

(45) **Date of Patent:** **Aug. 19, 2025**

(Continued)

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

4,464,324 A 8/1984 Hager
4,472,092 A 9/1984 Schmidt
(Continued)

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

JP 2004216131 8/2004
JP 2005006836 A * 1/2005 A63B 53/0466
(Continued)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

ISR, PCT Written Opinion of the ISR, PCT/US2016/012629, May 2, 2016, 7 pages.

(Continued)

Primary Examiner — Stephanie E Bloss

Assistant Examiner — Kevin C Butler

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 17/141,063, filed on Jan. 4, 2021, now Pat. No. 11,623,123, which is a
(Continued)

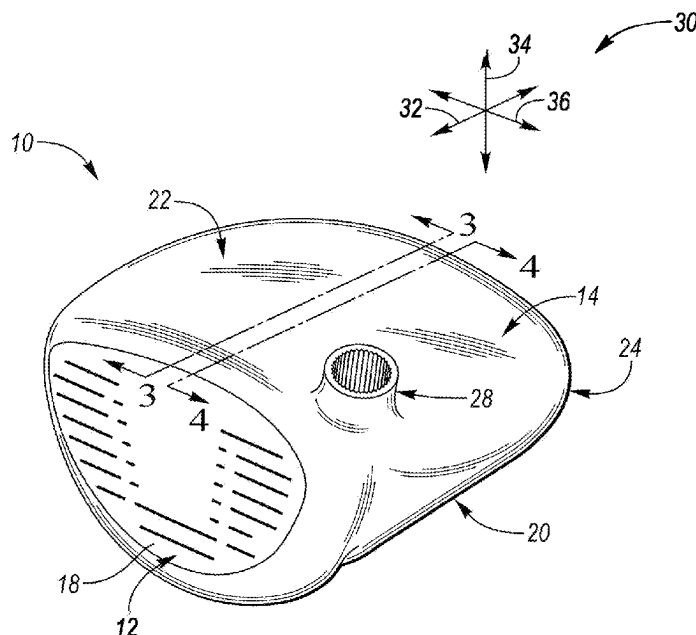
(51) **Int. Cl.**
A63B 53/04 (2015.01)
A45C 11/38 (2006.01)
 (Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC *A63B 53/04* (2013.01); *A63B 53/0466*
(2013.01); *A63B 60/00* (2015.10);
(Continued)

ABSTRACT

A golf club head includes a club face and a body. The club face is formed from a metallic material and includes a first, hitting surface, a second, rear surface that is opposite the first surface, and a flange that is separated from the second surface by a transverse distance. The body is formed from a polymeric material and includes a crown, a sole, a hosel, and a face support. The club face and the body cooperate to define a closed volume, and the face support extends to opposing sides of the flange and is operative to couple the club face to the body.

20 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets



Related U.S. Application Data

continuation of application No. 16/425,704, filed on May 29, 2019, now Pat. No. 10,881,915, which is a continuation of application No. 15/642,626, filed on Jul. 6, 2017, now Pat. No. 10,331,017, which is a continuation of application No. PCT/US2016/012629, filed on Jan. 8, 2016, which is a continuation of application No. 14/593,406, filed on Jan. 9, 2015, now Pat. No. 9,403,071, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 14/264,109, filed on Apr. 29, 2014, now Pat. No. 9,403,295.

- (60) Provisional application No. 61/862,341, filed on Aug. 5, 2013.

(51) Int. Cl.

A63B 60/00 (2015.01)
A63B 60/50 (2015.01)
B29C 45/14 (2006.01)
B29K 101/12 (2006.01)
B29K 705/00 (2006.01)
B29L 31/52 (2006.01)
G03B 17/06 (2021.01)
G03B 17/08 (2021.01)
H01H 9/16 (2006.01)
H04B 1/3827 (2015.01)
H04N 23/51 (2023.01)

(52) U.S. Cl.

CPC *B29C 45/14311* (2013.01); *G03B 17/06* (2013.01); *H01H 9/161* (2013.01); *A45C 11/38* (2013.01); *A63B 53/0408* (2020.08); *A63B 53/042* (2020.08); *A63B 53/0433* (2020.08); *A63B 53/0458* (2020.08); *A63B 2053/0491* (2013.01); *A63B 60/50* (2015.10); *A63B 2209/00* (2013.01); *B29C 2045/14327* (2013.01); *B29K 2101/12* (2013.01); *B29K 2705/00* (2013.01); *B29L 2031/5227* (2013.01); *G03B 17/08* (2013.01); *G06F 2200/1633* (2013.01); *H04B 1/3833* (2013.01); *H04N 23/51* (2023.01)

(58) Field of Classification Search

CPC *A63B 53/0433*; *A63B 53/0408*; *A63B 53/042*; *A63B 2053/0491*; *A63B 2209/00*; *H04N 23/51*; *A45C 11/38*; *B29C 2045/14327*; *B29K 2101/12*; *B29L 2031/5227*; *G06F 2200/1633*; *H04B 1/3833*
 USPC 396/27
 See application file for complete search history.

(56) References Cited**U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

4,614,627 A * 9/1986 Curtis B29C 45/4457
 273/DIG. 8
 4,618,149 A 10/1986 Mazel
 4,883,623 A 11/1989 Nagamoto et al.
 5,327,766 A 7/1994 Humphreys
 5,558,226 A 9/1996 Fritz
 5,614,143 A 3/1997 Hager
 5,728,008 A 3/1998 Howard
 6,042,486 A * 3/2000 Gallagher A63B 53/0475
 473/332
 6,050,904 A * 4/2000 Kuo A63B 60/00
 473/345
 6,146,571 A 11/2000 Vincent et al.
 6,262,130 B1 7/2001 Derian et al.

