



Press Release No. 4

The first Hickory Golf Major kicks off at Villa d'Este in a week's time

Hickory Golf Masters SA

Lugano, 06-05-2026

There is a palpable sense of excitement in the air over Lake Como. In a week's time, golfing history will be made at the Circolo Golf Villa d'Este, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Then, 37 gentlemen from 16 countries will tee off in the first major tournament of its kind. Welcome to the Hickory Masters 2026!

Becoming the first-ever Hickory Major champion and making golfing history – this is a chance that even world-class golfers get just once in a lifetime. Next week, at the Hickory Masters 2026 in Villa d'Este, Italy, 14 professionals and 23 experienced amateur golfers will take to the tee on 13–14 May to demonstrate the elegance and style of the game as it was played 100 years ago.

The showdown: Hickory World Champions versus Tour Professionals

This unique tournament has a small but select field of participants, all of whom live up to the title 'Masters' in every respect. Starting with the participants. The entry list features three former Hickory World Champions: **Perry Somers** (2010, Australia), **Paolo Quirici** (2013, Switzerland), and **Andrew Marshall** (2015, England). They are adept at using historic equipment and are self-confessed enthusiasts of this traditional form of the gentleman's sport.

At the Hickory Masters 2026, they will be challenged by a number of active tour professionals who regularly compete on the Legends Tour for victory, honour and prize money. Tournament play is their job, and they are accustomed to the pressure that major tournaments place on players – yet very few of them are familiar with historic equipment. Andrew Marshall is an exception: the 2015 Hickory World Champion finished 14th in Barbados at the end of April using modern equipment. The 52-year-old is therefore the clear favourite at Villa d'Este.

However, he could face stiff competition from the other Legends Tour professionals, notably **Thomas Gögele**. The German is in enviable early-season form, finishing under par in all three rounds in Barbados to come 8th. A week earlier, he impressed by finishing 22nd at the Senior



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PGA Championship (PGA Tour Champions) in the USA. Although he is a Hickory rookie, Gögele is confident about Villa d'Este: "I think I'll be able to adapt well to the old clubs." **Emanuele Canonica** (Italy) and **Markus Brier** (Austria) have also made a successful start to the season on the Legends Tour and registered for the Hickory Masters 2026.

'Silver Rake Niblick' for the winner of the Open category

Thirty-seven players from 16 countries, including Australia, Austria, China, Germany, England, Finland, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA, will compete for this prestigious prize. The winner will have their name immortalised on this newly created, historically significant challenge cup. There is also a total of €30,000 in prize money at stake for the 14 professionals in the field, who are judged exclusively in the Open category, with €10,000 going to the winner alone.

Amateurs will also be ranked in the 'Amateurs' and 'Senior Amateurs' (over 50s) categories, with one gross and three net prizes will be awarded in each.

How Hickory Golf Works – Course Layout from 1926

It's good to know that: Amateurs are awarded four strokes in addition to their official handicap (World Handicap Index) for the net score. This reflects the significantly higher level of difficulty involved in playing with hickory golf clubs. At the Hickory Masters 2026, only clubs that were originally manufactured before 1935 will be used.

The organisers of the Hickory Masters 2026 are making a further concession to this increased difficulty: "We have selected the tees for this tournament so that the fairways are as close as possible to the original course layout from 1926," explains Event Manager Claus Mühlfeit. Playing a par 69 over a total length of 5,032 metres with historic equipment is more than worthy of a Masters and indeed a Major tournament.

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 honouring 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 Sarkisants, a 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:

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