

Northwest Hickory Dodo Club



Dodo: an extinct heavy flightless bird (*Raphus cucullatus* syn. *Didus ineptus* of the family Raphidae) of the island of Mauritius that was larger than a turkey and was related to the pigeon.

A dodo was also a commonly-used term in the 1920s and 1930s to describe a hole-in-one. It was thought that making a hole-in-one was as rare as sighting a dodo. The term gradually faded from common usage and became extinct much like its namesake.

During the 1920s Burke Golf Company created the Dodo Club to recognize hole-in-ones. They mailed out a dozen golf balls to players who reported a hole-in-one. By the 1930s, however, there were so many dodos being reported, Burke discontinued the practice.

The following are members of the exclusive Hickory Dodo Club of the Northwest Hickory Players.

Gerry Cassel - 2021
Ray Tokareff (2) – 2020, 2019
Albert Bruno (2) – 2020, 2019
Carl LeBoa – 2019
John Lavendoski (2) – 2019, 2019
Andrew von Lossow - 2019
Larry Buckingham - 2016
Galen Peterson - 2015
Martin Pool - 2014
Rob Ahlschwede – 2004

Their stories follow:

March 3, 2021. Alderbrook GC, Union, WA – Gerry Cassel

Gerry Cassel of Shelton, Washington, new to hickory golf, wasted no time scoring his first hickory dodo. In Gerry's own words,

“In my bag of hickories, I have 3 clubs (Jigger, driving iron, putter) I got from Wally, a member at my club that he played with as a teenager. He passed away this year. His house sits on the tee box of #12 at Alderbrook Golf Course.”

“I was playing yesterday hitting two balls shooting our loop 10,11,12,13,18. On hole 12.... With the jigger from 135 yards.”

Remarkable story. Who can doubt but that Wally's spirit lives on in that jigger?



July 29, 2020. Laguna Lake GC, San Luis Obispo, CA – Ray Tokareff

March 27, 2019. Desert Crest CC, Desert Hot Springs, CA – Ray Tokareff

Ray Tokareff of Ashland, Oregon scored his second hickory hole-in-one on July 29, 2020 at Laguna Lake Golf Course in San Luis Obispo, California. He used his MacGregor Popular Mashie 5 to sink the shot on the 144 yard No. 5 hole.

In the previous year, Ray scored his first hickory hole-in-one on the first hole on March 27, 2019 at the Desert Crest Country Club in Desert Hot Springs, California. How many can claim their first shot of the day is a hole-in-one?

Ray used the same Mashie 5 to drop in the shot on the 115 yard hole.



March 10, 2020. Shadow Hills Country Club, Junction City, OR – Albert Bruno
May 13, 2019. Eugene Country Club, Eugene, OR – Albert Bruno

If you're in a match against Albert Bruno and you come to the 12th hole and it's a par three, you may as well concede the hole.

Albert Bruno joined the elite group of hickory players with not one, but two (!) hickory hole-in-ones. He scored his second hickory hole-in-one on March 10, 2020 at his home course, Shadow Hills Country Club in Junction City, Oregon. On the 12th hole playing 163 yards, he hit a Louisville 5 iron that hit 6 feet in front of the flag and rolled right in.

His first was ten months earlier when on May 13, 2019 he aced the 12th hole at Eugene Country Club in Eugene, Oregon. He used a Louisville niblick on the 114 yard hole. As he described it, the ball landed about 4 feet behind the pin and back spun into the cup.



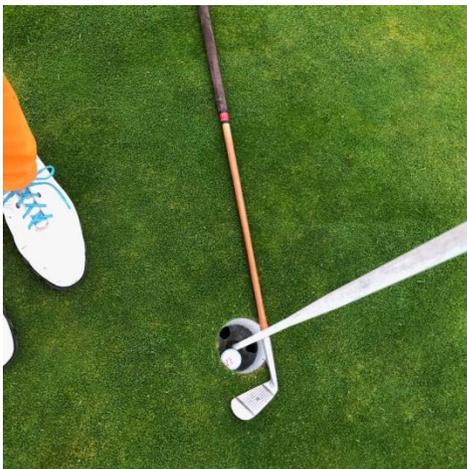
November 19, 2019. Jefferson Park Golf Course, Seattle, WA – Carl LeBoa

Carl LeBoa, a year after taking up hickories, scored his first hickory dodo on the 6th hole at Jefferson Park's executive course.

