



**ILLINOIS
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL
ASSOCIATION**

**SOFTBALL
DP/FLEX
RULE
Guidelines**

DP/FLEX RULE

NFHS Rule 3, Section 3, Article 6

- The Designated Player (DP)/FLEX Rule replaces the DH (Designated Hitter) Rule
- Allows for more players participation and flexibility in the game
- Gives coaches the option to:
 - not use DP/FLEX at all
 - use it to the same extent as the DH was used
 - use the DP/FLEX option to its fullest potential
- A DP does not have to be used
- If a DP is used, it must be noted on the starting lineup. The DP position always remains an option for use in the lineup, as long as there are eligible substitutes
- Once a team starts the game with the DP/Flex on their lineup card, those positions are available for the entire game.
 - As with all players they only have one reentry, but the position is always available for an eligible substitute to enter that position

LINEUP CARD

- The DP is the offensive player and must remain in the same batting position for the entire game.
- The name of the player for whom the DP is batting (FLEX) will be placed in the #10 spot in the lineup.
- If replaced by a substitute, the DP position remains in the lineup.
- A starting or substitute DP may re-enter the game one time as long as the DP returns to the original position in the batting order.
- A team using the DP starts the game with ten players, but could end the game with nine or ten players

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

SUBSTITUTING FOR THE DP

- The DP may be replaced by:
 - Pinch runner
 - Pinch hitter
 - FLEX
 - Substitute

- In all cases, if the DP has been replaced, the DP has left the game and has one re-entry permitted.

- In the sample lineup card to the right, Baker pinch-runs for Cooper (the DP):
 - Cooper has left the game
 - Cooper has one re-entry remaining
 - Baker is now the DP

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

THE FLEX MAY PLAY OFFENSE & THE DP MAY RE-ENTER

- If the FLEX runs or bats for the DP, the DP leaves the game. The FLEX (Brown) is now batting in the #7 position and the batting lineup continues to #9.



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

- When the DP (Cooper) re-enters to bat or run for the FLEX (Brown):
 - FLEX returns to the #10 position
 - FLEX plays defense only
 - FLEX has never left the game



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

THE DP MAY PLAY DEFENSE

- Cooper goes in to pitch.
- Brown has left the game (may re-enter).
- The lineup is down to nine players.

| NO. | PLAYER | RE | POS. |
|-----|-----------------|----|--------------|
| 19 | 1 HARRIS | | 6 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 17 | 2 ABLE | | 4 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 20 | 3 THOMAS | | 8 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 24 | 4 JONES | | 7 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 15 | 5 ALEXANDER | | 3 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 22 | 6 MOORE | | 2 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 25 | 7 COOPER | | DR4 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 7 | 8 MORRIS | | 5 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 3 | 9 RODGERS | | 9 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 18 | 10 BROWN (FLEX) | | 1 |
| | SUB. | | |
| NO. | SUBSTITUTES | | POS. |
| 10 | HOWELL | | |
| 4 | BAKER | | |
| 6 | SMITH | | |
| 55 | GREEN | | |

| NO. | PLAYER | RE | POS. |
|-----|-----------------|----|------|
| 19 | 1 HARRIS | | 6 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 17 | 2 ABLE | | 4 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 20 | 3 THOMAS | | 8 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 24 | 4 JONES | | 7 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 15 | 5 ALEXANDER | | 3 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 22 | 6 MOORE | | 2 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 25 | 7 COOPER | | DR1 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 7 | 8 MORRIS | | 5 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 3 | 9 RODGERS | | 9 |
| | SUB. | | |
| 18 | 10 BROWN (FLEX) | | 1 |
| | SUB. | | |
| NO. | SUBSTITUTES | | POS. |
| 10 | HOWELL | | |
| 4 | BAKER | | |
| 6 | SMITH | | |
| 55 | GREEN | | |

- The DP may also play defense at any position
- If the DP plays defense for any players other than the FLEX, those players still bat and have not left the game.
- Cooper plays second base and still bats #7.
- Able no longer plays second base (defense) but still bats #2.
- Able has not left the game.

KEY POINTS

Since the DP and FLEX split the offensive and defensive jobs of one player, they are “tied together” or “linked” and the FLEX can only play offense for the DP.

ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION - The FLEX may not go into one of the first nine positions for someone other than the DP. **This is illegal.**

The role of the DP/FLEX is never terminated.

