



MEMBER PROFILE

Michael Sands

Granby, Massachusetts USA

Michael Sands grew up in Ludlow, Mass., where his Scots/Irish family and friends taught him early about a game he would come to love.

"My father, Michael Sr., and my great uncle, Norman Martin, drilled it in my head:

'Keep yer eye on the bahh, keep yer heed doon, and doan'a press!!'

"Translation: Keep your eye on the ball, keep your head down, and don't press."

Keeping those tried and true Scottish maxims in mind, Sands would play golf, as well as hockey, for Ludlow High School. Both sports would become lifelong passions.

"I learned a lot from golf Coach Larry Holdsworth," he says. "I spent week after week trying to make the cut for the weekend match. I never gave up but I never did make the top six, so, no match play."

Still, he says, he loved the sport and got to play free golf every day on the team. And that wasn't so bad.

Sands recalls that he and his buddies would sneak on the Ludlow CC (a Donald Ross course), and the Orchards (also a Ross course) in South Hadley for a few hours of short game practice.

After school, Sands attended the Massachusetts Maritime Academy in Buzzards Bay and served in the Merchant Marine. Following that, he earned a masters degree in material science from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. His adult career has been with the U.S. Navy and the defense industry.

Golf remained a constant. Over the years, he would play such Massachusetts courses as Oxford CC in Chicopee, Westover, Chicopee CC, Tekoa

CC (Ross) and many others.

"I never fully realized how lucky I was to grow up in the original heart of golf country," he says. "It is a treasure trove for old courses, and great for hickory play."

Nothing, he says, has felt more natural than picking up the hickory shafted clubs. "Of course I have hit them along the way over the years, but not a full set, and not a full round. Now, though, my hickory journey has begun and I'm looking forward to playing a few tournaments."

Sands and his wife, Diana, have been married for 19 years and have two children, Maxwell, 14, and Grace, 12. Like dad, both love hockey and golf.

How often do you play hickories?

About 99 percent of the time but I am just starting the "Full Journey."

What's in your play set?

I use replicas and some originals, but I am on the hunt for some key Tom Stewart originals:

Black Brassie
Black Spoon
Trump Spoon – 1920s?
Black Cleek
Black Bulldog
Just Bros. Mid-iron, Mashie, Benny, Niblick SM, Niblick P.
Hickory Aim-Rite Putter original
A wood mallet putter that I made from parts in 1997.

Favorite club?

Benny – Great for approach and controlled short chips.

What ball do you play?

Titleist ProV1.

Favorite course for hickories?

Tekoa CC in Westfield, Mass.

Favorite hickory tournament?

Have yet to play one but I am looking forward to travel to and play in a few.

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

I enjoy looking at old instructions and teachings, and discovering how appli-



MICHAEL SANDS is one of the Bay State's newest hickory golfers.

cable they are because they were created while playing with hickory clubs. Some of that early lore did not translate well to modern synthetic metal and carbon fiber; so by going to hickory sticks there is so much more to re-learn.

Best thing about hickory golf?

If I swing easy, the flex of hickory adapts automatically which equals a great shot. If I swing hard, likewise the flex point moves in the hickory, yielding a great shot! So now I am going to make a go of it to climb back to scoring again, because I feel these clubs are in harmony with my natural swing and promote consistent shots.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

Many have probably said it, but there should be a full PGA tour event using only hickory. I plan on promoting hickory golf every time I hit the links. People are fascinated by it. I understand there are two camps, one that prefers original clubs only, and those who use replicas. I see benefits to both. Replicas are available to get and start playing and having fun. Originals are super fun to collect and play. I think the replicas availability promote hickory golf better.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

Little Red Book, by Harvey Penick.