



2025 NFHS SOFTBALL STEPPING THROUGH DP/FLEX & LIVING LINEUP



**PLAY.
PERFORM.
COMPETE.
TOGETHER.**

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UNDERSTANDING THE DP/FLEX RULE

- DP/FLEX is often confusing to both coaches and umpires
- This presentation steps through the DP/FLEX rules
- We will start at the beginning and step through the most questioned parts of the rule showing some common uses
- Each step builds on a previous step



STEP 1

KNOW YOUR JOB



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STEP 1 POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Normally starting players have two “jobs”
 - They play both offense and defense
- DP/FLEX splits these “jobs” into two positions
 - DP is an offensive specialist (3-3-6a)
 - FLEX is a defensive specialist (3-3-6b,e&f)
- Positions have to be declared and occupied at the start of the game (3-1-1)
 - This is why if you are going to utilize the DP/FLEX it has to be a part of the starting lineup



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STEP 2

KEEP DOING YOUR JOB



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STEP 2 KEEP DOING YOUR JOB

- DP is an offensive specialist (3-3-6a)
 - They keep doing their “job” by playing offense
 - As long as the DP continues to play offense in their spot in the lineup they have not left the game (3-3-6d)
- FLEX is a defensive specialist (3-3-6b,e&f)
 - They keep doing their “job” by playing defense
 - As long as the FLEX player continues to play defense (any of the 9 defensive positions) when their team is on defense they have not left the game (3-3-6f)



STEP 3

FLEX CAN DO THE DP'S JOB



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STEP 3 FLEX DOES DP'S JOB

- DP actually bats for the FLEX (3-3-6b)
 - They split one players "jobs" into two positions
- This ties DP and FLEX together on offense
- If the FLEX bats or runs they must do so in the DP's position in the lineup (3-3-6d&g)
 - If this happens the DP has left the game (9 active players)
 - Position is still available for starting DP to reenter or legal sub to enter
- If the FLEX bats in any other position in the lineup it is an illegal substitute (3-3-6g)



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WHY WOULD FLEX DO DP'S JOB

- FLEX plays 1st base, is a great hitter but very slow runner
- DP is a very fast runner but not a good hitter
- FLEX bats and gets on base then DP reenters to run for them
- FLEX goes back to playing defense only and has never left the game



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FLEX DOES DP'S JOB

- FLEX is doing both jobs
 - DP has left the game
 - Arrow up to show who is batting in the 7th position
- DP (Cooper) leaves the game (has no job) but has one reentry

NO.		PLAYER	RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	D. JONES		7
	SUB.			
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		1
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
25	7	A. COOPER		DP
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		9
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		3
	SUB.			
NO.		SUBSTITUTES		POS.
10		S. HOWELL		
4		B. BAKER		
6		C. SMITH		
55		D. BROWN		



FLEX DOES DP'S JOB

- DP reenters to run
 - Cooper uses their one reentry
- FLEX (Green) returns to playing defense only
 - Arrow down to show FLEX is back to playing defense only
 - They never quit doing their job (playing defense) so they have never left the game

NO.		PLAYER	RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	D. JONES		7
	SUB.			
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		1
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
25	7	A. COOPER		DP
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		9
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		3
	SUB.			
NO.		SUBSTITUTES		POS.
10		S. HOWELL		
4		B. BAKER		
6		C. SMITH		
55		D. BROWN		



STEP 4

DP CAN DO THE FLEX'S JOB



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STEP 4 DP DOES FLEX'S JOB

- FLEX's job is to play defense
 - If they no longer play defense they have left the game
 - If a legal substitute enters the FLEX position (3-3-6f)
 - Starting FLEX (player) has left the game has one reentry
 - FLEX position remains active (10 players)
 - If the DP plays defense instead of the FLEX, FLEX has left the game (9 active players) (3-3-6e)
 - Position is still available for starting FLEX to reenter or legal sub to enter

