



Member Profile

Mark Wehring

Houston, Texas USA

Texas resident Mark Wehring grew up in Brenham, a small German farming community of 12,000 about an hour from Houston and home to Blue Bell Ice Cream. At Brenham High School he was the starting point guard on the basketball team and a four-year letterman on the tennis team, playing No. 1 singles for three years. He played on the golf team, but wasn't allowed to practice after school, as that was reserved for the courts. An injury his senior year (fractured tibia and fibula bones, plus high ankle sprain) ended competitive tennis and opened up the world of the links.

Mark has been a golfer since 1980, when his father took him out to play for his 13th birthday. He discovered hickories in 2004, while playing in the British Golf Collectors Society Annual General Meeting at Hoylake (Royal Liverpool). He was instantly hooked on the idea of a full set being seven or eight clubs and that shot-making still mattered, compared to the modern-day power game. He loved the look and feel of the hickory game.

"In my opinion, there isn't anything like a well struck shot with a club that is almost 100 years old," he says. "Great joy, and great fun. And it gives me a great appreciation for how good players like Harry Vardon, James Braid, Bobby Jones, and Walter Hagen were in their day."

Mark plays out of Westwood GC in Houston, where he serves on the finance committee, chairs the green committee, and is the current match-play club champion. He is also a member at Walton Heath GC in London, England, a wonderful golf club with the finest inland courses in the United Kingdom.

He enjoys collecting and reading golf books, with special interests in architecture, James Braid, and the writings of Bernard Darwin. He is also a big fan of Tom Stewart irons.

He has been a member of the SoHG since 2005, serving in various capacities including tournaments and fixtures, medals, competition guidelines, tournament advisory, web, membership and finance, as well as on the board and executive committee.

Mark, who has a BS and MBA from the University of Houston, has worked in the financial industry for 25 years, mostly with Invesco, a global asset manager headquartered in Atlanta. He is a senior compliance officer focusing on global and alternative strategies.

He and his wife, Heidi, have been married for 11 years. They have two wonderful daughters, Emma, 9, and Grace, 6. They make their home in the Memorial Villages of Houston.

How often do you play hickories?

Houston is not blessed with sandy soil. Instead, we have clay which tends to be either dry and baked, or wet and heavy. This often dictates the choice of clubs. In general, I play most of my hickory golf in odd-numbered years that feature special hickory events in which I participate. In even numbered years, I play in state and local events with modern day clubs.

What's in your play set?

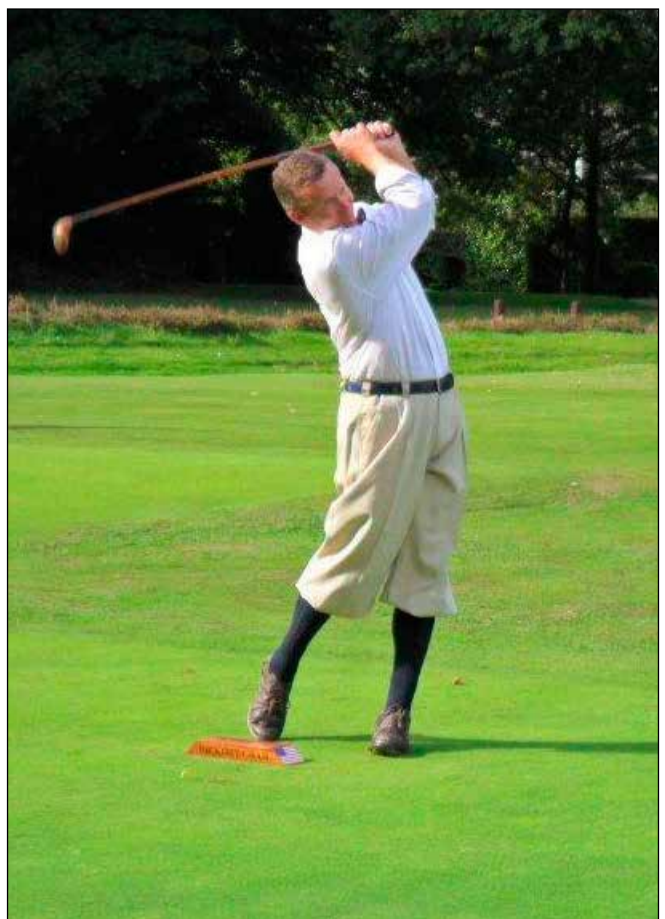
Tom Stewart Gem-style putter
Stewart Maiden for H&B Regis niblick (up to 90 yards)
Tom Stewart mashie niblick (up to 125 yards)
Tom Stewart mashie (up to 145 yards)
Tom Stewart muscle-backed jigger (up to 165 yards)
Tom Stewart mid iron (up to 185 yards)
Bruton Bulldog (up to 210 yards)
Cannes & Taylor brassie (up to 230 yards)

Favorite club?

The Stewart jigger. With a full swing, a high trajectory and the distance fits nicely between the mashie and the mid iron. By choking down a half an inch, the trajectory flattens for a nice, piercing ball flight. It is also a great club for the Truett approach – 10 yards in the air, followed by roll-out appropriate (10 yards to 122 yards) to stop stone-dead for today's pin placement.

What ball do you play?

I prefer the McIntyre mesh pattern ball and the small dimple RTJ and thank Chris McIntyre and Dave Brown for their vision and efforts. I also play the Titleist Pro VI and Pro VIx.



Good form. Hickory stalwart Mark Wehring sends another one down the middle of the Old Course at Walton Heath during the 2013 Hickory Grail matches.

Favorite course for hickories?

I am very partial to both courses at Walton Heath, the Old from 1904 and the New from 1913 – they play like inland links – firm and fast. Rye and Royal Dornoch are others I really enjoy playing with hickories. Slightly closer to home, Crystal Downs is wonderful with hickories. Two local courses in Houston are built on sandy soil along our bayous and are fun to play with hickories. Wortham Park, built in 1908, was the original Houston CC course before it relocated in 1957. It is the oldest 18-hole golf course in Texas. Memorial Park, designed by John Bredemus, began as a 9-hole sand green course in 1923 and has some great history with Jimmy Demaret and Dave Marr.

Favorite hickory tournament?

The next one. I look forward to, and have enjoyed them all.

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

*Golf benefits from a rich history, interesting aspects such as architecture, and wonderful writings. James Braid, winner of the Open Championship on five occasions, was also a club maker and golf course architect. His course designs required a lot of travel at a time when things weren't quite so convenient. He was the club professional at Walton Heath for 46 years, not only as a teacher and competition organizer, but also as a friend to the membership. The John Moreton books (1996 and 2013) from Bob Grant are excellent in following the 400+ Braid golf courses. Braid was also an author, writing instructional books such as *Advanced Golf* and penning a chapter in Bernard Darwin's *Six Golfing Shots by Six Famous Players*.*

Best thing about hickory golf?

Respecting the game, walking and foursomes. Remembering the feel of the well struck shot. Thanks to hickory golf, I have been blessed to meet some wonderful people, play some tremendous golf courses, and make some lifelong memories.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

Get out and play. Encourage others to hit a mashie on one of the short holes. Keep a second set and share with a friend for a friendly game on a summer evening. Support and promote a regional group.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

The Wind on the Heath. The Bernard Darwin books SoHG member Dick Verinder is putting out through Dormy House Press are wonderful. They bring much deserved honor to Bernard Darwin and his writings, and great satisfaction to me.