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17 December 2014

TO: ALL MANUFACTURERS

Maximum length of clubs other than putters

I am writing to inform manufacturers and other interested parties of some research that is being planned by The R&A and the USGA into the maximum length of golf clubs (other than putters). This notification is issued in line with Section 5.2 of the Equipment Rulemaking Procedures (Version 1) as published in November 2011, which aim to increase the transparency of the equipment rulemaking process and facilitate the participation of manufacturers and other interested parties in that process.

In 2004, The R&A and the USGA adopted a maximum length limit of 48 inches for all clubs other than putters. A survey conducted in 2008 found that the length of most drivers being used by touring golf professionals was between 44.5 and 45 inches. However, more recent data suggests that the majority of drivers currently used by touring professionals on the PGA Tour are now between 45 and 45.75 inches in length. Furthermore, with only a few exceptions, most drivers are now marketed as having a length of between 45.5 and 46 inches. It is estimated that each additional inch of club length has the potential to increase driving distance by 2-3 yards as a result of increased clubhead speed.

In light of the above, we would like to make you aware that The R&A and the USGA are planning to investigate the potential effect of increases in club length beyond the lengths typically used today, at all levels of the game, and whether the current maximum length of 48 inches, permitted for clubs other than putters, is still appropriate. It is important to note that this is strictly a research project and no proposal is being made at this time to change the current Rule.

If you would like to offer a comment on this research project and/or to contribute some data or other information which you feel may be useful, then please do not hesitate to contact me. Otherwise, I will be in touch again after our investigation is complete.

Yours faithfully

DR STEVE OTTO

Director - Research and Testing

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