



Member Profile

Doug Pendleton

Worcester, Mass., USA

September 2021

Doug Pendleton was born in Orlando, Fla., in 1958. By the time he was 10 Doug had lived in Tennessee, Africa (for 5 years), Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maine. It was in Maine that Doug was introduced to golf.

"I was a friend's house when I saw her father hitting golf balls in the back yard. He asked me if I wanted to give it a try. I'd never sung a club before, but Mr. Tompkins showed me how to grip it, how to take it back low and a little on the inside and how to hinge off his right elbow to make a smooth transition into the target zone. Basically, it was Ben Hogan's swing." (Joel Tompkins was an accomplished golfer who gave lessons in his retirement.)

"As I wanted to impress my friend, Suzie, I saved some money to buy clubs. Eventually, my mom took me to an antique store where, using the money I'd saved, I bought a juvenile putter, 7 iron and wood, all of which had leather grips and hickory shafts. The clubs cost \$1.50 each.

"I still have those clubs," he says. "For two years I practiced hitting the hickory 7 iron around in my back yard or in the small field nearby along with my friend, Gary. On my 12th birthday I played nine holes at Riverside Golf Course in Portland."

Shortly thereafter, Doug's family moved to Massachusetts and, for Christmas, he got a starter set of modern clubs. He also became a caddy at the International Golf Course in Bolton, Mass., where he could play on its executive golf course for free.

"That's when I really got the bug for golf," he says. "I learned from watching people while caddying and from going round and round the dry burnt fairways at Twin Springs Golf Course."

He even caddied for a golfer who was trying to make it onto the pro tour.

"I mentioned that I played next door at Twin Springs, so after his round at the International, this guy played 9 holes with me at Twin Springs," Doug recalls. "He suggested a small wager for a coke, but I suggested that we play for each other's putters. Maybe the guy was just being kind, because I won the match and he handed me his gleaming new Ping putter. I played with that putter for over 20 years."

Doug now plays golf at the Worcester Country Club in Massachusetts, and he makes a living as a business broker "helping business owners sell their companies so that they can play more golf."

Doug and his wife, Debbie, who is just learning to golf, live in Worcester, Mass., and summer on Cape Cod. They have three children (one plays golf) and three grandchildren. Doug makes a living in the mergers and acquisitions profession helping business owners' package and sell their companies.

How often do you play hickories?

Although my home club, Worcester CC, has a storied history with hickories – first Ryder Cup, Men's U.S. Open, Bobby Jones calling the stroke on himself, etc. – no one plays with hickory clubs at my home course except for me. At first it felt awkward showing up with them, so I'd go play at sunset or play a few holes with my son when no one was around. I am now playing 60-70% of my rounds with hickories. I am even playing matches with them, and people seem to like the idea of hickories. Since I play some of the state amateur tournaments, I have a USGA handicap for moderns and my SoHG handicap for hickory events. I look forward to meeting other hickory players.

What's in your play set?

Louisville – T. Stewart irons 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Louisville – Stewart Maiden niblick, 56 degrees
Louisville – Wilsonian spoon
Louisville – HB Spaulding putter

Favorite club?

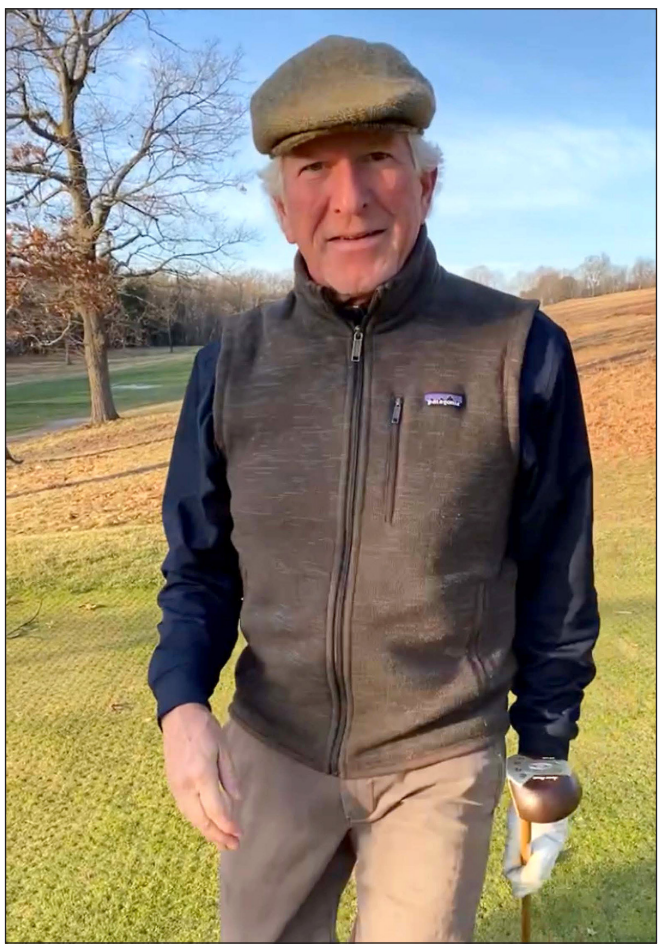
Hands down the Stewart Maiden niblick, I'll even sneak that club into my modern set at times.