6,390,932 B1 5/2002 Kosmatka et al.
 6,508,978 B1 1/2003 Deshmukh
 6,623,378 B2 9/2003 Beach et al.
 6,648,774 B1 11/2003 Lee
 6,683,653 B1 1/2004 Miyake
 6,824,636 B2 11/2004 Nelson et al.
 7,320,646 B2 1/2008 Galloway
 7,871,336 B2 1/2011 Breier et al.
 7,935,001 B2 5/2011 Meyer et al.
 8,062,151 B2 11/2011 Boyd et al.
 8,133,128 B2 3/2012 Boyd et al.
 8,133,135 B2 3/2012 Stites et al.
 8,202,173 B2 6/2012 Oldknow et al.
 8,287,400 B2 10/2012 Thomas
 8,328,654 B2 12/2012 Demkowski et al.
 8,357,756 B2 1/2013 Kim et al.
 8,378,210 B2 2/2013 Taguchi
 8,460,123 B1 6/2013 Demille et al.
 8,668,601 B1 3/2014 Peralta et al.
 8,690,709 B2 4/2014 Oldknow et al.
 8,870,679 B2 * 10/2014 Oldknow A63B 53/0466
 473/335
 8,876,622 B2 11/2014 Beach et al.
 8,956,242 B2 2/2015 Rice et al.
 8,986,133 B2 3/2015 Bennett et al.
 9,022,881 B1 5/2015 Ehlers
 9,370,697 B2 6/2016 Beno et al.
 9,403,071 B2 8/2016 Sander
 9,403,295 B2 * 8/2016 Sander B29C 45/4457
 9,427,631 B1 * 8/2016 Larson A63B 60/50
 9,566,627 B2 2/2017 Timmons et al.
 9,707,458 B2 7/2017 Luttrell et al.
 9,733,551 B2 8/2017 Akiyama
 9,833,666 B2 12/2017 Boggs et al.
 9,868,036 B1 1/2018 Kleinert et al.
 9,914,027 B1 3/2018 Harbert et al.
 9,937,390 B2 * 4/2018 Luttrell A63B 53/06
 9,962,584 B2 5/2018 Nielson et al.
 10,331,017 B2 6/2019 Sander
 10,493,334 B2 * 12/2019 Stites A63B 53/0466
 10,758,787 B2 * 9/2020 Sander A63B 53/04
 10,814,192 B2 * 10/2020 Sander A63B 60/02
 11,071,893 B2 * 7/2021 Larson A63B 53/0466
 11,358,038 B2 * 6/2022 Stites A63B 53/0475
 11,623,123 B2 * 4/2023 Sander H01H 9/161
 396/27
 2005/0026723 A1 * 2/2005 Kumamoto A63B 53/0466
 473/345
 2006/0240908 A1 * 10/2006 Adams A63B 60/02
 473/335
 2008/0194355 A1 * 8/2008 Liu A63B 53/047
 473/345
 2010/0041494 A1 * 2/2010 Boyd A63B 60/00
 473/342
 2010/0137073 A1 * 6/2010 Stites A63B 53/0466
 473/345
 2011/0236699 A1 9/2011 Heikkila
 2013/0178305 A1 * 7/2013 Beno A63B 60/52
 473/307
 2013/0324294 A1 * 12/2013 Oldknow A63B 60/52
 473/327
 2015/0011328 A1 * 1/2015 Harbert A63B 53/02
 473/338
 2015/0119165 A1 * 4/2015 Sander A63B 53/0466
 264/273
 2016/0101328 A1 * 4/2016 Luttrell A63B 53/0466
 473/342
 2016/0136489 A1 * 5/2016 Oldknow A63B 60/52
 473/327
 2016/0332040 A1 * 11/2016 Lafortune A63B 53/0466
 2019/0060720 A1 * 2/2019 Stites A63B 53/0466
 2020/0346083 A1 * 11/2020 Stites A63B 53/047
 2021/0121744 A1 * 4/2021 Sander B29C 45/14311
 2022/0280843 A1 * 9/2022 Boggs A63B 53/0466
 2023/0241463 A1 * 8/2023 Sander H01H 9/161
 396/27

(56)

References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

JP	2005296609	10/2005	
JP	6538204 B2 *	7/2019 A63B 53/0433
JP	2022541625 A *	9/2022 A63B 53/04
KR	20140079741 A *	6/2014 A63B 102/32
WO	WO-2008157691 A2 *	12/2008 A63B 53/04

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

ISR, PCT Search Report, PCT/US2016/012629, Mar. 2, 2016, 3 pages.

D.M. Bigg, Mechanical Properties of Particulate Filled Polymers, Battelle Columbus Division, Polymer Composites, Apr. 1987, vol. 8, No. 2, 8 pgs.

Tims Osswald, Understanding Polymer Processing and Governing Equations Sample Chapter 2 Mechanical Behavior of Polymers, Hanser, 2011, 27 pgs.

