



6 December 2023

Notice of Decision

Update to the Conformance Testing of Golf Balls to the Overall Distance Standard (ODS)

In March 2023 The R&A and the USGA issued a Notice and Comment relating to a proposed Model Local Rule (MLR) relating to golf ball conformance:

Specifically, for this proposed MLR, golf balls will be tested for conformance to the Overall Distance Standard (ODS) limit of 317 yards (plus 3 yards tolerance) at modified Actual Launch Conditions (ALC), namely a clubhead speed of 127 mph and ALC values of 11 degrees and 37 revolutions per second (2220 rpm).

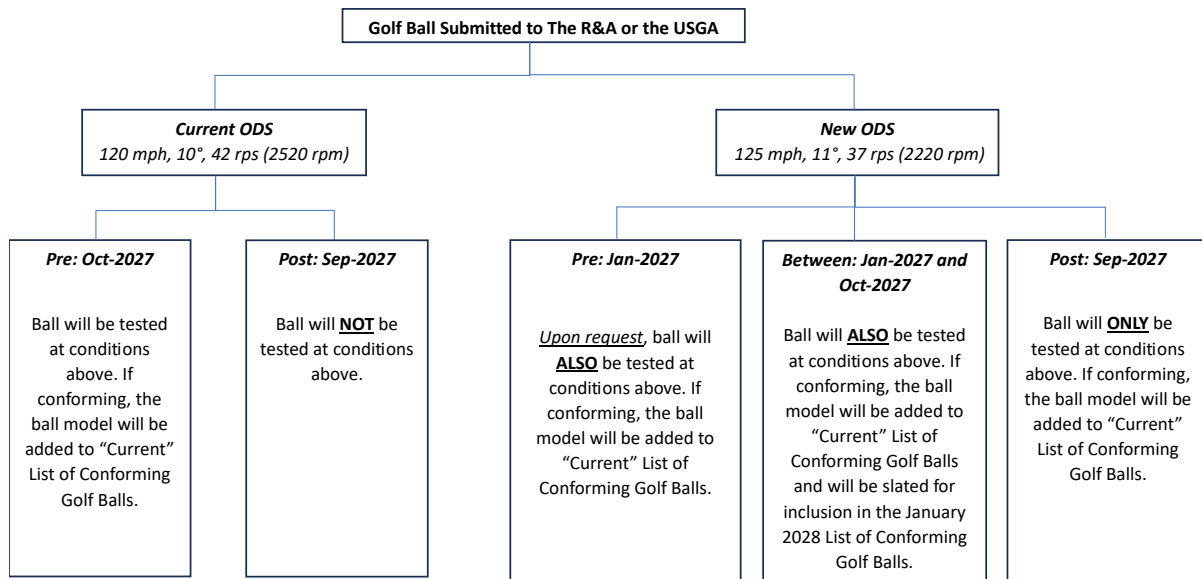
We received significant feedback from stakeholders regarding this MLR proposal. All of the comments have been carefully reviewed and considered in accordance with the Equipment Rulemaking Procedures adopted in November 2011. Based on this feedback and further research by The R&A and the USGA, we have modified our approach. Instead of an MLR, the test conditions for evaluating conformance of golf balls to the Overall Distance Standard will be updated. These updated test conditions will require golf balls to be tested for conformance to the Overall Distance Standard (ODS) limit of 317 yards (plus 3 yards tolerance) at modified Actual Launch Conditions (ALC), namely a clubhead speed of 125 mph with a launch angle of 11 degrees and a backspin of 37 revolutions per second (2220 rpm).

The launch conditions for all golf ball submissions will be determined by a mechanical golfer that has been set up to produce the appropriate launch conditions on the USGA/R&A calibration ball. Please note that interim screening may be used and more efficient means of determining the ALC will be investigated. For clarity, the bounce and roll component of the Overall Distance Standard will be calculated using the simplified bounce model as proposed by The R&A and the USGA in March 2021.

These updated test conditions will be applied to all golf ball submissions for the January 2028 List of Conforming Golf Balls. In other words, all balls received by the USGA/R&A during or after October 2027 will be evaluated in accordance with the new test conditions ONLY. Balls that conform will appear in the List of Conforming Golf Balls beginning January 2028.

An appropriate clarification in the Rules of Golf will confirm that any golf balls that appeared on the December 2027 List of Conforming Golf Balls (or a previous List of Conforming Golf Balls) may continue to be used until January 2030. The clarification to support this position will be introduced as part of our regular updates to clarifications closer to the inception.

Submission & Conformance Process Summary



We would like to thank all those who provided comments for their participation in this process and the constructive feedback provided. The decision set out in this Notice reflects those interactions.