WBSC

WORLD
BASEBALL SOFTBALL
CONFEDERATION

Game Time!

Appendix 5 – 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d.
WBSC SOFTBALL UMPIRE MANUAL
ELITE FIELD MECHANICS FP - 3, 4, 5, & 6-Umpire SYSTEMS - Learning Guide

February 2026

Table of Contents

Introduction 4
APPENDIX 5a 5
WBSC Mechanics – Key Concepts Framework Glossary 5
Abbreviations 6
Key Concepts Introduction 7
Four Essential Element Theory (FEET) 7
Dynamic Movement 7
Parallax Error 9
Optimising Angle and Distance 10
Optimising Coverage at Home Plate 11
Force Plays 11
Tag Plays 11
Starting Position, Observation Position and Calling Position 11
Plate Movement 13
Making the Call 13
Pre-Pitch Preparation (PPP) 14
Pre-Pitch Preparation and Outfield Coverage 15
Foul Fly Coverage - Infield 15
Advanced Base Umpire Movements 16
Inside/Outside Theory 16
Point of Plate (POP) Position 17
Holding Position 17
Backfilling 17
Second Base Diagonal Angle 18
End of Play Counter Rotations 21
Errors Due to Timing and Focus 21
Errors Arising from Moving or Taking a Stationary Position 22
Purpose of the Five and Six-Umpire Systems 22
APPENDIX 5b. Three-Umpire System 23
Pre-Game Plate Meeting and Between Innings Positions 23
Pickoff Plays 24
Free runner from 2B to 3B (tag play) 24
Runner 1B and 3B. Pickoff and steal responsibilities 25
Tag Ups 25
Leadoffs 25
Batter Runner or Last Runner to third base. 25
Live Ball Play from Infield 26

Ground Ball to Outfield 29
Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Area 31
Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Movements 33
Three-Umpire System Rotation Memory Map 39
APPENDIX 5c. Four-Umpire System 40
Pre-Game Plate Meeting and Between Innings Positions 40
Starting Positions – Base Umpires 40
Pickoff Plays 40
Free runner from 2B to 3B (tag play) 41
Tag-ups 41
Leadoffs 41
Live Ball Play from Infield 42
Ground Ball to Outfield 42
Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Area 43
Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Movements 44
Four-Umpire System Rotation Memory Map 47
APPENDIX 5d. Five and Six Umpire System 48
Five Umpire System 48
Pre-Game Plate Meeting and Between Innings Conduct 48
Starting Positions – Base and Outfield Umpires 48
Infield Rotations 48
Fly-ball Coverage 48
Fair/Foul Responsibility 48
Six-Umpire System 49
Pre-Game Plate Meeting and Between Innings Positions 49
Starting Positions – Base and Outfield Umpires 49
Infield Rotations 49
Fly-ball Coverage 49
Fair/Foul Responsibility 49
Five and Six Umpire - Fly-ball Coverage Area ULF & URF 50

Introduction

Appendix 4 establishes the philosophical and cognitive framework that underpins elite mechanics, ensuring umpires understand not just where to move, but why movement and vision determine accuracy.

This Appendix is designed to complement the **WBSC Softball Umpire Manual**, available on the WBSC officials resource page. It covers the mechanics and rotation systems for 3, 4, 5 & Six-Umpires Field Mechanics for **Elite Play and Advanced Levels of Umpiring**.

Umpires should already possess a solid understanding of the game and foundational mechanics set out in the **WBSC Softball Umpire Manual including Appendix 3 that covers the Three-Umpire Foundational Field Mechanics** and Rotation Systems before progressing to the advanced mechanics set out in this Appendix. Foundational mechanics cover the vast majority of plays, and these mechanics are designed to allow advanced umpires to cover the more exceptional plays that occur in elite play. Implementing these mechanics prematurely, without understanding when deviations from foundational mechanics are required, can negatively affect performance.

The material in this Appendix is aimed at umpires regarded as **'students of the game'** – those experienced in observing players' actions and preparing for the next steps into Junior and Senior Men's and Women's elite-level play. Umpire mechanics are increasingly critical in the modern game. As the game evolves, and as umpires progress to elite-level play, they must adapt to new challenges, including runners utilising varied base-touching techniques to advance bases, executing avoidance slides, and manoeuvring to disrupt plays. Additionally, fielders are modifying their backup roles and often positioning themselves in ways that can obstruct an umpire's view.

Some of these advanced movements and positioning philosophies are intended for use **only when the play demands them**. Most plays at all levels - including elite - **should still be officiated using the foundational mechanics in the WBSC Umpire Manual**. Over-anticipating or moving too early for a rare or exceptional play can place the umpire out of position for the far more common situations that make up most of the game.

By implementing WBSC mechanics effectively, umpires can optimise their positioning, anticipate potential interference or obstruction, and remain fully engaged with every aspect of the play. When working through this section, it is recommended that umpires seek guidance from mentors, trainers, senior umpires, or Umpires-in-Chief to ensure proper interpretation and application.

APPENDIX 5a

WBSC Mechanics – Key Concepts Framework Glossary

Base line	The direct line between two bases.
Base path	The most direct path from the runner to the base that they are attempting to reach (advancing or returning).
Calling position	The umpire's position to see the play, decide and communicate their call.
Clearing the catcher	The movement of the plate umpire to obtain an **unobstructed view** of the field, or to allow the catcher to retrieve the ball on a wild pitch or passed ball.
Dynamic movement	An umpire's ability to continuously adjust their position in response to the evolving play on the field. This includes tracking the flight and direction of the ball, anticipating the movement of runners and fielders, and adjusting angles and distance to maintain an **unobstructed view** of all critical elements. Rather than remaining static, the umpire uses proactive movement to ensure they are optimally placed for each developing play by adapting quickly as the situation changes to provide accurate and effective coverage, judgement, and consistent application of WBSC-approved mechanics.
First base line extended (1BLE)	A reference point to describe positions at second base or at home plate. When describing a position at second base, it is an imaginary line from first base through second base and extended towards the outfield. When describing a position at home plate, it is an imaginary line drawn from first base through home plate and extended through the catcher's box.
Going out	A base umpire's movement to the outfield to judge a catch, fair/foul ball or home run. Also known as 'chasing'.
Home plate diagonal angle (HPDA)	The angle from an imaginary line from second base through home plate. This is a reference point used to describe positions at home plate, also supporting the area of POP.
Leading edge	An angle that is level with the base and 90 degrees to the base path. This is used as a reference point for positioning and calling.
Observation position	The umpire's position to see the play developing. Also known as the 'primary position'.
Parallax error	An inaccurate judgement of the position of an object because of the position from which it is seen, such as whether a pitch passes over the outside of home plate, or whether a runner is in contact with a base when a tag is applied.
Pickoff	A play where a fielder attempts to retire a runner who is off their base, by throwing or applying a tag to that base or runner before the runner can safely return and re-establish contact.