* cited by examiner

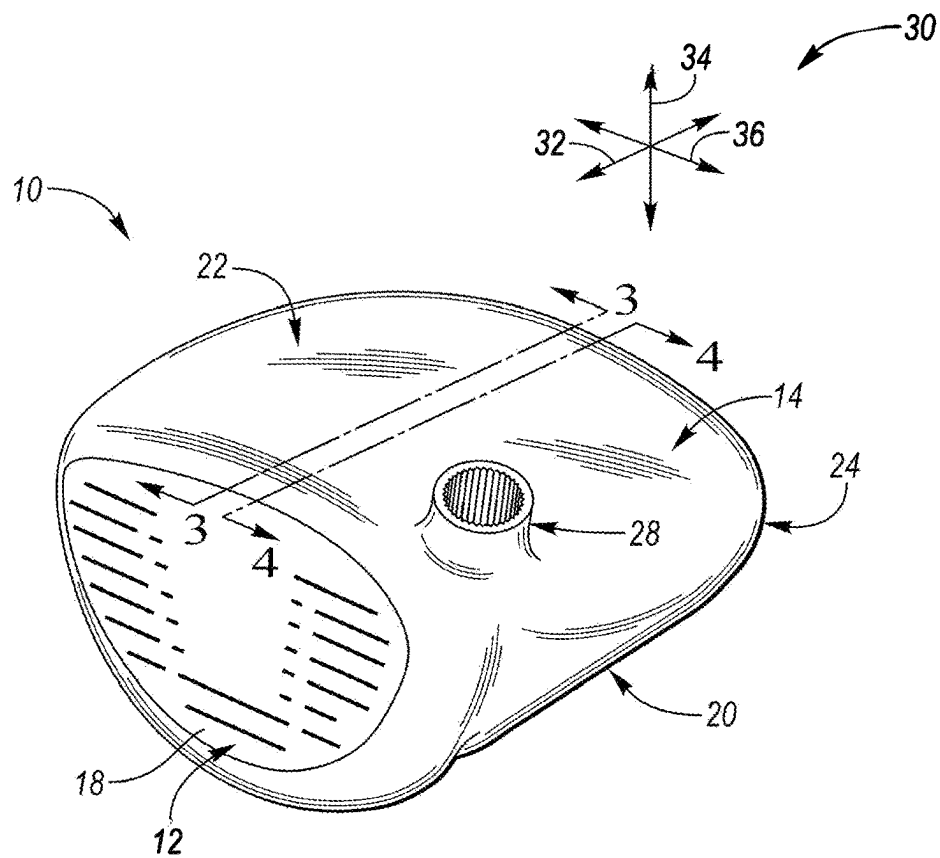


FIG. 1

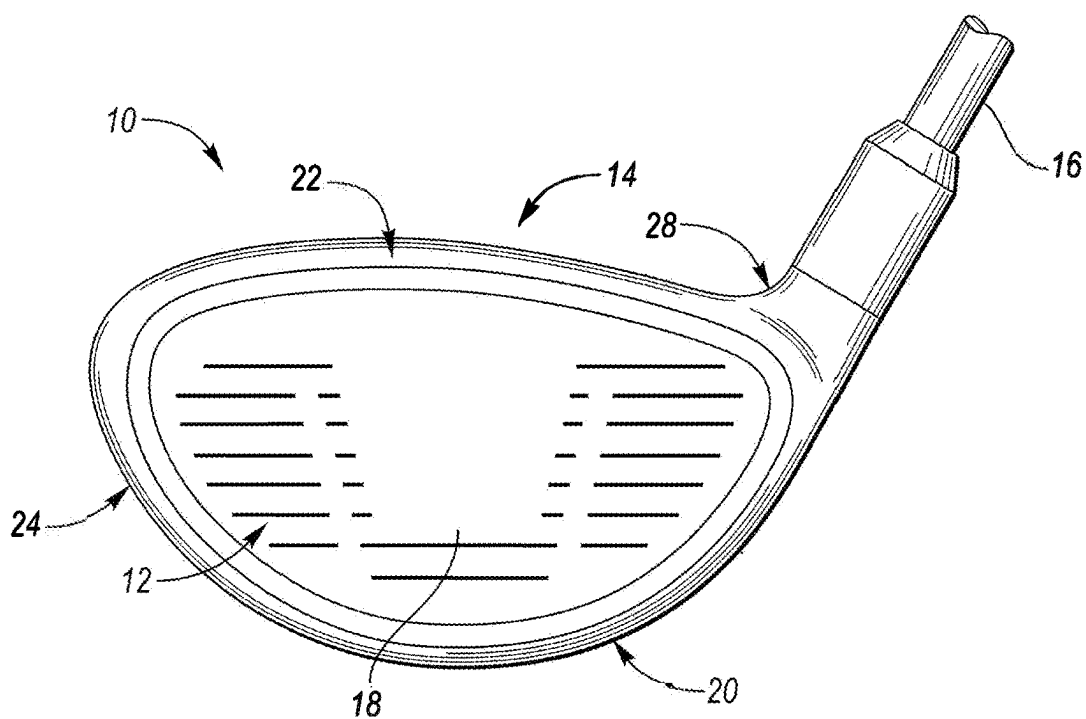


FIG. 2

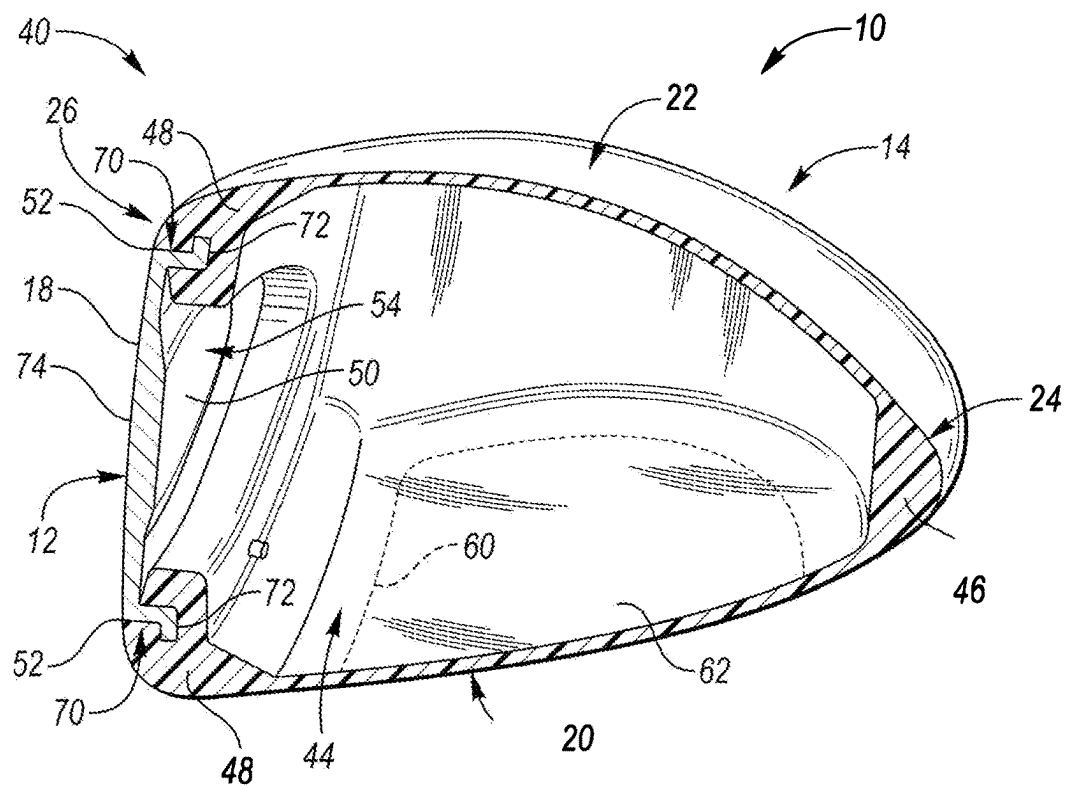


FIG. 3

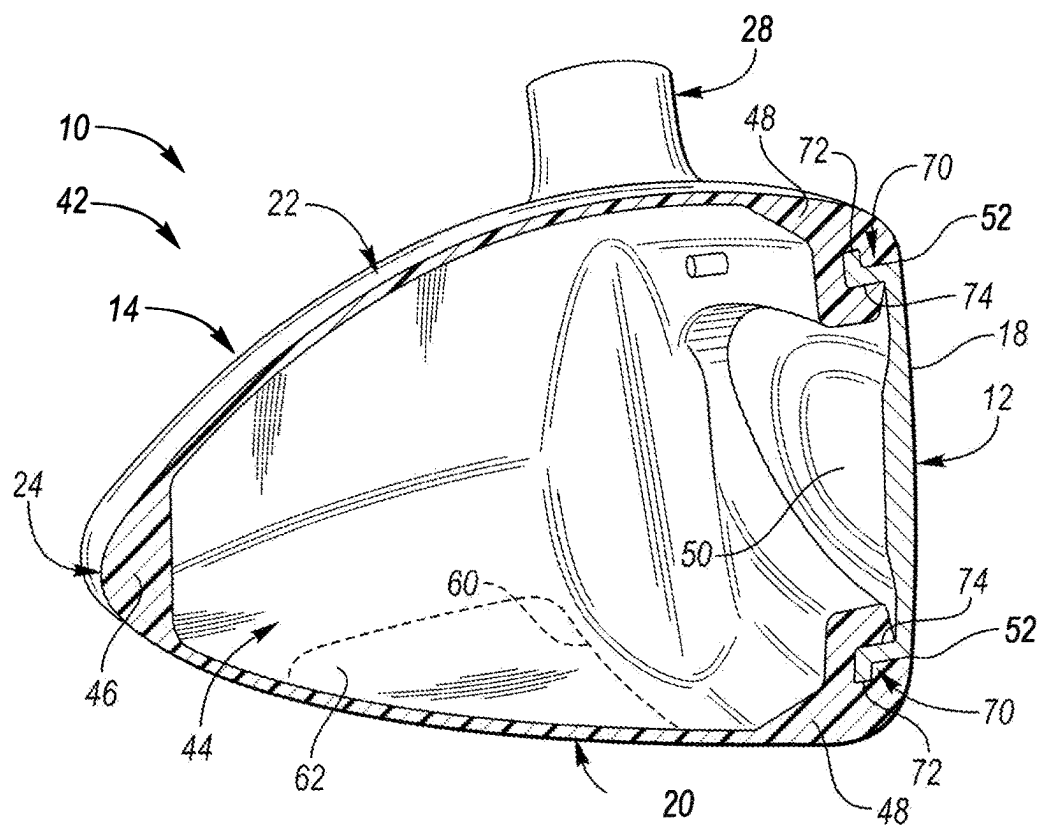


FIG. 4

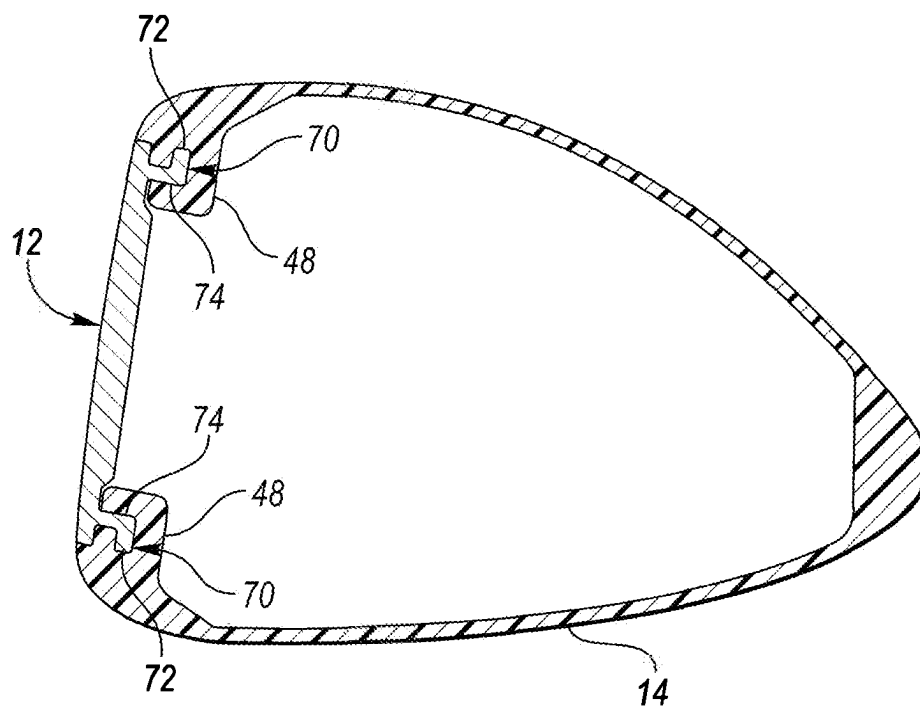


FIG. 5

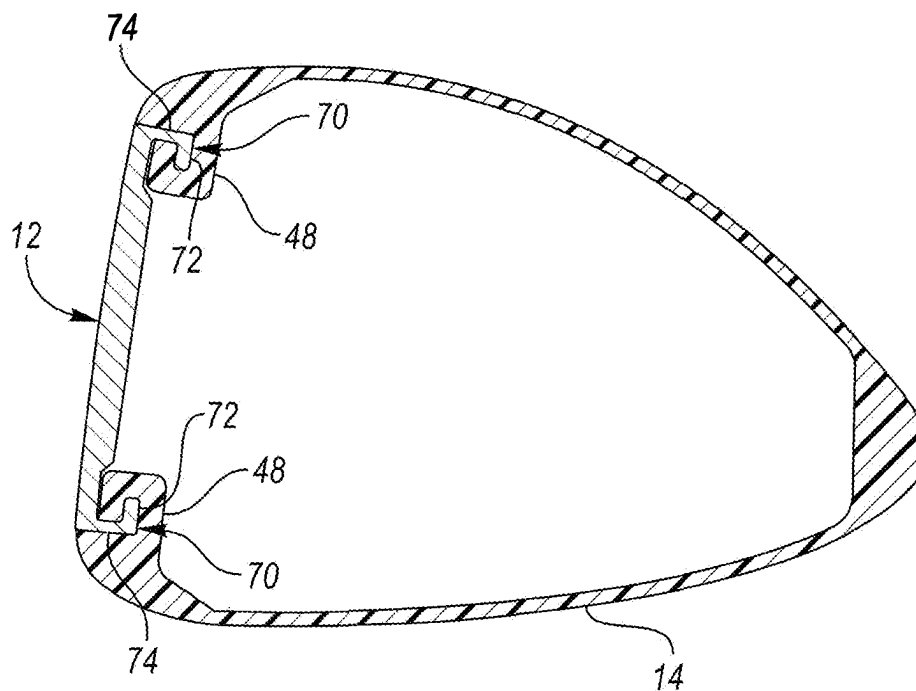
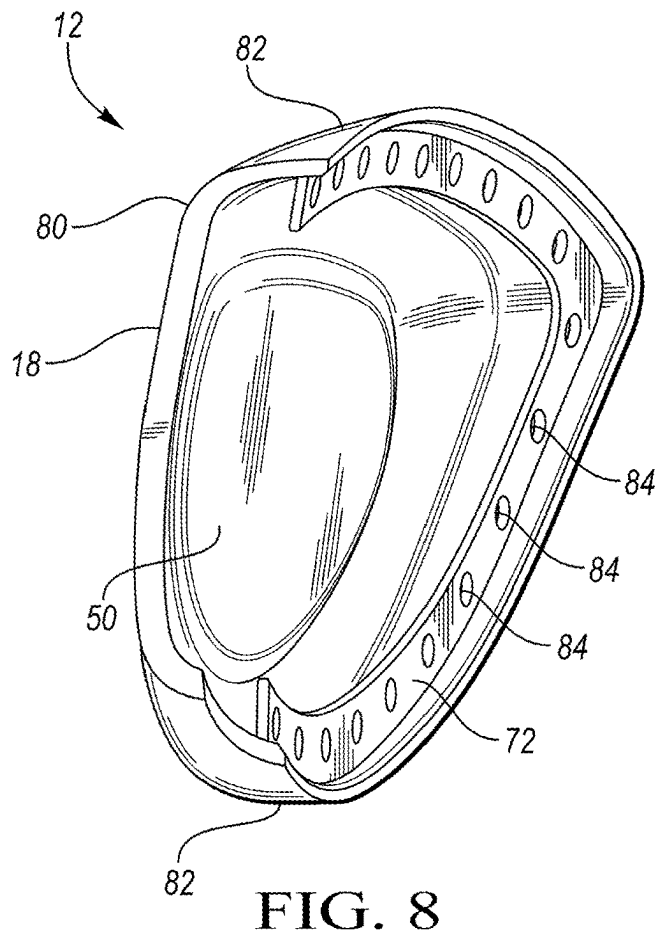
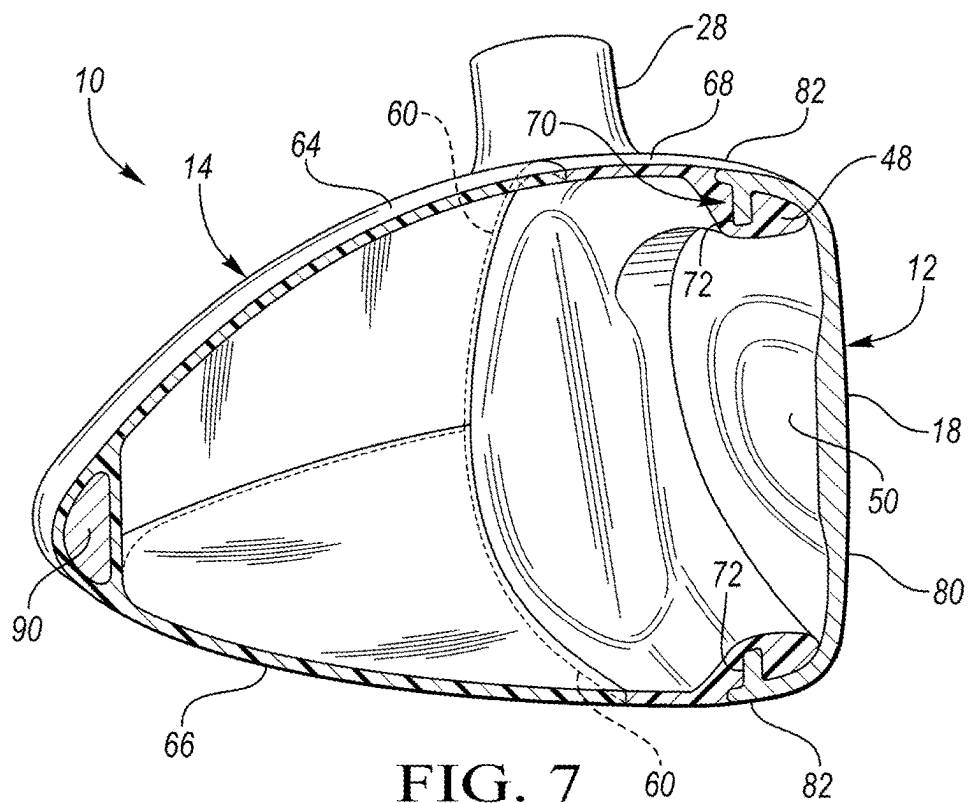


FIG. 6



1

POLYMERIC GOLF CLUB HEAD WITH METALLIC FACE

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 17/141,063, filed on Jan. 4, 2021, which is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 16/425,704, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,881,915, filed on May 29, 2019, which is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 15/642,626, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,331,017, filed on Jul. 6, 2017, which is a continuation of PCT Appl. No. PCT/US16/12629, filed on Jan. 8, 2016, which claims priority to U.S. application Ser. No. 14/593,406, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,403,071, filed on Jan. 9, 2015, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/264,109, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,403,295, filed on Apr. 29, 2014, which claims the benefit of priority from U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/862,341, filed Aug. 5, 2013, all of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present disclosure relates generally to a golf club having a metallic face and a polymeric body.

