



MASTERS

AFL MASTERS AUSTRALIAN TEAM 2019 EUROPEAN TOUR

(5TH to 22ND JULY 2019)

ENGLAND - IRELAND - FRANCE

INFORMATION PACK & CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI)

(Version dated 14 January 2019)



OFFICIAL TOUR WEBSITE: <https://www.aflmasterstours.com/>

1. Introduction

With the prior success of the 2016 England/Ireland Tour and our most recent 2017 China/India Tour I can now confirm preliminary details for the 2019 European Tour by AFL Masters Australian representative team scheduled for Friday 5th July to Sunday 21 July 2019.

Working in close consultation with AFL Europe, AFL England and Gaelic Masters Association (GMA) it is proposed that we will play 3 official international tests (on consecutive weekends) plus 2 mid-week social games. The tests will be played against Ireland (most likely in Galway), England (in London) and France (in Paris) with mid-week social games likely to be played in Cork (Ireland) and Oxford (v Oxford University). The Test v Ireland will be an International Rules Test, played with the round ball against the Gaelic Masters Association (GMA) Ireland representative team. All other tour games will be AFL.

Whilst many of the detailed arrangements for the tour are yet to be confirmed, we are sufficiently advanced to publicise the tour and to seek interest from the AFL Masters community.



2. Timing & Itinerary:

The tour will commence in Paris on Friday 5 July 2019 and conclude in Galway on the morning of Sunday 21 July 2019. The tour schedule is based on playing five games (3 tests and 2 social games) at regular but appropriate intervals. We have also sought to provide an appropriate mix of organised activities and free time, with our main aim always to have the team well prepared for the test matches. The times listed in the following itinerary are indicative but are likely to be adjusted as we fine tune arrangements. We will also periodically update the itinerary with venue information (i.e. hotels, games, etc) once these are known.

Preliminary Itinerary

Date		Itinerary	Accom'n City
Fri	5-Jul-19	Assemble in Paris Welcome Meet & Greet Drinks/Meal (evening)	Paris
Sat	6-Jul-19	Light training session (morning) Free day Pre-Test meeting & meal	Paris
Sun	7-Jul-19	AFL TEST: Australia v France (afternoon) Post match social function	Paris
Mon	8-Jul-19	Free day	Paris
Tue	9-Jul-19	Eurostar Train from Paris to London (Morning) Light recovery/skills session (afternoon)	London
Wed	10-Jul-19	Social AFL Game: Australia v Oxford (11-a-side) (approx. 6pm) Post match social function	London
Thu	11-Jul-19	Free day	London
Fri	12-Jul-19	Free day Pre-Test meeting & meal	London
Sat	13-Jul-19	AFL TEST: Australia v England All-Stars Post match social function	London
Sun	14-Jul-19	Fly London to Shannon Airport (Galway) (afternoon)	Galway
Mon	15-Jul-19	Free day	Galway
Tue	16-Jul-19	Social Int'nal Rules Game: Australia v Galway (9-a-side) (evening) Post session social function	Galway
Wed	17-Jul-19	Morning recovery session Free day (e.g. Tour to Cliffs of Moher)	Galway
Thu	18-Jul-19	Coach to Cavan (Morning) Light round-ball skills session & pool recovery (afternoon)	Cavan
Fri	19-Jul-19	Free day Light round-ball skills session (afternoon) Pre-Test meeting & meal	Cavan
Sat	20-Jul-19	Int'n Rules Test: Australia v All-Ireland (afternoon) Post match social function with Irish team.	Cavan
Sun	21-Jul-19	Coach to Dublin (approx. 11am) Team breakup dinner	Dublin
Mon	22-Jul-19	10.00 am Hotel check-out Tour End	



3. Touring Party Size & Selection Process:

The AFL Masters Board is a very big supporter of this concept on the basis that the provision of international opportunities for AFL Masters players is a great incentive to attract new players to the AFL Masters community. Accordingly, it is self-evident that players wanting to be considered for an AFL Masters representative team must be existing AFL Masters players based and playing regularly in Australia. Players who have no prior or ongoing connection to AFL Masters would not meet the eligibility requirements on the basis that the purpose of the tour is to reward and recognise well-performed AFL Masters players. Priority will be given to players who have attended National Carnivals and previously been selected in All-Australian teams.