A team may go from ten to nine players and back to ten players any number of times during the game and the game may end with ten or nine players.

DEFENSE

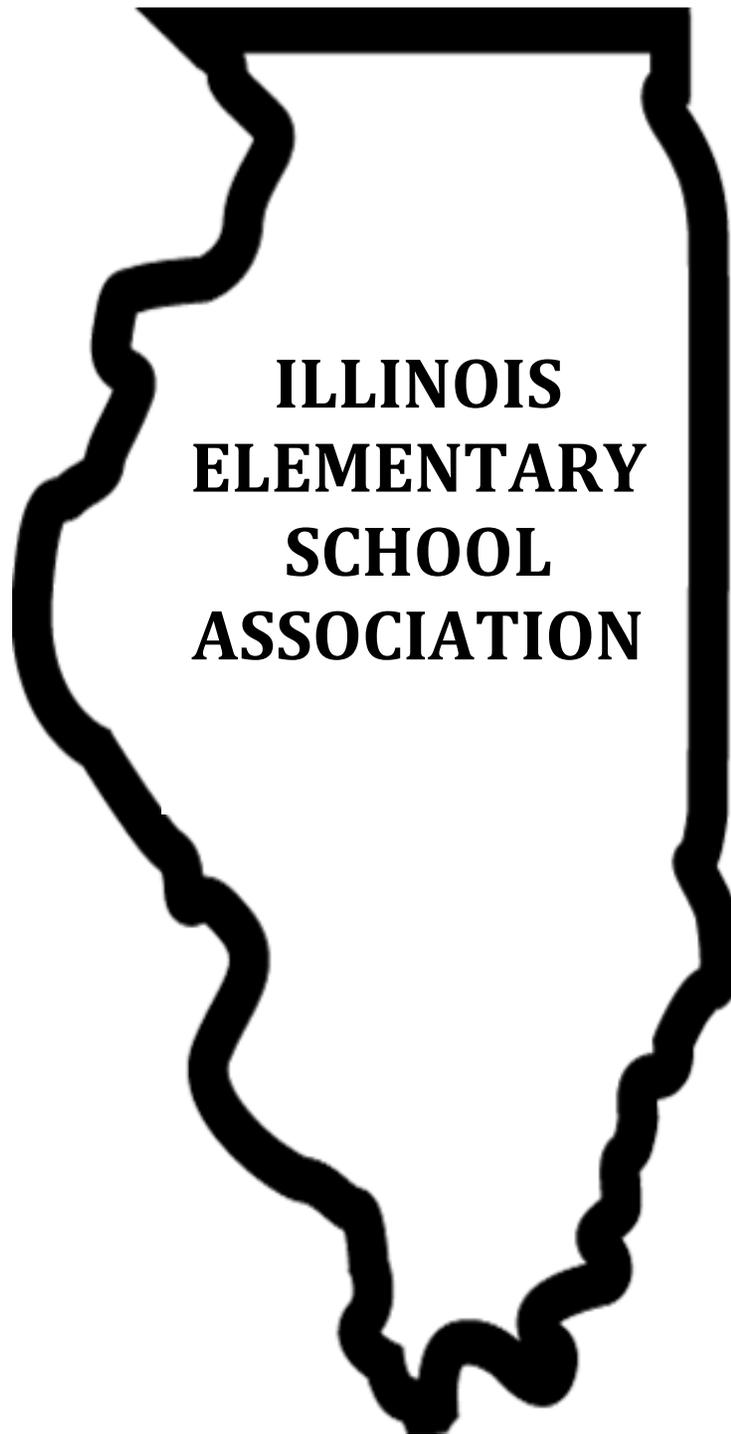
The DP can never be on defense only. If they don't play offense (use their bat), they have left the game.

The DP and the FLEX can play defense at the same time. FLEX can keep using their mitt and the DP can use someone else's.

OFFENSE

The FLEX can never be on offense only. If they don't play defense (use their mitt), they have left the game.

The DP and the FLEX can never be on offense at the same time. They are tied together and only one player can play offense in their (DP's) position in the lineup.



