

United States  
Golf Association



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**NOTICE TO MANUFACTURERS**

**CHANGES IN RULES RELATING TO GOLF CLUBS AND GOLF BALLS**

Attached to this Notice is a copy of Rules 4 and 5, and Appendices II and III as they appear in the Rules of Golf which become effective from 1st January, 1992. The changes which most affect manufacturers, together with a brief explanation of how the revised rules will be interpreted, are as follows:

**Reference to Rule 4-1a and Appendix II: Adjustability.**

In the design of putters only, limited adjustability of some features will be permitted, provided the conditions itemized in the new Appendix II, 1a are met. The following are some guidelines as to how the USGA will be interpreting this rule:

- a) Adjustability of lie will be permitted, but no other adjustment involving movement of one part of the putter relative to another will be permitted.
- b) In general, assembly kits will be permitted, such as two different heads for a single shaft, or face plates of two different materials for a given head, so long as every combination of the parts produces a conforming putter. For this reason, when submitting such kits for a ruling, *all* components must be included.
- c) The screw-together shaft will be permitted, provided it is fixed during play by a more secure means than the simple screw, namely by a mechanism that needs a tool both to fix it and undo it; and provided also it meets all other shaft specifications in its compound form.

**Reference to Appendix II 4-1c: Grips.**

One change limits the thickness of a grip. The other change applies to putters which have more than one grip, in which case both must be circular in cross-section. Note the one-year grace period for existing putters.

**Reference to Rule 4-1e and Appendix II: Insets on Club Faces.**

The sentence in the existing rule, which prohibits insets or attachments on the face of a metal club, has been deleted. Henceforth, no matter what material the clubhead is made of, it may have an inset in the face, or a complete face, of a different material. Added conditions in Appendix II, 4-1e prohibit such face constructions from significantly increasing speed or spin of the ball. See also the paragraph below on face markings.

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Reference to Rule 4-1e and Appendix II: Club Face Markings.

The part of Appendix II dealing with markings has been slightly revised to make it clear that the strict specifications for grooves and punch marks on the faces of iron clubs do not apply to decorative and other markings away from the impact area, or to markings on putter faces.

It is also made clear in the groove specifications for non-metallic clubs that it is the material of the face that determines whether the club is metallic or not for the purposes of this rule. In this connection, and because insets will be permitted on any club, the USGA may deem a club face to be metallic if it is made of a material with properties similar to metal in hardness, or ability to accommodate precisely formed grooves. Ceramic faces would fall into this category.

Long Putter

The USGA will continue to rule on submissions of this type of club according to the current or the 1992 rules, and in doing so, to apply the "ten degrees from vertical" rule strictly. (See Appendix II, 4-1b *Exception for Putter* - unchanged in 1992). In determining "normal address position" the USGA takes into account the intended method of use as well as the simple geometry of the putter head.

Reference to Preamble to Appendices II and III.

The grace period (until the end of 1995) granted in this note will apply mainly to clubs whose heads were deemed to meet the pre-1988 "Plain in Shape" specifications of Appendix II, 4-1d, but which do not now meet the more clearly defined specifications introduced in 1988. New designs do not, of course, qualify for this grace period.

Reference to Appendix III: The Ball.

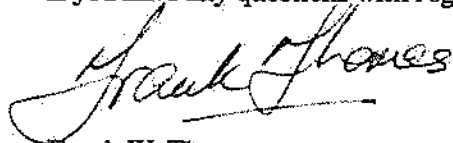
The changes in Section (c), Spherical Symmetry, bring the Rule Book into line with the simpler symmetry test procedure and relaxed specifications which have been in operation since 1989, at which time ball manufacturers were notified. Note, in the first sentence, that if asymmetry is the *intention* in the design of a ball, it will not conform regardless of whether it passes or fails the test procedures. In fact, it will not be tested.

Reminder to Submit Items for Rulings.

As always, manufacturers are requested to submit for a ruling any item of golf equipment (including shoes, gloves, etc.) over which there could be any doubt. They are also strongly advised, at least for the next two or three years, to submit *all* new products which take advantage of the relaxed rules allowing adjustability in putters and insets on clubs of any material.

**THE ABOVE NOTES ARE FOR GUIDANCE ONLY, AND DO NOT CONSTITUTE RULES.**

If you have any questions with regard to the above, please contact the undersigned.



Frank W. Thomas  
Technical Director

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10/18/91