



The R&A
International Golf
Conference 2023

GOLF'S **GOLDEN** OPPORTUNITY

Professor Steve Otto
The R&A - Chief Technology Officer

R&A



Equipment Standards

Hitting Distance and Innovation

Equipment Standards – Mission Statement

To keep under constant review the technological developments being made in the design and manufacture of golf equipment, and to determine whether such developments are in the best interests of the game.

Whilst not wishing to stifle innovation, the purpose of the equipment Rules is to protect the traditions of the game, to prevent an over-reliance on technological advances rather than skill and to preserve skill differentials throughout the game.

November 2000



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Golf should involve all clubs in the bag

Driver, Fairway woods, Long irons, Medium irons, Wedges, Putter

Success in golf should involve a mixture of skills

Power, Finesse, Technique, Mental strength, Imagination



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Golf is played on a huge variety of different golf courses

Golf allows for variability through course set up options
Tee positions, Green speed, Hole positions

Golf must understand its environmental responsibilities



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Golf has a single set of Rules

We all play the game under those Rules

Model Local Rules that allow for modification of the playing and
Equipment Rules

Distance Insights – Inception

May 2018



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Distance in golf is a complex issue which is widely debated at all levels of the sport. It is important that we collate all of the relevant data and hear the many different perspectives on this issue that exist in the international golf community. We intend to conduct this process openly, comprehensively and promptly and will work with all of the key stakeholders to ensure we have a fully rounded view of distance and its implications.

Martin Slumbers, May 2018

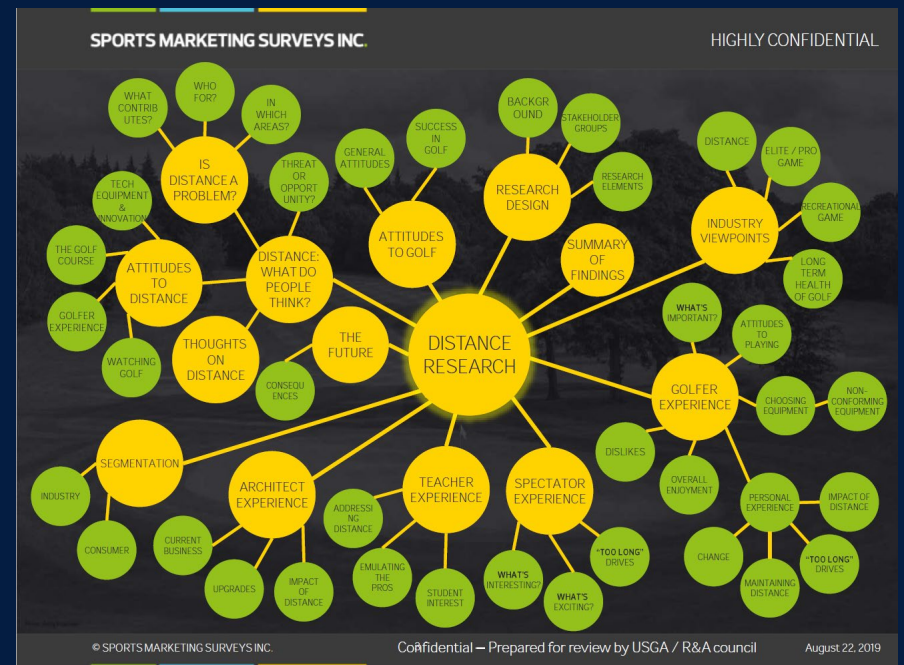
Distance Insights – Project 2019

Significant piece of work to review all elements of Hitting Distance and its implications

Attitudes, Facts, Modelling, Science, Data

Varied opinions and clarified underlying facts

56 reports – excellent reading!



SUMMARY | Conclusions

Fans like to watch strategic and varied golf, which integrates a range of different shot types and challenges for the player.

The ability to play in this way is of paramount importance to fans' feelings about specific players. Being a technically skilled and accurate golfer takes priority, and fans are happy to have a dominant winner or a range of winners, as long as their position is justified by the skill of their golf play.

In the future, fans want the skill and challenge element to persist, and do not want this to be threatened by players with the primary purpose of hitting shots an increasingly longer distance, or by extra long courses being built to accommodate them.

