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PRESS RELEASE

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5th EDITION — A SMALL CLUB WORLD CUP

22 - 23 - 24 May 2026

Centro Eracle FC – Casnate con Bernate (Como)



May 11, 2026, Milan, Press Room, Palazzo Lombardia

Lake Como is preparing to host an unprecedented event in the landscape of international youth football. On May 11, 2026, at Palazzo Lombardia (Regione Lombardia, Milan), the fifth edition of the **Memorial Franco Chignoli | DiCoMo** was officially presented — an international U11 charity tournament that each year brings together elite sport, solidarity, and the promotion of the Como Lake area.

The press conference featured the following speakers: **Federica Picchi** (Undersecretary to the Presidency with responsibility for Sport and Youth), **Alessandro Fermi** (Regional Councillor for Universities, Research and Innovation, Regione Lombardia), **Gianluca Zambrotta**, **Massimo Ambrosini**, **Giuseppe Bergomi**, **Filippo Galli**, **Mariachiara Rossi**, and **Olivier Chignoli**.

From **May 22 to 24, 2026**, at the **Centro Eracle FC in Casnate con Bernate (Como)**, twenty youth clubs from eight countries will compete in a format unprecedented in the



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tournament's history, under the supervision of World Champion Gianluca Zambrotta, patron and guardian of the event's values.

Olivier Chignoli, founder of the Memorial, recalls the starting point back in 2021: *"I was fortunate enough to see my father devote himself to giving real opportunities to children living on the outskirts of Paris, often from difficult backgrounds — he covered the costs and fees for enrolling in football schools, giving these boys — some of whom had come from very far away, like Haiti — a second chance. It felt natural to follow in his footsteps and make football a driver of social inclusion."*

A historic leap forward: Boca Juniors and River Plate are coming

The fifth edition marks a historic turning point in the Memorial's journey toward internationalization. While in 2025 there were 4 foreign teams, this year they rise to 12 out of 20 total, with clubs from 8 countries. For the first time in the tournament's history, two legends of world football make their entrance from Argentina:

Club Atlético Boca Juniors • Club Atlético River Plate

Completing an exceptional lineup: Liverpool FC, Manchester United FC, Leeds United FC, Celtic FC, RCD Espanyol de Barcelona, FC Porto, Paris Saint-Germain FC, Olympique de Marseille, Olympique Lyonnais, and FC Midtjylland. Representing Italy: AC Milan, FC Internazionale Milano, Juventus FC, AS Roma, Torino FC, Atalanta BC, Como 1907, and Empoli FC.

Lake Como thus becomes the stage for a true **"Mini Club World Cup"**: for approximately 90% of the children taking part, it will be their first sporting experience in an international setting. Olympique de Marseille, the reigning champions, return to defend their title.

The tournament: competition, growth, values

The Memorial is played in a 7-a-side format, with two qualifying groups and two final groups over the course of three days. The tournament's philosophy is one of maximum engagement: no closed groups, but 20-minute matches designed to give all 20 clubs ample opportunities to test themselves, beyond the sporting result. As Olivier Chignoli puts it: *"The sporting result is not the goal, but the consequence of a journey"* — the guiding thread that runs through every edition of the Memorial. Different footballing schools — some



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focused on physical structure, some on ball retention, some on collective organisation, some on creative flair — come together and enrich one another.

Among the new features for 2026 is a renewed individual awards system: in addition to the prizes for best player, top scorer, and best goalkeeper, the special **"Gianluca Zambrotta" award** for the best defender makes its debut. Zambrotta himself explains: *"The aim of this award is not only to recognise the sporting role, but above all the human one: to instil in these boys, from this age, the values that sport teaches — humility, sacrifice, selflessness, and the desire to always give your best."*

Great emphasis is also placed on fair play: the award is assigned according to six criteria — team spirit, reaction to the result, inclusion, respect for shared spaces, behaviour of adults, and positive language. Filippo Galli comments: *"Football is more about collaboration than competition. Coming together and sharing experiences is always a moment of growth."*

A completely new addition is the **"green card"**, with which referees reward acts of sportsmanship on the pitch, alongside a captains' vote: the children themselves identify the most fair-playing team.

