



United States Golf Association  
PO Box 708  
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**June 9, 2011**  
**Notice to Golf Ball Manufacturers**  
**USGA Area of Research Interest**  
**Golf Ball Initial Velocity Testing**

During the Equipment Rulemaking Forum held in November 2010 in Vancouver, several golf ball manufacturers expressed the view that the results obtained by the current test device used to evaluate the Initial Velocity (IV) of a ball is difficult to reproduce by other means. Based on these comments and our own desire to better understand the other testing methodologies being used, the USGA and The R&A have decided to initiate a new research project to study the measurement of golf ball IV.

The purpose of this research is to investigate how the results of alternative test methods could be used to reproduce results from the current IV testing equipment; in particular, by using non-proprietary test equipment.

As most ball manufacturers are aware, the ball conformance test for IV is performed at the USGA Test Center in Far Hills, NJ using a machine that was specifically developed more than 40 years ago by the Illinois Tool Works (ITW). This device utilizes a heavy flywheel to impact the golf ball at a velocity of 143.8 ft/sec. The average velocity of the ball is then measured over a distance of 6.28 ft to determine its conformance to the Rules of Golf. We are aware that most golf ball manufacturers, instead of replicating the ITW machine, rely on some type of Coefficient of Restitution measurement to predict the initial velocity of their golf balls prior to formal submission.

Some manufacturers have expressed an interest in contributing to research projects conducted by the USGA and The R&A. Therefore, we would like to invite all interested parties to provide us with data, suggestions or comments regarding the existing test and any ideas regarding alternative test methods. We would also welcome any other information that may be useful for this research project and any offers of possible collaborative research.

It is important to note that this is strictly a research area of interest at the present time and not a proposal to modify or replace the current ball IV test. If any of the research conducted results in a proposal for a test change, this will be communicated through the Notice and Comment process.

Please communicate any questions, comments, or other information to Dick Rugge, Senior Technical Director, P.O. Box 708 Far Hills, NJ 07931, or e-mail: [drugge@usga.org](mailto:drugge@usga.org).