

PUBLIC SAFETY

Play Safe in Small Boats

► IF YOU are going out in a small boat, either to fish or for fun, play it safe. Otherwise you may end up one of the 1,200 or so persons who die each year in the United States as a result of a small-boat accident.

Small-boat accidents account for four of every five lives lost in all types of water transportation. Men, especially those aged 20 to 24, are the chief victims. Motor-driven craft, largely the outboard type, accounted for three of every five deaths in small-boat accidents in 1954 and 1955, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company records show.

Rowboats were involved in about one-fifth of the deaths, while canoes and rafts accounted for most of the others. Surprisingly, only two of the deaths involved sailboats.

Most of the deaths were preventable, the company found. Its statisticians report that "in many instances small boats turned over when occupants stood up or shifted their position in the craft. Overloading was also responsible for an appreciable number of deaths.

"Others resulted from such dangerous practices as speeding, sharp turning, and engaging in horseplay near dams or falls. A goodly number of the persons drowned did not know how to swim; in some instances they were alone or with fellow passengers who also were nonswimmers.

"Physical weakness or impairment was a contributing factor in a few deaths.

"Sudden squalls, severe winds and treacherous currents not infrequently played a part in causing small-boat accidents. Boats hitting submerged objects also added to the toll of victims."

Their report warns that it is "foolhardy to venture out without adequate knowledge of how to operate a boat safely. Craft should be checked periodically for soundness of condition as well as for the adequacy of lifesaving equipment. Warnings

on storms and water conditions should be heeded. Persons who cannot swim should stay out of small boats or be in the company of several expert swimmers."

Science News Letter, August 18, 1956

ENTOMOLOGY

Medfly Control Research Begun

► A RESEARCH PROGRAM has been set up to discover ways of controlling the Mediterranean fruit fly, a destructive citrus pest that has cost the Federal Government more than \$2,000,000 and brought quarantine regulations to many sections in Florida.

The so-called Medfly, which made its first invasion of continental United States in nearly 30 years this spring, has thus far been confined to Florida counties, but nearby states are keeping a sharp lookout for the dreaded insect.

Strong measures have been taken to assure that the Medfly does not get out of its present boundaries. Meanwhile, research at the University of Florida's Agricultural Experiment Station, Gainesville, is expected to provide the means of complete eradication.

The work being done at the experiment station will emphasize fumigation of citrus, mangoes and pink tomatoes, and residue studies with the insecticides malathion, parathion, ethylene di-bromide and methyl bromide. Ethylene di-bromide and methyl bromide are being used to fumigate fruit shipped from quarantine areas.

The program was established at a recent conference with Agricultural Experiment Station staff members, Florida State Plant Board workers, and representatives of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in Washington and at Miami Medfly headquarters.

The entomologist who first identified the Mediterranean fruit fly in the current infestation, Dr. D. O. Wolfenbarger of the Subtropical Station, Homestead, is serving as liaison between control and research agencies at Miami Medfly headquarters.

Science News Letter, August 18, 1956

GOLF: Your LEFT SHOULDER makes the amazing difference!

One of the most startling discoveries to emerge from wide research in the golf swing is that your game literally hinges on your left shoulder!

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BIOPHYSICS

Probe Radiation-Caused Defect in Blood Clotting

► MORE KNOWLEDGE of how radiation, whether from X-rays or nuclear weapons, acts on protein chemicals in the living body may be coming from studies by Drs. Peter Rieser and Robert J. Rutman at the University of Pennsylvania.

The specific effect of low doses of radiation on fibrinogen, chemical important in blood clotting, has been probed by these scientists. Ability of fibrinogen to act on thrombin to form a clot is affected so that the clot forms more slowly.

The radiation effect is not merely to inactivate the fibrinogen. A specific change takes place in the fibrinogen molecule, the scientists found.

Such a specific change, they suggest in *Nature* (Aug. 4), may represent a mechanism of interaction between radiation and biologically active protein chemicals.

"This," they point out, "may be of importance with regard to generalized radiation damage."

Science News Letter, August 18, 1956

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