

CHAPTER 10

Questions And Answers About Hickory Golf

Q: How much does it cost to get started in hickory golf?

A: You can purchase inexpensive hickory clubs for as little as \$25 each. Obviously, these are not likely to be of a premium quality and will probably require work to make them playable. At Classic Golf, we offer fully restored Tom Stewart irons for about \$150 each with a one-year warranty on the shafts against breakage. Our restored woods are about \$250 each for the premium examples. So, a ten-club set with two woods would run \$1,700. A 14-club set would be \$2,300. This compares favorably with the purchase of a premium modern 14-club set where your irons are \$800, your driver is \$400, fairway wood \$200, two wedges at \$125 each, hybrid at \$150, and a putter at \$200 for a total of \$2,000.

Q: Can a beginner or high handicap golfer play hickory golf?

A: Yes. That is how it was done 100 years ago! It can be an advantage starting golf with clubs that require a more precise swing.

Q: Are there reproduction clubs available and are they allowed in hickory tournaments?

A: Reproduction clubs are available from Tad Moore, Barry Kerr, and Louisville Golf. Every tournament has its own set of rules. The National Hickory Championship allows reproductions because pre-1900 clubs are so difficult to find and are very expensive. At the present time there are ample supplies of vintage clubs available for play, but this could change with the increasing popularity of hickory golf. A reproduction set can be a great way to immediately get started playing hickory golf while you piece together a vintage set.

2007 Region 4 Texas Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



Max Hill putts at Onion Creek in Austin, Texas.



This finish position leaves me temporarily speechless!



Andy Reistetter from the fairway.



Selecting the right club at Onion Creek where I hung on for a narrow victory in this excellent 36 hole event.



Ron Lyons putts for birdie.



Willie Ducherer chips from a precarious lie.



Rob Howard prepares to drive.



Tom Hughes lofts one to the green.



Chuck McMullin lags a long one close.

Q: *Where can I play hickory golf?*

A: You can play hickory golf at any golf course. Choose the tees that play between 6,000 and 6,500 yards if you are an average to good player. Pre-1900 play with a reproduction golf ball is a different story. Few courses exist that are really suitable for this. Oakhurst Links in West Virginia, site of the National Hickory Championship and the oldest course in the United States, is a great choice. Keith Foster, the noted golf course architect, is developing some pre-1900 golf courses for use with these early clubs and reproduction balls.

Q: *What kind of golf ball should I play?*

A: Any ball with a soft cover or low compression is good. The Bridgestone B330S was my choice in 2007. Chris McIntyre of San Diego, California is developing some vintage mesh pattern golf balls that will be great to play with 1920s era hickory clubs. Avoid hitting range balls as much as possible. Hitting hard balls will tend to break shafts.

Q: *How good do I have to be to play in a hickory golf tournament?*

A: Most tournaments have several different divisions so that golfers of all abilities can compete. There is usually an open division, a handicap division, a senior division, and a ladies division. As long as you are able to maintain a good pace of play, anyone can compete.

Q: *Do I have to dress in the old fashion style clothing?*

A: Vintage 1920s attire included a shirt and tie and the famous plus-four pants that are often referred to as knickers (women's underwear to the UK crowd!). "Plus-fours" referred to the four extra inches of fabric around the knees that gave these shortened trousers their famous look. In pre-1900 times the socks were often pulled up over the pant legs to avoid soiling the bottom of the pants; plus-fours were not in fashion yet. Hickory golf is about playing with hickory clubs and while it is fun to look the part especially in a tournament, you don't have to. Golfers wore long pants in the 1920s! Most tournaments have a provision against baseball style caps, however, as these were not used during the era. Plus-four pants can be purchased online at a number of different sites, as can the floppy "newsboy" caps that were popular during the hickory era.

2007 Region 4 Texas Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



Edwin Chan, the top Chinese hickory golfer in the world.



Ben Plaunt confers with Rob Ahlschwede.



Trevor Niebergal putts from off the fringe.



Ken Holtz with a Schenectady.



Tim Flynn rolls one up.



Jim Apfelbaum not only writes, but plays hickory golf as well.



Kenny Plaunt is the longest hitter in all of hickory golf. He regularly blasts his drives 330 yards – with a HICKORY driver! Unfortunately, not all of Kenny's balls can be found.

Q: *Are the rules the same?*

A: The short answer is yes. However, any clubs that were legal at any time during the hickory era (except steel shafts) are legal in hickory tournaments even though they were later banned. This includes deep-groove clubs and concave faces among others. Pre-1900 rules are a bit different and the NHC provides a rulebook for play.

Q: *Do women play hickory golf?*

A: Absolutely! The National Hickory Championship has a very competitive women's division and generally women can play in any hickory event.

Q: *Can you play hickory clubs in a modern tournament?*

A: As long as your clubs are all legal, yes. The deep-groove irons, concave faces, and several other rare patent clubs would not be allowed, but everything else is quite legal for play.

Q: *How does hickory golf affect my handicap?*

A: Most hickory golfers keep two handicaps, one for their modern clubs and the other for their hickory clubs. Often they list their hickory handicap under a variation of their name. A hickory handicap is often your normal handicap multiplied by 1.5, so that a 10-handicapper with modern clubs is a 15-handicapper with hickories.

Q: *Do you use riding carts when you play hickory golf?*

A: I do not. Oakhurst Links has no riding carts. Most of the classic courses in Scotland do not have riding carts. Other hickory events allow riding carts if you would like one. There were no riding carts in the 1920s. I personally enjoy the walking aspect of golf quite a bit.

Q: *How far will I hit my hickory driver vs. my modern driver?*

A: You will be 30-40 yards shorter with your hickory driver. Your irons will go the same, loft for loft.

Q: *How often do you break clubs and where do you get them fixed?*

A: How often you break a club is difficult to say. Some players have never broken a club even though they have played for years. If you play enough, it is likely you will break a club sooner or later. Many small shaft cracks are easily repaired if detected early enough. Check your club after or between shots to make sure they are sound. If a club breaks, save the pieces because many times the club can be put back together or the parts can be salvaged. In many areas of the country there is a qualified repair person familiar with hickory clubs. At Classic Golf in Omaha, Nebraska, we offer a full service hickory repair and restoration center with a quick turnaround to anywhere in the world.

Q: *Is there a special hickory swing?*

A: No, but some swings work better with hickory clubs than others.

Q: *How do I care for my hickory golf clubs?*

A: Keep them clean, dry and out of the extremes of hot and cold.

Q: *How much are my old hickory clubs worth?*

A: That is hard to say because it is kind of like saying, "How much is my old car worth?" What kind of car is it? There is quite a difference between a Fiat and a Ferrari. What condition is it in? How strong is the market? A good guide for determining hickory golf club values is Pete Georgiady's "Wood Shafted Golf Club Value Guide". There are several other wood shaft value guides as well.

Q: *What is the best golf movie ever made?*

A: It is hard to vote against "Caddyshack", but in my opinion, "The Greatest Game Ever Played" is the best golf movie ever made; and it has to do with hickory golf! It is about Francis Ouimet, Harry Vardon, and Ted Ray in the 1913 U.S. Open. You should definitely check this one out! There are two other "hickory golf" movies: "The Legend of Bagger Vance" directed by Robert Redford—which I supplied some of the clubs for, and "Stroke of Genius" that told the story of Bobby Jones' life.

Q: *Has anyone helped you with your golf game?*

A: I was self-taught but I would not recommend this for anyone. It is best to find someone to help you spot the flaws in your game. An extra pair of eyes can be invaluable and that is why I recommend using a video camera. A good friend of mine, John Cunningham of Milwaukee, has a very good eye and a penchant for intelligently analyzing and dissecting various aspects of the golf swing. We both have had a lot of fun probing our own swings to make them as good as possible. John has helped me more than anyone else to better dial in my golf swing.

My brother, Tim, also has given me some excellent feedback over the years on my swing. Tim works with me at our business, Classic Golf, in Omaha and in addition to being a low handicap player capable of shooting under par scores, Tim is one of the most skilled and knowledgeable golf repair experts in the world today. Tim tied me in the only hickory event he ever played in with a score of 77!

Q: *How often does one play hickory golf vs. modern golf?*

A: I haven't played modern golf in over eight years. There are a growing number of players who just play hickory golf. Many players switch back and forth. It generally takes a few rounds to get used to the other set, so factor this into your tournament planning.

Q: *Do you breathe in or breathe out during the golf swing?*

A: The old match play trick is to ask someone if they breathe in or out on their downswing! Breathing is obviously very important. You would like to fully exhale just before you begin any golf stroke.

Q: *What is the "stymie" shot?*

A: The "stymie" is a situation that only occurs in match play where you block your opponent's path to the hole on the putting green with your ball. This rule is no longer in use, but it was used during the hickory era with Walter Hagen playing the stymie rule during his four consecutive PGA Championships and Bobby Jones also playing this rule in the U.S. and British Amateur Championships. In stroke play, you must mark your ball on the green if your opponent requests but not in match play unless you were within six inches of the hole or your opponent's ball, in which case the ball would be marked. This "stymie measure" is often indicated on old scorecards or marked on some hickory putter shafts!



Tommy Armour

CHAPTER 11

Some Of My Favorite Hickory Golf Experiences

I started playing golf in 1969 with a mismatched set I got for Christmas. I bought my first hickory shaft club on a whim for 50 cents at a Goodwill store in 1972. I distinctively remember hitting this Spalding mid iron in an open field near my house and thinking, “Wow! These things hit pretty good!”

It wasn't until 1989 that I played my first hickory shaft tournament. Ron Swesey from Omaha mentioned to me that the Golf Collectors Society was having a hickory golf tournament nearby in Council Bluffs, Iowa and that I should play. I had opened my own golf shop a couple of years earlier and I had numerous hickory clubs around that I had taken in trade. I put a number of the better-looking hickory clubs in a bag and took them to the driving range to see how they would hit. I felt fairly confident when I found enough straight-hitting hickory clubs to form a set for the upcoming tournament.

My confidence left me about two holes into the tournament, my first round ever with hickory clubs, when I realized that I had no idea how far any of the clubs would go! I was so intrigued by the idea of playing hickory golf that I decided to venture south for the Golf Collectors Society National Show in Miami, Florida later that year. I tweaked my hickory set and played them for two straight weeks before heading off to Doral Country Club. I was disappointed to learn that there was no individual tournament that year, only a four-man scramble for the hickory golf contestants.

I was paired with Les Marquoit, his son Steve, and Murl Crane. I played some exceptional golf, making birdie-eagle on my own ball in the early going to really energize our team. We won the event and I became good friends with Les Marquoit. The national show was amazing for the vast selection of golf clubs and memorabilia that was offered for sale. It was here that I would meet Tad Moore, the famous putter designer, Scotty Cameron, Bobby Grace, Roger Cleveland, Bob Farino, and Jim Butler who all had an interest in the vintage steel shaft woods, irons, and putters produced in the 1950s and 1960s—just like I did.

The Golf Collectors Society National Show

I have had many memorable tournaments at the GCS National Show. In 1990 and 1991, I couldn't seem to play good enough to beat Bobby Grace who always seemed to bring a great hickory game to the tournament. I finally beat him in 1992, but Paul Biocini beat us both. We played East Lake in Atlanta where Bobby Jones had played his first and last round of golf. I was doing well until I hit one of the par 5s in two and promptly 4-putted to take the wind out of my sails. In 1993, we headed to Palm Springs where I played with Chuck Furjanic and Jimmy Hill, both of whom played really well. One by one, however, we all melted down and John Sherwood from England bested everyone. I consider John a really good friend as well as being one of the largest hickory club dealers in the world currently. John now has a condo in Palm Springs. It is hard to beat that area for great golf in the colder months.

In 1994, the tournament moved to Ypsilanti, Michigan where I first met Ralph Livingston III. The GCS arranged a long drive contest and after an initial round of drives the field was narrowed to three players. In addition to myself, there was Micah Bosman from the Chicago area, a tall, young bomber with an excellent overall game and some short, skinny kid with glasses that I didn't know. I remember wondering how in the world this guy could have hit one of the three longest drives. He certainly didn't look the part of a long hitter. In the final round, Micah launched the longest drive at over 290 yards and I finished just behind him with Ralph a close third. I was amazed that Ralph could hit the ball so far.

Ralph has an infectious enthusiasm for anything he launches into and hickory golf was just beginning to take hold. Ralph could enthrall a small audience with his energetic and bubbling dissertations for all things hickory and he generally never missed an opportunity to do so. We would become really good friends, traveling the world together to play hickory golf. Ralph is probably responsible for more people becoming interested in hickory golf than anyone except Tom Morris!

In the tournament that year I finished double bogey-bogey, three-putting the last two greens to lose by two to Paul Biocini. I had been trying out a Schenectady putter and that, I believe, is the last time I have putted with one. I was quite disappointed in my finish and Bobby Grace mentioned that I should get a Spalding HB putter like Tommy Armour used. He used one and loved it. I found an HB putter at the show and so with renewed enthusiasm, I eagerly anticipated the next year's show in Lexington, Kentucky.

The next year, it was pouring rain on the day of the tournament and play was cancelled. I was so disappointed because I felt my game was ready. The next day, a call was made at the show for anyone who wanted to contest for the championship to come out and play. Instead of the usual 100+ golfers, I joined about 15 players including Ralph, Paul Biocini, and Ron Lyons, and we went out to play. This was the first time I had ever played with Paul Biocini and he had a great game. He was the PGA Northern California player of the year at one time and his game had no weakness that I could discern. I was playing really well and we had a great back-and-forth match. I eventually

made a late birdie and went on to just nip him by a couple of strokes for the low score. I had putted well with the new HB putter when it really mattered!

As fate would have it, the very next year in Kansas City, the rains would come again. This time, however, the entire tournament field had teed off. The sprinkles began early, but the downpour didn't arrive until we had played seven holes. After nine holes, nearly all the competitors had called it quits. I was playing with Paul Biocini and both of us were playing very well. Neither one of us was going to quit. I remember having about a three-stroke lead and the more we played the less dry areas I had to keep my hands and grips dry. I was counting down the holes but losing strokes as I went.



*Tom Kuhl, John Sherwood, Paul Biocini, and Randy Jensen
at the 1996 GCS Tournament in Kansas City.*

Paul had some kind of ridged grips that he could hang onto much better than I could hang onto my smooth leather grips that just slid through my fingers on every shot. There was standing water on every green and we were chipping to the hole while we were on the green because if we used our putters, as soon as the ball started to roll, it would stop in the water. By the time we arrived on the 18th tee box, we were tied.

There wasn't a dry stitch of cloth anywhere on me or in my bag. We both lobbed a driver shot out into the water-puddled fairway. I remember attempting to gauge how fast the club would slide through my hands on my approach shot so I could still make some sort of contact with the ball. This didn't work very well as I hit the shot heavy and came up well short. Paul hit a solid shot to the fringe and won. It wouldn't be until many years later that I would discover Harry Vardon's secret of rough side out leather grips that hold like glue in the rain!

In 1997, the GCS national show moved to Nashville, Tennessee where Paul and I again finished 1-2 in the tournament only this time it was I who finished on top. I had a fortuitous ruling as I had played two balls on a par 4 after an errant drive and made an

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eight on one ball and a five on the other ball. The ruling for a score of five gave me a 74 and a three-shot victory over Paul.

1998 was a weird year in Louisville, Kentucky. The course was not in very good shape and someone commented that the fairways had been sodded but the only problem was that the sod had been installed upside down! Ralph Livingston actually shot the low score but disqualified himself when he found out that we were supposed to be playing the ball “up” in the fairway only and not through the green as he had played. There was no rules sheet and I was asking people in my group how we were playing the ball as I was walking down the first fairway—and someone in another group told us. Furthermore, John Sherwood won the open division but Arlie Morris shot a lower score in the senior division playing from the same tees! Obviously, the tournament was not run very well. I had a bad day and was never in serious contention but I did have a very interesting experience on the 18th green.

I needed a birdie to break 80 and shoot a 79. It is strange how shooting an 80 seems about 10 strokes higher than shooting a 79. I had a 30-foot birdie putt that was uphill and breaking right with the dominant left-to-right sloping landscape. I wanted this birdie badly to break 80. I played the putt a foot left of the hole and thought I hit it good, but it broke more than I thought and halfway to the hole it was already at the right-center of the hole. It certainly looked like it would have no chance to go in from any reasonable observation of its line, but I was totally focused on that ball and the hole.



Putting for birdie.

As the ball neared the hole it had dropped further to the right so that it was on a line for the right edge of the hole. I was still totally focused on that ball going in the hole. As the putt slowed down, it was decidedly below the hole, with the nearest edge of the golf ball about two inches from the edge of the hole. For some reason, I had still not given up on that ball going in and as the ball neared the hole it made an inexplicable turn uphill toward the hole before stopping about an inch directly below the hole.

I was still totally focused on the ball and the hole, even though the ball had just stopped moving. Then the ball rotated a quarter-turn up the hill and fell in the hole! My jaw dropped. I quickly turned to my three playing companions and exclaimed, "Did you see THAT?!" Two of them were arranging things in their golf bags and the third golfer who was gazing off in the distance, turned to me, looked over at the hole to see if my ball was there, then looked back to me and said "Nice putt." None of them had even watched the putt! I went up to the hole to look for a ball mark or something around the hole that might have caused my ball to fall in, but the surface around the hole was very smooth and even.

Ralph played some excellent golf again in 1999. He came to the last hole at St. Augustine, Florida with a chance to tie me with a par. The last hole was a long par 4 with swampy tree lines on the right and left. In my practice rounds, I had decided to play just short of the fairly tight trees to avoid any potential disaster on this last hole by hitting my driving mashie. I had been only one over par for the day playing 17, but I had just three-putted and so I decided to hit driver on 18 to try to make up for my last mistake.