Point of plate (POP)	The area behind home plate, towards the back of the catcher's box. This is used as a reference point for positioning.
Rotation	The umpire's movement from one base to another where they will have responsibility to call any plays, or to holding position if the umpire potentially has responsibility for plays at more than one base.
Second base diagonal angle (2BDA)	The angle from home plate through second base. This is a reference point used to describe positions at second base.
Secondary play	A subsequent or follow-on play that develops immediately after the initial play, often as a reaction to a change in game situation. This can include a runner advancing after an overthrow, a tag attempt following a missed catch, or a second throw following a force or relay. Secondary plays typically occur while the defence is still recovering or repositioning from the primary action, requiring umpires to read and adjust dynamically to maintain coverage and view of the new active element.
Starting position	The umpire's field position before the pitch.
Steal	A play where a runner attempts to advance to the next base during the delivery of the pitch to the batter or catcher, without the ball being put into play by contact with the bat
Swipe tag	A tag attempt in which the fielder's arm is outstretched, and they turn their body or shoulder to reach the runner in a sweeping motion.
Third base line extended (3BLE)	A reference used for positions at second base or at home plate. When describing a position at second base, it is an imaginary line from third base through second base and extended towards the outfield. When describing a position at home plate, it is an imaginary line drawn from third base through home plate and extended through the catcher's box.

Abbreviations

PU	Plate umpire
U1, U2, U3	First base umpire, second base umpire, third base umpire
ULF, URF	Left Field Umpire, Right Field Umpire
HP	Home Plate
1B, 2B, 3B	First base, second base, third base
POP	Point of Plate
2BDA	Second Base Diagonal Angle
HPDA	Home Plate Diagonal Angle
1BLE	First Base Line Extended
1BFT	First Base Foul Territory
3BLE	Third Base Line Extended
3BFT	Third Base Foul Territory
BR	Batter Runner
LF/F7	Left Field, Left Fielder
CF/F8	Centre Field, Centre Fielder
RF/F9	Right Field, Right Fielder

Key Concepts Introduction

The concepts underlying umpire mechanics are consistent at foundational and advanced levels. The differences in how the game is played mean that advanced umpires, umpiring in elite play, must apply the concepts differently.
This **Key Concepts** section aims to refresh and expand, provide insight and reasoning for the terminology, with some guidance on their use at high-level play.

In learning each of the **Three, Four, Five, and Six-Umpire Systems** for high-level play, it is first important to understand the core meanings of terms and the reason for learning them. This section covers the required **Key Concept** learnings.

The final four sections are a breakdown of the movements to be learnt for each of the four **Umpire Systems**. They are designed so that each of the **Umpire Systems** can be read independently of the others. Learning the **Four-Umpire System** leans on the **Three-Umpire System**, and **Five and Six-Umpire Systems** leans heavily on the **Three and Four-Umpire Systems** teachings. They are all incremental learning steps of their respective system. The recommended reading for an umpire to learn any one rotation system is to read this **Key Concepts** section first, then the appropriate umpire system section being learnt.

Four Essential Element Theory (FEET)

The **Four Essential Elements** are:

1. The **ball**.
2. The **defensive player**.
3. The **offensive players**.
4. The **base** or the area of the play.

The umpire positions and rotations shown in the following diagrams for Live Ball plays from the Infield and Outfield, and Fly-Ball Coverage are WBSC best practice for most primary plays. It is acknowledged that, as some plays develop (this is particularly so for secondary plays), umpires will be required to adjust their position to better see the **Four Essential Elements**.

Tags on runners can easily be blocked due to the positioning of players involved in the play. Offensive players can quickly transition from running to sliding, while fielders move to catch the ball and then progress to tagging the runner. The fluidity of the game can cause the umpire's line of sight to become obstructed by either player. To maintain accuracy and consistency in decision-making in the evolving game, umpires must adopt a dynamic approach to positioning. Relying solely on the starting or set calling position is no longer sufficient, especially for tag plays. Instead, umpires must adjust their **Starting Positions** as necessary, then use **Observation Positions** that allow umpires to track the play as it unfolds, and move dynamically to maintain a clear, **unobstructed view** of the **Four Essential Elements**. Umpires must observe the ball, runner, fielder and base - especially control of the ball and tag attempts – and must observe them together to make the correct call. Watch the ball, or ball in glove all the way to the runner as the defensive player lays a tag on the runner. Use the window into the play - look into the tag. Tag plays are a low portion of plays, don't move to a position for a tag play while missing the majority of plays where the leading edge is best. Watch the action of plays and runners, be aware of runners changing their base path and defensive players moving in front of bases or into running paths when they don't yet have possession of the ball, this is the best guide if the play is at the leading edge or towards the side.

Dynamic Movement

Umpires should adapt to have the best angle to see the play and make a call. They should never be locked in position. **Dynamic Movement** involves being in the best position as the play develops and continuing to move if needed to see the **Four Essential Elements**.
Importantly, umpires should keep their head, eyes and focus on the play if movement is required while adjusting to maintain an **unobstructed view**.

The following are examples of **Dynamic Movement**:

- Using an **Observation Position** to see a play develop, then moving to a **Calling Position**.
- Taking a position that will allow you to see a force play, then moving sideways if the fielder comes off the base and attempts a tag.
- Moving sideways or towards the play as a tag is made so that you can see around or over the runner.

Umpires should never be locked in position. Whenever possible, umpires should be on the balls of their feet, so that they are stable but also ready to move. When adjusting their position, umpires should move both feet whenever possible so that they are balanced on the balls of their feet. This is referred to as **'active feet'** because the umpire actively and effectively moves their feet from one position to another.

Umpires move from a **Starting Position** to **Observation Position**, and from an **Observation Position** to a **Calling Position**. Umpires also use **Dynamic Movement** within observation positions and calling positions to continually adjust to where they will have the best view of the **Four Essential Elements**.

Dynamic Movement involves an umpire moving around a tag play or a base or closer to the base as the play develops. Moving away from the base puts the umpire off balance, losing perspective and lacking strength in their call. Moving sideways and towards the base at the same time can also mean that the umpire does not have a stable frame of reference. Dynamic movement allows the umpire to adjust angles during the play to avoid becoming straight-lined and to maintain elements separation

The leading edge remains the optimal place for judging routine close plays and tags at the bases/HP, and we should use these positions where possible. The goal of the mechanics is to place umpires in positions that maintain **unobstructed views** of all **Four Essential Elements**.

Fielders, backups, and runners can easily obstruct sightlines at leading edges; proactive positioning anticipates and mitigates these issues. Umpires need to move dynamically, adjusting in real-time as the play develops, so being proactive is a good start.

