses. The Circolo Golf Villa d'Este is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2026, and has previously hosted events such as the Italian Open and the International Italian Amateur Championships.

Following in the footsteps of champions in style

"The course was established 100 years ago and remains one of the finest in Italy. We will play on a layout that is reminiscent of the original 1926 course. We will face narrow, tree-lined fairways and well-protected, bunkered greens, and the yardages will be similar. This historic course, with its rich traditions, will allow us to walk in the footsteps



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of past champions. Eighty hickory golfers – professionals, amateurs and senior amateurs – have the privilege of being part of this premiere and establishing the Hickory Masters as 'the event' to play in," says Claus Mühlfeit, the Hickory Masters 2026 event manager.

Unlike other hickory tournaments, the Hickory Masters is played exclusively with original hickory golf clubs that were built before 1935. The players will also be dressed in period clothing from the early 1930s. By adhering to the dress code, hickory golfers show respect for the game and their fellow players. This is something that was taken for granted in the sport 100 years ago, and it is still relevant today.

Two days of competition for a unique trophy

The tournament consists of two rounds of 18-hole stroke play on consecutive days. The 80 participants compete in three categories: professionals, amateurs and senior amateurs. Victory and honour are at stake, and the professionals also have the chance to win a share of the €30,000 prize money. A major tournament also offers a unique and valuable trophy for the overall ranking: the "Silver Rake Niblick"! This is a 1:1 replica of the first hybrid club, which was decades ahead of its time when it was introduced in 1895.

This sterling silver trophy, which was handcrafted by Italian silversmiths, will bear the name of each year's winner. The original was made in 1895 by Willie Aveston, but it was never marketed as the inventor decided against patenting this special niblick, designed for use in sand or tall grass. Only a few were made, and Hickory Golf Masters SA owns one, which can be seen in the Hickory Golf Masters Museum in Lugano, Switzerland.

Three Hickory World Champions and eight tour winners in the field

Hickory golfers with a handicap of 18 or better who wish to compete against the world's best original hickory club players can register for the tournament. The organisers will maintain an entry list and, if more than 80 players register, places will be allocated according to playing strength.

Several successful tour professionals and some of the best hickory golfers of our time will be invited to compete by the organiser. In mid-May 2026, three hickory world champions will compete on Lake Como, marking the birth of a new legendary tradition:

Perry Somers (Australia), World Hickory Champion 2010 (also two-time European Hickory Champion and winner of eighteen national and international Hickory Championships)



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Paolo Quirici (Switzerland), World Hickory Open Champion 2013 (also US Professional Hickory Champion in 2013 and 2014, and China Hickory Open Champion in 2024 and 2025)

Andrew Marshall (England), World Hickory Champion 2015 (also World Hickory Revival Champion 2023, US Professional Hickory Champion 2016, winner of the 2018 Masters of Hickory; five-time tour winner).

A total of eight professionals who have won on international tours have registered for the Hickory Masters 2026. In addition to Marshall, these include **Markus Brier** (Austria), **Heinz Peter Thül** (Germany) and **Per Göran Nyman** (Sweden), all of whom have some hickory experience. There will also be 'debutants' competing in an official hickory tournament for the first time: **Gary Orr** (Scotland), **Thomas Gögele** (Germany), **Jean-François Remésy** (France) and **Emanuele Canonica** (Italy).

Hickory Masters 2026

13th & 14th of May 2026

Circolo Golf Villa d'Este, Lake Como, Italy

Entries close on Sunday, 12th of April 2026

www.hgm.golf

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.



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