



Member Profile

Bob Ubbing

Southern Pines, N.C., USA

Born and raised in Central Ohio, Bob Ubbing made an early acquaintance of golf. He grew up in Worthington, just north of Columbus. Just across the highway from the family's home was the York Temple Golf Club. From second to 11th grade, the club played an important role in the youngster's life. Ubbing has an abundance of memories from serving as a caddie while growing up.

"I especially recall those days when the temperature was going into the mid-90s," he says. "I'd get to the course before 6:30 a.m. to be able to catch a bag early to beat the heat. The caddies at York didn't use the term 'looping'. That was in the 1950s when the base caddy rate was \$1.35 for a single and \$2.35 for a double. Being home before 1 p.m. with \$1.50 in your pocket was a really good day. A 40-cent tip for a double made for a great \$2.75 day."

In 1938, the father of one of his classmates, Steve Schemine, took York's head professional job, filling a spot vacated by 1933 British Open and 1936 and 1937 PGA Champion Denny Shute. Schemine also owned a driving range less than one half mile up the road.

Ubbing remembers the practice range as the place where he was loaned his first golf clubs – an aluminum head driver from the range and a 3, 5, 7, 9 set of Lady Burke irons that had belonged to Mrs. Schemine. The clubs were to figure in one of his fondest memories of those days.

"It was a Monday morning caddy's day round when I made an eagle 3 on the par 5 10th hole," he says. "This was before I ever recorded a first career birdie. Learning to play a variety of shots with those early Lady Burkes was a great influence in the attraction to the hickory game."

Ubbing attended The Ohio State University in the 1960s but did not complete his degree there. In 1990, he returned to college at the Ohio University regional campus in Lancaster. He played on the regional campus golf team, telling anyone who would listen that he "red-shirted" the 70s and 80s.

After earning his BBA in 1993 and MBA in 1994 at the main Ohio University campus in Athens, Ubbing began a teaching career in area high schools, colleges, and prisons.

"With that background, one would expect I'd be better at getting out of jail on the golf course," he says.

Ubbing says that he and his "wonderful wife of 25 years," Mina, moved to the Sandhills of Central North Carolina in the spring of 2014. It was Mina who presented Ubbing with his first set of hickories in February 2015.

"Now she is considering getting herself a set as two ladies in her regular foursome are already playing hickories," Ubbing says.

While in Lancaster, Ubbing was twice elected city council president as an independent. Both he and Mina have served and chaired many non-profit boards, and both are still active as volunteers in North Carolina.

How often do you play hickories?

I'm playing hickories about 25 to 30 percent of the time now. That is up from just 10 percent of the time this spring.

What's in your play set?

I have a set of replica fitted Louisville Golf Precision 2 through 8 irons from Jay Harris in Pinehurst. My wedges are E. Just Bros. Louisville 52 and 56 degrees. I have a very upright swing plane so I really need to thank Jay for doing such a fantastic job of fitting these to my swing. My driver, spoon, and cleek also are replicas from Jay – the Hickory Nut head model. I alternate between my 1903 Schenectady putter and my Tad Moore Chicopee replica putter.

Favorite club?

My 52 degree "gap" wedge is my favorite. I hit it both better and more consistently than any of the four wedges in my steel set.

What ball do you play?

Lately, I've been playing the lower compression Wilson Staff balls, the Duo and the Duo Spin. Part of that choice is



Bob Ubbing is shown on the 18th tee of the Mid Pines Golf Course in Southern Pines, N.C. Ubbing won the Senior Net title at his first competitive hickory event, the 2015 U.S. Hickory Open at Miami Valley Country Club in Dayton, Ohio. His net total was 140.

because of availability but I am looking to switch to a replica ball at some point.

Favorite course for hickories?

I love both Pine Needles and Mid Pines. Mina and I are members at both. Choosing between the two is like choosing between chocolate cake with butter cream icing and butter cream cake with chocolate icing. If I had to choose just one, I would give Mid Pines the slight edge because of the classic view of the clubhouse from the 18th tee box. That is where the picture, above, was taken.

Favorite hickory tournament?

The 2015 U.S. Hickory Open at Miami Valley GC was my first and, so far, only competitive tournament. It will always hold a special memory for me as this Donald Ross course was so good and I made so many wonderful new acquaintances there.

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

Gene Sarazen has been one of my favorite players since my youth. He was always such a gentlemen, soft spoken, and well dressed. I have his autographed picture hanging right above my computer in my home office. Several years ago, I had the privilege of playing a little with the late Billy Casper. Billy was the epitome of class and kindness. My regrets about Billy are that I had not yet been bitten by the hickory golf bug. I am sure that, if I asked him, he would have told several stories about playing these clubs.

Best thing about hickory golf?

It is difficult to pick a single thing that stands out as being best. Among my favorites are showing respect for the traditions of the game by wearing traditional clothing. But spending a Sunday afternoon with my wife and another couple playing sets of tees nearer each other adds to the pleasure of the game too.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

Continue the good work that "Lang Willie" Engelson and others have started in the Carolinas and Virginia. They have found courses similar to Ohio's Miami Valley GC – Danville GC in Virginia, and Willow Springs G.C. in North Carolina – that are celebrating their centennials. They have arranged for a group of hickory players to join club members in a round. This generates excitement and raises curiosity among those unfamiliar with the traditions and equipment in the game of golf.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

While it is not purely a golf book, the recently deceased John Derr's A Place at the Table has several anecdotal chapters that show how golf removes social barriers and unites people of different cultures.