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The USGA has received numerous inquiries from golfers wishing to know whether or not their clubs will meet the new groove and punch mark specifications effective from Jan. 1, 2010 (the "New Groove Rules"). Many of these inquiries have come from golfers who plan to play in events where the condition of competition is in effect, requiring that the player's clubs conform to the New Groove Rules. As a result, the USGA and The R&A have created a reference resource called the Informational Club Database.

The purpose of the Database is to assist golfers in determining whether their irons, hybrids and fairway woods comply with the New Groove Rules. The Database is a searchable database of irons, fairway woods with lofts of 25 degrees or higher, and hybrids with lofts of 25 degrees or higher, submitted to the USGA and/or The R&A prior to Jan. 1, 2010 and evaluated to determine whether they meet the New Groove Rules. If it is indicated in the Database that a club does not comply with the New Groove Rules, it does not mean that the club does not conform to the Rules of Golf. Irons, hybrids and fairway woods available prior to Jan. 1, 2010, which conform to the 2008-2009 Rules of Golf, are permitted for use until at least 2024, provided that the Condition of Competition is not in effect.

Additionally, clubs available prior to Jan. 1, 2010, which conform to the 2008-2009 Rules of Golf, may be produced and sold by manufacturers until Dec. 31, 2010, and may be sold by retailers indefinitely. In listing the compliance status of clubs in the Database with respect to the New Groove Rules, the USGA has chosen to indicate whether a club complied or did not comply only if the test results were clear. In situations where the test results were mixed within a set submitted or the model did not consistently meet the New Groove Rules, the Database indicates that there was insufficient information available to determine compliance to the New Groove Rules. Any player that wishes to carry such clubs in events where the Condition of Competition is in effect should have their clubs tested individually and those clubs must meet the New Groove Rules.

It is important to remember that most clubs in production prior to Jan. 1, 2010 were designed to comply with a different set of groove specifications. Clubs that conform to the groove rules that were in effect prior to Jan. 1, 2010 will continue to conform to the Rules of Golf until at least 2024, unless the Condition of Competition is in effect. If the Condition of Competition is in effect, the clubs must comply with the specifications effective from Jan. 1, 2010.

Unlike the List of Conforming Driver Heads, the Database is to be used for reference purposes only. The Database is not to be used in any manner stipulating that clubs must be included in the Database in order to be carried when the Condition of Competition is in effect.

Doug Rimmer can be reached by e-mail (drimmer@wwex.com) or by phone (318-773-3359).

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newspaper for nine years covering UL and the Sun Belt Conference. He also wrote a weekly golf column and was the Advertiser's golf beat writer.

During those nine years, he won 31 writing awards from the Louisiana Sports Writers Association and earned a national "Best of Gannett" award for his coverage of the 2005 Little League World Series in Williamsport, Penn.

Since leaving the Advertiser in early 2008, he has served as vice president of McD Media, Inc., a marketing and public relations firm founded by his wife Mary Beth. He won several national writing and brochure awards from the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) and served two years on that organization's Board of Directors during his collegiate athletic career. During that time, he also served on the U.S. Olympic Committee media relations staff for two Olympic Games, in 1988 in Seoul, Korea, and in 1996 in Atlanta, and for six U.S. Olympic Festivals. He served two years as president of the Louisiana Sports Writers Association and remains a member of that group's Executive Committee and Hall of Fame Committee.

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James B. (Jim) Hyler Jr., of Raleigh, North Carolina, has been nominated to serve a one-year term as president of the United State Golf Association (USGA). Other officers for 2010 include Jay Rains of San Diego, Calif., and Glen Nager of Washington D.C., as vice-presidents; Tom O'Toole of St. Louis, Missouri, as secretary; and John Kim of New York, N.Y., as treasurer. Hyler, a retired banking executive, is completing his sixth year as a member of the USGA Executive Committee, including three years as a USGA vice-president. He served as the chairman of the President's Council for the 1999 and 2005 U.S. Open Championships at Pinehurst. New appointees to the Executive Committee in 2010 include Daniel Burton of Lititz, Penn.; William Katz of Essex Fells, N.J.; and James Williams of Orinda, Calif. Returning members include Christie Austin of Cherry Hills Village, Colo.; Pat Kaufman of Fort Washington, Md.; Brigid Shanley Lamb of Mendham, N.J.; Chris Liedel of Vienna, Virginia; Gene McClure of Atlanta, Ga.; Steve Smyers of Lakeland, Fla.; and Geoffrey Yang of Menlo Park, Calif. Joseph Anthony of Minneapolis, Minn., will return for the second year as the Association's general counsel. This group will lead the USGA's staff and nearly 4,000 volunteers who serve on more than 30 committees.

We sincerely hope the recent Holiday Season was a joyous one for you and your family.

Carr McCalla is the Executive Director of the Louisiana Golf Association.

He can be reached by phone (337.265.3938) or e-mail (cmccalla@lgagolf.org).