The winning team is awarded the **Franco Chignoli Trophy**, to be returned at the following edition. The trophy is permanently awarded to the team that wins it three times, not necessarily consecutively. All 20 teams receive a cup inspired by the European Cup.

The heart of the Memorial: the Sette Sorelle (Seven Sisters) and the charitable mission

Across its first four editions, the Memorial has raised over €60,000 directed toward concrete projects for children and young people in need. The 2026 edition supports the **"Sette Sorelle"**:

- **Fondazione Maria Letizia Verga ETS** – sport therapy in paediatric oncology
- **Fondazione Italiana Diabete ETS** – research and prevention
- **Azzurrini Academy & Real Eyes Sport** – sports inclusion for minors with autism and visual impairment
- **Fondazione Francesca Rava – NPH Italia ETS** – the "Palla al Centro" project for the reintegration of young offenders
- **Cooperativa Agorà97** – care and assistance for individuals with severe disabilities



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- **Amor Infinito by Diego** – educational and sporting opportunities for vulnerable minors

Alongside each organisation, exceptional ambassadors lend their voices in support: Massimo Ambrosini, Giuseppe Bergomi, Daniele Cassioli, Serginho, and other champions championing these causes.

On the afternoon of Friday 22 May, the spotlight turns to inclusion with a mini three-way tournament featuring the **Azzurrini Academy** and **Fuori Classe** teams: an event within the event, a symbol of the values that animate the Memorial.

Memorabid charity auction: open from 11 May

Starting from 11 May 2026, the **Silent Auction Memorial Franco Chignoli** is now open – an online charity auction of certified sports memorabilia, created in partnership with **Memorabid**, an Italian platform specialising in collectibles and memorabilia. All proceeds will support the Seven Sisters. Take part at www.memorabid.com/memorial2026

Institutions and territory: a shared recognition

The Memorial enjoys the patronage of Regione Lombardia and the Municipalities of Como, Casnate con Bernate, and Cernobbio. The event benefits from regional funding, a sign of institutional recognition of the quality and credibility of the project.

"The Memorial Franco Chignoli brings together and showcases the best of world youth football, but it also carries a message: it is a reminder that every coach, every club official, every player on the pitch can be a champion of solidarity, legality, and community. Sport becomes a vehicle for collective responsibility: the courage to educate through play, to choose the harder path – the path of values. At a time of profound transformation in football, for us the youth sector is a bet worth making, not only because this sport is one of the most beloved, but because it can be a lever for the growth of new generations, a place of encounter rather than conflict. Our thanks also go to all the champions who commit to being positive role models, on and off the pitch", says **Federica Picchi**, Regional Undersecretary for Sport and Youth.

"This is a tournament I have known for several years, and I wanted to send a clear signal of support – including financial support – from Regione Lombardia to an event that



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succeeds in combining the values of sport, fair play, internationality, and territorial appeal, thanks to the invaluable presence of extraordinary ambassadors: Gianluca Zambrotta, Massimo Ambrosini, Giuseppe Bergomi, and Filippo Galli", states Alessandro Fermi, Regional Councillor for Universities, Research and Innovation of Regione Lombardia.

A heartfelt thank-you goes to Undersecretary Federica Picchi and Councillor Alessandro Fermi for their closeness to the Memorial and to the local area.

A PCTO partnership agreement activated with the **Liceo Scientifico Linguistico Paolo Giovio** in Como brings students to participate as active members of the tournament staff, with one dedicated liaison for each team — fluent in that club's language — for all three days: an educational and human project of great value.

Notes for journalists

- Tickets and fundraising: www.memorialchignoli.com
- Charity auction: www.memorabid.com/memorial2026
- Social: IG/Facebook @memorialchignoli | YouTube @MemorialFrancoChignoli

About the Memorial Franco Chignoli

The Memorial Franco Chignoli is an international U11 youth charity tournament, founded in 2022 by Olivier Chignoli in memory of his father Franco. Promoted by the **Associazione Franco Chignoli Andiamo a Vincere APS**, it brings together elite sport, solidarity, and the promotion of the Como area.

"Vive le Football, Vive le Memorial Franco Chignoli! Andiamo a Vincere!"