

PROTECT YOURSELF BEFORE LIGHTNING STRIKES

By Amy Rolando
Chief Meteorologist and CEO
WeatherWatch, Inc. — Minneapolis, Minnesota
Edited by Caroline Ruden

The old notion that lightning never strikes the same spot twice is a case of wishful thinking. The fact is, lightning kills in certain areas with alarming predictability. You can protect yourself by knowing what to do during a storm.

Lightning tends to strike high places — for example, the Empire State building is struck about 40 times a year! Therefore, you shouldn't stand under trees during a lightning storm. Seventeen percent of deaths from lightning occur under trees.

Standing in wide open places are dangerous as well. Thirty-one percent of deaths from lightning occur on golf courses and in open fields. It is actually safer to stand under a group of trees shorter than others in the area, rather than out in the open. Lightning will more likely strike the taller trees in the area.

It is also important to stay off the water when lightning is near. Twelve percent of deaths from lightning occur when people are out boating or fishing. In June of 1993, two men were struck by lightning while they were fishing on Lake Independence.

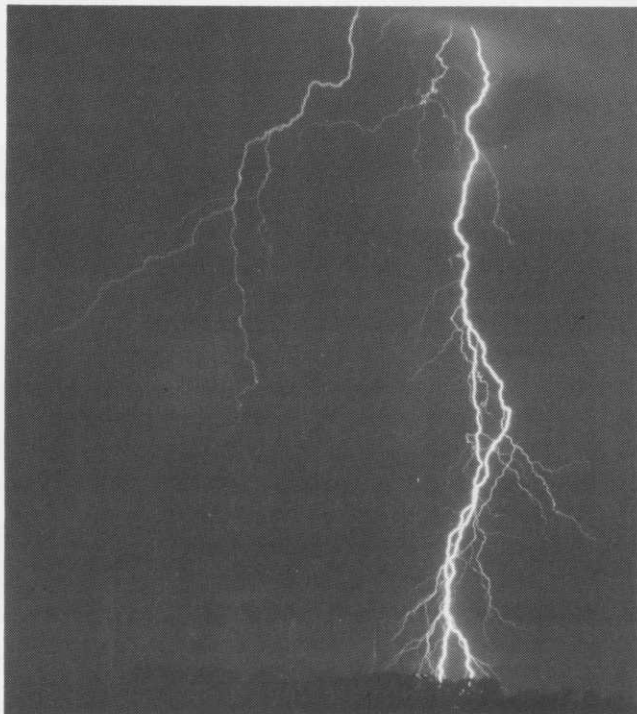
"They had been fishing for about an hour when Mr. Reinken cast his fishing rod for the last time. The lightning struck the rod's tip and entered Reinken's right palm and exited his right foot."

"Dr. John Twomey, director of Hennepin County's burn unit said the two men didn't do anything dumb. He said the clouds had already passed. He said they were caught in a phenomenon in which lightning struck although dark clouds were not overhead." (Star Tribune — June 9, 1993)

Even though there were no dark clouds directly above the two fisherman, they were struck by lightning from a storm in the distance. *Take note that lightning can strike close to ten miles from the parent cloud.*

WHAT TO DO WHEN LIGHTNING IS NEAR

Standing in the open with a metal object is a deadly



combination when lightning is nearby. That is why the golf course is an especially dangerous place to be during a lightning storm.

When lightning is nearby, it is *always* time to stop your golf game. Professional golfers Jerry Heard and Lee Trevino were both struck by lightning on the 13th fairway at Butler National Golf Club.

Heard, who had won four PGA tournaments and was on the fast track to become the game's next big star was taken out of the running in an instant.

Remember, no matter how good your game is going, it is never worth it to remain on the course while lightning is nearby.

But if you do find yourself far from the clubhouse when a storm is brewing, take the following precautions to ensure that you don't become a human lightning rod:

- Drop the golf clubs and the umbrella! These are metal objects which are often pointed skyward, just inviting lightning to strike. It is better to get wet than to attract a deadly lightning bolt.

- Take off metal-spiked golf shoes. Again, metal is a conductor of electricity.

- Seek low ground if you are in an open area. Lightning will strike on top of a hill before a lower-lying valley. Curl up on your side, the smaller target you are, the better. Lying on a rubber or plastic raincoat provides insulation.

- Be aware of the signs. Anytime you feel the hair on your head, neck or arms stand on end, lightning may be about to strike. Immediately drop to the ground and curl up on your side.

PROTECT YOUR PATRONS

Believe it or not, electrical storms kill 300 to 600 people in the United States each year, and they injure thousands more. Unfortunately the majority of these deaths and injuries occur on golf courses and in other open areas.

But golf course owners are not helpless to protect

(Continued on Page 12)

FLASHBACK

(Ed. Note: The following comments from Harold Stodola are reprinted from the November 1972 issue of Hole Notes.)

Some great impressions and words from one of Minnesota's greatest Greenkeepers, Harold Stodola.

As the last of the greenkeepers, I would like to give my impressions of the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents.

First, I am all for your Executive Secretary, Al Wareham. He was my Green Chairman and President at Keller. We called him Mr. Public Golf.

Now for the Superintendents, alphabetically, as I know them.

Russ Adams, goodwill man of the Association. A miracle worker to grow turf on busy University Course.

Oscar Bergman, Park View Golf Course. Up in years but young in heart. Starting all over again with a new course.

Bob Borovansky, Town and Country. Confident, capable and well liked by his members.

Arnie Bodhaine, Dawn Golf Course. He succeeded Doug Jabaay, who went up the recreation ladder.