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SOFTBALL

DP/FLEX

RULE

Sample

Exercises

SAMPLE LINEUP CARD

The sample exercises to follow will use this lineup card and progress through a series of substitution examples.

| NO. | PLAYER | | RE | POS. |
|-----|-------------|--------------|----|------|
| 19 | 1 | HARRIS | | 6 |
| | SUB. | | | |
| 17 | 2 | ABLE | | 4 |
| | SUB. | | | |
| 20 | 3 | THOMAS | | 8 |
| | SUB. | | | |
| 24 | 4 | JONES | | DP |
| | SUB. | | | |
| 15 | 5 | ALEXANDER | | 3 |
| | SUB. | | | |
| 22 | 6 | MOORE | | 2 |
| | SUB. | | | |
| 25 | 7 | COOPER | | 7 |
| | SUB. | | | |
| 7 | 8 | MORRIS | | 5 |
| | SUB. | | | |
| 3 | 9 | RODGERS | | 1 |
| | SUB. | | | |
| 18 | 10 | GREEN (FLEX) | | 9 |
| | SUB. | | | |
| NO. | SUBSTITUTES | | | POS. |
| 10 | HOWELL | | | |
| 4 | BAKER | | | |
| 6 | SMITH | | | |
| 55 | BROWN | | | |
| | | | | |
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SAMPLE EXERCISE #1

- Jones (DP) bats and gets on base safely.
- Offensive coach asks for time for a change - "Green will run for Jones."
- Green (FLEX) runs for Jones (DP) and Jones has left the game.
- NOTE- Jones has left the game (no longer Playing offense), they still have one re-entry. Green is now playing offense and defense.

| NO. | | PLAYER | RE | POS. |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------------|
| 19 | 1 | HARRIS | | 6 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 17 | 2 | ABLE | | 4 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 20 | 3 | THOMAS | | 8 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 24 | 4 | JONES | | DP |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 15 | 5 | ALEXANDER | | 3 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 22 | 6 | MOORE | | 2 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 25 | 7 | COOPER | | 7 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 7 | 8 | MORRIS | | 5 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 3 | 9 | RODGERS | | 1 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 18 | 10 | GREEN (FLEX) | | 9 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| NO. | | SUBSTITUTES | | POS. |
| 10 | | HOWELL | | |
| 4 | | BAKER | | |
| 6 | | SMITH | | |
| 55 | | BROWN | | |
| | | | | |
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SAMPLE EXERCISE #2

- When up to bat, Green singles to left.
- The offensive coach asks for time for a change - "Smith running for Green and Green will still be playing right field."
- Smith (substitute) is running for Green (FLEX) - Smith is the new DP.
- Green stays in the game playing right field (defense only).
- Green (FLEX) has not left the game.

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

SAMPLE EXERCISE #3

- In the 4th inning, the offensive coach asks for time for another change - "Jones to re-enter and bat for Smith."
- Jones (DP) re-enters for Smith.
- Jones has used her one re-entry.
- Smith has left the game and has one re-entry remaining.
- This is no different than a substitute/re-entry anywhere else in the lineup.

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

SAMPLE EXERCISE #4

- Jones (DP) is to play defense in center field for Thomas.
- Jones (DP) is now playing offense (using Their bat) and defense (using Thomas' mitt)
- Thomas still bats in #3 in the lineup and is playing offense only (still using their bat) and has not left the game.

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

SAMPLE EXERCISE #5

- An inning later, the defensive coach asks for time to make another change - "Jones will move to right field and play defense for Green; Thomas will go back to center field."
- Jones (DP) is to play defense in right field for Green (FLEX).
- Thomas goes back to center field.
- Jones (DP) is still playing offense and Defense (now using the FLEX's mitt).
- Green (FLEX) has left the game (still has no re-entry) since she is not playing defense.
- Green (FLEX) still has one re-entry.

| NO. | | PLAYER | RE | POS. |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|----|-----------------|
| 19 | 1 | HARRIS | | 6 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 17 | 2 | ABLE | | 4 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 20 | 3 | THOMAS | | 8X |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 24 | 4 | JONES | | DP 9 |
| 6 | SUB. | SMITH | | DP |
| 15 | 5 | ALEXANDER | | 3 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 22 | 6 | MOORE | | 2 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 25 | 7 | COOPER | | 7 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 7 | 8 | MORRIS | | 5 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 3 | 9 | RODGERS | | 1 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| 18 | 10 | GREEN (FLEX) | | 9 |
| | | SUB. | | |
| NO. | | SUBSTITUTES | | POS. |
| 10 | | HOWELL | | |
| 4 | | BAKER | | |
| 6 | | SMITH | | |
| 55 | | BROWN | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |