

The tornado left a wake of destruction across the city.

## Recounting the Tuscaloosa tornadoes

By Beth Geraci

**G**ib Fox and his family huddled in a makeshift teepee in the center of their living room. Fox's two young children were oblivious to what was happening. But Fox and his wife knew darn well what they were dealing with.

A mile and a half away, the Tuscaloosa, Ala., tornado was touching down.

When the worst was over, Fox, the golf course superintendent at Tuscaloosa's Ol' Colony Golf Complex, stepped outside.

"It was black as night and eerily calm," he said. "Everybody says it sounds like a freight train. It sounds worse.



This thing sounded like a group of jets hitting the afterburners at the same time."

The tornado reportedly carved a path 300 miles long from Mississippi to Georgia, traveling at about 180 miles per hour. "We were looking at it as it passed and I was saying, 'This is bad,'" Fox said. "You could see it clear as day."

About a half hour after the tornado struck, as Fox stood in his yard marveling at the eerie calm, the winds picked up again — a second, smaller twister. It swept right over the golf course. "I could see it. It was spinning up the in the air and I could see it," Fox marveled.

Like Fox's home and neighborhood, the golf course was spared damage. Other areas, however, were not so lucky. The death toll reached 41 in Tuscaloosa alone; 30 residents are still missing; and entire neighborhoods are obliterated.

"It looks like you took bulldozers and lined them up in a row and went to work," Fox said. "There's nothing left."

### Golfdom Scores Big at 2011 TOCA Communication Contest

We stop here briefly to sing our own praises (don't mind if we do). That's because we earned accolades at the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) contest, bringing home awards for editorial content and graphic design.

*Golfdom* earned six first place awards, including honors for feature writing (for the story "Giving Thanks"); web writing ("A Golf Course Uplifts a Community"); special projects (Plant Health Report and Water Wise); and headline writing ("I'll Take a... Mulligan"). *Golfdom* also won first place for portrait photography with the June 2010 cover photo of Chris Dalhamer.

*Golfdom* also garnered two merit awards. "The Best of Both Worlds" won for environmental stewardship article, and the 2010 Annual Putting Surface Guide won for special projects.

Seth Jones won merits for his work last year at *Golf Course Management* magazine, for his operations profile of Whistling Straits and for his cover story on Nick Price.

Congrats, team!



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