

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Little League. You have decided to be part of an organization that serves thousands of youth around the globe. And no part is more crucial than that of the umpire. We are the arbitrators of the game. Teams win or lose by playing in front of independent judges called umpires. Without us, there can be no real game.

The following manual is intended to assist those who wish to be umpires. Yes it will take a lot of work and training to be good at it. But the rewards are well worth it. For those of you that have previous experience with other codes, this manual will look very familiar. It is derived from the manuals given to new applicants when they join ASA, NFHS, NCAA, USSSA, etc. Where there are differences, all options are discussed. We will let you make the final decision on how you wish to officiate your game.

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SPECIAL CONSIDERATIOND FOR ARIZONA UMPIRES

THE UMPIRE

What makes a good umpire? Simple. Character, good judgment, and the desire to do a good job are the marks of a good umpire. And of these, desire is probably the most important.

Character: Be approachable but be above reproach. Umpires are impartial. They are the only ones on the field that do not have a stake in the outcome of the game. Keep it that way.

Judgment: The act of acquiring information through rules knowledge (the intent of the rule), common sense, and proper positioning to render a decision. Each and every decision must be based on fact. Don't guess. **Cover the play from the correct angle and distance. Then Pause, Read, React.** You will "Boot a Play" now and then. Suck it up and continue officiating. Do not let this influence your next call.

Desire: This is best expressed by perfecting your game thru continuous training. Read the rule book, case book, and mechanics manuals. If you are new to umpiring or have not worked with your assigned partner you have to start somewhere. You start with book rule and standard mechanics.

Attend clinics. Ask other umpires to watch your game. Apply the comments they give you. Watch other successful umpires. Ask questions. And yes, there can be lessons to be learned when a player or manager is chewing you out over a call. How you handle this shows your desire to improve.

Your authority should be unquestioned. You are the sole judge and jury of all actions on the field. You are expected to enforce all the rules, not just the ones that we happen to like at the moment, evenly and fairly to the best of your ability. You bring dignity to the profession and yourself by using a common sense approach to enforcing the rules while executing that authority.

And one final comment, the game is meaningless if the integrity of the game or the safety of the participants is jeopardized.

UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

If you are gonna, "Walk the walk, and talk the talk" look the part. You only get one chance to make a first impression. How you look when you make that initial appearance can make or break your game. A well-groomed, properly equipped umpire creates an atmosphere of respect and dignity.

There is nothing worse than going on the field with a shoddy uniform. Proper fit and cleanliness are essential. Shoes should be shined. Shirts clean, buttoned and tucked in. Pants clean, neat, and pressed. Caps worn correctly. Hair trimmed and neatly combed. Clean shaven or neatly groomed. Equipment should be in proper repair and adequate for the division of play.

Sloppy dress gives the impression of sloppy work. Your uniform and equipment do reflect the pride you put into your umpiring.

Uniform:

Light or navy blue shirt with appropriate patches sewn (not stapled or pinned) affixed.

Navy blue, black, or grey slacks (not jeans).

Navy blue or black cap, properly blocked.

Black belt and shoes* (not sneakers or flip-flops).

Black or navy blue socks.

*Shoes: You may need 2 pairs of shoes. One armored set to do the plate and a lighter pair with an all field condition sole for the field.

Equipment:

Navy blue, black or grey ball bag.

Plate brush (not a whisk broom or paint brush).

Ball / strike indicator.

Mask with throat guard (even if it has an extended wire guard. You will be glad later.)

Shin guards (worn under the legs of the pants).

Inside chest protector (more maneuverable than the balloon).

Protective cup.

And always have your rule book at the field. Keep it at the scorekeepers table. If you bring it on the field keep it discretely hidden and use it only when absolutely necessary.

FRATERNIZATION

There are times when you will need to talk to one player or coach for some legitimate reason according to game procedures. Find out the names of the coaches during your pre-game at the plate or ask a player his name. This way you can be a little more informal when you have to talk with them one-on-one since nobody else is around.

This does not mean you can't talk to them. If they say, "Hi, how are you?", or, "How's it going' blue?", answer them. "I'm fine today, **Sir**, and you?". This is just common courtesy. But keep it short, sweet, and always professional.

However, do not carry on idle conversation with the managers and players during the game. Especially if you happen to know a particular coach or player well. This gives the appearance of favoritism and ruins your appearance of impartiality. The umpire who performs his duties in a brisk, businesslike manner, who is courteous with the players and managers (without being overly friendly), whose calls are made promptly and confidently with an emphasis that dissuades argumentation, yet is not dictatorial, and who cooperates with his partner in covering all plays, is rarely questioned.

Between innings keep the conversation between you and your partner to a minimum. Do not discuss a play or joke around. But do please discuss things that will influence game coverage or management.

KNOW THE RULES

Good umpiring is dependant on a complete and thorough knowledge of the rules. It does not suffice just to read the rules. They must be studied so a mental picture is implanted in your head as to what that rule looks like on the field of play. Some decisions are repeated so frequently that they become second nature. Having mastered this you can now go on to some of the more involved rules. As always, proper positioning and timing: **Pause, Read, React**, will help you thru.

This may take many seasons. You do not become a good umpire overnight. It takes time and game situations to recognize situations and then apply the correct rule or multiple of rules. Start at the lower divisions and work your way up.

And some advise to rookies and veterans. Attend rules clinics. Read case plays. Study proper mechanics. **PAUSE. READ. REACT.**

PROPER MECHANICS

You can not make a proper call if you can't see the play. This is mastered by going to clinics where the proper positions for calls are discussed and demonstrated. Then do games so you can practice getting in position quickly and efficiently.

Most arguments start with an umpire out of position to make a call. Position is looking at the play from the correct angle at the proper distance so you can see the play develop. To close and the play happens to quickly. To far away and you can miss the little things, like a bobble, trap, missed tag, or dropped ball. And remember, angle is more important than distance.

Do not "Showboat". Umpires that discharge their duties with dignity and in compliance with accepted mechanics and signals command the respect of the players and their decisions are accepted without pause. Being overly dramatic on routine plays means you have nothing else left when you really need to sell that call. **Umpires are part of the game but not the center of attraction.**

COMMUNICATION

Umpires working together must communicate and have mutual respect for each other. Using proper mechanics each umpire has his own area of responsibility. Do not infringe on your partner. His calls are his. This does not mean you do not back him up. Yes there is gonna be times when he will be blocked out or just simple can not get there.

Use your pre-game to discuss how you want to handle these situations. You can let the covering umpire make his decision and if it's questioned you discuss it or you can call out, "I got it!" and make the call. Just agree on how it will be done. Also discuss any little quirky habits you may have. I personally can not give a proper 3 indication with my left hand. My left hand was crushed and now my fingers will not rise to the proper position or if they do I will drop my indicator. I use a spread finger formation to indicate a 3.

As a minimum, discuss what you will use for, “I need the count/outs” signal, infield fly, delayed dead ball, check swing, and home run. **And any changes you make to coverage while play is live should be done verbally.** And make sure you get a reply from your partner.

DISAGREEMENTS AND EJECTIONS

All umpires are perfect and are expected to be better as the game progresses. Good luck on the perfect. We are human just like everyone else. Disagreements are bound to happen when emotions run high. Expect it and be prepared for it. Remain calm. You are the guy who keeps the players, coaches and managers in check. Most disagreements can be handled in a firm but gentle manner. Listen to what they have to say, consider it along with all the other factors you have, give your ruling, and that is it.

Ejection should be the last resort. But if it is warranted, do it. You must maintain game control. Extreme verbal / physical abuse is automatic and must not be tolerated. You must make a written report and forward it up chain. Keep a copy in case questions arise or disciplinary actions are required.

HELPFUL HINTS

Keep the game moving. They will not have time to argue.

Keep active and alert on the field. See the problem before it strikes and try to defuse it.

Keep you cool. Never react in anger.

Keep personalities out of it. Each game is a new game.

Watch your language. You are the professional. Keep it that way.

Never insist on the last word. If the player or manager is walking away, let him.

If they have a legitimate point to argue under the rules, listen to them. You may have to go to your partner for assistance if you were blocked out.

Back-up your partner.

The uniform does not make you immune from criticism. Plan on it. Its part of the game.

You are gonna miss pitches or calls. It happens. Do not try to even it up.

Never openly criticize another umpire’s decision. Your turn will come. Keep these for the appropriate time.

BEFORE THE GAME

Your job as an umpire starts well before the first pitch is thrown. Get there early. 45 minutes prior is about right. This gives you extra time in case you encounter traffic or that ol’ flat tire on the way. 30 minutes is an absolute minimum. If someone is not there by 30 minutes prior you still have time to get an alternate.

Meet with your fellow umpires. Confirm crew assignments. You may have to move people around at the last minute. IE: The assigned plate umpire got hurt on the job. His

back is sore from a pulled muscle. He can work the field but can not hold the set position required behind the plate. It happens.

Go over mechanics. Yes, most signals and coverage is standard but there are individual styles that can confuse people. Remember my use of the spread fingers for a 3 signal. Hey, how about the injured umpire from the paragraph above. He may need some help. So how are we going to cover what he will not be able to cover? These are the little things that make a game go smoother.

Go over the ground rules, if any. Now go out on the field and see where these special ground rules are in effect. Don't be surprised when a ball goes into one of these areas. Also check for any defects which can be fixed before game time. Check for bad fencing, holes in the surface, heavy grass, garbage that blew on the field, chalk lines, backstops, dugouts, etc.

Now go in the dugouts and inspect equipment. **WHAT?** Yes, check that the bats are in specs and that the batting helmets and catcher's gear meet standards. While you are at it, is the catcher wearing his mask during warm-up?

Get your supply of game balls. Make sure they are all the same type. Yes, there is a difference. Try to keep the game as consistent as possible.

Get your water bottles. If you are in southern Arizona, game temperatures can rise to 110 degrees. Have some water in the dugouts or along the fence and out of play so you can get a drink between innings.

Now do your plate conference about 5 minutes before game time.

- Introduce the crew

- Introduce the captains and managers, have them shake hands

- Ask captains if all players are legally equipped

- Go over the field conditions and any ground rules

- Go over safety and jewelry concerns

- Remind the teams to hustle. 1 minute between each half inning

- Questions

This should take about 2 minutes if done right.

AFTER THE GAME IS OVER

Stay on the field until all players are in the dugouts. Once they are there now leave together thru the winning team dugout. This ensures that there will be no extra curricular activities in case there was a hard loss and gives the teams time to get that final protest in.

Do not stop to answer questions about calls made during the game. This only leads to trouble. Go to the scorekeeper's table and sign the scorebook if required.

NOW LEAVE THE FIELD!

Find a quiet/private place to clean up and discuss the game. Fill out any paperwork needed, especially if there was an ejection or a protest. You will have to forward that paperwork up chain. Keep a copy for yourself for later reference.

GENERAL MECHANICS

FAIR/FOUL COVERAGE

All umpires can call a foul ball. Yes field umps, sometimes you are in the best position to call that ball that comes off a batter's foot or is kicked out of the batter's box. In general, the plate ump has jurisdiction up to and touching first or third and the base ump has over the bag and beyond unless there is definite communication to the contrary.

Call the ball foul and point if the ball is foul. **DO NOT CALL, "FAIR BALL!". JUST POINT!**

CHECK SWING

When in doubt check with the field umpire before you make you decision. If you call a ball and there is an appeal for help, the plate umpire may still go to his partner for help. Is it mandatory? No. But going for help gives an air of fairness and a willingness to listen to the teams.

Note: Let them appeal for help. But if they start abusing the privilege and start asking for help on a number of pitches, put a stop to it.

GETTING HELP

Either umpire can request help from their partner. You are going to get blocked out on plays, or not be sure on a swing, or may miss a pulled foot, etc. Strive to be in the best position to keep these from happening but if they do there is a proper way to handle it.

If you know you can't make a good call, go to your partner before you make your call. Base umpire at first, "Did he pull the foot?!", while pointing to your partner. Plate umpire, "Yes he did!", while giving the safe sign. Base umpire, "Safe!", and giving the safe sign again.

If you called the runner out originally, you can still go for help. Same procedure with the base umpire now declaring the runner safe.

PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY AFTER A DEAD BALL

Most of the time the hidden ball trick is applied, it is done illegally. A runner is on first when the defense requests time. They gather round the pitcher and break. The batter gets in the box and is fiddling around getting set. The plate umpire says, "Play". The base runner switches feet and momentarily is off first base when the tag is made. The base umpire rings him up.

Totally illegal. This should be an illegal pitch/balk. The pitcher is on or straddling the pitching rubber without the ball. Play can not be resumed until the pitcher has the ball in possession on the mound and the catcher in the catcher's box. If the ball has to be at the

ground for the ball to be made live how did it get to first base? Use Capt. Kirk's transporter?

All umpires: Be sure the pitcher has the ball, the catcher is in the catcher's box and ready (equipment on), and all runners are on base before the plate umpire calls, "Play!". If it's the start of an inning, set the batter. If it's done wrong, do not make a call. Tell them to get the ball to the pitcher and let's get the game rolling.

INFIELD FLY

Let's put it simple, call the infield fly when you have one and two, with less than two. What are you talking about! You need first and second base occupied as a minimum, and 0 or 1 outs, (one and two, with less than two).

Signal your partner when the infield fly is in effect. Get a response from your partner. Either umpire can call it. Usually the base umpire points up at the ball and the plate umpire makes the announcement (he may have judged the hit an attempted bunt).

"Infield fly! The batter is out!" (add, if fair, when close to the foul line). Hey guys, the ball is live and there can be no force plays. Runners can advance at their own risk.

OBSTRUCTION/GENERAL INTERFERENCE

By far these are the 2 most misunderstood rules in little league. Please read the definitions as written in chapter 2 and the examples given in chapter 7 of the official rule book. The Right Call book also contains plays on how to call these rules.

Obstruction is an act by the defense that hinders a runner's progress. This usually results in an award of at least one base. The ball can remain alive or delayed dead depending on the situation.

Obstruction examples: Fake tags (could be cause for an ejection if flagrant), Blocking off a base on a pick off, blocking a base without possession of the ball, standing in the runner's established base path, The catcher holding his glove in front of the catcher's box causing the batter to hit the glove on a swing, verbal obstruction, etc.

Note: There is no eminent possession or about to receive a throw ball in the obstruction definition.

Interference is an act by the offense that hinders the defense from making a play. The ball is always dead, and somebody is always out.

Interference examples: Getting hit with a batted ball, batter interferes with a play at the plate; batter interferes with a catcher's throw, 3 ft line violations, coach's interference, a double hit ball, deliberately knocking down a defender when sliding into a base, etc.

Either umpire can call these rules.

Note: If both players are doing what they are required to do by rule and they make contact, you have a wreck, not obstruction or interference, unless one of them is trying to get a little extra in there. Baseball puts 4 and possibly up to 6 defenders on a collision

course with up to 4 offensive players. Now add a flying ball and a stationary bat to the problem.

THE PITCHER

Both umpires have jurisdiction on pitching violations. The plate umpire usually has violations that happen in relation to the hands. Licking the fingers, a double set, not stopping for 1 second, dropping the ball, etc are examples of hand violations.

The base umpire has violations that occur with the feet. Not stepping toward a base for a throw, failure to disengage the rubber properly for a throw, pitching from somewhere other than the mound, pitching off the ends of the rubber, etc are examples of foot violations.

The pitch is an illegal pitch/balk and the ball is alive.

Note: The base umpire in a 2 man system, U3 in a 3/5 man system, and U2 in a 4/6 man system is responsible for cleaning the pitching rubber between innings.

RUNDOWNS

One of the more exciting aspects of the game. The umpires should bracket the rundown as quickly as practical. But remember, you may have other runners to contend with.

If a single umpire has to cover the rundown, be on the infield side if possible. This will allow you to have to run less and still be in position to make other calls. But do not cross the rundown after it has started, you just get in the way.

With 2 umpires covering, one is on the outfield side (usually the field umpire) and the other is on the infield (the plate umpire). Split the distance in 2 and call your half or call the runner as he is approaching you. This should have been discussed in your pre-game. You always have the swipe tag to your side and have the tag to the back of the runner.

The plate umpire takes the trail position at first base, on the infield grass, for a rundown between first and second. He takes the lead position at third base, on the infield grass, for a rundown between second and third. He takes the lead position at home plate, in foul territory, for a rundown between third and home. The field umpire is on the infield grass for this rundown.

Note: Rundowns are ripe for interference or obstruction. Be on the lookout for them.

APPEALS/PROTESTS

Appeals technically should be made when the ball is live. Live ball appeals are typically tags up plays and missed base plays where the defense throws the ball to the base or tags a runner and makes a verbal appeal. These are easy to spot and rule on. Note: If the team calls time to make what should be a live ball appeal: set the field, bring the ball in live, and have them go thru the motions of a live ball appeal. And remember, the ball is live. Other runners can advance at risk while the appeal is made.

Teams are also permitted to appeal calls or protest the game when the ball is dead. Either umpire should acknowledge the procedure and then direct the process accordingly. These are typically for misapplications of the playing rules or an appeal is made to an umpire to get help.

These appeals must be made to the umpire that made the original call or the covering official. If they come to the plate umpire in error direct him to the correct umpire. They can appeal misapplications of the rules only. Judgment can not be questioned. Fair/foul, safe/out, ball/strike, are typical judgment calls. However these can also be rule calls.

For example, a foul tip with 2 strikes that is called a foul ball can be appealed. Yes he is arguing balls/strikes but the correct call is a third strike and an out with the ball live and in play by rule.

Appeals are to be made in a businesslike manner. The coach or player must request time. When granted, the coach/player states his case to the correct umpire. The umpire may but is not required to get additional help from his partners. Then the umpire that made the original call makes his final call. And that is it.

Note: Go for help if you need it or there is a possibility something is missing. There is no shame in this when done correctly.

Protests must go thru the plate umpire. Usually it is an appeal that did not go the way the coach or player wanted and they wish to forward the appeal up chain. Announce that the game is being played under protest and mark where you are in the game. If the protest is upheld the game is replayed from the point marked in the scorebook.

Note: The umpires must make their report on what happened for the protest committee.

PLAY OR ATTEMPTED PLAY

A play or attempted play is a legitimate move by the defense to obtain an out or to make the offensive player react. Example: Runner on third and a ground ball to the short stop. The short stop gets the ball and fakes throws to third or home to hold the runner at third. Then throws to first to get the batter-runner. This was 2 plays, the play to hold the runner and the final play for the out at first. This comes into play when appeals are made. You determine if the act is a play or attempted play. It's your judgment.

Note: The play described above is a continuous play. Continuous play is defined as multiple attempts to retire runners made in rapid and continuous succession. A double play is continuous play. A caught fly ball followed by an attempt to double up a runner is a continuous play. These plays are considered one play for the purpose of appeals.

BETWEEN INNINGS

Where do we stand? What do we do? Relax? Not hardly. We have duties to perform even between innings.

The plate umpire should stand about 7-10 ft to the defensive side of the diamond (the side that is coming off the field). Appeals can be made until the last defensive player leaves the field (enters foul territory). You have a good look at this and now can hold the first batter from entering the batter's box before the pitcher finishes his warm ups.

The base umpire has 2 choices. He can go down the right field line about 20 feet to get out of the way of overthrown balls to first base or come half down the first base line toward the plate and do the same. After the throw down to second base, clean the pitching rubber and go to your position (the "A" position) behind first base.

CLEANING THE PLATE/PITCHING RUBBER/BASE

There is a correct way to use the plate/base brush. **DO NOT USE YOUR SHOES TO SCRAP THE PLATE, OR CLEAN THE PITCHING RUBBER OR BASE! WE ARE NOT CHICKENS!** Put your back to the center field position and straddle the plate, pitching rubber, or base. Bend at the waist and briskly brush the dirt away. **NEVER BEND WITH YOUR BACKSIDE TO THE STANDS! IF YOU DO, BE READY FOR SOME LOVELY COMMENTS.**

THE PLATE UMPIRE

The plate umpire manages the game. He sets the tempo. Game management and the ability to call a good consistent strike zone are prerequisites to a solid reputation. Good judgment is required to accomplish this task. But good judgment alone will not suffice. Proper positioning, mechanics, and the little things you do will make or break your umpire career.

THE INDICATOR

Simple things like how you work the indicator tell much of how you will officiate. The indicator is meant and built to be used in the left hand. Each wheel fits a particular finger. Do not use it in your right hand. You will drop it or worse yet hit someone with it when you call an out.

THE MASK

Remove your mask any time the ball is batted or loose and in play. You remove the mask with the left hand and hold it. Do not put it down or try and wedge it under your arm. You will just loose it and bad things can happen. You may trip over it. Or a player can trip over it. Or the ball can hit it and influence the ensuing play. Hold it in your left hand.

How do you remove it? Grasp the center bars with your left hand fingers. Pull out so your chin and cap visor clear the pads. Then lift straight up and over the head. This will require practice to get it right so your hat will stay on as you remove the mask.

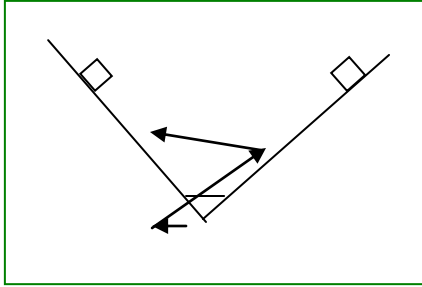
THE GATE

Clear the catcher when he moves on a batted ball or has to scramble for a pass ball/wild pitch.

It a pitch gets by the catcher, key on his shoulders. He can not move either direction without moving his shoulders first. If he moves right, plant your left foot and pivot back on that foot to your right. If he moves left, plant your right foot and pivot back on that foot to your left. This is commonly referred to as opening the gates.

INITIAL MOVE TO THE PLAY

Catchers usually head up the first base line on batted balls, so clear to the left (right hand batter's box). Then follow him up the first base line to rule any 3 ft lane violations or to help your partner on a pulled foot at first. Observe the play at first as your partner button hooks. Watch for obstructions by the first baseman or interference by the batter-runner. Then cut across the diamond for possible plays at third base. See Figure below.



THE SLOT

This is the starting position for the plate umpire. Your primary job is to call balls and strikes. You can't call what you can't see. So, where should you stand? You don't stand, you set-up.

You set up in the slot. This is the area or crease between the catcher and the batter and you look diagonally across the plate. Get in a position so you can see the pitcher, the entire plate, the batter's knees, and the catcher to include the catcher's opposite knee when the catcher is down in position. This gives you a view of the entire strike zone and the area immediately around the plate.

Your feet should be spread even or slightly wider than your shoulders. Your lead foot (left on a right hand batter and right on a left hand batter) should be just in front of your body with your trail foot just behind your body. This gives you good balance side to side and front to rear. Your feet are in the diagonal corners of an invisible rectangle thus the term "The Box" set up. Now go into a crouch position with your back straight and look thru the slot. Tuck your arms in so your elbows are protected and place your hands in your lap.

But where do you set up? Your ear closest the catcher should be at the catcher's shoulder. Your chin should be even with the top of the catcher's helmet. Another way to set is to place your nose on the inside line of the batter's box, and the middle bar of your mask, or your eyes, at the top of the strike zone.

Note: The closer you get into the slot the easier it is to see the ball and call an accurate pitch.

This eliminates 2 pitches from being called strikes, a pitch higher than the mask bar/your eyes and a pitch to the batter's side of your nose.

Now remember, a strike is any pitch that touches any portion of the white part of the plate. The batter's box inner line is 4 inches off the plate in the majors division. The ball is about 3 inches in diameter. So any pitch that does not touch the lines of the batter's box is good candidate for strikes.

Do not tire yourself out by going into position too early. Stand with your feet set till the pitcher starts his motion. Then drop down to your crouch position.

