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28 May 2008

## **NOTICE TO MANUFACTURERS**

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### **PROPOSED REVISION OF INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION OF SPRING FEATURES WITHIN CLUBHEADS**

In November 2004, The R&A issued a Notice to all manufacturers clarifying its interpretation and application of Appendix II, 5a of the Rules of Golf in respect of 'spring-like effect'. This Notice stated that, whilst the conformance of a club to the Pendulum test was necessary, this test was not sufficient to assess every design with regard to the intent of the Rule. Therefore, designs which include features that are intended to act like a spring, independent of the level of flexibility achieved by the design, would be ruled non-conforming.

Since that time, a number of clubheads have been found to have features which are contrary to the intent of this Rule and, whilst some of these clubs may not have exceeded the limit for 'spring-like' effect as measured by the Pendulum Test, they were deemed to possess features which have the characteristics of springs and as such were determined to be non-conforming.

Since January 2008, the language contained within the Rules of Golf has been revised to reflect more accurately our interpretation of 'spring effect'. Appendix II, 4c now 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.

Having now expanded the wording of this Rule to ensure that its intent is not circumvented, the purpose of this Notice is to propose a new test method which will provide clarity and certainty to both the Governing Bodies and manufacturers in evaluating the



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conformance of future clubhead designs to all aspects of the revised rule. If adopted, this proposal would mean that a submitted club would be evaluated solely based on its performance on the Pendulum (as described below) rather than by evaluating the design and construction of the club in other ways.

Currently, the Pendulum test is used to determine the conformance status of a club to clause (i) of the Rule – that is, to measure the flexibility or characteristic time (CT) of the club at the centre of the clubface against the limit of 239 microseconds, plus tolerance of 18 microseconds. It is proposed that the use of the Pendulum is extended to determine also whether a design unduly influences the clubhead's spring effect (clause (ii) of the Rule) by requiring that the CT of a club does not exceed the same limit for the centre of the clubface at any place on the clubface.

Exact locations for any additional measurements on the clubface will not be specified, rather, The R&A will reserve the right to test the clubface at any location.

At this time, it is intended that this proposed new test will apply to driving clubs only. However, if other clubs are developed with similar spring features, this evaluation method may be applied to them as well.

A clubhead whose design includes obvious springs, such as coiled springs or other similar features, will continue to be considered non-conforming due to plain in shape requirements and/or the requirement that all parts must be firmly fixed. As with all new design concepts, manufacturers are strongly encouraged to communicate with The R&A as early in the development process as possible.

If adopted, it is proposed that The R&A will implement this new measurement method shortly after the conclusion of the Notice period. The R&A does not intend to re-evaluate any previous submissions based on this proposed new measurement method. Any manufacturer wishing to have a previous ruling re-appraised should contact The R&A in writing, quoting the original decision reference number.

Written comments on this proposal 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](mailto:steveotto@randa.org). These comments should arrive in St Andrews before 1 July 2008.