

6 November 2007

TO: ALL AFFILIATED UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

DRIVING CLUBS

Following the recent announcement of the new Rules of Golf for 2008, I am writing to highlight, once again, the new Rule which will be introduced on driving clubs.

For the avoidance of doubt, I would clarify that, from 1 January 2008, all drivers must conform to the following provisions, as set forth in Appendix II, 4c of the Rules of Golf:

"Spring Effect and Dynamic Properties
The design and/or construction of, or any treatment to, the clubhead (which includes the face) must not:
(i) have the effect of a spring which exceeds the limit set forth in the Pendulum Test Protocol on file with the R&A."

This new Rule will apply to all golfers of all abilities and in all forms of play. Most importantly, it is recognised that this Rule will affect the conformance status of many drivers currently in use and, whilst many golfers have already replaced or made plans to replace such clubs with conforming models, some golfers, it would seem, are still unaware of the new Rule and its implications.

The purpose of this communication is to encourage you to contact all of the Golf Clubs in your country to:

- (a) ensure that they are fully aware of the new Rule and understand how it should be applied; and
- (b) suggest that, unless they have already done so, the Golf Clubs should take immediate steps to ensure that their Membership are fully aware and prepared for the new Rule.

In the run-up to 2008, Golf Clubs could be taking steps to raise awareness of the new Rule amongst their Members and assisting them to determine the conformance status of their drivers. This should help minimise any uncertainty, confusion, and/or unfortunate disqualifications after 1 January 2008 and help to ensure a smoother transition to the new Rule.

For your information, I am attaching a list of Frequently Asked Questions which may be of assistance to you. However, if you do have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact The R&A.

Yours faithfully

DAVID RICKMAN

Director of Rules and Equipment Standards

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1	Will the new Rule on drivers be applicable to amateur, Club level golfers?
A1	Yes. The new Rule will apply to all golfers, of all abilities, in all forms of play. This includes Club level golfers playing in their Club competitions and medals.
Q2	Question: Can individual Golf Clubs decide to allow the use of non-conforming drivers via a Local Rule or Condition of Competition?
A2	No. A Committee has no power to waive a Rule of Golf (see Rule 33-1). Local Rules and Conditions of Competitions can only be introduced under the terms of Appendix I.
Q3	Is it up to the Committee to ensure that I am using a driver which conforms to the new Rules?
A3	No. It is your responsibility to ensure that your equipment conforms to the Rules of Golf.
Q4	Where can I find out if my driver will conform after 1 January 2008?
A4	<p>The R&A has compiled and published the following lists based on the 2008 Rules:</p> <p>List of Conforming Driver Heads List of Non-conforming Drivers</p> <p>These can be accessed from The R&A's website (www.randa.org) by following the links to 'Rules', 'Equipment' and 'Driving Clubs'.</p>
Q5	I am a Club level golfer and my driver is not included on either of the published driver lists. Does this mean that I cannot use it after 1 January 2008?
A5	<p>No. As long as there is no strong evidence to suggest that your driver does not conform to the new Rule, you may continue to use it (but see Q6). Examples of strong evidence would include the following examples:</p> <p>(i) your driver includes a marking on the head which is similar to markings only found on drivers from the same manufacturer which are on the non-conforming list.</p> <p>(ii) the same model of driver is included on the non-conforming list, but in other lofts.</p> <p>(iii) advertising material claims that the driver is manufactured to be contrary to the Rules for 2008.</p> <p>In the avoidance of any doubt, you should contact the manufacturer of the club or The R&A.</p>
Q6	I am a low handicap golfer competing at Club level, but I am also planning to enter County and National level competitions. My driver is not on either of the published lists. Can I use it after 1 January 2008?
A6	<p>Using this driver in Club competitions would be permissible as long as it satisfies the criteria detailed in the answer to Q5.</p> <p>Using the driver at County and National level would not be permitted if the Committee in charge of those events had decided to introduce the Driving Club Condition as a Condition of Competition. This Condition requires that the driver the player uses is included on the List of Conforming Driver Heads.</p>

Q7	What is the difference between the Rule on drivers and the Driving Club Condition?
A7	The new Rule on drivers requires that the driver does not exceed a characteristic time of 239 microseconds (plus tolerance of 18 microseconds). This is the limit on a club's spring effect. The Condition requires that the driver the player uses not only conforms to this Rule, but is also included on the List of Conforming Driver Heads. The Condition is an additional requirement which can be introduced by Committees in charge of elite level competitions. It is not recommended for use at Club level golf.

Q8	Why is the use of the Condition not recommended for use at Club level golf? If all drivers had to be included on the Conforming List, wouldn't this make it less confusing for Club level golfers and easier for Club Committees?
A8	Applying the Condition at Club level could take drivers out of golfers' bags unnecessarily. There are many small manufacturers and club component manufacturers around the world who do not submit their products for a ruling and it would be unreasonable to prohibit the use of these clubs even though they may and probably do conform to the Rules.

Q9	If I am a Club golfer and I would like to know the conformance status of a driver not on the List, what can I do?
A9	In the first instance, you can contact The R&A through the 'contact us' section of The R&A's website (www.randa.org) and ask whether the driver has been submitted to them for a ruling. It may have been submitted and ruled non-conforming for another reason. If it has never been submitted, you could contact the manufacturer and ask them to confirm that the club was manufactured to conform to the 2008 Rules. You could also request that they submit a sample of the club to one of the Governing Bodies (The R&A or the United States Golf Association) for a ruling. Finally, as a last resort, you could send your club to The R&A for testing. Whilst The R&A would not be able to list the model as a result of this 'unofficial' submission, you would be notified as to the conformance status of the club.

Q10	I purchased my club in 1996 and I cannot find it on either of the published lists. Will it conform after 1 January 2008?
A10	All models of driver manufactured prior to 1999 are assumed to conform to the Rules for 'spring effect' and are deemed to be on the Conforming List - provided they have not been modified post manufacture or previously ruled not to conform for another reason. Any pre-1999 drivers which have been submitted and do not conform to the Rules for 'spring effect' are included on the Non-conforming List (for 2008).

Q11	My driver is a 'copy' or 'clone' of a popular model which is on the Conforming List. The markings on my driver are slightly different, but can I assume my club also conforms? It is unlikely ever to be submitted.
A11	In the absence of any strong evidence to suggest that your driver does not conform, you should continue to use it in the belief that it does conform. However, due to the difference in the markings, you cannot regard it as a "listed club" (i.e. a club on the Conforming List).