



NOTICE TO MANUFACTURERS

**April 11, 1997
Face Markings on Clubs**

Rule 4-1e, Face Markings - Impact Area, was first adopted in 1921. At the time, grooves or punchmarks were being used to score the impact area of iron clubs.

Over the years, face marking specifications were adopted that constrained the way in which grooves and punchmarks could be intermingled on the club face — the intent in all cases being to preserve the integrity of what was allowed for clubs with only grooves or with only punchmarks, as the case may be. In 1984, the application of face marking specifications under Rule 4-1e was extended from iron clubs to all clubs constructed of metal or metal-like materials.

Manufacturers have now designed face markings on metal woods using hyphenated grooves and punchmarks in combination and in line. Some of those were found to be closer together than the current specifications allow.

The Implements and Ball Committee, concerned about the rising number of such designs on metal woods, and the fact that many of those designs were not being submitted to the USGA prior to the manufacture or sale of such clubs, asked the staff to review the Rule and its previous interpretation with a view to determining whether this increasingly common practice of alternating punchmarks and groove segments in a line could be accommodated within the intent and spirit of the Rule.

Upon review, the staff recommended, and the Executive Committee approved, a change in the interpretation of Rule 4-1e, as follows:

On metal woods (e.g., clubs whose shape is similar to the shape of traditional wood clubs), which have impact area markings that include punchmarks and grooves in line, the area of the punchmarks shall not exceed the area of the missing portion of the groove; in this case, no more than three punchmarks in a row will be allowed.

The existing specifications regarding both punchmark size and the distance between punchmarks will remain in force.

Manufacturers again are strongly urged to submit new club designs to the USGA for an interpretation of the Rules before manufacturing or marketing clubs.

Questions should be directed to the USGA Technical Department at (908) 234-2300.

Yours sincerely,

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Technical Director