THE SLOT (FRONT VIEW)

Proper head position is controlled by
 1. Width of stance
 2. Amount of squat
 3. Forward body tilt

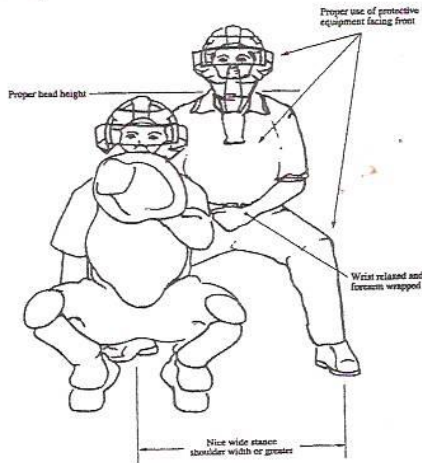


Figure 1

THE SLOT (SIDE VIEW)

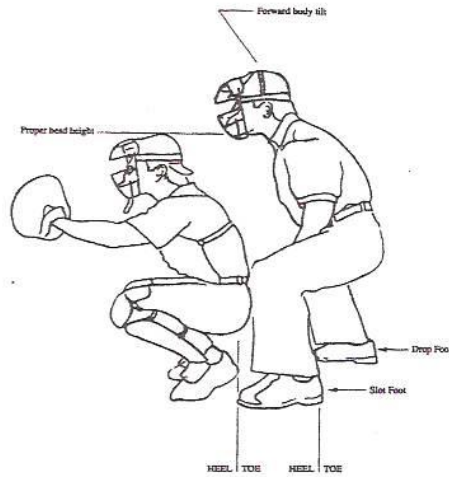
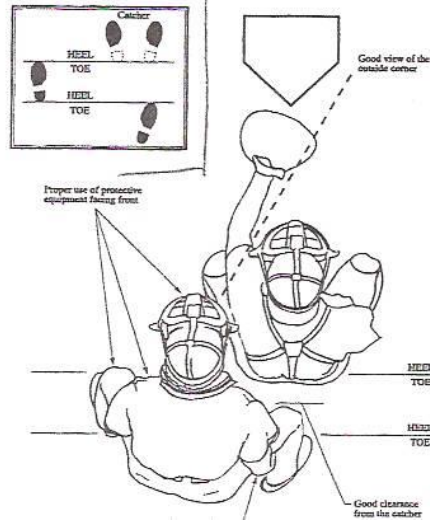


Figure 2

THE SLOT (TOP VIEW)



Head movement is critical. There are many schools of thought as to how much head and eye movement is acceptable to see the pitch. Why? Our eyes are wonderful acts of nature but they can only focus on one thing at a time. Movement creates a blur somewhere in our vision.

Keep the head and eyes stationary and the ball will blur as it approaches you. The ball will start to elongate as the off angle and perceived ball speed increases. The strike zone will remain clear.

Keep the eyes on the ball as the ball approaches and the ball remains clear. The strike zone blurs and almost disappears as the ball reaches the plate.

A third method is to keep the head and eyes steady until the ball appears to be moving off axis to you. Then make one head/eye adjustment to the inside. The ball and strike zone will blur a bit but not to the extreme of the first two methods.

Try them all. Then use the one that gives you the best results.

Note: You will not be able to tell which method gives you the best results unless you have an observer evaluating your calls or receive feedback from your partner(s) in the field. Thus the importance of pre-season games and continual feedback.

Never, ever place your knee on the ground. You will not be able to open the gate or follow the play in a timely manner. The only justification of putting a knee on the ground is if you are calling a batter whose strike zone is wider than it is tall and have to really lower your body in the crouch to see the zone accurately.

FLINCHING

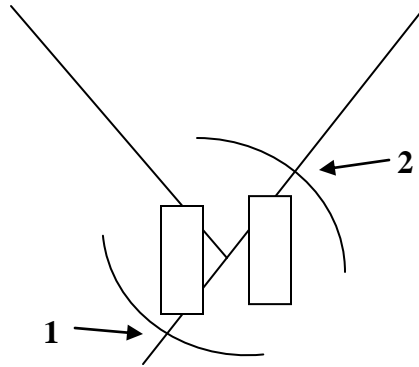
Flinching is more of a nuisance to a plate umpire. Flinching does not automatically make you miss a pitch but it will effect your game management in the long run. Plus it looks terrible.

Cause: Staying too long in the set position (setting too quickly), lack of confidence in the catcher to protect you, and a lack of trust in your own equipment.

Note: You will get hurt much worse if you move than if you let your equipment take the shot it was designed to take.

CALLS AT THE PLATE

Calls at the plate are made from one of two positions. Imagine two arcs approximately 12-15 feet from the plate. Arc "A" cuts the back side of the right hand batter's box and arc "B" cuts the front part of the left hand batter's box. Make your call when standing on the arc. The most advantageous point on the arcs is on the third base line extended or the first base line extended (points 1 and 2).



Note: In Little League it's easy to find this arc. It corresponds to the edge of the dirt circle around home plate.

TIMING PLAYS

The plate umpire is normally responsible for determining if a runner scored before the third out in a timing play. Cover your responsibilities then go to the holding area. From here observe the play and if a time play develops, move back to toward the plate and observe the touch of the plate.

If you are making the third out call, this responsibility falls to the base umpire.

DO NOT LET THE SCOREKKEPER DETERMINE IF THE RUN SCORES OR DOES NOT SCORE! THAT IS THE UMPIRE'S JOB.

BASE UMPIRE

The base umpire does most of the PAUSE, READ, REACT details on the bases.

PAUSE: watch the ball initially / glance at the runner(s)

READ: ball / defense / runners / location of next most likely play

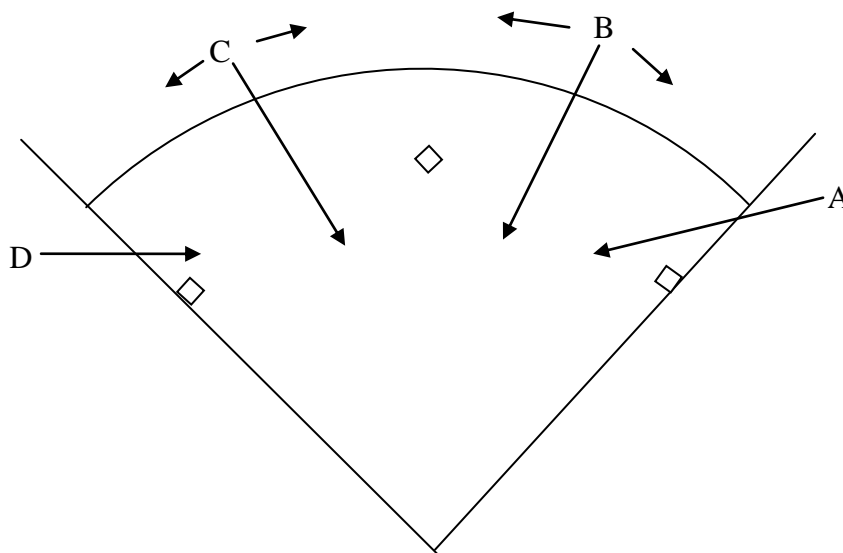
REACT: move into position / make the call

SET POSITION

There are two accepted set positions. First, we have the hands on knees with the back straight and knees bent. This is the preferred position. The second is standing straight up with hands to your side. As you move around the infield, come to the first set position prior to making your calls on the bases. It just looks better.

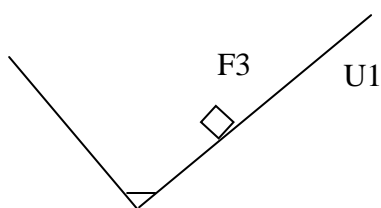
STARTING POSITION THE "A" POSITION

There are 4 basic field umpire start positions. Each is dependant on the number of runners on base and the number of field umpires assigned to the game.



With no runners on base (ie: the start of an inning) set up in what is called the “A” position. This is in foul territory and behind the first baseman. **DO NOT STRADDLE THE FOUL LINE!** If you are hit with a line shot the plate umpire will have a tough time calling fair/foul.

The “A” position is 3 – 6 ft in foul territory and about 10 ft behind and to the side of the first baseman. This puts you 10-20 ft behind first base depending on defender position and type of batter. You will not interfere with the first baseman and still are close enough to make a good call at first base.



THE A POSITION

Note: Be very wary of pull left handed batters. You may want to back off even more from the line.

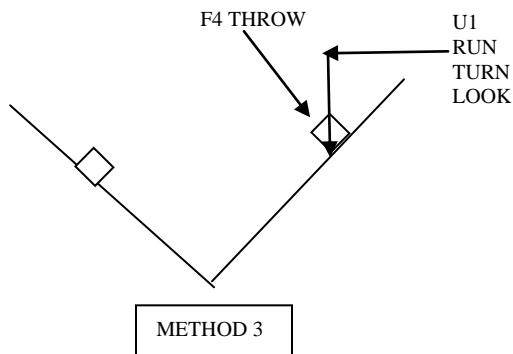
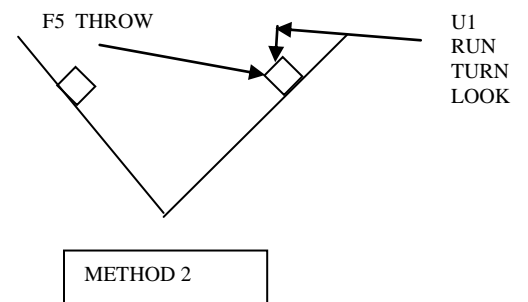
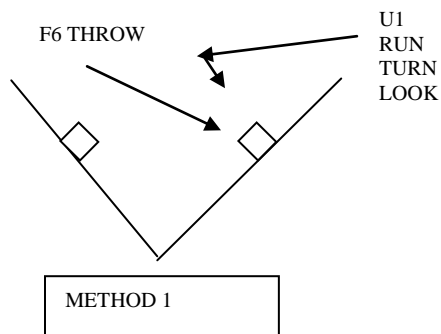
BATTED BALL FIELDED IN THE INFIELD AND NOT CLOSE TO THE FIRST BASE FOUL LINE

Start moving as the ball is released. If it goes to an infielder watch the ball and glance at the runner. If it's fielded you can use one of three methods to get into position to make the call.

#1 Run towards the fielder that has the ball. Watch the throw to see if it's on line and let the ball turn you back toward first base.

#2 Run to a position that is approximately 90 degrees to the anticipated throw and let it turn you to first base.

#3 Cut to a position that has you looking on the diagonal corners of first base and let the throw turn you back toward first base.



The intent is to stay out of the running and throwing lanes and put you in a position to get angle between you, the ball, the base, and the defender, so you can see the entire play.

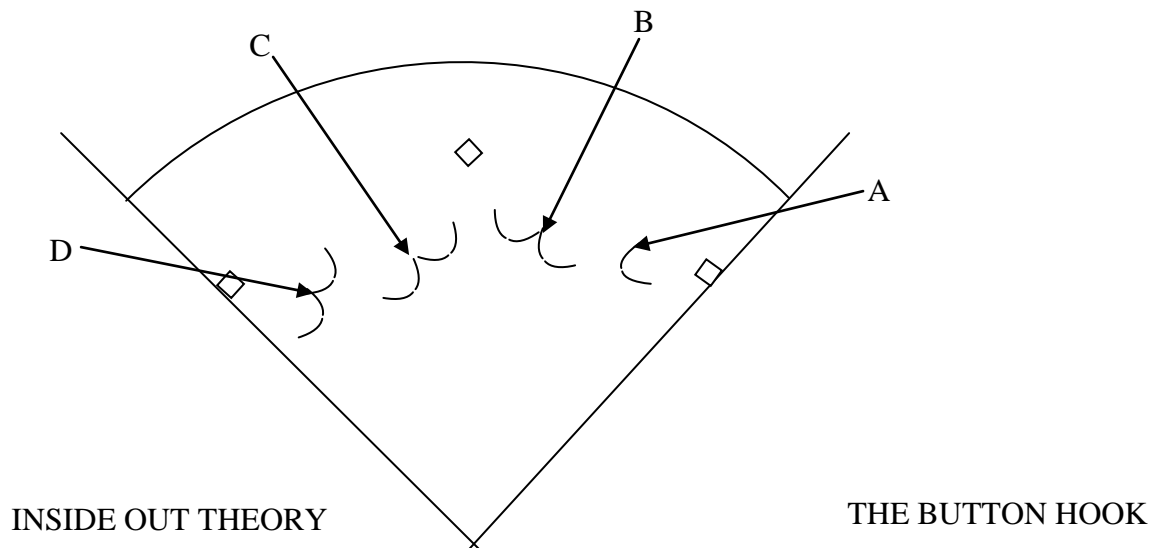
How close do you get to the base? About 15-20 feet on a typical force play. Move in if you anticipate a tag play. Now make the call from the preferred set position.

