



Member Profile

Andy Hayes

Evanston, Ill., USA

Andy Hayes grew up in Minneapolis, Minn., with a strong religious upbringing. He attended North Park University intending to become a pastor of a church. After seminary he found such a position with a small church in Evanston, Ill. When that church closed its doors in 2018, Andy began to look for another post while working part time coaching junior golf at an academy called The Golf Practice.

“I really enjoyed working in golf, and had a great mentor, Peter Donahue, who introduced me to the deeper parts of the game, the parts that go beyond the equipment and the score,” Andy says. “Six months later I was offered a full time position and am still working here five years later.”

He’s now a senior coach at Canal Shores Golf Course and director of summer programming that can host a many as 100 kids during the season’s busiest weeks. He also hosts the program’s podcast.

A trip to Scotland in 2018 completely changed his perspective. “I loved their laidback, yet serious, approach to the game,” he says, “and how accessible it seemed to everyone. I had a ‘conversion’ experience where I hit a 8 iron 100 yards on one hole and 200 yards on the next, due to the changes in wind. I was sold. This is how golf was meant to be played. When I returned home I immediately started playing with only eight clubs to experience more creativity and shotmaking that’s harder to find here. I then bought a persimmon driver, and most recently have switched to playing hickory clubs full time.”

Over the past five, he’s been diving deeper into the game to discover what golf actually means to him. What’s important and what acutally matters?

“I used to think it was score that mattered, and new equipment that would get me there,” he says. “I knew there had to be more to the game than this. Playing hickory clubs for me has removed any doubt as to whether it was my fault or the club’s fault for a bad shot.

“I love the feel of the clubs, the sound they make when swishing through the air, and the idea that, maybe, I could be just as good with equipment that was 100 years old. Last year I shot the best round of my life, 5 under, with modern equipment. While that was fun at the time, since then there’s a sense that something was missing from that moment. Shooting the best score didn’t satisfy in the way I thought it would.

“Now, I know hickory clubs aren’t going to fully fill this void, but it feels like they are the way to go. I feel a sense of connection to golf, history, and the way the game was meant to be played that I haven’t felt with anything else.”

How often do you play hickories?

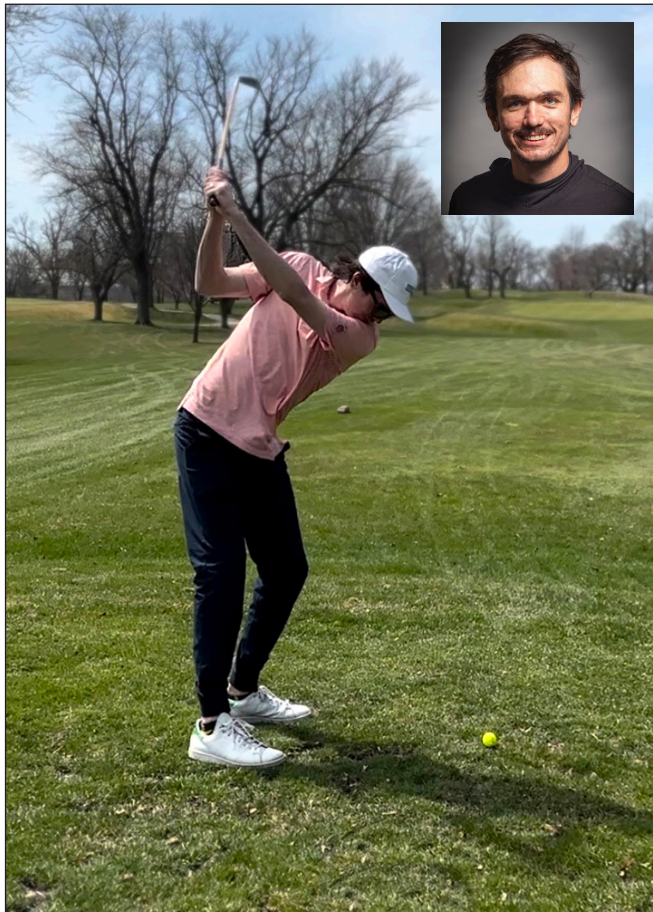
Full time. I use them every round I play, and always have them around daily when I am teaching.

What’s in your play set?

Tad Moore OA irons, a Tad Moore Brassie and Cleek, and HB putter

Do you have a favorite club?

The mashie. I’ve loved hitting it from inside 100 yards to a front pin and running it up close.



Andy Hayes is a golf instructor and student of the game’s deeper meanings.

What ball do you play?

Callaway Supersoft.

Favorite course for hickories?

My favorite course for hickories is Spring Valley Country Club in Salem, Wisc. It was designed by Langford and Moreau. I haven’t played in any events yet, but am looking forward to the Wisconsin Hickory Open at Lawsonia, which is my favorite course in America.

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

Playing old courses, especially in Scotland. I have the feeling that golf wasn’t really invented, rather it was discovered, and it was only a matter of time until someone did it. It’s been a great experience to play at some of the places where the game was first played.

Best thing about hickory golf?

I love the balance of the connection with history and being able to still be competitive and work to do my best at something.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

Letting people try the clubs. Since I got my set I’ve had a few friends, co-workers, and students buy their own after they’ve been able to try mine.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

To the Linksland by Michael Bamberger. I’ve reread this book a lot. I also have read Bamberger’s latest, The Ball in the Air.