



## 2013 GOLF BALL CONFORMANCE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

### **I. Introduction**

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of our general policies and procedures regarding golf ball submissions, as well as to provide you with the next year's conformance testing submission deadlines. Please note that we continue to utilize earlier submission deadline dates for September, October, November and December submissions.

There have been some changes and, as a result, we ask that you review the entire document so that you are familiar with the most up-to-date submission information. **For example, we modified Section V to further clarify the symmetry failure policy and added Section VII regarding our Check Test Program.** This will help to ensure that processing of golf balls submitted to the USGA for conformance testing is performed in an accurate and timely manner. As a reminder, the golf ball testing protocols are available at the following link:

<http://www.usga.org/equipment/testing/protocols/Test-Protocols-for-Equipment/>

### **II. General Submission Information, Procedures and 2013 Submission Schedule**

#### **General Information**

For our purposes, a “ball type” is defined as one in which all individual samples have been designed and manufactured to be identical, including external appearance and markings, except that the identification numbers may differ in value and color. Since it is often difficult to visually distinguish the various colors used in the markings (for example, black versus dark blue or dark gray), the color of the markings must not be so similar as to cause confusion. Likewise, ball types differentiated only by font style, size or slight variations in the color of the markings will not be accepted. Finally, the identification numbers (sometimes called the player number) cannot be used to distinguish different ball types. **When differentiating ball types using various symbols (e.g., stars, dots, dashes, etc.), the symbol must be of a significant size and must be easily recognizable.**

As previously noted, based on our experience, golf balls consisting of the same construction but incorporating a variety of cover colors have exhibited varying performance characteristics. As a result, the USGA no longer tests colored golf balls by group and considers each color to be a separate submission. Accordingly, each color is listed separately on the Conforming Ball List and the manufacturer incurs a testing fee for each color submitted. Additionally, for golf balls with colored covers, only one hue is allowed per individual color range. For example, ‘yellow’ and ‘lemon’ or ‘light blue’ and ‘dark blue’ are not acceptable for identically marked golf balls. Also, the use of iridescent paint is strongly discouraged.

## **Alignment Markings and Customization**

Alignment arrows, lines or equivalent markings are regarded as identification markings. However, where a pole or seam marking incorporates an alignment arrow, line or equivalent marking, and no reference to the brand or model name, the arrow, line or equivalent marking *may be printed in any color*. Provided all other markings are identical, the balls will be regarded as one model. If the alignment arrow, line or equivalent marking is accompanied by a word(s) or phrase (other than the brand or model name), the color of these words or phrases will be described and different colors will, therefore, be considered to be different models requiring separate submission for inclusion on the Conforming Ball List. If the arrow, line or equivalent marking is accompanied by the brand or model name, the strict application of the markings convention will apply for both the model name and the arrow, line or equivalent marking.

Custom logos and/or personalized markings (e.g., player name or initials) are permitted anywhere on the ball provided such logos or markings do not encroach on the pole or seam markings of the golf ball and could not be mistaken for an identification marking. Custom markings which include golf-related phrases or terminology are discouraged. Additionally, small scale lines associated with the player name or initials are permitted.

**If, in the opinion of the USGA, it is difficult to distinguish a golf ball submitted for conformance evaluation from any other previous or current submission due to the marking color or size, cover color or coating used, it will not be accepted. If there is any potential issue, question or doubt regarding the acceptability of any golf ball marking or color, please send representative samples or accurate facsimiles to the USGA well in advance of formal submission. Failure to do so may result in the USGA delaying testing until the issue can be resolved.**

## **Submission Procedures**

Whether a new or repeat submission, please submit two dozen balls of each ball type. *These balls must not be pre-selected, rather they must be a representative sample of those balls intended for tournament play and/or the marketplace and should be selected from the most recent production lot.* Additionally, the submission should be boxed, without sleeves, and the outside of the box should be properly identified with the name of the golf ball. Please do not send golf balls in plastic bags or containers other than standard ball boxes. Improper packaging may result in a delay in processing.

When submitting golf balls, manufacturers are required to complete a separate Ball Submission Form for each ball type submitted. Please note that the Submission Form requires that you identify any special characteristic(s)/feature(s) of the ball, including but not limited to coatings, markings, construction, artificial or electronic devices, etc. We continue to ask that you include information regarding general ball construction and spin performance. Additionally, complete identification of the ball type must be achieved by the specific contents of the pole (major) and seam (minor) markings. Failure to provide all of the required level of detail on the Ball Submission Form may delay testing of the ball. Please remember to sign the completed Ball Submission Form and send with each ball type, a copy of which is attached. Please use this most recent version for all 2013 submissions. The form may be reproduced if additional copies are required or you may request that we send you a copy by e-mail.

**All submissions should be sent to: The USGA, Research and Test Center, Attn: Pamela Sanderson, 77 Liberty Corner Road, Far Hills, New Jersey 07931-0708. Golf ball submissions for each expiration/publication date must be received no later than the submission deadline provided in the following table:**

<b>Deadline Date for Submissions</b>	<b>Publication Date of Subsequent List</b>
November 07, 2012	January 02, 2013
December 5, 2012	February 06, 2013
January 23, 2013	March 06, 2013
February 20, 2013	April 03, 2013
March 20, 2013	May 01, 2013
April 24, 2013	June 05, 2013
May 22, 2013	July 03, 2013
June 26, 2013	August 07, 2013
July 24, 2013	September 04, 2013
August 21, 2013	October 02, 2013
September 18, 2013	November 06, 2013
October 9, 2013	December 04, 2013
November 06, 2013	January 01, 2014
December 4, 2013	February 05, 2014

### **III. The Electronic List (E-List)**

In order for the E-List to work efficiently and effectively, it is our goal to further reduce the number of golf balls listed. Consistent with our current procedure, manufacturers should only request that brands falling into the following two categories be considered for inclusion on the E-List:

- (a) Brands that are currently being marketed, or that are planned for the marketplace within the next two months; and,
- (b) Brands that are currently being used on Tour, or that are scheduled to be used within the next two months.

