



Member Profile

Bill "Ernie" Ernst

Neenah, Wisc.

I really did not play golf until I was well into my 30's. Since then I have had the opportunity through work to travel and play many of the best courses in the States. These trips have always been wrapped around business and I quickly learned that golf was a great catalyst to building relationships in the business world.

I was introduced to hickory golf in XXXX by two members at my country club, Ken Holtz and Joe Guerard. My love of the sport has taken off from there. I have met so many great people. Playing in the Scottish Hickory Open at Gullane, Scotland was probably the most intimidating moment of my golf life. I got to hit the opening shot (luck of the pairing draw) that day and I think of that moment often and laugh at myself for thinking this was such a critical moment at the time.

My wife, Shirley, has enjoyed my participation in the SoHG and has traveled with me to a number of events. She does play golf, but I have not got her hooked on hickory golf... yet. We have been blessed with three lovely children and one grandchild.

How often do you play hickories?

Ninety percent of my golf these days is hickory golf. I just enjoy it so much. There is no better feeling than finding a club, repairing it and bringing it into play and if it's good enough it makes into your bag. With hickory golf I expect more out of myself. With modern clubs I expect more out of the clubs.

What's in your play set?

Jack White spoon
21 degree Bulldog
Macgregor Accurate Mid Iron
T. Stewart 2 Iron
T. Stewart 3 Iron
Star Maxwell Jigger
Star Maxwell Mashie
T. Stewart Mashie Special (my latest find)
T. Stewart Mashie Niblick
T. Stewart Niblick (The Indian Piece Pipe)
A&B Model H50 Putter

Favorite club?

The T. Stewart niblick. I call it the Indian piece pipe because it was cracked and repaired by Mr. Ken Holtz and has whipping all the way up the shaft. That club has settled a lot of bets. My play set is ever evolving every time I find a new club. I do favor Stewarts, always a finely made club. I can't pass up the pipe cleek mark wherever I find them.

Favorite course for hickories?

Royal County Down in Newcastle County Down, Northern Ireland. Best course I have ever played. I plan to play it one more time. In the States, it's Crystal Downs in Frankfort, Mich. and of course Lawsonia in Green Lake, Wisc.

What ball do you play?

TaylorMade TP5.



Ernie Ernst is in his 10th year of hickory golf and is one of Wisconsin's leading hickory players.

Favorite hickory tournament?

Belvedere Hickory Open. The members there are so supportive of the event (it shows) and the setting is so relaxing. Close second is the Kummel Cup that we run at Lawsonia, Wisc. I may be slightly biased on that event.

Any particular player or aspect of golf history you especially enjoy?

I am a big fan of Jack Nicklaus and had the opportunity this summer to meet him at which time he signed a Five Pound Scottish Bank Note I had obtained on a trip to Scotland. Phil Mickelson has always been my favorite golfer. I had the opportunity to be a walking scorer for him at the 2010 PGA event at Whistling Straits. His go-for-broke attitude is just fun to watch.

Best thing about hickory golf?

The people I have met and the opportunities that has presented. Hickory golf has ignited my passion in researching and finding golf clubs and introducing Hickory golf to the people I have met. It's so much fun to watch people hit a Hickory club for the first time and realize what this approach to golf can present to them.

Ideas to promote SoHG, hickory golf?

Introduce hickory golf to a friend, start a group in your area to play regularly and then expand it to the state level. Find others outside your area and start a challenge match. Just make it fun. Society of Hickory Golf membership is helpful. This is the blueprint we have started in Wisconsin.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

"Jack Nicklaus – Memories and Mementos from Golf's Golden Bear" and "American Triumvirate" by James Dodson.