Post Event report

International Grand Masters Hockey Festival

Rome 2026

WORLD GRAND MASTERS ASSOCIATION

At the conclusion of our event in Rome 2026, we cannot let this go by without extending the most grateful handshake of co-operation with our dear hosts H. C. Tevere! Roberto and his team provided us, as co-organisers, the most fantastic hospitality, and nothing was 'too much' trouble. I observed that this hospitality was equally extended to our various participants, who never had a bad word to utter. Thank you, Roberto!

The 'Rome' tour was attended by a total 9 Men's and Women's teams and were serviced by an excellent Umpire Manager in the form of Michael Mulders (NL) whose performance throughout was nothing other than 'top class'. Michael managed 'the 3rd team' of 7 umpires with absolute (apparent) ease, and we were lucky to have TO officialdom for 2 of the days from our dear friend Franco. We were very pleased to welcome to the fold 2 new umpires to WGMA events.

Jawed managed to speak with his 'friend' and we were blessed with dry and mostly hot weather throughout the festival, which made it all the better to enjoy.

On the pitch, teams were energetic, skillful, respectful, and both on and off the pitch clearly displayed a 'fraternity' that perhaps only WGMA events can boast. It was clear the skillsets of the teams were comparable, as the scorelines proved that no-one was going to 'walk away with it'! This was also reflected in the 'management' of the games by umpires, who achieved calm and well-appraised matches by only having the occasional green card awarded for naughty behaviour. One yellow card was awarded for 'dangerous play', but no further action deemed necessary.

Mid-week approximately 70 of us enjoyed a 'social dinner' at Hummustown restaurant near the centre of Rome, and the umpires were delighted to welcome Antonio Tolomei to the table. Antonio had to drop out of our list of umpires for this event due to quite serious health issues, but he made enormous effort to come and join us for the evening and give us an update. We all very much look forward to him re-joining us on the astros next year.

We were honoured to provide 2 matches for the O'80s players of England and 'The Rest of Europe'. The matches started by mutual agreement with a 3-stick bully (which some of them remembered) and continued to (perhaps) foregone conclusive wins for England in both games. After the second match, prize-giving and acknowledgments were made to the most 'senior' player as representative of this "Enduring Spirit of Hockey – We don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing", and other notable achievements. But our

roots go back even further. During this prize-giving, our beloved Secretary was wearing the shirt worn by his father, A.Q Khan who played for Pakistan in the 1948 Olympics!

Of surprise, and obvious delight to some, 'Scottish Thistles' managed to achieve 'finals' places in both the Women's and Men's events. A 'first' for them, and hearty congratulations!
The finals Victors were the hosts 'Gens Italica' (Men), who made a convincing final scoreline that avoided going to penalty strokes. For the ladies it was Scottish Thistles that took gold, in another convincing scoreline. The finals umpires sighed with relief!

At the closing ceremony and medals award, several team leaders expressed their gratitude for a well organised and enjoyable event. End of event verbal feedbacks included accolades to umpires, who they considered were 'better than the World Cup'!

Finishing an event is this way cannot be viewed otherwise than 'Successful', and WGMA very much look forward to welcoming all its members and extended family to its next event in Terrassa, Spain in November 2027, to celebrate 25 years of WGMA providing hockey opportunities to Grand Masters.

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