



December 13, 2019
Notice to Manufacturers

Definition of Alignment Device and Treatment of Ball-Markers

Adoption of Final Guideline

In accordance with our October 4, 2019 Notice to Ball-Marker Manufacturers, the USGA and The R&A have received and considered comments regarding the proposed definition. Based on these comments and further internal discussion, we have made minor changes to the proposed requirements.

Below, please find the final version of the definition, which will become effective on January 1, 2020:

Alignment Device Definition (Effective January 1, 2020)

The following criteria are used to determine when an object manufactured to mark the spot of a ball is an alignment device. Features include, but are not limited to:

- The object incorporates features designed to measure, gauge or interpret slope, green speed or other conditions, or includes optical or electronic components or,
- The vertical height of the object, in any configuration, is greater than 1.0" or,
- The maximum dimension in any horizontal direction exceeds 2.0" and incorporates any of the features noted below (or similar features):
 - the object incorporates painted, etched or inscribed line(s) or similar features greater than or equal to 2.0" in length ("line" includes any line, arrow or other straight marking that could be solid or broken, but has a defined start, a defined end and whose length can be measured),
 - the object has an appendage(s) or an extended feature(s) greater than 2.0" in length or that extends a feature of the object to a length greater than 2.0".

Note 1: An object is an alignment device if it exceeds the dimensional specifications listed above and advertising, marketing or intellectual property descriptions or claims related to the object indicates that it is primarily for the purpose of showing the line of play.

Note 2: An object is an alignment device if it is modified in any manner that would satisfy any of the above provisions.

If an "alignment device" is placed by the a player to show the line of play and the player places his or her ball based on the orientation of the alignment device, the player is in breach of Rule 4.3a, which

prohibits a player from creating “a potential advantage by using equipment (other than a club or a ball) that artificially eliminates or reduces the need for a skill or judgment that is essential to the challenge of the game.”

As previously noted, ball-marker and other similar submissions, the use of which have previously been ruled to be in breach of the Rules of Golf, will be re-evaluated at the request of the submitter or manufacturer.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Carter Rich, Senior Director of Equipment Rules and Conformance, at jcrich@usga.org.

Best Regards and Happy Holidays,

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United States Golf Association