



Member Profile

Bill Reed

Des Moines, Iowa., USA

Bill is a Des Moines, Iowa, native who has experienced living in many of the major metropolitan cities of the United States but, whether it was for business or family, always returned to his Midwestern roots. The pace and quality of life in Des Moines seems to suit Bill and wife, Penny, the best. This couple, who have been married for more than 50 years, met at East Des Moines High School. Bill participated in track and field, basketball, football, and began playing golf in his freshman year. Penny was a cheerleader and they had a date or two in high school but it wasn't until Bill was a freshman at Drake University and Penny was at Grandview College that the romance ignited. Bill says the flame is still burning intensely and Penny said "yeah, right."

Bill's passion for golf history began in gradeschool. An uncle, who was a substitute father figure for Bill, introduced his young nephew to golf, trap shooting, skeet, fishing, hunting, and anything having to do with sports. "I always wanted to know who built it and why," Bill says.

Much later, as a young breadwinner for the growing Reed family, Bill played golf during his extensive travels across the USA on business trips and sales calls. He began to develop a keen appreciation for the architectural nuances of Bendelow, Ross, and MacKenzie courses. After meeting Warren "Ole" Olson, a past president of the Golf Collectors Society, joining the group was a natural step. Bill has played hickories for 29 years, exclusively so for the past 15 years. "I figure a close estimate might be around 2,000 rounds with hickories," he says.

In addition to Bill's membership in the Society of Hickory Golfers, he is the immediate past president of the Golf Collectors Society, a co-founder and executive director of the Hickory Golf Association, and is the long term tournament director of the Heart of America Hickory Championship, now in its 38th year. The Heart of America was originated in 1978 by Ole Olson, the same man who introduced Bill to the GCS. It is still the oldest continuously held hickory tournament in the world.

By his own admission, never a "championship level" golfer, Bill says "I was born a 10 handicap and got worse from there." He plays in the "Statesman Divisions" (70 and over) and says he plays it forward "not as a concession to age, but to help speed up the pace of the game." As of this writing his handicap index is 19.2.

"You know, many players in my age category are trying to shoot their age on the course. I am quite happy to beat my body temperature," he says.

As he reflects on his long and storied career in golf collecting and playing with hickories, Bill says he's most pleased with the number of people whom he has introduced to the game.

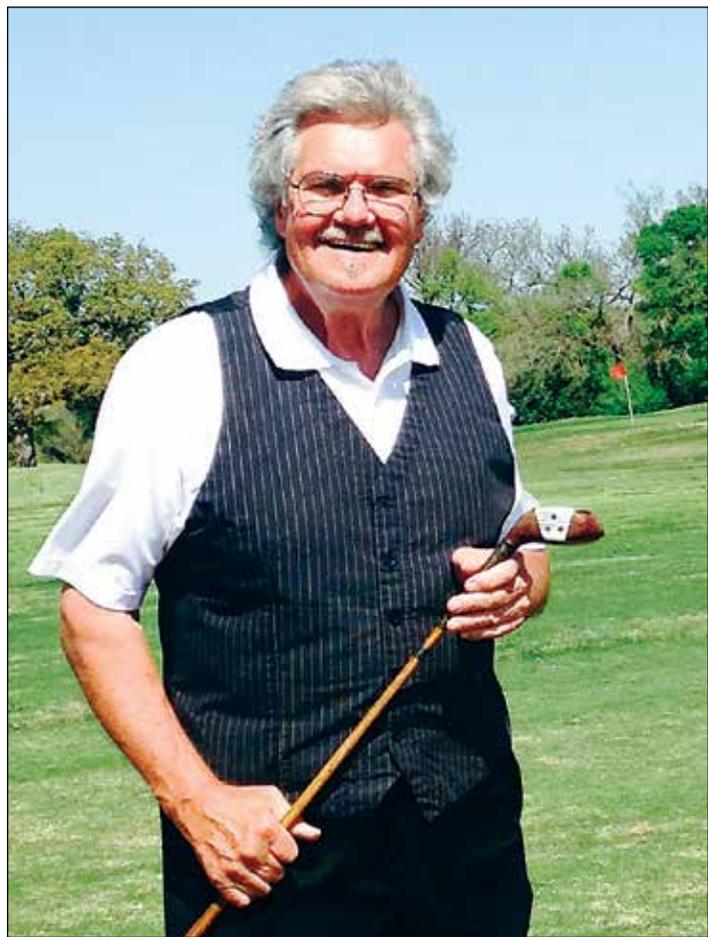
"I'm blessed with wife, family, health, and thousands of friends in hickory golf and in collecting the artifacts of the grand old game. Golf is a young man's vice and an old man's penance."

What's in your play set?

MacGregor fancy face brassie
A.G. Spalding spoon
MacGregor baffle
Hollywood mashie iron
Marathon mashie
MacGregor jigger
Stewart mashie-niblick
Stewart niblick
Harry C. Lee Schenectady putter

What ball do you play?

The Pearl colored Volvik Crystal, but any low compression, soft cover ball is fine by me, as long as it is white.



Iowan Bill Reed, one of hickory golf's most enthusiastic ambassadors, is co-founder of the Hickory Golf Association and past president of the Golf Collectors Society.

Favorite course for hickories?

Hyperion Field Club – 1910 Tom Bendelow – in Des Moines, Iowa.

Favorite hickory tournament?

Obvious answer is the Heart of America Hickory Championship (now in its 38th year). My next favorite is any tourney that I don't have to plan or direct. Just show up, play up, drink up.

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

My favorite golf character of all time is Walter Hagen. Sir Walter's style (and game) got the pros into the clubhouse and on the front page. Decades later, Arnie brought the game to the masses via TV.

Best thing about hickory golf?

To me it's the feeling of closeness to the architect, the course, the entire history of the game. A good single malt after the round rekindles the fire and washes away the bogies.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

I always wear period clothing (knickers/ plus fours or twos) when playing golf. Some people think that this is costume wear and feel self-aware or awkward. I feel at home and consider this a part of being an ambassador to the game. I always have promo material to hand out and loaner clubs in my vehicle.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

My most recent book on golf was Golf Dads by Curt Sampson who also wrote The Masters, and Hogan. Golf Dads is not a feel good Chicken Soup for the Golfer's Soul type of book. It will give you some page turning insights into some players you thought you knew.

My secret?

I have often been asked why there are so many hickory players in my part of the country. Do all of the above for almost 30 years and you, too, can be an overnight success in recruiting hickory players.