

SPORTS

Gun incident may change Phoenix forever

THE IMPLICATIONS ARE TERRIFYING:

Security officers wrestle the armed assailant to the ground. A man with slurred speech waiting on the sixth tee box for Tiger Woods, shouting his name. A man becoming indignant with a police officer. A man bragging he is carrying a firearm. A man arrested after a wrestling match with the police.

A man who, upon further inspection, was indeed carrying a concealed weapon.

"You're kidding me," Phil Mickelson said. Nope. "It's very, very scary," John Daly said. "Some people think we're babies about what is going on at No. 16. Well, it's because we're scared. We're worried."

The darkest fear of any athlete surfaced Sunday at the Phoenix Open, a vulnerability that can be exposed by any fruitcake with a pistol. It evoked memories of Monica Seles, once stabbed in the back during a changeover in Germany, the target of a crazy fan looking to help out Steffi Graf. It was reminiscent of the lunatic from Cleveland who drove to Florida in search of slugger Albert Belle, who had left the Indians and signed with the White Sox.

And suddenly the Thunderbirds have a new problem:

Metal detectors under the bridge? A complete ban on alcohol sales? Bulletproof vests for the golfers? A tournament without fans? Of course, we are making no assumptions, no accusations of grassy knolls or assassination plots. The man arrested, Brian K. Murphy of Phoenix, had a permit for his firearm, making its pres-

ence perfectly legal. But ...

Who in the hell carries a gun to the golf course? Before he met with the media, before he was prepped by security guards concerned about the image of the TPC, Woods was asked what he saw on the sixth tee.

"A guy who got into some kind of scuffle," Woods said. "He had a few cocktails, from what I heard."

A guy with a gun stashed in his fanny pack.

"What?" he said in disbelief. "I didn't know it was that bad."

With Phoenix's huge galleries, Tiger was not alone in the desert for long. This from a man of multiethnic descent who has complained of death threats in the past.

"I still get them," Woods said with remarkable calm. This is not the first time a fan with a firearm has been arrested in the vicinity of Woods. It happened in Dallas five or six years ago, when Woods was an amateur playing a practice round by himself. Two women were arrested with guns in their backpacks, on their way to where Woods was practicing. Some day, the rough edges of society will get a clue.

"There are definitely some crazy people out there," Payne Stewart said. "And there is a black and white issue out there. It's sad, but it's the way it is. As I understand it, Tiger has had some death threats before, which is why he has so many security guards."

Sadly, racism is an issue, and when it comes to harmony and acceptance of all colors, well, it's no secret that Arizona still has a faction of the Wild West militia



living inside its borders.

Of course, this could happen anywhere. But the image of the Phoenix Open will prevail over all logic, and the raucous atmosphere that makes the tournament so fun will now be a matter of serious debate. More than 422,000 people attended the Phoenix Open. Because of one idiot, there will likely be substantial changes in policy.

"I've done some crazy things when I was drunk," Daly said. "It's because of alcohol. People do stupid things when they're drunk. And that's why it's so scary. All it should take is one incident to make them a little more protective of our safety."

That incident has occurred, soiling a wonderful weekend of

drama at the TPC. A weekend when the 16th hole rocked with harmless celebration. When a course played like a major and a golfer named Rocco Mediate challenged himself to greatness.

Now, a story about a man and a gun will make the rounds, and some golfer might pass on this tournament in the future. A golfer no longer concerned about the noise. A golfer concerned about his life. Coming back, Tiger?

"I don't know," he said. "We'll see."

So long, Tiger. And the Phoenix Open as we know it.



(Above left) Security guards wrestle down the gunman. (Above right) Tiger wasn't alone on the green for too long.

Sheppard Named Quarterbacks Coach

KIRKLAND, WA—The Seattle Seahawks named Mike Sheppard the teams quarterbacks coach, Monday

Sheppard, who will be in his seventh NFL season in 1999, joins the Seahawks following two seasons as the San Diego Chargers' offensive coordinator/wide receiver's coach.

"I've known Mike for a long time, dating back to BYU," said Executive Vice President of Football Operations/General Manager & Head Coach Mike Holmgren. "He brings a tremendous amount of passing-game expertise to the table and I feel extremely fortunate to add him to our staff here in Seattle."

Prior to his stint with the Chargers, Sheppard served as the Baltimore Raven's wide receivers coach in 1996. He spent five years (1987-91) as the head coach at the University of New Mexico. He was also the head coach at Long Beach State from 1984-86.

Sheppard's other coaching stops include Kansas (1983) as offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach, Long Beach State (1982) as quarterbacks coach, Idaho State (1980-81) as quarterbacks and receivers coach, U.S. International (1979) as the offensive coordinator/quarterbacks, Brigham Young (1977-78) as a graduate assistant and Cal Lutheran (1974-76) as receivers coach.

Sheppard, 47, graduated from Cal Lutheran, with a bachelor's degree in business, where he was a two-sport star in football and baseball.

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