It is important to note that as umpires move around the diamond, as required by the Umpires' Manual, some proactive positions may not be possible, and umpires will need to observe and move to obtain the best **unobstructed view**, even if the runner is running away from them.

At the elite level, umpires apply experience, timing, and awareness of **Parallax Errors** to fine-tune their positions and judgments. **Parallax Error** is a real phenomenon. **Dynamic Movement** needs to be used to ensure we move to a position and angle to reduce vision error as it occurs.

The leading edge and starting or calling positions relative to 90 degrees to the runners' path are no longer the sole guiding principles for umpire mechanics. They are important reference points along with angles relative to the base, runner and throw. There is no 'X marks the spot' position. Umpire mechanics must be fluid and adaptable, particularly on tag plays. **Starting and Observation Positions** should not be assumed to be the final **Calling Position**. Instead, they should provide the flexibility to move to the best calling position and focal point - the focal point ensures an **unobstructed view** of the **Four Essential Elements** of the play. As the three elements move and the base remains fixed, the focal point moves, this may require staying in the initial observation position or adjusting by moving as the play develops, especially to see the actions of the fielder and the runners path including plays such as tag attempts and slides, and to maintain a constant view of the ball or the ball in the glove. A more advanced, complete and dynamic umpire has '**active feet**'.

Factors that determine how an individual umpire moves are directly related to their height and agility and may result in slightly different starting positions or movements by individual umpires.

Umpires must first fulfil their responsibilities as outlined in the **WBSC Softball Umpires Rotation Manual for Three and Four-Umpire Systems**, including trailing the **Batter-Runner**, rotating to bases, holding positions, moving inside or outside the diamond, and making fair/foul determinations. When necessary, these responsibilities take precedence to ensure proper game management and adherence to WBSC mechanics.

Parallax Error

Parallax Error occurs when the umpire's viewing angle prevents clear separation of the elements of the play. This most commonly happens when the umpire becomes straight-lined with the runner, fielder, ball, and base or tag point. When this occurs, depth perception is reduced and the sequence of events may appear distorted. Umpires reduce parallax by adjusting position to maintain angle and elements separation so the Four Essential Elements can be observed clearly.

Minimising **Parallax Errors** requires the umpire to move to the plane of interest that forms that call, thus turning the plane into a line in their view, and thus being able to determine where the target object is relative to that plane. Umpires make **Parallax Errors** when they are not in the correct position to view key parts of the **Four Essential Elements**. An umpire can eliminate a **Parallax Error** by placing themselves in a position on the plane that is the best view for those elements, such as being on the fair/foul line to make a fair/foul call.

Some of the most common **Parallax Errors** are:

- Judging a pitch is in the strike zone. As the PU is positioned at the top and on the inside of the plate, they have a clear view of whether the ball is at the top or over the inside. Pitches on the outside and at the bottom take more practice and judgement.
- Fair Foul line drives over bases from the PU stance position.
- Home runs over the foul pole where the ball is curving from fair territory.
- Trapped balls where an umpire is in a direct line to the hit.
- Judging whether the fielder or runner is in contact with the base when the umpire is not on the leading edge.

Sometimes, the umpire must judge multiple elements and cannot be in line with all of them. PU cannot be set on both the inside of the plate and the outside, nor is the bottom a sensible location to be starting at. Similarly, there are some tag plays where the umpire cannot be in a perfect position to see both the tag and whether the runner is in contact with the base. In situations like these, umpires must slow down their timing, use **Dynamic Movement** when it helps to get a better view of an element, and use additional inputs. For example:

- The plate umpire judging an outside pitch tracks the pitch, but also looks at:
    - the pitcher's release point.
    - the position and movement of the catcher's glove; and
    - the movement of the pitch between the pitcher and the catcher.
    - The umpire needs to use learnt brain training and visualisation before the game.
        - Brain training techniques can be taught utilising drills such as a ball on a stick held by an assistant to visualise the correct location of the outside and low corner of the strike zone.
- An umpire judging a tag play looks at:
    - the runner's path.
    - the way that the runner slides.
    - the fielder's action to apply the tag.
    - where the tag is made on the runner's body; and
    - the distance between the base and the tag.

All these factors help to judge whether the runner is in contact with the base when the tag is made. **Dynamic Movement**, ***even after the play***, can help an experienced umpire to create an improved 3D image of all the inputs.

Optimising Angle and Distance

The emphasis on angles, distance, and maintaining an **unobstructed view** is critical in WBSC umpire mechanics – at both foundational and advanced levels. Umpires should be stable when it allows for a view of the **Four Essential Elements** throughout the play. However, with moving elements, umpires must adjust their positioning, moving in sync with the glove and ball until the tag is applied to the runner - whether at a base or home plate. This movement ensures that all elements of the play are observed clearly and in sequence.
Starting distance to base should be:

- **with no runners on:**
  - **1B and 3B:** approximately 5.5m (18 ft)
  - **2B:** approximately 4.5m (15 ft)
- **with runners on bases other than your base:**
  - **1B** approximately 4.5m (15 ft)
  - **2B:** approximately 3.5m (12 ft)
  - **3B:** approximately 4.5m (15 ft)
- **with runner at your base:**
  - **All bases:** approximately 3.5 m (12 ft)

The umpire's starting distance should enable them to:

- move inside the diamond as required by the rotation mechanics.
- use inside outside theory and/or adjust position dynamically to maintain an **unobstructed view** of all play elements.
- view tags and the leading edge of bases.
- in time to see all runners touch bases and for any plays.

Because umpires have various levels of agility and height, some may need to start closer initially to watch the potential catch or move to the appropriate position to make calls.

On a play, the umpire's distance from the base should then be approximately:

- 5m (16 ft) for a force play.
- 3m (10 ft) for a tag play.

On tag plays, umpires must be close enough to be able to adjust left or right dynamically and reach the leading edge, keeping all elements in front, as the play dictates. The exception above, that the umpire at 2B starts 3.5m (12 ft) from the base with a runner on 1B, is because 2B is commonly stolen and this starting position optimises coverage for a steal.

When angle and distance cannot both be perfect, **angle takes priority**. However, being closer to the play can provide the best opportunity to make controlled movements to achieve the best angle. Parallax error increases with both distance and angle.

For every angle that provides a view of the **Four Essential Elements,** there is also an opposite angle that provides a similar view of the elements – provided that neither is obstructed. A view of a tag may be obstructed by the runner, the fielder making the play, or another fielder (especially one who is backing up the play). Umpires should consider angles 360 degrees around a play and adapt to the position that gives them the best **unobstructed view** of the play and opportunities to be able to cover secondary plays.

Optimising Coverage at Home Plate

Umpires must ensure that the lead runner is covered, and especially that there is an umpire at home plate whenever there could be a play. This is because they are the most likely runner to be played on, and it has the most direct impact on the outcome of the game. The area once known as the 1B holding position for U1 has been omitted from current teachings as umpires were waiting here and delaying their movement home when required with the lead runner.

