

KILLER COURSES ANGERS SUPERS

Executive Editor
GOLF Magazine
380 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10017

Dear Sir:

I am writing to you to offer, free of charge, some sound business advice: expand your title to GOLF ENQUIRER and begin marketing your magazine in supermarket checkout counters. After reading your special report entitled "Killer Courses", I feel this strategy is the only feasible way to maintain sales, as most knowledgeable golf business people have written you off as a serious golf publication.

If you haven't received thousands of letters from Golf Course Superintendents and other club officials protesting your publication of this erroneous and misleading article, it is probably only because they were too busy explaining to their members that they weren't indifferently and systematically trying to poison them.

Did anyone in GOLF magazine stop to think of the potential damage this article could do? Did anyone take the time to do even a little research on the subject, or did you just jump on the bandwagon with the other sensationalistic rag sheets and television shows? This is inexcusable from a magazine such as yours which is supposedly dedicated to the promotion of golf.

In general, the media has deservedly earned a reputation similar to that of politicians and used car salesmen. Why hasn't anyone questioned the deceased Lt. Prior's involvement in top-secret biological warfare and the possibilities of its contribution to his death? Why hasn't anyone questioned the Navy's motives for conducting a closed-door autopsy and investigation, and then conveniently pointing fingers at the Army Navy Golf Club and the fungicide Daconil 2787? No Daconil was found in any of Lt. Prior's tissue or body fluid - just on his shoes, clubs, and golf balls.

I have personally used Daconil 2787 for 13 years as a golf course superintendent, and have never experienced, seen, or heard of any problems associated with its use, and that included splashing pure concentrated on myself on more than one occasion. Checking my pesticide toxicity chart, I find that Daconil 2787 is the least toxic pesticide that I commonly use on the golf course. This chart also lists a few common items for comparison, and it shows that aspirin is at least 13 times more toxic, and table salt is at least 3 times as toxic, than Daconil 2787.

With this evidence and my experience, I still would not say absolutely and without question that Daconil 2787 did not cause Lt. Prior's death, though I believe it overwhelmingly unlikely. I leave such omniscience to such "experts" as the Dr. Samuel Epstein quoted in your article. Some people die from bee stings; others hardly have

a reaction. If we were all exactly alike and reacted to all substances exactly the same way, there would be no need of the word "allergy" in our vocabulary.

This brings me to your next "expert," Mr. Billy Casper. First of all, it is a well-known fact that Mr. Casper has a history of unusual personal allergy problems. Second, many of the pesticides used during Mr. Casper's prime four years are no longer used on golf courses. Third, from exactly which pesticide or pesticides did his doctor diagnose acute pesticide poisoning? Mr. Casper particularly singles out South Florida, which is where I have made my home now for nearly 8 years, and I also have experienced more allergy problems since living here, but I attribute it to melaleuca pollen or other natural phenomena rather than pesticides. In Florida, we probably do use a greater volume of pesticides than courses in the North because of the longer growing season, but northern courses generally are sprayed heavier for the time they are open. At Tam O' Shanter in 1964, he did so on some of the most heavily sprayed greens the golf business has ever seen. A disease was attacking the grass during this tournament and the greens were sprayed heavily on almost a daily basis to try to save them, and the fungicides used were some of the mercury compounds that have since been taken off the market. Funny that all that pesticide "exposure" did not affect his performance during this tournament.

Your statement that "a chemical similar to Daconil allegedly killed a Florida family after it was used to fumigate their house" is another ridiculous statement. Responsible publications don't inflame public passions with statements based on "similar" and "alleged" evidence. What is similar to Daconil 2787? Daconil is a fungicide used on turf and ornamentals, and under the name Bravo is used on fruits and vegetables. It is not a fumigant, and no one I've contacted associated with pesticides can figure out what "similar" chemical you are alluding to - not even a good guess.

Returning to your "expert" on environmental toxicology, Dr. Samuel Epstein, I highly recommend that you check with respected authorities, such as: Sir Richard Doll and Dr. Richard Peto, University of Oxford cancer researchers and epidemiologists; Dr. Elizabeth Whelan, epidemiologist and author of 12 books on health issues, including Toxic Terror; Dr. J. Gordon Edwards, a professor of entomology and counselor for the National Council for Environmental Balance; or Dr. Keith C. Barrons, author of Are Pesticides Really Necessary? Ask them or any other reputable scientist about Dr. Epstein's scientific methods and motives. Dr. Epstein makes quite a good living feeding on society's environmental paranoia and is time and again called in as the "expert" on environmental issues more diverse than any one man could possibly be an authority on. At the EPA hearings on the banning of DDT, Dr. Epstein was the only scientist to contend that DDT presents a high cancer-causing risk in humans, citing data from

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abotched laboratory experiment on mice.

