



Member Profile

Ed Ronco

Wyandotte, Mich., USA

Lifelong Michigan resident Ed Ronco grew up in Wayne, Mich. At Wayne Memorial High School he was a swimmer and football player, giving no thought to golf as “it was not a real sport,” he said.

In his senior year, he indulged a pal who asked him to try nine holes. For the next 15 years Ed played casually, perhaps a dozen times a year, until a fateful family trip changed his golfing life.

“We rented a house in Sea Pines on Hilton Head Island for a week with my wife’s sisters and their husbands,” he said. “One of the men, Fred, pretended to be a golfer and declared that going to Hilton Head and not playing golf is like going to Niagara and not seeing the falls. So we booked a round at the old Marsh Course (now Pete Dye’s Heron Point) on Sea Pines.

“We were so equally bad that, for the two of us, it turned out to be a competitive round. The two gentlemen who were involuntarily assigned to us on the first tee looked on with humor, patience, and pathos. A bit embarrassed about our performance, Fred and I then made a golfer’s bond promising to become skilled enough at the game so we could play anywhere in the country and ‘not make an ass of ourselves’. We are almost there.”

Through the years, Ed’s handicap continued to improve to his current 9 with steel and 13 with his hickories. He accomplished his goal of playing golf in all 50 states and is now working on his last two Canadian provinces.

He is the Region 5 director of the Golf Collectors Society, a member of the Society of Hickory Golfers, a participant of the Michigan Hickory Tour, and a founding officer of the Wyandotte Hickory Organization.

Ed has a BS, MS, and MA from Eastern Michigan University. A teacher and coach for 22 years in the Southgate Community School District, Ed was hired as an administrator where he worked for another 10 years before retiring. He met his wife, Anne, in the school district and they were married in 1976. Their only child is now working as a producer/reporter for KPLU public radio in Seattle.

How often do you play hickories?

It was about 10 percent of the time three years ago. It’s up to about 60 percent of the time now.

What’s in your play set?

I’ve resisted using replicas because half the fun of the hickory clubs is the search for what works for you. So, the following are all originals:

George Nicoll – Zenith putter
George Nicoll – Zenith niblick (up to 100 yds)
George Nicoll – Zenith corrugated face pitcarher (100 to 120)
Hendry & Bsihop – Mashie (120 to 135)
George Nicoll – Mashie (140-150)
George Nicoll – Mashie (160)
Tom Stewart – Mid Iron (170)
Ideal – Driving Iron (180-190)
Wright & Ditson – Brassie (max 220)

Favorite club?

The most consistent, and therefore my favorite, is the Hendry & Bishop mashie. It is a woman’s mashie and shorter than the others, but it likes me.

What ball do you play?

I like the feel and performance of the Wilson 50s and the Calloway Super-soft. The McIntyre RTJ ball also has a nice feel and I often use it for tournaments.

Favorite course for hickories?

My favorite course experience with hickory clubs was when I played Harbor Town in Hilton Head – excellent!



Ed Ronco poses near the founder’s statue at Ottawa Park, Ohio’s oldest public course.

Favorite hickory tournament?

Belvedere in Charlevoix, Mich., for the course and overall quality and the Canadian Hickory Open for just plain fun.

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

I’ve enjoyed most everything from the past players’ bios, to course architecture, to the evolution of equipment, to the history of the rules of golf. While reading the American Triumvirate (by James Dodson), I learned what a profound influence that Henry Picard had on Ben Hogan. I dug further and discovered a book about his life, The Hersey Hurricane, by Seamus McGee, which I recommend. I’ve learned a lot these past three years since I started playing hickory. You can’t hold an old club in your hand without catching the bug to learn about the era.

Best thing about hickory golf?

The people. I have met golfers from so many diverse backgrounds whose priority is certainly one thing – hickory golf.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

Members of the GCS and the SoHG have helped me understand the process of collecting and putting together a play set of hickories. That led to the formation of a regional group – the Wyandotte Hickory Organization. I believe regional hickory organizations are the key to growing the game. The GSC can only benefit from an increase in hickory players. I never considered myself a golf collector, but in my search for player clubs I ran into too many interesting and beautiful clubs that I would never hit, but had to have. Once you do that – you become a collector.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

The Rules of the Green – A History of the Rules of Golf, by Kenneth Chapman. It is a bit dry at points, but overall I found the morphing of the rules very fascinating.