UNDERSTANDING THE DP/FLEX RULE

The DP/Flex is a powerful tool in the hands of a coach who understands the rule. Suppose a team has a hot glove but, she is a poor hitter. And suppose a team has a player who is almost guaranteed to get on base one way or another, can steal second before the catcher can stand up, but struggles defensively. DP/Flex allows a team to turn this situation into an advantage. They can use ten weapons against the opposition's nine. They can use their nine best fielders and nine best batters even if they aren’t the same nine.

The Lineup

Your starting lineup with DP/Flex must have 10 starters, not 9. The DP/Flex must be indicated on the starting lineup. Both the DP and the Flex are starting players. Once the starting lineup has been given to the umpire, these positions cannot be added.

Batting Order and Substitutes

The substitute bats where the player she replaced was batting in the line. DP/Flex are joined at the hip with respect to the batting order. The only place in the batting order that either DP or the Flex can bat is the place the DP occupied at the beginning of the game. If both players are in the game, the Flex has number ten (10) in the batting order and she does not bat. In a normal substitution, one player leaves the game and one player enters the game. However, swapping the DP/Flex for each other is a “half substitution”. Only one member of the pair officially leaves the game or officially re-enters the game.

For example, if the DP comes in on defense for the Flex, the Flex has left the game (the lineup goes from ten to nine players). If the Flex re-enters on defense (which she can, one time), the DP returns to offense only and the lineup goes back to ten players. This move has not affected the DP’s starter/substitution/re-entry status in any way. Let’s take the reverse example: If the Flex comes in on offense for the DP, she is replacing the DP in the batting order (the lineup goes from ten to nine). In this case, the DP is removed from the game, and the substitute re-entry rules apply to the DP. If the DP re-enters, she will re-assume her original position in the batting order, and the lineup will go from nine to ten, and the DP will have used up her re-entry rights. The Flex will return to playing defense only. This move has not affected the Flex’s starter/substitution/re-entry status in any way. Either the DP or the Flex can be substituted for in the usual ways by other players, but the substitute takes on the position of the DP or Flex (depending on who she is substituting for).

Defensive Position Swaps Involving the DP and Flex

As with any lineup, defensive position swaps are not substitutions. The DP starts at the defensive position of “F10” benchwarmer. This means you can swap the DP with any player other than the Flex on defense and no one has left the game; it is not a substitution. The player removed from defense continues to bat in her normal place in the batting order. The Flex can be moved from her starting defensive position to any other defensive position (except for “F10” benchwarmer), and she remains the Flex, and it is not a substitution.

Playing Shorthanded with DP/Flex

If you start with DP/Flex, while your starting lineup was ten players, only the offensive lineup counts for the shorthanded rule. This means with DP/Flex you need eight players offensively to continue the game, just as before.