



I would like to bring your attention to a letter received from the CEO of Karsten Manufacturing Corp (PING). Go to www.franklygolf.com/grooves_johnsolheimletter.pdf to read the complete letter.

The following document contains only a small sampling of some comments made by concerned golfers with regard to the USGA's groove rule change.

All the letters received, in their entirety have been sent on to the president of the USGA with a request to share these with all the members of the Executive Committee and advisory board members.

If you would like a complete copy of the letters, these are available in a word-document and will be e-mailed upon request.

A small sampling of some Comments:

1. I do not support the groove rule change for all golfers when there is no evidence that it will make the game of golf better for all golfers. Please do not change this rule.

Tom

2. As the controversy surrounding the bail out of Wall Street still swirls, it is constructive to ask if the USGA is doing the same for the golf club industry. This is an unnecessary burden on golfers and the game itself.

It is the principle of not being forthright with golfers, who voluntarily abide by the rules, which is of concern.

Ron

3. Thank you, thank you, thank you for your weekly column and courage. For too many years the USGA has ignored the needs and concerns of we "average" golfers, to whom they pay lip service and send only their annual dues notices, ball repairs tools and a lovely calendar. This year I have, after much thought and with a great deal of disappointment and sadness, elected to vote with my feet and will forego my decades-long and once-proud membership in the USGA. I will remain "rogue" until such time as the duly-elected governing body that is supposed to represent we, the millions, finally

decides to keep their calendars and instead provide response-ible and meaningful leadership.

Richard

4. The USGA needs to wake up and listen to us the people who make golf what it is!

Jim

5. What the heck are you people doing? It's obvious you could care less about the millions of golfers you should be representing. Leave things concerning the grooves as they are.

Ken

6. If the USGA insists on the new grooves, and no one but the elite pays attention, eventually the USGA becomes a governing agency of no one.

Joe

7. I think this is the craziest thing I have ever heard.

Jimmy

8. Please do not change the groove specifications for all golfers. If you want to change the specifications for pro tournaments and .001% of the players, OK, but leave the rest of us alone.

Jim

9. If they are foolish enough to go ahead with the change regarding grooves this will be my last year as a USGA member. I know it isn't much but why pay \$25 per year to belong to an organization that completely ignores the needs of the membership?

Jerry

10. I for one will not abide by the new groove rule and all the golfers I know are against the new rule.

Jack

11. The USGA should be more focused on making the game more enjoyable and popular for the masses rather than obsessing over Tiger's ability to stop the ball on the green from 5 inches of rough.

Charles

12. We have yet to see definitive data saying that this "solution" directly addresses this "problem".

Gary

13. I believe the USGA has lost its focus and is becoming irrelevant. I do not intend to change my clubs because I have not seen scientific evidence that my current golf clubs give me an unfair advantage.

Jim

14. USGA, I am a member and demand to know how you arrived at your conclusions about the "new groove rule". Let us, the members decide if we want to change the rules. Your job is to do what we tell you to do, not the other way around.

Dean

15. I feel that their business practices lack transparency, and their recently ruling have failed to fairly represent the general golf population, and are not for the good of the game. So, this year, I have decided to protest the USGA's closed door policies in the only way they allow; by not supporting them financially.

Charles

16. There has been a complete lack of transparency, and an unwillingness to provide us with the evidence to justify the change. It is the principle of not being forthright with golfers, who voluntarily abide by the rules, which is of concern. This manner of governing our game is not what we expect from the USGA.

Bo

17. On those occasions when I am able to utilize my equipment to its potential which brings an enjoyment to my game that is both memorable and is why I keep coming back for more.

Joe

18. Frank Thomas thanks for giving us someone to rally around. USGA, are you listening? Do you care?

Shawn

19. By not considering the players who are not elite in ability might push people who normally would follow the rules, to not follow the rules. Also by not being transparent with the new ruling change, it shows that this might no longer be the last game of honest gentlemen and women.

John

20. Where is the evidence that this change will achieve the desired outcome? How can something as profound as a USGA Rule be imposed with no overwhelming evidence that the change will produce the desired outcome?

Where is the evidence of a problem that needs to be resolved? Where is the information supporting the contention that this problem is of such magnitude that it warrants a disruption affecting every golfer?

Will

21. The rule change regarding grooves has been handled in a manner worthy of any dictatorship. To change the rules simply because pros and single digit handicappers are "too good," is ludicrous.

When it comes time for me to renew my USGA membership, I will think long and hard before sending any money to an organization that hardly represents the vast majority of golfers.

Jim

22. As an avid golfer for more than 40 years now, To my thought, we are likely going to have to move to some bifurcation of the rules, if the USGA/R&A are so bent to make it more and more difficult for the pros. But for us mere mortals, even good mere mortals (I play to a +2 index), increasing the difficulty to score will ultimately reduce the enjoyment factor and lead to further declines in the game.

