

Conducting “Five-Alive” in the Vertical Jumps

The Rules and Rationale

“Five-alive” is a method of establishing rotating flights in vertical jump events with large fields. The NCAA (Rule 6-4, article 3) recommends that it be used whenever there are nine or more competitors at a given height. When the number of competitors at a given height is fewer than nine, the five-alive system is dropped & replaced by a continuous flight until the next height change. USATF (Rule 180.7b) recommends that rotating flights be used until there are twelve or fewer jumpers left in the competition at the conclusion of jumping at any height. The NFHS suggests the use of rotating flights for large fields, but provides few other specifics.

The advantage of rotating flights is that it allows athletes to stay warm & focused between jumps. If done properly, jumps attempted by an athlete would not be separated by more than four attempts by other competitors at any height.

The Method

- 1) Begin by calling the athletes in the assigned order.
- 2) When the first miss occurs, write “1” in the upper right corner of the box of that height; number the next four jumpers as “2”, “3”, “4”, & “5”. These are the athletes who are “alive”. (An option is to use & move stickers with the numbers on them.)
- 3) Continue to call those five jumpers in their numerical order until they clear the height, are eliminated from the competition, or pass their remaining attempts at the height.
- 4) When an athlete moves out of the rotation, give that number to the next jumper to enter the competition. Erase/mark-out the first number to avoid confusion. The new jumper takes the place of the previous jumper in the rotation.
- 5) Communicate! Inform each athlete as they enter the rotation & continually let the athletes know who is in the rotation.
- 6) In NCAA competitions, continue this process until there are fewer than nine jumpers remaining at the height. I number the last three jumpers on the list as “6”, “7”, & “8”. When the jumper before “6” enters the competition, so do these last three. At this point, leave those athletes already “called” in the same order & then move straight through the competitors remaining at the height. The exact order of this transition may change from height to height, based on the order of the competitors leaving the rotation.
- 7) At the next height, if the number of competitors remains sufficient, repeat the process.

A Model

	2.00		
Jumper A	X	X	X [#]
Jumper B	X	X	X ²
Jumper C	O		³
Jumper D	X	X	O ⁴
Jumper E	X	O	⁵
Jumper F	X	X	3
Jumper G			5
Jumper H			1
Jumper I			2
Jumper J			4
Jumper K			6
Jumper L			7
Jumper M			8

Explanation: “A” failed on first attempt, so becomes jumper “1” & numbers are given to the next four jumpers. “B” misses on first attempt. “C” made first attempt, so “3” is moved to “F” & marked-out on “C”. “D” & “E” miss first attempts. “A” & “B” miss second attempts. “F” misses first attempt. “D” misses second attempt. “E” makes second attempt, so “5” is moved to “G” & marked-out on “E”. “A” misses third attempt, so “1” is moved to “H” & marked-out on “A”. “B” makes third attempt, so “2” is moved to “I” & marked-out on “B”. “F” misses on second attempt. “D” makes on third attempt, so “4” is moved to “J” & marked-out on “D”. At this point, only eight competitors are left at this height so all would now be included in the rotation. Number the rest of the competitors “6”, “7”, & “8”. Continue to call the jumpers in numerical order. (Some find it helpful to write those numbers no longer being used in the rotation directly below the column as they are eliminated.)

Reminders

- 1) Always number the jumpers 1-5 in writing, starting with the first miss. Don’t attempt to keep track of the jumping order in your head.
- 2) Move the numbers as the jumpers make the height, are eliminated from the competition, or pass their remaining attempts.
- 3) Be sure to erase or mark-out the numbers no longer in use.
- 4) Always call the athletes in the numerical order of your five-alive flight & not by their order on the heat sheet. Believe your numbers.
- 5) Continually keep the athletes informed of the jumping order & let them know when they’re coming in.