BACKGROUND

A golf club may generally include a club head disposed on the end of an elongate shaft. During play, the club head may be swung into contact with a stationary ball located on the ground in an effort to project the ball in an intended direction and with a desired vertical trajectory.

Many design parameters must be considered when forming a golf club head. For example, the design must provide enough structural resilience to withstand repeated impact forces between the club and the ball, as well as between the club and the ground. The club head must conform to maximum size requirements set by different rule setting associations, and the face of the club must not have a coefficient of restitution above a predefined maximum (measured according to applicable standards). Assuming that certain predefined design constraints are satisfied, a club head design is typically quantified by the magnitude and location of the center of gravity, as well as the head's moment of inertia about the center of gravity and/or the shaft.

The club's moment of inertia relates to the club's resistance to rotation (particularly during an off-center hit), and is often perceived as the club's measure of "forgiveness." In typical driver designs, high moments of inertia are desired to reduce the club's tendency to push or fade a ball. Achieving a high moment of inertia generally involves placing mass as close to the perimeter of the club as possible (to maximize the moment of inertia about the center of gravity), and as close to the toe as possible (to maximize the moment of inertia about the shaft).

While the moment of inertia affects the forgiveness of a club head, the location of the center of gravity behind the club face (and above the sole) generally affects the trajectory of a shot for a given face loft angle. A center of gravity that is positioned as far rearward (away from the face) and as low (close to the sole) as possible typically results in a ball flight that has a higher trajectory than a club head with a center of gravity placed more forward and/or higher.

While a high moment of inertia is obtained by increasing the perimeter weighting of the club head, an increase in the

2

total mass/swing weight of the club head (i.e., the magnitude of the center of gravity) has a strong, negative effect on club head speed and hitting distance. Said another way, to maximize club head speed (and hitting distance), a lower total mass is desired; however a lower total mass generally reduces the club head's moment of inertia (and forgiveness).

In the tension between swing speed (mass) and forgiveness (moment of inertia), it may be desirable to place varying amounts of mass in specific locations throughout the club head to tailor a club's performance to a particular golfer or ability level. In this manner, the total club head mass may generally be categorized into two categories: structural mass and discretionary mass.