Outfield coverage and rotations should put umpires in an advantageous position to make a call, but should also prioritise coverage at the plate.

- In a **Four-Umpire System**, when U1 goes out, PU and U3 do not need to rotate. This creates the best coverage for home plate and 3B. U1 going out on all hits to right field reduces the need for U2 to go out and for other umpires to rotate.
- When U1 has the responsibility to rotate home, they can move to home once the catch is taken and watch the runner tagging up, or simply watch over their right shoulder to see the **Batter-Runner** touch 1B as they rotate home. U1 should then quickly release, direct and push PU to 3B and rotate towards **POP**. In elite play, where all umpires are at an advanced level, U1 can trust that their partners will cover subsequent responsibilities at 1B and adjust to exceptional circumstances when necessary. All umpires should be aware of their partners' movements and positions.

Force Plays

Force plays have events that occur in various locations than just at the base ground level. The umpire needs to see the runner touching the base, the fielder being in contact with the base, and the fielder controlling the ball in their glove.
In situations where the fielder's foot breaks away from the base, the umpire may then need to look for a tag play, or for the fielder retouching the base. This requires being able to see two or more different locations from the same observation position. The umpire needs to stay back to be able to see the whole of the play, starting at the leading edge, and use **Dynamic Movement** if one or more of the **Four Essential Elements** are blocked or becoming blocked.

Tag Plays

Tag plays can be extremely tricky and difficult, as all the elements other than the base are moving at different speeds and angles. It is important that the WBSC umpiring community continues to discuss and break down the different variables that go into achieving the best angle and distance for the dynamics of a tag play. Use of **Dynamic Movement** to get the appropriate angle and distance to continually see the **Four Essential Elements** is essential to achieving and maintaining the best view of the play – look into the tag and make the right call.

Starting Position, Observation Position and Calling Position

The **Starting Position** is the position that an umpire takes before the pitch. From this position, the umpire is ready to go out on a fly ball, rotate to another base, move into the diamond, or take an **Observation Position** for a potential play at their base. Base umpires should be close enough to be able to get to the best **Observation Position** but not start in front of a fielder or interfere with a fielders' opportunity to field a batted ball.

When starting at the **2BDA** the umpires' position should be based on the distance from the base. The fielder may appear in front of you, *but* ***this starting position should be seen as an arc to the fielders' position****.*

The **Observation Position** is the position that an umpire takes following the **Starting Position**, as a play is developing. An **Observation Position** includes the initial position that an umpire takes when they rotate to a base, or PU to the holding position.

Umpires should find an **Observation Position** for each play where they can decide:

- Is there likely to be a force play or a tag play? Which way will the runner and fielder move to attempt the play?
- Could there be an interference or obstruction?
- What is the best position to see all four elements coming together for the play?
- Is there likely to be a secondary play?

The **Calling Position** is the position where the umpire watches the play, decides and communicates whether the runner is safe or out. The umpire will need to take a position and may need to move to see:

- the leading edge.
- the ball at all times, or see the glove holding the ball at all times.
- whether the fielder has control of the ball.
- whether the fielder has applied or is going to apply a tag.
- whether the runner has reached the base before the fielder completes the play.

Umpires must never position directly over a base when making a call.
When your eyes are vertically aligned with the base, the ball, tag, and leading edge collapse into a straight-lined view of the play, removing depth perception and elements separation and increases the risk of parallax error. At elite speeds, the difference between a tag made *on* the leading edge versus *past* it may be only a few centimetres, and calling from above the base can completely invert that perception. Maintaining a calling position just short of the leading edge, combined with proper angle, depth, and micro-adjustments during the final metre of movement, this ensures the ball, fielder, runner, and base remain visually separated and allows for precise judgment at the highest levels of play. This is why it is important not to move to the extension of the base line too early.

The umpire may or may not move from the **Starting Position** to be in the **Observation Position**, and from the **Observation Position** to be in the **Calling Position**. Sometimes the **Starting Position** will also be the best **Observation Position**, and the **Observation Position** can also be the best **Calling Position**. The **Observation and Calling Position** will always depend on the play.

Umpires' first responsibility on a play is to rotate to cover the base or bases where they may be required to call plays. The following comments are additional to movement, rotations and use of the holding position by the PU as required by the umpire manual.

- The **Observation Position** should allow the umpire to see where the play will most likely be. Observing the runner's path is particularly important as this can allow the vision required for umpires to see runners potentially changing direction to create interference and also the fielders' movements in any potential obstruction.
- On a potential tag play, the umpire should take an **Observation Position** that allows them to see the **Four Essential Elements** as the play develops, this may not be at the leading edge.
- When the PU is not required to move to the holding position, rotate to third, or cover the infield, the best **Observation Position** at home plate is 2-4 meters (6-12 feet) directly behind the plate at **POP** and up to the imaginary extension of the first base line. From there, umpires should adjust to the best calling position dictated by the play's development.
- When U1 is required to rotate to HP, they first need to observe any tag-up responsibility at 1B and observe the **Batter-Runner** touch 1B over their right shoulder, release the runner quickly, and push the PU to 3B by verbalising if needed. U1 should not stop at the **3BLE**, they should move to the HP **POP** area, letting the play dictate the best position while adjusting to maintain an **unobstructed view** of the **Four Essential Elements,** which may need to be at the leading edge.

- U3 may use foul territory on any call that puts them in the best position to look into a possible tag on a runner advancing from 2B; however, they must be able to move and to be able to adjust as the play dictates. A free runner from 2B will often slide in using the backside of the base so foul territory is a good option, as long as U3 can move to the leading edge if required.
- At home, the runner will often use the leading edge of the plate when the catcher has the ball, or the ball will arrive after the runner, or a force play.
- The runner is more likely to use a slide that requires a swipe from the catcher on plays where the catcher does not have the ball, and the ball and runner will arrive at around the same time.
- Moving too early towards the extension of any line where a runner is coming at any base can prevent you from reaching an unobstructed view if the play dictates that the view is at the leading edge.
- On a potential tag play, if the runner is running directly at you and you need to move to avoid a collision, it indicates you were in the wrong position or didn't wait for the play to develop properly.

Plate Movement

PU's starting position is in the plate stance, to call ball or strike on the pitch. After the pitch, PU may be required to rotate, or to establish an **Observation Position**.

In most cases, PU's first movement is to **Clear the Catcher** by moving to the left of the catcher and HP. This allows PU to rotate or trail the batter runner as required, or to **Observe** the whole field that is not obstructed by the catcher or batter/batter-runner. When the ball has been hit and PU is not required to rotate or trail the batter-runner, PU can move to the **POP** area after their initial movement to clear the catcher.