He used a Spaulding Kro-Flite (1927) 4 iron to ace the 135 yard hole. He said, "I had to go around the green two times looking for my ball before I realized it was in the hole!" As he was playing alone there were no witnesses to share in the excitement. Here's to selfies!

Carl often goes out to Jefferson Park at the crack of dawn to hone his hickory game before going to work.

Yoga teacher says, "honor yourself for honoring your practice."



December 12, 2019. Wing Point G&CC, Bainbridge Island, WA – John Lavendoski
November 17, 2019. Wing Point G&CC, Bainbridge Island, WA – John Lavendoski

It was a banner year for John Lavendoski, Northwest's own "Ted Ray," who made two dodos at year's end. He first aced the newly redesigned, Redan-style 10th hole playing at 183 yards at his home course. He used a c.1928 "Rudy Fielitz" mussel back mid-iron that had been recently restored by the master clubmaker, Jerry Olson. Making only his fourth swing following its restoration, John knocked his shot in for his hickory dodo.



Three weeks later, he used a PGA of America P-80 Jigger (another restoration project by Jerry Olson) to knock it in from 110 yards out on the #2 hole. Lavendoski says he was using the "shaft-covering-the-ball" technique which he learned from his playing partner Jeff Dean to add loft and 'soften' his jigger shots.) Nice work Jerry and Jeff! Oh, and you too John.

John says the best part of it was having his two kids with him to share the moment. He also says he bought them a round of "cranberry juice and lemonade" afterwards. And something stronger for himself, one presumes.



September 21, 2019. Indian Canyon GC, Spokane, WA – Andrew von Lossow

While technically not a Dodo, Andrew accomplished something even rarer, a hickory double eagle! Maybe we should call it some even more (?!?) extinct - a Pterodactyl!

The following is by Jim Davis, editor for the Society of Hickory Golfers.

The albatross.

A rare bird, on sea or on the golf links. In golf an albatross is the title used to describe a score of three under on a given hole. That can only happen on a par 5 (or more) because if you hole out your tee shot on a par four, you must settle for a hole-in-one. Of course, that's pretty good, too!

PGA Tour legend Gene Sarazen's "shot heard round the world" at the 1935 Masters is the most famous of these birds and to have happened at a Major is by far the most rare. It happened on the par-5 15th hole and forced a tie for the lead. Gene won the playoff, as you no doubt know.

In case you are wondering, there is a group that tracks such occurrences, the National Hole in One Association, which provides insurance to golf events against this budget buster. After all, you might have to fork over a new car, or whatever else you've plunked down as an award for the ace. Still, the odds are in the event host's favor. The NHOA estimates the odds for a hole-in-one at 12,700 to 1 for the average public player; while the pros, who play golf near constantly, have odds of 3,700 to 1. An albatross? Try to beat 6 million to 1. And a hickory albatross? Don't even try.

Which makes Andrew Von Lossow's feat at the 2019 Spokane Hickory Open an eye-opening bit of hickory golf news.

The Northwest Hickory Players were visiting Indian Canyon GC for the 2019 Spokane Hickory Open. Some 35 players were in the field from California to Canada, Idaho and Arizona...Oregon, too. It was beautiful early fall weather and Von Lossow, the son of Northwest golf pro and teacher, Jim Von Lossow, was one of the earliest ones on the course for the opening round. He had already parred the first hole. The second is a 447-yard par five with a left-bending dogleg.



Photo by Jeff Lefferts.

“I hit a nice solid tee shot to the middle of the fairway and had a straight shot at the green from around 195 yards,” Von Lossow says. “My lie dictated a little bit of a cut shot but I knew with a good swing I could hit it fairly straight and get my ball to the middle of the green.”

About 195 yards out, Von Lossow aimed for a bank to the left of the green, thinking a miss here would release back toward the hole. He took a Tad Moore OA Jigger for this shot.

“I felt good, and let it rip with a nice, balanced swing,” he says. “It was a pure strike and I remember being simply pleased to have hit it solid.”

Von Lossow and the rest of his foursome watched the ball begin to cut, almost with a purpose, toward the flag. The ball landed on the green about 10 feet from the stick, took one hop and disappeared.

