

Lightning strikes again

It's a sad irony that a mere three weeks after Dr. James Belville of the National Weather Service spoke to MAAGCS members about lightning and lightning safety, a 15-year-old Paint Branch High School football player, Troy Trice, was critically injured by a strike.

The million-to-one chance phenomenon Dr. Belville mentioned—that lightning can strike up to five miles outside a storm—happened in suburban Maryland. It was raining but there had been no thunder, no lightning prior to the bolt that hit Trice. According to reports, he was saved because he was wearing a football helmet, because he was sweating (the moisture on the outside of his skin acted as a conductor, keeping the current away from his internal organs), and because he received

CPR promptly.

Dr. Belville spoke about the power of lightning strikes, as did *The Washington Post*, "The...bolt exploded through the rain at 60,000 miles a second, packing upwards of 100 million volts of electrical energy heated to 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit—five times the sun's temperature."

In the face of this power, superintendents and pros should not be in the least reluctant to clear the course early when a storm approaches.

At last month's meeting Bill Neus asked Dr. Belville about the shelters on his course, Hobbits Glen. They are open-sided but equipped with lightning rods. Dr. Belville was reluctant to give approval to such means of protection, encouraging one and all to seek *enclosed* shelter.

What to do when lightning is near

Most deaths occur when one is in the open or under a tree. In the open, stoop with only your feet contacting the ground.

- * Move away from isolated tall objects.
- * Seek shelter in a large building or enclosed auto.
- * Get away from open vehicles like golf carts or maintenance equipment.
- * Get away from water.
- * Drop all metal objects like golf clubs. Remove metal cleats.
- * If you feel an electrical charge, your hair stands on end or your skin tingles, drop to the ground immediately.
- * If someone is struck, start mouth-to-mouth or CPR.

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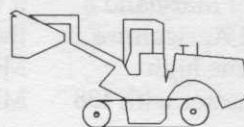
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