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DON'T TRUST YOUR GOLF BALLS!
*NTU student proposes alternative method of golf-ball grading for better golf games*

A Nanyang Technological University (NTU) undergraduate is proposing an alternative way of grading golf balls. The aim? Better golf games.

Golf balls currently come marked in different hardness grades to suit different levels of play by amateurs and professionals. This current grading system is based on a testing method for golf balls that dates back some 60 years.

Recently, Mr Sim Jian Yong, a second-year undergraduate at NTU’s School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (MAE) undergraduate discovered, while pursuing a project under NTU’s Undergraduate Research Experience on Campus (URECA) programme, that many golf balls currently available are wrongly graded. In fact, 75% of the golf balls he tested received a wrong grade.

Under the guidance of MAE’s Assoc Prof Franz Konstantin Fuss, the NTU President Research Scholar tested 50 golf balls of various retail brands. Using a variety of methods that measure the compression of golf balls at different velocities, and stress and relaxation levels, he noted that an alternative testing method was needed to capture the load exerted on golf balls for a more accurate assessment and hence grading of their performance.

Says Assoc Prof Fuss, “Jian Yong’s research will have a tremendous impact on the game of golf. A more accurate rating system of golf balls can help prevent overuse syndromes and chronic injuries, common among avid golfers.”
Adds Jian Yong, “I am glad that my research in sports engineering has real world applications and can help golfers everywhere improve their game. I also look forward to the day when the golf balls I test and grade will be used by golf greats like Tiger Woods, Vijay Singh and Nick Faldo. That'll be quite a thrill.”

Jian Yong will present his research at the Asia-Pacific Congress on Sports Technology to be held in September 2005 at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. This is a special honour for him as the bulk of presenters at such international conferences are academics. In fact, Jian Yong may well be the only undergraduate presenter at the conference.

Looking ahead, Jian Yong and Assoc Prof Fuss plan to redesign current testing equipment for golf balls, and provide independent testing services for golf ball companies. Patents for the testing equipment and the technology behind them will also be considered.

Jian Yong’s project is one of some 250 projects by 150 NTU professors and some 100 NTU undergraduates and graduate students to be showcased at Discover Engineering @ NTU – Singapore’s largest showcase of engineering and technological innovations.

Discover Engineering @ NTU ends with a bang with the L.I.F.E. @ NTU Open House on 13 March.

**END**

About Nanyang Technological University

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is an established international institution in tertiary education.

Our university has a distinguished lineage with roots that go back to 1955. We began as Nanyang University, a private university set up with donations from people of all walks of life, from Singapore and the region. The university grounds, Yunnan Garden Campus, was donated by the Hokkien Clan Association as part of this campaign.

We were reborn as Nanyang Technological Institute, established on the same campus in 1981 with government funding to educate practice-oriented engineers for the burgeoning Singapore economy. In 1991 we became Nanyang Technological University with the absorption of the National Institute of Education.

Today, we are a research-intensive university ranked among the top 50 universities in the world. We have a strong engineering college ranked among the best globally, a business school with one of the top 100 MBA programmes in the world, an internationally acclaimed National Institute of Education, one of the best communication and information schools in Asia, and a biological sciences school at the forefront of Singapore’s life sciences initiative.
Undergraduate enrolment will swell from 17,500 to 23,500 with the establishment of three new schools – the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Art, Design and Media, and School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences.

A traditional strength of the university is the high employment rate and high remuneration received by its graduates. The university is now in the process of realising its New Undergraduate Experience initiative with a comprehensive curriculum, wide choices of options for students, vibrant campus life and international experience. Strong international relationships and collaboration programmes is a hallmark of the university. This includes the Singapore-MIT Alliance, Singapore-Stanford Partnership, Cornell-Nanyang Institute of Hospitality Management, Singapore – University of Washington Alliance in Bioengineering, Global Immersion Programme with Peking University, Tsinghua University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, University of Washington and Georgia Institute of Technology, among many other programmes in US, China, India, Japan and Europe.