When I duck-hooked my drive into the left trees, I was about ready to kill myself for being such an idiot but fortunately decided that punishment might be a touch severe. I found my ball, that was the good news, but it certainly didn't look playable and two club-lengths for an unplayable lie would still put me in the jungle with no improvement in position. There was no place going back for a penalty drop so it appeared I would have to re-tee. I could very likely make a seven.

I went in for another look at my lie in the jungle. I decided to attempt to play out as I thought that most certainly a six or seven for a 76 or 77 would be a nice second or third place score (which was exactly right). I contorted myself around some trees, trying to find an angle where the clubhead could be swung, so that the ball could possibly be hit and, hopefully, advanced. With a strong chop, I managed to hit the ball about ten feet toward the fairway, just barely outside the swamp but still in long grass with tree limbs blocking any flight to the green.

From there I powered an iron shot out of the rough about 40 yards short and right of the green. I pitched up to six feet and holed the putt for a bogey five and a 75. I was very relieved. I thought my score had a good chance to win. Ralph came up the 18th fairway needing a par for a tie. After some adventure of his own, he missed an eight-foot par putt for the tie.

In 2000, the GCS selected a venue in Virginia Beach, Virginia. For whatever reason, I just couldn't get my game going. I just hung in there and tried to turn in the best score that I could, but I couldn't even break 80. The course was a modern design that played somewhat difficult in the wind, but I didn't think that was an excuse for the 80 that I had just shot. I was disappointed with how I played and as the different players filed in, I was going over in my mind what had gone so wrong with my game and how I could improve so that I wouldn't shoot scores like this again. I didn't hit anything out of play; I just missed a lot of up-and-down opportunities, as you will when the putts

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are not dropping. There were a number of really good hickory golfers playing in this event and one by one they all turned in scores higher than 80! Most of the scores were between 81 and 85 for the good players on this day! What did Harry Vardon say? "Just keep hitting the ball!"

The GCS went to Dallas for 2001 and I was battling my contact lenses all round until on the last hole, with my eyes blurring in and out, I missed a five foot putt for par to shoot a 76. Ken Jackson, the superb player from the Dallas area shot a wonderful 75. Ken has played some great hickory golf over the years, mostly in the Region 4 GCS events that are held every year in Texas. It was nice to see him win. That was the last round of golf I ever played with glasses or contacts.

Columbus, Ohio saw the GCS invade in 2002. Jim Butler held a vintage steel shaft tournament at his Table Rock Golf Club. Scotty Cameron called me over to check out his new wild-looking "Futura" putter design before we teed off. I shot 75 with vintage steel shafted clubs to win that event and then had to play the hickory event right after that. Some of the avid hickory players, myself included, had voiced an opinion that hickory golf tournaments were sometimes contested at yardages that were too short. So we managed to get this course set up at 6,500+ yards like we wanted, except that there was a soaking rain the night before with very cold temperatures on the morning of play that made the course play more like 7,800 yards. My 77 was the low score.



John Gates and I at the 2002 GCS Tournament in Columbus, Ohio.

In 2003, we went back to St. Augustine, Florida and the World Golf Village where we played the Slammer and Squire Courses. I played with Paul Biocini and he waxed me. I think I contracted the yips in that tropical Florida weather. There was a beautiful and original Donald Ross golf course just down the road that would have made a great hickory tournament course for us, Palatka Country Club.

I almost didn't go to the tournament in 2004 in St. Charles, Illinois. I arrived late and didn't even play a practice round. As I was arriving at the golf course, an old golfing friend of mine spotted me in the parking lot. I had known Tony Kalina from some 20+ years earlier when we played golf together occasionally. Tony was an excellent player who now happened to be the superintendent at the course we were playing! Tony generously offered to caddy for me and I accepted. We had a great time talking golf as he guided me around the course that he knew so well. Despite hitting a ball in the water, I won by a stroke. A good caddy can be invaluable!

The GCS returned to St. Augustine for 2005, lining up the St. John's County Golf Course for the tournament. The year 2005 was the year of the last-hole collapse for me, losing three championships that year on the last hole of play. This was actually the third in the series. John Crow Miller of Dallas was there to witness my eight on the last hole. We were playing a very reachable par 5 with water down the entire left side.

I pulled my drive close to the water but in excellent position to try the risky carry over water to the green. John later asked me what I was thinking when I hit my second shot. I was focusing on a swing thought that obviously didn't work too well as I pulled my second shot about 80 yards left past the water onto an uninhabited island surrounded by water. When I say uninhabited, I wasn't counting alligators or crocodiles for which this was probably a perfect habitat.

The thought crossed my mind about how I could get over there and swimming with a mashie between my teeth wouldn't have been out of the question in a more northern climate. I opted to move up 10 yards, switch to a more lofted club and try the same swing thought. I definitely improved this time; pulling the shot only about 60 yards left so I could enjoy the splash. They say that every shot in golf makes somebody happy and these two I am sure would do the job for Bill Kreisler, a good friend of mine, who would win with a round of 76 that he thought "for sure" would not be good enough to secure a victory. You can play much more relaxed golf if you have no worries.

The Mountain Course at Angel Park in Las Vegas was the spot in November of 2006 for the GCS National Tournament. I had driven my Porsche down to see Chris McIntyre in San Diego before the tournament to tune up my game in the warm Southern California weather and he and I and Jason Egnatz went out for a round of golf. Before we teed off, Chris surprised us by showing us the new ball he had "made". Using an original mesh pattern golf ball mould, he had produced a beautiful "Regal" mesh golf ball! We all played one each of the seven balls that he had produced so far.

I was impressed by how well the ball played. And the ball looked great with its vintage mesh pattern! I ask him if the balls were legal and if I could play one in the GCS tournament. He assured me that it was a totally legal golf ball and when we were finished, he gave me one extra ball that we had played so that now I had two mesh pattern golf balls to last me for several practice rounds and to play with in the GCS tournament!

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The next day we drove to Palm Springs to see John Sherwood at his condo before we headed to Las Vegas. I played at John's course and shot two-under par on the back nine. I liked the ball. At the GCS World Hickory Championship in Las Vegas a few days later, I shot a 74 at the tough Angel Park Mountain course to win the tournament by six strokes.

I played very well outside of a couple of chipping glitches. The old touring pro Rives McBee watched me play a couple of holes and had some nice things to say to me afterward which I appreciated. Chris was excited that I won with his ball and his plans are for producing more balls to satisfy his hickory golf club rental business and perhaps make them available to other hickory golfers. There were some good scores in the senior division, which played from a more forward tee, as Paul Biocini edged out Arlie Morris by a stroke 75 to 76. Both of these guys still play great.

In 2007, the GCS invaded Pinehurst, North Carolina with the Mid Pines Resort hosting the show and golf tournament. Jay Harris won the warm-up event, the Mid Pines Hickory Open on his home turf and Ben Plaunt, the superb lefty from Edmonton, Canada, beat me by two strokes to win the GCS title. Ben has been one of the finest hickory golfers for a number of years and it was nice to see him break through and win a much-deserved major title.



Oakhurst has a very peaceful and relaxed ambiance about it.

The National Hickory Championship

Playing Oakhurst Links, site of the first eight National Hickory Championships, might possibly be the most fun you will ever have playing golf! The course is isolated

in the mountains just outside White Sulphur Springs in West Virginia. The ambiance is special with quiet, breathtaking views from the original clubhouse built in the 1800s. There is a peaceful tranquility that pervades the entire atmosphere even during the busy moments of the NHC that harkens the soul back to an earlier era when life was simpler and more carefree. The tournament itself has provided me with many memorable moments but just playing practice rounds at Oakhurst is an experience worth savoring.



Sheep and golfers co-exist at Oakhurst.

Before the first NHC in 1998, I called Pete Georgiady to ask him which of the two divisions, pre-1900 or post-1900, I should play in. “Which of the two divisions is more prestigious to win?” I queried. There had never been a pre-1900 golf tournament—hickory golf was generally 1920s golf. I wasn’t sure if I even had enough of these older clubs to make a playable set. When Pete informed me that the pre-1900 division was the way to go, I set about assembling a “new” set of hickory golf clubs. I arrived on Monday for the Saturday and Sunday tournament and Ralph Livingston and I played 36 holes a day in preparation.



Allen Wallach rips a gutty drive in a practice round off the first tee at Oakhurst.

The evening before the tournament, I showed

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my clubs to Pete for an inspection. "You can't use that niblick, it is from 1905" Pete said with a chuckle. It wasn't that funny to me. I had practiced all week with that Forgan niblick, assuming it would be fine for the tournament because it had a smooth face. Now, I had no niblick the night before the tournament and all my short game practice that had been based on that club was thrown into disarray in my mind.

Fortunately, Don Gibboney brought a spare niblick, a Willie Park of Musselburgh model. He reluctantly agreed to let me purchase this club from him on the condition that I sell it back to him if I found one I liked better. Examining my new purchase as I sat on the porch at Oakhurst in the fading evening light, I realized I would have to play the loft and lie angle just as it was but the thing that really bothered me was the strong dig sole angle that would make it difficult to play well. Mark Waid, the Oakhurst



Contestants enjoy the golf as well as the views.



Two-time ladies champion Vicki Gibboney prepares to putt.

superintendent, happened to be walking by and I asked him if he had a grinder of any kind. Yes, he did! And so as the day ended, I shaped the sole of my Willie Park niblick to ready it for the next morning's play.



Jay Harris, Randy Jensen, and Tom Johnson.

I played well with the niblick, beating Jay Harris by two strokes (he was playing in the other division, but he was my closest competition). The next year Jay got me, beating me by a stroke. Jay is an excellent competitor and a lot of fun to play with. Jay lives on the seventh hole of Pinehurst #2. How good is that?

I won the tournament in 2000, but 2001 stands out in my mind because it rained the first day and I had a narrow lead with a very good score of 75 after the first round. The second day saw an absolutely torrential downpour that might have easily stopped play.



Contestants in the 2000 NHC.

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*Steve Kameika and 2001 NHC Champion Fred Fruisen
on the fourth green at Oakhurst.*

But hickory golfers don't let a little rain stop them! I teed off armed with several towels, an umbrella, and a waterproof jacket and hat. I was determined to not let my grips get wet and sink my chances for victory like what had happened at the GCS tournament in Kansas City a few years earlier.



My whole goal was to keep my grips dry. I was meticulous in arranging my clubs and umbrella between shots to keep everything dry. I remember glancing over at Fred Fruisen who was playing another hole during the round. I remember thinking that Fred had a very good first round of 77 and would be a tough competitor in round two. But Fred had

no jacket, no hat, no umbrella, and nothing to cover his clubs. He was absolutely soaked. I thought his game surely must have gotten washed away in the downpour, yet he did look very peaceful.



I finished the first nine holes in 37 strokes, an excellent score, I thought, considering the conditions that by now were deteriorating further, if that were possible. Rivers of water were flowing through the fairways and the greens were a puddle of standing water. The second round was cancelled after nine holes.

Amazingly, Fred Fruisen had shot a 34. I was stunned. He had beaten me by a stroke. What a great round. A 34 in perfect conditions is exceptional. A 34 in conditions like these was nothing short of amazing. Fred and I ended up playing a lot of practice rounds over the years together and he has a superb game. I've always



Playing Hickory Golf

had a very hard time beating him, yet we always have a great time playing together. We met a couple of times in a match play tournament that preceded the NHC and he beat me both times.



I was motivated to play well in 2002 as both Fred Fruisen and Jay Harris were in the field and they each had one championship to my two. Either one of them could tie me with two titles if they were to win. Ralph Livingston was also in the field and Ralph could play great at any time. I brought a lot of focus to my record-setting two rounds of 74-73=147. I won by ten shots over Ralph. If I had never gotten into hickory golf, Ralph would probably have about a dozen more victories.

In 2003, I won the match play tournament and the NHC title. In 2004, Russ Ravert played an exceptional first round to lead the tournament after the first day. I played some exceptional golf the next day to post a 73 and claim my third straight NHC title.

I came into the 2005 NHC seeking my fourth straight title and I felt primed and ready. The course was more difficult than ever due to some harder and faster greens requiring even more precision than usual. After a good first round, Mike Stevens and I engaged in an epic battle of great golf. Mike is a teaching pro from Florida and had finished second and third on numerous occasions. He has



an absolutely beautiful, slow rhythm to his swing—perfect for hickory clubs. The lead was never more than a stroke one way or the other and neither one of us was making the killer mistakes that can get you on any hole at Oakhurst. In fact, playing our 13th hole of the day, I was only one over par on my round.

This was some really incredible golf and should have netted me about a ten-stroke lead on the field the way the course was playing except that Mike Stevens had matched all my great shots with great shots of his own and we were tied! On our 13th hole, the long fourth hole, I came up short on my aggressive approach playing at the far left flag position while Mike played a nice second shot well to the right of the green. I had an exceptionally difficult uphill pitch to a firm green only seven yards deep with big trouble immediately behind the green.





I caught the ball just a touch heavy so now I was chipping for a four. My next shot was nearly good but it buried in the fringe just two inches from the green instead of bouncing forward. Meanwhile Mike had chipped up to some six feet from the hole. In attempting to chip in for a bogey, I ran the ball by the hole five feet; not a bad shot, except that I was putting for a six and Mike for a four. Mike made his putt and the possibility that I might fall three strokes behind was looming quite large. I made my putt in the side door, but I had now lost two



strokes and the way Mike was playing, that might be all the advantage he may need. Mike played the next three holes in excellent fashion going par-par-par. But I made birdie-par-birdie to tie the match. Just to put that in perspective, I did not make a birdie on the course the day before. On the long par 5 eighth, our 17th hole, I hit my third shot to within six inches while Mike left his approach about 15 feet short. I tapped in my birdie as Mike lined up his unlikely birdie putt. I had just birdied three of the last four holes to go from two strokes behind to, most likely, one stroke ahead. It was an amazing comeback on a very difficult course.



There can come a time in a person's life when you enter a crossroads of fate. Two paths stand before you. One path leads in a direction that is quite ordinary; the other path leads decidedly out of the ordinary. What path you take can change your life forever. Mike made that 15-foot birdie putt. You could try that putt 20 times and probably not make it one time. It was an extraordinary putt. I wasn't so much stunned as truly impressed because I knew the difficulty of that putt. We were tied with the last hole left to play. My tee ball started at the left

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edge of the green and kicked left just inches into the really long grass where it would take me three swings to dislodge my ball. Mike had won the tournament with an incredible display of golf and as good a clutch putt as anyone has probably ever made. It was nice to see such a superb performance justly rewarded.



The NHC moved to the famous Pinehurst resort in Pinehurst, North Carolina for 2006, contesting the championship on courses #8 and #1. Even with these great courses, the tournament just did not seem to have the ambiance and flavor that Oakhurst had in such generous supply.

I played my first round using a Forgan gunmetal blade putter, but after three-putting #18 for a 79 and a one-stroke lead, I decided to play my old Ben Sayers wood mallet on the second day. I didn't even bring the Forgan putter with me before the second round to avoid any second-guessing. On the practice putting green, before I teed off, I could not get any putts into the hole. Three-foot putts were missing. And these were really good greens. Maybe that was the problem because this same putter had always worked well for me at Oakhurst with its crude, primitive greens.



I usually played several days with the older hickories before the tournament, but that wasn't too practical with the longer courses here so I had played 1920s hickory golf right up to the tournament. I had actually been putting great, playing several practice rounds with my friend Bill Kreischer who has a house on one of the

Pinehurst courses. I had gotten in a couple of sub-par rounds on courses I had not seen before.



Chris McIntyre impersonating Old Tom Morris!

On this morning though, I was really having trouble starting the ball straight off the face of the Sayers putter. I was paired with Jay Harris who had the second best opening round score and we teed off last as was customary. I pitched to tap-in range on the first two holes, but on the third hole I left myself a three-foot putt. Knowing that I was flat-out missing a high percentage of these short ones in practice, I brought all my focus to bear on this short putt and the ball just fell in the very left edge of the cup. I knew I was in for a day of extreme focus on the greens!

Jay is great to play with and he gave me everything I could handle, especially with some late, great shots that closed the gap and made my late birdie on #16 the key shot for me in the tournament. I had hit this downhill 20-footer a bit too hard and if it hadn't been intercepted by a four-inch hole in the ground, I could have easily taken a couple more putts. I know Jay, being the competitor that he is, had a few choice words for me after my ball bounced high off the back lip and fell in the hole! I finished my winning round of 78 with a nice three-putt on #18. Jay finished second, Chris McIntyre impersonating Old Tom Morris finished third, with former champs Rick Fruisen and Mike Stevens fourth and fifth, respectively.

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



Lewis Keller, owner of Oakhurst Links, along with his daughter Vikki who authored a book on the history of Oakhurst, the oldest course in the United States, and wife Rosalie Keller.



Lady golfers at Oakhurst during the NHC including five-time champion Caty Goidel (far left) and two-time champion Vicki Gibboney standing next to Caty.

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery

*Hickory champion
Chuck McMullin at
Oakhurst Links
in West Virginia.*



Starting the NHC in true Scottish style!

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



Doug Marshall tees off on the first hole at Oakhurst in the NHC.



I chat with Trey Holland, past president of the USGA and avid hickory golfer, during the NHC.

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



The late Elmore Just, with Russ Ravert to his right, was a strong supporter of the NHC. Today, the Elmore Just Foursomes Competition precedes the NHC.

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



All contestants walk at the NHC.



Lewis Keller and John Crow Miller discuss hickory golf at Oakhurst.

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



Vicki Gibboney approaches the green.



Ralph Livingston III tees off from the square shaped Oakhurst tee box. These dirt tees have a bucket of sand and a bucket of water for use in making your sand tee.



Rob Ahlschwede demonstrates his chipping prowess.



Seasoned competitor Eric Wolke on the 2nd green at Oakhurst.

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



Note that tall grass just a few yards from the hole as these NHC competitors play on the 2nd green at Oakhurst.