Structural mass generally refers to the mass of the materials that are required to provide the club head with the structural resilience needed to withstand repeated impacts. Structural mass is highly design-dependent, and provides a designer with a relatively low amount of control over specific mass distribution. On the other hand, discretionary mass is any additional mass that may be added to the club head design for the sole purpose of customizing the performance and/or forgiveness of the club. In an ideal club design, the amount of structural mass would be minimized (without sacrificing resiliency) to provide a designer with a greater ability to customize club performance, while maintaining a swing weight that is expected by the consumer.

In the interest of minimizing the total structural mass, most metal woods, for example, generally employ a thin metal face and hollow structural shell formed from a high strength, lightweight metal alloy. Such a design, while effective in reducing structural mass, may involve complex, multi-stage manufacturing processes, and may be limited in further advancements due to the cost prohibitive nature of more advanced alloys.

Another design factor involves the type of face style that is chosen for the club. In metal woods, the majority of designs can be categorized as either having a cup-face, or an edge-welded face plate. The face plate design typically involves a substantially planar (or slightly curved) metallic plate that is fused to the body at or near the forward, face portion of the club to form the hitting surface. This plate is typically inlaid into a slight recess, and welded or fused to the body at, or proximate to the edge of the plate.

A cup-faced design includes a similar metallic plate/hitting surface, however, the plate extends beyond just the forward, face portion and onto the sole/crown of the body. Such a design extends the weld-line rearward, behind the hitting surface. In this manner, the cup-face design can provide a slightly larger possible hitting surface, and reduces the possibility for a welded edge to affect the impact characteristics of the club head.

SUMMARY

A golf club head includes a club face and a body. The club face is formed from a metallic material and includes a first, hitting surface, a second, rear surface that is opposite the first surface, and a flange that is separated from the second surface by a transverse distance. The body is formed from a polymeric material and includes a crown, a sole, a hosel, and a face support. The club face and the body cooperate to define a closed volume, and the face support extends to opposing sides of the flange and is operative to couple the club face to the body. In one configuration, a portion of the flange extends along a direction that is within about 30 degrees of parallel to a portion of the first surface.

3

In one embodiment, the club face is a cup-face style design. In this configuration, the hitting surface of the club face is coupled with the flange through a side-wall portion, and the side-wall portion forms an outer surface of the golf club head.

In one configuration, the flange defines a plurality of holes extending between the opposing sides. As such, a portion of the face support is disposed within each of the plurality of holes. This portion may be formed into the plurality of holes during a molding process such as injection molding or compression molding.

In one configuration the body includes a metallic weight captured within the polymeric material. The metallic weight may be disposed within a band of material between the crown and the sole and adjacent a perimeter of the golf club head.

In one configuration, the hosel is integrally formed with the face support. The body may, for example be formed from three distinct pieces that are fused or adhered together. As such, in one configuration, there may be a seam disposed between the crown and the sole, between the crown and the forward portion, and between the sole and the forward portion. The seam may include at least two layers of the polymeric material that are coupled through at least one of an adhesive or a joining process such as ultrasonic or laser welding.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic perspective view of a golf club head.

FIG. 2 is a schematic front view of a golf club head.

FIG. 3 is a schematic cross-sectional view of the golf club head provided in FIG. 1, taken along line 3-3.

FIG. 4 is a schematic cross-sectional view of the golf club head provided in FIG. 1, taken along line 4-4.

FIG. 5 is a schematic cross-sectional view of an embodiment of a golf club head.

FIG. 6 is a schematic cross-sectional view of an embodiment of a golf club head.

FIG. 7 is a schematic cross-sectional view of an embodiment of a golf club head.

FIG. 8 is a schematic perspective view of the rear portion of a cup-face style face of a golf club head.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals are used to identify like or identical components in the various views, FIG. 1 schematically illustrates a schematic perspective view of a wood-type golf club head 10 (i.e., “club head 10”) that generally includes a face portion 12 (i.e., the “face 12”) and a body portion 14 (i.e., the “body 14”). As generally illustrated in FIG. 2, the club head 10 may be mounted on the end of an elongate shaft 16, which may, in turn, be gripped and swung by a user to impart a generally arcuate motion to the club head 10.

The face 12 of the club head 10 may generally define a hitting surface 18 that is intended to contact a golf ball during a typical swing. The hitting surface 18 may be a planar surface, or may have a slight convex/arcuate curvature that extends out from the club head 10 (i.e., a bulge or roll curvature). Additionally, as is commonly understood, the hitting surface 18 may be disposed at an angle to a vertical plane when the club is held in a neutral hitting position. This angle may be generally referred to as the loft angle or slope of the club. Wood-type club heads (including hybrid woods) may most commonly have a loft angle of

4

from about 8.5 degrees to about 24 degrees, though other loft angles are possible and have been commercially sold.

The body 14 of the club head 10 is configured to support the face 12 and to provide a connection means between the face 12 and the elongate shaft 16. Referring again to FIG. 1, the body 14 may generally include a lower portion 20 (i.e., a “sole 20”) and an upper portion 22 (i.e., a “crown 22”). For the purpose of this description, the crown 22 may meet the sole 20 where the surface has a vertical tangent when the club head is held in a neutral hitting position. In practice, a portion of the sole 20 near this transition point may also be referred to as the skirt 24. Finally, the club head 10 includes a hosel 28 that is configured to receive and/or otherwise couple with the elongate shaft 16 or shaft adapter. With a face-plate design, the body 14 may further include a forward-facing wall 26 that at least partially abuts the face 12. Axes 30 further define directionally-related portions of the club head 10, including a fore-aft axis 32 extending through the face 12 (generally indicating front and rear portions/ directions of the club head 10), a vertical axis 34 extending perpendicular to the fore-aft axis 32 and between the sole 20 and crown 22, and a toe-heel axis 36 extending perpendicular to both the fore-aft axis 32 and the vertical axis 34.

FIGS. 3 and 4 generally illustrate schematic cross-sectional views 40, 42 of one embodiment of the club head 10, taken along a vertical, fore-aft plane and respectively facing in opposite directions (i.e., FIG. 3 is generally toe-facing, and FIG. 4 is generally heel-facing). As shown, the body 14 may at least partially surround and/or define an internal volume/cavity 44 that may be filled with air. While FIGS. 3 and 4 illustrate the cavity 44 as being a closed cavity (i.e., isolated from the external environment), in other embodiments the cavity 44 may be partially open, such as by removing a portion of one or both of the crown 22 and sole 20.

The views 40, 42 provided in FIGS. 3 and 4 further illustrate the thin-walled nature of the crown 22 and sole 20. In one configuration, the club head may include a band of thicker material 46 disposed about the perimeter of the body 14 (i.e., perimeter when viewed from the top/above the crown 22 along the vertical axis 34) and between the crown 22 and the sole 20. This band of material 46 may serve a structural function by reinforcing the outward edge of the body 14 against impacts, though may also be varied throughout the club head 10 to increase the moments of inertia and/or alter the center of gravity.