WHY WOULD DP DO FLEX'S JOB

- Coaches will start with DP/FLEX
 - DP is batting 7th and FLEX is listed as F1
 - Once lineup is official they tell umpire at the plate meeting “my DP is playing defense for the FLEX and will be my pitcher”
- Why do this?
 - DP is their starting pitcher and a good hitter, FLEX is 2nd best pitcher but not a good hitter
 - If DP begins to struggle pitching later in the game coach can reenter the FLEX to pitch but keep their DP (the better hitter) batting the entire game



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DP DOES FLEX'S JOB

- DP is doing both jobs
 - Identify as F1 for courtesy runner eligibility
- FLEX (Green) leaves the game (has no job) but has one reentry

NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	D. JONES		7
	SUB.			
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		3
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
25	7	A. COOPER	1	DP
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		9
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		1
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
10	S. HOWELL			
4	B. BAKER			
6	C. SMITH			
55	D. BROWN			



STEP 5

POSITIONS LIVE FOREVER



**PLAY.
PERFORM.
COMPETE.
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STEP 5 POSITIONS LIVE FOREVER

- Step 1 mentioned a team has to start with DP/FLEX positions if they want to use them anytime during a game
- Once you start with DP/FLEX those positions are available for the entire game
 - These positions can be active (10 players) or inactive (9 players)
 - An eligible sub can enter into these positions at any time
- Players lose eligibility but positions live forever
 - Players have one reentry, once a player leaves the game for a second time they are done for the game
 - But their position can be filled by any eligible sub for the entire game



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CONTINUE WITH FLEX DOING DP'S JOB

- Later in game FLEX bats again in the 7th position
- DP leaves the game again
 - Cooper has left the game a second time and has no more eligibility for the game (done for the game)
- FLEX bats again
 - Show arrow up to know who is batting in 7th position

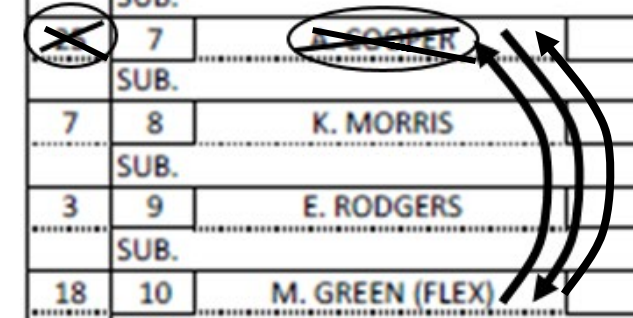
NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	D. JONES		7
	SUB.			
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		1
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
7	7	A. COOPER		DP
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		9
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		3
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
10	S. HOWELL			
4	B. BAKER			
6	C. SMITH			
55	D. BROWN			



CONTINUE WITH FLEX DOING DP'S JOB

- FLEX gets on base
- Cooper cannot reenter
- Any of the 4 substitutes are eligible to enter in the DP position
- Coach says "Blue I want 10 to run for the FLEX"
 - VERY important that umpire gets clarity
 1. Is #10 entering in the DP position and the FLEX is returning to playing defense only (Green is not leaving the game) OR
 2. Is #10 entering in the FLEX position playing offense and defense (Green leaves the game)

NO.		PLAYER	RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	D. JONES		7
	SUB.			
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		1
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
7	7	A. COOPER		DP
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		9
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		3
	SUB.			
NO.		SUBSTITUTES		POS.
10		S. HOWELL		
4		B. BAKER		
6		C. SMITH		
55		D. BROWN		

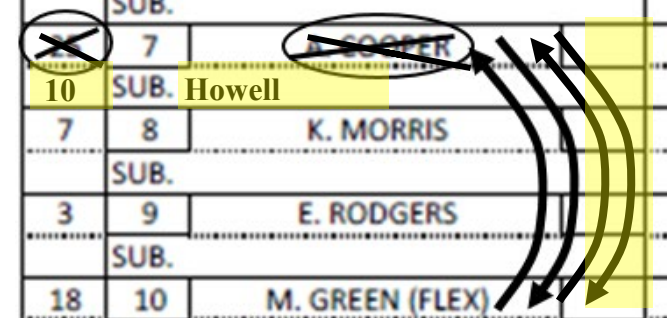




CONTINUE WITH FLEX DOING DP'S JOB

- Coach wants option 1 with #10 entering the DP position and the FLEX player going back to playing defense only
- Show #10 Howell entering in the 7th position in the lineup and arrow down to show FLEX going back to playing defense only

NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	D. JONES		7
	SUB.			
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		1
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
7	7	A. COOPER		DP
10	SUB.	Howell		
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		9
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		3
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES			POS.
10	S. HOWELL			
4	B. BAKER			
6	C. SMITH			
55	D. BROWN			





STEP 6

**DP DOES ANOTHER PLAYERS DEFENSIVE
JOB**



**PLAY.
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TOGETHER.**

STEP 6 DEFENSIVE JOB

- Step 1 mentioned that most players have two “jobs”- playing offense and defense
- Step 4 discussed the DP doing the FLEX’s job and the FLEX leaving the game
- Instead of playing defense for the FLEX the DP could play defense for one of the other 8 batters in the lineup
 - In this case the other player still bats in their spot in the lineup and has not left the game(3-3-6e)
 - That player still has a “job” as they are still playing offense so they have not left the game
 - This allows the FLEX and DP to both play defense at the same time



PLAY.
PERFORM.
COMPETE.
TOGETHER.



WHY WOULD DP DO SOMEONE ELSE'S DEFENSIVE JOB

- Two most common uses
 - A player is having a bad day and coach wants to talk with them to help regain their focus
 - A player gets a slight injury and needs treatment that is not able to be done in time to play defense but they do not want to remove them from the game
 - Ankle needs taped
 - Abrasion from slide needs bandaged
- By definition this is not a substitute and does not have to be reported as no player is leaving the game
 - It is good preventative umpiring to ask coaches to report when DP plays defense as it helps eliminate confusion if asked by the other team



PLAY.
PERFORM.
COMPETE.
TOGETHER.



DP DOES ABLE'S DEFENSIVE JOB

- DP is doing two jobs
 - Batting in the 7th position in the lineup and playing F4 on defense
 - Mark as F4 if desired to ensure there is not a question about unreported entry
- Able will continue to bat 2nd and has not left the game
 - They still have a job on offense so they have not left the game

NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	D. JONES		7
	SUB.			
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		3
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
25	7	A. COOPER	4	DP
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		9
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		1
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
10	S. HOWELL			
4	B. BAKER			
6	C. SMITH			
55	D. BROWN			



SUMMARY

DO YOU HAVE A JOB?



**PLAY.
PERFORM.
COMPETE.
TOGETHER.**

DO YOU HAVE A JOB?

- If you do not have a job to do you have left the game
- DP's job is to play offense
 - If they continue to play offense they have not left the game
- FLEX's job is to play defense
 - If they continue to play defense they have not left the game
- FLEX can play offense but only in the DP's position
 - When this happens the DP lost their job so they have left the game
- DP can also play defense
 - If they play defense for the FLEX the FLEX has left the game (they have no job)
 - If they play defense for one of the other 8 batters in the lineup that player still has an offensive job to do and has not left the game
- Positions (jobs) are available for the entire game (jobs can be filled by others)



PLAY.
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QUESTIONS



**PLAY.
PERFORM.
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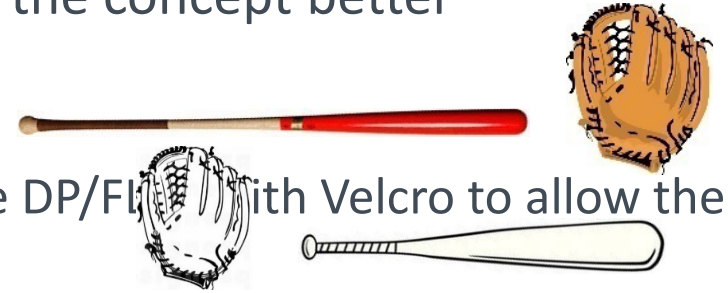
LIVING LINEUP



