

United States Golf Association
Golf House
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May 28, 2008
Notice To Manufacturers

Proposed Revised Interpretation of Spring Features in Clubheads

During the past several years, the USGA has evaluated and determined that some submitted clubs did not conform to the Rules of Golf because the USGA considered the designs to include spring features having the intent of, or the effect of, unduly influencing the clubhead's spring effect. The USGA made these decisions after performing substantial research-based evaluations on each such submitted clubhead.

The USGA added additional language to the 2008-2009 Rules of Golf that included a reference to this topic. As stated in Appendix II, 4c:

c. Spring Effect and Dynamic Properties

The design, material and/or construction of, or any treatment to, the clubhead (which includes the club face) must not:

(ii) incorporate features or technology, including, but not limited to separate springs or spring features, that have the intent of, or the effect of, unduly influencing the clubhead's spring effect

The USGA recognizes that the current method of evaluation can result in decisions that are not always clearly understood by submitters and also can create lengthy delays in the conformance decision process. To reduce the time needed to make a conformance decision on a club incorporating a spring feature or technology that has the intent of, or the effect of, unduly influencing the clubhead's spring effect, and to improve the clarity of the decision, the USGA is proposing to replace the current design evaluation decision method with a measurement method. The measurement would be used to determine whether a submitted club incorporates a prohibited spring feature or technology.

Currently, conformance for spring effect is determined using the pendulum tester to evaluate the flexibility only at the center of the clubface, the location of which is determined dimensionally. It is proposed that the pendulum tester also be used to determine whether a design unduly influences the clubhead's spring effect by limiting the

CT of the entire clubface to the same limit as the center of the clubface – 239 microseconds with an 18 microsecond measurement tolerance allowed. Typical clubs in the market today, as well as those previously made, easily meet this requirement because the vast majority of clubs have their highest CT reading located at or very near the center of the face. Allowing the same value across the entire face is a non-stringent means of determining the presence of advanced spring features.

The USGA is not proposing to measure CT at additional specific locations. Rather, the USGA reserves the right to measure additional locations on submitted clubheads for the purpose of determining whether or not a club incorporates feature or technology having the intent of, or the effect of, unduly influencing the clubhead's spring effect.

At this time, it is the USGA's intention to apply this method of determining the presences of these spring features to driving clubs only. If other clubs are developed with similar spring features, this evaluation method may be applied to them as well.

A clubhead design incorporating obvious springs, such as coil spring or other similar features, will continue to be considered non-conforming due to plain in shape requirements and/or the requirement that all parts be firmly fixed. As with any unique design concept, developers of such club designs are advised to communicate the design or the design concept to the USGA as early in the development process as possible.

It is proposed that the USGA adopt this method of determining the presence of a prohibited spring feature or technology within 30 days after the conclusion of the comment period. The USGA does not intend to re-evaluate any clubs previously ruled conforming according to this measurement method. If submitters of clubs previously ruled non-conforming for spring features would like to have their submissions re-evaluated, they should contact the USGA.

Written comments regarding this proposal should be sent to the USGA, attention Dick Rugge, P.O. Box 708, Far Hills, NJ 07931, Fax 908-234-0138, e-mail: drugge@usga.org. Written comments received later than July 1, 2008 will not be considered.