

Club Anchor Ruling

An Exclusive Study by Golf Datatech, LLC

January 2013

A Study of Serious Golfers' Reaction to the Proposed New Club Anchor Ruling

The Situation

The R&A and the United States Golf Association, golf's governing bodies, announced proposed changes to the Rules of Golf that would prohibit anchoring the club in making a stroke.

"The proposed Rule 14-1b, which follows an extensive review by The R&A and the USGA, would prohibit strokes made with the club or a hand gripping the club held directly against the player's body, or with a forearm held against the body to establish an anchor point that indirectly anchors the club."

Objective

Determine attitudes of Serious Golfers to the proposed club anchoring rule and its effect on amateur golfers, particularly those using longer putters.

Methodology

1,766 members of the Golf Datatech Database of Serious Golfers responded to an online study between January 1 and 8, 2013, and form the basis of the analysis.

All respondents who completed a survey were entered into a random drawing for premium golf merchandise.

Golfographics

The responding sample plays an average of 68 rounds per year, with an average handicap of 14.3 and a mean age of 55.5. 17% play most of their golf at a Private facility and less than 1 in 10 was female.

Serious Golfer Comments

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"They (USGA) have a responsibility to assure that the game is one of skill; not one for those who can spend the most; equipment should not trump skill."

(16-20 handicap)

"I would not be unhappy to see amateur players allowed to anchor a long putter - even in competition, but prefer that the pros comply with the new rule."

(5 & Under Handicap)

"In my opinion the ruling bodies are trying to do the right thing, but I honestly don't see the scientific proof that the anchored putter provides any advantage over a standard putter!" *(11-15 handicap)*

"The USGA should have never allowed the longer putters, or decided against the anchored putters years ago. They waited entirely too long." *(21-25 handicap)*

"I am a better putter with the Belly Putter. The game is all about confidence and I have more confidence with my belly putter. I don't think it should be made illegal." *(6-10 Handicap)*

Club Anchoring Rule

The Serious Golfer's Reaction

Putting Skills, Styles & Opinions

Responding golfers consider themselves to be skilled putters with 69% indicating they are "above average", 26% say they are "average" and only 6% believe they are "below average" putters.

95% of respondents putt right handed and only 5% are using longer length putters: 3% Belly (41-46 inches) and 2% Long (48-52 inches).

Grip Used Most by Conventional Users

Standard	89%
Cross hand (left hand low, if right handed)	9%
The "claw"	2%
Base: Use a <i>Conventional Putter</i>	1671

Grip/Style Used Most by Belly Putter Users

Standard	72%
Cross hand (left hand low, if right handed)	17%
The "claw"	12%
Base: Use a <i>Belly Putter</i>	60

Belly putter non-anchored	25%
Belly putter anchored	75%
Base: Use a <i>Belly Putter</i>	60

Grip/Style Used Most by Long Putter Users

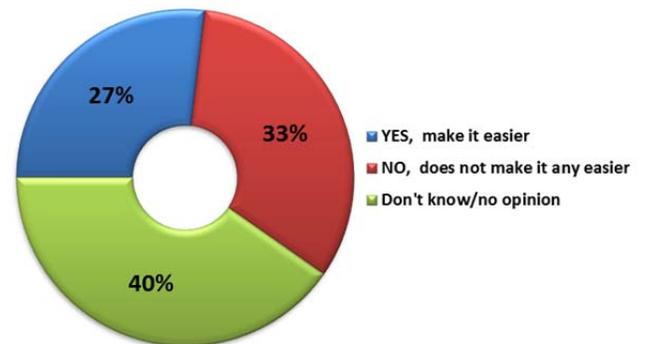
Standard	77%
Cross hand (left hand low, if right handed)	0%
The "claw"	23%
Base: Use a <i>Long Putter</i>	35

Long putter non-anchored	17%
Long putter anchored	83%
Base: Use a <i>Long Putter</i>	35

Trial of Longer Putters by Non-Users

Only 17% of respondents have used a "longer style" putter for at least a short period of time. With the vast majority saying they have only hit a few putts (38%) or never tried one (45%).

Does Anchoring Make Putting Easier?



Q. In your opinion do long putters, which are anchored to the body, make it easier to putt?

Of the total responding base, 40% don't know, or have no opinion as to whether anchoring makes it easier to putt, while 33% believe that anchoring long putters to the body does *not* makes it easier.

Among the 1,055 respondents who had an opinion 45% said YES it makes it easier to putt and 55% said NO, it does not make it easier to putt.

