

7. Section 5 Rule 1

The Referee.

Following a recent theme, namely that all rules are valid regardless in which section of the rule book they are found, this section deals with the officials. Rule 1 dealing with the referee specifically.

This rule is split into three sections, what the referee shall do, what he shall not do and what he may do if he fails to see an incident. I would like to address the second section as I believe some clarity is called for.

The first thing stated is that the referee may not answer any unauthorised questions. A case in point is that an inexperienced player asked of another acting as the referee, which ball or balls may be struck after the awarding of a Free Ball and what would be the ruling if a ball on was potted but not first struck?

I was approached by both for clarification and was met with consternation when I replied that giving any information is not permissible.

The rule specifically states that the referee is not to indicate that a player is about to make a foul stroke, which is taken to mean whether he is about to OR isn't. Answering such a question would be in

contravention of that rule.

To clarify further, the questions that a referee is permitted to answer is limited to 4.

1. He may tell either player what the scores are for each but must make no mention of the difference.

2. He may tell the striker the colour of an indicated ball.

3. He must inform the striker playing from in-hand if the cue ball is within the confines of the 'D' if asked.

4. He must answer if asked whether balls are touching.

These four are the ONLY questions by a player to the referee regarding play that the rule book authorises for answering.

All other questions may be answered by a blank stare.

The other point mentioned in this section is that the referee is not allowed to give advice or offer an opinion on anything affecting play. He cannot say to the striker, for example "why don't you go for the red over the pocket". But he can say "why didn't you go for it" after it has been potted or moved.

My advice however, is to say nothing, it's always

safer that way, as all of us married men may attest.