

# What If There Were No Rules?

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In this era of conforming versus nonconforming, it has been said the United States Golf Association is all that stands in the way of golf equipment designers turning into mad scientists. True? We asked three R&D veterans to throw out the USGA's "Rules of Golf" and see what they could come up with in clubs and balls. Here are some possibilities.

**Want to hit more fairways than Calvin Peete in his prime?** Adams golf Chairman and CEO Barney Adams would start by locating shafts in the center of clubheads. According to Adams, center-shafted clubs would reduce the droop in the shaft, thus increasing the golfer's chances of hitting a straight shot.

**In irons,** former Cobra club designer Clay Long contends that placing more mass beyond the allowed 0.625-inch distance behind the shaft would result in larger, counter-balanced iron heads that would reduce the chance of slicing.

**What about golf balls?** How does 14 extra yards sound? John Calabria, vice president of research and development for Maxfli, says it's not hard.

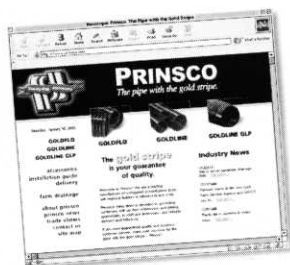
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*"Center-shafted clubs would reduce the droop in the shaft, thus increasing the golfer's chances of hitting a straight shot."*

According to Calabria, one yard is gained for every .010 inch the ball's diameter is reduced. Decreasing the ball's diameter from 1.68 inches to 1.62 inches, for example, would add six yards. Additionally, Calabria says that one yard is gained for every .5 gram of weight added. Therefore, his prescribed 2-gram increase would net another four yards. Finally, increasing ball velocity (achieved by firming up a ball's core) from 253 feet per second to 256 feet per second would tack on another 3.45

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yards (1.15 yards per added foot per second).

As with most things, there are trade-offs. Calabria, for instance, is quick to point out that this type of ball would only benefit someone with a high swing speed, and the only true reward is the additional distance. Still, it's fun to look at the possibilities - and inside the minds of some mad scientists.