What ball do you play?

The Titelist Pro-V1.

Favorite course for hickories?

My home course, Worcester CC, is so much fun. From the tips it's 6,700; middle tees are 6,200; and the forward tees 5,800 yards. It's very playable, a great walking course and knowing that legends such as Walter Hagen, Gene Sarazen, Willie MacFarlane, Francis Ouimet and Bobby Jones all played here (with hickories) enhances my enjoyment. Willie Ogg, the long time pro at Worcester, and Bobby Jones share the hickory course record at 66. My best round so far is a 76 from the middle tees. I have a 16-day golf trip to Scotland planned May of 2022 where I will get to play many cool courses. Upon my return from Scotland, I suspect that I may have a new favorite hickory course, it could be Shishkin, Machrihanish, The Old Course, Carnoustie,



Doug Pendleton is shown on a crisp and sunny winter's day at Worcester CC in Worcester, Mass.

Panmure, Anstruther, Crail, Western Gables, Carradale or maybe even Corrie.

Favorite hickory tournament?

If I could have played in World Hickory Open at Crail in Scotland this fall (2021) that would have been my favorite tournament.

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

Since my family surprised me last Christmas with my starter set of hickories, I have been enjoying the history of the game and the lads who played hickory. There is so much to learn. Getting into hickories has opened a whole new area of interest to me, including trying to build a play set of antique clubs. I am hoping to build a set of clubs made in Scotland ahead of my trip there in 2022.

Best thing about hickory golf?

I think unknowingly I have always been a hickory player. I started with those three hickory clubs but went away from it. Until recently, I didn't even know anyone still played with hickories. For years my friends always wanted to know why I carried a little wee bag and tended to play with a half or three-quarter set of clubs. For years I played with just six clubs. When asked why I did this, I really didn't have an answer, I didn't know myself. I have always enjoyed hitting creative shots to the detriment of score but when I got the hickories, it all started to make more sense to me. When people ask me why hickories, my answer is easy – if you show up with hickories (or say just six clubs in the bag) expectations are lowered. Lower expectations = more fun, pure and simple!

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

Several years ago, over New Year's Eve cocktails, the discussion of resolutions was in the air. I proposed that I was going to try to become a scratch golfer. I had been in the low single digits for over 30 years and even got as low as .05 but I have always blown it. To try and add some credibility to my quest for scratch, I started an Instagram feed called "Journey to Scratch." Who knows if I will get there but I will say that when I pick up my moderns after hitting hickories it almost feels like I am cheating. To the question at hand of promoting hickory, through my Instagram feed I connect with people all over the world. We share a common bond of golf and my passion for hickory golf. In addition to Instagram, I have been sharing my clubs with other members of the club and there's some interest there. I recently met and played a round with fellow hickory player Kevin Mendik, from Brae Burn CC. Kevin's license plate is "Mashie" which is awesome. Playing with Kevin and making plans to join him at his course got me to thinking that if someone created a way that kindred spirits of hickory could find a way to connect via the internet (like the Thousand Greens website) it might be a great way to further the game of hickory golf.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

I am almost finished with Tom Coyne's book A Course Called America wherein he writes a little about hickory golf. His book A Course Called Ireland was his best so far and overall, he's a great writer. I have enjoyed reading his books and played golf with him whilst he was on his tour here on Cape Cod.