

Belgium Masters Women's Hockey Tournament 2025

This new hockey tournament, held at the Royal Hockey Club Namurois, was the result of collaboration between Belgium Old Panthers and LX Ladies with the support of WGMA, after discovering that the annual ISVT tournament in Tilburg was over-subscribed. As Thistles women also missed out on registration and Wales Masters was keen to be involved, it was decided to hold a women's tournament in Belgium at Namur.

The tournament took place over the weekend 25-27 April and ten teams (over 150 players) participated from Belgium, Scotland, Wales and England: Belgium Panthers (55+, 60+, 65+), Thistles (60+, 65+), Wales (65+) and LX Ladies (4 teams with mixed ages 60-80). The ten teams were split into 2 pools of five, so each team had 4 matches of 2 x 20 minutes over Friday and Saturday. Points were awarded as follows: 2 for a win with a bonus point for a 2-goal difference, and 1 point for a draw. On Sunday morning each team played a cross-over match to determine the final order of team, and the presentation of colourful cups was held at 12:30 on Sunday.

On Friday evening there was a brilliantly organised tour of Old Namur, followed by a Gala dinner held at Brasserie Francoise, a 19th century building in Place Saint-Aubain near the Cathedral. An excellent 3 course meal was enjoyed by all, accompanied by excellent wine in this historical, atmospheric gem. On Saturday evening there was surprise entertainment held at the hockey club before a buffet meal. This included traditional Walloon dancing, an important part of Namur's folkloric heritage, followed by stilt jousting, an early 15th century Namur tradition which involves two teams attempting to knock each other off their stilts. There was opportunity to participate in both activities!

Congratulations go to Scottish Thistles 2 on their final victory, followed closely by three England LX teams and the Wales team, with Belgium Panthers taking 6th place. The tournament will be remembered, not just as a first, but also for the Masters spirit that prevailed over the weekend with friendships, fun and unforgettable moments shared. A huge thank you is due to Namur Hockey Club for hosting the event and making everyone feel so welcome. Also, heartfelt thanks go to Dominique Havelange and Ruth Harland from BOP for all their input and enthusiasm in working with representatives of the other participating clubs to make the tournament such a success.