The face 12 may generally be formed from a metal or metal alloy, and may be structurally supported on the body 14 by a face support 48. The face support 48 may be a thicker portion of the body 14 that may support the face 12 and transfer any impact forces from the face to the remainder of the body 14. In one configuration, the face support 48 may be disposed only near the perimeter 52 of the face 12, thus leaving a portion 54 of the rear surface 50 of the face 12 exposed to the cavity 44.

To reduce structural mass beyond what is economically viable with metal alloys, the body 14 of the club head 10 may be formed from a polymeric material having a yield strength that is great enough to withstand the repeated stress imparted by the ball impact. Examples of such materials may include certain polyamides, polyimides, polyamide-imides, polyetheretherketones (PEEK), polycarbonates, engineering polyurethanes, and/or other similar materials. In general, the polymeric material may be either thermoplastic or thermoset, and may be unfilled, glass fiber filled, carbon fiber filled, or may have other suitable fillers and/or additives to promote increased strength. In one configuration, a suit-

5

able material may have a tensile strength of at least about 180 MPa, while in other configurations it may have a tensile strength of at least about 220 MPa.

In one configuration, the entire polymeric body 14 may be formed as a single, continuous piece. Such a design may have strength benefits by reducing seams, weld lines, or other parting lines that may act as stress concentration points. In another configuration, the design of the body 14 may include a single seam 60 located within the sole 20, where a sole plate 62 may be subsequently bonded/fused to the body 14 to form a closed cavity 44 (if desired). In still other designs, such as schematically shown in FIG. 7, the body 14 may be formed from three or more polymeric components, including, for example, a crown portion 64 ("crown"), a sole portion 66 ("sole"), and a forward portion 68, all of which may be fused together using an adhesive or other joining process such as ultrasonic welding, laser welding, or the like. As shown, the forward portion 68 may include both the hosel 28 and the face support 48 integrally formed from the polymeric material. In such an embodiment, a seam 60 may be disposed between the crown 64 and the sole 66, between the crown 64 and the forward portion 68, and between the sole 66 and the forward portion 68. The seam 60 may, for example, include a fused or adhered lap joint that includes at least two layers of the polymeric material.

To provide a rigid connection between the face 12 and the body 14, the face 12 may include one or more mechanical locking features 70 disposed about its perimeter 52. The locking features 70 are configured to mechanically interlock with a portion of the body 14 to hold the face in position. In one configuration, the locking feature may include a flange 72 that is positioned apart from the rear-facing surface 50 of the face 12 and that may be embedded within the face support 48 during the fabrication of the body 14. For example, the polymer used to form the body 14 may be over-molded around the flange 72, such that the polymer contacts and surrounds the flange 72 up to, for example, the rear-facing surface 50 of the face 12. In this manner, the polymer may extend on opposing sides of the flange 72. Once the polymer has solidified, it may firmly secure the flange within the face support 48, and interfere with the flange's ability to withdraw from the support 48. In one configuration, the flange 72 is connected to the remainder of the face 12 through an extension member 74 that extends from the rear surface 50 of the face 12 in a direction away from the hitting surface 18. In the face-plate designs, such as shown in FIGS. 3-6, this extension member 74 may be entirely surrounded by polymer.

In addition to providing a rigid coupling means, the over-molded flange 72 may also aid in transferring impact forces from the face 12 to the body 14 by increasing the contact area between the face 12 and the body 14 (i.e., thus lowering contact pressures and/or stress concentration points). The over-molding process may also ensure that uniform contact is achieved between the flange 72 and the face support 48 across the entire surface area of the flange 72. In this manner, overmolding may promote a more uniform force transfer than a club head with an affixed face inlay, which may only make firm contact at a plurality of discrete points.

While suitable locking features 70 may include a variety of shapes and sizes, the example illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 4 is generally an "L"-shaped locking feature 70 (including the extension member 74 and flange 72) that extends from the rear surface 50 of a face-plate style face. FIGS. 5-6 generally illustrate other locking feature designs that may be

6

used to mechanically retain the face 12 within the club body 14. These examples include a dual-flange design (FIG. 5) and a radially inward facing "L" flange design (FIG. 6). Still other configurations may include hooks, tabs, angled posts, or other such protrusions that may likewise mechanically interlock with the body 14.

FIG. 7 provides a schematic cross-sectional view of a club head with a cup-face design. As shown, the cup-face 80 includes a side-wall portion 82 that extends from the perimeter of the hitting surface 18 toward the rear of the club head 10. A flange 72 extends radially inward from the sidewall portion 82 of the face 12, and is mechanically secured to the body 14 via the face support 48. In addition to serving as an exterior surface of the clubhead 10, the sidewall 82 may also serve a similar purpose as the extension member 74. FIG. 8 illustrates a rear view of the cup-face 80, apart from the body 14. As shown, in one configuration, the flange 72 includes a plurality of holes 84. These holes 84 may be useful during the molding process to allow molten polymer to more easily extend to both sides of the flange 72. As such, once solidified, a portion of the face support 48 may be disposed within each of the plurality of holes 84. In one embodiment, there may be from about 5 to about 50 holes, or from about 10 to about 40 holes, or even from about 15 to about 30 holes. Additionally, each hole may have a diameter of from about 2 mm to about 8 mm, or from about 2 mm to about 5 mm, which may be sufficient to allow molten polymer to flow to both sides of the flange 72.

Common to all of the above-described locking feature designs is a flange 72 extending in a direction that is generally parallel to the face 12 and/or may meet the sidewall 82 at about a 90 degree angle. The flange 72 is separated from the rear surface 50 by a distance that is sufficient to permit the polymer of the body 14 to flow between the flange 72 and the rear-facing surface 50 of the face 12 such that it can mechanically secure the face 12 and prevent the face 12 from freely withdrawing from the body 14. In one configuration, the separation distance may be from about 5.0 mm to about 30.0 mm. Additionally, because the face 12 may have a slight bulge/roll curvature, the term "generally parallel," it is intended to indicate that the flange 72 is parallel to a portion of the hitting surface 18 to within about +/-30 degrees. Regardless of the design, the hitting surface 18, extension member 74 (or sidewall 82), and flange 72 may all be formed from one or more metallic materials.

As discussed above, the present club head 10 may be fabricated by molding a high tensile strength polymer material into the shape of the club body 14, while ensuring that the polymer material also over-molds certain locking features of the metallic face 12.