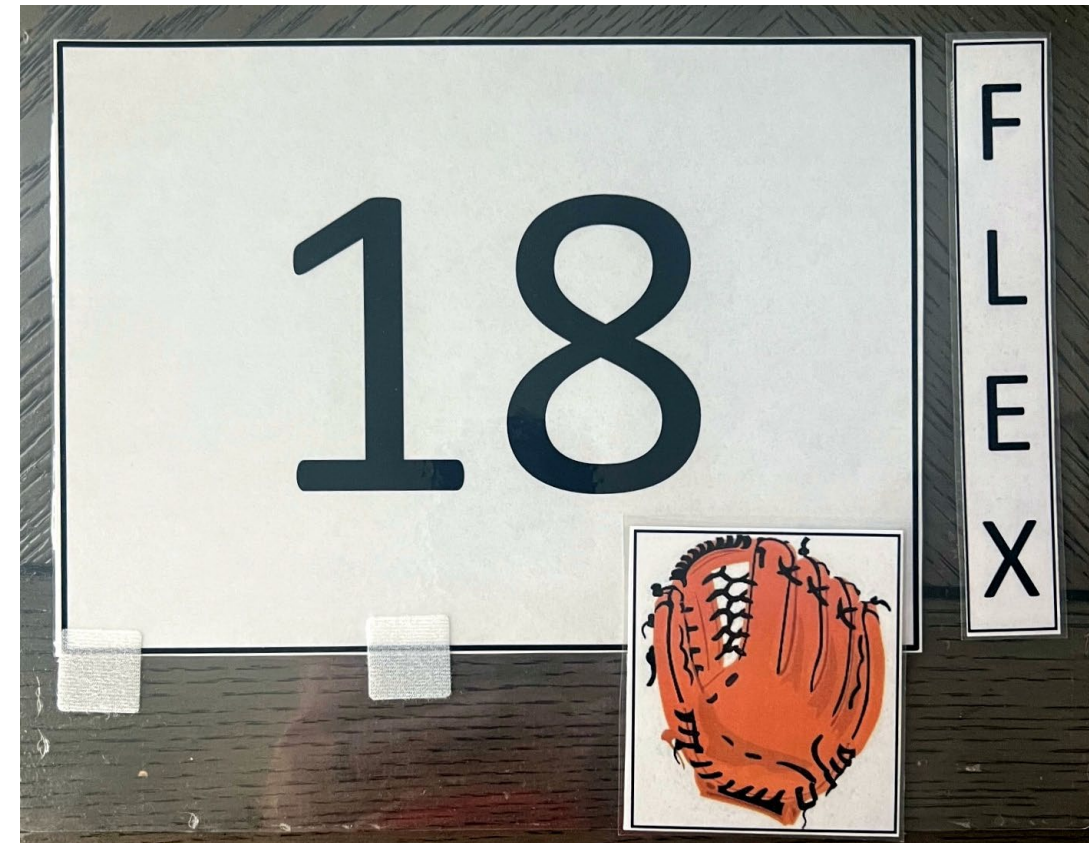
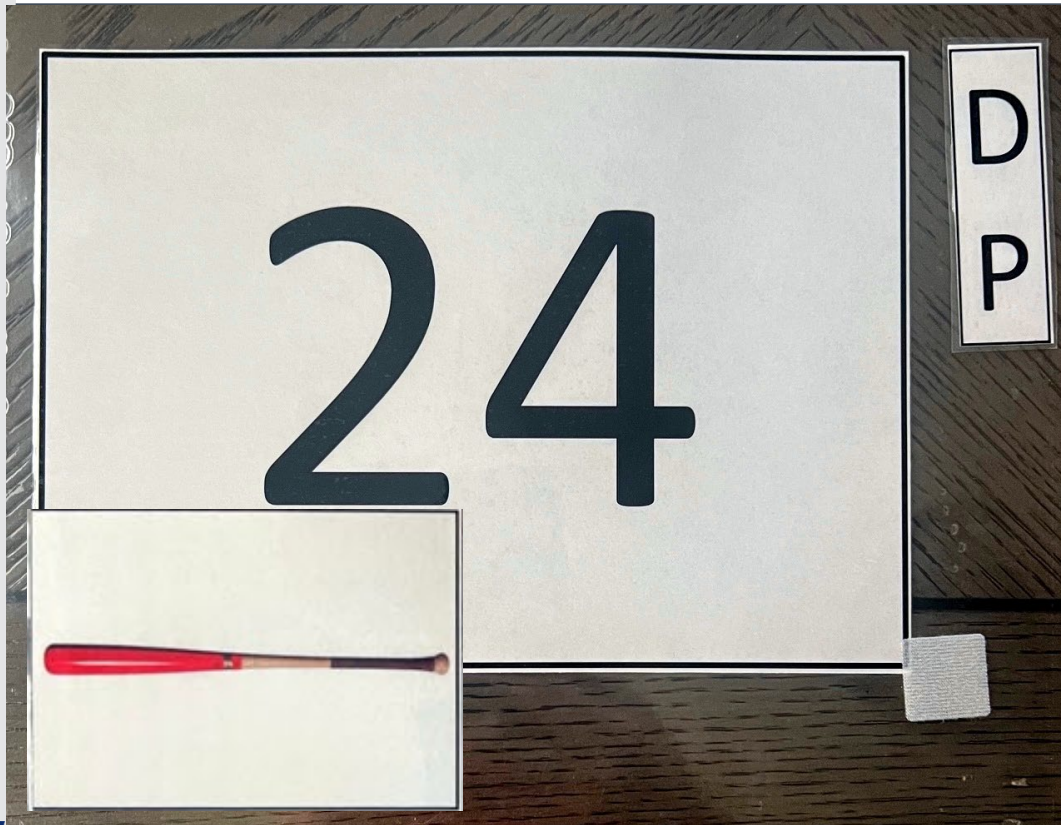
**PLAY.
PERFORM.
COMPETE.
TOGETHER.**

