

2021 ONION CREEK HICKORY CLASSIC
ONION CREEK CLUB, MARCH 25-26-27, 2021
AUSTIN, TX



In a pandemic year, with curtailed travel and cautious players, the 2021 Onion Creek Hickory Classic became history in a quiet way, and yet, in a spectacular way.

WEDNESDAY Thirty-seven players made their way to Austin this year, and there were no women for the first time. However, those players who were here came from Texas (of course!), Colorado, Oklahoma, Iowa, Wisconsin, Georgia, Ohio and Kentucky. The hospitality room at the host hotel was up and running before 5:00 PM on Wednesday and a great time was had by all for the rest of the week.

THURSDAY The match play event on Thursday was changed from Canada vs. USA to East vs. West. KEN JACKSON of Fort Worth, TX (West) and RICK WOECKENER of Garrettsville, OH (East) captained the two teams. The West team prevailed, beating the East team 10.5 to 4.5. Hopefully our Northern border will reopen before next March and we can revert to a Canada Vs. USA format. Perfect weather.

FRIDAY The day kicked off with a terrific group photo taken adjacent to the Jimmy Demaret bronze bust outside the Onion Creek clubhouse. Long-time CBS Sportscaster VERN LUNDQUIST was kind enough to travel to Onion Creek and he presented a green Vardon Jacket to Onion Creek member and hickory supporter VIRGIL SWIFT. Both were introduced by former PGA Tour and Senior Tour player RIVES MCBEE.



The fun really kicked in with the arrival of twenty kids from five First Tee chapters within Texas. They were dressed in period attire and came with well-honed game. JACOB LEWALLEN, JACOB CASTRO, ZACH LEWALLEN and ERIC RAMOS of the DALLAS First Tee organization beat the field with a very solid, even-par cumulative gross score of 140. The AUSTIN team was six strokes back, followed by PINEY WOODS, SAN ANTONIO and TYLER. The energy, excitement and enthusiasm demonstrated by players, parents, coaches, Onion Creek members/volunteers, and the almost forty regular hickory players behind the 18th green on Friday afternoon when the dust settled was contagious. I envision all ten Texas First Tee chapters sending a four-person team to Austin next year.

The TEXAS CUP, with the Champion Team's name on an engraved plate BEFORE the presentation was made, was a hit. According to WAYNE AARON of Atlanta who did the research, the cup was made around 1910 and just several years ago, a version of the same cup sold for a LOT of money. The Greater Dallas First Tee team took the Texas Cup home and will return it for next year's tournament. (Awards guru Donna Smith of OCC is shown attaching the winner's name, before the presentation, in the photo below.)

Note the table: each kid on the first three teams took home a hickory putter, and the first three teams received gold, silver and bronze medals. Kids on the first team received a signed OCHC poster signed by Texas golf legend Ben Crenshaw. All kids chose a golf book donated and signed by the authors (BEN CRENSHAW, KEVIN ROBBINS, CURT SAMPSON and BARBARA PUETT). We have checked with old-timers within the hickory golf community and have been unable to identify *any* other organized hickory golf tournament specifically for young golfers. I suspect that within a very few years, the terms **Hickory Golf**, **First Tee** and **Austin** will be well known around the nation. These kids' enthusiasm and energy displayed last Friday will serve them well. Perfect weather.



SATURDAY. Players finishing their rounds and walking up to the very difficult, elevated 18th green were welcomed by eight beautiful Model A Ford automobiles parked behind the green, (out of play and out of harm's way), courtesy of the Lone Star Model A Ford Club of Georgetown, TX. *Note: Model A Fords, I understand, were made only from 1928 through 1932, just when hickory-shaft clubs were gradually fading out.* The second day of the 36-hole Onion Creek Hickory Classic came with perfect weather (as did the first two days). Perfect weather again.

JEREMY WRIGHT of Louisville, KY became the first four-time winner with a strong 155, followed by RICK WOECKENER, Garrettsville, OH and MARK WEHRING of Houston, TX.

Complete results can be accessed by going to www.OnionCreekHickoryClassic.com

Mobile Loaves & Fishes will receive about \$3000 from silent auction and raffle revenue.

Please applaud the following special people.

BILL REED (Iowa and Texas): Bill hauled twenty sets of hickories from Iowa to Texas for the First Tee kids' use. Bill, a former President of the Golf Collectors Society (now Golf Heritage Society) has done so much for this tournament and for so many other tournaments!!!!

JENNIFER MACCURRAGH. Executive Director, First Tee of Greater Austin. When I first approached her with the idea, Jennifer was 100 percent on board and she got this event rolling!

VERN LUNDQUIST of CBS Sports, for taking the time from his schedule to join us for the start of our event on Friday.

RIVES MCBEE of Irving, TX for his continuing support of hickory golf.

VIRGIL SWIFT, OCC member, for his enthusiastic support which has enabled us to do the little extras which help to make a tournament successful.

CHRIS BOWEN, General Manager of Onion Creek Club. Onion Creek comped the kids' green fees and provided many services throughout the week.

KIRK DILLEN, OCC Head Golf Professional and his staff. Carefully posting scores and keeping track of all details.

DONNA SMITH, OCC member and awards coordinator. Donna jumped on board at the last minute and did a fabulous job. She received a hickory putter as recipient of the *Russ Fisher Outstanding Volunteer Award.*

... and finally, **RYAN CRUMP,** our golf course superintendent and his crew. Those greens were magnificent. And it is only March. Ryan rocks!