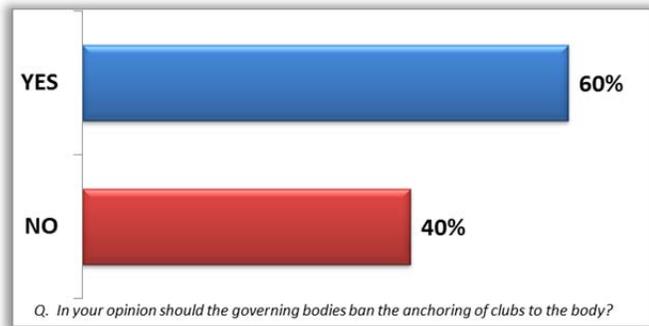


Club Anchoring Rule

The Serious Golfers' Reaction

The Proposed Club Anchor Rule

The USGA and The R&A announced a proposed rule which would ban the anchoring of clubs to the body. The survey posed the following question to the respondents: *In your opinion should the governing bodies ban the anchoring of clubs to the body?*



The proposed rule on club anchoring is scheduled to be enforced beginning in 2016. When asked their opinion on whether the USGA should continue down this path or begin enforcing the rule sooner, 50% of serious golfers were in agreement with the planned timetable.

2013	19%
2014	29%
2015	3%
Jan 2016 as planned	50%

What Will Current Long Putter Users Do?

- 31% Will continue to anchor their long putter
- 31% Will NOT anchor against their body
- 38% will switch to a conventional Putter

Asked of the respondents who currently anchor their long/belly putters to their bodies

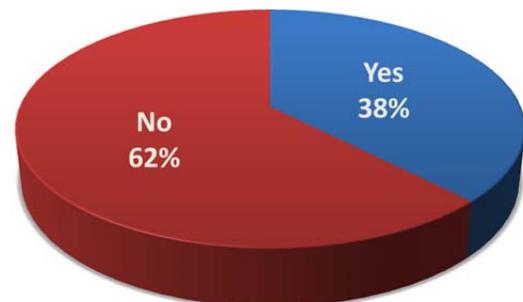
Club Anchor Rule & the Pros

Overwhelmingly, respondents believe if a Golf Professional won a tournament in the past using a long putter anchored to their body they won fair and square (87%).

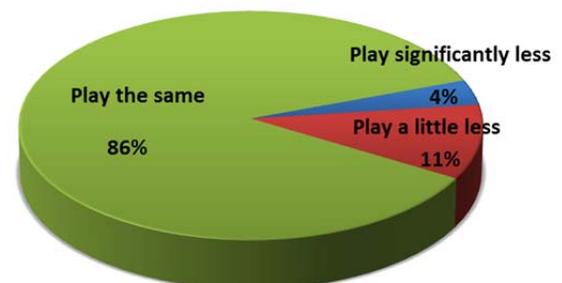
They won fair and square	87%
Their wins should have an asterisk in the record books	6%
They cheated	1%
Don't know/no opinion	6%

Club Anchor Rule & Amateurs

62% of respondents do not believe the ban on anchoring will cause some amateur golfers to enjoy the game less.



Nor do the bulk of respondents believe golfers who are now using longer putters will play any less often if they cannot anchor their long putter.



Club Anchoring Rule

The Serious Golfers' Reaction

The Rules of Golf

Currently there is one set of rules for professionals and amateurs alike.

- 68% of serious golfers believe there should be one set of rules for everyone
- 25% believe amateurs and pros should play by different rules
- 7% are not sure

The following describes serious golfers' opinions regarding rules changes:

Support ONE Set of Rules

Two sets of rules can be confusing	63%
Once you have two sets of rules there is no telling where it will end	59%
I like to be able to play the same game as the pros	54%
The game isn't "broken" so why are they trying to "fix" it?	45%
I want to play the same courses with the same rules as pros to see how my game stacks up	31%
<i>BASE: Support ONE set of rule Multiple Response</i>	1196

Support TWO sets of Rules

There should be different rules for golf pros like other sports	64%
I play for fun	50%
I already play different tees than the pros, why shouldn't I use different rules	44%
I don't need the same rules as the pros	39%
I don't follow all of the rules	13%
<i>BASE: Support TWO set of rules Multiple Response</i>	446

Amateurs & the Rules of Golf

While serious golfers are passionate about the game, technology and their equipment, when it comes to the Rules of Golf only 20% said they follow *all the rules of golf as written*; 66% said they follow the rules of golf *to the best of their ability* and 14% said they *usually* follow the rules of golf.

When asked what rules they sometimes "bend" (by those who don't follow all the rules), not putting out is the biggest offense (75%), followed by a mulligan on the first tee (33%) and just dropping another ball when the original is lost (32%).

Don't putt out everything (gimme putts)	75%
Mulligan on the first tee	33%
Lost ball (just drop another ball)	32%
Stroke and distance for out of bounds	25%
Don't play it as it lies	23%
None of the above	7%
Touching sand with club in bunker	2%
<i>BASE: Sometimes bend the rules Multiple Response</i>	1409

FIVE YEARS FROM NOW...

85% of respondents believe this change to the Rules of Golf will not be important.

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