BACKGROUND TO LIVING LINEUP

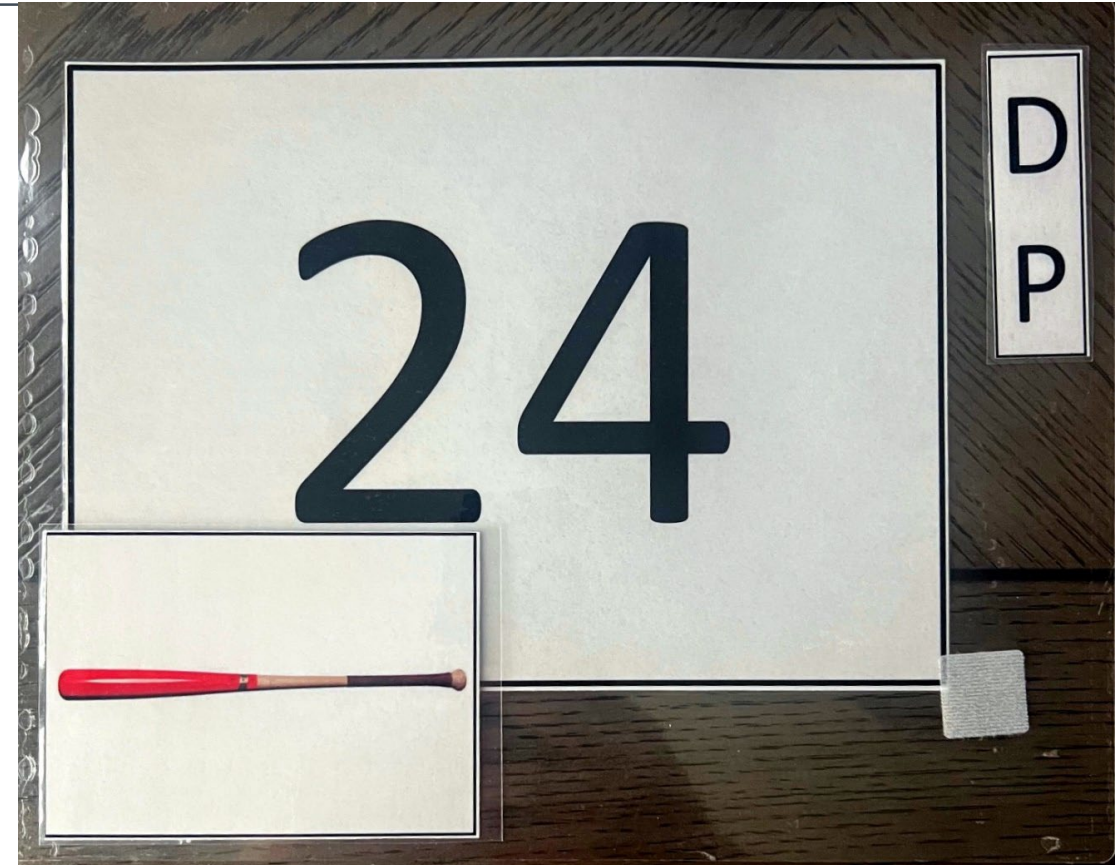
- Adds action to lineup management discussion
- Physical movement helps kinesthetic learners understand the concept better
- Suggested “Props” for the presentation
 - Laminated number sheets for each person in the lineup
 - Laminated pieces that represent batting and fielding for the DP/FL with Velcro to allow them to be moved
 - Laminated pieces for player that had DP play defense for them with Velcro to allow them to be moved
 - Chairs for eligible substitutes and players that have left the game in the positions needed
 - Sitting down means they are not currently in the game
 - Laminated pieces for those that have left the game a second time no longer have eligibility