Jay Harris and I wait for the fairway to clear before teeing off on #8 during the NHC.

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



Perennial NHC contender Steve Kameika at Oakhurst.



"You think that was bad, let me tell you what happened to me!"

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



Competitors finish their round on the 9th green at Oakhurst.



Oakhurst 1884? No, it's Marcia Zanger looking resplendent in her vintage attire.

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



Here, I'm chipping to the last green at the 2003 NHC. The ball is in the air!



The NHC lady competitors watch the action.

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



I sink the winning putt on the last hole during the 2003 NHC. The ball is captured in this photo just before it falls into the hole. If my ball were to hit either of my competitor's balls just to each side of the hole, I would receive a one-stroke penalty, taking three shots from this position and consequently losing the tournament! This rule was subsequently dropped in later NHC tournaments.



Viewing the NHC from behind the last green.

Natational Hickory Championship Photo Gallery



Jay Harris of Pinehurst, NC congratulates me on the last green of my victory in the 2003 NHC.



Tom Johnson 3rd place, and Fred Fruisen 2nd place, flank me as I hold the trophy for the 2004 NHC.

Playing Hickory Golf

The 2007 NHC returned to Oakhurst and everyone was quite happy about that. There is no other place quite like Oakhurst! I was in excellent form all week, winning the alternate shot with Tom Johnson whose game complimented mine quite nicely. In the first round, I was headed for a respectable round of 77 or 78 but I birdied four of the last five holes to shoot a 72!



Here I am chipping to the final green in 2007 and playing it safe!

On day two, with a bit of a lead, I matched Jay Harris shot for shot for 13 holes until Jay had to take a chance and try to drive the downhill par 4 fifth hole (our 14th of the day) to gain some ground. When that failed, the only drama remaining was whether or not I would break the all-time scoring record at Oakhurst and I really went for birdies on my 15th, 16th, and 17th holes, but with no success. When I reached the 18th hole, I resigned myself to try to finish without the disaster that occurred the last time I played here in 2005: a triple bogey on this last hole!

I safely aimed my tee ball to the right of the green and hit it there. I had 30 yards remaining, uphill and under trees from directly right of the green. Again I played safely, hitting hard enough to finish on the far end of the green and not risk coming up short of the front flag. I decided to lag my rather long putt and try to assure not three-putting the final green in front of the gallery. My lag putt dropped right in the hole on the last rotation! Trying for birdies I got nothing but pars, and trying for a par at the last, I made birdie! Isn't that the way golf goes?

I had shot 72-74=146 to break my previous scoring record by a stroke, finishing two-under par for the tournament. Jay Harris finished nine strokes back in second and Tom Johnson got third. An interesting sidelight is that John Roth played the whole tournament with just one club: an Urquhart Adjustable!

Another interesting memory from Oakhurst involved Ralph Livingston and I playing a practice



round together. We were teeing off on the eighth hole as about 20 sheep were grazing in the fairway about 100 yards in front of us. The sheep weren't really in our way at all; our tee shots would easily carry over the top of them. I teed off first and hit a nice long drive down the left center of the fairway. As usual, the sheep paid no attention to the fact that I had just hit a golf ball over them. Ralph stepped up to tee off and let loose a low bullet of a drive, no more than waist high, heading right for the sheep. It was useless to yell "fore" so we watched apprehensively as the ball closed in on the unsuspecting sheep. Whack! The ball blasted into the rear flank of one of the sheep. The surprised critter jumped back, looked around, and then went back to grazing. Whew! At least the ball didn't do any damage. We were both relieved.

A couple of hours later, Ralph and I, still practicing our hickory golf, came to the same eighth hole. Again, the sheep were in the same position as before. Again, I teed off first and hit a nice drive over the heads of the sheep. Then Ralph stepped up to tee off. As he addressed the ball, all the sheep scurried hurriedly away to the safety of the trees down the right side. "Look at that, Ralph" I interrupted, before Ralph could take a swing. "I guess they've seen you play before!"

Ralph had another interesting incident occur during the 2002 NHC Tournament while playing with Gary Wiren. Teeing off on the long par 4 fourth hole, Ralph actually whiffed his drive, right over the top, and the ball fell forward off his sand tee so that his own mound of sand now stymied him! A bit of confusion ensued as to what should be done next. Could Ralph re-tee his ball? Could he remove his sand tee that was blocking his second shot? Did he have to play the ball as it was? Gary Wiren wasn't sure. Ralph wasn't sure.

I was watching the commotion from the third tee box as a call went out to Pete Georgiady at the clubhouse. Pete wasn't sure. Someone went to contact Trey Holland, past USGA president and expert on the rules, who was playing on another part of the course. Meanwhile, Ralph decided to play the ball as it lies, and he exploded through his sand tee



Playing Hickory Golf



into his golf ball, bounding his ball a small ways up the fairway. Not that unusual, you might think, for someone bringing up the rear in a tough hickory shaft competition like the NHC. Except that Ralph finished second, beating everyone in the field except me!

The Scottish Hickory Championship

In 1998, Ralph Livingston and I decided it would be great to go to Scotland and play our hickory clubs in the top tournament of the British Golf Collectors' Society, the Scottish Hickory Championship. We arrived at the Glasgow airport where David Hamilton, who had graciously agreed to show us around Scotland, met us. He took us to his home course of Kilmacolm for our first round of golf in Scotland. The



Don't let Scottish sunshine fool you. It may be raining and hailing in just a few minutes!

weather was absolutely gorgeous on this May afternoon with sunshine, a hint of a breeze, and temperatures in the middle sixties.

This was nothing like the Scottish weather I had heard about with high winds, cold temperatures, and rain. The next morning, Ralph and I were preparing to head down to Royal Troon to play both of their 18-hole courses, when I went outside to check the weather. It was another beautiful day with calm, clear skies and warm sunshine! I left my rainsuit and umbrella at the hotel and we headed to Troon.

On the drive down, the skies started to cloud over and small drops of rain began to fall from the sky. Now I was wishing I had brought my umbrella and rainsuit. By the time we teed off on the first hole, a cold, brisk wind was blowing in off the sea and the rain was steady. After seven holes, I was soaked to the bone and my hands were numb. In America, courses close when they get this much rain, but not so on the links courses of the U.K. where the sandy soil soaks up water like a dry sponge. Since they have hardly any lightning, golf is not cancelled for rain.



The Swilcan Bridge at the Old Course in St. Andrews. Where better to take a picture in Scotland?!



Archie Baird and John Crow Miller. Archie has been a fixture at the Scottish Hickory Championship since he started it in 1985.

Chris Homer and I had a memorable match in 2001. I don't remember Chris hitting a bad shot the entire round. He drove the ball very well, hit his irons right at the flag, chipped close to the hole, and never missed a short putt! I was managing to hang in there with him, nursing a one-stroke lead as we played the last hole. On the 18th green, Chris rolled in a tough 10-foot putt for an excellent up and down par forcing me to make my six-foot putt for a par and a score of 72. There is something inherent in competition that tends to uncap a certain brilliant focus of mind that might otherwise be unattainable. I can still vividly recall the blades of grass in the line of that last putt.

At the turn, the wind had picked up and was blowing so hard that the rain was coming down sideways. The temperature was barely 40 degrees. A clubhouse never looked so inviting. After our bone-chilling round of 18 holes of golf was finished, we staggered into the clubhouse. The buffet lunch was spectacular and after food and a bit of drying off, we headed out for our second 18—this time in just a mild rain. That was the last time I didn't take an umbrella playing Scottish golf!

I have been to Scotland six times and I feel like I have won the Scottish Hickory Championship four times instead of the two that are listed on the trophy. I had not yet joined the BGCS and so I played as a guest in this first event and shot the low score for the tournament. However, in true British understatement, that didn't even rate a mention at the awards dinner later that night!



And while I was shooting 72 and Chris Homer was shooting 73, Ralph Livingston shot a 74 to win the handicap trophy. This was remarkable considering that I had played every day with Ralph for over 10 straight days and he had not once threatened to break 80. And, in fact, he had twisted his ankle the day before and thought he might not be able to even walk that morning! Beware the injured golfer!



Neil Hutchinson and I played to a tie in 2004. Neil played some exceptionally gutsy golf that day, making numerous outstanding clutch shots right when he needed them. It was I who had to make a putt to tie Neil on the last hole. I thought we would have a play-off for the scratch trophy, but the BGCS broke the tie by matching scorecards.

The lowest back nine score was

the tiebreaker. Well, hickory golf is still in its infancy and Neil did play a round worthy of the championship trophy.

I won the tournament again in 2005 when 57 players teed off on a cold, windy, and rainy afternoon at Gullane. I was well dressed, but my hands were still numb from the cold before I ever teed off! If somebody had told me I was going to shoot 72 in these conditions, I wouldn't have believed it. Mark Wehring, from Houston, finished only two strokes back with a superb round of 74. I made a great birdie on #16, which was



The Championship Course at North Berwick is one of my favorite places to play hickory golf.

played directly into the wind. I hit three great shots on the hardest hole on the course that day: a perfect drive right down the middle of the narrow, twisting fairway, a driving iron right on the back section of green where the hole was cut, and a curling 30-footer right into the center of the cup. I promptly double-bogeyed #17, though, and then hooked my drive badly off #18 tee and was lucky to have Wayne Aaron's caddy find my ball for me! I made a par from that unlikely spot to finish strong.

In a practice round at Crail one day, Ralph Livingston and I joined Tad Moore and Roger Hill mid-round to play a few holes. We were teeing off on a steeply uphill par 4 with a yawning fairway bunker dead center in the middle of the fairway. This bunker

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looked quite intimidating with its large size, deep sod-faced front, and close proximity to a good drive's landing zone. I teed off first and pulled my drive left of the sod-face bunker, but plenty long. Ralph hit his drive next at the left edge of the sod-faced bunker, and we thought he would easily clear the bunker, and he did, but it was closer than we thought. Roger heeled his drive a bit and it landed just to the right of the sod-faced bunker.



The scenic Glen Course in North Berwick.



Another of my favorite courses, Cruden Bay, in the north of Scotland, with the ruins of the castle that inspired Bram Stokers' "Dracula" in the background.

Now Tad got up to hit. I had decided to have a little fun with him and as soon as Tad made contact, I loudly exclaimed, "You've hit it into the sod-faced bunker!" As fate would have it, the ball launched like an arrow directly at the middle of the sod-faced bunker. There was total silence as the normal post-swing chatter was replaced with an intense interest in where Tad's drive would end up. The ball seemed to hang forever against the clear blue Scottish sky. As the ball dropped, everyone wondered if the ball had enough carry to clear the bunker. It did not. The ball landed directly in the middle of the sod face in an explosion of dust and fell back into the bunker. We all broke out into laughter, including Tad. What were the odds of that happening?

Hail figured into two of my Scottish practice rounds. The first one was at Cruden Bay playing with Ralph Livingston. The north of Scotland can have some unpredictable weather, even by Scottish standards, and we were playing the par 5 sixth hole when rain, wind, and



*Travis Vanderpool
caddies for me at
the Scottish Hickory
Championship.*

marble-size hail hit us so hard, we were both drenched even with umbrellas and waterproof clothes. It rained seven different times during the course of that round, but, in spite of the weather, I was having one of my finest rounds. With four holes to play, all into a stiff breeze, I was four-under par. I missed six-foot par putts on each of the last four holes!

At Kilspindie, I was playing golf with a friend of mine, Travis Vanderpool from Omaha making his first trip to Scotland on a beautiful, sunny 55-degree day. On the 15th hole, Travis looked across the firth and noticed a huge, black wall cloud that seemed to be moving our way. Travis looked at me, the experienced Scottish golfer, and inquired as to the degree of importance that we should attach to such an ominous looking development. I assured him it was nothing to worry about.

An eerie calm pervaded the entire course and there was not a breath of wind. In ten minutes as the dark cloud had descended over us, drops of rain began to fall. The wind picked up speed quickly and now, blowing a gale, the hail came hard and heavy. You might think that an umbrella would be sufficient protection at a time like this, but I can assure you, it is not. The storm had passed in 15 minutes, but we were soaked and half frozen. The sun came back out and by the 18th hole; it was a beautiful, sunny day again. Travis noted that the native Scots on the course, who had also weathered the storm, were mostly playing in short sleeve shirts.

I had another interesting experience playing with Travis at the Jubilee Course at St. Andrews. Travis had hit an iron shot up against the lip of a particularly deep bunker to the left of the 14th green and as he descended to play his shot, it brought to mind a great quotation from Horace Hutchinson from his book, "Hints on Golf". "If your adversary is badly bunkered, there is no rule against your standing over him and counting his strokes aloud, with increasing gusto as the numbers mount up, but it will be a wise precaution to arm yourself with the niblick before doing so, so as to meet him on equal terms."

I already had my niblick in my hands and Travis was badly bunkered. He didn't get out on his first effort and he clearly wasn't happy but I did not say a word. When he did not get out on his second shot, I softly said "That's two." Travis heard me and looked up, glaring at me. Again, he tried and again the ball stayed in the bunker. "Three." I said, a little louder. Now Travis exploded in a burst of colorful expletives, and started to walk out of the bunker.

I quickly reassured him that his previous shot would have cleared the lip if only he had more loft on his wedge. I handed him his lob wedge and he calmed down enough to try it again. "Four." I tallied up, a little louder than before, as his ball nearly cleared the lip. In a fury, he quickly blasted at the ball again. "Five." I called out louder. Seething with anger, Travis took a mighty, adrenaline-charged final stab at the ball and brought it out just onto the edge of the green. "Six!" I yelled, as he emerged from the bunker glowering at me.

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I could totally understand why one would want to be armed with a niblick after using this match play tactic! I had to explain the situation to Travis a couple of times before he was calm enough to, shall we say, appreciate it. We laugh about it now, but I don't recommend this tactic for everyone!

Later that day I watched as Travis played the 18th hole at the Old Course with another group. I was sitting on the steps leading up to the Royal & Ancient clubhouse next to the 18th green with two of our friends when I commented to them that this was Travis' 36th hole of the day. The light was fading and Travis had hit a long drive right down the middle and he was using his laser rangefinder to get the exact distance to the hole. He must be playing well, I said, to still be so interested in the exact yardage.



Travis Vanderpool and I in front of the R&A in St. Andrews.

We watched as Travis addressed the ball. "He tends to shank the ball when he gets tired" I said right as Travis started his swing. Travis was a two-handicapper at the time and though the swing looked good, the shot had a hollow thud. "I think he shanked it," I said. We all looked intently for his shot, but the light was so dim that you could no longer see the ball. There was a solitary car parked along the boundary fence to the right of the fairway. The unmistakable sound of a golf ball hitting the car pierced the stillness. He HAD shanked it! Right into the only car parked on the street! It was late in the day and for some reason this shot reduced the three of us into a hysterical fit of laughter.

We were actually rolling on the ground; we thought it was so funny! Travis' ball had banked off the car and had come to rest just in play by a yard or so. He hit his third and again we could not see the ball. The distinctive "ting" of ball hitting metal was again heard; only this time he had hit the flagstick! With Travis hitting metal again, we could not contain ourselves! The comments flew about his ball being attracted to metal. To us, it seemed incredibly hilarious. Travis made the putt for his par 4!

I returned from Scotland to the States in 2005 holding the titles of all four major hickory golf championships, all at the same time: The National Hickory Championship, The Canadian Hickory Championship, The GCS World Hickory Championship, and the

BGCS Scottish Hickory Championship, but I think I was more excited about what happened at the Old Course at St. Andrews, than I was about winning all four majors.

I had played the Old Course a half a dozen times or so at that point. I even shot a 75 with my hickories on my first trip around the Old Course. This was excellent considering that I double-bogeyed the 17th hole. My caddy advised me to aim for the



On the Swilcan Bridge with Rob Ahlschwede and Chris McIntyre at the Old Course in 2005.

church steeple off the tee and I thought that might be too safe, but I tried it anyway, after all, my caddy had been watching me play well up to then and I figured he knew my game. I ended up so far left, I'm not sure they even mow grass over there.

I had a horrible angle to the green from about 220 yards with a lie that I should hit no more than a niblick out of. The Road Hole, as the 17th at the Old Course is known, is probably the most famous hole in all of golf and I dearly wanted to par that hole. I did not. The second and third times I played the hole, I made a

bogey, almost making a par from off the road one time. I finally did make a par, hitting the front right edge of the green and converting a difficult two-putt with a six-footer.

On this day, I was pumped up, as usual, to play the hole. The old adage is to aim at the "O" in the "OLD COURSE HOTEL" sign that is part of the building directly in front of you that you must drive over. Of course, any of the three "O"s will work. I hit a very solid drive over the far right "O" with a little fade. I was just hoping the ball would stay in play. The hole doglegs sharply to the right, but the out-of-bounds is close to where your best approach angle to the green is located. My shot placement turned out well, just in the right rough with an excellent angle to the green.

With a little wind in my face, I selected a driving iron and pulled it just left of the green. I was lucky to not have the road hole bunker between my ball and the hole. I was about 60 feet from the flag and had to go up an incline to the green, then down to the hole. If I hit my shot just a little too far to the left, my ball could easily funnel into the famous road hole bunker. If I was long, I could go right out onto the road. If I were short, the ball would roll back to me.

Distance control and trajectory were both very critical to the success of this shot. If I hit a high lob onto the green, it would likely bounce out onto the road. A lob shot just short would not get up the hill. I would have to run the ball up to the hole. I selected my Tom Stewart jigger stamped for Ben Sayers to attempt a low, running, chip shot.

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At first I thought the ball might be short and I was exhorting the ball to get up the hill. As it crested the hill, I realized that, indeed, I might have hit it too hard. "Stop, stop, stop!" I was imploring as the ball rolled down the hill, hit the flagstick, and fell in the hole! Birdie three! It never crossed my mind that the shot had any chance to go in the hole. A birdie three on the Road Hole! With hickories! It still gives me goose bumps! Old Tom Morris would have been proud!