BATTED GROUND BALL THAT GOES THRU THE INFIELD (the Button Hook)

After the ball clears the infield, continue to what would have been the set position if the ball had not cleared and pick up the runner. Glance back at the ball to ensure it is not coming back in. Pick up first base and observe the touch. Watch out for any obstruction/interference play. Button hook. Follow the runner to the next base.

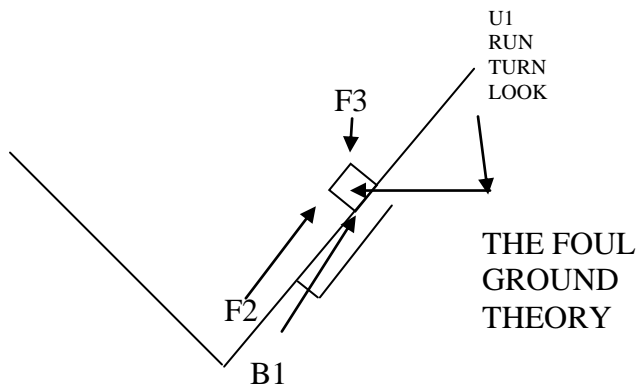
BUTTON HOOK. THE INSIDE OUT THEORY

When the ball goes into the outfield all base umpires come inside the diamond unless they go out to cover a fly ball. Clear to the inside of the infield, about 15-20 ft. Plant your lead foot as you maintain contact with the runner. Let the runner's momentum pivot you as he touches and rounds first. Push off on the plant foot and follow the runner to the next base. Keep out of the running and throwing lanes.



BATTED BALL TO THE INFIELD AND CLOSE TO THE FIRST BASE LINE. FOUL GROUND THEORY

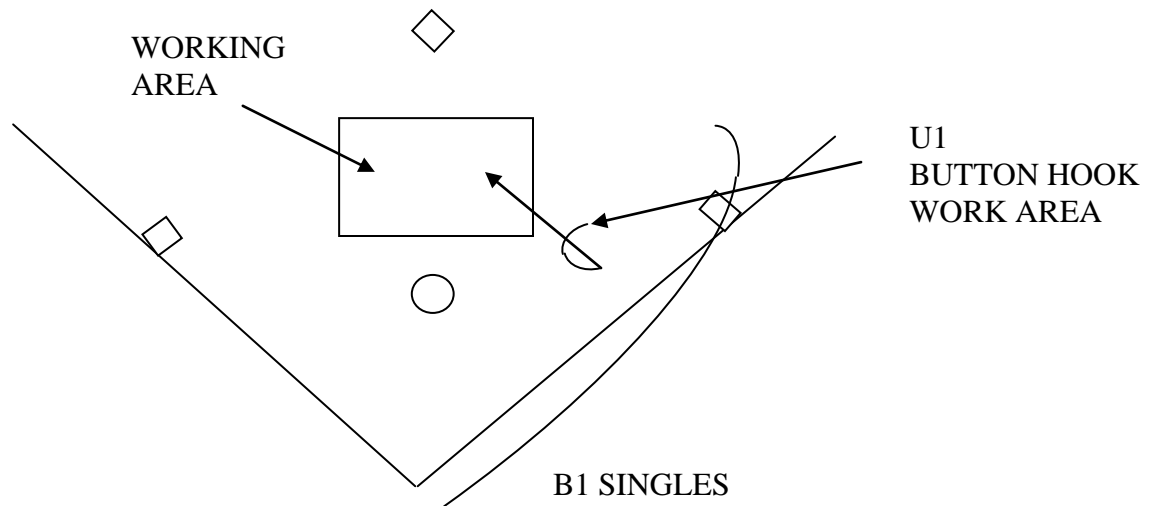
This is a ball batted to the first baseman, to the extreme left of the second baseman, or to the right fielder with a possible throw back to first base. Move toward first base and further back into foul territory (12-15ft) and stop on the diagonal of the first base corners. Make the call or follow the runner to the next base.



Note: You will be well behind the runner at this point. To gain ground, run toward the working area behind the pitching mound to even it up.

FOLLOW THE RUNNER

Runners are quick, a lot quicker than most umpires. They know what they are going to do, we have to react. This puts us at a disadvantage. Follow a runner from a position inside the diamond. We have less running to do and can actually slow to a fast walk and still cover the play. Move to the working area which is behind the pitching mound about half way to second base. From there we can watch the runner(s) and move quickly to any base to make the final call. On the big field this area is called the VEE area.



TAG PLAYS

Tag plays are fast action plays. You need to get closer to properly see the tag (about 8-12ft). Move to the inside of the diamond and stay back as the play develops. Watch the throw. This is your first indication that you could have a possible tag play. The throw is usually off line or late because of a bobble by the defender. Now move in toward the point where the defender, ball, and runner will arrive. The best position to call a tag is at 90 degrees to the path of the runner and just short of the point of contact. You should be able to look thru the runner and defender. Now hesitate.

Key points: Where was the tag made not where the glove stops on a sliding runner? Was the ball bobbled or dropped? Did the runner touch the bag or over slide? Now make the call. **AND SELL IT!**

TIMING PLAYS

The plate umpire is normally responsible for determining if a runner scored before the third out in a timing play. If he is making the third out timing call, this responsibility falls to the base umpire.

DO NOT LET THE SCOREKKEPER DETERMINE IF THE RUN SCORES OR DOES NOT SCORE! THAT IS THE UMPIRE'S JOB.

MAKING A CALL

There are two types of plays, Force plays and Tag plays.

Force plays start with the action of the batter. The offense has a tremendous advantage. They know if the batter was told to swing or take. They know if the steal is on. Or the Hit and Run. To even it up, the offense must beat all play to the forced bases. A tie does not go to the runner. It goes to the defense.

Tag plays start with the defense. They have the advantage. They know which runner they are going to play. Thus the offense is given the break. A tie does go to the runner.

In either case watch for: pulled foot, touch of the base, interference/obstruction, bobbled ball, and/or dropped ball. If everyone knows it's an out or a safe call, just give a routine signal. But if it's close, SELL IT.

YOU PULLED THE FOOT, SAFE!

THE FOOT'S THERE, OUT!

YOU MISSED THE BAG, OUT!

YOU BEAT IT, SAFE!

YOU BOBBLED IT, SAFE!

IT'S A CATCH, OUT!

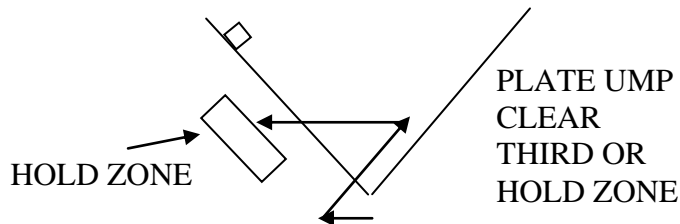
THE 60 FT DIAMOND

TWO UMPIRE SYSTEM

By far the most widely used system in any form of youth baseball and softball. You can cover 90% of the situations that you will normally encounter in a typical game. Two umpires working as a team can cover their individual plays with ease, be in the right place at the right time, and perform mechanics so smoothly that they will disappear from the forefront. But if you have not worked together you have to start somewhere. You start by saying coverage is according to standard mechanics.

The plate umpire should be prepared to make his share of base calls and the field umpire will make plate calls in certain situations. The plate umpire has the lead runner if there is more than one runner on base. As the first one scores or is put out he picks up the next lead runner unless it is the batter-runner or the last runner on base. That runner is the field umpires responsibility.

To do his job effectively, the plate umpire will go to the holding zone in foul territory between home and third. From there he can make the call at third by moving inside the diamond or make the call at home by retreating in foul territory with ease.



The base umpire makes most of the calls on the bases. He is also responsible for the runners touching first and second as they advance. He makes the following calls at third base:

The trail runner and/or the batter-runner all the way to third.

Lone runners advancing on a fly ball.

Any return throws to third after a play at the plate.

TAG UP RESPONSIBILITIES

The plate umpire has all tag ups at third base and runners at second base with runners on first and second. The base umpire has: all runners at first base, the lone runner at second,

the runner at second base with runners on second and third, and the runners at first and second with the bases loaded.

This can lead to a long run for the base umpire if he is in the “C” position with bases loaded and a fly ball to left field. The plate umpire should call, “I got the tag at first!” so the base umpire can take the tag at second and third. Do not do this unless there is communication and acknowledgment during the game or thoroughly discussed during the pre-game between umpires.

NO RUNNERS ON BASE

With no runners on base the base umpire starts in the “A” position.

Plate Umpire:

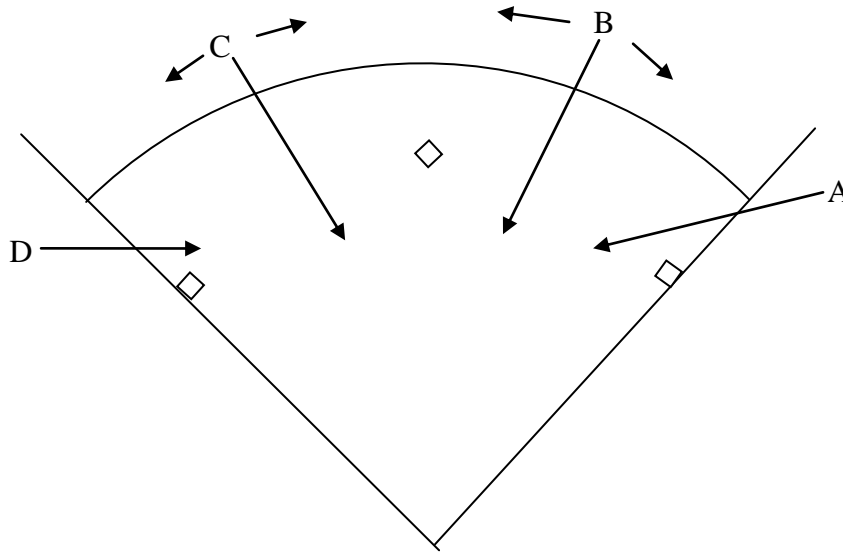
1. Stay in the area of the plate with any ground balls close to the foul line. You have the fair/foul call.
2. On infield hits: clear the catcher, move up the first base line to observe the play (3ft line, pulled foot, help with a swipe tag, etc), then move to third base or the holding zone.
3. Has all the duties of a base umpire if the base umpire goes out on a fly ball.
4. Has routine fly ball and third base foul line calls.
5. Back up your partner.

Base Umpire:

1. Responsible for the batter-runner all the way to third.
2. Has foul ball coverage down the right field line. If the right fielder breaking for the foul line, you have the trap/catch and the fair/foul calls.
3. Back up the plate umpire.

Once you have runners on base the other set positions (B and C) apply. Let’s discuss them now. They play an important part if the crew is going to call a good game.

STARTING POSITIONS BEYOND THE “A” POSITION



The “B” position is approximately half way between first and second base to the outfield side of the baseline. This puts you a few steps behind and to the left of the second baseman. Adjust your position left or right depending of the position of the second baseman, the type of batter (Stay for a right hander and move closer to second for a lefty. Give them their side of the infield.), and expected play. If you anticipate a bunt or steal, move a bit closer to second base.

The “C” position is approximately half way between second and third base to the outfield side of the baseline. This puts you a few steps behind and to the right of the short stop. Adjust your position left or right depending on the position of the short stop, the type of batter (Stay for the lefty and move closer to second for a right hand batter. Give them their side of the infield.), and the expected play.

The “D” position is the mirror of the “A” position but on the third base line. It is used when you have 3 or move umpires.