We will select a **maximum of 24 players**. Players must be turning 40 or more in 2019 in order to play in the International Rules Test v Ireland as GMA Masters applies a strict 40+ age requirement.

Expression of Interest (EOI):

Those of you who have a serious and genuine interest in being part of the 2019 AFL Masters European Tour are encouraged to complete and submit an **Expression of Interest (EOI)** form which can found on the official 2019 European Tour website at:

<https://www.aflmasterstours.com/player-application-form>.

Partners & Supporters:

In the past we have always welcomed partners, families and supporters to be part of the tour party. We plan to create opportunities for involvement of partners and supporters such as social committees, venue scouts, team photographers and nightly tour updates. It is likely that partners/supporters will be limited to 12 – 15 (based on lessons from past tours where the tour party was slightly more than what could be accommodated by coach/bus transfers, which created logistics issues).



4. Preparations:

For anyone contemplating this tour as a player we need to stress that this is not an end of season piss-up! and a 'no dickheads' policy is strictly applied. Whilst there will be plenty of social events (and alcohol), fun and free time, this is primarily about pulling on the Australian jersey and playing 3 Tests for your country. Everyone will be expected to commit to prepare well including fitness, training in state groups etc. You don't have to have played at the highest level or be the best or most talented player but there is an expectation (and team ethos) that you will be the best you can be. For most, the opportunity to pull on the Australian jersey and play for your country at this stage in your life is sufficient motivation to prepare well. If that sounds like the sort of experience you are looking for then we'd love to hear from you, but if you are not prepared to commit to this regime then this tour may not be for you.

5. Indicative Costing:

In terms of funding, the same principles of self-funding will apply as were adopted for the 2016 Tour of Ireland/England and 2017 Tour of China/India. Specifically, tour participants will be expected to book and fund their own travel arrangements. In terms of international travel (i.e. between Paris, London and Cork) whilst on tour, participants will be advised of which flights and Eurostar trains are preferred (i.e. so that we travel in groups where possible). For hotel accommodation, we will nominate a team hotel and make a group booking based on feedback from participants as to what room type etc they want. Each person will be responsible for settling their account for hotel accommodation (i.e. we will make group booking but don't want to be responsible for collecting money... that's your responsibility).

As per previous tours, each participant will be required to contribute to a team fund or pool which is used to source and pay for whole-of-team expenditures such as coach/bus transport, training venues, game-day physios, trophies, presentation dinners and the like. The team fund will be reconciled at the conclusion of the tour and any unspent monies returned to participants (or

donated to local charity if group prefers). In 2016, this fund was \$500 per person so you should work on that basis, with any underspend refunded.

The more we lock down the itinerary, the better able we are to provide more accurate costing information but for budgeting purposes. The main cost items will include:

- Return airfares to Europe (est \$2200 - \$2600)
- Flight between Ireland & England (est \$175)
- Eurostar train between London & Paris (est \$150)
- Hotel accommodation (est \$150 - \$200 p.n twin share)
- Team apparel (est \$500)
- Team fund (est \$500)

The intent is to be as transparent as possible with tour costing and this reflects that the not-for-profit approach and the underlying desire to provide the best value for the least outlay by participants.

Financial Governance:

In keeping with the guidelines approved by the AFL Masters Board, the tour is organised on a strictly not-for-profit basis, with all participants self-funding their involvement. All financial expenditures incurred will be recorded, disclosed and reconciled in a transparent manner to ensure the highest standards of financial integrity.

