



## **JGGA's Policy Concerning Nonconforming Golf Equipment on the Market**

Feb.1st 2015

Japan Golf Goods Association

Japan Golf Goods Association (headquartered in Tokyo, Japan. Chairman: Hiroyuki Bamba. Hereinafter referred to as "JGGA") hereby states its position and policy concerning "nonconforming golf equipment" (i.e., golf equipment falling outside of the applicable specifications set forth in the Rules of Golf promulgated by R&A/USGA) that is currently available on the market in Japan.

JGGA is an organization consisting of companies belonging to the golf equipment industry. All members are dedicated to stimulating the golf market in order to provide an environment where all golfers may enjoy golf and to make the game more enjoyable and interesting.

The purpose for playing golf is vary from golfer to golfer. Some are more serious about competing and strictly following the Rules of Golf while others play golf for fun or fitness as an enjoyable pastime. JGGA believes that it is desirable for the stimulation of the golf market to have a wide variety of golf equipment available in the market from which all types of golfers may choose in order to find one that really fits their respective purposes and needs, hoping that more and more golfers will enjoy playing golf as a result of such improvement in the golf equipment market.

From this point of view, JGGA has left it to the judgment of each member company whether to manufacture and/or sell golf equipment that doesn't fully conform to the specifications set forth in the Rules of Golf promulgated by R&A.

On the other hand, an increasing number of nonconforming equipment on the market could create confusion among golfers and tournament organizers. JGGA considers it very important for the healthy development of the industry that all relevant parties make efforts to prevent consumers from buying nonconforming equipment without knowing that it is nonconforming, and to avoid any confusion or trouble due to the inability of tournament organizers to determine the conformity of each equipment at the tournament site.

From this standpoint, JGGA will continue to strongly request its member companies to clearly indicate that their equipment is nonconforming when they manufacture and/or sell such equipment, along with appropriate explanation as needed. In addition, JGGA will be approaching and communicating with golfers, golf course operators and other members of the golf community so that they may understand and support our policy and action plans going forward in this regard.

We appreciate your kind attention and understanding.

JGGA issues this statement for the following reasons.

## 1. About JGGA

JGGA is established to enhance efficiency in production and distribution of golf equipment and the industry's consumer service while improving quality, performance and safety of golf equipment; to promote the sound development of the industry; and to contribute to the wellness of the Japanese people.

It consists of more than 300 member companies that are engaged in manufacturing, retail, wholesale and import of golf clubs and other golf equipment in Japan.

Its main activities includes planning and operation of "JAPAN GOLF FAIR" that is held in February every year, hosting of nationwide demo days, offering of professional sales technique training to improve the sales knowledge and consumer service, and lobbying in association with other industry organizations for abolition of the golf facilities tax and other causes.

JGGA, as an organization of the Japanese golf community, also works to contribute to the sound development and expansion not only of the golf equipment industry but also of the entire golf community by bringing pleasure of the game to all golfers in Japan and all over the world through supply of golf equipment, while respecting the policies and values of individual member company, other industry groups and golfers.

## 2. The Rules of Golf and Present Situation in the Golf Market

Golf is a sport and certain rules apply to competitions. As some of the readers may know, the Rules of Golf are reviewed from time to time, and revised every fourth year in principle. Most of revisions are made to clarify the playing rules and equipment specifications to catch up with the every changing golf environment. Recently in the tour and top amateur tournaments, competitors' distance has been remarkably increased, and there is a growing concern that it ruins the game when played at existing golf courses as it is becoming a distance competition rather than competition on skills and techniques. As a result, in the recent revision of the Rules, some limits are imposed on the performance of golf equipment to stop golfers from overly relying on it.

For example, the upper limits have been set in regards to the coefficient of repulsion and volume of golf club heads and the length of golf clubs to reduce the flight distance. The new rules about the shape of grooves in irons have been introduced to limit the amount of spin.

However, for the most of amateur golfers, nothing give more pleasure than long driving distances and control of a golf ball on the green with a back spin as professional golfers do. That is why quite a few of golfers are still using and wanting nonconforming golf equipment and why nonconforming golf equipment is still available on the market in response to such demand. Some golfers may be using or buying nonconforming equipment without knowing that they don't conform to the Rules.

As a matter of fact, nonconforming equipment is exhibited every year at the JAPAN GOLF FAIR by some manufacturers.

### 3. JGGA's Response

It is prohibited to use nonconforming golf equipment at official tournaments authorized by R&A or Japan Golf Association as well as rounds played in accordance with the Rules of Golf (it results in disqualification in case of tournaments). On the other hand, there are many golfers who enjoy the game for different purposes other than competing.

As stated before, JGGA will continue to strongly request its member companies to clearly indicate that their equipment is nonconforming when they manufacture and/or sell such equipment, along with appropriate explanation as needed. In addition, JGGA will be approaching and communicating with golfers, golf course operators and other members of the golf community so that they may understand and support our policy and action plans going forward in this regard.

Through a variety of actions and initiatives, JGGA is committed to providing a market environment where all golfers are able to choose and use the most appropriate golf equipment for every situation.