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February 21, 2013

Glen Nager, President
Mike Davis, Executive Director
United States Golf Association
77 Liberty Corner Road
Far Hills, New Jersey 07931

Dear Glen and Mike:

As we have mentioned on several occasions throughout the course of the formal comment period associated with the potential adoption of Rule 14-1b, we at the PGA of America certainly understand and respect the critical role the USGA plays in writing and interpreting the Rules of Golf. We also appreciate the fact that you have reached out and invited the golf community to share its collective thoughts, concerns and opinions regarding what has become a polarizing topic.

As indicated in our November 26, 2012 correspondence regarding this matter, we were then and remain very concerned about the impact Rule 14-1b will have on participation now and in the future. In addition, we are concerned about the resulting negative consequences it will have on the level of enjoyment experienced by those players of all skill levels who have in good faith anchored their putters for a variety of reasons, including health and injury, alternative methods exercised with an eye toward improvement and, at the end of the day, because they feel they can simply make more putts.

A multitude of amateurs and professionals view anchoring a long putter as a preferred way to putt. These players have spent countless hours, months and years attempting to improve and perfect their strokes. It has been an acceptable method of putting and should the ban proceed, these people will be forced to find a different way to play the game. It begs the question, why now?

As you are well aware, we conducted a poll of our PGA members. The participation rate was extremely high, 4,228 of our membership, and nearly two thirds (63%) of the respondents indicated that they do not favor a ban. Since we introduced the poll, we have been inundated by calls, letters and conversations with our members throughout the country restating their opposition to the ban. It is also worth noting that during our Board of Directors planning session earlier this week our Board unanimously reaffirmed our stance on this issue.

Certainly there are a few within our PGA ranks and throughout the industry that favor the ban but we can state unequivocally that the overwhelming sentiment communicated to us by our PGA members is that the proposed ban will be harmful to the overall state of the game.

It will take a lot of the joy out of the game for those who anchor, drive some away from the game all together and open a Pandora's Box of questioning PGA member management of the expected disregard for the ban at golf facilities around the country.

In addition, we believe that should Rule 14-1b be formally adopted, the current rumblings of bifurcation conversations around the industry will increase and only grow more rancorous. We at the PGA of America share your belief that in an ideal world one set of Rules for players of all levels is the best approach to the game.

The anchoring conversation has opened the door to bifurcation and we have paid close attention to comments made during our State of the Game Forum at the 2013 PGA Merchandise Show, as well as statements from various leaders within the game, including Commissioner Tim Finchem, David Fay, Jerry Tarde and Mark King. In addition, we have heard from numerous PGA members throughout the country that should the ban occur that they intend to adopt a Local Rule at their facilities that would permit a player to anchor a putter. Simply put, these conversations did not exist before mention of Rule 14-1b and now they appear to be at fever pitch.

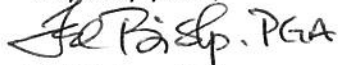
As it relates to the USGA's examination of anchoring a putter, highly respected USGA officials including P.J. Boatright, Joe Dey and David Fay have analyzed it in the past and determined that it is an accepted method of putting. Even Mike Davis a little more than a year ago publically stated that anchoring was not problematic and not detrimental to the game. With an abrupt change of heart, the USGA has now stated that anchoring a putter does not equate to what is deemed a proper "stroke." However, we all know that there is no universally recognized stroke. The game's variety and the artful approach of its players to dabble, adjust and invent based on 600 years of implied permission is part of what makes our game so special.

We do not believe that Rule 14-1b will result in millions of players putting their clubs in their closets and choosing to pursue other activities. As we said during our brief presentation to you at your Annual Meeting, that would be an exaggeration. But as an organization which serves as the tangible connection between the game and all of those that play it, and one that is committed to growing the game, we believe that one less golfer playing one less round is not what the game needs in 2013.

Finally, based on the lack of statistical data proving any competitive advantage, it seems unreasonable to impose this ban on the current generation of golfers that have adopted the anchored method well within the stated Rules of the game.

For all of the reasons set forth above, it is our opinion that the proposed ban is not good for golf.

Very truly yours,



Ted Bishop, PGA
President
The PGA of America

c: Tim Finchem
Peter Dawson