



TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Issue Date: August 2002

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2. Slap Hit/Bunt Interpretation
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Designated Player Rule

The introduction of the Designated Player Rule and abolishment of the Designated Hitter Rule represents a major change in how coaches will manage their players and line-ups. It also presents a challenge to umpires to ensure they have a complete understanding of the workings of the rule.

While many coaches will continue to use the DP as a pseudo DH, many will not, and as the coaches become more familiar with the rule, so it will be that umpires must be alert to what can, or cannot, be done with the DP and DEFO.

The Rulebook contains several case plays and Points of Emphasis with regard to this rule that are designed to assist umpires in understanding the complexities of the rule. The attachment is also provided, with thanks to Rob Harris in WA, to further assist in educating umpires in how to manage DP & DEFO situations.

Slap Hit/Bunt Interpretation

A definition of a Slap Hit was introduced to the Rulebook to explain the difference between a Bunt and a Slap Hit. While nothing has changed with regard to a bunt (*a batted ball not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly within the infield*), there appears to be some confusion with players and umpires in the interpretation of the words of the Slap Hit definition.

When reading point (b) of the definition, the words must be read in conjunction with the opening sentence of the definition, i.e. for a slap hit to be ruled, the batter, when taking running steps (within the batter's box) toward the pitcher before making contact with the pitch, must make contact with the ball with a controlled, short chopping motion (or sweeping action).

If the batter simply assumes a bunting position, takes running steps toward the pitcher, makes contact with the ball by tapping slowly within the infield, without any swinging, chopping or sweeping motion of the bat, this action should be interpreted as a bunt, and if the ball becomes foul on a third strike, the batter would be out.

The action of the batter running through the batter's box toward the pitcher, in itself, does not necessarily constitute a slap hit ~ there must be some physical movement of the bat!

Alternate Mechanic For First Base Umpire

Following the successful trial of a new mechanic for the first base umpire in the four umpire system, it has been decided that the mechanic can be used as an alternative to the 'button-hook' at first base in the three umpire system.

The basis of the mechanic is that the umpire, rather than moving into the infield and button hooking to pick up the batter-runner at first base, moves down the line, in foul territory, toward home plate (See Fig. 1). The initial movement should not take the umpire any further than the front of the coach's box, i.e. 15 feet toward home plate from the base.

When to use: Any time with no runners on base, or a runner on first base only, and the batted ball is a ground ball through the infield (i.e. the third base umpire does not 'go', but stays within the infield area to cover any play at second base).

Benefit: Since the ball is through the infield, by moving down the line toward home it is considered easier to pick up the batter-runner touching first base than it is to cut into the infield (sometimes across the line of the runner from first base) and button-hook, especially if there is a possibility of a throw from the outfield to first base. (Many outs have been missed by umpires failing to observe batter-runners missing first base, due to incorrect buttonhook mechanics, e.g. turning the wrong way to pick up the batter-runner, or being too slow to move into the infield and turning as, or after, the batter-runner has reached first base).

From this alternate position, it is also a simple movement (1) into the infield for a possible play-back on the runner who has rounded first base, or (2) to rotate to home plate in event of the plate umpire having rotated to third base for a possible play. (See Fig. 2)