Distance Insights Report 2020

Evolution of hitting distance

Hitting distance at the elite level has increased

Lots of data, more in the last 3 decades

Course length has increased

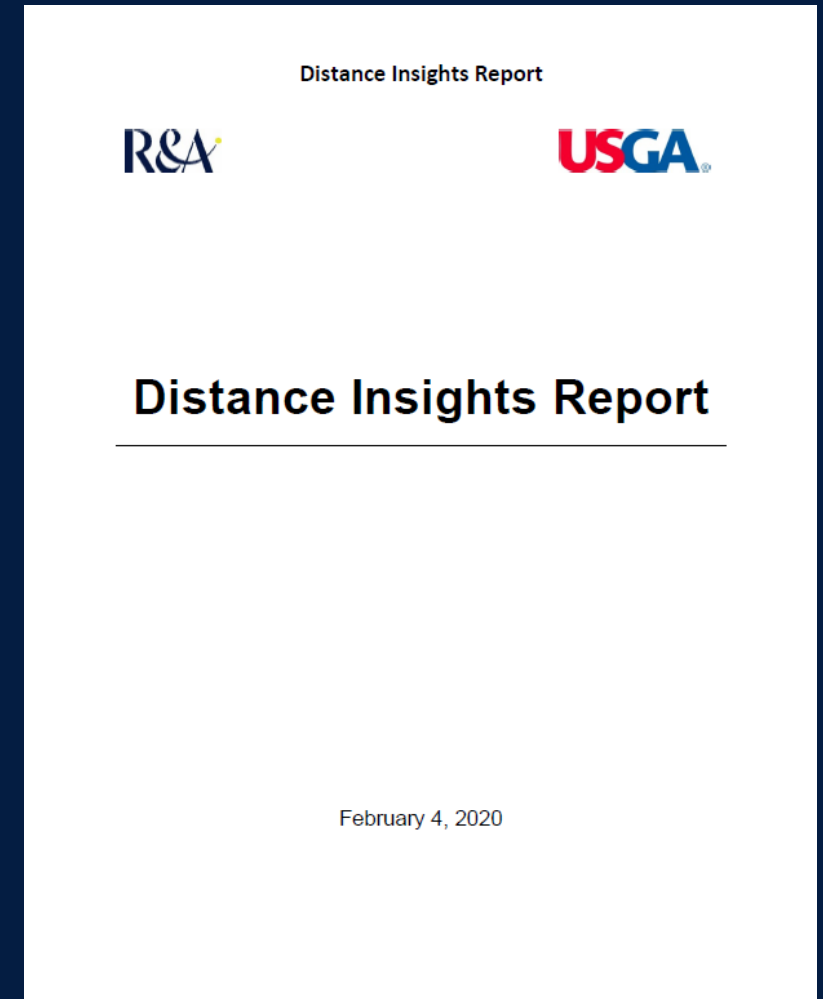
Tournament and recreational play

There is no evidence that trend in hitting distance will
not continue

0.8 – 1.0 yards per year

Increase has occurred for a variety of reasons

Club, Ball, Player, Agronomy, Tech



Main themes

Pressure on courses to lengthen

Balance of skills required in golf

Area of Interest – March 2022

Reduction in Overall Distance Standard

Reduction in club performance and forgiveness (MLR)



Distance Insights Project

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE DISTANCE INSIGHTS PROJECT:
IMPLICATIONS OF HITTING DISTANCE IN GOLF

