



Member Profile

Breck Speed

Little Rock, Ark., USA

Breck Speed is a southerner whose easy-going manner and gracious sense of hospitality are well-known to friends and family. Born in Louisville, Ky. and raised in Fort Smith, Ark., Breck attended Lawrenceville Prep in New Jersey, Tulane University in New Orleans (BA in history), and the University of Arkansas (Juris Doctor). Golf was one of several sports that attracted the young man's attention as he went out for football, basketball, and water polo. Golf has become his driving passion, though, especially the hickory variety. Ever sociable, Breck says he's "enjoyed meeting quite a number of hickory players in national and international competitions over the years."

Currently, Breck is CEO of Mountain Valley Spring Company, established in 1871. "It's the oldest continuously operated bottled water company in the United States and a natural to sponsor the SoHG's Championship Series," he says. (And, those who know might add, the water from those Arkansas hills is very good.)

Breck and his wife of 31 years, Anne, have two grown children. "I never thought I'd say this," he says, "but I'm ready for grandkids! They are going to need my special guidance."

As his own children have turned out just fine, no one need fear what that "special guidance" portends. Meanwhile, Breck continues to enjoy his involvement with hickory golf and has introduced many a newcomer to the game.

"This is an exciting time to be involved with hickory golf," he says. "I participated in all six Championship Series events in 2012 and was very pleased to see the events grow. I anticipate 2013 and beyond will see additional growth in both national and local events. Once people get involved with hickory, they don't willingly go back to 'modern golf'," he says.

How often do you play hickories?

I am almost exclusively a hickory player now. I picked up my modern clubs this past year only on the occasion of our Club Championship (the Country Club of Little Rock, 1902). I turned 55 and thought I had a chance against the seniors. As usual, the really good guys my age continue to have their way with me. I won the consolation division after being eliminated in the first match.

What's in your play set?

Driver – Gibson, with a three star shaft.
Spoon – Tad Moore.
Irons – a matched set of eight Wilson "red label" clubs.
Sand – Water Hagen "Iron Man."
Putter – Schenectady, center shafted.

Favorite club?

The Iron Man. The father of our club pro emeritus, Charles Lewis Jr., worked in Walter Hagen's shop in Detroit in the late 1920's and I like to imagine that he put his hands on this club.



Breck Speed and friends at a 2012 hickory golf outing; plus a bottle of his favorite beverage (not including Scotch).

What ball do you play?

Srixon Soft Feel.

Favorite course for hickories?

My local muni, War Memorial Park, is a fun layout. It is a par 64 and was originally designed for hickories.

Favorite hickory tournament?

Any tournament run by CHGA Captain Bill Engelson.

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

I'd like to learn a lot more about the equipment makers. The innovation they fostered continues to be expressed today.

Best thing about hickory golf?

People seem to check their egos at the door. They still want to be competitive and thrash you – but they'll buy you a whisky afterwards. And I really like winning a whisky from Chris Deinlein!

Ideas to promote SoHG, hickory golf?

The SoHG Championship Series is going to be more of a driver of participation in the future. Especially as it is used as an entryway into international competitions.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

I just read Rick Wolffe's great book on Tillinghast – "The Course Beautiful, Reminiscences of the Links". It is a "must have" for any golf book collector or someone wanting to learn more about the early days of golf course construction in America.

Note: *Breck Speed is one of the driving forces behind the expansion of modern hickory golf. Through his involvement and the sponsorship of his company, Mountain Valley Spring Water, the SoHG has been able to create its Championship Series, expand its Web site and work to continually improve its service and communications with its membership.*