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22 September 2008

NOTICE TO MANUFACTURERS

PROPOSED REVISION OF INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION OF SPRING FEATURES WITHIN CLUBHEADS

On 28 May 2008, The R&A proposed a new test method for evaluating future clubhead submissions to determine whether they contain features or technology that are designed to influence, or have the effect of influencing, 'spring effect'.

As you know, Appendix II, 4c states that:

> **Spring Effect and Dynamic Properties**
> The design, material and/or construction of, or any treatment to, the clubhead (which includes the club 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; or
> (ii) incorporate features or technology including, but not limited to, separate springs or spring features, that have the intent of, or the effect of, unduly influencing the clubhead's spring effect; or
> (iii) unduly influence the movement of the ball.

This revised language was introduced in January 2008, to reflect more accurately The R&A's interpretation of 'spring effect' – i.e. whilst the conformance of a club to the Pendulum test is necessary (see clause (i) above), this test is not sufficient to assess whether a club incorporates a feature which might *influence* its 'spring effect' (see clause (ii)). The revised wording was prompted by a number of clubhead submissions which were found to incorporate spring features but did not exceed the limit for 'spring-like' effect as measured by the Pendulum Test. Under the pre-2008 wording of the Rule, it was not clear to all manufacturers as to why such a club should be ruled non-conforming. However, it was always our intent that designs which include features that are designed to act like a spring, independent of the level of flexibility achieved by the design, should be ruled non-conforming.

With the new wording in place, the purpose of the proposal contained in the May memorandum was to put forward a test by which a submitted club could be evaluated, solely based on its performance on the Pendulum rather than by evaluating the design and construction of the club in other ways.

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All of the comments received from manufacturers have been carefully considered and, as a result, further investigative work is being carried out. Therefore, at this time, please be advised that no final decision has been taken as to whether to adopt the proposed test protocol. However, whilst we conduct additional evaluation of the proposed method and, until this is completed, The R&A's Equipment Standards Committee has decided to adopt the following interim method to determine whether a club conforms to Appendix II, 4c:

1. The characteristic time (CT) of all driving clubs will be routinely measured at other locations on the face, in addition to at the centre of the face. This evaluation method may also be applied to other clubs.

2. Clubs which measure less than or equal to 239 microseconds (plus test tolerance of 18 microseconds) at all of the locations tested will be determined to conform to the Rules of Golf. This is provided the club also satisfies all of the other specifications set down in Appendix II, including the requirements that the clubhead must be 'plain in shape' and all parts must be fixed.

3. Any club which has a CT measurement greater than 239 microseconds (plus test tolerance of 18 microseconds) at any location on the face, other than the centre, will be subjected to further analysis and evaluation as to whether it is deemed to incorporate a spring feature. A club which measures above the limit plus the tolerance in the centre of the face will, of course, be ruled non-conforming.

4. Manufacturers should be aware that any further analysis of a club may cause a significant delay in the conformance decision and it may require the manufacturer to submit additional samples and provide detailed information on the product design and intent, including a copy of the patent application and planned advertising material.

This interim method of testing will be effective immediately and, as already stated, work will continue on the evaluation and/or development of the method proposed in our May memorandum.

Any questions on the above should be sent to The R&A, marked for the attention of Dr Steve Otto, Director – Research & Testing, The R&A, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9JD, Scotland or by email to steveotto@randa.org.