RUNNER ON FIRST

Plate Umpire:

1. On batted balls to the infield/outfield, clear the catcher and observe the play at first base. Then cut inside the diamond and take the lead runner to third
2. The plate umpire covers third if there is a wild throw to second on a steal. Be prepared to take the play home.
3. Fair/ Foul and catch/no catch on all fly balls.
4. Back up your partner.

Field Umpire:

1. Set up in the "B" position.
2. If there is a steal, stay to the outside and behind the defender. Make the call. If the ball is throw wild, cut inside the diamond and be prepared to take the runner to third if the plate umpire is not in position.
3. Be prepared to take the play at home if the plate umpire can not make it back to home on a booted play at third and the runner tries to score.
4. On batted balls to the infield, take the first throw to any base except the plate. Then take subsequent throws to first or second base. Any throw back to third is the plate umpire's call.
5. On a hit to the outfield, cut inside the diamond to the working area, button hook, observe the lead runner touch of second, and take the batter-runner to third.
6. On a double play, take one step toward second and make the call. Follow the flight of the ball to first and make the call.
- 7*. Has tag up responsibility for the runner at first and takes the single runner all the way to third.
8. Back up your partner.

* Take the play at second if the plate umpire says he has the tag up at first.

COMMUNICATE

RUNNER ON SECOND

Plate Umpire:

1. On batted balls clear the catcher, and observe the play at first. Cut toward third and be ready for any throw backs to third base.

2. Fair/ Foul and catch/no catch on all fly balls. Observe the batter-runner touch first since the base umpire has the tag up at second. Has the play at third if the ball is not caught. Retreat to home if the ball is caught.
3. Observe the lead runner touch of third on base hits.
4. Back up your partner.

Base Umpire:

1. Set up in the “C” position.
2. On hits to the infield, take the first throw unless it is to the plate. Any subsequent throw to first or second are yours. A throw back to third base is the plate umpire’s call.
3. On balls hit out of the infield, come inside the diamond to the working area, button hook, and take the batter-runner to third. Observe the touches.
4. On steal plays, move toward third and be prepared to make the call.
5. On fly balls to the outfield, move inside the diamond to the working area, button hook, and observe the tag up at second. Take the runner to third if the ball is caught. Pick up the batter-runner if the ball is not caught.
6. Back up your partner.

RUNNER ON THIRD

Plate Umpire:

1. On batted balls, clear the catcher, observe the play at first base, and drift to the holding zone.
2. Be ready for a call at the plate if the runner on third comes home.
3. Fair/ Foul and catch/no catch on all fly balls.
4. On fly balls to the outfield, you have tag up responsibility for the runner on third and all calls at the plate.
5. Back up your partner.

Base Umpire:

1. Set up in the “C” position.

2. On hits to the infield, take the first throw unless it is to the plate. Any subsequent throw to first or second are yours. A throw back to third base is the plate umpire's call.
3. On balls hit out of the infield, come inside the diamond to the working area, button hook, and take the batter-runner to third. Observe the touches.
4. On a steal, cut inside the diamond and be ready for a call at third if the runner doubles back.
5. Back up your partner.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

Plate Umpire:

1. On base hits and double steals, take the lead runner at third. Go to the holding area and cut inside the diamond to make the call.
2. On hits where there is no play on the lead runner, stay in the holding zone and watch the lead runner touch home. Pick up the next runner going to third. Make the call.
3. Has tag up responsibilities at second base and calls the advance to third play.
4. On ground balls, clear the catcher to the left, observe the batter-runner while cutting across the diamond toward third.
5. Has throw back call at third.
6. Fair/ Foul and catch/no catch on all fly balls.
7. Back up your partner.

Field umpire:

1. Set up in the "C" position. Take the first throw in the infield and subsequent throws to second and/or first. The plate umpire has throw backs to third.
2. If the runner tries to steal third, move toward third and make the call. On a double steal, cover the play at second.
3. Has tag up responsibilities for the runner at first and the subsequent play at second base.
4. On hits thru the infield or to the outfield, cut inside the diamond to the work area, and button hook. See that runners and the batter-runner touch first and second.
5. Take the batter-runner to third.
6. Back up your partner.

RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD

Plate umpire:

1. Has tag up responsibility for the runner at third and the subsequent play at the plate.
2. On base hits thru the infield, move to the holding zone. Take the lead runner's touch of the plate then pick up the next lead runner(s). You have touch responsibilities at third and the plate.
3. Has touch responsibilities for the runner on third to touch the plate. If there is no play at the plate, observe the runner touch of the plate and help your partner at third.
4. On ground balls with a play at first or second, clear the catcher to the left, observe the batter-runner advance to first while cutting across the diamond toward third.
5. Has throw back call at third.
6. Fair/ Foul and catch/no catch on all fly balls.
7. Back up your partner.

BASE UMPIRE:

1. Set up in the "C" position.
2. On batted balls to the infield, take the first throw and any subsequent throws to first or second. Throws back to third are the plate umpire's call.
3. Has tag up responsibilities for the runner at second and the advance to third.
4. On base hit thru the infield or to the outfield, cut inside the diamond, and button hook in the work area. Observe all base play and take the batter-runner all the way to third.
5. Has steal coverage at third base.
6. Back up your partner.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

Plate Umpire:

1. Has tag up responsibility for the runner at third and the play at the plate if he advances. If there is no play at the plate, observe the runner touch of the plate and help your partner at third. Retreat if he says he has the play.

2. On base hits, clear the catcher, observe the batter-runner as he goes toward first, and cut across the diamond to the holding area.
3. Take any play at the plate.
4. If there is no immediate play at the plate and the runner on third advances, observe the touch of home plate and pick up any lead runners.
5. If the first play is to second or first base, clear the catcher, observe the batter-runner as he goes toward first, cut across the diamond to the holding area, observe the lead runner touch home and be ready for a possible return throw to third.
6. Fair/ Foul and catch/no catch on all fly balls.
7. Back up your partner.

BASE UMPIRE:

1. Set up in the “C” position.
2. Take the first throw in the infield and any subsequent throws to second or first. The plate umpire has the throw back to third.
3. On base hits thru the infield or to the outfield cut inside the diamond to the working area, button hook, and observe all runners touch first and second. Take the batter-runner to third.
4. On fly balls, has tag up responsibilities for the runner at first and subsequent play at second. If the plate umpire is assisting at third and you can take the play at third, advise him to retreat to home. You now have the play at third.
5. Has steal coverage at second.
6. Back up your partner.

BASES LOADED

Plate Umpire:

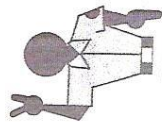
1. Fair/ Foul and catch/no catch on all fly balls.
2. On fly balls, has tag up responsibilities for the runner at third and any further play at the plate. If the runner advances and there is no play at the plate move to the holding zone and help your partner at third. Retreat to home if he says he has the play.
3. On base hits, clear the catcher, observe the batter-runner, and cut across the diamond to third. Observe the lead runner touch of home. Then pick up the lead runner(s) touch of third and home. You have the calls at third or home.

4. If the first play is to second or first base, clear the catcher, observe the batter-runner as he goes toward first, cut across the diamond to the holding area, observe the lead runner touch home and be ready for a possible return throw to third.
5. Has fir/foul and catch/no catch responsibilities.
6. Back up your partner.

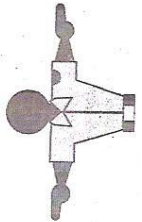
Base Umpire:

1. Set up in the “C” position.
2. Take the first throw in the infield and any subsequent throws to second or first. The plate umpire has the throw back to third.
3. On base hits thru the infield or to the outfield cut inside the diamond to the working area, button hook, and observe all runners touch first and second. Take the batter-runner to third.
4. On fly balls, has tag up responsibilities for the runners at first and second and subsequent play at second or third. If the plate umpire is assisting at third and you can take the play at third, advise him to retreat to home. You now have the play at third.
5. Has steal coverage at second and third.
6. Back up your partner.

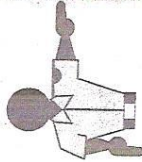
UMPIRE SIGNAL CHART



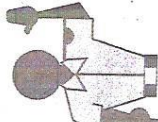
DOUBLE
Raise right arm with fingers spread, then left arm. Verbally call, "Two Bases."



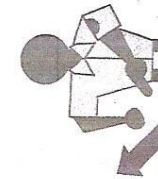
TRAPPED BALL/SAFE
Extend arms straight out with palms down. Verbally call, "Trapped Ball" or "Safe."



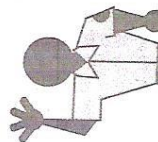
DELAYED DEAD BALL
Extend left arm straight out with fist closed.



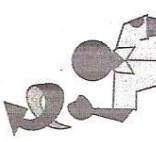
HOLD UP PLAY
With palm facing forward, hold right arm out from batter toward pitcher.



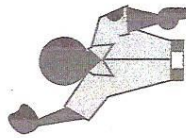
FOUL TIP
Fingers from both hands are focused together chest high in front of body and then a strike signal with no verbal call.



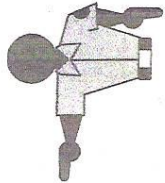
FOUR-BASE AWARD (RPI)
On any fair touched ball going over the fence, raise right hand showing four fingers. Verbally call, "Four Bases."



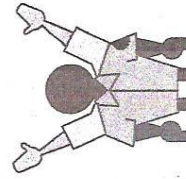
HOME RUN
Raise right arm. With fist closed move it to counter-clockwise twisting motion. Verbally call, "Home Run."



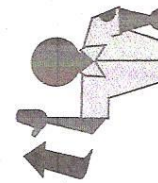
INFIELD FLY
Raise right arm with flat closed. Verbally call, "Infield Fly."



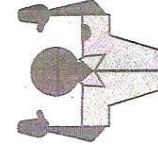
FAIR BALL
Point towards fair ground with hand closest to infield. No verbal call.



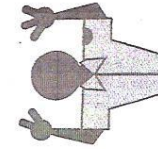
FOUL BALL
First give DEAD BALL signal. Verbally call, "Foul Ball."



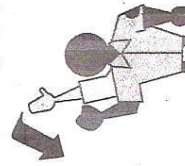
PLAY BALL
Motion with either hand to the pitcher. Verbally call, "Play Ball."



TIME DEAD BALL
Raise both hands with open palms away from the body. Verbally call, "Time" or "Dead Ball."



COUNT
Raise both arms up, indicate strikes with fingers on right hand and balls with fingers on left hand. Verbally give count. Use counter-clockwise motion of fingers when giving count.



STRIKE/OUT
Bring left arm with hand closed to midsection as right arm is extended straight up with hand facing ear. Then pull down at elbow while closing fist. Verbally call, "Strike" or "Out."

THE THREE MAN SYSTEM

The three man umpire system, when executed properly, is not only the most enjoyable system of umpiring, but also assures near complete coverage of everything that can happen on the field. Players and fans love the better base coverage. Umpires have plenty to do without getting bored (an umpire goes out on almost every fly ball and the clockwise rotation system when an umpire does not go out virtually has an umpire at every base). Note: If an umpire goes out to cover a fly ball there is no rotation. Use the two man system mechanics.

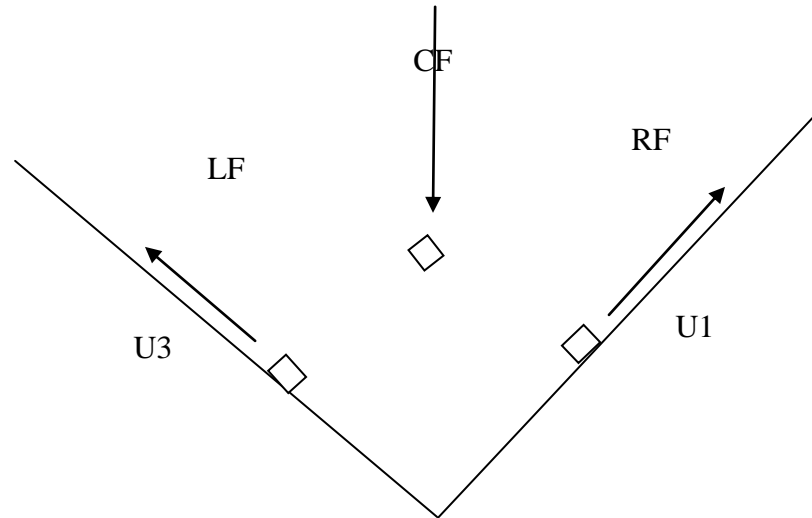
It will never replace the two man system because it requires additional manpower to execute. However, with limited games, such as a playoff or tournament where you can draw from a larger pool of umpires, the three man system should be the system of choice.