There are two circumstances when PU will not clear the catcher in this way:

- On a sharp hit or foul fly ball, where PU has a better position to make a call from behind the plate on an extension of the fair/foul line, or by moving towards the fence with the flight of the ball.
- On a passed ball or wild pitch when not required to rotate towards 3B.

On a passed ball or wild pitch, PU clears the catcher by moving left or right to allow the catcher to retrieve the ball. PU can do this by watching the catcher's shoulders and opening up their stance. If the catcher turns to the left (anticlockwise), PU can clear the catcher by moving their left foot back and to the right so that PU also turns anticlockwise. If the catcher turns to the right (clockwise), PU can clear the catcher by moving their right foot back and to the left so that PU also turns clockwise.

If a runner is advancing home on the passed ball or wild pitch, PU will need to establish an **Observation Position** after clearing the catcher, and then a **Calling Position** for a play at HP. This follows the same principles as other tag plays. PU should:

- Avoid positioning themselves in a throwing lane, or otherwise interfering with the play.
- Maintain a view of the **Four Essential Elements**.
- Avoid being on the **3BLE** as this places one element (the base) between the umpire and another element (the runner).
- PU may clear the catcher then move to the right of the catcher if there is no responsibility to move toward 3B if it puts them in the best position to see all **Four Essential Elements**.

Making the Call

While in the **Calling Position**, the umpire must be able to see all **Four Essential Elements**, including the leading edge, and advancing runner. If the play allows you to maintain a stationary calling position, then remaining stationary is best to have a stable view of the play.

However, if the view into the tag is narrowing or blocked by any player, the umpire should adjust by moving to get an **unobstructed view** of the **Four Essential Elements**. **Dynamic Movement** is important throughout the whole of the tag play. In any position, the umpire should be on the balls of their feet, constantly able to evaluate the current position and adjust as needed to maintain an **unobstructed view**. **Dynamic Movement** is a smooth movement, ***with umpires keeping their head and eyes as still as possible while using their feet to adjust***. Just before the tag play is made, stop, open up, set, see the play and then make the call.

On force plays, after seeing the fielder release the throw and seeing that it is on target, the umpire should focus on the area around the base, watching the ball, the fielder and the runner come together. Once you have made your decision on the play, rise from the **Observation Position,** and signal and verbalise your call, using appropriate emphasis and voice. On tag plays, watch the thrown ball into the fielder's glove and follow the ball and glove to the area of the tag, while always having the runner in your field of vision.
With the **Four Essential Elements** in front of you, judge whether the runner has been obstructed and whether the tag was made prior to the runner touching the base. Stop, set, see the play and make the signal and verbal call, using the appropriate emphasis and voice. If required, you may adjust your position to best see all the **Four Essential Elements**, including moving after the play if it provides you with more inputs about the position of the **Four Essential Elements** to complete the 3D image in your mind.

Making the call – as the four elements come together; stop, read the play, and make the call.

Pre-Pitch Preparation (PPP)

Beyond the guidelines outlined in the **WBSC Softball Umpires Manual**, effective pre-pitch preparation is essential for optimal positioning and decision-making.

Pre-Pitch Preparation is first about learning and understanding the correct starting position, depth, and angle requirements. Beyond that, it is about being a **student of the game**, watching games and players, including when you are off the diamond.
Understand each of the players' techniques, habits, tells, and timing. This helps when working the game, being able to keep the flow of the game going at pace, keeping up with the players, and moving it along when needed.

Pre-pitch preparation includes umpires running through their mind:

- the count.
- the number of outs.
- the score.
- the runners on base, including their speed and likelihood to steal or attempt an extra base.
- the outfielders' positioning and depth, their ability to make a catch and the strength of their arm; and
- fielders' capabilities, including their range and ability to execute a play.

Gathering this information leads to knowledge and an understanding of the game, and the umpires' ability to quickly read and adapt to the play.
What are the team's options at this point in the game? What are they likely to do? When do teams stretch for an extra base or not, attempt a double play, or play safe?

Pre-Pitch Preparation prevents umpires from being caught unaware or out of position in unusual situations. Mental preparedness before the pitch allows the umpire to adapt to what might otherwise seem unexpected. It allows umpires to move effectively during the play to get the best distance and angle for any call they need to make.

PPP: If you know a play can occur and prepare for it mentally, then you only need to read that play as it develops, get in position, and make the call.

Pre-Pitch Preparation and Outfield Coverage

To ensure good outfield fly ball coverage and by the correct umpire, and to ensure we have good base coverage, especially with multiple runners, or runners going home, we must ensure umpires do not go out on fly balls that have no real likelihood of being caught. Umpires must be aware of the depth, starting positions and ability of the outfielders. Proper pre-pitch awareness helps determine when an umpire should go out on a fly ball, who is best positioned to take the responsibility, and how to minimise unnecessary going out (outfield coverage) - particularly on bounding fly balls or plays that fall outside their designated coverage area. By better anticipating plays and communicating with partners, umpires can ensure efficient coverage of their responsibilities in the outfield and infield.

On a fly ball to the outfield, **one base umpire shall go out** to determine whether the ball is fair or foul (including balls leaving the field of play) and whether a fielder has made a catch or there is no catch. if a catch is made, the umpire is to signal the out. **Umpires must go out on any ball that could reasonably be caught**. When an umpire does not go out, **they must still open to the play where possible, and track the flight of the ball into the glove**. Failure to track the ball in flight, or **at least observe the catch when mistakenly not going out**, removes the umpire's ability to assist on trapped-ball or no-catch situations and creates unnecessary risk. Over-correction, away from going out is as detrimental as over-going.

Umpires must be careful not to rush their decision to go out and should look to their partners and communicate their decision to go. Each time the umpire at 2B goes out needlessly, the coverage at HP can be compromised.

In the **Three-Umpire System**, if the responsible umpire is at the 2B position, then the PU shall make the call fair or foul (including balls leaving the field of play), catch or no catch from F7 or F9 to the fence.

In both **Three and Four-Umpire Systems**, the base umpire should look to the flight of the ball, then look to the base umpire/s before just going out. This will give time to decide if the ball could be caught, and also allow effective communication and other umpires to indicate their read on the ball too. By better anticipating plays and communicating with partners, umpires can ensure efficient coverage of their responsibilities in the outfield and infield.

In a **Three-Umpire System**

- When umpires start at 1B and 3B, U1 should have the first option of going out.
- When one umpire starts at 2B, the umpire at 1B or 3B should be given the first option of going out.

In a **Four-Umpire System**, **U1 or U3 should be given the first option** to go out by U2.

When the outfield coverage area dictates the PU has the call on a fly ball, or where an umpire did not go out, base umpires should get an appropriate angle on the fly ball to be able to assist the PU on a catch, no catch, or trapped ball. The PU should hesitate, then make the call.