The Canadian Hickory Championship

In my opinion, the Canadian Hickory Championship is one of the finest hickory events in all of hickory golf. It is one of my two favorite tournaments. Ron Lyons puts on a fantastic week of hospitality and hickory golf at his 27-hole, "The Legends" Golf Course in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, which he co-owns with Edwin Chan. There is a casual two-person best ball match play tournament for openers and the next day, the Casey Cup pits an American team against a Canadian team in a Ryder Cup style 27-hole competition.



Competitors at one of the first Canada vs. U.S.A. Matches.

The following day concludes with the 36-hole Canadian Hickory Championship and a banquet where a Canadian "legend" is inducted into The Legends' "Hall of Fame". Arrive early and you can participate in an excursion into the mountains to play great courses like Banff Springs and Jasper Park, classic Stanley Thompson designs from the hickory era. The competition is always strong in the tournament with many excellent hickory golfers competing for the top prize. The 27-hole golf course is an excellent layout for some challenging hickory golf and the course is in peak condition for the tournament with fast, smooth greens like you would expect to see at a PGA Tour event.

I have had several memorable Canadian Hickory Championships. The first time I had a really good chance to win the tournament was in 2002 playing with Paul Biocini and John Wilson. I birdied my 27th hole to take a two-stroke lead on Paul and a four-stroke lead on John who had been tied with me until he took a seven on the par 4 ninth of the original nine. I figured John was finished after his triple bogey and Paul would be my main competition.

I would shoot a 37 on the par 36 back nine and with a two and four-stroke lead over Paul and John, you would have thought my chances for victory would have been exceptional, if not a sure thing. Well, John Wilson played some inspired and flawless golf on the back nine and as we arrived on the 18th tee, he was four-under par on the nine and had a one-stroke lead over me.

I had actually birdied 17 to gain the tee box on 18. The 18th hole is a very demanding par 4 finishing hole over water where you can gamble and try to drive the green, about a 270-yard carry over water, or play "safely" out to the right. There is a tight out-of-bounds on the right and bunkers on the left sloping down to the lake. With a little breeze in our face, driving over the water was not a good option for me. A straight tee shot was imperative and I knew how important it was for me to put some pressure on John with a good tee ball.

I got off a very acceptable driving iron shot that finished just inside the 150-yard marker. That was just what I wanted to accomplish; the pressure was squarely on John to match my tee shot.

John addressed his tee ball, and just before he began his swing, he turned his head to look back at me and said, with a smile on his face, "This is what it's all about, isn't it!" He then looked back to his ball and swung, hitting a perfect drive down the left center of the fairway.

In all my years of competition, I had never seen anyone break his pre-shot routine at such a critical juncture to make such a spontaneous and heartfelt comment like that and then have the focus to hit a perfect shot!

I was totally amazed. I still had a chance to win, though, and with my par, John would have to match me to capture the Canadian Hickory Championship. He had a slippery, downhill birdie putt from just off the back fringe, about 12 feet from the hole.

This putt was really fast and it would be quite easy to roll the putt six feet or more past the hole and a three-putt would put us in a play-off. When he hit the putt, I knew it was stroked too firmly. The ball was gathering speed and I could see it would roll at least six feet beyond the hole.

However, the line was exceptional and the ball crashed dead center into the flagstick and fell straight to the bottom of the hole. Another birdie! I congratulated John on the finest round of nine holes of hickory golf that I had ever seen in competition.

Anytime you shoot a five-under par 31 for nine holes of golf, is exceptional. To do it in a tournament is even better. To do it when it matters in a tournament is better yet. To do it with hickory clubs, well, that speaks for itself!

Playing Hickory Golf

I was playing some exceptional golf going into the 2004 Canadian Hickory Championship; all parts of my game were working well and when I hit my opening tee ball into the small lake on the left side of the first hole of the new nine I wasn't upset at all. I finished the first nine at one over par and I bogeyed the second hole of the original nine when my tee ball ended up directly under a small pine tree on the left side of the fairway to go to two-over par.

The critical hole in the tournament for me was the long, dogleg right par 5 fourth hole, my 13th of the day. From a hanging lie, I pulled my driving iron second shot way left into what looked like an out of play position deep in the trees. The ball was most likely lost and I played a provisional ball right behind another tree left of the fairway. I was looking at triple bogey to go with my already two-over par status for a probable five-over par standing. Things were looking bleak.

What a great stroke of fortune it was to find that my original second shot had apparently rebounded out of the unplayable thicket of trees and brush into just the rough and trees. I was stymied by a tree, but at least I could still hit my third shot forward, which I did into the front right bunker. Now hickory sand shots are something you would like to seriously avoid if possible. A sand save is not that likely in hickory golf and a disaster from a bunker is much more common. I made a well-focused swing, blasting my ball out of the bunker onto the green where it bounced to the right and rolled into the cup!

I had made a birdie on a hole that looked like I was going to make a triple bogey! I made a 15-foot birdie putt on the next hole and then birdied both #7 and #9 to finish my round with four birdies on my last six holes to shoot a two-under par round of 70. That certainly would have struck me as nearly impossible back on the par 5 when I was two-over par with my second shot appearing to be unplayable deep in the trees!

I started my second round with 11 straight pars before I birdied a par 5. I finished my second round solidly for a round of par 72. I thought I had won the tournament handily but as I turned my score in, Ron Lyons looked me straight in the eyes and said in a very serious tone, "Glenn Jevny just shot a 66." Glenn is a very smooth swinging player from Alberta who can absolutely bomb his driver. I had played with Glenn in my opening round. He had hit a lot of great iron shots that went right over the flag and left him difficult up and down opportunities during his first 18 holes. I was trying to do the quick math in my head to see if he had beaten me or not. He had certainly gained six strokes on me in our second 18! His first round of 78 had left him two shots behind me. Glenn's 66 is the lowest competitive round shot in the modern era! It is not always easy to win a hickory golf tournament.

In 2005, I had a great match with Canadian pro Ross Kenny, a 6'4" ex-hockey player who can hit a golf ball 300 yards with a hickory driver. In the opening round of the CHC I shot a three-under par 69, but only had a one-stroke lead over Ross who had shot a two-under par 70. In the afternoon round, Ross and I battled back and forth until we came to the final hole of the second 18, with me clinging to a one-shot lead after Ross had just birdied the par 4 17th hole.

The par 4 18th hole offers the option of attempting to drive over a lake that guards the green or to play safe and hit around the lake. This great risk/reward par 4 has been voted the best finishing hole in Edmonton. With the honors on #18, Ross decided to try to drive the green even though we were hitting into a slight breeze. Ross would need to carry the ball the equivalent of about 280 yards to clear the lake from where we were teeing off. With a mighty swing, Ross pounded his driver high and hard on a perfect line for the shortest carry over the lake just right of the green. I had watched Ross play all day and I figured his odds of pulling off this shot would be less than 50%.



*The 18th hole at the Legends Golf & C.C.
during the Canadian Hickory Championships.*

Only his finest effort would even have a chance to clear the water. The ball looked good, however, as it was falling from the sky. We knew it would be close as to whether it cleared the water or not. The ball fell from the sky and splashed at the water's edge just short of dry land. Ross expressed his disappointment verbally in no uncertain terms. After taking a moment to collect himself, Ross was preparing to hit another ball when someone yelled to him that he should check his ball's position before re-teeing.

I thought my chances of winning the tournament at this moment were rather excellent with a one-shot lead and Ross' ball in the water. I hit a mediocre driving iron that was pulled left. The ball landed in the left rough and rolled down the bank into one

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of the bunkers that save a wayward tee shot from going into the water. I was about 135 yards from the green on a slightly downhill lie in the bunker playing to an elevated green across water. As I examined my situation, I noticed a crowd had gathered around Ross down by the edge of the lake and it was apparent there was some discussion about his ball's position that I assumed must mean that it was potentially playable.

I figured that all I had to do was somehow get my ball over the lake and I would be assured a score of five and a probable victory. I selected a mashie so I would have plenty of club and then I hit the ball solidly with a three-quarter swing. There is a steep bank in front of the green and I didn't see exactly where my ball landed, but it cleared the water and was probably just short of the green. When I got down to Ross' position, his ball was in the water but only half submerged. The lake was staked with red hazard stakes, but was not outlined with red paint around the perimeter, as you would normally see in a tournament.

If the lake had been outlined with red paint, Ross' ball would be considered to be in the lake. But there was no outline around the lake. The usual protocol in this situation is to figure the line of the hazard as a straight line between the nearest red stakes. The red stakes were quite a ways apart and when you measured it this way, Ross' ball was outside the hazard line. There was talk about the lake being higher than normal and that the ball could be considered to be in "casual water" which would be a free drop.

The ruling was that Ross' ball was outside the hazard and in casual water and so Ross received a free drop. To make matters worse for me, my ball had cleared the hazard and found the only uncut piece of grass on the entire bank that slopes up to the green. This circular patch of grass was about six inches in diameter and two feet tall. The mower must have missed it because the grass on all sides of it was cut fairly short.

My ball was lodged deep within the base of this grass. It looked like it was possibly "plugged" which would be a free drop, but it was just nestled all the way down to the bare dirt level yet not underground. After pondering my lie, I decided it was most likely that I would not be able to extract my ball from this position in just one swing and even if I did, it would be unlikely that it would move more than a few inches which means the ball could roll backwards down the hill into the water.

I opted to take an unplayable lie penalty stroke so that I could still possibly get up and down for a five. I took my penalty and we both ended up chipping on and two putting. Ross made four and I made six. Ross won by a stroke.

It was a weird set of circumstances; Ross hits into the lake and gets a free drop and I clear the hazard and get a one-stroke penalty. Ross was very good about the whole situation and I didn't blame anybody for anything. I think Ross could have made the same score playing his ball from the lake, as the top half of his ball was out of the water. It was a strange ending to a really outstanding match between Ross and I. Ross was excellent to play with and he has one of the best "killer instincts" in closing a tight match of anyone I have ever played against.

We also play a Ryder Cup style 27-hole team match play event just before the Canadian Hickory Championship and I have had a great time playing with Ross, John Wilson, and Ben Plaunt, an exceptional lefty who opened the CHC one year with a smooth score of 69! Ben's long hitting brother Kenny is the longest driver of the golf ball with a hickory driver that I have ever seen, often blasting drives out in the 330-yard range!

Willie Ducherer is another long hitting Canadian with a great swing who brings a lot of game to this event. The "Curtis Cup", as this competition is called, has been taken convincingly every year by the Canadians, except in 2004 when I captained the American team. That year I had Max Hill, a stalwart and seasoned hickory veteran, playing in the last match against Johnny "Bago" McMurchy, the clutch Canadian performer. As the matches were closing, it became apparent that the final result would be very close and the only match in doubt was the Hill-McMurchy duel.



Contestants in the 2001 Canadian Hickory Championship Matches.

I caught up to them on the eighth hole of their nine-hole match and questioned Ron Lyons, the Canadian captain, as to how the match stood. Ron informed me that their match was tied. I told Ron that all the other matches had been completed and the entire competition was also tied! Ron looked surprised and asked me not to tell Johnny how the matches stood because he didn't want to put the extra pressure on him. I went over to Max on the green and told him all the matches were done and Canada and the US were all square, it would all come down to his match. I think Max's heart skipped a beat.

Both teams surrounded the green abuzz over the final match and as Johnny "Bago" was lining up his 40-foot birdie putt, I walked over and informed him that the hopes of all Canada were in his hands as the matches were tied with only his match in doubt. A look of terror rolled across Johnny's face and Ron Lyons shook his head at me and whispered that I shouldn't have told him that.

Johnny needed a par to win the hole and with the pressure of the match and all of Canada's hopes on his broad shoulders, Johnny hit his 40-foot birdie putt 10 feet. Not 10 feet short, he hit the putt 10 feet. There was total silence. Thirty or more spectators lined

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the green and not a sound was heard as Johnny lined up his 30-foot par putt. I wasn't sure whether I should laugh or cry.

Johnny stroked his second putt. This putt was hit much better. The putt had a considerable break to it and, after seeing his first putt, I thought it was very possible that Johnny might three-putt from this new position. The ball started to the right, rolling gently downhill and picking up speed as it approached the flatter lower level of the green. As Johnny's ball rolled out onto the flat of the green, the ball began to break left as it slowed down. About six feet from the hole, the putt was looking pretty good.



All eyes were on Johnny's ball as it went tracking right into the cup! A curling 30-footer for a two-putt par! Unbelievable! Johnny held on to his one-hole advantage despite a valiant effort by Max Hill on the last hole. Suddenly, Canada had a new national hero. Johnny "Bago" McMurchy had saved the Curtis Cup for Canada!

*Johnny "BAGO" McMurchy –
Canadian Casey Cup hero!*

Tad Moore's Southern Hickory Four Ball Championship

In 2003, Tad Moore, the noted golf club designer and hickory golf enthusiast, organized the first Southern Hickory Four Ball Championship at The Fields Golf Course in LaGrange, Georgia. This is a tournament where you and your partner each play your own ball and the best score on each hole between the two of you is counted. This is a fun format because a bad hole by either player will not sink your chances as long as both players don't do poorly on the same hole!

I teamed with Rob Ahlschwede, the international player from Nebraska, for this first event and we won the tournament! Rob is a good partner for me because he is capable of stretches of good golf—he shot a 77 at Niagara on the Lake in 2006, but he will generally have a few fozzled shots, to borrow some antique hickory golf terminology, during a round.

Generally, Rob is quite entertaining when his game is in meltdown mode and since this happens frequently, I am always left in good spirits. We paired again in 2004, but Chuck McMullin brought his buddy from college, Fred Muller, the pro at Crystal Downs in Michigan and they played exceptionally well together to beat us. Fred has won about every hickory event he has played in Michigan and I have competed against him several times. Chuck is also an excellent hickory player with a vast knowledge of golf's early history and the clubs and clubmakers from this era.

The 2005 tournament went down to the wire, to the very last hole of the 36-hole event. After I had made a bogey, Rob holed a long par putt for a one-stroke victory! I estimated the length of Rob's putt at about 35 feet, but he claims it was actually much shorter.

The turnout for Tad's tournament was better than ever in 2006 and a writer and photographer for Golfweek magazine also showed up to document the burgeoning hickory golf movement. In the first round, I three-putted the 18th green for a 75 on my own ball and a 74 score overall. I was not very happy with my putting game. Our best ball score of 74 had left us in sixth place, three strokes out of the lead. I headed to the putting green to try to straighten my putting stroke out.

I spent several hours on the practice putting green and then a couple of more hours after that putting in my motel room before I went to bed. I had restored enough confidence that I was looking forward to the next day's concluding round. On the first tee box the next morning, I told Rob that he needn't worry because I was planning on making all the shots today and I wasn't expecting any help from him.

This is excellent psychology from two standpoints. First, I would have no expectations concerning Rob's performance and thus I could totally focus on my plan to make a good score on every hole. Second, Rob would feel no pressure from me to produce great golf shots and that way, maybe he would! I hit a nice drive on the opening par 5 but my second shot would have to be threaded through the trunks of two large trees about 100 yards in front of me.

My second shot hit one of these trees squarely and came back to within 30 yards of me! I managed to get an eight-foot par putt and after Rob bogeyed, I rolled in the eight-footer! All that putting practice was looking like it was worth it now!

On the second hole, I faced a curling five-foot par putt and I made that as well. I had saved two strokes with my putting on my first two holes. The downhill par 4 third hole had been my nemesis in the past with a hazard area just to the right of the landing zone and a green with water directly behind it. I hit a low mashie niblick second shot designed to land short and bounce back to the hole. The ball bounced nearly perfectly and finished overhanging the hole for a tap-in birdie!

This was certainly just the start we were looking for. The par 3 fourth hole goes over water with more water on the right. Rob launched his ball off the rocks and into the water. My tee ball hit the green, but I had to make an eight-foot putt for par after my lag putt, which I did! On the fifth hole, my drive took a bad bounce to the left and rolled up against a boundary fence. I took an unplayable lie penalty and made a bogey. I was disappointed; I had wanted to play an error-free round. Rob, however, made a par!

We were still one-under on our best ball score. On the par 4 sixth, I bombed my driver to within 70 yards of the flag, which was in the back, left corner of the green. I hit my RTJ Tom Stewart niblick in the hole for a deuce! My eagle put me two-under on my own ball and our team three-under par. I tried extra hard to maintain my good focus

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on the next hole because a player will often let down after a great shot or great hole. I rolled in a 15-foot birdie putt on the seventh!

The eighth hole is one of the most difficult holes a long uphill par 3 that most players hit a wood on. I hit a superb long iron and made a nice two-putt from 25 feet. I let a nice birdie opportunity escape me on the par 5 ninth hole when I failed to get up and down from the fringe and I made a par. The 10th hole is a par 5 with a lay-up tee shot in front of a large lake. I played two nice shots to get to about 40 yards out where I pitched onto the two-tiered green to four feet for another birdie.

The 11th hole is the most difficult on the course. The tee ball on this par 4 must be straight and long as your second shot is played from a steep downhill lie over a pond that butts directly up to the front edge of a very shallow green with a steep bank behind it. I hit an exceptional drive and a very well positioned iron to have a swinging 15-foot birdie putt. A par on this hole is great and a bogey isn't the worst score as this hole can easily produce double bogeys and worse. I was just trying to lag my slick, downhill putt close to the hole but the ball tracked right into the center of the hole for another birdie! I was five-under on my own ball after 11 holes and our team was six-under!

I made nice pars on the next three holes and then hit a short iron to about six feet on #15. I made this putt for another birdie to go six-under on my own ball. I think I was starting to get outside my comfort zone. I had shot a 67 before with my hickory clubs in a practice round, but not a 66 like I would now with three more pars. Rob teed off first on the par 3 16th and "wallached" one dead left into two-foot high grass.

