



Member Profile

Tobby Taylor

Morton, Miss., USA

Born and reared in central Mississippi near the Bienville National Forest, Tobby Taylor grew up learning to love the outdoors and enjoys camping, hunting, and fishing. In school, he participated in football, basketball, and chess.

After graduation he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, studied advanced electronics and was stationed at Patrick Air Force Base in Florida where he worked on Advanced Range Instrumentation Aircraft (ARIA). This specialized aircraft is used downrange to track and receive data from rocket launches out of Cape Canaveral.

It did not take Airman Taylor long to find the Manatee Cove Golf Course located on the Air Base, but not so much for golf. The course has a lot of water holes and a couple of small lakes that were filled with bass. One afternoon while fishing in a canal alongside a fairway, he hooked something large. After a brief struggle, Taylor landed a Tru-Flite 1-iron that he had hooked by the rubber grip. The next day he brought his prize catch into work to show the fellows. Turns out his boss played golf and challenged the young airman to learn how to use the club he had just caught. Thus was Airman Taylor hooked on golf.

In 1978 Taylor received orders to Ramstein Airbase in Ramstein-Miesenbach Germany where he quickly found Woodlawn Golf Course. On his days off, he could always be found on the course or in the clubhouse. Here he also met the other love of his life, Jackie La Plante. The two were soon married and Jackie took a job in the Woodlawn Pro Shop just so she could see her husband more often. Taylor continued to play golf as he traveled the world with the military.

Not one to be left out, Jackie took golf lessons and learned to play, quite well, actually. While stationed in upstate New York, Tobby and Jackie won a couples Bowling/Golf tournament. It was a two-day tournament where couples bowled the first day and played golf the next. They finished first place in Bowling and second in Golf with an overall first place for the tournament.

Upon his retirement from the U.S. Air Force, Tobby and Jackie, now with two daughters, moved to central Mississippi where he found employment in the IT Department of the University of Mississippi Medical Center. The demands of raising his young family and the job left little time for golf... not to mention the nearest public golf course was almost an hour away from his home. The golf clubs got packed away, but not for long.

Taylor says he has always been attracted to old and rusty things. "During my working years I became interested in vintage trucks, vintage race cars, vintage clocks, vintage tools, and vintage hickory shaft golf clubs. I liked cleaning and restoring the old rusty things, but also enjoyed researching the history of the manufacturers and the legacy of these items."

Taylor retired from the Medical Center in 2014 though he still volunteers three days a week at public schools to help with IT needs. With more time available, he focused more on his hobbies. It was while researching how to restore his old hickory clubs that he discovered modern hickory golf. "I never imagined golfers would actually still play with these old hickory sticks," he says.

The discovery piqued his interest. In May 2020 he purchased a mixed set of hickory clubs from eBay and started playing golf again. Fortunately, Jackie approved.

"It's right up his alley," she says. "He loves the old traditions, like making cane syrup, repairing vintage clocks, and rebuilding old trucks. I'm glad he's able to combine his love of golf with his interest in preserving a piece of golf history."

How often do you play hickories?

I now play hickory golf almost exclusively. The only time I play with my modern clubs is in Team Tournaments where the golf course is wet.

What's in your play set?

I enjoy the hunt for playable clubs and restoring them to a playable condition. I have about 15 clubs. I get mad at one or two from time to time and pull them out of my bag. Here is what I have in the bag today:

Stellite Brassie, 12 degrees, Aluminum insert face
MacGregor Dreadnaugh Brassie, 15 degrees
P22 Mid-Iron, P.G.A. Standard, 22 degrees
No. 5 Mashie, Wilson, The Wilsonian, 33 degrees
No. 5 Mashie, Lowel & Campbell, 40 degrees
No. 6 Mashie-Niblick, Marvel, 42 degrees
Niblick, Anderson Anstruther, 45 degrees, (Concaved)
No. 19 Niblick, ACE, 50 degrees
Jigger, The Athletic Store Belfast, 32 degrees
Putter - Wright & Ditson, Smooth Face



Tobby Taylor poses with two favorite hobbies – old cars and hickory golf. “The car is a 1926 Ford Roadster pickup,” he says. “My wife named her ‘Miss Madeline’ from the children’s books because Madeline and her classmates often dressed in yellow.”

Favorite club?

My favorite has to be the jigger. I am a bogie golfer-plus and I use the jigger to chip and roll onto the greens. It has a very flexible shaft and appears to have a mind of its own. All I have to do is swing and let the club do the rest. It seems to always find the hole.

What ball do you play?

Thanks for asking this question. I am new to hickory golf so I am still experimenting. Right now I'm using the Wilson Duo Soft 29 and Duo Soft+. I enjoy reading what other hickory golfers are using. It gives me ideas of other balls to try.

Favorite course for hickories?

I have found the Forest Country Club to be almost perfect for hickory golf. It has hardpan fairways which is great for long rolls. The greens are firm and the size of postage stamps... it gives the hickory golfer a fighting chance when competing against modern clubs.

Favorite hickory tournament?

I am still learning how to hit these non-forgiving golf clubs. Give me a little time here...

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

I truly believe Bobby Jones got it right when he said, “Golf is the closest game to the game we call life. You get bad breaks from good shots; you get good breaks from bad shots, but you have to play the ball where it lies.” I love to watch and listen to the entertainers on the golf course, players like Lee Trevino and Chi Chi Rodriguez. They were playing the game they loved and enjoying themselves while doing it. When I started learning the game, I went to the library and got a book by a Pro. I wanted to learn the right way to play. Unbeknownst to me, Lee Trevino didn't swing the “Right Way.” I blame Lee for my first three years of bad golf, the rest is all on me.

Best thing about hickory golf?

To me it's bringing history back to life. Hickory golf is a stripped-down version of the game played today. A man, a stick, and a ball: simple. It's all about a man's skill, not how much technology he can afford. During a practice round, Lee Trevino asked his caddie the yardage to the green. The caddie replied a 7-iron. Lee told the caddie you're the caddie and I'm the striker. He took out a 4-wood, 4-iron, 6-iron, and an 8-iron and hit four balls from that spot and put them all on the green. Lee told the caddie, “I just need you to tell me the yardage, I will decide which club I should play.”

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

I love what the SoHG has done to promote hickory golf. Their website is full of quality information and SoHG encourages the development of local/regional groups like the Southern Hickory Golf Society. The best way to promote hickory golf is to simply get out there and play with your hickory clubs. Trust me, people notice, and they ask questions.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

“And Then Arnie Told Chi Chi...” It's a collection of the greatest true golf stories of all time. Written by Don Wade.