In general, any traditional molding technique may be used to form the body 14, however, injection molding may be the most straightforward process. During the injection molding process, one or more molding dies may define a molding cavity, with the flange 72 of the face 12 being disposed within the molding cavity. A suitable molten polymer may then be injected into the mold cavity such that the polymer extends to opposing sides of the flange 72. Once the polymer solidifies and/or cures, the flange 72 is then firmly held in place within the polymer. For single-piece body constructions, a molding technique, such as lost-core molding may be used to form the body. In multi-piece body designs, molding techniques such as injection molding or compression molding may similarly be used.

Referring again to FIG. 7, in one configuration, the body 14 may include one or more weights 90, such as captured

7

metallic inserts, that may be used to alter the magnitude and/or position of the club head center of mass and/or one or more moments of inertia of the club head **10**. In one configuration, the one or more weights **90** may be formed into the club head **10**, for example, by overmolding the weights **90** during the molding of one of the crown **22** or sole **20**. The weights **90** may, for example, be integrally molded into the band of material **46** disposed around the perimeter of the club head **10**. In another configuration, the one or more weights **90** may be separately adhered into a recess that is created during the molding process.

The one or more weights **90** may include, for example, one or more metallic objects, such as metallic discs or metallic bands. Such a weight may increase the moment of inertia about a vertical axis, and may move the center of mass rearward of the face. In an embodiment using a metallic band, the band may have a varying cross-sectional thickness to enable more precise control over the location of the center of mass and the various moments of inertia.

While the best modes for carrying out the invention have been described in detail, those familiar with the art to which this invention relates will recognize various alternative designs and embodiments for practicing the invention within the scope of the appended claims. It is intended that all matter contained in the above description or shown in the accompanying drawings shall be interpreted as illustrative only and not as limiting.

“A,” “an,” “the,” “at least one,” and “one or more” are used interchangeably to indicate that at least one of the item is present; a plurality of such items may be present unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. All numerical values of parameters (e.g., of quantities or conditions) in this specification, including the appended claims, are to be understood as being modified in all instances by the term “about” whether or not “about” actually appears before the numerical value. “About” indicates that the stated numerical value allows some slight imprecision (with some approach to exactness in the value; about or reasonably close to the value; nearly). If the imprecision provided by “about” is not otherwise understood in the art with this ordinary meaning, then “about” as used herein indicates at least variations that may arise from ordinary methods of measuring and using such parameters. In addition, disclosure of ranges includes disclosure of all values and further divided ranges within the entire range. Each value within a range and the endpoints of a range are hereby all disclosed as separate embodiment. In this description, for convenience, “polymer” and “resin” are intended to be synonymous and to encompass resins, oligomers, and polymers. The terms “comprises,” “comprising,” “including,” and “having,” are inclusive and therefore specify the presence of stated items, but do not preclude the presence of other items. As used in this specification, the term “or” includes any and all combinations of one or more of the listed items. In other words, “or” means “and/or.” When the terms first, second, third, etc. are used to differentiate various items from each other, these designations are merely for convenience and do not limit the items.

The invention claimed is:

1. A golf club head, comprising:

a body formed from a filled polymeric material having a tensile strength greater than approximately 180 MPa, the body including a crown, a sole, a hosel, and a face support; and

a cup face formed from a metallic material and cooperating with the body to define a closed volume, the cup face including:

8

a face having a hitting surface and a rear surface opposite the hitting surface;

a side-wall portion extending from a perimeter of the hitting surface and rearwardly of the rear surface, the side-wall portion forming a portion of an exterior of the golf club head and having an inner surface facing the closed volume; and

a flange extending radially inward from the inner surface of the side-wall portion and spaced from the rear surface by a separation distance;

wherein the flange is embedded within the face support such that the face support contacts and surrounds the flange to couple the cup face to the body.

2. The golf club head of claim 1, wherein the polymeric material is glass fiber filled.

3. The golf club head of claim 1, wherein the polymeric material is carbon fiber filled.

4. The golf club head of claim 1, wherein the side-wall portion is partially embedded within the face support.

5. The golf club head of claim 1, wherein the face support contacts the rear surface of the cup face.

6. The golf club head of claim 1, wherein the flange extends in a direction that is generally perpendicular to the side-wall portion.

7. The golf club head of claim 1, wherein the separation distance is between approximately 5.0 mm to approximately 30.0 mm.

8. The golf club head of claim 1, wherein the body further comprises a forward portion comprising the hosel and the face support.

9. The golf club head of claim 8, wherein the sole, the crown, and the forward portion comprise independent components formed from the polymeric material that are fused together with adhesive, ultrasonic welding, or laser welding.

10. The golf club head of claim 1, wherein the body includes a metallic weight captured within the polymeric material between the crown and the sole and adjacent a perimeter of the golf club head.

11. The golf club head of claim 1, wherein the body is a single, continuous piece.

12. A golf club head, comprising:

a body formed from an unfilled polymeric material having a tensile strength greater than approximately 220 MPa, the body including a crown, a sole, a hosel, and a face support; and

a cup face formed from a metallic material and cooperating with the body to define a closed volume, the cup face including:

a face having a hitting surface and a rear surface opposite the hitting surface;

a side-wall portion extending from a perimeter of the hitting surface and rearwardly of the rear surface, the side-wall portion forming a portion of an exterior of the golf club head and having an inner surface facing the closed volume; and

a flange having opposing sides and extending radially inward from the inner surface of the side-wall portion and spaced from the rear surface by a separation distance,

wherein the flange is embedded within the face support such that the face support contacts and surrounds the flange to couple the cup face to the body.

13. The golf club head of claim 12, wherein the side-wall portion is partially embedded within the face support.

14. The golf club head of claim 12, wherein the flange extends in a direction that is generally perpendicular to the side-wall portion.

15. The golf club head of claim 12, wherein the separation distance is between approximately 10.0 mm to approximately 20.0 mm.

16. The golf club head of claim 12, wherein the body includes a metallic weight captured within the polymeric material between the crown and the sole and adjacent a perimeter of the golf club head. 5

17. The golf club head of claim 12, wherein the hosel and the face support are integrally formed as a forward portion of the body; and 10

the golf club head further comprises a seam disposed between the crown and the sole, between the crown and the forward portion, and between the sole and the forward portion.

18. The golf club head of claim 17, wherein the seam includes at least two layers of the polymeric material that are coupled through at least one of an adhesive or a joining process. 15

19. The golf club head of claim 12, wherein the flange defines a plurality of holes extending between the opposing sides; and 20

wherein a portion of the face support is disposed within each of the plurality of holes.

20. The golf club head of claim 12, wherein the cup face and the body are further secured with an adhesive. 25

* * * * *