

United States
Golf Association



USGA

FRANK HANNIGAN
Senior Executive Director

Golf House
PO Box 708
Far Hills, NJ 07931-0708
(201) 234-2300
Telex: 7109862521

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C. GRANT SPAETH
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RULINGS ABOUT GROOVES

In 1984, the specifications for grooves in the Rules of Golf were modified. Previously grooves had to be "v" shaped. The 1984 change permitted grooves with diverging sides and would thus include any groove shape from a "v" groove to a box or square groove. But the groove size and spacing specifications were not changed. These require that the distance between grooves be at least three times the width of the adjacent groove.

The Karsten Manufacturing Company then produced Ping Eye 2 clubs with box grooves too close together. Unusual circumstances surrounding this issue resulted in the USGA "grandfathering" these clubs for a limited period of time. This was done to be fair to many golfers who purchased the Ping Eye 2 clubs unaware of the problem.

The USGA decided that use of the Ping Eye 2, or any brand with a similar groove configuration, will not be permitted in any of the thirteen USGA championships in 1990 and will not be permitted under the Rules of Golf after December 31, 1995.

Meanwhile separate considerations by the PGA Tour have complicated the issue in the minds of some golfers.

In June, 1988, the PGA Tour said it was considering a ban on all square or box grooves and a return to traditional "v" grooves. This was based on conclusions drawn from some player tests and opinions of some Tour professionals.

In August, 1988, the PGA Tour Policy Board voted to postpone independent action. It was agreed the USGA would conduct further player tests, with full cooperation of the PGA Tour, to evaluate the differences in performance between box and "v" grooves at the skill level of PGA Tour professionals. The USGA agreed to report on its findings early in 1989.

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