EPA to Blackball rules guide

Quick Reference

Area	Classic EPA (Otley)	Blackball (WPA)	What It Means for Player
Legal Shot Requirement	Hit ball on. No cushion contact required. Gentle roll-ups legal.	Hit ball on **AND** pot a ball OR drive any ball to cushion.	**No soft dead roll-ups.** Must hit a rail unless snookered AND you called “full ball” or “total snooker”.
Penalty After Foul	**2 visits.** Visits carry forward if you pot.	**Free shot + 1 visit.** Free shot is standalone. Visits **do not carry**.	After a free table shot, your next shot is the start of 1 visit regardless. (1st visit does not carry)
Break Requirements	Pot a ball OR drive **4 object balls** to any cushion.	Pot a ball OR drive **2 object balls past centre pocket line**.	2 balls crossing the centre line replaces counting rail impacts.
Deciding Groups	Pot on break + nominate. If missed, open table until first pot.	**Always open after break.** Determined only by first legal pot in open play.	Pots on **break OR free shots** never assign colours.
Skill Shots (Combinations)	Foul if opponent ball potted (except shot 1 after foul).	Hit own ball first (except shot 1 after foul), can pot own ball **and** opponent ball in same shot legally.	Can sink opponent blocker while potting own ball to clear pockets. (Skill shot)
Snooker Escape	Must attempt legal contact.	Only need to hit ball on; cushion contact rule waived when snookered and declared full ball or total snooker by the player.	When fully snookered, the player must declare “full ball” or “total snooker” or a cushion must be hit after contact.

Critical Changes

- **Hit a cushion (including safeties):** In Classic EPA, rolling the cue ball to rest against an object ball is standard safety play. In Blackball, failing to contact a cushion after object-ball contact is an instant foul unless the player was in a snooker AND has formally declared “full ball” or “total snooker”.
- **Stop assuming two visits:** Under EPA rules, potting a ball on visit 1 leaves visit 2 in reserve. In Blackball, the free shot is an isolated bonus shot. If you pot a legal ball on your free shot, you enter your normal single visit; if you miss on the subsequent shot, your turn ends immediately.
- **Groups are never decided on the break:** Even if you drop three reds on the break, the table remains completely open. You only secure your group by potting a ball in normal open play on the following shot.
- **Use combination skill shots:** When an opponent ball blocks a pocket, you can play your ball and pot theirs in one stroke. Provided initial contact was with your own group and your ball also drops, the shot is legal and your turn continues.
- **When Snookered:** When fully snookered, the player must declare “full ball” or “total snooker” or a cushion must be hit or legal ball potted after contact with a “on” ball.