



The Mercy Rule

Background

Rules of the Game of Snooker are approved for use by the World Professional Billiards & Snooker Association (WPBSA) and the International Billiards & Snooker Federation (IBSF) and are subject to periodic review by those organisations.

A review in 2003 saw the following amendment made to **Section 3 – Rule 4 – END OF FRAME:**

“ADD 4(d)

At the completion of any *break* and when only the colours remain on the table, if four (4) or more snookers are required, the referee will ‘award’ the *frame* ‘against’ the player requiring the snookers.

This rule does not apply if the *frame* scores are equal on the final *frame*.

In 2008 at a subsequent review this addition [i.e. Rule 3.4(d)] was **removed** from the *Rules of the Game of Snooker*. Whilst it was in effect and part of the official rules, 3.4(d) was commonly known as “The Mercy Rule”.

Local Interpretation

Although Rule 3.4(d) has been removed from the official *Rules of the Game of Snooker* since 2008, it has continued to remain popular at various Club and Regional Association competitions throughout Australia. **At this level, it has been utilised as a means of preventing frames going on for extended periods of time while a player attempts to rectify a virtually impossible points deficit by pursuing repeated snookers once on the coloured balls.**

The SBCC Board has therefore adopted the continued use of “The Mercy Rule” in all SBCC Regional scratch (i.e. non-handicap) snooker events as a means of ensuring that games in all grades are completed within a reasonable time expectation. This applies equally to preliminary rounds as well as all competition play-offs/finals series.

The points difference required for the frame to be 'awarded' with each of the colours left on the table is as follows:

Ball	Difference	Colour
	40	Yellow
	38	Green
	35	Brown
	34	Blue
	32	Pink

NOTE: (1) "The Mercy Rule" does not apply if the frame scores are equal on the final frame.

Therefore, if the frame scores are 1-1 in a best of three frame game or 2-2 in a best of five frame game, the last scheduled frame must be played out to the end regardless of the difference in scores.

NOTE: (2) The frame is awarded at the end of the break – e.g. if potting the yellow puts a player 38 in front, but he/she then fouls on the green, the frame is not awarded as the points difference would only be 34.

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