Foul Fly Coverage - Infield

On a foul fly ball in the infield. PU has responsibility for the catch and fair/foul and should position themselves on the fair/foul line for a close fair/foul call, or should move parallel with the ball towards the fence (dead ball line) to observe a potential catch and potential contact with the fence or any other object. If there is a base umpire at 1B or 3B (whichever is nearer the foul fly ball), they should also move towards the fence parallel with the ball to assist PU, provided they are not responsible for runners at their base.

Advanced Base Umpire Movements

Three-Umpire System - U3 Going Out Correction

In a **Three-Umpire System**, with U3 at 3B and U1 at 1B, if U3 initially moves to go out on an outfield fly ball they first thought catchable, but then judges the ball will not be caught, they may visually and **verbally communicate** to U1 as they are coming inside or button hooking between 1B and 2B that they have 2B, U3 may easily rotate back inside the diamond to 2B.
U1 may shorten their rotation or make a larger button hook toward the 1B foul line, and then proceed to HP and push PU to 3B. The correction allows better coverage of the **Batter-Runner** around the diamond.

U1 Using Button Hook

When U1 or U2 on a **Four-Umpire System** are required to cover multiple bases, their movement inside the diamond is described as a 'button hook'- going into the diamond and then turning around their left shoulder. Button hooking is used whenever U1 comes inside the diamond on a **Three-Umpire System** and by U2 on a **Four-Umpire System** when U1 goes out.

In other situations, wherever this Appendix states that U1 can use foul territory to rotate to HP or get a view of the **Four Essential Elements** at 1B, U1 can choose to button hook. Button hooking can give U1 greater ability to adapt to a different situation, such as a backfill situation or another base umpire making a late decision to go out for a catch.

Umpire Goes Out - Infield Awareness

When an umpire goes out on a fly ball, the umpire must turn and look back to the infield to view all plays. If the umpire observes that a base is not covered near them due to a missed rotation, they may return to the infield and make a call, or be able to give an opinion if asked. Clear communication with the crew on returning to the infield is important. **"I'm here 'name'"** - gives a clear indication to the crew that you have covered an empty location that has a play about to occur at it.

Always watch all plays, regardless of where you are on the diamond. Your view is different and may be the angle needed to get the call correct. Wait for the controlling umpire to request the conference and give what you saw in a clear and concise statement.

Inside/Outside Theory

When the ball is in the outfield, base umpires (who have not gone out) should be inside the diamond, and when the ball is in the infield, base umpires should be outside the diamond.
On balls hit to the outfield, base umpires not going out on a fly ball should rotate into the inside of the diamond. U2 may stay outside if they can keep all 4 elements in front of them. However, if any umpire goes out, **all other umpires must come inside** to cover bases and backfill where required.

Once the ball returns to the infield, the base umpires, having rotated to their proper coverages, may move back out beyond the base path when it is clear that there will be no play at an umpire's area of coverage and there is time to move out while keeping all the **Four Essential Elements** in front. If runners are moving and there is a possibility of a play at an umpire's area of coverage, open up to the ball and the runners, staying out of any possible throwing lane and move to the proper angle and distance for a possible play and call.

On hits to right field or right centre field, U3, if not rotating to 2B, should come down the line in foul territory, to a point even with the bag and allow the **Four Essential Elements** dictate whether U3 should rotate inside or go back out beyond the baseline or stay in foul territory if all four elements are in front of them. If there is a possibility of a play at 3B on the throw back, move to the best position to see all elements.

If the throw is to home with no immediate play at 3B, move back out beyond the baseline in fair territory and move to the best position for a possible secondary play.

Point of Plate (POP) Position

The **Point of Plate** (**POP**) is a key observation position for umpires when stationed at home plate. It is located approximately 2-4 meters (6-12 feet) directly behind home plate. This is not a fixed position; if we think in terms of an oval shape, the '**POP'** area might initially be from the **POP** to **1BLE** - an extension of the line drawn from 1B. This position provides a clear view of plays developing at the plate while allowing the umpire to adjust dynamically as needed.

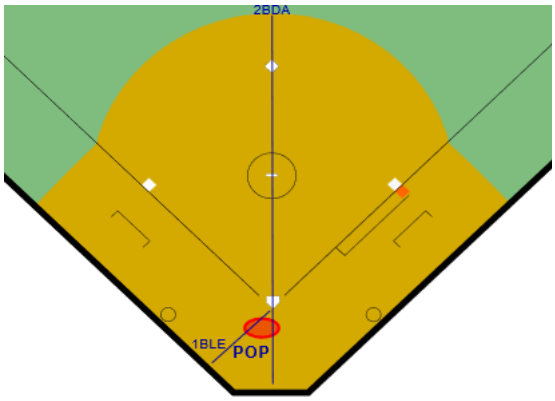


Figure 1POP Position

From the Point of Plate (POP), an umpire can effectively observe plays at home and surrounding field action **before transitioning** to the best calling position **dictated by the play**. POP remains the primary starting and observation position for plays at home, **with movement occurring during the development of the play** rather than in anticipation of **rare outcomes**. **Swipe-tag plays from the 3BLE represent a very low-percentage outcome**; the majority of tag plays occur at the leading edge or are best judged from POP using active feet. Premature movement to the 3BLE increases the risk of missing the primary play.

Holding Position

A position in foul territory, an oval shape, approximately 6-12 meters (20-40 feet) from home plate to 3B, 3-5 meters (9-15 feet) off the foul line or to an area where the umpire can observe all **Four Essential Elements** and be ready to move to their next position. Umpires use the holding position while watching the play develop to determine which base they are required to cover.

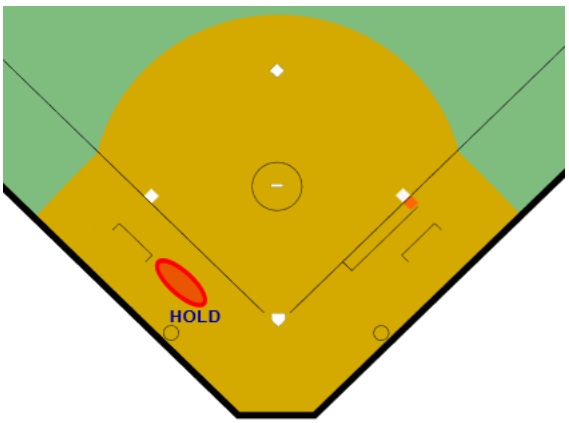


Figure 2 Holding Position

The **Holding Position** is an oval shape to allow the umpire to move within it and be ready to adapt to the play that is developing. Umpires will often take a holding position closer to the base where the play is most likely, while still being able to move to the other base if needed.

Backfilling

This is when the play requires an umpire to counter-rotate to cover a position not filled by another umpire who is required to cover a play situation elsewhere. An umpire must be ready to move to cover off a play when the responsible umpire cannot get in position to make the call. This is why umpires must come inside the diamond if not going out on a fly ball.