STARTING POSITIONS

The starting position for the umpires is the plate umpire at the plate and the field umpires at the "A" and "D" positions described earlier. From here the field umpires can cover fly balls to the outfield and still have a two man system in the infield.

FLY BALL COVERAGE

So how do we cover plays to the outfield? We split the field in half. With no runners on base we have the following set up.



U1 has the fair/foul call down the right field line and any trouble fly ball to the outfield from the center fielder to the right field foul line. If the center fielder is running straight in toward the infield it is U1's call. U1 turns his back and goes. He has fair/foul and catch/trap calls.

U3 has the fair/foul call down the left field line and any trouble fly ball to the outfield from the center fielder to the left field foul line. If the center fielder is running straight in toward the infield it is U1's call. U3 turns his back and goes. He has fair/foul and catch/trap calls.

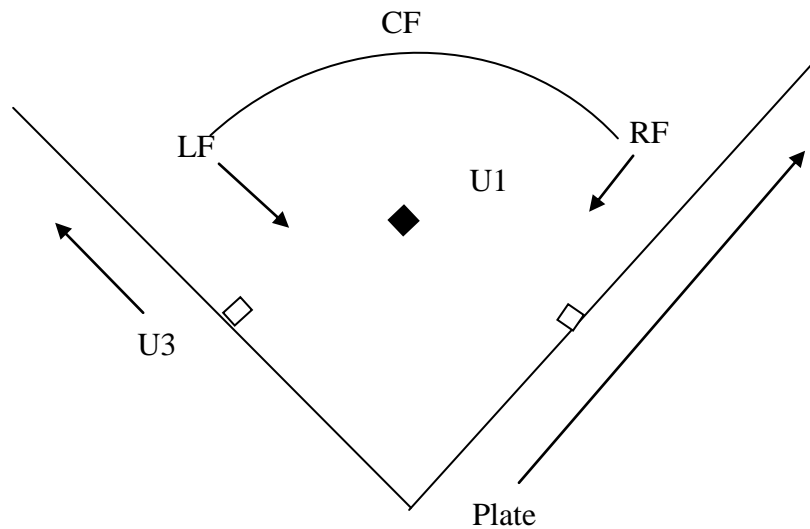
The Plate umpire has all routine fly balls to the outfield and fair/foul coverage up to and bounding over first and third. If either U1 or U3 turns and goes, the remaining umpires revert back to the two man system of coverage.

If a field umpire goes out to cover a trouble ball it may leave the remaining umpires in a reversed position. When reverting to the two man system the remaining umpires will rotate clockwise and good communication is critical.

Example: Runner on second base. U3 is on the third base line and U1 is in the "B" position. A fly ball down the left field line that causes U3 to go will leave U1 behind the runner (He would have been in the "C" position in a two man system.). U1 would have to hustle to the working area and make the call. With clockwise rotation the plate umpire

can call U1 off, "I got third!" and take the play. U1 should fade back toward the plate in case of an overthrow. He now calls he has the plate for the benefit of the plate umpire.

The following illustration shows a runner on second with U1 in the "B" position. So how do we split the field? Like this. Note: The "B" position is the preferred position for runners on base. This makes the third base side of the infield, umpire free, with less chance of an umpire influencing the play. If there is a left hand batter or the umpire feels that the first base side should be umpire free, he can move to a modified "B" position behind second base or the "C" position. Fly ball coverage stays the same.



Note: The reverse of the example above. If U3 were in the "B" position U3 has catch/trap calls between the left fielder and right fielder to include these fielders coming straight toward the infield. U1 has fair/foul and catch/trap calls along the first base line and when the right fielder heads for the foul line. The plate umpire has fair/foul/ and catch/trap calls down the third base line and when the left fielder heads for the foul line.

NO RUNNERS ON BASE

Plate Umpire

1. On any batted ball, trail the batter-runner to first, cut across the diamond to the holding zone.

2. On hits to the outfield, cut inside the foul line and make the call at third.
3. Drift back in foul territory to make calls at the plate if U1 or U3 has the batter-runner to third.

U1:

1. Set up in the “A” position.
2. Go out on any fly balls between the center fielder to include the center fielder coming in and the right field foul line, or and batted ball to the outfield close to the foul line. Has fair/foul and catch/trap calls.
3. On all other fly balls, cut inside the diamond, button hook, and take the play at first. Be ready to take the batter-runner to third.
4. On hits to the outfield, cut inside the diamond to the working area, button hook, and call the play at first. Look to see if U3 is in the working area for the play at second. If not, take the play at second. If he is release and cover home.

U3:

1. Set up in the “D” position.
2. Go out on any fly balls between the center fielder and the left field foul line, or batted ball to the outfield close to the foul line. Has fair/foul and catch/trap calls.
3. On all other fly balls, cut inside the diamond to the working area, button hook, and pick up the batter-runner. Be ready to take him to third.
4. On hits to the outfield, cut inside the diamond to the working area, button hook, and call the play at second. Look to see if the plate umpire is in the holding zone for the play at third. If not, take the play at third.

RUNNER ON FIRST

U1:

1. Set up in the “A” position.
2. Take fly ball coverage down the right field line.
3. On fly balls you do not go out on, move inside the diamond, has tag responsibilities for the runner at first and the advance to second. Take the last runner to third.
4. On base hits to the outfield, observe the batter-runner touch of first base. Release to foul ground if U3 is covering second and cover the plate.
5. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Set up in the “B” position.

2. Take fly ball coverage between the left and right fielders as described above.
3. On fly balls you do not go out on, has the advance at second.
4. Has tag responsibilities at first and the advance to third if U1 goes out for a fly ball.
5. On base hits to the outfield, move in side the diamond and take the plays at second. Be ready for plays at first after U1 releases to cover the plate.
6. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Take fly ball coverage down the left field line.
2. Take the play on R1 at third if the fly ball is missed. Cover plays at the plate.
3. On base hits trail the batter-runner, observe the play at first then cut across the diamond. Has the call at third base.
4. Drift back to the plate if U1 or U3 has the runner to third.
5. Back up your partners.

RUNNER AT SECOND BASE

U1:

1. Set up in the “B” position.
2. Take fly ball coverage between the left and right fielders as described above.
3. On fly balls you do not go out on, has tag responsibilities at second.
4. Has the play at first and second on dropped fly balls or hits to the outfield. Take the lone runner to third if U3 is in the outfield.
5. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Set up in the “D” position.
2. Take fly ball coverage down the left field line as described above.
3. On fly balls you do not go out on, has tag responsibilities at second.
4. If U1 is in the outfield, has the play at first and second on dropped fly balls or hits to the outfield. Take the lone runner to third.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Take fly ball coverage down the right field line.
2. Take R2 to third if the fly ball is missed. 3. On base hits trail the batter-runner, observe the play at first then cut across the diamond. Has the call at third base.
4. Cover plays at the plate if U1 or U3 has the lone runner to third.

5. Back up your partners.

RUNNER AT THIRD

U1:

1. Set up in the “A” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage from the center fielder (to incline the center fielder running directly to the infield) to the right field line.
3. If U3 goes out take the batter-runner all the way to third.
4. On hits to the outfield, observe the batter-runner touch first and cover the plate. If U3 is in the outfield cover first and second.
5. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Set up in the “D” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage from the center fielder to the left field line.
3. On hits to the outfield cover the play at second. If U1 is in the outfield cover first and second.
4. If U1 goes out take the batter-runner all the way to third.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has tag up responsibilities for the runner at third and immediate return throw to third.
2. On base hits trail the batter-runner, observe the play at first then cut across the diamond.
3. On hits to the outfield has calls at third except if U1 or U3 is taking the batter-runner to third.
4. Has calls at the plate unless U1 is covering the plate..
5. Back up your partner.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

U1:

1. Set up in the “B” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage between the right and left fielders.
3. On batted balls hit to the outfield that nobody goes out on, move inside the diamond to the working area and take the play at first. Observe U3 covers second and retreat to cover the plate.

4. On batted balls that U3 goes out on, has tag responsibility at first base and the play at second if the runner advances. Take the trail runner or batter-runner to third.
5. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Set up in the “D” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage down the left field line.
3. On batted balls hit to the outfield that nobody goes out on, move inside the diamond to the working area and take the play at second.
4. On batted balls that U1 goes out on, has tag responsibility at first base and the play at second if the runner advances. Take the trail runner or batter-runner to third.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fly ball coverage down the right field line.
2. On batted balls observe the play at first base as you cut across the diamond to the holding zone. Has the call at third.
3. On fly balls where U1 or U3 go out, has tag responsibilities at second. Take the advance to third.
4. Has the call at the plate unless U1 rotates to cover the plate.
5. Back up your partners.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

U1:

1. Set up in the “B” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage between the left and right fielders.
3. On batted balls hit to the outfield that nobody goes out on, move inside the diamond to the working area and take the play at first. Observe U3 covers second and retreat to cover the plate.
4. On batted balls that U3 goes out on, has tag responsibility at first base and the play at second if the runner advances. Take the trail runner or batter-runner to third.
5. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Set up in the “D” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage down the left field line.
3. On batted balls hit to the outfield that nobody goes out on, move inside the diamond to the working area and take the play at second.

4. On batted balls that U1 goes out on, has tag responsibility at first base and the play at second if the runner advances. Take the trail runner or batter-runner to third.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fly ball coverage down the right field line.
2. On batted balls observe the play at first base as you cut across the diamond to the holding zone. Has the call at third.
3. On fly balls where U1 or U3 go out, has tag responsibilities at third. Take the advance to home.
4. Has the call at the plate unless U1 rotates to cover the plate.
5. Back up your partners.

RUNNERS AT SECOND AND THIRD

U1:

1. Set up in the “B” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage between the left and right fielders.
3. On batted balls hit to the outfield that nobody goes out on, move inside the diamond to the working area and take the play at first. Observe U3 covers second and retreat to cover the plate.
4. On batted balls that U3 goes out on, has tag responsibility at second base and the play at third if the runner advances. Take the trail runner or batter-runner to third.
5. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Set up in the “D” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage down the left field line.
3. On batted balls hit to the outfield that nobody goes out on, move inside the diamond to the working area and take the play at third.
4. On batted balls that U1 goes out on, has tag responsibility at second base and the play at third if the runner advances. Take the trail runner or batter-runner to third.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fly ball coverage down the right field line.
2. On batted balls observe the play at first base as you cut across the diamond to the holding zone. Has the call at third.
3. On fly balls where U1 or U3 go out, has tag responsibilities at third. Take the advance to home.

4. Has the call at the plate unless U1 rotates to cover the plate.
5. Back up your partners.

BASES LOADED

U1:

1. Set up in the “B” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage between the left and right fielders.
3. On batted balls hit to the outfield that nobody goes out on, move inside the diamond to the working area and take the play at first. Observe U3 covers second and retreat to cover the plate.
4. On batted balls that U3 goes out on, has tag responsibility at first and second base and the play at second if the runner advances. Take the trail runner or batter-runner to third.
5. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Set up in the “D” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage down the left field line.
3. On batted balls hit to the outfield that nobody goes out on, move inside the diamond to the working area and take the play at second.
4. On batted balls that U1 goes out on, has tag responsibility at first and second base and the play at second if the runner advances. Take the trail runner or batter-runner to third.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fly ball coverage down the right field line.
2. On batted balls observe the play at first base as you cut across the diamond to the holding zone. Has the call at third.
3. On fly balls where U1 or U3 go out, has tag responsibilities at third. Take the advance to home.
4. Has the call at the plate unless U1 rotates to cover the plate.
5. Back up your partners.

