



Member Profile

Peter Flory

Glencoe, Ill., USA

The youngest of six children, Peter Flory grew up in Ann Arbor, Mich. The University of Michigan graduate has degrees in economics and English literature.

“My mom took up golf after I was born and used to drop me off at the putting green while she played in her 9-hole league,” he says. “So, I learned the short game first and expanded from there.”

A self-taught player, Flory says he has owned but two sets of clubs in his life. “So, even before I got into hickory golf, I was a traditionalist when it came to modern equipment. In high school in early 1990s, I was the last guy playing with a persimmon driver and a blade 1 iron.”

Flory owns and operates a consulting business that focuses on distressed bank acquisitions, so his busy times come during economic recessions. “Fortunately, this gives me a flexible schedule during the good times and has allowed me to travel to some of the national hickory tournaments over the last few years,” he says.

Flory has not abandoned play with modern clubs and is a top flight amateur with the steel weapons, having qualified for the Western Amateur, the U.S. Mid Amateur, and recently as an alternate for the U.S. Amateur. He’s also qualified for the 2017-18 Illinois State Amateurs and in 2017 finished third in the state in the Chicago District Golf Association Mid Am.

When not examining bank acquisitions or sinking birdie putts, Flory’s hobby is creating digital golf course designs. “I create 3D working models of golf courses that can be played on video game systems, PCs, and golf simulators,” he says. “That led to the realization that I could revive NLE, or No Longer Existing, golf courses that were lost to history. So, I’ve done a lot of research of old magazines, club archives, various libraries, and even personal records of descendants to piece together enough information to recreate lost courses.”

It was that hobby that led to hickory golf. While playing at Lawsonia Links in 2015 he noticed a flyer at the club announcing a hickory golf tournament. “I decided that it would be essential for me to really understand how these NLE courses would have played in their day. Once I tried out the hickories, I was immediately hooked. It was like finding a new sport that was more like the golf that I fell in love with as a kid.”

Flory and his wife, Nicole, and accomplished artist, have three boys ages, 9, 9, and 5.

Q&A with Peter Flory

How often do you play hickories?

I’ve only been at this for two years now, but it is mostly just in the hickory tournaments and occasionally a casual round if it is a classic course that really calls for it. I still am an active tournament golfer with modern clubs, so I do find it a little difficult to switch back and forth in the heart of the season. The course management needed for hickory play helps my modern game, but the torque on the woods requires a different swing.

What’s in your play set?

When I dove into this, Tad Moore really helped me out. I have a custom set of his Star OA irons with extra long and stiff shafts, with heads bent about 3 degrees upright due to my height. I also carry a Tad Moore Pall Mall Spoon and a Louisville Driver. Right now, I’m putting with Tad’s Dunn Wooden Mallet. My offseason goal is to find a neglected set of originals that can be reshafted to my specs.

Favorite club?

I just love hitting the spoon, especially off the tee. My favorite feeling in hickory golf so far is being able to shape shots off the tee in either direction to fit the hole. And the spoon is my go-to for anything that calls for a draw. When my timing is on, I love the way that the shaft feels like it throws the ball out there.

What ball do you play?

I’ve experimented with soft compression balls and replicas, but I usually end up playing a Pro V or the equivalent. I do carry a gutty replica in my modern bag that I use to make prop bets with friends.

Favorite course for hickories?

The course that drew me into this in the first place, Lawsonia Links. It’s one of my favorite courses in general and playing it with hickories has made me realize how epic the scale was when it was constructed.

Favorite hickory tournament?

I enjoy the Southern Fourball the most for the partner aspect. Tad Moore introduced me to Ted Kopec when I needed a partner and we’ve really had a great time hamming and egging our way around.



Peter Flory on the Lawsonia Links during the 2016 U.S. Hickory Open in Wisconsin.

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

My fascination is with golf course architecture and especially lost courses. As a hobby, I have been bringing lost courses back to life digitally for simulator play. I’ve worked on the lost Olympia Fields courses, Mill Road Farm, and I’m about half way done with the Lido. This takes a lot of research, which is what I enjoy. At some point this winter, I’ll complete the Lido and will play it, digitally, with hickory clubs for the first round since the early 1940s. This hobby is sort of like the golf equivalent of Jurassic Park.

Below is an example of my digital recreation of the famous fourth hole at the Lido. [The original Lido Golf Club on Long Island, N.Y. was designed by C.B. Macdonald and Seth Raynor with input from Alister MacKenzie. It could not surmount lingering economic problems created by World War I and the Great Depression, finally closing in 1942.]



Best thing about hickory golf?

Initially, it was the connection with the original architecture. However, after playing tournaments for a couple years now, I just find that it is a much more exciting style of golf. There is so much that can go wrong that it makes it thrilling when it happens to go right. And either way, it’s a great walk with interesting and friendly people.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

Here is my idea – the SoHG and/or regional hickory groups should try to partner with various state golf associations to introduce one hickory tournament per calendar year to their schedule. Use the upcoming wave of centennial anniversaries of classic courses as the catalyst to get good venues and coordinate the rental clubs as part of the entry fees. I would also suggest making it a partner event or even a scramble to lower the intimidation factor for first-timers. If good venues are secured, people will sign up. I’ll be looking for a chance to initiate this in Illinois.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

I’m about halfway through Horace Hutchinson’s British Golf Links right now. I finally made it all the way through Wayne Morrison and Thomas Paul’s The Nature Faker, which is a 2,000+ page e-book about William Flynn’s architecture.