

# CR With a Player/DH?

By Brent Killackey

The player/DH option, added for NFHS play in 2020, gives high school coaches another option for player participation.

The player/DH might prove a useful option for a pitcher who hits the pitch-count limit and a coach wants to keep him in the game as a hitter.

But what happens when a player/DH, who is currently in the game as both the pitcher and the DH, gets on base — can the player/DH have a courtesy runner (if this speed-up rule is adopted in the state) as shown in the PlayPic?

The NFHS says the answer is no.

Elliot Hopkins, NFHS baseball rules editor, explained that the player/DH occupies two roles. When he's in the field, he's playing a defensive position. When he's at bat or on the bases, he occupies an offensive position as the DH. So when he's acting offensively, he's in the DH role and thus not eligible for a courtesy runner.

So whether the player/DH is a catcher or a pitcher in the defensive role, he may not have a courtesy runner when he's in the DH role.

With a player/DH, a team starts with nine players, one of whom starts in both a defensive role and the DH role. There may be substitutions in the defensive role without terminating the DH role. A player/DH who had

a substitute in the defensive role may return to that defensive role once (that counts as a starter's re-entry) and continue as the player/DH; a subsequent substitute shifts the <sup>ON A</sup> (Defensive Sub) player/DH into the DH role only.

Any substitution into the offensive role terminates the DH role for the remainder of the game. If the player/DH had not used his re-entry, he could still return to that spot in the batting order, but as a regular substitute and not as the player/DH.

Teams may also still opt to use a "traditional" DH, where they have 10 starters, one occupying the DH spot, batting for a player in a defensive spot. Both the DH spot and the spot occupied by the player for whom the DH is batting may have substitutes. With a "traditional" DH, the DH is terminated when the defensive player for whom the DH is batting (or any substitutes) pinch-hits or pinch-runs, or when the DH or any previous DH assumes a defensive position.

The "traditional" DH is not permitted to have a courtesy runner since he never occupied a defensive role, although he is eligible for a pinch-hitter or pinch-runner as a straight substitute. Unlike the player/DH, an offensive substitution does not automatically end the "traditional" DH.

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