

Greens in the Trees

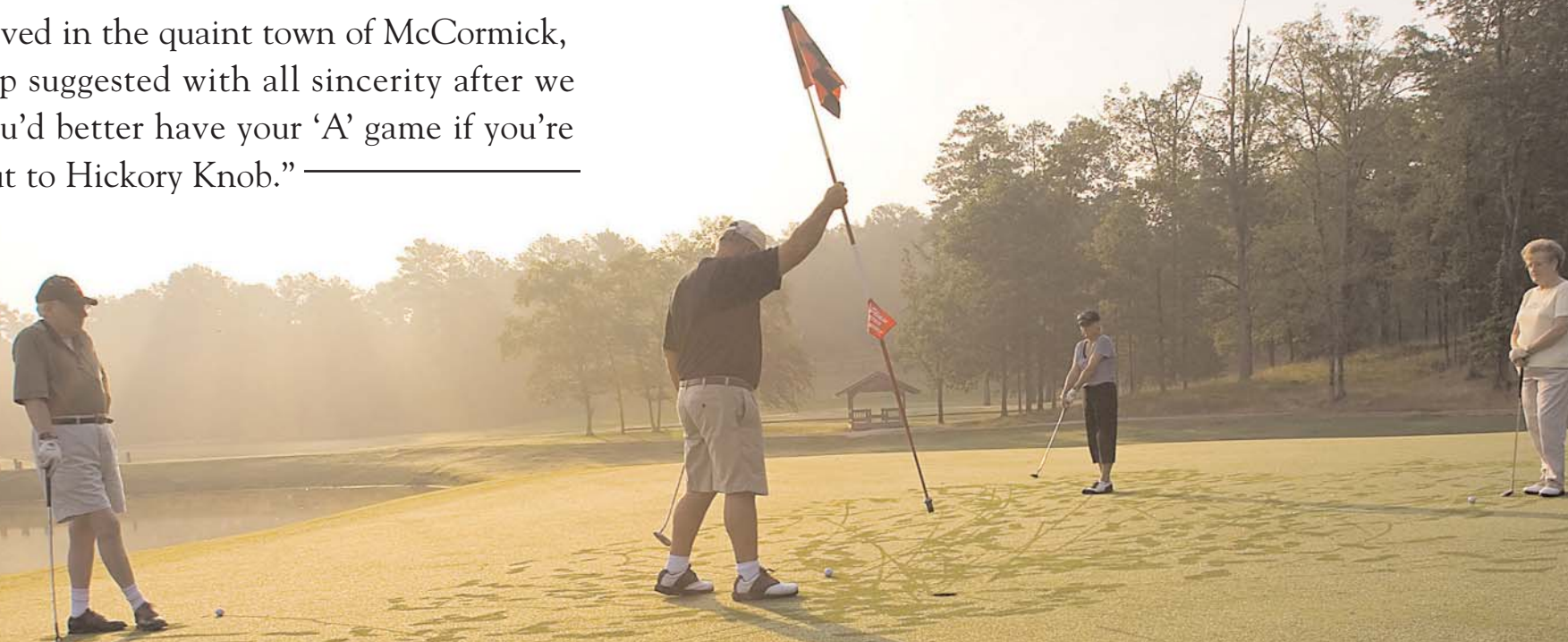
State Park Golf Courses Worth Driving

By Warren Florence

The Saturday morning we arrived in the quaint town of McCormick, a local patron at a coffee shop suggested with all sincerity after we asked him for directions, “You’d better have your ‘A’ game if you’re heading out to Hickory Knob.”

“Yeah? Why so?”
“You’ll see.”

A stone’s throw or two from town and our new friend’s advice, we stood on freshly trampled dew beside the first tee box. All around us, sunlight penetrated through a blanket of fog exposing Strom Thurmond Lake, a shimmering spectacle housing all sorts of water fowl in the Savannah Lake Region. Almost every hole we encountered was either neatly carved through tall pines, or nestled right along the 70,000-acre lake, which separates South Carolina and Georgia. And as our coffee-shop friend suggested to us, we certainly became more focused after seeing that much water.



Between the front and back nine, many remark at how aesthetic (a lake view everywhere) and challenging (hilly terrain) this golf course is. And the surprisingly pleasant part of it all--in a state full of celebrated courses--was that this club-like atmosphere, and well-manicured surroundings sat in the middle of a state park. That’s right, a state park! Hickory Knob State Resort Park.

Better than one good secret, however, South Carolina State Parks boast two championship golf courses designed by Tom Jackson: Hickory Knob and Cheraw, which offer driving ranges, putting greens and a friendly staff operating a stocked pro shop. Fairways are divided by stretches of pine trees. This means they’re not adjacent, and golfers aren’t playing from one fairway to another.

Yet, the park isn’t just thinking of the scratch golfers. Especially in Cheraw, those

patches of trees are home to many birds. Recently, the golf course at Cheraw State Park earned certification as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary by Audubon International. This challenging course is one of only 10 in South Carolina with this distinction.

Hickory Knob, the only resort park in the state system, offers cabins, villas and campsites, along with recreational opportunities ranging from fishing and boating to tennis and skeet shooting. A full-service restaurant provides three meals daily and caters to groups by request. Cheraw State Park uniquely combines its golf with equestrian, hiking and biking trails, rustic cabins with full amenities, group camps and family campsites near Lake Juniper, where (like Lake Thurmond) you can use the park’s boat ramp for a day of fishing, skiing or just cruising the sunset.

Find out more...

Cheraw State Park Golf Course
843-537-9656
Hickory Knob Golf Course
864-391-2450

To learn more about state park destinations and the new central reservation service, visit the website at

www.SouthCarolinaParks.com

or call 1-866-345-7275

www.DiscoverSouthCarolina.com