



Member Profile

Jim Pucci

North Conway, N.H, USA

Baseball and basketball were Jim Pucci's sporting interested growing up in Winthrop, Mass. Golf was a distant third until his sophomore year in high school.

"Something 'clicked' and I quickly became a decent player and was named a conference All-Star throughout high school," he says.

He later made the golf team at Bryant College. "After three 'under-achieving' seasons on the team, I left with degree in hand and hit the labor force," he says.

Tiring of contract work after two years, Pucci took a job as assistant golf professional at a local course. Four years and four different golf courses later, he thought it might be "time to grow up and find a real job."

That led to an entry level position in the technology department with Scudder Investments that eventually morphed into a full-time support position. After three years, Pucci accepted a job in the technical department of ADP.

It was a life-changing job in that he met his future wife, Catherine, at ADP. After 13 years with the company, the couple said goodbye to the corporate world and in the fall of 2016 purchased a bed and breakfast in North Conway, N.H. called the White Birch Inn (www.whitebirchinnh.com).

"Three months into our new adventure and we couldn't be happier," he says. "I just need to ask the boss for more time off to golf. I should have had that written into the contract."

Pucci says that hickory golf found him when he purchased a club to display three years ago.

"During a Google search, the Society of Hickory Golfers website appeared near the top of the search list," he says. "I went through nearly every link and resource and was immediately hooked. The thought of replicating how golf was played around 1920 was so appealing."

Pucci recalls that learning golf at age 10 meant learning how to hit a mixed bag of clubs from different manufacturers.

"I had to learn how to hit each club and this was the 'norm' back in 1910-20, so this aspect brought me back to when I was introduced to the game. I feel like I'm learning how to play all over again. It has taken me a full three years to put together a set that I am comfortable with but that is half the fun."

Pucci hasn't played much in the past 10 years and says his level of play and expectations have diminished, but he has a modern handicap of 7 and a hickory handicap of 12.

"The game is so much more interesting playing with wood shafts," he says. "And the looks and comments you get when appearing on the first tee with 'antiques' can be priceless."

Pucci has organized the New Hampshire Hickory Golf Association and has an event scheduled in July 2017 (The White Mountain Hickory Classic – info on the SoHG tournament schedule page).

"Catherine and I consider our inn 'hickory friendly' and a note about hickory golf will be out on our website soon," Pucci says.

The couple have been married 10 years and have three four-legged, furry children – a rescue dog named Guinness and two rescue cats, Jax and Mulligan.

(The New Hampshire Hickory Golf Association has a Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/New-Hampshire-Hickory-Golf-Association-208999592893147/)

How often do you play hickories?

I play hickory golf 80-90 percent of the time.

What's in your play set?

No replicas. I find originals and attempt to learn how to hit each. I have some extra clubs that find their way into my play set. Currently in my bag are:

McEwan of Formsby Driver, 10 degrees

Wright and Ditson Spoon, 16 degrees

George Nicoll, Macdonald Smith 1 Iron, 20 degrees

Tom Stewart 2 Iron, 25 degrees

Tom Stewart 3 Iron, 30 degrees

Tom Stewart Mashie, 34 degrees

Tom Morris Signature Mashie, 38 degrees

Hendry & Bishop Mashie Niblick, 44 degrees

Robert Forgan Niblick, 52 degrees

UK made Schenectady style Putter



Jim Pucci is the owner of a New Hampshire B&B and the organizer of the NH Hickory Golf Assoc.

Favorite club?

I just put the Tom Morris Signature mashie in the bag and have taken quite a liking to it.

What ball do you play?

The McIntyre Ouimet ball

Favorite course for hickories?

North Conway CC and the Donald Ross course at Mt. Washington.

Favorite hickory tournament?

Probably the Vermont Hickory Open, though I've only played in a few tournaments. I like stroke play events as that format is a stricter examination. You need a clear head from the first tee shot to the final putt. Mid Pines is on my bucket list. So that would be my favorite that I haven't played yet.

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

I love the rawness of how Golf was played. Particularly, Gully Golf. No excuses. Hit it Go find it and hit it again no matter the lie until it's holed. With regards to a player or architect.... Harry Vardon was the first Global superstar and his tour of the U.S. is quite interesting. I have an affinity for Donald Ross designed courses. But in all honesty, any course designed before 1935 peaks my interest.

Best thing about hickory golf?

I have to echo the sentiments of other SoHG members – It is the people you meet. Their interest in the history of the game and the enthusiasm among hickory players is contagious.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

Playing hickory golf at "away" courses more often. Our home course knows who we are. Exposure at different courses may reach more people and provide us an opportunity to advertise hickory golf and the SoHG. Perhaps even lending a hickory set to other courses just for display in their pro shops with some literature on modern hickory golf.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

The Vardon Invasion. It depicts most of his U.S tour in 1900 with match results and old pictures.