



Member Profile

Ronald Wells

Pinehurst, N.C., USA

Ronald “Rusty” Wells grew up in Bloomington, Ill., where he attended Bloomington High School, played football and captained the high school golf team his junior and senior years. His parents bought their first home when he was 12 years old. As it was only three blocks from the local municipal golf course, it didn’t take long for the youngster to fall under golf’s spell.

“At the age of 12, I couldn’t get enough golf in my life,” he says. “In the summer I’d go to the golf course around 7:30 a.m. and return home in the evening, just before dark. All summer long I’d caddy and play golf with kids my own age who were in love with golf as much as I was.”

All that golf created a fine young player in Wells who, following high school, attended Illinois State University on a golf scholarship. “I captained that team in my junior and senior year,” he says.

After graduation, Wells worked for a small Bloomington business that distributed janitorial and maintenance supplies. Two years later he bought the company from the owner who was ready to retire.

As busy as he was with a new business and a young family with wife, Ilene, Wells accepted a request from the Illinois State athletic director to coach the college golf team.

“He was my college coach and he wanted to be sure I could coach the ISU Golf team as well as run my business. I was in love with golf and immediately accepted his offer. I remained the golf coach for five years and recruited and coached a couple kids who later became touring golf professionals, most notably D.A. Weibring.”

After 30 years in business, Wells retired and he and Ilene moved to Pinehurst, N.C., where they have lived for the past 17 years. The couple have three children, nine grandchildren and a great-grandson.

How often do you play hickories?

I only play hickory tournaments about three times a year. I usually play Mid Pines. About every other year I travel to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, to play the CB MacDonald tournament. I try to play in the U.S. Hickory Open if it’s not too distant from me and, of course, if any tournaments are held at the Pinehurst courses, I play there.

What’s in your play set?

If I could find a really good set of original irons I would love to play them. For now, I play replicas of the 1933 Bobby Jones irons made by Tad Moore, called Victors. My woods are a driver and cleek from Mike Just at Louisville Golf.

What ball do you play?

I play a soft ball if possible, and lately it’s been the Calloway Chrome soft or Super soft.



Lifelong golfer Rusty Wells once coached a college team that included professional D.A. Weibring.

Favorite course for hickories?

I’m fond of Mid Pines in the Pinehurst area and Mimosa hills in Morganton N.C.

Favorite hickory tournament?

My favorite hickory tournament is the Mid Pines event because it’s the largest tournament I play in and people come from all around the world to play in it.

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

Has to be Bobby Jones when he played hickory into the 1930s.

Best thing about hickory golf?

Best thing for me is the guys I’ve met and enjoyed playing with. Always gentlemen even when struggling with tough shots with hickory equipment when the shots might have been much easier with modern equipment.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

I would say try to get existing hickory players to promote the sport within their clubs by introducing the concept to golfing friends. Don’t jam it down their throat, just put the idea out there to try it. If I’m at my range with hickory clubs people ask questions and seem curious about the clubs and usually ask to hit one or two.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

I just ordered the new James Patterson book Miracle at the Masters. A fiction that sounds like fun.