A "wallach" is a hickory tee ball that starts about 45 degrees left of the target; it hits the ground almost immediately after impact and bounces to its final destination. This shot is named after famed hickory golfer Allan Wallach of Philadelphia who played this



*Relaxing after my round of 67 at Tad Moore's
Southern Hickory Four Ball Championship in LaGrange, Georgia.*

shot often. Anyway, with Rob in a strategically disadvantaged position, I managed to par the hole with a nice five-foot par putt.

The 17th hole is a long par 5 that it is possible for me to reach the green in two with my two best shots. I bombed my drive down the fairway and was in position to potentially hit the green with a perfectly played spoon. This would put me seven-under par on the day. I proceeded to hit the three worst shots of my entire day one after another. I ended up with an eight-foot par putt that I missed.

I was keenly disappointed, but Rob had come through with a par! We were seven-under par on our best ball score! We were playing with Tom Irving and the pro at the Fields, Butch Wilhelm. Often when one player gets on a good roll, the positive vibrations can carry all the players to a good round. Tom and Butch had started the day a stroke ahead of us and were four-under par for their round. We were only a couple of strokes in front of them, so we needed to finish strong.

I made a nice par on 18, two putting from about 45 feet. Rob and I had finished with a seven-under par 65 to go with our opening 74. We won the tournament by two strokes. I had shot a 67 on my own ball, my lowest competitive hickory round of golf. And Golfweek magazine ran a six-page spread on the tournament, complete with pictures, in their June 17, 2006 edition. Travel and Leisure Golf magazine had done a nice article on me the year before in their March/April 2005 edition titled "The Hickory Tiger".

The Hickory Grail

Ralph Livingston III is responsible for the creation of "The Hickory Grail", a team competition between players from the United States and those from Europe. Ralph and David Hamilton of Scotland organized the first event that was contested on the links of Kilspindie Golf Club in Scotland in 2000. Twelve American players ventured overseas to become a part of this historic match. The American players included Ralph Livingston III, Roger Hill, Tad Moore, Brian Siplo, Chuck McMullin, Jack Timmel, John Crow Miller, Win Padgett, Bill Farmer, Trey Holland, Ralph Livingston Jr. and myself.



Chris Homer and Ralph Livingston III during their famous Hickory Grail Match.

Hickory Grail Photo Gallery



United States Hickory Grail Golf Team

Kilspindie GC May 25, 2000

*Jack Timmel, Chuck McMullin, Ralph Livingston Jr., Roger Hill, Tad Moore,
Bill Farmer, John Crow Miller, Ralph Livingston III, Winfield Padgett,
Randy Jensen, Brian Siplo, Rick Wolffe, Brian Delacey*



European Hickory Grail Golf Team

Kilspindie GC May 25, 2000

*Jim Colville, David Hamilton, Hamish Ewan, Chris Homer, John Still, John Sherwood,
Philip Truett, Alan Jackson, Tom Tew, Barry Kerr, John Pearson, Pehr Thermaenius*

Hickory Grail Photo Gallery



Byron Nelson, our honorary Hickory Grail captain, at his ranch in Texas. U.S. team members Win Padgett, Bill Farmer, John Crow Miller, Chuck McMullin, myself, Ralph Livingston III, Tad Moore, and Roger Hill surround Byron.

Hickory Grail Photo Gallery



Teeing off at the 1st hole in a match with John Sherwood at Kilspindie in Scotland during the Hickory Grail.



John Sherwood tees off as I look on on the same hole. John and I have had a number of very close matches!

Hickory Grail Photo Gallery



John Crow Miller donated the coveted Hickory Grail trophy.



Ralph Livingston III poses with the Hickory Grail trophy from the event that he started. Little did he know that the outcome of the first Hickory Grail would come down to the very last putt — HIS PUTT!



John Still can only laugh at the lie his ball has found in his Hickory Grail match.



Ralph Livingston III and Chris Homer approach the final green in their decisive Grail match.

Playing Hickory Golf



Ralph Livingston III lines up his final putt on the 18th green at the inaugural Hickory Grail as everyone looks on.



The tension can be cut with a knife!

I had a great match against John Sherwood of England, just nipping him at the end, and as the 36 holes of match play was coming to a close, it became apparent that everything was boiling down to the final match between Chris Homer of England and Ralph Livingston III. The players had all gathered around the clubhouse porch as Chris and Ralph came down the 18th fairway to decide the fate of this first international hickory golf competition of the modern era. The mathematical possibilities were flying fast and furious, and as Chris Homer holed out, everyone knew that the Grail Championship had come down to Ralph's six-foot putt.

If Ralph were to make the putt, the U.S. would win. If Ralph missed the putt, the Europeans would be the champs. You could have cut the tension with a knife as Ralph surveyed his putt from all sides. There was total silence as all eyes were on Ralph as he addressed his putt. That moment seemed to last an eternity as Ralph stood motionless over his putt, culling forth every last ounce of concentration that he possessed for this one, incredibly important putt. Finally his putter moved back. I was keenly focused on Ralph's putter head to see if there was any uncertainty in his stroke. The putter head moved forward through the ball. The stroke looked perfect to me as the ball rolled toward the hole. The ball went in the dead center of the cup and Ralph confidently plucked the ball from the hole! Ralph had won the Grail for the U.S. under intense pressure. His great stroke on the final putt won the tournament that he had conceived in such a dramatic fashion that a Hollywood screenwriter couldn't have come up with a better ending!

Playing Hickory Golf



Ralph receives congratulations after he drops the winning putt!



The Grail is now contested every other year alternating between Scotland and the U.S. At first we wondered if we could get enough people who wanted to participate and were willing to travel. When the Europeans first came to the U.S. to play our match at the St. Andrews Club in Younkers, New York, they brought about 30 people. I guess that answered that question! At the St. Andrews Club, it was my match that came down to the wire. I was playing John Mullock of England and I had to spot John 26 strokes! John is not a bad golfer; in fact he can play quite well when he gets on a roll. I thought 26 strokes was quite a lot for me to spot a player like John, but I guess the closeness of our match attests to the fact that only in golf could you equalize players of differing abilities to produce a match such as ours. All the other matches had finished and Brian Siplo, our Grail captain, informed me on the 17th tee box that I needed to win my match for the U.S. to win the Grail. A tie would give the victory to the Europeans.



Teeing off in the Hickory Grail.

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I was one hole down standing on the 17th tee box and spotting John a stroke on this hole. If John makes a bogey and I make a par, Europe wins the Grail. I had to win both 17 and 18 and I was spotting John a stroke on 17 and a stroke on 18. That meant I had to win each hole by two strokes. I birdied 17 to tie our match. And I launched a huge drive right down the center of 18 fairway as the evening light was growing dim. John was having some adventures down the right side, which gave me hope that I may be able to beat him by two strokes on this hole.

Brian Siplo came out to help me get the yardage exactly right on my approach to 18. I had about 115 yards to the front flag position, all of it slightly uphill. A short approach would roll backwards down the bank at the front of the green. I decided to play the shot as a 120-yard shot and if I erred, it would be better to be long. I selected my mashie niblick and made what I thought was a perfect swing. The ball came crisply off the face of my club, streaking directly at the flagstick.

There was a large crowd gathered around the 18th green and there was very little reaction as my ball came down. I thought the odds were good that I was inside 10 feet, but in fact my ball had carried all the way to the back fringe! My ball was about 50 feet from the hole and directly on the line of a ridge separating the right half of the green from the left. If I hit the shot just left of the ridge, the ball would funnel way to the left and if I hit it to the right of the ridge, it would go way right. I couldn't believe my luck. I had hit my two best shots on this hole and a par was very seriously in doubt!

I tried to chip my ball so it landed directly on the crest of the ridge, but it landed a couple inches to the right and my ball ended up pin high, 25 feet to the right of the hole! John was on the green in four above the hole about 15 feet away. I gave my par putt a run but it was difficult to estimate the break coming up and over the ridge. My ball finished three feet below the hole. John just needed to two-putt for a six to assure a tie in our match and a European Grail victory.

John's putt was downhill and slick and certainly no guaranteed two-putt. I don't think John was accustomed to playing with this much pressure and he left his first putt a knee-knocking four feet short. With all his European teammates watching, it certainly wouldn't be good for John to miss the putt and he didn't, making a great clutch putt under the circumstances for his six and a European victory. I shook hands with John and congratulated him on the putt and the European's victory.



Philip Truett and Win Padgett at Kilspindie.



John Pearson and Chuck McMullin pose for the camera during their Grail match.



Archie Baird confers with John Sherwood in our Hickory Grail match at Kilspindie.

Two years later, at Kilspindie again, I had another memorable match with Nigel Notley. I was spotting Nigel five strokes in our match play finale for the Grail. Nigel had won the scratch trophy for the Scottish Hickory Championship a few years earlier so I knew he was a very good hickory player. We arrived at the 18th hole all square in our match and this time, at least, I wouldn't be spotting any strokes on the last hole! Most of the other matches had finished and it was another very close competition. Our match could be critical and a large contingent of American and European players was watching the proceedings from just outside the clubhouse. I had chipped up to tap-in par range when Nigel holed a tough chip shot from off the green for a birdie and a victory in our match! The event ended in a tie and Europe kept the Grail!

In 2007, the Grail was contested on American soil at Brook Hollow Golf Club in Dallas, Texas. John Crow Miller organized a fabulous event complete with elaborate opening ceremonies and a fine tribute to Ralph Livingston III at the closing banquet. In between, the bermuda grass and the Tillinghast slopes confounded the European team and the U.S. won handily without the drama of previous years. I had a great time talking Irish golf with John Hanna in our match and I hope to play in Ireland someday soon!



The 2007 Hickory Grail opening ceremonies.

2007 Hickory Grail Photo Gallery



The 2007 U.S. Hickory Grail team.



The 2007 European Hickory Grail team.

2007 Hickory Grail Photo Gallery



David Hamilton exhorting his European team members on.



European captain David Kirkwood of Scotland looks as though he may have just substituted an exploding golf ball on his unsuspecting American adversary!



The European Grail team wasn't just all men!



Brian Siplo rolls his birdie putt to the hole.

2007 Hickory Grail Photo Gallery



Nice arm extension on this Graham Rowley drive.



Tony Norcott prepares to hit from light rough.



Lining up another birdie putt.



These Brook Hollow bunkers are quite challenging.

2007 Hickory Grail Photo Gallery



I tee off on an uphill par 3.



Chris McIntyre and I teamed up in the alternate shot format.



John Crow Miller & Philip Truett.



John Still looks on as Trey Holland approaches.

2007 Hickory Grail Photo Gallery



Tad Moore putts for birdie.



Better than being in the bunker!



William Tanner of Scotland displays his strong yet sensitive touch.



All ages can play.

2007 Hickory Grail Photo Gallery



Mark Wehring is thinking his tee ball just might go in the hole.



Fred Muller, one of the world's best hickory golfers, demonstrates his winning form from the fairway.



Ron Beatt and John Still paired off against the formidable American team of Tad Moore and Roger Hill.



John Hanna and I talk hickory golf during the 2007 Hickory Grail.

GCS Heart of America Hickory Championship

The Region 7 Golf Collectors Society “Heart of America” Hickory Championship is the longest running, continuously contested hickory event in the world. The first tournament was held in 1978 and it has been held every year since then. The GCS World Hickory Championship is older, beginning in 1973, but it has had several formats, including a scramble competition one year, and some years when no tournament was held at all. The Heart of America tournament is for GCS members from Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Colorado, Wyoming, Missouri, and Wisconsin. Anyone is welcome to play in the tournament, even if you live in another state or country and even if you do not belong to the GCS.

This is the tournament in which I played my first competitive round with hickory golf clubs in 1989. Starting in 1990, I have won this tournament 17 out of the last 18 years, missing only in 1994 when I lost a three-hole playoff in Denison, Iowa to Mike Stolarskyj. Terry Easton of Brandon, South Dakota has played in about every one of these tournaments as well and if I had never played, I think Terry would be about a 12-time champion! Most of these tournaments



Contemplating an approach shot at an early Heart of America Hickory Championship.

were quite close with Terry just a stroke or two back at the finish. Let me give you the most recent example.

In 2006, the tournament was held in Dike, Iowa for the second straight year at Fox Ridge Golf Course, an extremely well maintained course owned by Scott Johnson, at the time, who is a strong hickory golf fan. The previous year, I had shot a 73 on my first trip through the course to win by three strokes. Terry had been only a stroke behind me when I holed out from the fairway for an eagle on the 11th hole! This time, I came to the last hole, a short dogleg left par 4 with bunkers protecting the left side, feeling quite comfortable with a three-stroke lead over Terry. When I pulled my drive into the left fairway bunker, I wasn't too concerned. I watched from just outside the bunker as Terry hit his second shot from the middle of the fairway.

His shot landed on the green and rolled in the hole for an eagle two! "Great shot" I lauded as I realized that his deuce meant that if I bogeyed, we would be in a play-off! Suddenly my bunker shot got my full attention. I had to carry a greenside bunker if I wanted to shoot for the flag and that could be a potential disaster, especially when approaching with a high lofted niblick like I intended to do because the high trajectory could bury a golf ball in the face of the bunker. I aimed safely to the right and pulled my bunker shot right at the edge of the bunker I wanted to avoid! Apprehension reigned supreme as my ball fell from the sky and narrowly cleared the bunker. It took a good kick left and rolled down about a foot from the hole! I won by two strokes.

In 1997, Terry Easton and I tied after 18 holes at Green Valley Golf Course in Sioux City, Iowa. The local television station was on hand and they covered the sudden-death play-off that ensued on the par 4 first hole. I hit a very good drive right down the heart of the fairway. Terry hit his drive 30 yards to my right and behind me into the right rough with his view to the green blocked by a small tree. Terry hit an excellent recovery at the right edge of the green but about 10 yards short.

I hit my approach just a little heavy and finished just inches short of the green. The flag was in the rear and Terry chipped up to about 10 feet away. I chipped up and was just about a foot inside Terry. I remember thinking that I hadn't exactly taken advantage of my better tee ball position like I had hoped! Terry hit his putt and it looked perfect. The ball was tracking for the middle of the cup and hit something right before it got to the hole. It hit just off-center and spun out, finishing on the lip of the hole. Terry let out a cry of understandable disappointment.

I hit my putt at the right-center instead of left-center like I was aiming for. My ball broke to the right edge and hit something near the hole that bounced the ball slightly left where it just caught the edge of the hole and took a full circular lap around the hole before falling in. Another victory!

In 1991, the tournament was held in Des Moines, Iowa at the Beaver Run Golf Course. It had rained hard all morning and it was still sprinkling when the decision was made that we would, indeed, play. We played the "lift, clean, and place" rule because the water was standing in puddles all over the golf course. I went out in 33 strokes, three-under par, and made a string of pars on the back nine that brought me to 18th

Playing Hickory Golf

still holding on to my three-under par standing. It had started to rain again as I got to the green and I stood over a slippery side hill, downhill putt of about five feet for a par and a score of 69. The rain was pelting the ground and I wanted to make that putt really badly. I had already won the tournament, but I brought extra focus to that very difficult putt and managed to slide the ball in the left center for my first tournament round of sub-70 hickory golf!



The Sand Hills Club has no water hazards and no trees!

Our 2007 tournament was notable for our visit to the Sand Hills Club in Western Nebraska. The Sand Hills is rated in the top 10 courses in the U.S., and the top course built in the world after 1960! Dave McNair contacted designer Ben Crenshaw, two-time Masters champion, who graciously set up our event at his exclusive club. A field of about 30 hickory golfers from around the United States arrived to find the scenery breathtaking and the greens stimping at what Mark Wehring estimated at "about 15". This was a U.S. Open set-up!



Dave McNair tees off at the Sand Hills.

Sand Hills Photo Gallery



*Mark Wehring, myself, Jay Harris, and Terry Easton
prepare to play at the Sand Hills Golf Course.*



*Dick Shanahan plays out
of a Sand Hills bunker.*



*The bunkers are on a massive
scale at the Sand Hills!*

Sand Hills Photo Gallery



Duane Baylor in Sands Hills sand.



Cameron Werner presents me with the Heart of America trophy for my victory at the Sand Hills.

Dave McNair played brilliantly until a late par 5 derailed his plans for victory. I don't remember missing a shot—except that blind approach shot that I pulled a little left on #7—hello triple bogey! I shot 81 and my same game a few days earlier on a bit easier course gave me a two-under par 70! Dave finished second followed by Jay Harris, Vic Horan, Mark Wehring, and Terry Easton. Unconfirmed reports persist that several members of our group are still missing somewhere in the sand dunes on the back nine.

My Most Significant Victory

I include this story, even though it was played with steel shafts, because this tournament stands out in my mind as a turning point in my competitive golf career. The year was 1989, the same year I started playing hickory clubs, and I was playing in the Omaha World-Herald Publinks Golf Tournament. The Omaha World-Herald is the city's newspaper that sponsors the tournament and they cover this event like it is a major golf championship. This tournament is advertised as the largest public course match play tournament of its kind in the United States. It generally gathers 500 to 700 applicants and has had a championship field of as many as 200 golfers from around the area. Qualifying takes place on two different courses over 36 holes trimming the field to 32 players (now 64 players) for the match play brackets. Needless to say, the tournament has drawn some very strong fields over the years, attracting the area's best players.

I had just won my third match in sudden death on the first extra hole of a play-off with a 30-foot birdie putt. The semi-finals were 18 holes scheduled for the next day, Saturday, and the finals would be 36 holes the day after on Sunday. All four semi-finalists would play together on Saturday. My opponent was Jay Muller, one of the longest hitting golfers I have ever played with. The other match featured a good friend of mine, Mike Stolarskyj playing against Jay's best friend, Tim Marchese.