CLOSE UP OF NUMBER SHEETS AND MOVEMENT



MOVEMENT FOR DP PLAYING DEFENSE

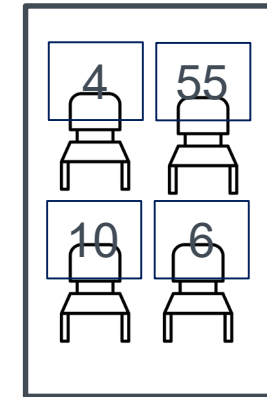
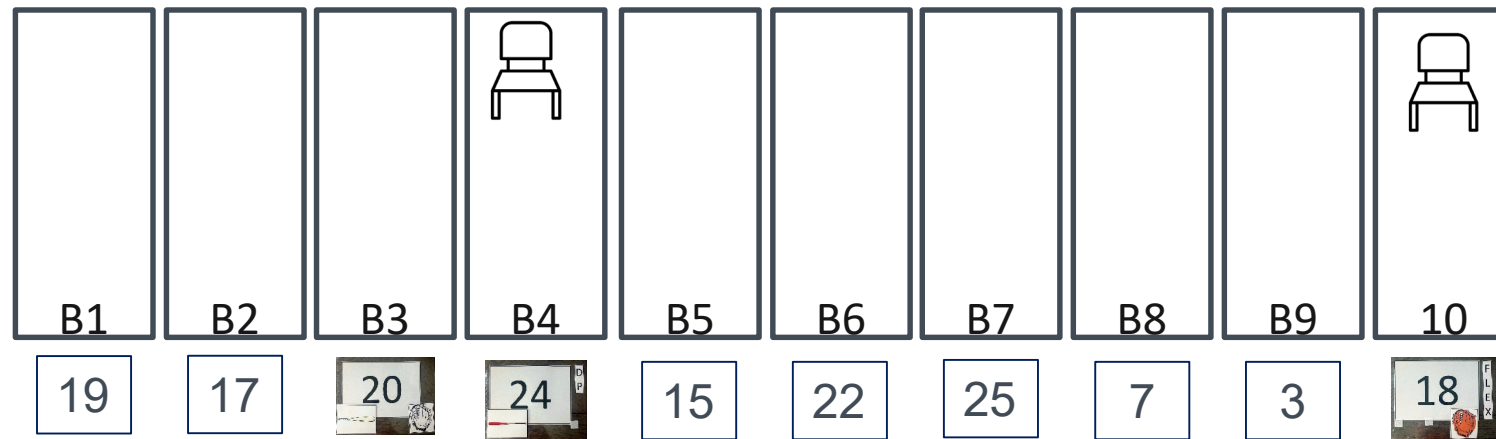