BETWEEN INNINGS

U1 and U3: Assume a position mid way between first/third and home. This keeps you out of the throwing lanes during warm-up. Face the infield. Observe the action around the dugout on your side. Hustle players in and out. Keep the on deck batter in the circle

until the catcher throws to second. U1 hustles to the “A” position. U3 moves to the pitching mound to clean the rubber, then hustles to the “D” position.

Plate: Assume a position about 12-15 ft to the left of the right hand batting box. Face the infield and observe play. Count the warm up pitches or monitor the time between innings and call for the throw down. Sweep the plate after the throw down. Make sure the ball is in the pitcher’s possession and the catcher is dressed and ready before you call for the batter. Get the batter set and check your partners. Then call play.

THE FOUR MAN SYSTEM

The four man system provides an umpire at every base and offers excellent coverage of the outfield. An umpire will go out on every ball hit to the outfield. The remaining 3 umpires will assume the three man coverage with rotation (U1 or U2 will rotate to cover the plate). This system is typically used for the quarter final and semi final games.

BETWEEN INNINGS

U1, U3 and the plate umpire assume the same between inning positions as in the 3 man system. U2 will stay about 10-12 ft behind and slightly to the first base side of second base. He has clean up duties on the mound after the throw down.

FAIR AND FOUL COVERAGE

The plate umpire has fair/foul/ coverage down the foul lines up to and bounding over first or third base.

U1 has fair/foul coverage beyond first base.

U3 has fair/foul coverage beyond third base.

FLY BALL COVERAGE

The plate umpire has fly ball coverage (catch/trap) in the infield area.

U1 has fly ball coverage (catch/trap) from the right fielder to right field foul line.

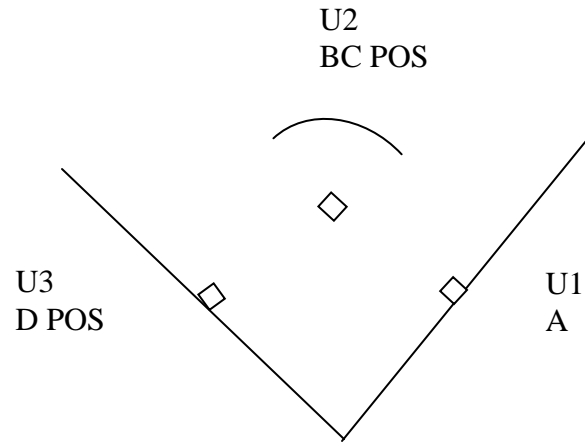
U3 has fly ball coverage (catch/trap) from the left fielder to left field foul line.

U2 has fly ball coverage (catch/trap) between the right and left fielders to include when they head straight for the infield.

START POSITION

U1 will set up in the "A" position. U3 will set up in the "D" position. The plate umpire will occupy his normal spot.

U2 will start at a position that is kind of a combination of positions B and C. Call it the BC position. It's an arc about 12-18 ft behind and slightly offset to the first base side of second base. Typically he will start here to give the right handed batter's their side of the infield. This also is the best positions for steals. But he can and is advised to set up on the third base side for left hand batter's or if there is indication of a probable trick play (a double steal, a suicide squeeze, a catcher pick off, etc) to that side of the diamond.



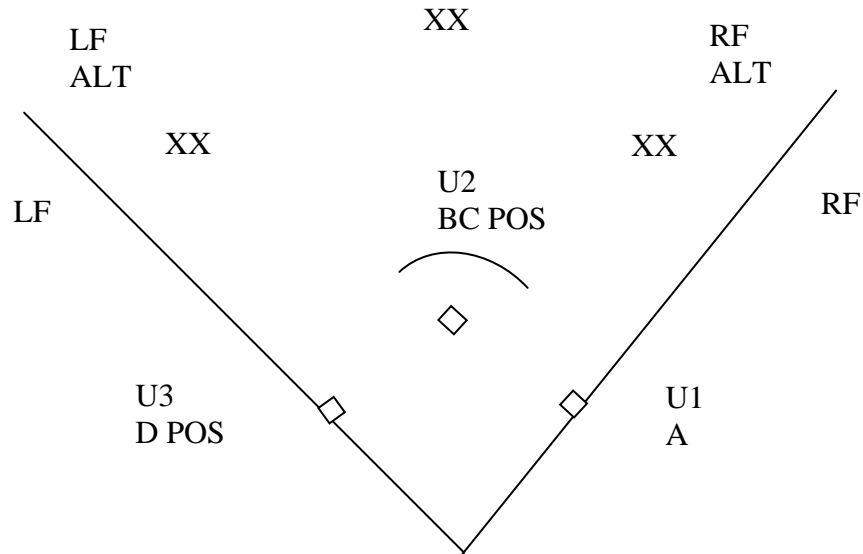
PLAY COVERAGE

There are only 4 coverage options when using the 4 man system. Which option is used depends on which umpire moves to the outfield.

- #1. Everyone calls his base on a hit to the infield.
- #2. U1 goes out, U2 cuts inside the diamond to take his place and cover plays at first. U3 cuts inside the diamond and covers plays at second. The plate umpire moves up the line to cover third. U2 retreats to cover the plate.
- #3. U2 goes out, U3 cuts inside the diamond to take his place and cover plays at second. U1 cuts inside the diamond and covers plays at first. The plate umpire moves up the line to cover third. U1 retreats to cover the plate.
- #4. U3 goes out the plate umpire moves up the line to cover third. U1 retreats to cover the plate.

THE SIX MAN SYSTEM

Has the most complete coverage possible. Every base has an umpire dedicated to it. Fly ball coverage is provided by the additional two umpires.



OUTFIELD UMPIRE POSITIONS

There are two positions to place the left and right field umpires. The traditional spot is abreast the right or left fielder and about 5 feet in foul territory. The umpires can still see the ball hit at the plate and not interfere with the fielders. They are abreast the fielders and can get in a good 90 degree position to rule catch/trap.

The alternate position is 10-20 ft inside the line in fair territory and behind the fielders. The umpires have a better view of the plate but now are at a disadvantage to call a trouble ball hit in front of the fielders.

OUTFIELD SPLIT

The two outfield umpires split the field at the center fielder with the right field umpire taking the center fielder if he runs toward the infield. Each has fair/foul and catch/trap authority in their area.

THE FIVE MAN SYSTEM

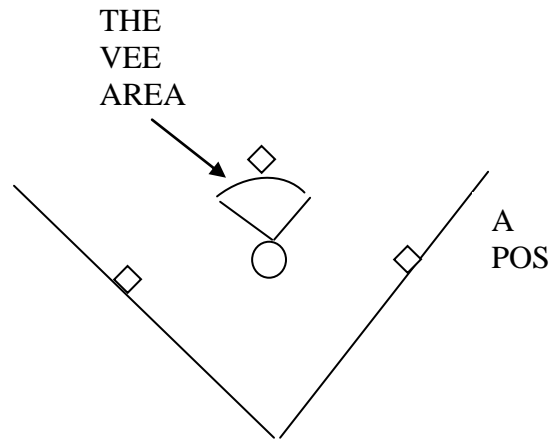
Never heard of this one. It is a rarely used system. If you have a game that is important enough to put 6 men on you normally have a spare. The 5 man system is a backup to the six man system when one umpire can't make the game at the last minute and no spare is available (or was used on another game). Two umpires cover the foul lines as in the six man system and the remainder use three man mechanics in the infield with no umpire going out and all umpires using a clockwise rotation.

THE 90 FT DIAMOND

2 MAN SYSTEM T two man system is run much like the 60 ft diamond but there is no real “B” or “C” position unless you have 4 or more umpires.

THE VEE

The “B” and “C” positions and the working area are replaced by what is called the “VEE” area behind the pitching. THIS PUTS THE FIELD UMPIRE IN FRONT OF THE INFIELDBERS. BE CAREFUL YOU DO NOT GET IN THE WAY.



WHERE DO YOU STAND IN THE “VEE”?

The traditional answer is stand to the side of the pitcher that you expect plays. With a runner on first the play will be at second or first, so stay to the first base side of the pitcher. Once a runner gets to second, play most likely will be at third, so stand to the third base side of the pitcher.

The second school of thought is to let the umpire choose where he wants to stand. There may be some reason he may want to switch sides (poor footing for example).

GENERAL RULES FOR THE FIELD UMPIRE

The field umpire starts in the “A position with no runners on base and moves into the “VEE” with runners on base. When in the “A” position he has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage down the right field line from the right fielder going toward the infield and to the foul line. The plate umpire has the rest of the fair/foul and catch/trap calls.

The field umpire has the primary balk calls to the bases since he has the best look at the pitcher's foot contact with the rubber. He also has the best angle to see the step before the throw.

NO RUNNERS ON BASE

U1:

1. Has fly ball coverage down the right field line.
2. On batted balls cuts inside the diamond, button hooks, and has the batter-runner all the way to third.
3. Back up your partner.

Plate:

1. Has fly ball coverage on all fly balls to the infield and the outfield that U1 does not go out on.
2. On batted balls follows the play up the first base line, cuts across the diamond, and heads for the holding zone in foul territory along the left field line.
3. If there is a play at first or second and the ball gets away, has the call at third.
4. Drift back to the plate in foul territory if U1 has the play at third.
5. Has calls at the plate.
6. Back up your partner.

RUNNER ON FIRST

U1

1. Set up in the "Vee".
2. Has the pick off call at first and the steal of second.
3. Has the primary balk calls to first.
4. Has the play at second on a fly ball if the runner advances.
5. Has the play at second and first on batted balls.
6. Takes the lone runner or the batter-runner to third.
7. Back up your partner.

Plate:

1. Has all fly ball coverage.
2. Has tag responsibilities at first base.
3. On batted balls follow the play to first, then cut across the diamond and go to the holding zone at third.
4. Has the call at third on the lead runner.
5. Fade back to the plate if U1 has the call at third.
6. Has the calls at the plate
7. Back up your partner.

RUNNER ON SECOND

U1

1. Set up in the “Vee”.
2. Has the pick off call at second and the steal of third.
3. Has the primary balk calls to second.
4. Has the tag at second on a fly ball.
5. Has the first play in the infield and the play at second and first on batted balls.
6. Takes the lone runner or the batter-runner to third.
7. Back up your partner.

Plate:

1. Has all fly ball coverage.
2. Has advance responsibilities at third base.
3. On batted balls follow the play to first, then cut across the diamond and go to the holding zone at third.
4. Has all calls at third base.
5. Fade back to the plate if U1 has the lead runner at third.
6. Has the calls at the plate
7. Back up your partner.

RUNNER ON THIRD

U1

1. Set up in the “Vee”.
2. Has the pick off call at third.
3. Has the primary balk calls to third.
4. Has the play at second and first on batted balls.
5. Takes the lone runner or the batter-runner to third.
6. Back up your partner.

Plate:

1. Has all fly ball coverage.
2. Has tag and advance responsibilities for the runner at third base.
3. On batted balls follow the play to first, then cut across the diamond and go to the holding zone at third.
4. Has all calls at third base.
5. Fade back to the plate if U1 has the lead runner at third.
6. Has the calls at the plate.
7. Back up your partner.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

U1

1. Set up in the “Vee”.
2. Has the pick off calls at second and first.
3. Has the primary balk calls to second and first.
4. Has the steal at second.
5. Has the tag responsibility at first base.
6. Has the advance to second.
7. Has the first play in the infield and the play at second and first on batted balls.
8. Takes the trail, lone, or batter-runner to third.
9. Back up your partner.

Plate:

1. Has all fly ball coverage.
2. Has tag and advance responsibilities for the runner at second base.
3. Has the steal at third.
4. On batted balls follow the play to first, then cut across the diamond and go to the holding zone at third.
5. Has the call at third on the lead runner(s).
6. Fade back to the plate if U1 has the lead runner at third.
7. Has all calls at the plate.
8. Back up your partner.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

U1

1. Set up in the “Vee”.
2. Has the pick off calls at third and first.
3. Has the primary balk calls to third and first.
4. Has the steal at second.
5. Has the tag and advance responsibilities for the runner at first base.
6. Has the first play in the infield and the play at second and first on batted balls.
7. Takes the trail, lone, or batter-runner to third.
8. Back up your partner.