We teed off on an overcast Saturday morning and I felt that perhaps I was out of my league as all three other golfers were outdriving me off the tee by at least 30 yards. Jay moved out in front of me and was 2-up when it started to rain quite heavily on the seventh hole. The semi-finals were postponed until the next day when both the semi-finals and finals would be played. All contestants were required to walk so Sunday would be a long day for the two finalists. I had an excellent caddie, Donna Isoldi, lined up for the day. When 8 A.M. on Sunday rolled around, the sun was shining and the weather would not be an issue unless you counted the soggy fairways and greens.

I got my match back to even with a par and a birdie on 11 and 12. By the time we got to the 17th tee box, I was one hole up. The 17th hole, however, was a long par 5 that Jay could reach in two but I could not with the wet fairways. I figured our match was really even at this point because Jay was essentially playing a par 4 while I was playing a par 5. I hit my two best wood shots and was 50 yards short of the green as I watched Jay attempt his second shot out of the left tree line. From across the fairway, it appeared that Jay was hitting a 7 iron by the look of his club at address.

Playing Hickory Golf

Apparently he was blocked by the trees and laying up. He hit the ball solidly with a more full swing than I expected, but the ball snipped off a small tree limb exiting the trees. His ball, however, carried and carried until, amazingly, it landed on the very front of the green! I pitched up to six feet. Jay putted up to four feet. Both of our putts had a substantial right-to-left break. I figured I had to make my putt or else I was basically in a sudden-death play-off when Jay made his. The speed of the putt had to match the line perfectly or the ball would miss. I hit an excellent putt to make my birdie.

I wasn't expecting Jay to miss and when he did, I was in the 36-hole finals against Tim Marchese who beat my buddy, Mike, 1-up on 18. The finals were contested at another course across town just a short time later.

I hooked my drive badly on the first hole, losing to a par. I lost the third to a birdie and the tough fifth hole to a par. I was quickly three-down. With some superb putting, I managed to finish the first round three-down. I had not been hitting my driver well all day and I hooked it badly starting the second 18 to make a bogey and go four-down after the first hole. Starting on the third hole, I made three straight 15-foot putts, all to halve the holes, one for a birdie and the next two for pars. I knew standing over each one of those putts that if I were five-down this late in the match, I was not very likely to win.

I birdied the seventh and eighth holes to cut my deficit to two-down with 10 holes to play. Now I felt like I had a little life. I got a bad bounce on my approach iron into the par 4 ninth hole and my ball lodged up against a stone wall. I whiffed my first swing at the ball and lost the hole to go three-down with nine to play. Somewhat rattled by the whiff, I hit my driver into trouble on #10 and did well to have a six-foot par putt, but Marchese rolled in a 30-foot putt for birdie to go 4-up with eight holes to play.

The handwriting was on the wall. I could feel that the match was all but over. I was up against a seasoned tournament golfer who does not "choke". I had never been in this position before and, I thought, I might never be in this position again. If I was going to lose, I was going to lose playing the most aggressive, daring shots that I could play with no other thought than to make a birdie on every hole. I hit a bold tee ball on #11, very close to the water for a shorter approach to the par 5 green.

I birdied and Marchese parred. I fired a short iron directly at a tight pin on #12. Again, I birdied and Marchese parred. On the 14th and 15th holes, I hit what I thought were perfect 30-foot birdie putts, but both were those heart-breaking dead-center lip-outs. Marchese was 2-up with three to play.

The 16th hole is a par 3 of 160 yards. I hadn't hit anything close from this range all day. My mind was working a mile-a-minute trying to figure out some way I could make my ball go straight. I realized that if I lost this hole, the match was over with Marchese winning 3 & 2. I actually got off a nice straight shot that dropped some eight feet from the hole. Marchese almost rolled in his 25-foot putt, curling it right over the edge.

There was some green damage between my ball and the hole and I knew I would probably miss the putt due the surface irregularity. The referee for the match signaled

that I should repair this area. What a great break, I thought, as I repaired the damage. I made the birdie putt. I was one-down with two to play. If I lost hole #17, again, I would lose the match 2 & 1. My adrenaline was at full flow and I ripped a perfect drive down the dead center of the 420 yard par 4 fairway. Marchese, who earlier in the day had been out-driving me by about 30 yards, also got off a great drive and he turned and looked me in the eyes and said "That's the best drive I've hit all day today."

When we reached our drives, they were quite close in distance and Marchese said to me "Who's away?" I responded, "You're away, Tim." I had him by about six inches. The flagstick was located in the very back, right corner of the green and Marchese hit a nice iron onto the green just short and left about 30 feet from the hole.

I had to make a birdie, so instead of playing the smart, safe shot like Tim just did, I went for that deep pin position. I hit my 8-iron perfectly; it was one of my best swings of the day. As the ball was falling from the sky, it was splitting the flagstick in half. Then the ball disappeared, right over the back of the green on the fly. I knew I had just lost the tournament.

There is a steep drop-off directly behind the green and you could take a bucket of practice balls back there and never get up and down. It was such a great swing, it was a shame to lose the tournament on that shot. I arrived to examine my position.

My ball had gone all the way down the steep embankment until it had stopped just at the base of the hill. At least the ball was slightly on the upslope, I consoled myself. I was 30 yards long going straight uphill to a domed pin position. If my ball landed short, it would stop right there. If my ball hit pin high, it would bounce and run down to the front of the green. The only shot was to hit an extremely high shot that landed just inches short of the crest of the hill on the green so the crest could kill the shot's momentum.

For years, I had practiced a wedge shot where I opened the face up completely and took a full swing to see how high I could hit a golf ball. That was the shot I would need. The odds of pulling this shot off are probably about 100 to 1. I laid my wedge face completely open and took a full swing. The ball came off the face perfectly. It rose high in the air and landed in exactly the only spot that could keep the ball anywhere near the hole.

I had a four-foot, side hill putt for par. I had just hit the finest competitive golf shot of my career. Marchese left his approach putt uncharacteristically short and then lipped out his par putt. Suddenly, I was putting to square the match. My hands were shaking like a leaf, but I made the putt. It seemed almost unbelievable that we were now tied.

On the 18th hole, I was incredibly nervous and hit one of my poorer drives, getting under the ball a bit, but I wasn't in any trouble. Marchese launched a very long drive right down the middle of the fairway on this short, uphill par 4. Time seemed to slow down for me as I sized up my approach iron. With an increasing crowd, I paced my yardage to the front flag position to get it exactly right.

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I hit a good approach shot that came up just inches short of the green, about 15 feet from the hole. Marchese put his approach shot only about a foot away from my ball. Playing first, he kind of chunked the shot, leaving himself a full six feet from the hole. I knew this was my one chance to win the tournament and I played boldly for the flagstick, but I ran my shot past the hole by about four feet.

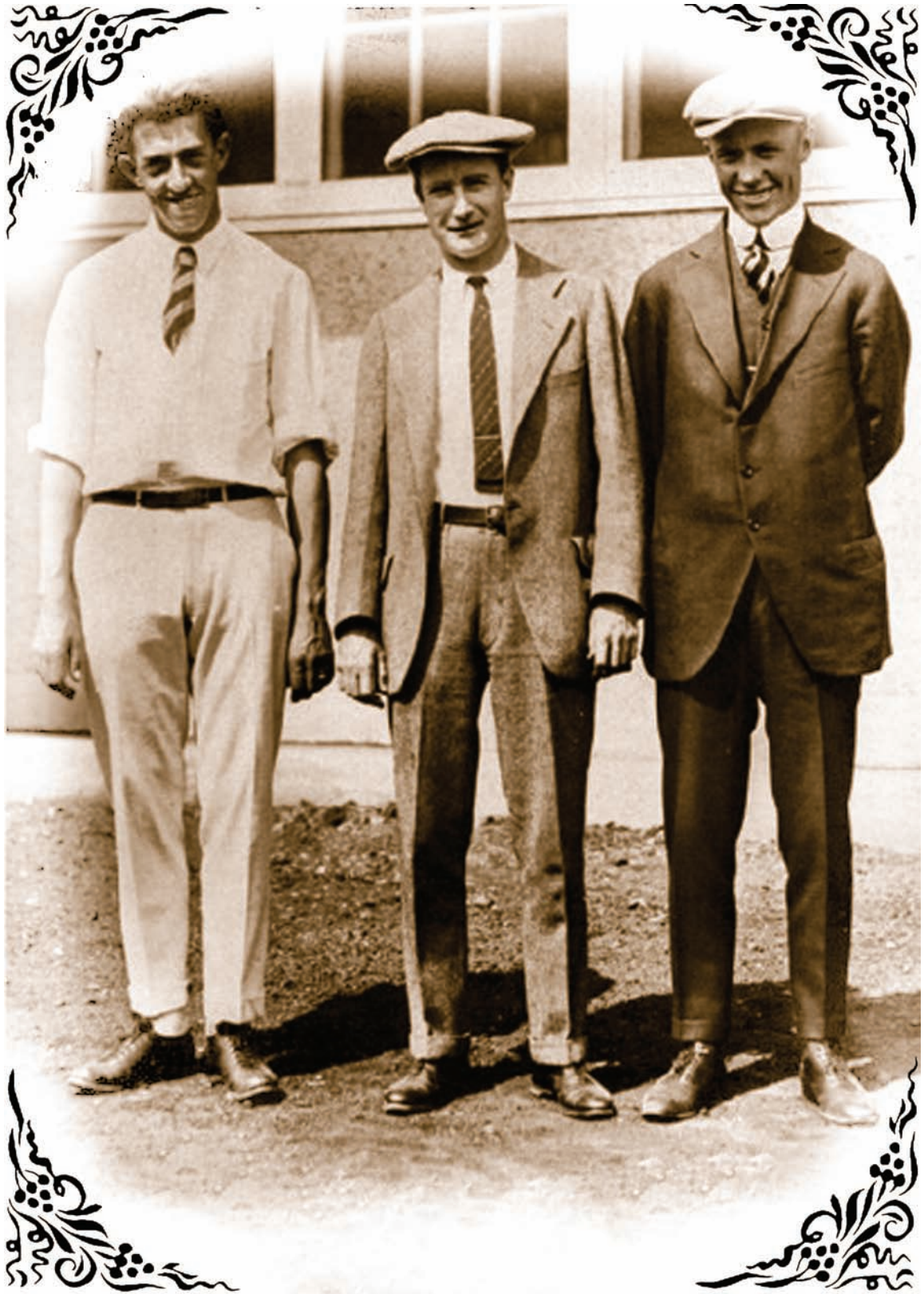
Both of our putts were tricky with a side hill break. When Marchese rolled in his par putt, it dawned on me that if I missed, I would lose. I had to play my putt on the left edge and get the speed just right. I don't think I have ever been as nervous as I was on this 18th hole. I made the putt. We were in a sudden-death play-off.

We both hit excellent drives off the first play-off hole with our balls no more than six feet apart as we lined up our second shots. The flag was back right and there was a slight left to right breeze. Marchese liked to play a draw and his iron hung out to the right, bounced off the edge of the green, and rolled down a hill, leaving him with a very difficult ball position.

Sensing an opportunity, I hit a safely calculated draw shot into the short, left center of the green, 30 feet from the hole. Marchese hit a great chip shot, bouncing the ball twice through the fringe before trickling the ball onto green and rolling 10 feet past the hole.

I hit a conservative lag putt up three foot short, and directly below the hole. Marchese's par putt looked nearly perfect, but it had a little too much speed and it spun out of the center of the hole. I had a straight in three-foot putt to win the tournament.

I blank my mind out in these situations and just use my eyes to see what I intend to do. I made a perfect stroke and the ball rolled into the center of the hole. I had won the tournament! I hadn't given up when the situation looked close to impossible and I hit some great shots even though I was exceptionally nervous. This great victory inspired me in many other rounds throughout my hickory golfing career.



*Francis Ouimet, Jerome Travers and Chick Evans
Three amateurs who dominated golf in the U.S. before the First War.*

CHAPTER 12

Hickory Golf Websites And Organizations

The three main organizations related to hickory golf are 1) The Golf Collectors Society; 2) The Society of Hickory Golfers; and 3) The British Golf Collectors Society.

The GCS was founded in 1970 and has members from around the world whose common bond is collecting golf items. Regional tournaments are held every year and a national show is held annually at a different site each year. Their website is www.golfcollectors.com.

The SOHG is an organization for golfers whose primary interest is playing hickory golf. Their website features a worldwide hickory golf tournament schedule. The web address is www.hickorygolfers.com.

The BGCS has an aim of promoting interest in the history and traditions of golf and they hold numerous hickory golf events including the Scottish, English, and Welsh Hickory Championships. Their web address is www.britgolfcollectors.wyenet.co.uk.

Ralph Livingston III has an excellent website at www.hickorygolf.com. A tremendous amount of information on all aspects of hickory golf is presented and there are links to other hickory golf related websites. This is hickory golf's original website.

Chris McIntyre has another wonderful website dedicated to playing hickory golf, www.playhickory.com. Chris rents hickory sets for hickory golf events and even has reproduction era golf balls!

The National Hickory Championship has their own website at www.nationalhickory.org. Their site features recent tournament results and entry blanks for the upcoming tournament.

The Canadian Hickory Championship, run by Ron Lyons in Edmonton, has some excellent information and pictures as well as entry blanks for the upcoming tournament. Check it out at www.thelegends.ca/hickory.html.

And Oakhurst Links, host to nine of the 10 National Hickory Championships, has its website at www.oakhurstlinks.com.

Hickory Golf from Around the World



Ryder Cup player Pierre Fulke enjoyed his winning even par round in the 2007 Swedish Hickory Championship together with 2004 champion Scott Patrick and Swedish professional Magnus Sunesson. Scott's caddie is Anti Paatola, who is one of the driving forces behind the Society of Golf Historians in Finland.



Hamish Ewan (fourth from the left) organized a wonderful hickory match at his home course of Nairn in Scotland.

Hickory Golf from Around the World



A wolf followed me for three holes here at Jasper Park in the Canadian Rockies, no doubt calculating the value I may have to him as a potential snack! Here at the 16th hole, the ideal line to the green is just over the antlers of the elk. Needless to say, wildlife abounds at this classic Stanley Thompson design.



An astute Chinese journalist recognized the fact that I was putting with a Ben Sayers Benny hickory shaft putter from over 30 feet away while I was practicing on the putting green at the Old Course in St. Andrews in 2005!

Hickory Golf from Around the World



Doug Marshall and Gene Boldon at a GCS event.



Clubmakers Tad Moore and Barry Kerr discuss their craft.



Playing the 1898 Omaha Field Club with Rob Ahlschwede, Tucker and Dave McNair, and Jerry Cedarbloom.



How great would it be to have a whole bag of T. Stewart clubs when your name is Tanner Stewart!

Hickory Golf from Around the World



Matt Dodds looks on as I putt in Vermont.



The Orvis Cup competition held at the Equinox Resort in Vermont in 2006 was the first tournament offering prize money for a strictly wood shaft tournament since the 1920's. I won this 36-hole event by a single stroke!

Hickory Golf from Around the World



The alternate shot competition that precedes the Scottish Hickory Championship is held every year at the Old Course at Musselburgh, generally acknowledged as the oldest golf course in the world!

Hickory Golf from Around the World



Archie Baird, founder of the Scottish Hickory Championship, presents me with the trophy for the 2005 Scottish Hickory Scratch Championship.

Hickory Golf from Around the World

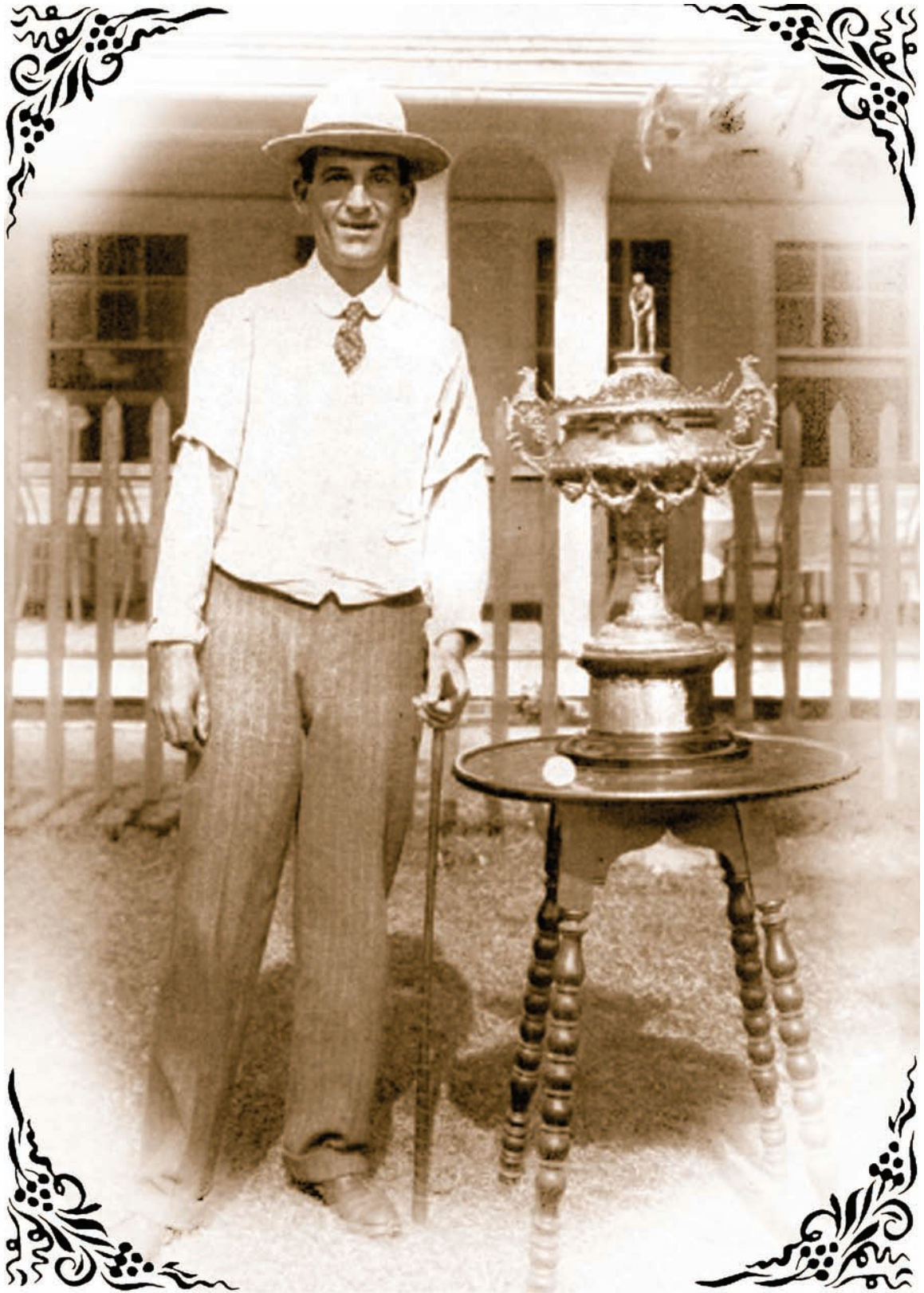


I play my second shot to the first hole of the Hickory Open at the Kingsley Club in Michigan. Ralph Livingston III looks on.