ARRANGEMENT FOR LIVING LINEUP

- Ask for 14 volunteers
 - Need minimum of 4
- Give each volunteer a number and place them in order shown in the lineup card
 - * indicate the required spots
 - If you have limited volunteers tape the remaining numbers to empty chairs to show the positions
 - If you have enough volunteers have the 4 substitutes sit in chairs
 - Have a chair behind spot 4 and spot 10 in the lineup

NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	D. JONES		DP
	SUB.			
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		3
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
25	7	A. COOPER		7
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		1
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		9
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES			POS.
10	S. HOWELL			
4	B. BAKER			
6	C. SMITH			
55	D. BROWN			

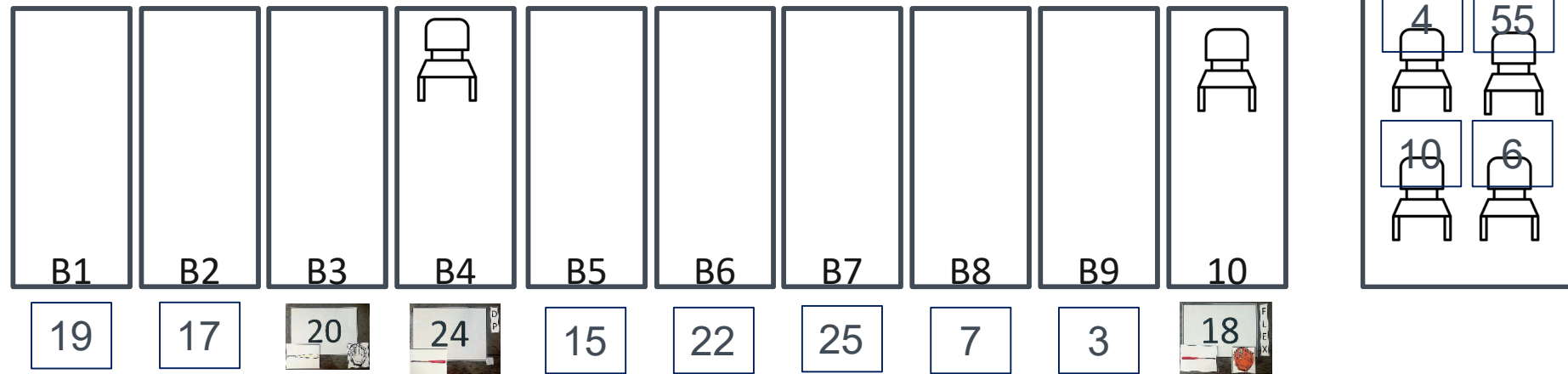
ARRANGEMENT FOR LIVING LINEUP





MOVEMENT FOR EXAMPLE 1

FLEX PLAYING OFFENSE FOR DP



Flex is playing offense for DP (full position (DP's spot)) in the lineup



QUESTIONS



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DP/FLEX RULE

SAMPLE EXERCISES



PLAY.
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SAMPLE LINEUP CARD

All samples will use this lineup card and progress through a series of substitutions

NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	D. JONES		DP
	SUB.			
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		3
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
25	7	A. COOPER		7
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		1
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		9
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
10	S. HOWELL			
4	B. BAKER			
6	C. SMITH			
55	D. BROWN			



SAMPLE EXERCISE #1

- Jones (DP) bats and gets on base safely
- The offensive coach asks for time to make a change
- “Green will run for Jones”

SAMPLE EXERCISE #1

Green (FLEX)
running for
Jones (DP)

NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	D. JONES		DP
	SUB.			
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		3
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
25	7	A. COOPER		7
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		1
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		9
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
10	S. HOWELL			
4	B. BAKER			
6	C. SMITH			
55	D. BROWN			



SAMPLE EXERCISE #1

Note –

Jones has left the game (no longer playing offense), they still have one re-entry. Green is now playing offense and defense.