Michael

23. What could possibly be the reasoning behind this rule change? If the unfair advantage that affects only those who make a living from playing golf, is of such significance, then simply prohibit use while playing in any USGA, PGA, or LPGA sanctioned event.

Mac

24. The whole argument surrounding the new grooves is bogus. If one plays regularly--3-4 times a month--a wedge will be worn out within 1 1/2 -2 years. The USGA has given all of us over 10 years to wear them out.

I actually think the USGA got it right this time.

Terry

25. Once again the USGA uses the "throw the baby out with the bath water" approach that totally discounts the amateur golfer.

Dorothy

26. I think that of all the things to do for golf this was about the worst.

David

27. The change in the groove rule is one of the most ridiculous pieces of regulation yet ushered in by the USGA. If the USGA is that concerned with the ability of some players to spin the ball out of light rough, the solution is not to make millions of golfers buy new wedges at a replacement cost that literally will be in excess of \$1 billion (e.g., 10 million golfers pay \$100 for one new inexpensive set of conforming wedges).

Robert

28. The USGA is not doing the game of golf any favor with unnecessary and unwanted rules (I reference the US Tax code as an example where this can go). Get out of the way and let golfers play golf.

Richard

29. As a 53 year old recently new golfer I hope the USGA comes to their senses. Nothing I can say has not been said by many before me.

Cal

30. Whoever is planning another grooves rule change needs to retire or get a real job as you do not have enough historical perspective to be in the job you have.

Mark

31. To further compound the situation by refusing to disclose more information about its research and methodology in arriving at this decision is just plain arrogant on the part of USGA leadership.

Jim

32. It's obvious to me that there are many ways that could be employed to bring about the desired results without changing equipment specifications. The USGA should exhaust themselves testing ways, first! If equipment change is the only way, then give us the results of testing that supports that conclusion.

Arthur

33. You don't have to allow manufacturers to make wedges spin MORE than today's models, but rolling the grooves back really hurts those of us that don't hit 14 greens each round. That would be all of us....

Jeff

34. Since my irons will be obsolete with regards to the USGA's new rule change at the start of next year, I will not be able to, in good conscious, continue to post my scores.

I understand that recreational golfers have some time to use and ultimately change their irons. But the fact remains, we know that we are playing "illegal" equipment.

Fred

35. I have been a member of the USGA for years & generally support their goals. They aren't thinking clearly, however on the grove change. The PGA Tour can make a local rule outlawing square groves & that will solve the problem the USGA is trying to correct.

Thank you so much for what you do.

Alan

36. To whom it may concern. The coming groove rule is in my opinion an open slap in the face to all golfers around the world.

John

37. If the USGA is worried about the pros shooting too low of scores because they are able to spin the ball from the rough, then grow the rough longer for tournament play. It is outrageous that the USGA would penalize the majority of golfers because the pros can shoot low scores.

I sure hope we can get our grooves back.

Jack

38. If the USGA impose inane rules, they invite players ignored them on the basis of common sense.

Regards,
Rex

39. Now you're going to change the grooves so the PGA tournaments won't have the shot either. The players on the tour are Pro's, not just good or great golfers, they are the best in the world. Leave the grooves alone; don't ruin the game by trying to improve it.

Don

40. My feelings on the groove issue are that the USGA has stepped off the deep edge. I have been a USGA member for many years, but this bit of insanity might keep my checkbook closed.

The fiasco with the Ping grooves should have taught the USGA something.

Joe

41. I can speak for a lot of golfers. We will simply ignore the USGA ruling. Once that starts the USGA will lose all control over the game

Bob

42. Thanks for the opportunity to comment. The USGA has decided that the performance of square grooves is an advantage for golfers. I have been playing golf for over 45 years and have used every type of groove and "shaft" that was ever put in a club at one time or another. Grooves are a mental thing...if you believe they will impart more spin (average golfer) you may get but it will be 1 time in 100. As you know we all tend to remember only our good, longest, etc. shots, so I can understand some of the comments. Leave the grooves alone, leave shafts alone, leave the ball alone, but limit the size of driver heads. (Anything past 460 is grotesque). Bottom line: More good shots bring golfers back and go a long way in growing the game.

Frank

43. The USGA is focusing on the wrong areas to police. Instead of worrying about grooves they should be looking at putters; eliminate broomstick and belly putters and bring the game back to traditional clubs that made the sport what it is. LEAVE THE GROOVES ALONE.
A. Peter

44. Looks like the USGA will artificially inflate the value of my 2 sets of square groove irons after 1-1-2010. If all new sets have to be small groove but large groove sets can be used till 2024, get ready eBay, here comes the iron flood.

