



# MLB Designated Hitter Rule

## 5.11 Designated Hitter Rule

- a) The Designated Hitter Rule provides as follows:
- 1) A hitter may be designated to bat for the starting pitcher and all subsequent pitchers in any game without otherwise affecting the status of the pitcher(s) in the game. A Designated Hitter for the pitcher, if any, must be selected prior to the game and must be included in the lineup 60 Rule 5.11(a)(1) to 5.11(a)(7) cards presented to the umpire-in-chief. If a manager lists 10 players in his team's lineup card, but fails to indicate one as the Designated Hitter, and an umpire or either manager (or designee of either manager who presents his team's lineup card) notices the error before the umpire-in chief calls "Play" to start the game, the umpire-in-chief shall direct the manager who had made the omission to designate which of the nine players, other than the pitcher, will be the Designated Hitter.

Rule 5.11(a)(1) Comment: A correction of a failure to indicate a Designated Hitter when 10 players are listed in a batting order is an "obvious" error that may be corrected before a game starts. See Rule 4.03 Comment.

- 2) The Designated Hitter named in the starting lineup must come to bat at least one time, unless the opposing Club changes pitchers.
- 3) It is not mandatory that a Club designate a hitter for the pitcher, but failure to do so prior to the game precludes the use of a Designated Hitter for that Club for that game.
- 4) Pinch-hitters for a Designated Hitter may be used. Any substitute hitter for a Designated Hitter becomes the Designated Hitter. A replaced Designated Hitter shall not re-enter the game in any capacity.
- 5) The Designated Hitter may be used on defense, continuing to bat in the same position in the batting order, but the pitcher must then bat in the place of the substituted defensive player, unless more than one substitution is made, and the manager then must designate their spots in the batting order.
- 6) A runner may be substituted for the Designated Hitter and the runner assumes the role of Designated Hitter. A Designated Hitter may not pinch-run.
- 7) A Designated Hitter is "locked" into the batting order. No multiple substitutions may be made that will alter the batting rotation of the Designated Hitter.
- 8) Once the game pitcher is switched from the mound to a position on defense, such move shall terminate the Designated Hitter role for that Club for the remainder of the game.
- 9) Once a pinch-hitter bats for any player in the batting order and then enters the game to pitch, such move shall terminate the Designated Hitter role for that Club for the remainder of the game.
- 10) Once the game pitcher bats or runs for the Designated Hitter, such move shall terminate the Designated Hitter role for that Club for the remainder of the game. The game pitcher may pinch-hit or pinch-run only for the Designated Hitter.
- 11) If a manager lists 10 players in his team's lineup card, but fails to indicate one as the Designated Hitter, and the opposing manager brings the failure to list a Designated Hitter to the attention of the umpire-in-chief after the game starts, then
  - A. the pitcher will be required to bat in the batting order in the place of the listed player who has not assumed a position on defense, if the team has taken the field on defense, or
  - B. if the team has not yet taken the field on defense, the pitcher will be placed in the batting order in place of any player, as chosen by the manager of that team. In either case, the player whom the pitcher replaces in the batting order shall be considered to have been substituted for and is removed from the game and the Designated Hitter role for that Club shall be terminated for the remainder of the game. Any play that occurred before the violation is brought to the attention of the umpire-in-chief shall count, subject to Rule 6.03(b).
- 12) Once a Designated Hitter assumes a position on defense, such move shall terminate the Designated Hitter role for that Club for the remainder of the game.
- 13) A substitute for the Designated Hitter need not be announced until it is the Designated Hitter's turn to bat.
- 14) If a player on defense goes to the mound (i.e., replaces the pitcher), this move shall terminate the Designated Hitter's role for that Club for the remainder of the game.
- 15) The Designated Hitter may not sit in the bullpen unless serving as a catcher in the bullpen.

- b) **Starting Pitcher as Designated Hitter.** It is not mandatory that a Club designate a hitter for the pitcher. However, in the event the starting pitcher will bat for himself, the player will be considered two separate people for purposes of Rule 5.11(a). In such cases, the manager should list 10 players on his team's lineup card, and this player should be named twice – once as the starting pitcher and once as the Designated Hitter. Thus, if the starting pitcher is replaced, he can continue as the Designated Hitter (but can no longer pitch in the game), and if the Designated Hitter is replaced, he can continue as the pitcher (but can no longer hit for himself). If the player is simultaneously replaced both as a starting pitcher and Designated Hitter, he cannot be replaced by another two-way player filling both roles as separate people (this can be done only once on the initial lineup card by identifying that the starting pitcher will bat for himself). Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in Rule 5.11(a) above, if that pitcher bats or runs as Designated Hitter, such move will not terminate the Designated Hitter role for that Club; neither will the role be terminated in the event that Designated Hitter assumes the role of pitcher on defense. However, if that player is switched from the mound or Designated Hitter role to a position on defense other than pitcher, such move will terminate the Designated Hitter role for that Club for the remainder of the game.

**AMENDED DESIGNATED HITTER RULE:** With the Designated Hitter in place in both leagues in 2022, the Official Baseball Rules have also been amended to afford additional flexibility to starting pitchers who bat for themselves. Such a player will be considered two separate people for purposes of Rule 5.11(a). If the player is replaced as a starting pitcher, he can continue as the Designated Hitter, and if the Designated Hitter is replaced, he can continue as the starting pitcher (but can no longer bat for himself). Part of new Rule 5.11(b) can be read below:

Starting Pitcher as Designated Hitter. It is not mandatory that a Club designate a hitter for the pitcher. However, in the event the starting pitcher will bat for himself, the player will be considered two separate people for purposes of Rule 5.11(a). In such cases, the manager should list 10 players on his team's lineup card, and this player should be named twice -- once as the starting pitcher and once as the Designated Hitter. Thus, if the starting pitcher is replaced, he can continue as the Designated Hitter, and if the Designated Hitter is replaced, he can continue as the pitcher (but can no longer hit for himself). If the player is simultaneously replaced both as a starting pitcher and Designated Hitter, he cannot be replaced by another two-way player filling both roles as separate people (this can be done only once on the initial lineup card by identifying that the starting pitcher will bat for himself).