In an effort to ensure that this condition is being adhered to, we will continue to perform random checks, and, in some circumstances, we may notify a manufacturer and request evidence that a certain brand (or brands) satisfies one of the above two conditions.

Those brands that do not satisfy one of the above listed conditions for inclusion on the E-List may continue to be submitted for testing and included on the *'Reserve List'*. This list is designed for those balls that are not currently planned for the marketplace or for use at the professional and/or elite amateur level, but may be introduced at a later date. The *'Reserve List'*

enables manufacturers to submit balls for testing in preparation for possible appearance on the E-List in the future.

Conforming balls included on the *'Reserve List'* are not included on the E-List. Use of any ball included on the *'Reserve List'* is not permitted when the Conforming Ball List is a Condition of Competition. Please note that the USGA does not publish the contents of the *'Reserve List'*.

Finally, a brand of ball that appears on the *'Reserve List'* may be transferred onto a subsequent published edition of the E-List when, and if, it becomes a ball that the manufacturer has decided to market and/or put into play at the professional and elite amateur level. A manufacturer wishing to move a ball from the *'Reserve List'* onto the E-List must notify the USGA Test Center at least one week prior to the publication date of the next E-List. **If a ball submitted for inclusion on the 'Reserve List' is modified in any manner, the manufacturer must contact the USGA to discuss prior to moving the ball to the E-List.**

#### **IV. Fee Structure**

The fee for all golf ball submissions is as follows:

Conformance Testing:	\$1,000.00 for (24 sample balls)
ITR Test Service:	\$ 800.00 for (6 sample balls)
Size, Weight and Initial Velocity Test Service:	\$ 450.00 for (12 sample balls)
Initial Velocity Test Service:	\$ 300.00 for (12 sample balls)

Please note that if a ball submitted for conformance testing cannot be fully evaluated as a result of its performance during testing, the ball will not be listed on the Conforming Ball List. The manufacturer will be permitted to submit one subsequent sample for conformance testing at no additional cost.

#### **V. Symmetry Failure**

If a new conformance submission fails at least one of the symmetry requirements (i.e., time or carry), our policy states as follows:

- 1) The manufacturer will receive written notice that it has up to six months from the time of posting to the Conforming Ball List to submit further samples which either pass or demonstrate a statistically significant improvement in symmetry (i.e., the improvement is based upon the conformance submission). This means that the manufacturer may make sequential resubmissions until the publication date of the List prior to the month in which the ball would be removed (for example, the deadline for resubmission of samples submitted to appear on the January 2013 List that failed symmetry is June 5, 2013).
  - (a) If the ball fails both criteria (i.e., time and carry), then there must be significant improvement in at least one of the criteria by the end of the six month period to remain on the list. The other criteria must remain at or improve from the previous level.

- (b) If the ball fails one criterion and passes the other, then there must be significant improvement in the failed criteria at the end of the six-month period and the other criteria must continue to pass. If the other criteria fails during resubmission, regardless of whether the failing criteria passes or significantly improves, then the ball would be considered to have not significantly improved.
- 2) If the manufacturer cannot achieve a significant improvement within the six-month period, then the ball will be removed from the Conforming Ball List.
  - 3) If the manufacturer achieves a significant improvement within the six month period, then the manufacturer is given an additional period that extends to the annual submission deadline to manufacture and submit samples that pass all standards. For example, the deadline for submitting passing samples for a ball submitted to appear on the January 2013 List that failed symmetry, but significantly improved within the six month period, is November 6, 2013.
  - 4) If the manufacturer does not submit conforming samples by the annual deadline, then the manufacturer must change the marking on any resubmission for subsequent postings on the Conforming Ball List (i.e., it must be distinguished from the original submission and will be considered a new ball type).

## **VI. Notification Procedure**

If during conformance testing, a ball type fails any of the required standards, you will be contacted. If you do not receive such notification, the ball types submitted prior to the submission deadline will be published on the subsequent publication date and will expire at the end of 12 months. A brand of ball must be submitted once a year to remain on the current Conforming Ball List. Please note that once a ball appears on the list, you are authorized to make the following statements in advertisements or promotional materials: "Conforms with USGA Rules" or "Conforms with the Rules of Golf." **Use of statements such as "USGA Approved" or "USGA Tested" is prohibited. Publication of any test results, or use of the USGA seal or logo is also prohibited.**

## **VII. Check Tests**

As you are aware, at various times during the year, balls are collected for testing from retail outlets and by Rules Officials at various sites. In recent check tests, we have seen an increasing number of balls that are extremely close to exceeding one or more of the conformance limits. We remind you that balls collected for check test are subjected to the same conformance tests as regular submissions. If the check test balls fail any of the conformance tests, other than symmetry, that listing will be immediately removed from the Conforming Ball List, and the various tours and golf associations will be notified.

There have also been instances where check test samples perform and/or appear upon dissection, to be different from the ball with the identical markings that was submitted for conformance. Balls submitted for conformance must be a representative sample of those balls intended for tournament play and/or the marketplace. If a check test sample of balls performs and/or appears significantly different from the samples, with identical markings, submitted for conformance

testing, it might be concluded that the samples submitted are not representative of the conformance sample. In this situation, the manufacturer assumes the risk that the particular ball will be removed from the Conforming Ball List.

### **VIII. Conclusion**

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Pam Sanderson, Senior Coordinator II of Golf Ball Conformance and Test Service, or Carter Rich, Manager of Equipment Standards, at (908) 234-2300.

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