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Golf Association



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NOTICE TO GOLF CLUB MANUFACTURERS

July 1, 1987

Attached is the text of those sections of Rule 4 and Appendix II which have been modified. The revised wording has been underlined for your convenience. The modifications can best be understood if this notice is read in conjunction with the 1987 Rules book.

We would like to direct your attention to two specific areas of revision:

1. The preamble to Rule 4, CLUBS, re-emphasizes the request that manufacturers submit samples of equipment before manufacturing it.
2. Appendix II 4-1e(i), Grooves, includes reference to the 30 degree method of measurement, and also requires that the width and cross-section must be generally consistent across the face and along the length of the grooves. The Rule also requires that the rounding of the edges of grooves be in the form of a radius which does not exceed .020". The sketch showing examples of groove cross sections is for guidance only.

In Appendix II 4-1a, the section entitled Plain In Shape has been expanded to further clarify its meaning. However, the features mentioned in this section of the Appendix are not necessarily the only features covered by this Rule. This section of the Appendix, like all other sections of the Appendix relating to equipment rules, is intended for guidance purposes only.

If you have any questions regarding the modifications to Rule 4 and Appendix II, please contact the undersigned.

Frank W. Thomas
Technical Director

FWT/gs

P.S. Enclosed also is a copy of the press release describing the action taken by the USGA relating to groove measurement.

RULES CHANGES FOR 1988

The following proposed changes to Rule 4, Rule 5 and Appendix II & III were approved by the Joint Rules Committee.

Only the sections where a change has been made are presented, with the changed wording underlined.

USGA

RULE 4. CLUBS

If there may be any reasonable basis for doubt as to whether a club which is to be manufactured conforms with Rule 4 and Appendix II, the manufacturer should submit a sample to the Royal and Ancient Golf club of St. Andrews (*USGA) for a ruling, such sample to become its property for reference purposes. If a manufacturer fails to do so he assumes the risk of a ruling that the club does not conform with the Rules of Golf.

A player in doubt as to the conformity of a club should consult the *Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews.

4-1 d. Clubhead

The distance from the heel to the toe of the clubhead shall be greater than the distance from the face to the back. The clubhead shall be generally plain in shape.

The clubhead shall have only one face designed for striking the ball, except that a putter may have two such faces if their characteristics are the same, they are opposite each other and the loft of each is the same and does not exceed ten degrees.

4-1 f. Wear

A club which conforms with Rule 4-1 when new is deemed to conform after wear through normal use. Any part of a club which has been purposely altered is regarded as new and must conform, in the altered state, with the Rules.

(Rules 4-1g, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4 are not included here as changes to these sections are not proposed by the I&B Committee.)

APPENDIX II

Design of Clubs

Rule 4-1 prescribes general regulations for the design of clubs. The following paragraphs, which provide some detailed specifications and clarify how Rule 4-1 is interpreted, should be read in conjunction with this Rule.

4-1b. Shaft

Generally Straight

The shaft shall be at least 18 inches (457mm) in length. It shall be straight from the top of the grip to a point not more than 5 inches (127mm) above the sole, measured along the axis of the shaft and the neck or socket.

Bending and Twisting Properties...etc.

Exception for Putters: The shaft or neck or socket of a putter may be fixed at any point in the head and need not remain in line with the heel. The axis of the shaft from the top to a point not more than 5 inches (127mm) above the sole must diverge from the vertical in the toe-heel plane by at least 10 degrees when the club is in its normal address position.

4-1c. Grip

(i) For clubs other than putters the grip must be generally circular in cross-section, except that a continuous, straight, slightly raised rib may be incorporated along the full length of the grip.

(ii) A putter grip may have a non-circular cross-section, provided the cross-section has no concavity and remains generally similar throughout the length of the grip.

(iii) The grip may be tapered but must not have any bulge or waist.

(iv) For clubs other than putters the axis of the grip must coincide with the axis of the shaft.

4-1d. Clubhead

Dimensions

The dimensions of a clubhead (see diagram) are measured, with the clubhead in its normal address position, on horizontal lines between vertical projections of the outermost points of (i) the heel and the toe and (ii) the face and the back. If the outermost point of the heel is not clearly defined, it is deemed to be 0.625 inches (16mm) above the horizontal plane on which the club is resting in its normal address position.

Plain in Shape

The clubhead shall be generally plain in shape. All parts shall be rigid, structural in nature and functional.

Features such as holes through the head, windows or transparencies, or appendages to the main body of the head such as plates, rods or fins for the purpose of meeting dimensional specifications, for aiming or for any other purpose are not permitted. Exceptions may be made for putters.

Any furrows in or runners on the sole shall not extend into the face.

4-1e. Club Face

Hardness and Rigidity

The club face must not be designed and manufactured to have the effect at impact of a spring which would unduly influence the movement of the ball.

Markings

Except for specified markings, the surface roughness must not exceed that of decorative sandblasting. Markings must not have sharp edges or raised lips, as determined by a finger test. Markings within the area where impact is intended (the "impact area") are governed by the following:

"(i) Grooves. A series of straight grooves with diverging sides and a symmetrical cross-section may be used (See diagram.) The width and cross section must be generally consistent across the face of the club and along the length of the grooves. Any rounding of groove edges shall be in the form of a radius which does not exceed .020 inches (0.5mm). The width of the grooves shall not exceed 0.035 inches (0.9mm), using the 30 degree method of measurement on file with the United States Golf Association. The distance between edges...etc."