

# Dodge Park trees snap as 'toothpicks'

By Winnie Wilmarth  
Nonpareil Staff Writer

Scary. That's how several Council Bluffs men described their experience in Dodge Park Golf Course as a tornado swirled through. For several minutes, they were convinced they weren't going to live through the storm.

Mark Royer, 19, said he and two fellow golfers, Tom Lustgraaf and Sean Davis were on the second hole when they were warned of the impending storm.

The three "didn't think the clouds were moving that fast," and continued on. Just as Davis prepared to tee off on the fifth tee box, lightning very nearly struck him, according to Royer.

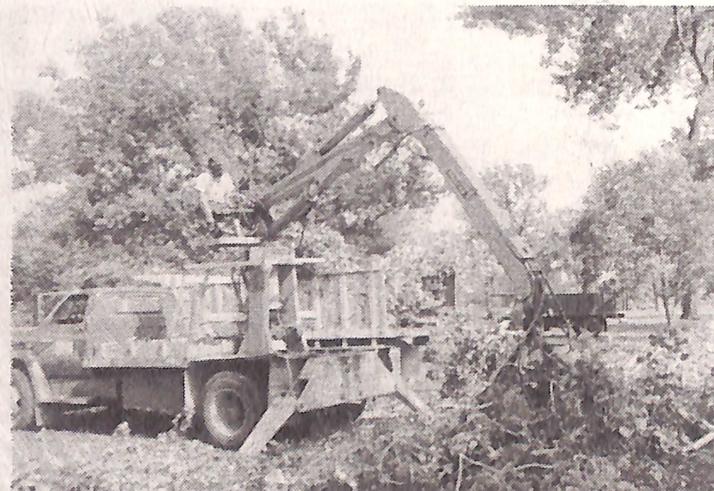
Between 25 and 30 golfers had taken refuge in the Dodge Park Clubhouse before the storm hit. As Ranger Scott Nielsen drove one of the last carts into the cart shed, he saw the wind suddenly blow a cart up onto two wheels.

As the golfers gathered near a big picture window to watch the storm, it began rattling. "I thought we would loose all the windows," said Don Bitz, head pro supervisor of the Dodge-Westwood Golf Complex.

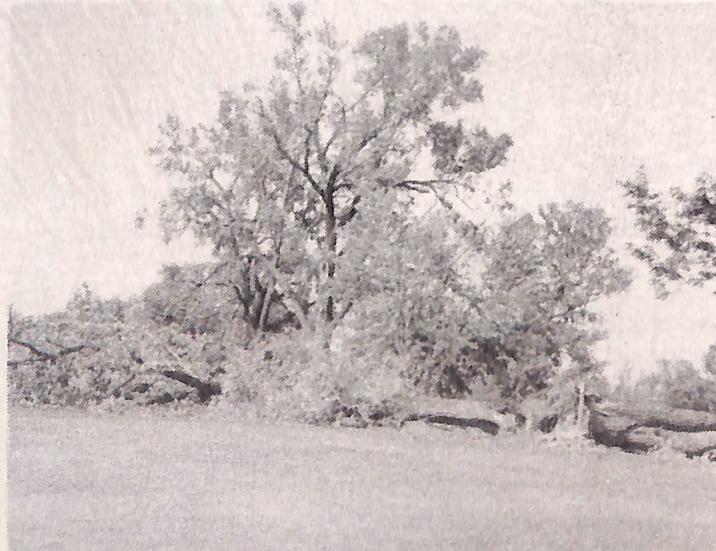
The pressure was sufficient to push two heavy doors open and everyone had felt a tremendous pressure, Bitz said.

The three, and only remaining golfers on the course, dropped their clubs, intending to run for cover, but were unsure about where they should run. Lightning struck a tree about 100 feet ahead of them and the rain began to pour down, limiting their vision.

(Continued)



City crews were able to go to work on golf course damage nearly two weeks after the July 15th tornadoes. Costs for cleanup efforts by contractors are estimated at between \$30,000 and \$35,000, not counting city costs and replanting destroyed trees. — Photo by Winnie Wilmarth.



The major damage to trees occurred in the ninth fairway. A line of a dozen trees were uprooted or twisted off. — Photos by Winnie Wilmarth.