



Member Profile
Mike Pishlo
 Wyandotte, Mich., USA

Mike Pishlo is a native of Southeast Michigan who got his start in golf as a caddy at the Grosse Ile Golf & Country Club (a Donald Ross course). He was 11 years old.

“Not only did I carry the bag, but I met some of Michigan’s greatest golfers, including five-time Michigan Amateur Champion Glenn Johnson and two-time PGA Champion, Walter Burkemo,” he says. “The longest ball hitter I ever saw was Gordie Howe of the Detroit Red Wings.”

Mike says he took advantage of Monday play for caddies and did his best to copy the swings of the better players. “After two years of Mondays, I was able to glean enough to break the 100 barrier for most of my rounds,” he says.

He played on the Southgate High School golf team and was captain for one year. He attended Central Michigan University where golf took a back seat to working and studying for an eventual career as an elementary teacher with the Gibraltar School District. He later transferred to Carlson High School and taught English, social studies, and senior government.

While teaching, Mike was able to join a few golf leagues. He later worked part-time for the Lake Erie Metro Park Golf Course, “where I was able to improve my game to what I call a ‘respectable’ level,” he says.

In 1968, Mike married his high school sweetheart, Linda. They celebrated 50 years in January 2017 and have two sons, one a police officer in Flat Rock, Mich., and the other a celebrated chef who now resides in Austin, Texas and operates a homebrew business.

After retiring, Mike played golf and indulged in visiting garage sales for unusual items he might sell for a slight profit. At one such sale he spotted some old hickory golf clubs.

“I bought them and called Ed Ronco of the Wyandotte Hickory Organization (WHO) and offered to sell them,” he says. “Ed and I made our deal but as I was walking away, he challenged me to play a round with wooden sticks. The next week I met Ed and some other WHO players for a game. He had a bag of hickory sticks for me and the game was afoot. I must have been so scared of breaking his clubs or just embarrassing myself that I took the slowest, smoothest swings I could muster and hit many of my best shots ever. I even managed to win a few skins. I was hooked. I loved the feel, the reward for a proper swing, and the support and friendship of the WHO members.”

That was in 2013. Two years later Mike sold his set of Pings and has since played exclusively with hickories.

“I have joined WHO and the Michigan Hickory Tour playing throughout Michigan, surrounding states, and even Canada. I have even added St. Andrews in Scotland to my bucket list,” he says.

Mike says he feels fortunate to be able to escape the Michigan winters and play golf in south Texas. He’s doing his best to get in 50 rounds a year.

“For me, hickory golf not only represents a challenge and the excitement of golf, but there is a reverence in playing ‘the old game,’ and perhaps, having a wee nip with your friends at the end of the round,” he says. “There is something so pure between a hickory golf club and its golfer. It must be the connection with the past and the founders of the game that draws the best and friendliest people you could ever meet. We share a very special bond and love of the game.”

Mike and Linda live in Brownstown Township, Mich. and winter in South Padre Island, Texas.

How often do you play hickories?

100 percent of the time since 2015.

What’s in your play set?

My playset seems to be ever changing always looking for that right feel. I am not a collector but seem to be accumulating more and more clubs as I go along.

- Eddie Demott Special brassie with an aluminum face plate
- George Forrester Elie Special bulldog
- Tiedebohl Bros. mashie
- T. Stewart cleek
- George Nicoll Clinker
- Ben Sayers Stop UM mashie niblick
- Rockwood niblick
- Walter Hagen Iron Man
- Brown/Vardon style putter



Mike Pishlo has become an ambassador for the hickory golf he so enjoys, sharing its praises wherever he can.

Favorite club?

My favorite go-to club is the Sayers Stop Um mashie niblick or the Nicoll Clinker.

What ball do you play?

The Wilson Duo. But I am looking forward to trying the new 4-piece Kirkland Signature with the urethane cover.

Favorite course for hickories?

Each new golf course seems to be my favorite. I am partial to the Grosse Ile Golf Course where I learned golf, but have really enjoyed The Legends in Edmonton, Canada; Onion Creek in Texas; and, of course, Wyandotte Shores, home of the WHO!

Favorite hickory tournament?

My favorite hickory tournament so far has been the Heart of America in Des Moines, Iowa, but I am looking forward to playing in the Belvedere Hickory Open in Charlevoix, Mich.

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

Best thing about hickory golf?

I have met some of the nicest people and golfers at courses I just happen to visit. It has been especially fun challenging the younger “fence hitters.”

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

I have appointed myself an ambassador for SoHG as I always dress in period attire, carry my hickories with an extra set in the car, while I invite those I meet everywhere to join me in a round of the “the old game” and experience the reward of a true swing.

Most recent book on golf that you read?

I just read The Greatest Game Ever Played by Mark Frost for the third time. There is much history and insight in the book about the players and the early game that the movie couldn’t convey. To twist a phrase that the character of Eddie Lowery uses in the movie, it wasn’t an “eezy peezy” game back then; not that it is now either.