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SAMPLE EXERCISE #2

- Two innings later, Green singles to left
- The offensive coach asks for time to make a change
- "Smith is running for Green and Green will still be playing right field"

SAMPLE EXERCISE #2

Note –

- This substitution is critical for the umpire to ensure they understand what the coach is requesting
- Coach says “Smith is running for Green” at this point there are two options:
 1. Smith is substituting for Green and is the new FLEX playing offense in the DP’s position in the lineup. Change is made and recorded in the 10th position
 2. Smith is substituting for Jones and is the new DP, Green is going back to playing defense only. Change is made and recorded in the 4th position.
- By actively listening and understanding the second part of the coach's statement “Green will still be playing right field” we know the coach wants option 2.

SAMPLE EXERCISE #2

Smith (sub) running for Green (FLEX) is recorded as a sub for Jones and becomes the new DP

Green remains in the game playing right field only



NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24 6	4	D. JONES Smith		DP DP
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		3
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
25	7	A. COOPER		7
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		1
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		9
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
10	S. HOWELL			
4	B. BAKER			
6	C. SMITH			
55	D. BROWN			

SAMPLE EXERCISE #2

Note –

- Since Green will continue to play defense, Smith enters the game for the first time as the new DP
- Since Green (FLEX) is still playing defense they have NOT left the game (never quit using their mitt)



PLAY.
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SAMPLE EXERCISE #3

- In the 4th inning, the offensive coach asks for time to make another change
- “Jones to re-enter and bat for Smith”

SAMPLE EXERCISE #3

Jones (starting DP) re-enters for Smith

NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	D. JONES		DP
	SUB.	Smith		DP
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		3
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
25	7	A. COOPER		7
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		1
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		9
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
10	S. HOWELL			
4	B. BAKER			
6	C. SMITH			
55	D. BROWN			



SAMPLE EXERCISE #3

Note –

- Jones has used her re-entry
- Smith has left the game and has a re-entry remaining
- This is no different than a substitution/re-entry anywhere else in the lineup



SAMPLE EXERCISE #4

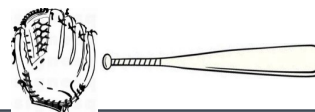
- In the next half inning, the defensive coach asks for time to make another change
- “Jones will play defense in center field for Thomas”



PLAY.
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SAMPLE EXERCISE #4

Jones (DP) to
play defense
in center field
for Thomas



NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8
	SUB.			
24	4	<u>D. JONES</u>	8	DP
	SUB.			DP
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		3
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
25	7	A. COOPER		7
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		1
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		9
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
10	S. HOWELL			
4	B. BAKER			
6	C. SMITH			
55	D. BROWN			

SAMPLE EXERCISE #4

Note –

- Jones the DP is now playing offense (using their bat) and defense (using Thomas' mitt)
- Thomas still bats in the 3rd position in the lineup is playing offense only (still using their bat) and has NOT left the game



SAMPLE EXERCISE #5

- In the next inning, the defensive coach asks for time to make another change
- “Thomas is going back to playing center field, Jones will play defense in right field for Green”

SAMPLE EXERCISE #5

Thomas goes back to center field

Jones (DP) to play defense in right field for Green (FLEX)



NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	B. HARRIS		6
	SUB.			
17	2	S. ABLE		4
	SUB.			
20	3	C. THOMAS		8 8
	SUB.			
24 8	4	<u>D. JONES</u> Smith	9 8	DP DP
15	5	R. ALEXANDER		3
	SUB.			
22	6	B. MOORE		2
	SUB.			
25	7	A. COOPER		7
	SUB.			
7	8	K. MORRIS		5
	SUB.			
3	9	E. RODGERS		1
	SUB.			
18	10	M. GREEN (FLEX)		9
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
10	S. HOWELL			
4	B. BAKER			
6	C. SMITH			
55	D. BROWN			

SAMPLE EXERCISE #5

Note –

- Jones (DP) is still playing offense and defense (now using the FLEX's mitt)
- Green (FLEX) has left the game (still has a re-entry) since she is not playing defense (no longer using their mitt)

THANK YOU

National Federation of State High School Associations

PO Box 690 | Indianapolis, IN 46206

Phone: 317-972-6900

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