

Darrell who?

This guy calls the shots in golf

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Darrell Survey's Patty Inman inspects a set of golf clubs prior to a PGA event. CNN.SI.com

(CNN.SI.com) -- They're so popular, you know them by their first name alone. Tiger, Jack, Arnie and Karrie.

And oh yea, don't forget Darrell.

Darrell?

"Personally I'd like to meet Darrell," said 11-time PGA winner Paul Azinger. "I don't even have any idea who Darrell is. I've never met the guy."

And he never will.

That's because the "Darrell" he refers to is not a guy, but instead the Darrell Survey, an independent company that inventories the entire contents of the golf bag of every player on the PGA Tour, The Senior Tour and the

LPGA Tour at every tournament.

"We're on the first and 10th tee of all the tournaments," says Darrell Survey representative Patty Inman. "We survey all the equipment that the players are using, everything from their spikes all the way down to the shafts. You name it, we survey it."

The survey is the life-blood of the golf equipment companies. It provides them with the necessary information to successfully market their products to the public.

For example, In its advertisements, Cleveland Golf boasts that its wedges are number one on the PGA Tour - used by more players than any other. Cleveland Golf knows this, for fact, because of data provided by the Darrell Survey.

"It gives us the information that we need to know about the players and if they are using our product or not," says Tad Moore, president of Tad Moore Golf. "And it's very important because if we are going to market products we want to tell the world that 25 guys are using my putter or whatever so it's real important to us."



Paul Azinger: "I don't even have any idea who Darrell is. I've never met the guy." CNN.com

And important to the bottom line.

"Sales is the key thing out here," said Steve Mata, a Titleist Tour representative. "I like to say without being a significant part out here on the PGA Tours, it definitely helps sales."

Azinger says the information collected by the survey can be vital to any golfer who's in the market to buy equipment.

"If I was the general public and I wanted to know what was the best product going right now, what were the best irons, what were the best woods, what were the best putters, I would look at the Darrell Survey. And I would say if the majority of players are using this club on the PGA Tour and that's what they do for a living? Well I'm going to have to go try that club out."

So it's no wonder that company representatives anxiously await the results of the Darrell Survey every Thursday night.

"I live for the Darrell Surveys," admits Mata. "It's kind of like back in college, high school, it's just a report card and it reflects on how you are doing week to week."

Adds Moore, "For the bigger companies that are paying people, they need to know it because they are going to write the guy a check at the end of the week for what he's using."

And because of that, the Darrell Survey wields a tremendous amount of clout and has made Darrell the envy of the PGA Tour.

"I would like a job like Darrell's," Azinger said. "He never shows up, he's never here, he's got people working for him, they count our clubs, they inspect our bag and you never see Darrell."

He may not be seen, but he's most definitely heard.