



# The Caddie Who Played with Hickory

*John Coyne*

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Before there were titanium woods and graphite shafts, golf clubs were made from the wood of hickory trees and had intriguing names like cleek, mashie and jigger. Golf was a game played not with high-tech equipment but with skill, finesse, and creativity. And the greatest hickory player of all time was Walter Hagen---until the day he met a teenage caddie at a country club outside Chicago.

America's first touring golf professional, Hagen made (and spent) more prize money than his friends Babe Ruth and Jack Dempsey earned from baseball and boxing during the Golden Age of Sports. In this novel, set in the halcyon post-war Midwest of 1946, Hagen comes to historic Midlothian Country Club as the champion he is---but also as a man handicapped by a secret.

Waiting for him are two caddies. Harrison Cornell—a onetime rich playboy from the Bahamas—has a past; the other---Tommy O'Shea, a farm boy who caddies at the country club---may have a future . . . but only if he can somehow beat Hagen on the links, in one last game played with hickory.

Cornell is a mystery man who appears from nowhere and presents himself as a "looper," a professional caddie. Soon everyone sees that he has a gift---within weeks he has improved the games of dozens of members. Only Tommy O'Shea, his eager pupil, knows Cornell's real motive for coming to the club: his grudge against Walter Hagen, over something that happened during the Second World War in the lovely paradise known as the Bahamas.

As the playboy and the farm boy become friends, Harrison teaches Tommy the secrets of playing golf with hickory, along with lessons in life and love. But the shadow of Hagen, and the upcoming match, fall across the Midwest summer, and as the competition nears, Tommy's hopes for the future---and his love for a member's daughter---are threatened when the truth about Harrison's past is revealed. Not until the climax, played out in an exciting shot-for-shot match, will all the questions be answered and all the scores settled.

As in his previous novel, *The Caddie Who Knew Ben Hogan*, author John Coyne has created a world rich in characters, action, and golf lore---this time including the fascinating history of hickory play. An entertaining, suspenseful read for anyone who loves the game, it is also a book that offers a pure dose of Midwestern soul, written by a new voice in golf literature who has firmly established himself as one of the leaders of the genre.

Praise for *The Caddie Who Played with Hickory*:

"A highly entertaining must-read for anyone interested in hickory golf or the history of the game. I loved it!"  
-- Randy Jensen, 7-time National Hickory Golf Champion

"John Coyne knows his golf history, its characters and the game. He spins a story that includes a mysterious character, a hero, a romance, a semi-villain, and a classic golf match into a believable tale."

-- Dr. Gary Wiren, noted golf teacher, and former Director of Research and Learning for the PGA of America

"The legendary Walter Hagen, Chicago's greatest amateur golfer, Chick Evans, hickory clubs and Chicago's Midlothian Country Club are all featured in this tense story of championship golf and summer romance. John Coyne spins a tale so involving, the reader is in enjoyable suspense about the outcome of every putt."

-- Jerry Dudek, Director of Development, Evans Scholars Foundation/Western Golf Association

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