16 January 2026

Area of Interest

Implementation Date for the Update to the Overall Distance Standard Test for Golf Balls

In December 2023, The R&A and USGA published a Notice of Decision on an update to the Overall Distance Standard test for golf balls. This required that all golf balls submitted for conformance evaluation for listing from January 2028, must conform at the new test conditions. At the same time, recreational golfers would be permitted to continue to play with previously conforming golf balls until January 2030.

The Governing Bodies adopted this phased approach in response to contributions made during the decision-making process. The later implementation for the recreational game was intended to allow manufacturers more time to develop their full product lines, and to provide an opportunity for retailers and golfers to exhaust any existing stock.

Since that announcement, The R&A and USGA have been progressing plans to support the implementation of this decision, including engaging with stakeholders on a range of issues. During this engagement, several stakeholders have expressed concerns over the potential challenges that could come from the two-phase approach to implementation.

Based on this feedback, The R&A and USGA are interested in soliciting views on a possible change from the phased implementation to a single date across the whole game effective from January 2030.

We ask that all responses relating directly to this Area of Interest should be received no later than 15 February 2026. These communications should be addressed to Dr Mark Grattan at The R&A via the email address equipmentstandards@randa.org.