
CARLOS MONARREZ: Noose pun was wrong but message was right

Image sparked dialogue, awareness about racism

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Here we go again. Blame the media.

Golfweek editor Dave Seanor was fired last week for putting a noose on the cover of the magazine's Jan. 19 issue. The image illustrated the Golf Channel's predicament over lynching remarks made by anchor Kelly Tilghman about Tiger Woods.

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Fred Couples said the Golfweek editor must have been an "idiot" for having a week to make such a poor choice.

Woods said the entire episode had been "more media-driven than anything else."

PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem, who rarely comments on anything controversial, said the magazine's cover was "outrageous and irresponsible."

But Finchem uttered something even more offensive when he said of Golfweek's cover: "It was a naked attempt to inflame and keep alive an incident that was heading to an appropriate conclusion."

The problem is, no conclusion should ever be reached in this matter. According to Alabama's Tuskegee University, 3,466 African-Americans were lynched in the United States from 1882 to 1968. That's something we should never forget or shirk from when we discuss racial issues. In fact, Seanor said that was his objective.

"I wish we could have come up with something that made the same statement but didn't create as much negative reaction," Seanor told the Associated Press a day before he was fired. "But as this has unfolded, I'm glad there's dialogue. Let's talk about this and the lack of diversity in golf."

My problem with the cover was that the noose was used lightly as a bad visual pun about the Golf Channel. Still, the cover achieved its purpose of sparking dialogue and awareness. Even some experts in racist imagery haven't found total fault with Golfweek.

"I don't want to be too harsh on them," said Dr. David Pilgrim, curator of the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University. "I'm kind of ambivalent about them putting a noose on there.

"On the one hand, to use golf lingo, I kind of want to give them a mulligan if their hearts were in the right place and they were trying to spark conversation about race in, for example, the PGA. If that's what they were trying to do, it was probably a misguided attempt and certainly it smells a lot like sensationalism."

I understand the hurt and disgust the image of a noose evokes. But we shouldn't be intimidated by the image or turn away from it. If we study it and never flinch, we can understand the meaning of the images and dark vocabulary of racism in the future.

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