

Section 2 Rule 13.

Free Ball.

O. K. we are now going to put this rule to bed by crossing T's. and dotting I's.

When the referee is considering his decision of whether to award a Free Ball or not, he must consider the exact interpretation of the rule. It states very clearly that to be awarded, only that both extreme edges of a ball or balls on need be available for the striker to hit with first impact of the cue ball, not its full circumference.

What does this mean? Well it doesn't mean that a ball that is able to be so struck must have space available equal to the width of a ball, unencumbered on each side.

Imagine if you will, that gravity has been turned off and a giant hundred metre wide ball is suspended over another similar sized ball with just one metre of separation. Now turn gravity back on and even if the giant balls had the power of unlimited movement at maximum speed, the area of potential impact of one on the other would still describe a very small circle.

Now imagine those two balls a kilometre apart and it is obvious that, not only would the possible impact area now encompass the whole of the area of each ball facing the other, but it is entirely within reason that they could miss each other altogether.

So back to reality and you will see that this analogy works just as well with our normal sized snooker balls. The closer they are in proximity the less surface area is needed to find the extreme edges. It is only when there is distance between them that the outside edges must be able to be struck without interference.

So this fact must be kept in mind if a foul ends with the cue ball and a ball on in close proximity, but especially when the foul results in the cue ball being in-hand.

The rule makers were specific in their instructions and deliberate with their inclusion of the words, - 'from all possible positions on or within the lines of the 'D'.

So using our imaginations again, picture a ball on between the brown and yellow spots and on the baulk line. With the cue ball in hand after a foul and able to be placed within a hairs breadth of the ball on, it would be almost impossible to find a position to be

able to declare a Free Ball, even if all six colours were contained within the 'D'.