



Member Profile
Mark Hollingsworth
West End, N.C., USA

Born to missionary parents and raised in Caripe, Venezuela, Mark Hollingsworth grew up playing soccer, baseball, and volleyball. That background stood him well in earning athletic scholarships to pay for his secondary education at Biola University in La Mirada, Calif., where he earned a degree in business.

In his freshman year, Mark was introduced to golf by some friends. For his first outing he purchased MacGregor blade 3-5-7-9 irons, a bulls eye putter, and a Wilson Staff persimmon driver and 5 wood from a local pawn shop.

“We went directly to a local munny which had a quarter inch of snow on the ground,” Mark recalls. “We played orange balls so we could find them and walked 18 holes in about 2½ hours.”

What was truly amazing, he said, is that he shot 185, or slightly more than ten strokes a hole. Despite the “cool” introduction, Mark was smitten with the golf bug and proceeded to improve, and that rather quickly. Three months later, in a junior collegiate regional championship, he shot 77, 78 to help his team to a fifth place finish.

Over time, Mark continued to cultivate and refine his passion for the game. In 2008, he and his wife, Joanna, moved from their long time home in Orange County, Calif. to Pinehurst, N.C.

Five years later he was introduced to hickory golf by Steve Gaddy and Dr. Jay Harris. “I borrowed a set of authentic original hickories from Jay and proceeded to break shafts on four of the irons,” he says. “It was because of my learned tendency to come steeply into the ball and take a divot.”

After consulting with the good doctor, it was decided that replica clubs in extra stiff shafts might be more prudent for Mark’s swing. Since then he has played in several local and national tournaments and is “absolutely hooked on hickory golf and all that goes with it,” he says.

“The highlight so far was getting a 10-day trip to Scotland in October 2014 for the World Hickory Open Championship and International Hickory Cup at Carnoustie.”

Mark has been a financial advisor with Raymond James for 32+ years and still enjoys the daily challenges in the work place. He carries a 2 handicap with modern clubs, 5 with hickory.

He and Joanna have two children, Mindi, 27, and Kaci, 24.

How often do you play hickories?

This year I played about 25 rounds, roughly 30 percent of my total rounds.

What’s in your play set?

Louisville Precision Rustless irons:

2 (190 yards) 4 (170) 6 (150)
 8 (130) 50° (110) 58° (95)

Two Louisville woods with a Dr. Jay Harris touch:

Hickory Nut driver (12°)
 Hickory Nut spoon (17°)

Tad Moore Bulldog 23°
 Tad Moore mallet putter.

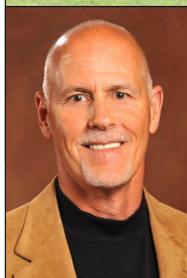
Basically half a set which requires swing adjustments for distance control.

Favorite club?

Tad Moore putter and Hickory Nut spoon.

What ball do you play?

I like the Wilson Elite 50 yellow, Srixon Soft Feel Yellow, and the Callaway Super Soft. I find them very playable, excellent feel, and have used them even with modern clubs.



Mark Hollingsworth’s first golf experience was 18 holes on a snowy day – in two and a half hours. Above, on the first tee at Mid Pines.

Favorite course for hickories?

Mid Pines. The renovations there have given it the original Donald Ross look and feel and it is spectacular – but VERY hard!

Favorite hickory tournament?

I love match play and had an absolute blast at the Hickory Match Play Championship at the Cricket Club in Philly and the Hickory Cup in Scotland.

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

I love old videos of Bobby Jones. He had the purest swing in golf history and the record to back it up. Poetry in motion.

Best thing about hickory golf?

Without a doubt it has to be the fine folk who are involved. I cherish the many friends I have made in just shy of two years of being involved in this great sport. They are all so gracious, talented, self deprecating, and just plain fun to be around! An interesting side note to this is that most of them seem to be very successful in life in general. I think this sport attracts the cream of the crop.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

I think the presence of recognizable pros like Sandy Lyle will do more to promote the sport than anything. It was terrific having him at the World Hickory Open in Scotland. Being able to interact with an icon of the sport like Sandy is a HUGE perk and his involvement in the sport will bring wide ranging benefits. We need to promote this to as many pros as possible.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

Mind over Golf by Richard H. Coop. I’m about halfway through this one...very interesting. My favorite golf book is more esoteric – Seven Days in Utopia – Golf’s Sacred Journey, by David Cook. Many great life lessons in this one.