



The R&A
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4 December 2008

TO: ALL MANUFACTURERS

APPLICATION OF NEW RULES ON CLUBFACE MARKINGS

Introduction

As you know, in conjunction with the United States Golf Association, on 5 August 2008 The R&A announced its decision to introduce new Rules on clubface markings from 1 January 2010.

The purpose of this document is to clarify some of the details contained within that announcement and to update some of the information provided.

“Manufactured By” Date

The announcement stated that:

“All clubs (with the exception of drivers and putters) manufactured after 1 January 2010 will be subject to the new specifications on club face markings.”

The R&A's interpretation of this position is that, to satisfy this requirement:

- (i) the clubhead must exist in its finished form and be ready for sale and/or assembly by 1 January 2010; and
- (ii) the clubhead must be assembled and distributed to a retail environment (or sold directly to the customer) by 1 January 2011.

Whilst this interpretation is primarily aimed at preventing the continued production of clubs which do not conform to the new Rules as soon as possible after their introduction, it also aims to take into consideration the complexity of the golf club manufacturing and assembly process, which naturally varies between manufacturers. To pre-empt some of the questions which may be raised in respect of the above, I am attaching a list of 'frequently asked questions'.

Determination of Groove Conformance



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Please find attached a revised version of the above document which was previously circulated to manufacturers on 5 August alongside the announcement of the new groove Rules. This updated document contains no substantive changes.



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Equipment Submissions

During the period leading up to 1 January 2010 and beyond, manufacturers are encouraged to submit samples of their products to The R&A so that they can be measured for conformance to the new Rules. This suggestion applies to back catalogue models, existing ranges and products which are planned for the future. We believe that it is important to use the time leading up to the introduction of the new Rules to gather as much information as we can on the status of golf clubs affected by the new Rules. This will help both manufacturers and the Governing Bodies to answer enquiries from golfers and to assist them in their future purchasing decisions. Furthermore, it should also help manufacturers to understand their own manufacturing capabilities and variability, and to assess the accuracy of their own measurement techniques.

Details of the golf club submission procedure can be found on The R&A's website (www.randa.org), and there is a Submission Form which should be downloaded and completed for each model sent.

Software

Most manufacturers will already be aware that software is available from The R&A which can analyse grooves for conformance to the new Rules from a variety of measurement machines. If you have not yet received a trial copy of this software, please contact Dr Steve Otto (steveotto@randa.org) directly for further information.

If you have any questions regarding any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

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Assistant Director – Equipment Standards



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Frequently Asked Questions*

Question 1: Can manufacturers continue to produce models of clubs that conform to the pre-2010 groove specifications which were manufactured and marketed prior to 1 January 2010?

Answer: No, as any club manufactured on or after 1 January 2010 must conform to the new groove specifications. However, manufacturers may continue to assemble clubs until 1 January 2011 using clubheads which meet the pre-2010 groove specifications, provided the clubheads were manufactured prior to 1 January 2010.

Question 2: What is the definition of 'finished form'?

Answer: 'Finished form' is interpreted to mean that the clubhead is ready for assembly into a golf club. In essence, all of the processes involved in manufacturing the head must be completed by 1 January 2010.

Question 3: Can a manufacturer continue to assemble custom fit clubs of old models beyond 1 January 2011 if the heads existed prior to 1 January 2010?

Answer: No, such clubs must be assembled and shipped to customers by 1 January 2011.

Question 4: Can a manufacturer continue to market old models which are assembled prior to 1 January 2011?

Answer: Yes, provided the heads existed by 1 January 2010, and the clubs are fully assembled and within a retail environment by 1 January 2011.

Question 5: Can a golfer repair an old model of club beyond 1 January 2011?

Answer: Yes, a golfer can repair a club beyond 1 January 2011, provided the repair does not include any modification to the original grooves or other face markings. Any modification to the original grooves or other face markings means that the clubhead would be regarded as new and, as such, would have to meet the 2010 groove specifications in order for the club to continue to conform (see Rule 4-1b).

Question 6: Can a golfer replace a club within a set of old model clubs beyond (a) 1 January 2010, and/or (b) 1 January 2011?

Answer: Yes in both cases, provided that for (a) the clubhead existed by 1 January 2010 in its 'finished form' (see Q2 above), and for (b) the club was in an assembled form by 1 January 2011.

Question 7: What is the status of a club which is marketed and sold with multiple shafts and which is designed to be assembled and adjusted by the golfer?



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Answer: As long as the head was manufactured prior to 1 January 2010, this package of components can continue to be sold directly to customers or into the retail environment until 1 January 2011. The golfer can continue to exchange shafts on this club and purchase new items beyond January 1, 2011, subject to the general introduction of the new Rules for all golfers in all forms of play on or after 2024.

* All of these questions relate to clubs which contain face markings which do not conform to the 2010 Rules