



"Distance Insights Project" Survey of EIGCA members (July 2020) Headline data from the 19 questions under the 9 headings

1. Integrity

- 66% feel the ever-increasing length in golf threatens the integrity / essence of how the game is played
- 66% feel the increased length in golf threatens the integrity / essence of historic courses to an unacceptable level

2. Environmental sustainability

- Considerable concern was shown about the negative effects on land grab (70%), water consumption (66%), demand for resources (59%) and habitat reduction (45%)

3. Safety

- 88% are concerned about the safety implications brought about by technological development of equipment (68% were very concerned)
- 90% have encountered existing courses with increased safety issues due to the increase in hitting distance
- 73% have increased safety margins due to the increase in hitting distance

4. Design

- 25% have been frequently tasked by clients to design a course that (in their professional opinion as an architect) is unnecessarily long. 38% say they have occasionally been briefed to do this.
- 20% have almost always been tasked by clients to lengthen a course, another 37% have frequently been briefed to do so, and 32% occasionally (89% of respondents meaning this is a common requirement asked of architects)
- 93% have re-designed a course, or part of a course, due to the increase in hitting distance (15% almost always, 37% frequently, 42% occasionally)
- 83% have adapted their design strategies over the course of their career due to the increase in hitting distance.

5. Impact

- 54% believe the increase in hitting distance has had a negative impact on gender equality in the game



- 88% assess the impact of continued increases in hitting distances as having a negative impact on golf
- 76% see there being a negative impact on golf course design

6. Playability

- 75% believe that the increasing ball flight length and club technology were diminishing the skill of the game and lead to a simplification of golf course strategy
- 59% believe the 'increase in hitting distance' and 'improvement in consistency of strike' have made golf more fun for amateurs. NB: this could be a conflict of interest if an equipment rule change to reduce shot lengths were to be adopted for all players, not just professional golfers. The majority of respondents favour maintaining the status quo for amateurs.
- 50% feel that 'distance' and 'consistency of strike' for amateur golfers are equally important in the enjoyment of the game. The other 50% were slightly more in favour of 'consistency of strike'

7. Future growth

- When asked about what is important to the future growth of the game, no respondent mentioned hitting distance. 56% cited consistency of strike as being the most important and the remaining 46% were spread across factors, with comments including: joy of the game, health benefits, community and diversity/accessibility, pace of play, and reducing the cost to play.

8. Regulations

- 95% believe the governing bodies in golf need to take action to reduce the hitting distance. Of this number who expressed an opinion, 34% say this should only be applied to professional tournaments.
- 62% think that amateurs should be spared any regulatory effects to reduce hitting distance (21% amateurs be completely exempt + 41% that amateurs should largely be spared)

9. Reduction in shot length

- When asked by what percentage they would like to see the hitting distance reduced (considering an average shot length of 310 yards / 282 metres by the longest hitters on the PGA and European Tours in 2019 ... 53% said a 10% reduction, 33% thought 15%, 15% thought 0-5%, and 7.5% believe more than 15%.