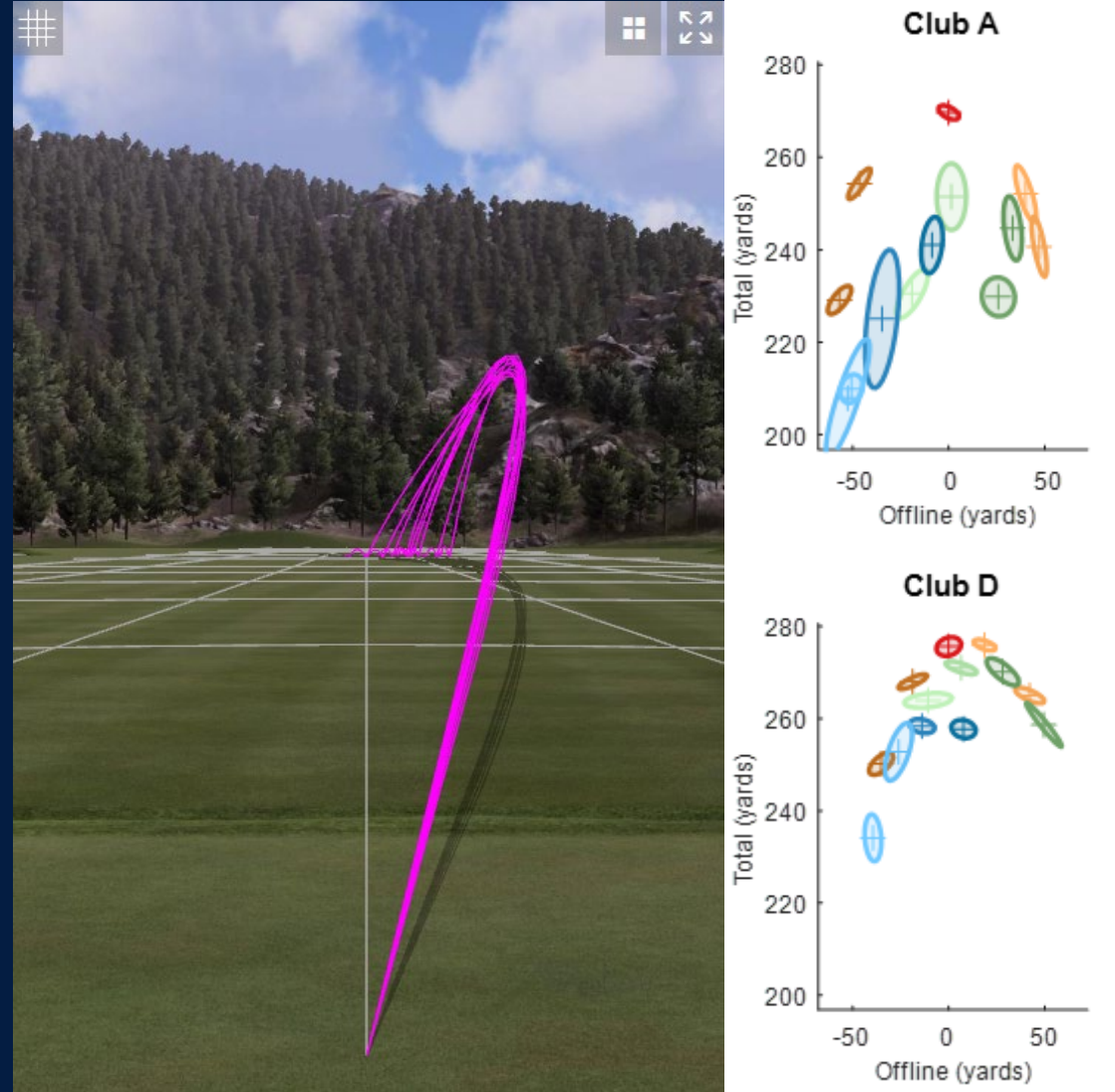
February 4, 2020

Area of Interest - Details

Reduction in ball distance for all

Restrictions on club performance (efficiency and forgiveness) as MLR

Potential relaxation on some Equipment Rules as compensation



Response from stakeholders to Aol

September 2022

Recurring theme – do not impact the recreational game

Complexity and impact/Technical details

Extent and impact needs to be proportionate and targeted

Position after feedback

We need to take action to ensure the golf is thriving and healthy in the future:

1. Doing nothing is not an option
2. Impacting the recreational game needs to be avoided
3. Introducing Model Local Rules to provide options

Considered carefully from Sept 2022 to March 2023

Notice and Comment – March 2023

Increase in testing speed within ODS from 120mph to 127 mph

Reflective of the longest/fastest shots at the highest level

Launch conditions updated to 11 degrees and 37 revs per second

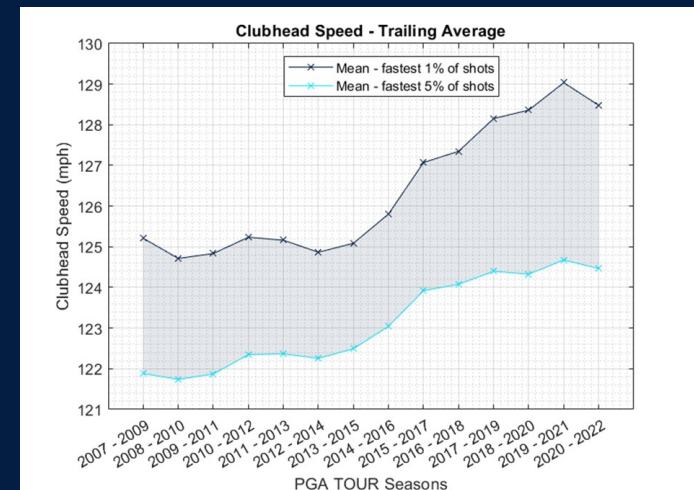
Expected to reduce average by 14-15 yards