Example Situation: Four-Umpire System, with a runner at 2B or 3B base or runners at 2B and 3B, and either U2 or U3 goes out to cover a fly ball to the outfield, and the PU stays or moves back to home for a play. Depending on the development of the play, the base umpire at 2B may need to backfill to provide coverage at 3B.

A backfill situation is triggered by PU communicating that are staying at HP for the play. The base umpires then adjust.

- U2 or U3 (whichever has not gone out) will cover 3B.
- U1 should rotate inside the diamond to cover 1B and 2B if possible. If U1 is unable to rotate inside the diamond because they would interfere with the play, U1 should instead move towards the fence near 1B dugout. U2/U3 needs to be aware of the location of U1 and provide coverage at 2B if required.
- The umpire who has gone out should assist as required. This could mean that they:
    - watching plays from the outfield, and providing an opinion if asked, or
    - take responsibility for a base if needed, and if they clearly communicate this to the other umpires.

Second Base Diagonal Angle

The **Second Base Diagonal Angle** (2BDA) is similar to **POP** formed by an imaginary line extending from home plate continuing diagonally through 2B a few meters back toward centerfield, aligned with the central axis of the base. This line helps establish the optimal angle for observing plays at second, ensuring the umpire has a clear view of the action while maintaining proper positioning for potential tag plays or force-outs. The umpire should adjust their position along this line or move off this line as the play develops, depending on force plays or tag plays to ensure an **unobstructed view** of the key elements involved in the play at second base. The umpire must also be able to get to the leading edge if required.

The **Second Base Diagonal Angle** positions are used in the **Three and Four-Umpire Systems** movement descriptions. U2 in a Four-Umpire System, or U3 at 2B in a Three-Umpire System, can choose between the **'Standard' Starting Position** and **'Alternate' Starting Position**. The umpire should choose the best **Starting Position** for:

- A clear view of the batter and the home plate area.
- A view of the pitcher's landing; and
- The play that is most likely to develop.

Umpires can change between the **Standard Starting Position** and the **Alternate Starting Position** in response to the game situation.

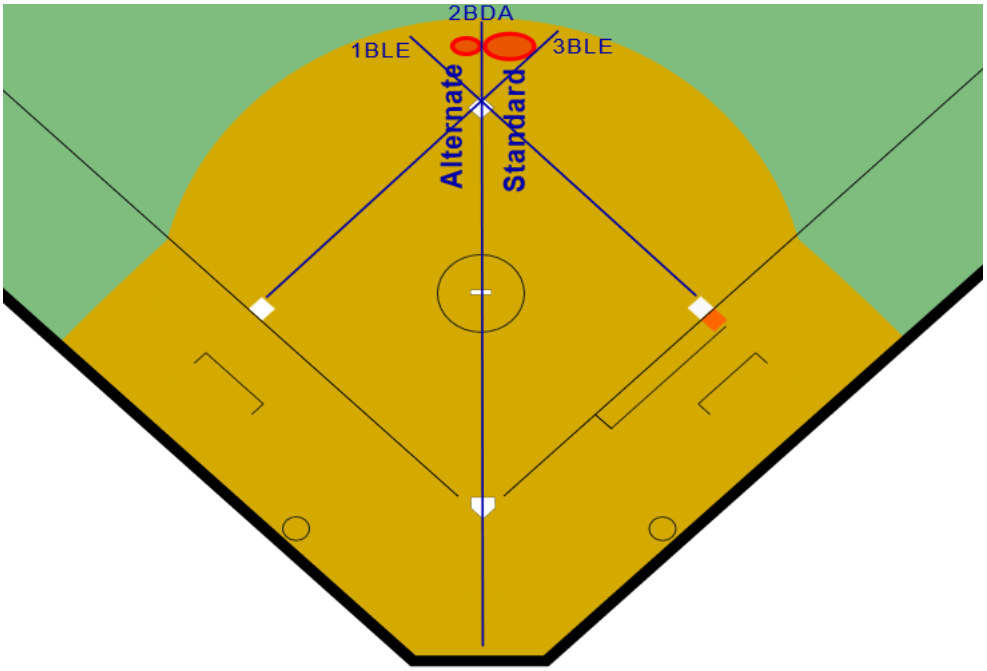


Figure 3 SBDA Positions

Second Base Diagonal Angle – Standard starting position used by U2 (Four-Umpire System) and U3 at 2B (Three-Umpire System)

Approximately 3.5m (12ft) back from 2B between the **Second Base Diagonal Angle**, formed by an imaginary line extending from home plate continuing diagonally through 2B up to an extension of the line from 3B (3BLE) to the back of 2B.

- Umpires may use this position to establish a proactive **Starting or Observation Position** for tag plays and allow movement around the base as the play dictates.
- The base umpire should adjust to the best position to ensure that they have an **unobstructed view** of HP and the batter for the whole of the pitch and potential hit.
- They **may also adjust to an area up to the 3BLE** if obstructed by the pitcher's action or if their starting position obstructs the centre fielder's view.
- Occasionally, an outfielder may request you to move slightly to see the HP area. Umpires can either move one step to their right or left. Outfielders often move left and right with each batter, so there may not be any issue. Fielders usually adapt to the umpires' position over time.
- If the umpire maintains an **unobstructed view** of the **Four Essential Elements** as the play develops, they may not need to move from the starting position to establish an **Observation Position** or **Calling Position**.