“We barely heard any noise and the flagstick never moved,” he says. “I thought it might have gone over the green, but surely it finished middle of the green at worst.”

His playing partners were not 100 percent sure, but thought they heard something. Von Lossow said that is when it hit him. “That ball truly went in! It was too perfect not to go in. A nice celebratory yell and high fives to go around. An albatross!”

Smiling all the way to the green, Von Lossow says the ball in the cup was spectacular confirmation of one of golf’s rarest shots... and with a hickory jigger at that!

February 10, 2016. Legion Memorial GC, Everett, WA – Larry Buckingham

Larry Buckingham, age 70, of Seattle, Washington scored his first hole-in-one on February, 10, 2016 at the Chandler Egan designed Legion Memorial Golf Course (est. 1937) in Everett, Washington. And he did it with a hickory club!



Larry is new to hickory golf and this was only his fifth round playing with hickories. He used a cleek on the downhill 158 yard 16th hole.

We're not sure of the maker of the club as there is so much lead tape on the back of the club that the name has been obscured. It is safe to say that Larry will not be removing any tape or modifying this club in any way in the near future, even if the club maker must remain in anonymity.

"Just call me Mr. Dodo," he said.

Earlier this year, Larry shot his age for the first time (using modern clubs) by finishing birdie, par, birdie for a one under 70 at Bellevue Muni. I'd say Larry is off to a fine start in 2016!



January 17, 2015. Stardust Golf Course, Sun City West, AZ – Galen Peterson

Galen Peterson of Port Townsend, Washington scored his first hickory dodo on January 17th, 2015 at the Stardust Golf Course in Sun City West, Arizona.

Galen had just finished playing a hole where he had hit a bad approach to the green and the ball landed in a bush. To add insult to injury, as he was hunting for his ball, a bee took exception to his presence and stung him. Galen says that must have woken him up.

The next hole was 163 yards with water all the way on the right side and a bunker on the left side of the green. He used a Ben Sayers 25 degree mid-iron and hit a slight fade that hit about 10 to 15 feet from the pin and bounced a couple of times and rolled into the cup!

That surely took the sting out of the sting!



April 6, 2014. Terra Lago Golf Course, Indio, CA – Martin Pool

Martin Pool of Kenmore, Washington made his first hickory hole-in-one on April 6, 2014 at the Terra Lago Golf Course in Indio, California. Martin used a Tom Stewart mashie niblick on the uphill 120 yard 4th hole. The shot looked good right off the clubface, but as it was uphill, we could not see it go in. After a brief search he thought to look in the hole, and there it was!



Martin has made four hole-in-ones (one unofficial – but that’s another story and oh what a story it is) in his lifetime, all with modern clubs. This was his first hickory dodo. He first began playing hickories some twenty years ago, but only sporadically. Martin is a co-founder of the newly organized Northwest Hickory Players and has been much more active in hickory golf in the past year.

A remarkable thing happened on the very next par 3 that same day. Playing the downhill 7th hole (playing about 130 yards that day), Martin nearly holed out again (!) for consecutive hole-in-ones. Using the same Stewart mashie niblick, the ball landed in the front part of the green, tracked toward the hole, and lipped out! It finished two feet away for an easy birdie. “That was nuts,” he eloquently stated. His playing companions began calling the club “The Magic Niblick.”

November, 2004. Grove Park Golf Course, Asheville, NC – Rob Ahlschwede

As told by the inimitable “Kilty” himself: November, 2004, and I am travelling to the very first MidPines Hickory Open. On the way we stopped in Asheville, North Carolina to see the sights and a chance to play the 1926 Donald Ross course at the Grove Park Inn. Fall golf in the Carolina hills. Fall color, cool and a bit foggy at the start of the round. It was also an opportunity to get the stiffness of the road out of the body, and get in a practice round before the tournament.

The 17th is a slightly downhill 150 yard, teed from the front yard of an old, vacant stone house on the property. Steep drop off to the left, hotel with lots of windows to the right.

So, my 150 yard club then was a Spalding Kro-Flite woman's 2 iron, cut down shaft--hey! That's the way it came, eh! And it went 150 with the trajectory I liked. So, good swing, it looks good, still looks good, that could be close... lands on the green, 8 feet short, two bounces and in. It went in!!! That was a hole in one! Damn! My only hole in one, and it's with hickory on a Donald Ross course. Cool....