6. Tour Apparel:

As you will be representing Australia and AFL Masters, the wearing of the team uniform will be mandatory for specific events and functions and we will provide further details on this prior to departure. It is likely that we will be seeking a basic kit to the value of \$500 with options for players/supporters to purchase as many additional items as they desire. The items that we will be seeking as part of any kit will soon be published on the official website.

Once we have kit designs and costings we will pass them through along with order forms so you can select your gear. We would like to get the gear order and manufacture process underway early. We stress that orders forms for apparel will need to be accompanied by full payment before we will allow garments to be manufactured.



7. Announcement of Australian Coach:

We will soon announce the Australian coach and once this appointment has been made, we will progressively release information from the Coach about recommended training and fitness regimes and other information about the finer points of the International Rules hybrid game.

8. Tour Organising Committee

A Tour Organising Committee of approx. 5 members will be assembled to progress arrangements for the tour. The Committee will be comprised of former past and present tour members who will form the leadership group for this tour. Their contact details will be circulated shortly along with details of our new Facebook page.

9. Background & AFL Masters International Strategy:

In mid-2016 the national Board of AFL Masters discussed a proposal for the establishment of links with the governing bodies of AFL England, AFL Europe and the Gaelic Masters Association (GMA) to explore and facilitate opportunities for regular international games between representative teams. This led to the creation of an honorary position titled 'AFL Masters Ambassador International' to represent AFL Masters Board to establish an ongoing dialogue with AFL governing bodies in other countries with a view to exploring opportunities for future international games could be held. The AFL Masters National Board and Executive are responsible for strategy and policy decisions with respect to international development opportunities and tours.

2016 Tour to England & Ireland:

In October 2016, a tour comprising 35 players, partners and supporters, embarked on the 2016 AFL Masters Australian Tour of England and Ireland. The Australian team was coached by former West Coast Eagle and Brisbane Lions player, Brent Staker. The team assembled in London and played a trial match against Oxford University, before the first ever AFL Masters Test between Australia and England, with the Aussies winning by the narrowest of margins. The touring party then travelled to Ireland where it was met by then Irish Prime Minister, Hon Enda Kenny who addressed the team. Two Masters International Rules Tests were played between Australian and Ireland in Galway and Cavan, with the hosts prevailing on both instances. The tour received considerable media interest and culminated in a finale dinner after the final test where the Australian Ambassador to Ireland was the guest of honour.





2017 Goodwill Tour of China & India:

An AFL Masters Australian representative team visited China (Guangzhou) and India (Kolkata) and spend approx. 4 days in each location to train with and then play against these national teams to help their preparations for IC17. In China, team participated in a community skills clinic at the Guangzhou Scorpions AFL Club in the lead up to the inaugural AFL Test between representative teams from AFL China and AFL Masters Australia. As expected, the game was fiercely contested by both teams, but importantly was played in a true spirit of fair play and sportsmanship. Whilst the Chinese proved to be too fit and fast in the wet conditions, winning comfortably. The touring party then travelled to Kolkata, India. With the Australian High Commissioner to India attending the game along with numerous Indian dignitaries and an enthusiastic and vocal crowd estimated at between 7000-9000. The game was a big hit with the spectators who cheered their team at every opportunity. The game was a physical challenge played in great spirits. The Australian team's ball control and overhead dominance proved the decisive factor in the final result but the India team were fearless and relentless in their efforts.





10. Future Updates:

We are very keen to communicate as often as possible so that those who have committed to being part of the tour can build their enthusiasm and anticipation. Once we have announced our coaching team, regular information will be passed on about the game of International Rules, the style of play, the training techniques, who your team mates are and various other relevant information. The expectations are that the playing group will be well prepared and that they will perform well on this international stage. It is the task of the organising committee and coaching staff to make all necessary arrangements to ensure you have every opportunity to perform to this high standard whilst representing Australia.... and in doing so, have an experience of a lifetime!

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