

## YORKSHIRE REFEREES

The publication of the new Rules is on the World Snooker Website and comes with an added explanatory document where all changes and reasoning behind certain rewritten sections will be explained. Below are the main Rule changes.

### RULE BOOK CHANGES AS FROM 11-08-2019

#### **SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS – RULE 5 – Striker and Turn**

In the original Rule book, part of this Rule said:

“If a non-striker comes to the table, out of turn, he shall be considered as the striker for any foul he may commit before leaving the table. When the referee is satisfied that the above conditions have been met, the incoming striker’s turn begins.”

We felt this needed changing for the following reasons:

When a foul is committed it ends the striker’s turn and incoming player’s turn starts. This could set a dangerous precedent i.e. a situation can arise where the striker is on the verge of beating the tournament high break, a break that is held by his opponent. This opponent could now come to the table, commit an infringement and because of this he now ends the striker’s visit thus the chance of him making the highest break.

In the new Rules we have now clearly defined that a ‘foul’ ends a player’s turn and a ‘penalty’ doesn’t end the turn but just incurs penalty points and does not affect the order of play.

The new Rule now reads:

***“It is a penalty if the non-striker comes to the table, out of turn, and commits any infringement. The referee shall call PENALTY and any ball(s) moved shall be replaced to their position prior to the infringement, and the striker’s turn will continue unaffected.”***

We also felt that this particular part of the Rule should not come under definitions, so we placed it in SECTION 3 THE GAME.

As a follow-up on this we had to change the definition of ‘Foul’.

Original:

#### **SECTION 2 RULE 16 Foul**

A foul is any infringement of these Rules.

New:

#### ***Infringements, Fouls and Penalties***

***An infringement is any violation of these Rules.***

***A foul is an infringement which will end the offender’s turn. Penalties are infringements which do not affect the order of play.***

This should now make everything clear and stops the above situation from happening.

## **SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS – RULE 9 – In Hand**

The original Rule, under paragraph (b) states:

- (b) The cue-ball remains in-hand until:
  - (i) it is played fairly from in-hand; or
  - (ii) a foul is committed whilst the ball is on the table.

We felt that sub-paragraph (ii) needed looking at because of a certain scenario that was open to many different interpretations.

When a player goes in-off with the cue-ball, the referee will place that cue-ball on the table against the bottom cushion. If the incoming player comes to the table and by chalking his cue, drops his block of chalk and contacts a ball (not the cue-ball) then this is a foul. This then means that the cue-ball (which is against the cushion) will now become in play and the incoming player must play that cue-ball from that position.

We found that unfair because it was the referee that placed it there and nothing to do with the player. We also received many queries about this particular situation and how to deal with it.

To avoid any discussions and different interpretations, we decided to change the Rule so that the cue-ball remains in hand if the cue-ball has nothing to do with the foul.

New Rule:

- (b) The cue-ball remains in-hand until:**
  - (i) it is played legally from in-hand; or**
  - (ii) a foul is committed involving the cue-ball while it is on the playing area.**

We also added in SECTION 3: THE GAME under a new Rule (16. Ball Moved Other than in a Stroke) under paragraph (b):

**If an object ball in play is disturbed by the striker while the cue-ball is in-hand, the referee will call FOUL and the cue-ball will remain in-hand for the next player's turn.**

## **SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS – RULE 17 – Snookered**

The original Rule, under paragraph (e) states:

- (e) The cue-ball cannot be snookered by a cushion. If the curved face of a cushion obstructs the cue-ball and is closer to the cue-ball than any obstructing ball not on, the cue-ball is not snookered.

To us this was a Rule that made no sense whatsoever and created many debates. This Rule was introduced in the 1995 Rule book.

Think this scenario: After a foul, the incoming player comes to the table and finds cue-ball in the jaws of a pocket, then on the cushion is Blue then the last Red. So Blue is in between White and Red. The original Rule under (e) states that this is not a snooker because the curved face of the cushion is closer to the cue-ball than the Blue. Automatically this means that if the cue-ball is not snookered here then a Free Ball cannot be awarded after the foul. We feel this is wrong and the overall consensus was to delete this Rule from the Rule book. Paragraph (e) now simply reads:

**The cue-ball cannot be snookered by a cushion.**

This now means that a Free Ball will be awarded in the described situation.

## **SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS – RULE 22 – Consultation Period**

We added a definition of a Consultation Period. This is the period where balls are being replaced after a Foul and a Miss and where players can assist the referee with the position of the balls but not touch any ball because they will receive a penalty of seven points if they did. We all know the situation where a player, as a bit of a laugh, puts the cue-ball in his trouser pocket to confuse the referee. This always opened a big debate as to whether the referee should penalise the player or not. The top refs thought not to penalise as the player was not actually consulting the referee as to the position of that cue-ball but many referees all over the world would say that they should penalise. We have debated long and hard about this and decided that, for simplicity and worldwide understanding, we had to make it clearer. The Rule now states that any touching of a ball, whether consulting the referee as to the position or not, it will be punished with a penalty of seven points.

### **Consultation Period**

***A consultation period is the period in which players may assist the referee with replacing any ball(s) to the original position prior to when an infringement was made (Section 3 Rule 2c(ii), 3(k), 10(i), 14, 15 and 16(c)) or as described in Section 3, Rule 9. The consultation period starts from the moment the decision is made to replace the ball(s) and ends when both players are satisfied as to the position of the ball(s), or by the referee's final decision.***

We also made sure that this consultation period is not only restricted to replacing balls after a Foul and a Miss but is enforced in any situation where the request or decision is made to replace balls, hence the references in the definition. These references are per the new Rule book. The situations are; -when a player contacts and disturbs a device to mark the position of a ball (ball marker), -the non-striker playing out of turn and disturbing balls, -a player disturbing balls prior to playing a stroke, -balls disturbed by other than the striker, -balls being disturbed as an act of unsporting conduct. In all these (referred) Rules it is now stated that there is a consultation period.

Under SECTION 3: THE GAME - RULE 10 - PENALTY VALUES we added:

***seven points if any player contacts, with any part of their person, attire or equipment, any ball or a device used to mark a ball, during a consultation period.***

### **SECTION 3: THE GAME – RULE 14 – Foul and a Miss**

Under paragraph (a) the original Rule states:

The striker shall, to the best of his ability, endeavour to hit the ball on or a ball that could be on after a Red has been potted. If the referee considers the Rule infringed, he shall call FOUL AND A MISS unless:

- (i) any player needed penalty points before, or as a result of, the stroke being played;
- (ii) before or after the stroke, the points available on the table are equal to the points difference excluding the value of the re-spotted black;

We have had so many discussions with and received so many opinions from players that disagree with sub-paragraph (ii).

This sub-paragraph was first introduced in the 2011 Rule book and after consultation with members who were part of the Rules Committee during that time, it was still unclear why this Rule was introduced. The current Rules Committee concluded that there was no valid reason and have decided to delete the paragraph. In Professional snooker there was also a strange conflict of interest. Although a Foul and Miss could not be called, a player would still get a warning for Ungentlemanly (now Unsporting) Conduct should they concede at this point.

**The deletion of this sub-paragraph in the new Rule book will mean that a Foul and a Miss will be called if, before or after the stroke, the points available on the table are equal to the points difference excluding the value of the re-spotted Black. In Professional snooker, when conceding the frame at this point, the issuing of a Warning for Unsporting Conduct will still be enforced.**