



26 August 2025

Notice and Comment on Identification Markings for Golf Balls
Conforming to the 2028 Test Conditions

On 16 December 2024, R&A Rules Limited (The R&A) and the United States Golf Association (USGA) published an Area of Interest (AoI) communication seeking feedback from stakeholders on the use of a marking on the golf ball to readily identify conformance to the 2028 Overall Distance Standard (ODS) test conditions. The key objective of such a marking is to provide clarity for golfers, golf ball manufacturers, committees, PGA professionals, retailers, and other stakeholders to easily identify that a ball conforms to the 2028 ODS test conditions. On 12 May 2025, The R&A and USGA published an update to the December 2024 AoI, withdrawing the first option (a prescribed marking with no flexibility for the manufacturer on appearance), clarifying the second option (see the following paragraph), and sharing an alternative solution for comment (a registration code which provided the potential for a relaxation of existing golf ball marking guidelines).

Following feedback received in response to the December 2024 AoI and the May 2025 update, including from several stakeholders that conduct competitions at all levels of play, The R&A and USGA propose adoption of the second option set out in the December 2024 AoI, which requires that any golf ball listed as conforming to the 2028 ODS test conditions must include a distinguishing characteristic specified by The R&A and USGA (the Marking), in addition to meeting the existing marking guidelines.

This option provides manufacturers with flexibility to incorporate the Marking within their own designs provided that the minimum requirements are met. The Marking would be required to be identifiable and readable by the naked eye. Additionally, The R&A and USGA would work with manufacturers in advance of any submission to ensure that their proposed use of the Marking meets the minimum requirements.

Description of the Marking

The Marking would be required for a golf ball's inclusion on the List of Conforming Golf Balls (the List). All other existing golf ball marking guidelines would continue to apply (see The R&A and USGA's Golf Ball Submission Guidelines). The Marking would consist of the number "125", having dimensions of no less than 0.175" (4.45 mm) in width and 0.125" (3.175 mm) in height, and it would be encased within a geometrically shaped outline (e.g., circle, oval, square, rectangle, etc.).

Manufacturers would have flexibility in designing the Marking's font, style, colour and outline shape. In addition, there would be significant flexibility for manufacturers to incorporate the Marking within a ball's own markings (whether associated with a pole marking, seam marking/side stamp or any other markings which a manufacturer designs for their golf ball) or as a standalone marking at any location on the golf ball. With any design, the Marking would need to be identifiable and readable by the naked eye.

Administration

Each manufacturer's markings would be subject to approval by The R&A or USGA. It would be strongly recommended that manufacturers provide graphics of proposed designs in advance of submitting a ball for

conformance testing. While an approved design should result in an easy means of identification of conformance simply by looking at the ball, The R&A and USGA would also publish a list of approved designs associated with each manufacturer for assistance with identification.

It is anticipated that this proposal will allow for ease of identification for golf balls conforming to the 2028 ODS test conditions while providing maximum flexibility to manufacturers in the design and placement of the Marking on the golf ball.

We invite comments in response to the proposed identification marking, including alternative solutions within the framework noted above, and ask that all responses to this proposal be received no later than 22 September 2025. These communications should be addressed to Dr Mark Grattan at The R&A via the email address equipmentstandards@randa.org.