

NFHS Designated Hitter (3-1-4)

For the 2020 season, NFHS has added another option to the DH rule. There are now 3 lineup options a team can use:

1. Straight 9-person lineup (No DH).
2. Traditional DH (10-person lineup) (3-1-4a):
 - a. The DH can bat for any of the 9 starting defensive players and their substitutes.
 - i. The DH and the player for which the DH is batting are locked in the batting order.
 - ii. These 2 players cannot be on the field defensively at the same time.
 - iii. No multiple substitutions are allowed that will alter the batting order for these players.
 - b. The starting defensive player cannot also be the DH using option 2, but can using option 3.
 - c. If a pinch hitter bats or a pinch runner runs for the DH, this player becomes the new DH.
 - d. DH may re-enter.
 - e. The DH role is terminated when:
 - i. The player being hit for bats or runs for the DH.
 - ii. DH plays defense.
3. Player/DH (9-person lineup) (3-1-4b):
 - a. The Player/DH can be for any position, not just the pitcher.
 - b. The Player/DH must be declared before the start of the game. Be sure to confirm with the coach at the plate meeting he/she does not want a Player/DH if they submit a straight 9 lineup.
 - c. Coach cannot designate a player as a player/DH later in the game.
 - d. Only the starting player/DH can be the player/DH. Any substitute will be only a player.
 - e. Only the starting player/DH can be the DH. No substitute can be the DH.
 - f. If a substitute plays defense for the player/DH, then the player/DH becomes just the DH.
 - g. The player/DH and any substitutes are locked into the batting order and cannot be on the field at the same time.
 - h. DH is terminated if a substitute bats or runs for the player/DH.
 - i. The player/DH cannot have a courtesy runner even if they are a pitcher or catcher. On Defense, they are the pitcher or catcher. On offense, they are the DH. A runner would be considered a substitution.

Notes: The type of DH (or lack thereof) must be declared before the game. Coaches cannot change the DH option once the game has started.

Please carry your DH rules Notecard with you on the field for quick reference.

The following situations are from the NFHS website.

SITUATION 1: The home team coach is using Jones as the player/DH. In the second inning, Jones comes to bat and hits a clean double. With Jones on second base, the coach goes to the plate umpire and requests that a courtesy runner run for Jones. **RULING:** A courtesy runner for Jones is not allowed. When his team is on defense, Jones is a pitcher; when Jones is at bat he is batting as a DH, not as a pitcher. A courtesy runner is not allowed for a DH. (3-1-4b; Suggested Speed-Up Rules–Courtesy Runners 1)

SITUATION 2: Jones is listed as a player/ DH and comes to bat in the third inning. Jones hits a double and, while sliding into second base, sprains his ankle and cannot continue. The coach puts Williams in to run for Jones. **RULING:** Legal. The impact of Williams running for Jones is that the role of the DH is now ended for the game. Since Jones is no longer the DH, and he and Williams cannot occupy a spot in the lineup at the same time, Jones is considered as removed from the game for his first time. (3-1-3, 3-1- 4b)

SITUATION 3: Jones is listed as the player/DH. Having pitched in the first two innings, he comes to bat in the third inning and hits a double. With Jones on second base, the coach tells the umpire that he wants to end the role of DH for Jones. He is ending the use of a DH for the game, making Jones only eligible to be the pitcher. The coach now wants to have a courtesy runner run for Jones. **RULING:** Legal. The coach may end the role of the DH, leaving the previous player/DH as only a defensive player. As Jones was the pitcher of record, having pitched in the last half-inning, he is eligible for a legal courtesy runner. (3-1-4b, Suggested Speed-Up Rules – Courtesy Runners 1)

SITUATION 4: Jones, as the player/ DH, grows tired in the fifth inning and is replaced as the pitcher by Coleman. Jones remains the DH. In the sixth inning, Jones is hit by a pitch in the helmet and the medical staff will not allow him to continue in the game. The coach a) puts Smith in to run for Jones at first base or B) has Coleman run for Jones. **RULING:** Both are legal. In (a), the role of the DH will be ended for the game as Smith is an offensive substitute for Jones. Additionally, Coleman will be out of the game since Smith now occupies that spot in the batting order. In (b), the role of the DH is also ended. Coleman does remain in the game as the pitcher and will hit for himself in later at-bats. (3-1-3, 3-1-4b)

SITUATION 5: Brady is the pitcher/ DH and tires in the second inning. The coach brings in Kelly to pitch in the second inning. In the fourth inning, Evans replaces Kelly as the pitcher. In the fifth inning, Brown replaces Evans as the pitcher. In the seventh inning, Brady returns to play first base. **RULING:** These substitutions are all legal, with Brady remaining the DH in each instance. Brown will be out of the game when Brady returns. The pitcher/DH is not locked into a defensive position and may be moved defensively while being locked in the batting order. (3-1- 4b)

SITUATION 6: Smith is listed as the second baseman/DH in the lineup. In the sixth inning, the coach wants Smith to play right field while remaining the DH. **RULING:** This is a legal defensive change. The player/DH may move positions defensively while remaining the DH. Smith would now be RF/DH. (3-1-4b)

SITUATION 7: Does a player/DH have a re-entry as the defensive player and a re-entry as the DH? **RULING:** No, any of the starting players may be removed from the game and re-entered once. The player may not be removed as a defensive player and removed later as the DH and re-enter twice in both capacities. He has one re-entry. (3-1-3)

SITUATION 8: The visiting team coach has a lineup utilizing the standard DH option; 10 starters, one being the DH for a defensive player. In the third inning, the coach realizes he wanted to use the player/DH option and not the standard DH. He asks the home plate umpire if he may change the options since the DH has yet to bat. **RULING:** No, he may not change his lineup card. Once a coach has had his lineup accepted by the plate umpire, he may not change from one DH option to the other. (3-1-4)

SITUATION 9: The home team is using the player/DH option while the visiting team is using the standard DH option with 10 starters. At the pregame conference, the home team coach insists that the visiting team must use the same DH option that he is using. **RULING:** The use of a DH is not mandatory, and each team may decide independently if it will play the game with a straight nine lineup, use the standard DH option, or use the player/DH option. Teams do not have to use the same method. (3-1-4)

SITUATION 10: The home team is using Jones as the player/DH option. In the fifth inning, with the DH going 0-3 at bat, the coach wishes to use a pinch-hitter for Jones. He tells the plate umpire that Smith will bat for the DH with Jones returning as DH later in the game. **RULING:** The coach may use a pinch-hitter for player/DH, but when he does the role of the DH has ended for the game. Jones may return later, but when he does it will be as a defensive player who will bat for himself. [3-1-4b(2)]

SITUATION 11: Kelly is the LF/DH. In the third inning, Jones substitutes for Kelly as the left fielder. In the fourth inning Kelly returns as the left fielder. In the fifth inning, Armstrong substitutes for Kelly in left field. May Kelly remain as the DH? **RULING:** No. Kelly, having been removed from the game twice, is no longer eligible to play in any capacity. The role of the DH has ended since Armstrong now must bat for himself. (3-1-4b)