Plate:

1. Has all fly ball coverage.
2. Has tag and advance responsibilities for the runner at third base.
3. On batted balls follow the play to first, then cut across the diamond and go to the holding zone at third.
4. Has the call at third on the lead runner(s).
6. Fade to the plate if U1 has the lone or batter-runner to third.
7. Has all calls at the plate.

8. Back up your partner.

RUNNERS AT SECOND AND THIRD

U1

1. Set up in the “Vee”.
2. Has the pick offs calls at second and third.
3. Has the primary balk calls to second and third.
4. Has the steal at third.
5. Has the tag and advance responsibilities for the runner at second base.
6. Has the first play in the infield and the calls at first and second on batted balls.
7. Takes the trail, lone, or batter-runner to third.
8. Back up your partner.

Plate:

1. Has all fly ball coverage.
2. Has tag and advance responsibilities for the runner at third base.
3. On batted balls follow the play to first, then cut across the diamond and go to the holding zone at third.
4. Has the call at third on the lead runner(s).
6. Fade to the plate if U1 has the lone or batter-runner to third.
6. Has all calls at the plate.
7. Back up your partner.

BASES LOADED

U1

1. Set up in the “Vee”.
2. Has all pick offs calls.
3. Has the primary balk calls to all bases.
4. Has the steal at second and third.
5. Has the tag and advance responsibilities for the runner at first and second base.
6. Has the first play in the infield and any throw backs to at second and first.
7. Takes the trail or batter-runner to third.
8. Back up your partner.

Plate:

1. Has all fly ball coverage.
2. Has tag and advance responsibilities for the runner at third base.
3. On batted balls follow the play to first, then cut across the diamond and go to the holding zone at third.
4. Has the call at third on the lead runner(s).

5. Fade to the plate if U1 has the lone or batter-runner to third.
6. Has all calls at the plate.
7. Back up your partner.

90 FOOT 3 MAN SYSTEM

The additional umpire adds better coverage to the outfield and eases the load of the single field umpire. U1 starts in the “A” position and U3 starts in the “D” position. With runners on base one of the two umpires works the “VEE”.

FLY BALL COVERAGE

Use the following fly ball coverage. The plate umpire has fair/foul up to and over first and third base and to the side that does not have field umpire coverage. He has catch/trap duties in the infield and the outfield area not covered by a field umpire. A field umpire will have fair/foul and catch/trap coverage on any ball he goes out on.

Note: The 90 ft diamond is just as easy to cover as the 60 ft. Some say action is slower than the 60 ft diamond because the players have to run a longer distance. This appears to give the umpire more time to make the call. But one thing is paramount, thorough knowledge of the 60 ft mechanics is a necessary foundation for the 90 ft field.

NO RUNNERS ON BASE.

U1:

1. Starts in the “A” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage from the center fielder to the right field line to include the center fielder running toward the infield.
3. Has the call at first base. Take the runner to second via the “VEE” if U3 is not in position in the “VEE”.
4. Fade back to cover the plate if the plate umpire covers third.
5. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Start in the “D” position.
2. Has fly ball coverage from the center fielder to the left field line.
3. Move into the “VEE” and take the calls at second on batted balls.
4. Take the play to third if the plate umpire is not in position to call third.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fair/foul coverage up to and over first and third.
2. Has catch/trap in the infield.
3. On batted balls observe the play at first and then cut across the diamond to the holding zone.
4. Has the calls at third.
5. Has calls at the plate if U1 is not covering the plate.
6. Back up your partners.

RUNNER ON FIRST

U1:

1. Starts in the "A" position.
2. Has fly ball coverage from the right fielder to the right field line to include the right fielder running toward the infield.
3. Has the pick off at first.
4. On batted balls has the call at first base.
5. Fade back to cover the plate if the plate umpire covers third.
6. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Start in the "VEE".
2. Has the balk to first and the steal at second.
3. Has the calls at second on batted balls.
4. Has the play at first if U1 goes out on a fly ball.
5. Take the play at third if the plate umpire is not in position to call third.
6. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage up to and over first and third.
2. Has fair/foul and catch/trap in the outfield not covered by U1.
3. On batted balls observe the play at first and then cut across the diamond to the holding zone.
4. Has the calls at third if U1 is covering the plate..
5. Has calls at the plate if U1 is not covering the plate.
6. Back up your partners.

RUNNER ON SECOND

U1:

1. Starts in the "VEE".
2. Has the balk to second.
3. Has the pick off at second.
4. On batted balls has the call at first and second base.
5. Take the lone runner or batter-runner to third if U3 has fly ball coverage.
6. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Start in the "D" position.
2. Has the steal at third.
3. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage from the left fielder to the left field foul line to include the left fielder running toward the infield.
4. Has the calls at third on batted balls that U3 does not go out on.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage up to and over first and third.
2. Has fair/foul and catch/trap in the outfield not covered by U3.
3. On batted balls observe the play at first and then cut across the diamond to the holding zone.
4. Has the calls on the lead runner at third unless U3 did not go out on a fly ball..
5. Fade to the plate if U1 or U3 is taking the play to third.
6. Has calls at the plate.
7. Back up your partners.

RUNNER ON THIRD

U1:

1. Starts in the "VEE".
2. Has the balk to third.
3. On batted balls has the call at first and second base.
4. Take the batter-runner to third if U3 has fly ball coverage.
5. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Start in the "D" position.
2. Has the pick off at third.

3. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage from the left fielder to the left field foul line to include the left fielder running toward the infield.
4. Has the calls at third on batted balls that U3 does not go out on.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage up to and over first and third.
2. Has fair/foul and catch/trap in the outfield not covered by U3.
3. On batted balls observe the play at first and then cut across the diamond to the holding zone.
4. Has the calls on the lead runner at third unless U3 did not go out on a fly ball.
5. Fade to the plate if U1 or U3 is taking the play to third.
6. Has calls at the plate.
7. Back up your partners.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

U1:

1. Starts in the "VEE".
2. Has the balk to first and second.
3. Has the steal at second.
4. On batted balls has the call at first and second base.
5. Take the batter-runner to third if U3 has fly ball coverage.
6. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Start in the "D" position.
2. Has the steal at third.
3. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage from the left fielder to the left field foul line to include the left fielder running toward the infield.
4. Has the calls at third on batted balls that U3 does not go out on.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage up to and over first and third.
2. Has fair/foul and catch/trap in the outfield not covered by U3.
3. On batted balls observe the play at first and then cut across the diamond to the holding zone.
4. Has the calls on the lead runner(s) at third unless U3 did not go out on a fly ball.
5. Fade to the plate if U1 or U3 is taking the play to third.
6. Has calls at the plate.
7. Back up your partners.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

U1:

1. Starts in the “VEE”.
2. Has the balk to first and third.
3. Has the steal at second.
4. On batted balls has the call at first and second base.
5. Take the batter-runner to third if U3 has fly ball coverage.
6. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Start in the “D” position.
2. Has the pick off at third.
3. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage from the left fielder to the left field foul line to include the left fielder running toward the infield.
4. Has the calls at third on batted balls that U3 does not go out on.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage up to and over first and third.
2. Has fair/foul and catch/trap in the outfield not covered by U3.
3. On batted balls observe the play at first and then cut across the diamond to the holding zone.
4. Has the calls on the lead runner(s) at third unless U3 did not go out on a fly ball.
5. Fade to the plate if U1 or U3 is taking the play to third.
6. Has calls at the plate.
7. Back up your partners.

RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD

U1:

1. Starts in the “VEE”.
2. Has the balk to second and third.
3. On batted balls has the call at first and second base.
4. Take the batter-runner to third if U3 has fly ball coverage.
5. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Start in the "D" position.
2. Has the pick off and steal at third.
3. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage from the left fielder to the left field foul line to include the left fielder running toward the infield.
4. Has the calls at third on batted balls that U3 does not go out on.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage up to and over first and third.
2. Has fair/foul and catch/trap in the outfield not covered by U3.
3. On batted balls observe the play at first and then cut across the diamond to the holding zone.
4. Has the calls on the lead runner(s) at third unless U3 did not go out on a fly ball.
5. Fade to the plate if U1 or U3 is taking the play to third.
6. Has calls at the plate.
7. Back up your partners.

BASES LOADED

U1:

1. Starts in the "VEE".
2. Has the balk to first, second and third.
3. Has the pick off at first and second.
4. Has the steal at second.
5. On batted balls has the call at first and second base.
6. Take the batter-runner to third if U3 has fly ball coverage.
7. Back up your partners.

U3:

1. Start in the "D" position.
2. Has the pick off and steal at third.
3. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage from the left fielder to the left field foul line to include the left fielder running toward the infield.
4. Has the calls at third on batted balls that U3 does not go out on.
5. Back up your partners.

Plate:

1. Has fair/foul and catch/trap coverage up to and over first and third.
2. Has fair/foul and catch/trap in the outfield not covered by U3.

3. On batted balls observe the play at first and then cut across the diamond to the holding zone.
4. Has the calls on the lead runner(s) at third unless U3 did not go out on a fly ball.
5. Fade to the plate if U1 or U3 is taking the play to third.
6. Has calls at the plate.
7. Back up your partners.

90 FOOT DIAMOND 4 MAN SYSTEM

The four man system adds additional umpire coverage in the outfield. Both wing umpires have their areas to cover and, depending on your placement of U2, U2 has outfield duties.

WHERE TO PLACE U2

There are two schools of thought on the positioning of U2. One has U2 staying in the modified "BC" position as with the 4 man system on the small diamond. The other has him coming inside the diamond with runners on base. The split is 55-45 in favor of the first style of positioning since it transitions more readily to the 6 man system.

Style #1

Advantages: Better cover of the outfield, 3 umpires vs. two. U1 and U3 have the lines with U2 covering between the right and left fielder.

Disadvantages: U1 or U3 has a longer run to get to the "VEE" area if U2 goes out on a fly ball.

Coverage: Exactly like the 4 man system on the 60 ft diamond, with rotation.

Style#2

Advantages: Better cover of the infield since U2 is in the "VEE" whenever there are runners on base.

Disadvantages: U1 and U3 have a larger area to cover in the outfield. They split at the center fielder.

Coverage: Exactly like the 4 man system on the 60 ft diamond, without umpire rotation.

90 FT DIAMOND – 5 AND 6 MAN SYSTEM

The six man system is style #1 with the addition of the right and left field umpires (or the same as the 6 man system on the smaller diamond). The 5 man system is the same as the three man system for the 90 ft diamond with the addition of the right and left field umpires. U1 and U3 are thus relieved of their fly ball duties.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ARIZONA UMPIRES

For you rookies, Arizona is the hottest, wettest, driest, or coldest state in the union. Or at least it feels that way with the temperature spread that can occur on any given day.

Mid afternoon summer temps can soar to 110 degrees. But you may not feel it. With humidity around 5% typical, you do not sweat. This can lead to heat exhaustion and sun stroke. Sweat equals water. No sweat no need to drink water. Totally wrong for our summer climates.

Drink at least a half gallon of water during those 5PM start games, and even more for the mid afternoon Sat games. The leagues should provide water bottles. But I suggest you get one of those ½ gal jugs and fill it with cold water. Place it in the near dugout or outside the fence where you can get at it between innings.

The temperature can drop like a rock after the sun goes down during the start of the season. The temp may be mid 80's with the sun up but drop to the lower 60's after sundown. A jacket is always advisable.

The tail end of the season and the start of the playoffs coincide with the start of the monsoon season. Bring a spare uniform so you can change between games unless you enjoy running around in a wet shirt and soggy socks.

Be aware of the weather, specifically lightning. All umpires have the authority to suspend a game if there is lightning in the area. As the field umpire(s) move around the diamond they get a good look at incoming weather. Nothing looks worse than to have one field shut down for lightning and the next field to keep playing. If it gets to close for one field it's too close for all. The tournament director can only suggest the game be suspended. But consider his advice when you make your decision.

Send the players to their cars and tell them not to leave. The tournament people will advise them when it is safe to return. **BUT STAY OUT OF THE METAL DUGOUTS AND LEAVE THE BATS ALONE! WANNA BE A LIGHTNING ROD?**