

## Options

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An option (optional assignment) allows a club to move a player on its 40-man roster to and from the minor-leagues without exposing him to the other 29 teams.

After 4 or 5 years as a professional, a player must be added to his club's 40-man roster or exposed to the 29 other clubs in the Rule 5 draft. (A club has 5 years to evaluate a player who signs his first pro contract at 18 years old or younger, but only 4 years to decide on a player who signs at age 19.) For purposes of calculating years as a pro, the counting begins the day a player signs his first pro contract, not the season he begins to play.

When a player is added to the 40-man roster, his club has three "options," or three separate seasons during which the club may to move him to and from the minor leagues without exposing him to other clubs. A player on the 40-man roster playing in the minors is on optional assignment, and within an option season, there is no limit on the number of times a club may demote and recall a player. However, a player optioned to the minor leagues may not be recalled for at least 10 days, unless the club places a Major League player on the disabled list during the 10-day window.

After three options are exhausted, the player is out of options. Beginning with the next season, he must clear waivers before he may be sent to the minors again. See Waivers. Additionally, a player with 5 years of Major League service may not be sent to the minor leagues on an optional assignment without his consent.

### Counting option years

- If a player is not sent to the minors during a year, an option is not used.
- If a player is on the 40-man roster in spring training but optioned to the minors before the season begins, an option is used.
- If a player's optional assignment(s) to the minors total less than 20 days in one season, an option is not used.
- A player may be eligible for a fourth option year if he has been optioned in three seasons but does not yet have five full seasons of professional experience. A full season is defined as being on an active pro roster for at least 90 days in a season. (If a player is put on the disabled list after earning 60 or more days of service in a single season, his time on the DL is counted.) The 90-day requirement means short-season leagues (New-York Penn, Northwest, Pioneer, Appalachian, Gulf Coast, Arizona Rookie, Dominican and Venezuelan Summer Leagues) do not count as full seasons for the purposes of determining eligibility for a fourth option.