

Let lightning play the golf course alone

Posting this article on your bulletin board would be a smart move; it won't bore anybody and it may save lives.

By JIM OBERT

Here's how to get a charge out of life by playing a version of Russian roulette on the golf course.

Call up three guys you don't like and make a game during an electrical storm.

The first one struck by lightning loses.

On the public fee Madison course at Peoria, Illinois, recently, two foursomes turned out for their usual early-morning game when they shouldn't have.

Ugly, purple clouds stirred in a slate-gray sky. The roll of far-off thunder drummed heavily for a second or two,



An example of what the destructive force of lightning can do to a lone standing tree.

then lost its identity in a slight breeze and a gentle rain.

It was 6:45 a.m. when the first foursome of Jack Rosenak, Bill Butler, Ray Wright and Ken Schertz reached the tee on the fourth hole. Rain drops pattered softly on the leaves of a giant catalpa tree, 50 feet tall.

Also at 6:45, the other foursome putted out on the second green. One of the players was Joe Stowell, newly-appointed basketball coach at Bradley University.

The weather disturbed Stowell. "Let's quit," he suggested.

Rosenak, owner of a supper club, has some electrifying memories.

"We were standing around looking at the sky wondering whether to quit or go on when all of a sudden the world seemed unreal. There was a loud, crackling noise and it felt like somebody had put a red-hot heating pad on the back of my neck," he says.

"I had been knocked flat on my stomach with no idea how I got there. When I picked up my cap I noticed the brass button on it had a brown discoloration which wasn't there before."

None of the foursome was injured.

The Peoria groups were fortunate that no lives were lost. It is a statistical fact that many deaths to spectators and players alike result each year from not taking the proper precautions.

The National Bureau of Standards advises that if staying out of doors is unavoidable during a thunderstorm, shelter should be sought in this order.

(1) A cave (2) Depression in the ground (3) Deep valley or canyon (4) At the foot of a steep or overhanging cliff (5) Dense woods.

Above all, stay away from small sheds or shelters if in an exposed location; isolated trees, wire fences, hilltops and wide open spaces.

Raising clubs or umbrellas above the head adds to the danger during an electrical storm.

Now will you stay off the course when it storms? Bet your life you'd better. ●