

SNOOKER MYTHS

Spin can be imparted to the object ball from the cue ball.

To impart any kind of spin to any ball, the point of contact between whatever is striking the ball must remain in contact with that ball for a minimum but measurable amount of time and force. The longer the time span the more spin will be imparted and is much more important to the effect than the force used. (Even though the cue remains in contact with the cue ball for a very short time, this type of stroke is not deemed to be a push). Thus a roughened tip, coated with chalk to prevent slippage, will make the cue ball spin in a chosen direction and the longer the contact between tip and ball the more spin will be achieved, so the importance of the follow through when playing the shot is therefore demonstrated. If we take this as an accepted scientific theory, it must be obvious that the point of contact of the cue ball with the object ball is of a fraction of a second and that no follow through whatsoever is involved. This is true regardless of the speed of the contact, whether the shot is hard and fast, or gentle and slow, the contact between the two balls is the same in regards to time (a fraction of a second) and follow through (none). It has been stated that to make an object ball that is tight to the cushion run along that cushion to the pocket, one must put sidespin on the cue-ball, which is then transferred, not so. The only way to get that ball to hug the cushion is to strike the object ball and the cushion at the same moment.

In conclusion then, it must be clear that it is impossible to transfer spin from the cue ball to the object ball.

Points can be taken or awarded 'away'

The number of players, and even some referees, that call fouls as "four (or any other number) away" is at epidemic proportions. No player has ever had any points deducted from their score; there has never been a numerical negativity for anyone, ever, in the history of the game. Points can only be added to a score and, as we all know, any foul will result in the opponent's score increasing, not the offender's

score decreasing. Fouls do not take points away; they only give penalty points to!

The striker cannot be snookered by a cushion, which makes any miss automatic.

Nowhere in the rulebook does the question arise, or is it written, that the above statement is correct. The Miss Rule, Sec. 3 Rule 14 states 'b) if the striker, in making a stroke, fails to first hit a ball on when there is a clear path in a straight line from the cue-ball to any part of any ball that is or could be on, the referee shall call FOUL AND A MISS'.

There are three provisos in the rulebook to this admonition. One, that no penalty points are required, two, that the points available are not equal to the points difference and three, that the referee does not consider the stroke intentional. None of these provisos mentions 'Miss', nor are there any other provisos.

Now it must be obvious, even to the most obtuse of us, that the cue ball, obstructed from any ball on by a cushion, cannot have a clear path in a straight line that ball. Sec. 2 Rule 17 (e) is the relevant rule, which also does not mention 'Miss'.

Sec. 3 Rule 12 states that if the cue ball is snookered after a foul the referee shall state FREE BALL and that is what is relevant to being obstructed or not by a cushion.

The final thought here is that there is no such thing as an automatic miss except (and including the three provisos above) when the striker is able to hit any ball on, or part thereof, directly and fails.

That table needs leveling.

Yes, maybe it does, but there may be other reasons for balls to deviate from the straight and narrow. Are you confident enough in your cue action to be sure that you didn't, inadvertently, put a little side spin on the ball if it was the cue ball that ran off true? When was the last time the table was brushed and ironed? Residual chalk and dust on the

cloth could easily make a ball change direction slightly. The raised nap, especially on a heavier or newer cloth, could also cause deviation, most often on a ball that is running slowly towards the baulk end of the table against the nap. Is the cloth old and worn? If so it would have to have been on the table for a good length of time and I'm sure it would amaze you how much powdery chalk is under it. Could this be the cause of that missed shot? How good is the set of balls being used? Are they old with lots of chips in them? Are they clean? Did the ball run over a less than perfect spot?

So before lots of time and money are wasted on leveling a table that may not need it, consider other possibilities.

Foul miss.

Contrary to popular belief this rule does not exist. There is no such thing as an 'illegal miss' or to paraphrase the song from Casablanca, a miss is just a miss and this fundamental thing applies. There is in the rules the definition of a foul (Sec. 2, rule 16) and also the definition of a miss (Sec. 2, rule 21). As can be seen they are quite separate and although there cannot be a miss without a foul, there can certainly be a foul without a miss. Ergo, the possibilities are - no foul (keep quiet or call any relevant score), or a foul (you must call it), or a foul and a miss (you must call the foul and use your judgment on the miss), but not just a miss. If your judgment is a miss following a foul, the correct call is "foul (as defined by Sec.2, 16) and a miss" (as defined by Sec.2, 21).