Jim

45. Dear Frank,

I was prompted to write you after reading your "Let's be Frank" column on GolfChannel.com. I whole heartedly agree with your position that the USGA is taking unnecessary action regarding the groove issue.

The Pros will undoubtedly go to higher lofted wedges and/or a softer ball to counteract the rule change, thereby negating its intended effect. Thus the 99.99 percent of us

making up the rest of the golfing population will suffer from an egregious rule change. What's next, smaller drivers?

Rules like this will lead to the USGA's Rules of Golf being ignored by the general population. I sincerely hope they will reconsider this unwarranted action.

Sincerely,

Gary

46. Please include this in your letter to the USGA.

As an avid golfer and single digit handicap (8.7 index), I find the new rule regarding grooves on clubs quite confusing. I enjoy the game tremendously and as my skill level has risen over the years, I do not have the ability to spin the ball out of the light rough. While I may understand your intentions to penalize elite players for not hitting fairways and taking technology out of the game, your rules will certainly have more impact on the average golfer.

Would it not be more prudent and efficient to make the rough tougher and fairways more narrow for elite professional players? I fear the rule will force technical advances on clubs and therefore increase the costs for the average golfer. Ultimately, I believe this will have more of a negative impact than what is expected.

Lin

47. The proposed changes with respect to club grooves brings evokes memories of the incident involving Karsten Solheim vs USGA.

I agree with Frank Thomas in that only a very small percentage of golfers are involved. Why not initially, at least, change the equipment rules for USGA, PGA, & LPGA competition only. Then, determine if that solves the perceived problem to USGA's satisfaction.

As an instructor, I can assure you that the average player benefits little, if at all, from larger, squarer grooves. All he/she wants to do is play two or three times a week with their friends and have a good time. As long as they are not playing in any sanctioned events, they should not be required to replace current equipment.

Come on USGA, let's apply a little thought to this proposal and give it a trial period first, to see if your perception is valid.

Doug

48. Wouldn't it be much easier to make those participating in PGA events to use the old wooden headed drivers, fairway woods, similar vintage irons, putters, & golf balls we grew up with, and leave the rest of us alone? You would no longer have to cope with "grooves", moment of inertia, lengthen golf courses just for tournaments and other momentous problems faced by the touring pros and we poor amateurs would be able to enjoy our game.

Brian

49. Heck, Frank just consider the USGA's action - and possible action on > 60 wedges - to be part of the stimulus package intended to help all the poor golf equipment manufacturers. It doesn't have to make sense and transparency is for others! It's the American way . . .

Bill

50. It is entirely unfair and an economic hardship on non-professional golfers to change any club requirements such as grooves.

Pete

51. Dear Members of the USGA Committee:

Frankly, I think that you all have lost your grip. I am a long time member of the USGA. I can tell you that I will not be renewing my membership this year. I take umbrage with your decision on grooves. For heavens sake, I am a 24 handicap player. I need all the help I can get. Why in the world should I be punished because the players of the PGA have taken advantage of the technology we have today?

It seems to me that you should be listening a bit more to those of us who have supported you all these years. I think that you are out of touch with us.
I, for one, will refuse to give up my Pings!

Christina

52. To whom it may concern,

I have grave doubts about the proposed groove rule changes for several reasons.

1. It is my belief that the marked change (as opposed to minor change) in elite players skills from the rough have greatly increased only in very recent years as the ball has changed, not since the groove rules were originally changed.
2. Many people of average skills will be forced to make a change in equipment or stop participating in occasional competitions.
3. The benefit of the larger grooves for lesser players is somewhat significant for their enjoyment of the game, but makes no really significant difference in their scores.
4. The change in performance from wound, Balata covered balls to solid core, synthetic covered balls has been more significant than the change in grooves overall.

Bruce

53. Why should I continue my membership in the USGA when it does not seem to represent my interests as a 75 year old 15 handicapper.

David

54. It is preposterous that an organization that oversees rules for the millions of golfers around the world has such autonomy. This issue about grooves testifies to how preposterous the group is. A good old-fashioned "Boston Tea Party" should occur where golfers stop playing USGA events and stop joining the USGA.

The USGA should also operate with complete transparency, releasing all findings that are the basis for its decisions.

And as been the case with its own national championship, the USGA can make the grooves a non-issue by growing the rough for the best golfers in the world.

The USGA ought to be ashamed of itself for being so uppity.

Regards,
Robert

55. Frank,

No Questions, just wanted to say thank you for pursuing some sanity in the USGA's groove insanity.

They do NOT have their groove on!

Keep doing what you're doing, because I know you are speaking for the VAST silent majority.

Ozzie

Don't understand the USGA! Tour Player are suppose to be able to do things with clubs that the rest of us can't being to accomplish. Tell them to just leave it alone, the game will be okay. Plus golf cost enough as it is. Thanks for looking out for all of us and not just the Big money players.

Gary