

ABSC Adopts Updated Rules for Billiards & Snooker

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The IBSF has adopted the changes to the rules of Snooker and English Billiards announced by the WPBSA in 2011. As the ABSC Championship Playing Conditions state that all championships will be conducted under the rules of the game published by the IBSF, these rule changes come into effect immediately, and will be used for all future ABSC Championships.

The full listing of the updated rules can be viewed by clicking the following links to the IBSF website for [Snooker](#) and [English Billiards](#), however the significant amendments are listed below:

SNOOKER

SECTION 2:

5. Striker and Turn

The person about to play or in play is the striker and remains so until the final stroke, or foul, of his turn is complete and the referee is satisfied that he has finally left the table. 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. His turn and his right to play another stroke ends when:

- (a) he fails to score from a stroke; or
- (b) he commits a foul; or
- (c) he requests the opponent to play again after his opponent has committed a foul.

6. Stroke

(a) A stroke is made when the striker strikes the cue-ball with the tip of the cue.

(b) A stroke is fair when no infringement of Rule is made.

(c) A stroke is not completed until:

- (i) all balls have come to rest;
- (ii) the striker has stood up, in readiness for a succeeding stroke, or leaving the table;
- (iii) any equipment being used by the striker has been removed from a hazardous position; and
- (iv) the referee has called any score relevant to the stroke.

(d) A stroke may be made directly or indirectly, thus:

- (i) a stroke is direct when the cue-ball strikes an object ball without first striking a cushion;
- (ii) a stroke is indirect when the cue-ball strikes one or more cushions before striking an object ball.

(e) Following the final stroke of the opponent's turn, if an incoming player plays a stroke/strikes the cue-ball before the balls have come to rest, he shall be penalised as if he were the striker, and his visit to the table shall end.

SECTION 3:

8. Touching Ball

(g) If a stationary object ball, not touching the cue-ball when examined by the referee, is later seen to be in contact with the cue-ball before a stroke has been made, the balls shall be repositioned by the referee to his satisfaction. This also applies to a touching ball which later, when examined by the referee is not touching, the balls shall be repositioned by the referee to his satisfaction.

13. Play Again

Once a player has requested an opponent to play again after a foul or requested the replacement of ball(s) after a Foul and a Miss, such request cannot be withdrawn. The offender, having been asked to play again, is entitled to:

- (a) change his mind as to:
 - (i) which stroke he will play; and
 - (ii) which ball on he will attempt to hit;
- (b) score points for any ball or balls he may pot.

14. Foul and a Miss

(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, unless:

- (i) any player needed penalty points before, or as a result of, the stroke being played; (see (b) (ii))
 - (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;
- and the referee is satisfied that the miss was not intentional.

(d) After the cue-ball has been replaced under this Rule, and the striker fouls any ball, including the cue-ball while preparing to play a stroke, a miss will not be called if a stroke has not been played. In this case the appropriate penalty will be imposed; and the ball on shall be the same as prior to the last stroke made, namely:

- (i) any Red, where Red was the ball on;
 - (ii) the colour on, where all Reds were off the table; or
 - (iii) a colour of the striker's choice, where the ball on was a colour after a Red had been potted; and
 - (iv) the next player may elect to play the stroke himself or ask the offender to play again from the position left; or
 - (v) the next player may ask the referee to replace all balls moved to their original position and have the offender play again from there; and
 - (vi) if the above situation arises during a sequence of miss calls, any warning concerning the possible awarding of the frame to his opponent shall remain in effect.
- (e) All other misses will be called at the discretion of the referee, unless, 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.

BILLIARDS

SECTION 2:

4. Stringing

Stringing is when both players (or one from each side) play together from the Baulk-line on either side of the “D” to the top cushion and back, with the object of having the ball played come to rest on the bed of the table and closer to the Baulk cushion than the ball played by the opponent. Contact with any side cushion, or impinging into the opponent’s ‘half of the table’, shall give the opponent the options.

17. Running a coup

Running a coup is when the striker, when in hand, directly pockets his cue-ball when no ball(s) are out of Baulk. It is not deemed running a coup if the ball first makes contact with the flat of a cushion and then (indirectly) enters a pocket.

SECTION 3:

15. Action after a Foul

If a foul is committed, the referee shall immediately call FOUL.

- (a) If the striker has not made a stroke, his right to play a stroke ends immediately. If he should, in the opinion of the referee, intentionally play a stroke after being called for a foul, he shall be deemed to have committed a further foul for playing out of turn and shall be further penalised.
- (c) All fouls will incur a penalty of two points but not more than two points shall be forfeited in any one stroke. Additionally, the next player shall have the option of playing:
 - (i) from where the balls have come to rest, the red if off the table being first correctly spotted; or
 - (ii) from in-hand with the red placed on the Spot and the object white/yellow placed on the Centre Spot. After a request to have the balls so spotted has been made, it cannot be withdrawn.

Rule Changes in a Nutshell

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There are numerous changes in the rules of Snooker and English Billiards which have now been adopted by the ABSC, and therefore should be applied immediately in all levels of the game. The majority of changes are simply clarifications or corrections to the structure and grammar of the rules, but a few involve some alterations to the way certain rules are applied.

Here is a brief explanation of the significant changes.

Snooker

Striker and Turn

It is clarified that if the non-striker comes to the table and plays out of turn, he will be considered as the striker for any foul he may commit. Previously, it could be interpreted that since only the striker could commit a foul, if the non-striker moved a ball it would be replaced to its original position.

Stroke

Previously, it was defined that a stroke ends when the balls come to rest. Now it is clarified that the striker must stand up and remove any equipment from a hazardous position on the table before the stroke is complete. Therefore, touching a ball with the rest as you pick it up from the table makes the stroke just played a foul, not the next one – any balls potted would then not be counted.

Play Again

It is clarified that a request to have the balls replaced after a Foul and a Miss cannot be withdrawn.

Foul and a Miss

In addition to the circumstance where a Miss will not be called if either player needs snookers (now correctly worded as needing penalty points) before or as a result of the stroke, this will also apply if the difference in scores is exactly equal to the value of the balls remaining on the table. However, a miss can still be called if the referee thinks that the miss may have been intentional.

When a Foul and a Miss is played and the balls are replaced, if the player commits a foul before playing a stroke, the referee will not call a Miss, but the opponent can still ask to have the balls replaced and the ball on remains the same. For example, if the player is snookered in the pack of reds and needs to hit a colour, then after a failed attempt and the balls are replaced he touches a red with his finger while feathering, the opponent can ask for the balls to be replaced, and the player still needs to hit a colour, although he may change his mind as to which colour he chooses.

Billiards

Stringing

It is clarified that if your ball falls into a pocket, touches a side cushion, or crosses onto the other half of the table, you lose the string.

Stroke

It is clarified that the stroke must be made ‘in the direction of cue alignment.’ This means that the stroke where the tip of the cue is brought down across the face of the cue ball (sometimes seen in nursery cannon play) is not valid, and will be considered a foul.

Running a Coup

The definition of Running a Coup is clarified in that it is not deemed running a coup if the ball first makes contact with the flat of a cushion and then (indirectly) enters a pocket.

Action After a Foul

If a player commits a foul before playing a stroke, then intentionally (in the referee’s opinion) plays a stroke after being called for a foul, he shall be deemed to have committed a further foul for playing out of turn and shall be further penalised.

After a request to have the balls re-spotted from a foul has been made, it cannot be withdrawn