To put things in perspective, let us try to think logically and consider the following points:

- 1.) Golf Course Superintendents, their spray technicians, and other maintenance personnel take the greatest risk using pesticides. They are exposed to the pure concentrated pesticide when mixing and handling; they are exposed to the diluted spray mixture before it is watered in; and they spend 2 to 3 times as many hours on the golf course as golfers do.
- 2.) A golf course crew is generally a small close-knit group, and it would be very difficult to look another member of that group in the eye if you felt you were exposing him to unnecessary or unusual hazards.
- 3.) Thanks to the efforts of the media and environmental groups, pesticides with residual activity (mostly chlorinated hydrocarbons like DDT) have been taken off the market, and the replacement chemicals (mostly organophosphates and carbamates) are more dangerous to man (especially those who mix, handle, and spray them), and must be used more often and at much higher cost to deliver the same level of control.
- 4.) The only reason golf course maintenance people support the use of pesticides is because it is a necessary tool for doing their job of providing the fine playing conditions that golfers have come to expect and demand. None of us like using pesticides. We receive no "kick-backs" or other compensation from chemical companies. Without pesticides there would be no golf as we know it today.
- 5.) Every year we lose one or more pesticides for use on golf courses, usually because of accidents, excesses, or false allegations in the agricultural industry. Golf Course Superintendents must pass examinations to obtain and retain licenses to use restricted pesticides and are head and shoulders above the ag industry and the general public concerning pesticide use and safety.

It is time that golfers realize that they had better get behind their Superintendents and support the responsible use of pesticides. There is little incentive for a chemical company to invest the huge sums of money necessary to get a new pesticide tested and registered for use on golf courses. If present trends continue, many of today's golfers may not be able to afford being one of tomorrow's golfers. When your Superintendent asks for your financial support for turfgrass research projects (some of which involves finding biological controls to replace pesticide controls), give generously. If every golf course gave just \$500 a year for turf research, most of the serious problems facing Golf Course Superintendents would be solved in a few short years.

The pesticide controversy is an issue of vital concern to the golf industry, and presents a challenge that should be met head-on by everyone who cares about the great game of golf.

Sincerely,

Mark Jarrell, CGCS

Chairman, Superintendent Promotions, Florida GCSA
Director, Florida Turf-Grass Association
Past-President, Palm Beach Chapter GCSA

From . . .

OUR SIDE

I would expect this type of article from a publication like "National Enquirer" but not from a magazine that is in the business of promoting.

I admit that you did lend some credibility to golf course superintendents in the closing paragraphs of your article buried in the closing pages of your magazine but to entitle the article "Killer Courses" and to put a large skull and crossbones in a poison bottle on the first page of the article is inexcusable.

A little research goes a long way-consider the following facts:

— Daconil 2787, also called BRAVO, is used on nearly all vegetables and fruits.

— Considerably more people suffer from allergies to seafood, milk, grains pollen, and grass itself than they do to Daconil 2787 on golf balls.

— In laboratory tests it took three times as much Daconil 2787 than table salt to kill test animals and thirteen times more than aspirin.

— One alleged death due to Daconil 2787 is negligible compared to golf course deaths that occur due to insect attacks, lightning, heat stroke, heart attacks, and even golfers being struck by balls.

— Diazinon, also called Spectracide, which you have also mentioned in your article will probably soon be prohibited from use on golf courses but will still be permitted for use on almost all agricultural crops, in home gardens, and even in homes themselves for control of roaches, stored food pests, and other insects.

Golf course superintendents in Florida raised over \$35,000 this year to support research efforts.

Wouldn't it be more responsible for you to publish an article encouraging golfers to support these fund raising efforts rather than telling them in bold skulls and crossbones that superintendents are poisoning them?

I don't know if the damage you have already done can be corrected but I can assure you that your magazine has lost credibility with golf course superintendents and other knowledgeable people throughout the nation.

I hope that you now realize that "Killer Courses" was a mistake.

Sincerely,

Cecil C. Johnston

External Vice President

Florida Golf Course

Superintendent's Association