



Member Profile

Hugh Menzies

Pinehurst, N.C., USA

Hugh Menzies was born in Canberra, Australia, then the new federal capital of Australia, on Nov. 19, 1940. At the time, his father Harry Menzies, a public servant with the Australian Government, was liaising with the British Army to provide raw materials for the British armies fighting Field Marshal Rommel's Afrika Corps. When Japan entered the war, he did similar liaison work with the Australian and U.S. forces fighting in the Pacific. This stirred an interest in overseas work for Harry and in 1948, he was sent to Japan by the Australian Government to help resuscitate Australia's exports – mainly wool – to Japan.

Harry took his family along, including eight-year-old Hugh. Golf was a big sport among the expats living in Japan – then under the control of General Douglas MacArthur. "I got my first lesson from Chick Chin, a professional who may have played in the 1936 Masters," Hugh says.

For many years, cricket was Hugh's major sport. But he golfed with the family in Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, and New Zealand as Harry moved from post to post. The family came to New York in 1961 and, some years later, Hugh met and married Enid Stenn, whose father was a keen golfer. A son was soon forthcoming and, during spring vacations, Hugh got in some golf with his father-in-law. But living in Manhattan, where he practiced journalism for such as the New York Times, Business Week and Fortune, the prospects for golf were limited.

In 2000, Hugh's son, Neil, suggested playing a few rounds at Pinehurst in the wake of Payne Stewart's U.S. Open victory. Enid fell in love with the village and the die was cast. ("I never had any intention of leaving Manhattan," Hugh says.) They bought a house in 2001 and relocated from New York to become full-time residents a few years later. And what else is there to do in Pinehurst but golf?

Hickories, however, were given no thought until the Menzies moved to their present house in the Fairwoods on 7 community and met Jay Harris. Jay, a hickory player of no little skill, despaired of Hugh's swing (he despaired of everyone's swing), but still encouraged him to take up hickories – hey, a customer is a customer. Hugh still plays most of his golf with contemporary clubs, but hickories are becoming more important. Why? "Because they are fun, call for all sorts of creativity and have brought an entirely new and interesting cast of characters into my life," he says. "Jay still despairs of my swing, but he's a tolerant fellow. Like so many hickoryites."

How often do you play hickories?

A couple of times a month in the non-winter months. A bit more when tournaments get bunched together: ie this coming September.

What's in your play set?

*Jack White brassie
McGregor three wood
Iron Cleek or driving iron made in Singapore, maker unreadable
George Nicoll mashie iron
John Potter midiron
Carl Wendell jigger
MacGregor mashie
Mashie of unknown maker
40 degree unknown (maker's name covered by lead tape)
H. Logan mashie niblick
Rogers Peet niblick
Tad Moore Tom Morris mashie niblick
Mashie Niblick with name covered by lead tape. (sand iron)
Spalding Chicopee putter*

Change is the name of my bag and after shooting a 102 with woods and an 85 without them at French Lick recently (U.S. Hickory Open, July 12-13, 2011), woods may well leave my bag altogether.

Favorite club?

*H. Logan mashie niblick.
When disaster threatens this is my savior (most of the time).*



Hugh Menzies with his H. Logan mashie niblick, the club that gets him out of trouble (most of the time).

What ball do you play?

Whatever comes out of my bag but of the softer variety. Are yellow balls allowed in hickory golf?

Favorite course for hickories?

I am hard-pressed to pick a favorite. I actually enjoy playing Pinehurst No. 7 even though it is 5,800 yards from the greens. But I guess the true answer is "no clearcut favorite."

Favorite hickory tournament?

None really. But the three Opens I've played in have been special with the piper, off-course events, etc.

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

Well-written books about golf and golfing events, not especially about individual players.

Best thing about hickory golf?

Fellow competitors: A most clubbable group. But also testing one's skill with highly individualistic golf clubs on a wide variety of courses in very different parts of the country. And the welcome we get from clubs at which we play. Also using my hickories at PCC against fellow members using contemporary sticks and enjoying their bemusement and, very occasionally, amazement.

Ideas to promote SoHG, hickory golf?

I like the idea of moving towards a rota for the Open to encourage players from all parts of the U.S. to join in. Might help build up and strengthen regional play. That said, going back to established venues where we are most welcome is great. Think it would be fun to encourage more women to play. This might involve some thinking about what courses women can handle with hickories.

Whatever publicity we can generate to encourage golf magazines and the Golf Network to pay some attention would also broaden the game, hopefully without losing the wonderful amateur feeling and the participation of whose skill level will never be great but just love participating.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

"The Match" by Mark Frost.