Hickory Golf from Around the World



I'm on the side of a hill, just left of the 8th green at Cruden Bay in Scotland. Ralph Livingston III snapped this picture as I was preparing to hit. I actually parred the hole!



Walter J. Travis

APPENDICES

Best Places to Play Hickory Golf

The following is my list of favorite spots to play hickory golf.

Oakhurst Links, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia

The Old Course, St. Andrews, Scotland

Musselburgh Old Course, Scotland

North Berwick/West Links, Scotland

Cruden Bay, Scotland

Royal Dornoch, Scotland

Royal Aberdeen, Scotland

Muirfield, Scotland

Gullane #3, Scotland

Machrihanish, Scotland

Carnoustie, Scotland

Prestwick, Scotland

Brook Hollow C.C., Dallas, Texas

Cypress Point, California

Baltusrol, New Jersey

Banff Springs GC, Canada

Jasper Park GC, Canada

The Legends Golf & CC, Canada



The Legends Golf and Country Club in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Best Books on Hickory Golf

These are my personal Top Ten Favorite Golf Books, though not in any order.

- 1) *Golf: The Badminton Library*. Edited by Horace Hutchinson. This is a fantastic cornerstone book for any golfer's library. First published in 1890. I love the picture of "Modern Golf Clubs"! Another great section talks about all the different kinds of wood that were tried for shafts.
- 2) *The Complete Golfer* by Harry Vardon. Another cornerstone book for the hickory player. Fantastic instruction by the world's best player who bridged the gap between gutty ball and modern ball hickory eras. Vardon's golf swing was decades ahead of its time and his instruction book is still as useful today as it was then.
- 3) *Down The Fairway* by Bobby Jones. The most famous hickory era player was also a modest, intelligent, and thoughtful writer with tremendous insight into the various aspects of golf and tournament golf.



- 4) *How To Play Your Best Golf All The Time* by Tommy Armour. This book is from 1953, but Tommy was a hickory era player and a contemporary of Walter Hagen and Bobby Jones. This classic instruction book was the all-time best seller for many years. Tommy Armour was voted the top instructor in the 20th Century. The instruction is simple and straightforward in Tommy's no-nonsense style.

- 5) *The Scrapbook of Old Tom Morris* by David Joy. A very recent book, but what a treasure! Old Tom is the most influential figure in the history of golf and no list would be complete without something about Old Tom. This highly entertaining “scrapbook” is loaded with wonderful pictures of the era, evoking strong images that seem to come to life before your eyes.
- 6) *Golf Courses of the British Isles* by Bernard Darwin. A great book that tells you how to play the classic courses of Scotland and England WITH hickory clubs! Read it before you play the courses.
- 7) *Golf Architecture in America* by George C. Thomas. A classic on course design from the hickory era. Play one of his courses after you read the hows and whys of his design.
- 8) *Scotland's Gift: Golf* by C.B. MacDonald. This is a great book and a must read for anyone with an interest in the history of hickory golf. MacDonald was the father of American golf and his story is fascinating. From his roots in Chicago to his education in St. Andrews, Scotland where he met and was the frequent playing companion of Old Tom and Young Tom Morris! This book details how he brought the game back to U.S. shores and started the U.S. Open and became friends with Bobby Jones. How about that for a life?!
- 9) *Golf in the Making* by Ian Henderson and David Stirk. If you were to get just one book, this would be it. A great overview of the early history, clubmakers, clubs, balls, patents and much more.
- 10) *Great Golfers: Their Methods at a Glance* by George Beldam. Great pictures of early golf technique. Fascinating!

A few other recommended golf books:

Picture Analysis of Golf Strokes by Jim Barnes
Concerning Golf by John Low
Sixty Years of Golf by Robert Harris
Mystery of Golf by Arnold Haultain
Five Simple Steps to Perfect Golf by Count Yogi (Harry Frankenberg)
The Clubmaker's Art by Jeff Ellis
Golf in the Kingdom by Michael Murphy
Oakhurst by Paula Diperna & Vikki Keller

David Hamilton has many exceptional books that are well worth reading

Reference books:

Cleek Marks and Trademarks on Antique Golf Clubs by Pete Georgiady and Patrick Kennedy
The Compendium of British Club Makers by Pete Georgiady
North American Club Makers by Pete Georgiady
Wood Shafted Golf Club Value Guide by Pete Georgiady

Modern Hickory Holes-in-One

Jim Monaghan
Randy Jensen
Rob Ahlschwede
John Roth
Doug Marshall
Dave McNair
Kody Kirchhoff (2)
John Wilson
Mike Gunn
Gary Briggs
Frank Lester
Scott Patrick
Don Gibboney
Mike Kosich



Top Sub-Par Hickory Tournament Rounds

| | | | |
|------------------|--------------|------|---|
| 66 (6 under par) | Glenn Jevny | 2004 | Canadian Hickory Championship |
| 67 (5 under par) | Randy Jensen | 2006 | Southern Hickory Four Ball Championship |
| 67 (4 under par) | Zach Saltman | 2006 | World Hickory Open |
| 68 (3 under par) | David Orr | 2006 | World Hickory Open |
| 69 (3 under par) | Ben Plaunt | 2002 | Canadian Hickory Championship |
| 69 (3 under par) | Randy Jensen | 2005 | Canadian Hickory Championship |
| 69 (3 under par) | Randy Jensen | 1991 | Heart of America Hickory Championship |



*The 2002 Canadian Hickory Championship.
John Wilson lines up his birdie putt that he would make to shoot 31 on the
back nine and win the tournament. Ross Kenny, Paul Biocini and I look on.*

Modern Hickory Golf Championship Results

GCS World Hickory Championship

| | | |
|------|---------------|------------------|
| 1973 | Jim Monaghan | |
| 1974 | Dick Hardison | |
| 1975 | Don Kepler | |
| 1976 | Lee Seltzer | |
| 1977 | Johnny Henry | |
| 1978 | Gary Wiren | |
| 1979 | Jack Dezieck | |
| 1980 | Austin Herzog | |
| 1981 | Phil White, | St. Louis MO |
| 1984 | Bob Lucas, | Myrtle Beach SC |
| 1985 | Fred Oman, | Dallas TX |
| 1986 | Phil White, | Indianapolis IN |
| 1987 | Paul Biocini, | Bernardsville NJ |
| 1990 | Bobby Grace, | Birmingham AL |
| 1991 | Bobby Grace, | Dallas TX |
| 1992 | Paul Biocini, | Atlanta GA |



The GCS World Hickory Championship in 1997 at the Old Natchez Country Club in Nashville, Tennessee.

GCS World Hickory Championship

| | | |
|------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1993 | John Sherwood, | Palm Springs CA |
| 1994 | Paul Biocini, | Ypsilanti MI |
| 1995 | Randy Jensen, | Lexington KY |
| 1996 | Paul Biocini, | Kansas City KS |
| 1997 | Randy Jensen, | Nashville TN |
| 1998 | John Sherwood, | Louisville KY |
| 1999 | Randy Jensen, | St. Augustine FL |
| 2000 | Randy Jensen, | Virginia Beach VA |
| 2001 | Ken Jackson, | Dallas TX |
| 2002 | Randy Jensen, | Columbus OH |
| 2003 | Paul Biocini, | St. Augustine FL |
| 2004 | Randy Jensen, | St. Charles IL |
| 2005 | Bill Kreischer, | St. Augustine FL |
| 2006 | Randy Jensen, | Las Vegas NV |
| 2007 | Ben Plaunt | Pinehurst NC |



*Ralph Livingston III and I prior to teeing off
at the 2002 GCS World Hickory Championship.*

National Hickory Championship

| | | |
|------|--------------|-----|
| 1998 | Randy Jensen | 152 |
| 1999 | Jay Harris | 156 |
| 2000 | Randy Jensen | 152 |
| 2001 | Fred Fruisen | 111 |
| 2002 | Randy Jensen | 147 |
| 2003 | Randy Jensen | 152 |
| 2004 | Randy Jensen | 152 |
| 2005 | Mike Stevens | 156 |
| 2006 | Randy Jensen | 157 |
| 2007 | Randy Jensen | 146 |



Mike Stevens plays from the 3rd tee at Oakhurst as I look on.

National Hickory Ladies Championship

| | |
|------|----------------|
| 1999 | Vicki Gibboney |
| 2000 | Caty Goidel |
| 2001 | Caty Goidel |
| 2002 | Dianne Young |
| 2003 | Vicki Gibboney |
| 2004 | Lawren Just |
| 2005 | Caty Goidel |
| 2006 | Caty Goidel |
| 2007 | Caty Goidel |



Caty Goidel, five-time NHC Ladies Champion.

Canadian Hickory Championship

| | |
|------|----------------|
| 2000 | John Wilson |
| 2001 | John Wilson |
| 2002 | John Wilson |
| 2003 | Paul Biocini |
| 2004 | Randy Jensen |
| 2005 | Ross Kenny |
| 2006 | Darren Pockett |
| 2007 | Glenn Jevny |



Dan Kavalec tees off in the Canadian Hickory Championship.

Casey Cup

| | | |
|------|-----------|--------|
| 2002 | Canada 15 | USA 8 |
| 2003 | Canada 16 | USA 8 |
| 2004 | Canada 12 | USA 11 |
| 2005 | Canada 20 | USA 4 |
| 2006 | Canada 19 | USA 5 |
| 2007 | Canada 18 | USA 6 |

BGCS Scottish Hickory Scratch Championship (The Archie Baird Trophy)

| | |
|------|-----------------|
| 1997 | Chris Homer |
| 1998 | David Beadle |
| 1999 | John Sherwood |
| 2000 | John Sherwood |
| 2001 | Randy Jensen |
| 2002 | Nigel Notley |
| 2003 | Claes Kvist |
| 2004 | Neil Hutchinson |
| 2005 | Randy Jensen |
| 2006 | Mark Wehring |
| 2007 | John Sherwood |



Putting in the Scottish Hickory Championship at Gullane.

BGCS Scottish Hickory Championship (Handicap)

| | |
|------|----------------------|
| 1985 | John Rigg |
| 1986 | John Kiernan |
| 1987 | Alan Jackson |
| 1988 | David Easby |
| 1989 | Alan Garrett |
| 1990 | Alan Jackson |
| 1991 | David Cameron |
| 1992 | Barry Kerr |
| 1993 | John Pearson |
| 1994 | Bob Gowland |
| 1995 | John Kiernan |
| 1996 | Archie Baird |
| 1997 | Brian Siplo |
| 1998 | Archie Baird |
| 1999 | Ralph Livingston III |
| 2000 | Chuck McMullin |
| 2001 | Ralph Livingston III |
| 2002 | Hope Letters |
| 2003 | Neil Hutchison |
| 2004 | Keith Bilbie |
| 2005 | Mark Wehring |
| 2006 | Mark Wehring |
| 2007 | Bill Druce |



Real men aren't afraid to play in a kilt!

Heart of America Hickory Championship

| | | |
|------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1979 | Cal Baker | Prairie Dunes C.C. |
| 1980 | Warren Olson | Benson Park G.C. |
| 1981 | Tom Kuhl | Dub's Dread G.C. |
| 1982 | Warren Olson | Denison C.C. |
| 1983 | George Turner | Dodge Park G.C. |
| 1984 | Gary Hauk | Belton G.C. |
| 1985 | Warren Olson | Denison C.C. |
| 1986 | Michael Jones | Platteview C.C. |
| 1987 | Michael Jones | Windbrook C.C. |
| 1988 | Warren Olson | Denison C.C. |
| 1989 | Tom Kuhl | Scottish Links G.C. |
| 1990 | Randy Jensen | Swope Park G.C. |
| 1991 | Randy Jensen | Beaver Run G.C. |
| 1992 | Randy Jensen | Shoreline G.C. |
| 1993 | Randy Jensen | Deer Lake G.C. |
| 1994 | Mike Stolarskyj | Denison C.C. |
| 1995 | Randy Jensen | Tiburon G.C. |
| 1996 | Randy Jensen | Paradise Pointe G.C. |
| 1997 | Randy Jensen | Green Valley G.C. |
| 1998 | Randy Jensen | Shoreline G.C. |
| 1999 | Randy Jensen | Benson Park G.C. |
| 2000 | Randy Jensen | Humbolt/Iola G.C. |
| 2001 | Randy Jensen | Deer Creek G.C. |
| 2002 | Randy Jensen | Tiffany Greens G.C. |
| 2003 | Randy Jensen | Brandon G.C. |
| 2004 | Randy Jensen | Woodland Hills G.C. |
| 2005 | Randy Jensen | Fox Ridge G.C. |
| 2006 | Randy Jensen | Fox Ridge G.C. |
| 2007 | Randy Jensen | Sand Hills G.C.. |



Sand Hills Golf Club 2007.

Southern Hickory Four Ball Championship

| | |
|------|---------------------------------|
| 2003 | Rob Ahlschwede and Randy Jensen |
| 2004 | Chuck McMullin and Fred Muller |
| 2005 | Rob Ahlschwede and Randy Jensen |
| 2006 | Rob Ahlschwede and Randy Jensen |

Hickory Grail

| | | | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|--------|----|--------|---|
| 2000 | Kilspindie, Scotland | USA | 6 | Europe | 5 |
| 2001 | Kilspindie, Scotland | USA | 10 | Europe | 7 |
| 2003 | St. Andrews Club, Younkers NY | Europe | 9 | USA | 8 |
| 2005 | Kilspindie, Scotland | Europe | 9 | USA | 9 |
| 2007 | Brook Hollow, Dallas TX | USA | 13 | Europe | 5 |



My 2005 Hickory Grail match with Nigel Notley. Nigel chipped in on the last hole to beat me 1-up!

Texas GCS Region 4 Fred Oman Memorial Trophy

| | | |
|------|----------------------|-----|
| 1992 | Mark Eaves | 74 |
| 1993 | Jesse James | 79 |
| 1994 | Ken Jackson | 77 |
| 1995 | Bob Safford | 76 |
| 1996 | Ralph Livingston III | 78 |
| 1997 | Ken Jackson | 74 |
| 1998 | Chuck McMullin | 77 |
| 1999 | Ken Jackson | 74 |
| 2001 | Randy Jensen | 71 |
| 2002 | Randy Jensen | 79 |
| 2003 | Randy Jensen | 78 |
| 2004 | Ross Kenny | 155 |
| 2005 | Mark Wehring | 153 |
| 2006 | Ross Kenny | 154 |
| 2007 | Randy Jensen | 156 |

Swedish Hickory Championship

| Men | | Course |
|------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1998 | Pehr Thermaenius | F16 GC Uppsala |
| 1999 | Tiit Kask | Djursholms GC Stockholm |
| 2000 | Peter Hansson | Helsingborgs GC Viken |
| 2001 | Chris Homer | Torslanda GC Gothenburgh |
| 2002 | Peder Kruse | Torekovs GC Torekhov |
| 2003 | Stefan Bjallroth | Lidingo GC Stockholm |
| 2004 | Scott Patrick | Gotesborgs GC Hovas |
| 2005 | Peder Kruse | Landeryds GC Linkoping |
| 2006 | Mikael Garnow | Djursholms GC Stockholm |
| 2007 | Pierre Fulke | Ljunghusen G.C. Falsterbo |



Pierre Fulke chips to the final green during his 2007 Swedish Hickory Championship victory.

| Women | | Course |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1998 | Agneta Thermaenius | F16 GC Uppsala |
| 2000 | Agneta Thermaenius | Helsingborgs GC Viken |
| 2001 | Lolo Dahl | Torslanda GC Gothenburgh |
| 2002 | Annika Thunstrom | Torekovs GC Torekhov |
| 2003 | Maja Thermaenius | Lidingo GC Stockholm |
| 2004 | Maja Thermaenius | Gotesborgs GC Hovas |
| 2005 | Maja Thermaenius | Landeryds GC Linkoping |
| 2006 | Maj-Britt Widenfelt | Djursholms GC Stockholm |
| 2007 | Pia Ramel | Ljunghusen GC Falsterbo |

