

1. Section 3 Rule 14 Foul and a Miss

The first and most important sentence of this rule states that 'The striker shall, to the best of his ability, endeavour to hit the ball on'.

The first thing to clarify is that the rule as stated is for snookered situations where both players are still able to win the frame without penalty points.

It is assumed that if a person is able to pick up a cue and bend over the table then they are able to strike a ball they can see and a miss must be called if they fail.

To analyse the sentence then, the first thing it says is that the striker shall to the best of his ability. This means that he must try his very best. He is obligated to do so and anything less will result in his having to try again if his opponent so desires.

The next thing it says is that he must do so to the best of his ability. This means that it is the ability of the striker that is in question, not the ability of the grade or the pennant team he is in or even the player he is drawn to play that week, but solely his own skill.

To give an analogy for this would be to imagine an A grade player playing in D grade. His skill level is such that most failures from snookered situations should

be considered by the referee as a potential miss. Conversely, all his opponents in that grade who are either inexperienced or of much lesser skill should expect far greater leniency from the referee.

In other words it is not obligatory to call a miss on one player just because you would call it on his opponent.

The rule then goes on to state what the outcome should be in considering different scenarios when a miss should be called, and directions for the referee about the state of play, but in essence the whole rule is encapsulated in the first sentence.

Of course a referee must take into account any intervening balls that have been struck and the pace the stroke was played in assessing his decision but even those two reasons for calling a miss can occasionally be called into question.

So, in conclusion the referee's first and most important consideration must be - did that player make a good enough attempt considering his ability, in my opinion, to hit a ball on.

If, when making that consideration, the referee has any hesitation in arriving at a yes or no answer then

the striker should be given the benefit of the doubt.

He must of course then go on to assess whether his avoidance of balls not on and the pace of his stroke were executed with enough care, but his first and most important consideration is the one stated.