

My Lineup Card System

By Matt Moore

One of the plate umpire's duties is to keep up with the lineup card — verifying it before the game and keeping it current.

It's important to note all changes. Some cards are difficult to write on and there is usually little room for you to make notes.

So I developed a system that I use for marking my lineup cards. It allows me to easily note what is important during a game. While marking all of the changes is important, there isn't a "required" way to do it. This is just what has worked for me over time.

Before the game. As I head for the field, I make sure I have a pen, my lineup card holder, several index cards and my designated-hitter-rule card (NCAA games only). A medium-point

Sharpie serves as my pen. Since I don't do a lot of writing during the game, it works for me because I can read what I write clearly and it will write on most any surface.

I use the index cards for game notes. All trips to the mound need to be noted. For high school games, I'll use that same card to note when courtesy runners come into the game.

I also have the DH rule, which spans three pages in the rulebook, laminated on a card and it is in my lineup card holder.

At the plate meeting. It is customary that the home team lineup be taken first. That is only specified in the pro rulebook.

When I review each lineup card, I start with the uniform numbers. Although numbers are not required, I look to make sure they are listed and

there are no duplications. I then quickly scan the names, again looking for same last names that might need first initials. Last, I count the nine fielding positions and look for the DH. I will announce to the coach, "You have Smith DH'ing for Jones in the four spot." The only positions that officially matter are the pitcher, the DH (if one is being used) and the player being DH'd for. But checking for all the positions helps ensure the coach didn't include two first basemen in his lineup and leave out his slick-fielding shortstop. Substitutes are not required, but it does make it easier if they are on the card.

Last, for NFHS games only, I ask the legal question: "Are all of your players properly and legally equipped, and does all of your equipment meet rule specifications?" When the coach answers, "Yes" and only then, I make

a mark in the upper right-hand corner of the lineup card. That way I know I asked and should there be an issue, my mark will remind me I did so.

Once I've accepted and approved the card, any changes count as substitutions. I then repeat the steps for the visiting team and let the home coach run through ground rules.

Notes. I use the index cards for all of my notes. Specifically, I will write down any conferences, warnings, courtesy runners and/or items that need to be addressed with my crew after the game.

When there is a warning or conference, I write down all of the timing information — inning, outs, batter and count. If it is a warning, I also write down which team was warned and the reason. If it was a conference, I will make note of which number conference it was and whether it was an offensive or defensive meeting. If the conference results in a substitution,

I will mark an "X" through which number conference it was, so I know it doesn't count against a team's limit.

I use one side of a note card for all the conferences and courtesy runners. I'll use separate note cards for warnings, ejections and other notes. When weather becomes an issue, note the situation when needed. It takes little time between innings and avoids conflict should the game be stopped.

Substitutions. Since each sub goes into the game only once, but each of the nine or 10 spots in the lineup can see multiple changes, I make most of my notations next to the sub's name. For the first sub of the game, I will put the letter "A" and the inning he enters next to his name — T5 for the top of the fifth inning.

For the person leaving the lineup, all I do is put an "A" and circle it. That tells me that person has entered the lineup and when, and tells me which player is out of the lineup without

much writing or without crossing out anything.

For NFHS games, when a starter re-enters, I put an "X" next to the indication of the sub, which tells me the starter has re-entered. The inning doesn't matter so I don't note it.

As more changes happen, I keep working my way through the alphabet. I rarely get to "H."

Take a look at each of the lineup cards pictured. The captions take you through a series of changes that might happen. There is also an example of what my note card might look like.

There is not a set system, but I think what I've described is easy to follow so that if my game were stopped in the middle, a new plate umpire could easily figure out what has happened during the game.

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Official Line-up Baseball X				
DATE <u>May 13, 12</u> TEAM <u>Union Eagles</u>				
NO.	PLAYER	RE	POS.	
14 1	Abel		7	
SUB.				
9 2	Baker		4	
SUB.				
12 3	Charles		8	
SUB.				
44 4	Daniels		3	
SUB.				
32 5	Edwards		6	
SUB.				
17 6	Franklin		2	
SUB.				
24 7	George		9	
SUB.				
2 8	Hamilton		5	
SUB.				
19 9	Irwin		1	
SUB.				
10				
SUB.				
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
6	Jackson			
11	Knutson			
28	Larson			
35	Matthewson			
1	Nelson			

This first lineup card is what has been turned in to the plate umpire. The "X" in the upper right-hand corner tells me that I have asked the legal/safety question of the head coach and gotten the correct response.

Official Line-up Baseball X				
DATE <u>May 13, 12</u> TEAM <u>Union Eagles</u>				
NO.	PLAYER	RE	POS.	
14 1	Abel		7	
SUB.				
9 2	Baker (A)		4	
SUB.				
12 3	Charles		8	
SUB.				
44 4	Daniels		3	
SUB.				
32 5	Edwards		6	
SUB.				
17 6	Franklin		2	
SUB.				
24 7	George		9	
SUB.				
2 8	Hamilton		5	
SUB.				
19 9	Irwin (B)		1	
SUB.				
10				
SUB.				
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
6	Jackson			
11	Knutson A/T2			
28	Larson B/B3			
35	Matthewson			
1	Nelson			

The second lineup card shows two changes. Knutson was the first sub, entering for Baker in the top of the second inning. Larson then entered in the bottom of the third inning for Irwin.

Official Line-up Baseball X				
DATE <u>May 13, 12</u> TEAM <u>Union Eagles</u>				
NO.	PLAYER	RE	POS.	
14 1	Abel		7	
SUB.				
9 2	Baker (A) X(C)		4	
SUB.				
12 3	Charles		8	
SUB.				
44 4	Daniels		3	
SUB.				
32 5	Edwards		6	
SUB.				
17 6	Franklin (D)		2	
SUB.				
24 7	George		9	
SUB.				
2 8	Hamilton		5	
SUB.				
19 9	Irwin (B) (E)		1	
SUB.				
10				
SUB.				
NO.	SUBSTITUTES		POS.	
6	Jackson C/T4			
11	Knutson A/T2			
28	Larson B/B3			
35	Matthewson D/B4			
1	Nelson			
7	Owens E/T5			

The last lineup card shows several more changes. Baker has re-entered and then been substituted for a second time, this time by Jackson. Additionally, Matthewson pinch-hit for Franklin in the bottom of the fourth inning and Owens was added to the card as a legal substitute before he played defense for Matthewson in the top of the fifth.

UNION

O1 1, #23, 2outs, 1-0, HC
 O1 2, #21, 2outs, HC
~~X~~ 3, #17, 1out, HC

COURTESY
 CATCHER PITCHER
 1/1,3

The note card shows the conferences and courtesy runners for the Union Eagles. The coach has used two defensive conferences and one offensive conference. He also had Nelson serve as a courtesy runner for the catcher in the first and third innings. Each conference lists the type (O or D) and which number of that type it is — the inning, the batter, the outs, the count (if any) and who made the trip (HC for head coach, PC for pitching coach). For the second defensive conference, the D2 is X'd out because that's when the pitching change occurred and no defensive conference is charged when a substitution is made.