Vintage Championship Results

The Open Championship (British Open)

| | | | |
|------|-----------------|-------------|-----|
| 1860 | W. Park | Prestwick | 174 |
| 1861 | Tom Morris Sr. | Prestwick | 163 |
| 1862 | Tom Morris Sr. | Prestwick | 163 |
| 1863 | W. Park | Prestwick | 168 |
| 1864 | T. Morris Sr. | Prestwick | 167 |
| 1865 | A. Strath | Prestwick | 162 |
| 1866 | W. Park | Prestwick | 162 |
| 1867 | T. Morris Sr. | Prestwick | 170 |
| 1868 | T. Morris Jr. | Prestwick | 157 |
| 1869 | T. Morris Jr. | Prestwick | 154 |
| 1870 | T. Morris Jr. | Prestwick | 149 |
| 1871 | No championship | | |
| 1872 | T. Morris Jr. | Prestwick | 166 |
| 1873 | T. Kidd | St. Andrews | 179 |
| 1874 | M. Park | Musselburgh | 159 |
| 1875 | W. Park | Prestwick | 166 |
| 1876 | B. Martin | St. Andrews | 176 |
| 1877 | J. Anderson | Musselburgh | 160 |
| 1878 | J. Anderson | Prestwick | 157 |
| 1879 | J. Anderson | St. Andrews | 169 |
| 1880 | B. Ferguson | Musselburgh | 162 |
| 1881 | B. Ferguson | Prestwick | 170 |
| 1882 | B. Ferguson | St. Andrews | 171 |
| 1883 | W. Fernie | Musselburgh | 159 |
| 1884 | J. Simpson | Prestwick | 160 |
| 1885 | B. Martin | St. Andrews | 171 |
| 1886 | D. Brown | Musselburgh | 157 |
| 1887 | W. Park Jr. | Prestwick | 161 |
| 1888 | J. Burns | St. Andrews | 171 |
| 1889 | W. Park Jr. | Musselburgh | 155 |
| 1890 | J. Ball | Prestwick | 164 |
| 1891 | H. Kirkaldy | St. Andrews | 166 |
| 1892 | H. Hilton | Muirfield | 305 |
| 1893 | W. Auchterlonie | Prestwick | 322 |
| 1894 | J.H. Taylor | Sandwich | 326 |
| 1895 | J.H. Taylor | St. Andrews | 322 |
| 1896 | H. Vardon | Muirfield | 316 |

The Open Championship (British Open)

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-------------|-----|
| 1897 | H. Hilton | Hoylake | 314 |
| 1898 | H. Vardon | Prestwick | 307 |
| 1899 | H. Vardon | Sandwich | 307 |
| 1900 | J.H. Taylor | St. Andrews | 309 |
| 1901 | J. Braid | Muirfield | 318 |
| 1902 | A. Herd | Hoylake | 307 |
| 1903 | H. Vardon | Prestwick | 300 |
| 1904 | J. White | Sandwich | 296 |
| 1905 | J. Braid | St. Andrews | 318 |
| 1906 | J. Braid | Muirfield | 300 |
| 1907 | A. Massy | Hoylake | 312 |
| 1908 | J. Braid | Prestwick | 291 |
| 1909 | J.H. Taylor | Deal | 295 |
| 1910 | J. Braid | St. Andrews | 299 |
| 1911 | H. Vardon | Sandwich | 303 |
| 1912 | E. Ray | Muirfield | 295 |
| 1913 | J.H. Taylor | Hoylake | 304 |
| 1914 | H. Vardon | Prestwick | 306 |
| 1915-1919 | | WWI | |
| 1920 | G. Duncan | Deal | 303 |
| 1921 | J. Hutchison | St. Andrews | 296 |
| 1922 | W. Hagen | Sandwich | 300 |
| 1923 | A.G. Havers | Troon | 295 |
| 1924 | W. Hagen | Hoylake | 301 |
| 1925 | J. Barnes | Prestwick | 300 |
| 1926 | R. Jones | Lytham | 291 |
| 1927 | R. Jones | St. Andrews | 285 |
| 1928 | W. Hagen | Sandwich | 292 |
| 1929 | W. Hagen | Muirfield | 292 |
| 1930 | R. Jones | Hoylake | 291 |
| 1931 | T. Armour | Carnoustie | 296 |
| 1932 | G. Sarazen | Prince's | 283 |
| 1933 | D. Shute | St. Andrews | 292 |
| 1934 | T.H. Cotton | Sandwich | 283 |
| 1935 | A. Perry | Muirfield | 283 |

The U.S. Open

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| 1895 | Horace Rawlins | Newport GC, RI | 173 |
| 1896 | James Foulis | Shinnecock Hills GC, NY | 152 |
| 1897 | J. Lloyd | Chicago Golf Club, IL | 162 |
| 1898 | Fred Herd | Myopia Hunt Club, MA | 328 |
| 1899 | Willie Smith | Baltimore CC, MD | 315 |
| 1900 | Harry Vardon | Chicago GC, IL | 313 |
| 1901 | Willie Anderson | Myopia Hunt Club, MA | 331 |
| 1902 | Laurie Auchterlonie | Garden City G.C., NY | 307 |
| 1903 | Willie Anderson | Baltusrol GC, NJ | 307 |
| 1904 | Willie Anderson | Glen View Club, IL | 303 |
| 1905 | Willie Anderson | Myopia Hunt Club, MA | 314 |
| 1906 | Alex Smith | Onwentsia Club, IL | 295 |
| 1907 | Alex Ross | Philadelphia Cricket Club, PA | 298 |
| 1908 | Fred McLeod | Myopia Hunt Club, MA | 322 |
| 1909 | George Sargent | Englewood Golf Club, NJ | 290 |
| 1910 | Alex Smith | Philadelphia Cricket Club, PA | 298 |
| 1911 | Johnny McDermott | Chicago Golf Club, IL | 307 |
| 1912 | Johnny McDermott | CC of Buffalo, NY | 294 |
| 1913 | Francis Ouimet | The Country Club, MA | 304 |
| 1914 | Walter Hagen | Midlothian CC, IL | 290 |
| 1915 | Jerome Travers | Baltusrol GC, NJ | 297 |
| 1916 | Charles Evans, Jr. | Minikahda Club, MN | 286 |
| 1917-1918 | | WWI | |
| 1919 | Walter Hagen | Brae Burn CC, MA | 301 |
| 1920 | Edward Ray | Inverness Club, OH | 295 |
| 1921 | James Barnes | Columbia CC, MD | 298 |
| 1922 | Gene Sarazen | Skokie CC, IL | 288 |
| 1923 | Robert T. Jones, Jr. | Inwood CC, NY | 296 |
| 1924 | Cyril Walker | Oakland Hills CC, MI | 297 |
| 1925 | Willie MacFarlane | Worcester CC, MA | 291 |
| 1926 | Robert T. Jones, Jr. | Scioto CC, OH | 293 |
| 1927 | Tommy Armour | Oakmont CC, PA | 301 |
| 1928 | Johnny Farrell | Olympia Fields CC, IL | 294 |
| 1929 | Robert T. Jones, Jr. | Winged Foot GC, NY | 294 |
| 1930 | Robert T. Jones, Jr. | Interlachen CC, MN | 287 |
| 1931 | Billy Burke | Inverness Club, OH | 292 |
| 1932 | Gene Sarazen | Fresh Meadows CC, NY | 286 |
| 1933 | Johnny Goodman | North Shore CC, IL | 287 |
| 1934 | Olin Dutra | Merion Cricket Club, PA | 293 |
| 1935 | Sam Parks, Jr. | Oakmont CC, PA | 299 |

Canadian Open

| | | | |
|-----------|------------------|-------------------|-----|
| 1904 | J.H. Oke | Royal Montreal GC | 156 |
| 1905 | George Cumming | Toronto GC | 148 |
| 1906 | Charles Murray | Royal Ottawa GC | 170 |
| 1907 | Percy Barrett | Lambton GC | 306 |
| 1908 | Albert Murray | Royal Montreal GC | 300 |
| 1909 | Karl Keffer | Toronto GC | 309 |
| 1910 | Daniel Kenny | Lambton GC | 303 |
| 1911 | Charles Murray | Royal Ottawa GC | 314 |
| 1912 | George Sargent | Rosedale GC | 299 |
| 1913 | Albert Murray | Royal Montreal GC | 295 |
| 1914 | Karl Keffer | Toronto GC | 300 |
| 1917-1918 | | WWI | |
| 1919 | J. Douglas Edgar | Hamilton GC | 278 |
| 1920 | J. Douglas Edgar | Rivermead GC | 294 |
| 1921 | W.H. Trovinger | Toronto GC | 293 |
| 1922 | Al Watrous | Mt. Bruno GC | 303 |
| 1923 | C.W. Hackney | Lakeview GC | 295 |
| 1924 | Leo Diegel | Mt. Bruno GC | 285 |
| 1925 | Leo Diegel | Lambton GC | 295 |
| 1926 | Macdonald Smith | Royal Montreal GC | 283 |
| 1927 | Tommy Armour | Toronto GC | 288 |
| 1928 | Leo Diegel | Rosedale GC | 282 |
| 1929 | Leo Diegel | Kanawaki GC | 274 |
| 1930 | Tommy Armour | Hamilton GC | 277 |
| 1931 | Walter Hagen | Mississauga GC | 292 |
| 1932 | Harry Cooper | Ottawa Hunt Club | 290 |
| 1933 | Joe Kirkwood | Royal York GC | 282 |
| 1934 | Tommy Armour | Lakeview GC | 287 |
| 1935 | Gene Kunes | Summerlea GC | 280 |

PGA Championship

| | | |
|-----------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1916 | Jim Barnes | Siwanoy CC, NY |
| 1917-1918 | | WWI |
| 1919 | Jim Barnes | Engineers CC, NY |
| 1920 | Jock Hutchison | Flossmoor CC, IL |
| 1921 | Walter Hagen | Inwood CC, NY |
| 1922 | Gene Sarazen | Oakmont CC, PA |
| 1923 | Gene Sarazen | Pelham CC, NY |
| 1924 | Walter Hagen | French Lick CC, IN |
| 1925 | Walter Hagen | Olympia Fields, IL |
| 1926 | Walter Hagen | Salisbury GC, NY |
| 1927 | Walter Hagen | Cedar Crest CC, TX |
| 1928 | Leo Diegel | Five Farms CC, MD |
| 1929 | Leo Diegel | Hillcrest CC, CA |
| 1930 | Tommy Armour | Fresh Meadow CC, NY |
| 1931 | Tom Creavy | Wannamoisett CC, RI |
| 1932 | Olin Dutra | Keller GC, MN |
| 1933 | Gene Sarazen | Blue Mound CC, WI |
| 1934 | Paul Runyan | Park CC, NY |
| 1935 | Johnny Revolta | Twin Hills CC, OK |

The Western Open

| | | |
|------|---------------------|--|
| 1899 | Willie Smith | Glen View Golf Club, IL |
| 1900 | No tournament | |
| 1901 | Laurie Auchterlonie | Midlothian CC, Midlothian, IL |
| 1902 | Willie Anderson | Euclid Club, Cleveland Heights, OH |
| 1903 | Alex Smith | Milwaukee CC, River Hills, WI |
| 1904 | Willie Anderson | Kent CC, Grand Rapids, MI |
| 1905 | Arthur Smith | Cincinatti GC, Cincinatti, OH |
| 1906 | Alex Smith | Homewood CC, Flossmoor, IL |
| 1907 | Robert Simpson | Hinsdale GC, Clarendon Hills, IL |
| 1908 | Willie Anderson | Normandie GC, St. Louis, MO |
| 1909 | Willie Anderson | Skokie CC, Glencoe, IL |
| 1910 | Chick Evans | Beverly CC, Chicago, IL |
| 1911 | Robert Simpson | Kent CC, Grand Rapids, MI |
| 1912 | Macdonald Smith | Idlewild CC, Flossmoor, IL |
| 1913 | Johnny McDermott | Memphis CC, Memphis, TN |
| 1914 | Jim Barnes | Interlachen CC, Minneapolis, MN |
| 1915 | Tom McNamara | Glen Oak GC, Glen Ellyn, IL |
| 1916 | Walter Hagen | Blue Mound CC, Milwaukee, WI |
| 1917 | Jim Barnes | Westmoreland CC, Wilmette, IL |
| 1918 | | WWI |
| 1919 | Jim Barnes | Mayfield CC, Cleveland, OH |
| 1920 | Jock Hutchison | Olympia Fields CC, Olympia Fields, IL |
| 1921 | Walter Hagen | Oakwood Club, Cleveland, OH |
| 1922 | Mike Brady | Oakland Hills CC, Bloomfield Hills, MI |
| 1923 | Jock Hutchison | Colonial CC, Cordova, TN |
| 1924 | Bill Mehlhorn | Calumet CC, Homewood, IL |
| 1925 | Macdonald Smith | Youngstown CC, Youngstown, OH |
| 1926 | Walter Hagen | Highland CC, Indianapolis, IN |
| 1927 | Walter Hagen | Olympia Fields CC, Olympia Fields, IL |
| 1928 | Abe Espinosa | North Shore CC, Glenview, IL |
| 1929 | Tommy Armour | Ozaukee CC, Mequon, WI |
| 1930 | Gene Sarazen | Indianwood CC, Lake Orion, MI |
| 1931 | Ed Dudley | Miami Valley GC, Dayton, OH |
| 1932 | Walter Hagen | Canterbury GC, Beachwood, OH |
| 1933 | Macdonald Smith | Olympia Fields CC, Olympia Fields, IL |
| 1934 | Harry Cooper | CC of Peoria, Peoria Heights, IL |
| 1935 | Johnny Revolta | South Bend CC, South Bend, IN |

British Amateur Championship

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1885 | A.F. MacFie | Hoylake |
| 1886 | Horace Hutchinson | St. Andrews |
| 1887 | Horace Hutchinson | Hoylake |
| 1888 | John Ball | Prestwick |
| 1889 | John Laidlay | St. Andrews |
| 1890 | John Ball | Hoylake |
| 1891 | John Laidlay | St. Andrews |
| 1892 | John Ball | Royal St. George's |
| 1893 | Peter Anderson | Prestwick |
| 1894 | John Ball | Hoylake |
| 1895 | L.M.B. Milville | St. Andrews |
| 1896 | Freddie Tait | Royal St. George's |
| 1897 | A.J.T. Allan | Muirfield |
| 1898 | Freddie Tait | Hoylake |
| 1899 | John Ball | Prestwick |
| 1900 | Harold Hilton | Royal St. George's |
| 1901 | Harold Hilton | St. Andrews |
| 1902 | Charles Hutchings | Hoylake |
| 1903 | Robert Maxwell | Muirfield |
| 1904 | Walter Travis | Royal St. George's |
| 1905 | A.G. Barry | Prestwick |
| 1906 | James Robb | Hoylake |
| 1907 | John Ball | St. Andrews |
| 1908 | E.A. Lassen | Royal St. George's |
| 1909 | Robert Maxwell | Muirfield |
| 1910 | John Ball | Hoylake |
| 1911 | Harold Hilton | Prestwick |
| 1912 | John Ball | Westward Ho! |
| 1913 | Harold Hilton | St. Andrews |
| 1914 | J.L.C. Jenkins | Royal St. George's |
| 1915-1919 | | WWI |
| 1920 | Cyril Tolley | Muirfield |
| 1921 | Willie Hunter | Hoylake |
| 1922 | Ernest Holderness | St. Andrews |
| 1923 | Roger Wethered | Royal Cinque Ports |
| 1924 | Ernest Holderness | St. Andrews |
| 1925 | Robert Harris | Westward Ho! |
| 1926 | Jess Sweetser | Muirfield |
| 1927 | William Tweddell | Hoylake |
| 1928 | Phil Perkins | Prestwick |
| 1929 | Cyril Tolley | Royal St. George's |
| 1930 | R.T. Jones, Jr | St. Andrews |
| 1931 | Eric M. Smith | Westward Ho! |
| 1932 | John De Forest | Muirfield |
| 1933 | Michael Scott | Hoylake |
| 1934 | Lawson Little | Prestwick |
| 1935 | Lawson Little | Royal Lytham & St. Annes |

U.S. Amateur Championship

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1895 | Charles Macdonald | Newport GC |
| 1896 | H.J. Whigham | Shinnecock Hills |
| 1897 | H.J. Whigham | Chicago GC |
| 1898 | Findlay Douglas | Morris County GC |
| 1899 | H.M. Harriman | Onwentsia CC |
| 1900 | Walter Travis | Garden City GC |
| 1901 | Walter Travis | CC of Atlantic City |
| 1902 | Louis James | Glen View CC |
| 1903 | Walter Travis | Nassau CC |
| 1904 | H. Chandler Egan | Baltusrol |
| 1905 | H. Chandler Egan | Chicago GC |
| 1906 | Eben Byers | Englewood GC |
| 1907 | Jerome Travers | Euclid CC |
| 1908 | Jerome Travers | Garden City GC |
| 1909 | Robert Gardner | Chicago GC |
| 1910 | William Fownes Jr. | The Country Club |
| 1911 | Harold Hilton | The Apawamis CC |
| 1912 | Jerome Travers | Chicago GC |
| 1913 | Jerome Travers | Garden City GC |
| 1914 | Francis Ouimet | Ekwanok CC |
| 1915 | Robert Gardner | CC of Detroit |
| 1916 | Chick Evans | Merion |
| 1917-1918 | | WWI |
| 1919 | S.D. Herron | Oakmont CC |
| 1920 | Chick Evans | Engineers CC |
| 1921 | Jesse Guilford | St. Louis CC |
| 1922 | Jess Sweetser | The Country Club |
| 1923 | Max Marston | Flossmoor CC |
| 1924 | R.T. Jones, Jr. | Merion CC |
| 1925 | R.T. Jones, Jr. | Oakmont CC |
| 1926 | George Von Elm | Baltusrol |
| 1927 | R.T. Jones, Jr. | Minikahda CC |
| 1928 | R.T. Jones, Jr. | Brae Burn CC |
| 1929 | Harrison Johnston | Del Monte |
| 1930 | R.T. Jones, Jr. | Merion CC |
| 1931 | Francis Ouimet | Beverly CC |
| 1932 | C.R. Summerville | Baltimore CC |
| 1933 | George Dunlop Jr. | Kenwood CC |
| 1934 | Lawson Little | The Country Club |
| 1935 | Lawson Little | The Country Club |