Jake Cassidy, Owatonna. Always looking for better ways. Seldom misses a meeting.

Kurt Erdman at picturesque Rochester Country Club. Best man to raise turf and trees together.

Maynard Erickson, followed his Dad at Theodore Wirth, and has a son following him.

Dave Feser, Minnreg Golf Course. Slow talking, deep thinking, well educated. Handling a big job at Honeywell.

Bob Feser, Manager of Medina Golf Club and practical teacher at Anoka Tech.

Vince Frost, White Bear. Honest, outspoken, doing a faithful job.

Irv Fuller, Mankato Golf Club. Has been there so long he knows every blade of grass by name.

His brother John at Midland. Keeps that busy place humming summer and winter.

Dick Grundstrom, Dellwood. Raises fine turf and drains low fairways at the same time.

Ray Hall, Minnetonka. Been at more courses than any other superintendent and each new job better.

Vern Hansen, Minneapolis Golf Club. Capably filling the big shoes of Jack Kalb.

Ron Helming, Hazeltine. Successfully held National Open. Now bidding for National PGA.

Bob Hickman, Fort Snelling Golf Club. So busy with his many duties we seldom see him. A great host.

Tom Hopf, Greenhaven, Anoka. Everything we hear about his course is complimentary.

Allen Ista, Northfield. Always see him at the Short Course.

George Jenarich. Quiet, dignified, smooth operator of beautiful Woodhill.

Bill Johnson. Plays golf and curls as well as he manicures well-kept Edina.

Carl Johnston, young Superintendent at Alexandria. Ambitious and enthusiastic.

Duane Kahmeyer. Helping at Golden Valley until he gets a course of his own again.

Roger Kisch. Silent, resourceful, hard worker at Southview.

Gary Kwas. Sharp, active, intelligent import from Wisconsin. At home at Wayzata Country Club.

Lightning — (Continued from Page 10)

patrons of their courses. Some private weather forecasting companies offer a service called lightning detection, which allows them to track lightning with unprecedented accuracy.

Some companies offer a paging system to warn owners when storms are headed toward their course. This gives owners time to warn golfers and get them off the course when lightning is nearby.

Although you can't control the dangers of severe summer weather, using a private weather forecasting service is one way to help lessen the risk of a death or injury on your course when Mother Nature is at her worst.

MGCSA GOLF TOWELS

*These thick,
green & white,
2-ply towels are
now available at
the MGCSA
office for \$10.*

*Support and
promote your
association!*

**TO ORDER:
612/473-0557
OR
800-642-7227**



Harold Stodola

Clarence Larson. Finally he has revamped Columbia Golf Course in play, and do his members ever love it.

John Lightfoot, Cloquet. Small in stature but big in ideas and the ability to carry them out.

Jim Lindblad. As up to date as his modern championship. Rolling Green.

His brother, Don, is at Majestic Oaks and they say it is a Majestic layout.

Bill Lundquist, serious veteran at Forest Hills.

Orland Maenke. Must be lonesome at women-less Olympic Hills.

Busy Tony Magina. Have hardly seen his handsome sideburns this summer.

Walter Mann, Mendota Short Course. It has never been so good.

Clem McCann, with a smile as big as his spreading Coon Rapids Course.

His son owns a closely operated course in neighboring Dayton.

Dick McCory, assistant at Interlachen. Best amateur bartender I know. Very steady on bus trips.

The Morris' - father and son, at Tartan Park. What a layout. What a job they are doing.

Newly married Larry Mueller at Minnesota Valley. Snowmold never phased him when he returned from his honeymoon.

Garold Murphy. So diversified he should be able to retire to his Wisconsin cabin at fifty.

Spencer Nelson. Little Falls in the summer. California or Florida in the winter. Couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

Tall Irv Novak. All we hear about Austin Country Club in the Twin Cities is praise.

George Ostler. Quiet, calculating, far-seeing Superintendent at Hillcrest. Course is immaculate.

Jerry Parizek, Lost Spur. Doesn't say much, but thinks and produces a lot.

Cal Polsean and son in South Dakota. Keep maintenance standards high in their state.

John Queensland, Cedar River Country Club, Adams. Young, enthusiastic; anxious to learn how to do the best for his club.

Rich Rannels, Golden Valley. Smooth operator. Just gave golfers a fine golf course for state tournament.

Keith Scott. Just as polished as superb Oak Ridge. They both have class.

Dean Sime, Interlachen. His club is in the first ten in America and so is he.

Tom Stelter, Como Golf Course. I never saw a young superintendent come along so fast. But who wouldn't under Mike Weinhandl.

Dave Streater, Orono. We miss you at our meetings.

Charles Suter, Highland. How does it feel to have another nine added to your course.

Dick Toupal at well designed North Oaks. What a pleasure it must be to belong to your club.

Dick Ulrich, Lafayette. Happy in his new job and loves his course.

Larry Vetter. Golfer, superintendent and promoter for bigger and better association through education.

Cliff Vohs, St. Cloud Country Club. His work is tops just like his Cadillac.

Dick Wise, Detroit Lakes. Up where the fishing and hunting are best. So is his golf course.

Jim Wodash, Albert Lea. Father of large family. Father of interesting golf course.

Arthur Yanke. Phalen. Perhaps retired by now. He earned it.

Bernie Zimmer, our longtime Secretary. Is overdue for a fine club which he deserves.

What a pleasure it is to see our golf courses in such fine hands.

Ye Olde Greenkeeper,
Harold Stodola