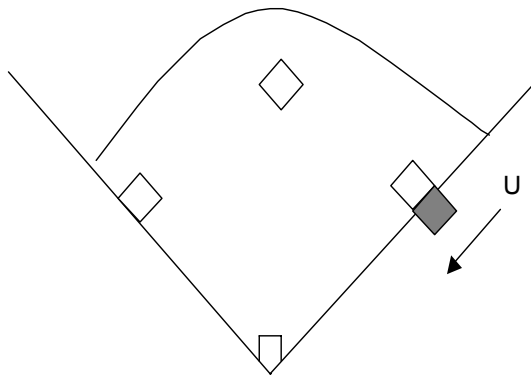


FIG. 1

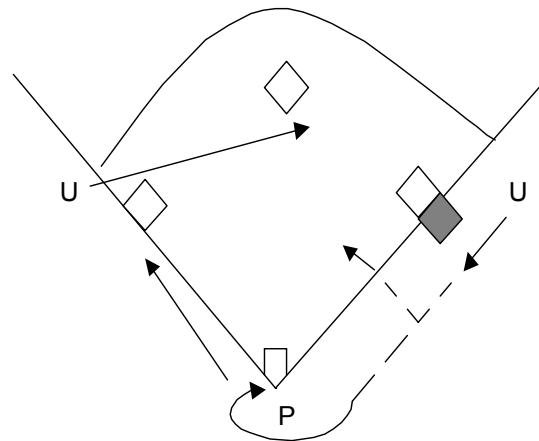


FIG. 2

This is an alternate mechanic and it is acceptable for an umpire at first base to use this or the standard buttonhook mechanic.

Alan McAuliffe
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DESIGNATED PLAYER

When using a designated player (DP)

1. A team starts the game with 10 players.
2. The DP bats for the DEFO (Defence Only), who is listed in the 10th place in the Line-Up.
3. The DP and DEFO may be substituted using players from the bench.
4. The starting DP and DEFO may re-enter once.
5. The DP may field for any player, at any position, at anytime.
6. The player that the DP fields for must still bat, and becomes a ‘temporary DP’.
7. The DP fielding for any player, **other than the DEFO**, is **not** a substitution, as no player has entered the game from the bench.
8. If the DP fields for the DEFO, the DEFO has left the game. The game continues with 9 players. The starting DEFO **may re-enter once** or a substitute may resume, as the DEFO, and the game then reverts back to 10 players.
9. The DEFO may bat but only in the place of the DP, and this is **not** a substitution, as no player has entered the game from the bench.
10. If the DEFO bats for the DP, the **DP** has left the game. The game continues with 9 players. The starting DP **may re-enter once** or a substitute may resume, as the DP, and the game then reverts back to 10 players. The DEFO goes back to fielding only.

	NAME	POS	UNI.
1	Adams P	9	22
2	Bills F (T DP)	8	32
3	Clisby D	1	24
4	Davies L	DR 2	52
5	Edwards R	4	15
6	Francis K	7	74
7	Gordon M	8	18
8	Hall E	5	99
9	Inglis A	3	40
10	Jones C	6	69

**DP FIELDS FOR F2
NOT A SUBSTITUTION**

	NAME	POS	UNI.
1	Adams P	9	22
2	Bills F	2	32
3	Clisby D	1	24
4	Davies L	DR 2	52
5	Edwards R	4	15
6	Francis K	7	74
7	Gordon M	8	18
8	Hall E	5	99
9	Inglis A	3	40
10	Jones C	6	69

**DP FIELDS FOR DEFO
DEFO HAS LEFT THE GAME - BACK TO 9
PLAYERS**

**MAY RE-ENTER
ONCE**

	NAME	POS	UNI.
	Adams P	9	22
	Bills F	2	32
3	Clisby D	1	24
4	Davies L	DP	52
	Jones C	6	69
5	Edwards R	4	15
6	Francis K	7	74
7	Gordon M	8	18
8	Hall E	5	99
9	Inglis A	3	40
10	Jones C	6	69

MAY RE-ENTER ONCE

**DEFO BATS FOR DP
DP HAS LEFT THE GAME - BACK TO 9 PLAYERS**

	NAME	POS	UNI.
	Adams P	9	22
	Bills F	2	32
3	Clisby D	1	24
4	Davies L	DP	52
	Kennett B	DP	02
5	Edwards R	4	15
6	Francis K	7	74
7	Gordon M	8	18
8	Hall E	5	99
9	Inglis A	3	40
10	Jones C	6	69
	Morris N	6	01

MAY RE-ENTER ONCE

MAY RE-ENTER ONCE

**SUBSTITUTIONS FROM BENCH
ORIGINAL STARTERS MAY RE-ENTER ONCE**