



Member Profile
Larry Spittler
 Hershey, Pa., USA

Larry Spittler has spent his whole life in the Central Pennsylvania area, first as a youngster in Pine Grove before moving to Hershey in the early 1960s. He played a number of sports growing up but golf was always a passion, inherited from his grandfather, his father and an uncle who was like a second dad to him. He picked up the game at 10 years old and has been playing ever since.

Some of his fondest golf memories come from caddying on the West Course of the Hershey Country Club and, later, working on the grounds crew as a teenager. Most of his early rounds were played on Blue Mountain View near Fredricksburg, Pa., or at Spring Creek Golf Course in Hershey where he spent many summer days learning the secrets of the 9 hole layout.

Despite knee and ankle surgeries, Larry says he seen steady improvement in his game over the past 10 years and jokes that he is playing to a lower handicap (4) than he did in his 20s. He has won both the Senior and Super Senior Club Championships at Manada Golf Course and recently partnered with Rod Cline, one of Central Pennsylvania's top amateur players.

On July 1, 2021, Larry will retire from Shentel as a Training Instructor II. He is also a retired pastor. He holds a bachelors of science degree from Messiah College (now Messiah University) and Masters in Divinity from Southern Seminary. He and his lovely wife, Rita, have been married for over 30 years and have two daughters and three grandchildren. They have opened their home to two retired racing greyhounds, Bella and Tree, and help run the day-to-day operations for Personalized Greyhounds, a greyhound adoption group in Central Pennsylvania.

How often do you play hickories?

Having just gotten my set, I have set a goal for this year to make it a 60/40 split between my modern clubs and my hickories. I'm only keeping the modern ones at 60 because of tournament commitments but I can see myself working that number down and my hickory rounds going up. I currently play at least once a week with my hickories

What's in your play set?

Currently carry all originals but I am excited to be adding a Tad Moore putter to the bag. The core of my set was put together by Bruce Markwardt who did an outstanding job.

- Putter – Spalding Deadline
- Niblick (2) – MacGregor (75 yards or so)
- Wright and Ditson fancy face Niblick (25 yards and out of sand)
- Mashie Niblick – MacGregor (80 – 100 yards)
- Mashie (2) – MacGregor (110 – 130)
- MacGregor (130 – 150)
- Mid Iron – MacGregor – (160 – 180)
- Approach Cleek – J Patterson (160 – 180)
- Sammy – Kroyden (175 – 190)
- Spoon – Gene Sarazen (185 – 200)
- Brassie – H&B Invincible (215 – 230)

Favorite club?

I've only played a few rounds so far but it is a toss-up between my mid iron and my approach cleek. I've only hit one bad shot with my mid iron so far and the approach cleek has been like my secret weapon. Used for a variety of shots and just a fun club to hit.

What ball do you play?

Been a Titleist guy for as long as I can remember. I switched from the Pro V1 to the AVX when it first came out and I love it. It absolutely performs with my hickory clubs and I will recommend it to anyone looking for a ball to try.

Favorite course for hickories?

If you are in the Central Pennsylvania area, give Manada Golf Course a try. We play it from the red tees so it is around 5,300 yards. Quick greens and challenging without



Larry Spittler on the first tee of the old course at the Homestead in Hot Springs, Va. This is the oldest first tee in continual use in the country. Originally a six-hole course, it was later redesigned by Donald Ross.

being overwhelming. The other course I have tried is Blue Mountain View. Excellent course for hickories.

Favorite hickory tournament?

The first one I get to play in! Haven't had a chance to experience one yet so I am really fired up to participate as soon as possible.

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

I have always been a bit of a history geek and the golden age of golf has always had a fond place in my heart. Love "getting to know" some of the great legendary players in the game as well as any opportunity to play on historic courses.

Best thing about hickory golf?

The connection to the past. You cannot hold one of these clubs and not find yourself wondering how many other players held this same club and what courses has it seen. I also love having to create shots on the course. There is much more of a premium in hickory golf on being patient and seeing different kinds of shots than we ever see with modern clubs.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

Look for events to play in using your clubs. Our club does two Par 3 tournaments a year where the entire course is converted to par 3's of varying lengths and difficulties. My golf partner and I are going to play our hickories in this event and compete with the modern guys for fun. Also, I am in process of building out an inexpensive second set so when people are intrigued by what I am doing, I can let them try. Finally, be creative and think outside the box. I go on a golf trip every year to Toftrees Resort near State College. My friend and I are going to host a hickory chipping and putting contest at the end of the first day of the trip. I'm going to donate a hickory putter and niblick to the winners.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

Harry Vardon's The Complete Golfer. Wonderful book and it was like sitting and getting to know the man.