Model Local Rule for the ball

Intended to be used only within elite golf

Earliest implementation January 2026

Comments due by August 14th 2023 – we look forward to hearing from you



Innovation

Enhanced acquisition and use of data

Innovation within the sport

Review of the Equipment Rules



DAY 4 WATCH SCORES RADIO TEE TIMES AUDIO Shop The One Club My Account

Leaderboard ShotView OFF-AIR

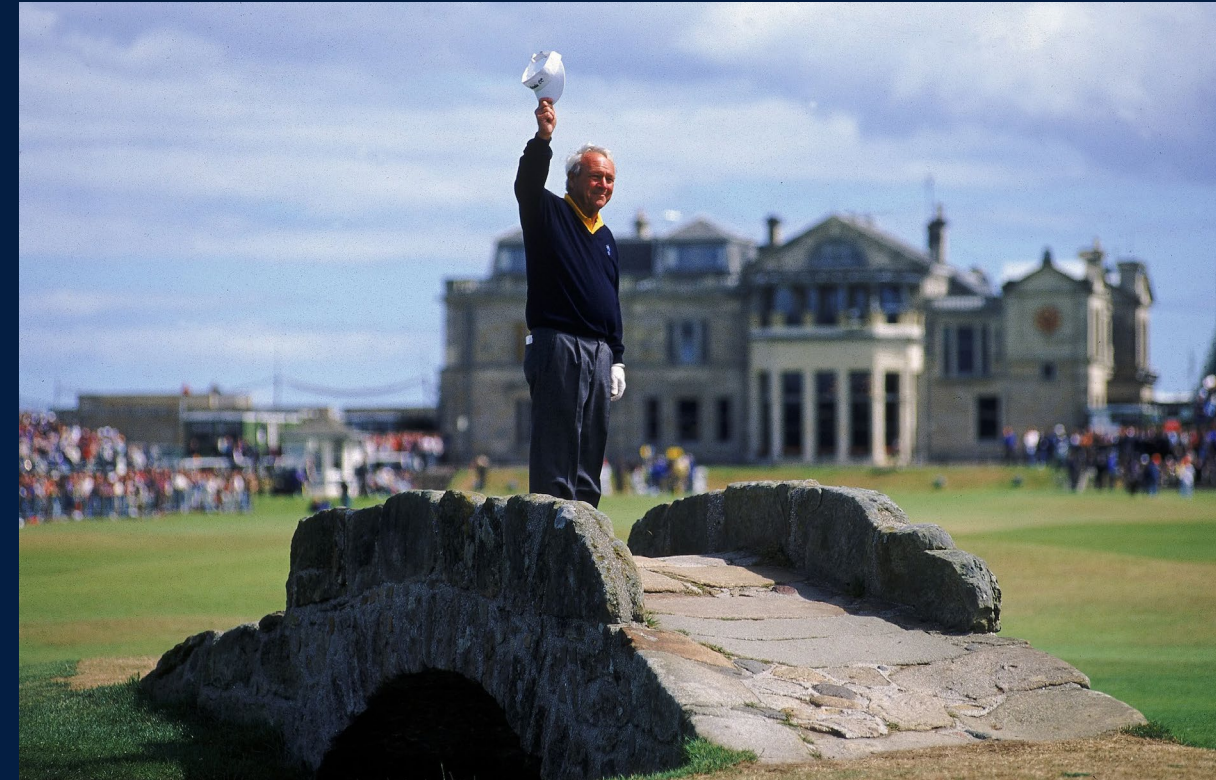
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PAR 4 386YDS
HAROLD VARNER III -9
2 3 4
T SELECTOR
WAYS HIT
% 10TH BEST
% 119TH BEST
AGE PUTTS
1 4TH BEST
HAROLD VARNER III -9
CHELL -5
TO COURSE MAP

PLAYERS ON COURSE		ROUND 4		
POS	PLAYER	PAR	HOLE	ROUND
T1	SCHWAB, Matthias	-11	6	-2
T1	MACINTYRE, Robert	-11	5	-1
3	HERBERT, Lucas	-10	6	-2
T4	VARNER III, Harold	-9	10	-3
T4	PEREZ, Victor	-9	6	-1
T4	KITAYAMA, Kurt	-9	5	E
T7	STEELE, Brendan	-8	14	-4
T7	HOVLAND, Viktor	-8	12	-3
T7	KAYMER, Martin	-8	10	-2
T7	HATTON, Tyrrell	-8	6	E



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What other people may find in poetry or art museums, I find in the flight of a good drive: the white ball sailing up into the sky, reaching its apex, falling and finally dropping to the turf, just the way I planned it.

Arnold Palmer



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