



## Official Ruling 22-02

### Starting & Substitute Pitchers Must Pitch To One Batter

Below is the baseball rule which requires the starting and relief pitchers to pitch to one batter before they can leave the mound:

3.05—(a) The pitcher named in the batting order handed to the official scorer, as provided in Rules 4.01(a) and 4.01(b) shall pitch to the first batter or any substitute batter until such batter or any substitute batter is put out or reaches first base, unless the pitcher sustains injury or illness which, in the judgment of the umpire-in-chief, incapacitates the pitcher from pitching.

(b) If the pitcher is replaced, the substitute pitcher shall pitch to the batter then at bat, or any substitute batter, until such batter is put out or reaches first base, or until the offensive team is put out, unless the substitute pitcher sustains injury or illness, which in the umpire-in-chief's judgment, incapacitates the pitcher from further play as a pitcher.

As stated above a starting pitcher enters the game when the lineup is presented to the scorer. This is a baseball rule not a Dixie rule. Further, a substitute pitcher unlike a starting pitcher enters the game when he begins warm-up pitches as stated below.

3.08—(a) If no announcement of a substitution is made, the substitute shall be considered to have entered the game when:

(1) If a pitcher, the substitute takes position on the pitcher's plate and commences making warm up pitches during an inning or commences making preliminary pitches at the beginning of his/her team's defensive half of the inning.

Further; 3.03(a)—NOTE: A pitcher removed from the mound for a substitute pitcher in the defensive line-up may return to the game in another defensive position but may not return to the mound as a pitcher.

If an umpire mistakenly allows a pitcher to warm-up and leave the game without pitching to one batter, the pitcher has nevertheless been in the game and cannot return as a pitcher.

*William Wade, Commissioner*  
*August 26, 2021*