

# Off The Fringe



## PGA, Mangum Recant Brush Damage Statements

**COURT DOCUMENTS STATE THAT ATLANTA ATHLETIC CLUB STILL USING GREENSPERFECTION BRUSHES AND DIDN'T INTEND TO IMPLICATE THEM.** By Seth Jones

If the glove does not fit, you must acquit.

Or, in this case, if you can't prove the brush did the damage, you must take it back.

That's what has been determined by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi, Delta Division. In a stipulation of dismissal filed by the court on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, in a case of greens brush manufacturer GreensPerfection Inc. versus Atlanta Athletic Club, Ken Mangum, CGCS and the

PGA of America, it was declared that the defendants "never determined and never intended to say that GreensPerfection brushes caused damage to any putting greens at the Atlanta Athletic Club in August 2011."

That's an about-face from what was stated at the PGA Championship, in both a press release and on live TV.

In a press release issued by the PGA of America concerning the damage, it stated that, "damage is believed to be the result of a significant rise in the dew point at approximately 7:00 p.m.,

which caused the brushes on the mowers on those greens to stick in the grass and damage the turf.”

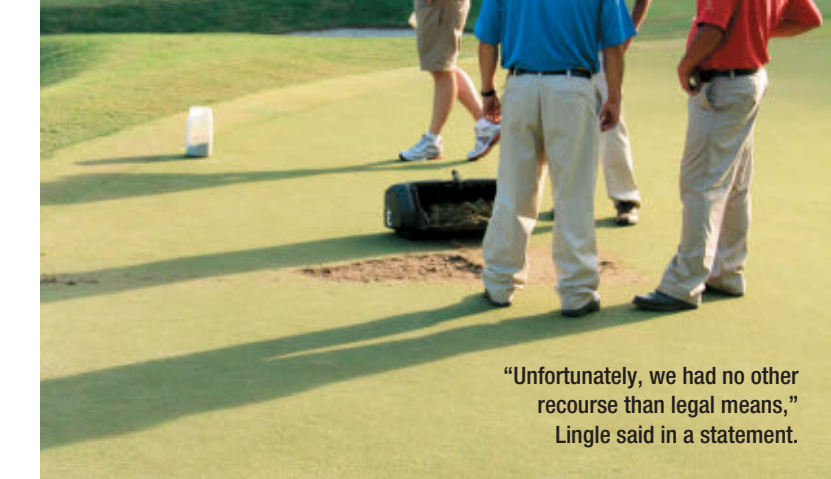
In a live press conference broadcast on the Golf Channel on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Ken Mangum, CGCS, director of golf course and grounds, echoed that sentiment, saying, “the only answer I could come up with was that the humidity changed and the brush grabbed and dug into the green and caused the problem.”

But Rodney Lingle, CGCS at Memphis CC and owner of GreensPerfection Inc., manufacturer of the brush being used at Atlanta Athletic Club, refused to believe that his brushes could have caused such damage.

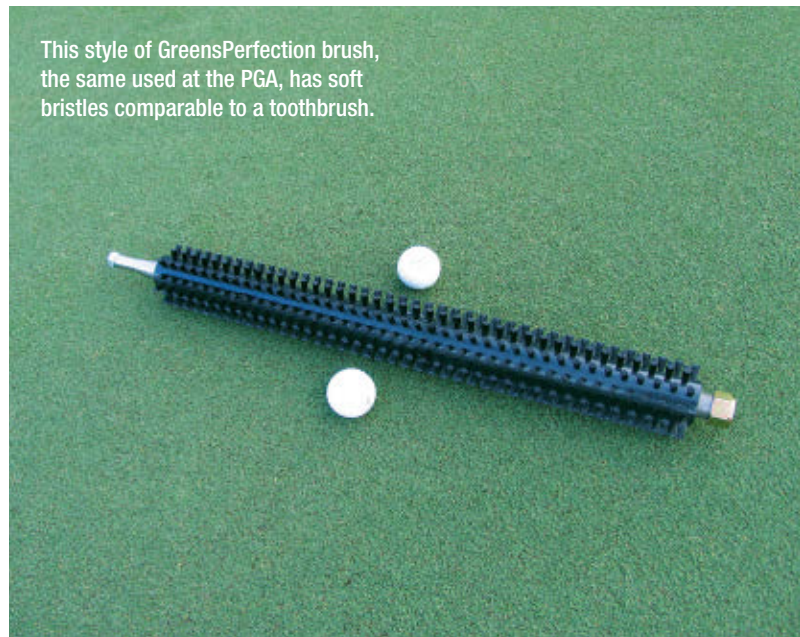
In a statement sent exclusively to *Golfdom*, Lingle states, “After the statements made at the 93<sup>rd</sup> PGA

*We felt a responsibility to our customers to make sure they knew our product was safe and effective.*

Championship, we felt a responsibility to our current customers' concerns, as well as potential customers, to make sure they knew our product was safe and effective. GreensPerfection brushes are incapable of damaging any greens in the way represented by the defendants,” the statement reads. “According to the official court document, the defendants never determined that GreensPerfection brushes caused damage to any putting greens at the Atlanta Athletic Club and the brushes are still in use at The Atlanta Athletic Club and have been



“Unfortunately, we had no other recourse than legal means,” Lingle said in a statement.



This style of GreensPerfection brush, the same used at the PGA, has soft bristles comparable to a toothbrush.

since the PGA Championship.”

The statement goes on to say that the brushes have been used safely and effectively for over two years by more than 200 golf courses across the United States with success on greens with all types of grasses, including *poa annua*, bentgrass, Bermuda, zoysia and paspalum. The brushes were extensively tested for two years with no failures and in all types of climatic conditions, before ever being sold to the golf course industry.

“Unfortunately, we had no other recourse than legal means, as we reached out repeatedly to the defendants during, as well as after, the 93<sup>rd</sup> PGA Championship and received no corrections to the statements they made,” the statement concludes before thanking superintendents for their support.

So is the damage to the brand already done to GreensPerfection despite the stipulation of dismissal issued by the court? According to brand marketing specialist Ann Stephenson, CEO of Stephenson Group PR, and her 20 years of experience, GreensPerfection has little to worry about.

“There will be some damage control that the company will have to do, but it will be minimal,” she said. “This isn’t a huge hit. If the company comes out with a strong statement, they’ll put it behind them.”

Mangum and the Atlanta Athletic Club declined comment on the issue. A representative for the PGA of America could not be reached.

And what about the other culprit originally implicated in the greens damage? As of press time, the dew point could not be reached for comment. ■