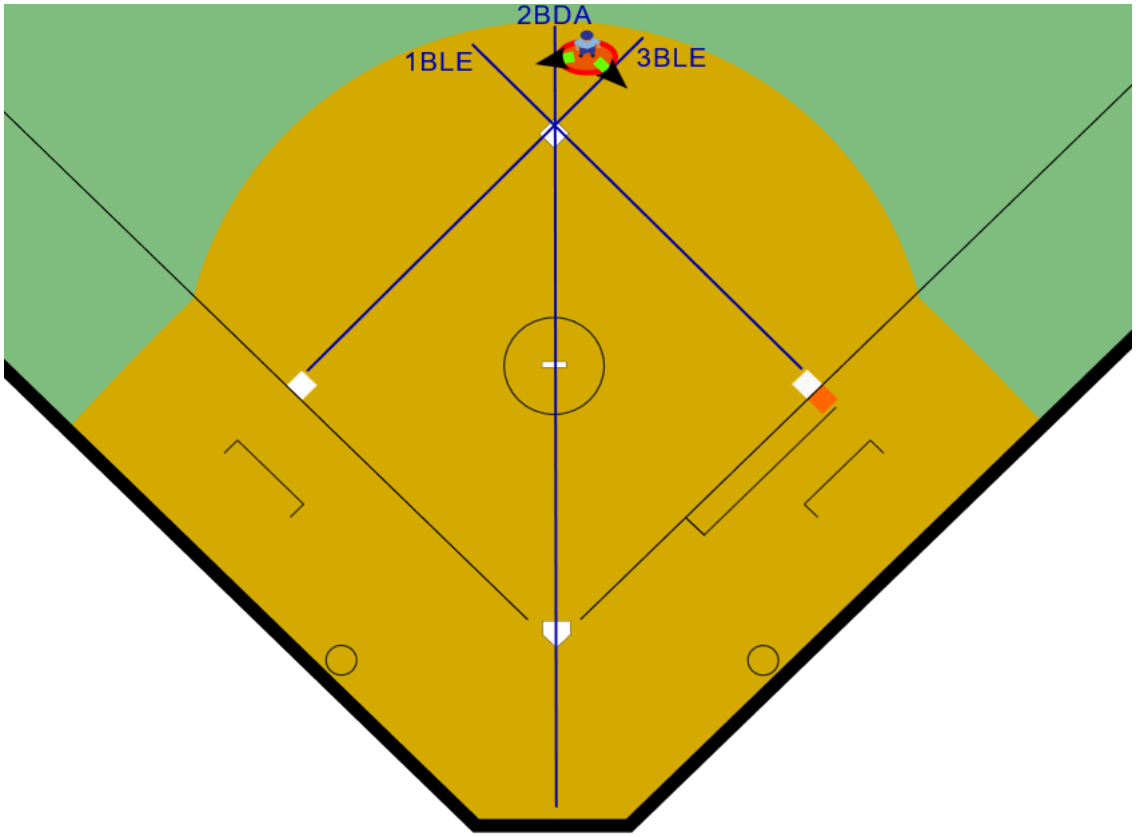


Figure 4 SBDA Standard Position and Mechanics

Second Base Diagonal Angle - Alternative starting position used by U2 (Four-Umpire System) and U3 at 2B (Three-Umpire System)

- With a runner on 1B only or runners at 1B and 3B only, the starting position may be **approximately** 3.5m(12ft) back from 2B in an area between the **Second Base Diagonal Angle**, formed by an imaginary line extending from home plate continuing diagonally through second base and 1-2 meters (3-6 feet) off the 3B side of 2B, provided that it gives an **unobstructed view** of home plate and the batter for the whole of the pitch and potential hit.
- This is to establish a proactive observation position on a potential steal and tag play. It can also assist in keeping the umpire out of the throwing lane on a potential wild throw and avoid being blocked out by or impeding the second base fielder backing up the throw on the potential steal.
- The umpire must be able to adjust, if required, to see the **Four Essential Elements**, including for any play that is on the back, side and including the leading edge of 2B.
- In this starting position, **as the umpire is already on the 3B side of 2B** and **past the Second Base Diagonal Angle**, the umpire should **not move to their right**; they should move toward the **Second Base Diagonal Angle** in the first instance, the 1B side of 2B or the leading edge as the play dictates. Umpires **should not move toward the extension of the line** from 1B through 2B.
- **The 2BDA exists to optimise unobstructed vision and minimise parallax error**. Movement away from the 2BDA toward the 1BLE, increases and magnifies parallax error, and therefore significantly reduces the umpire's ability to accurately judge plays, particularly front-edge tag plays at the leading edge of the base.

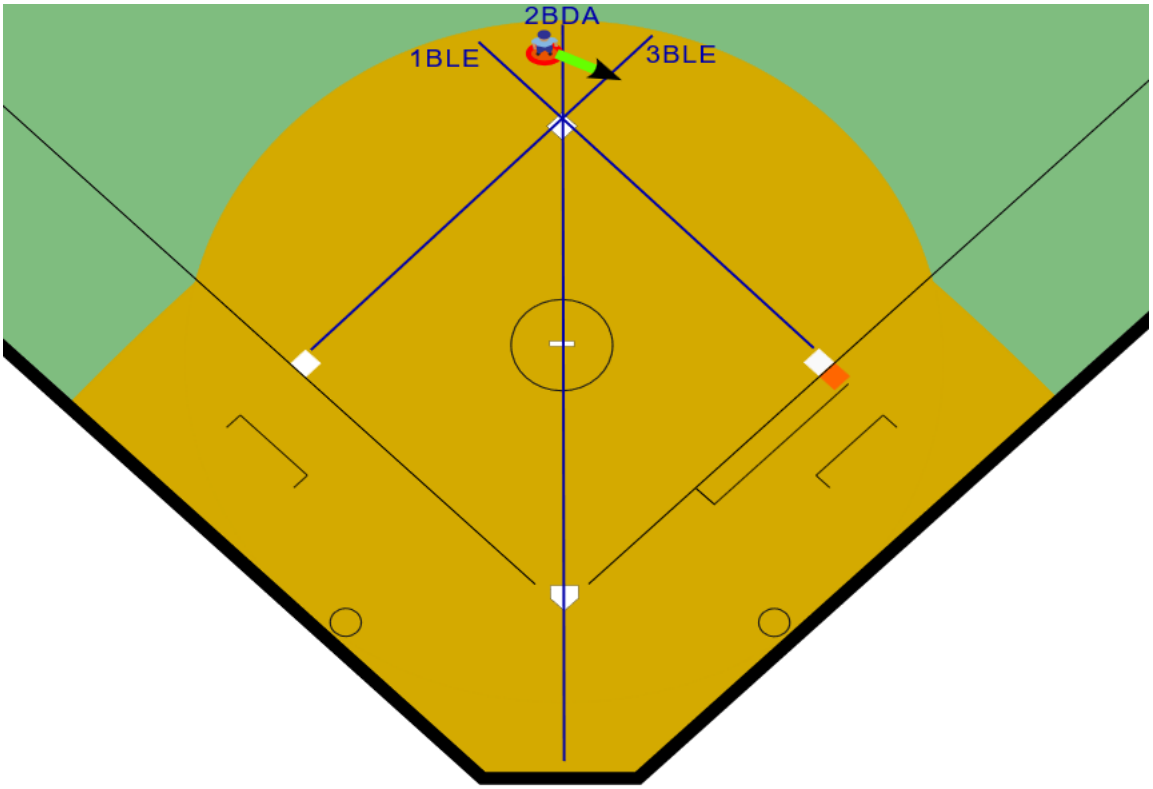


Figure 5 2BDA Alternate Position and Mechanics

- With a runner on second base, **the umpire working the 2BDA must remain positioned to cover first base if U1 goes out**. For this reason, starting slightly toward the first-base side of the 2BDA is preferable to starting on the third-base side, **provided an unobstructed view of home plate and the batter is maintained**. From this position, **the umpire must also be able to move inside the diamond** on time and establish the correct angle and distance for routine plays and any required coverage at first base.

- The umpire should ensure that they take a **Starting Position** and **Observation Position** close enough to the base that they can move efficiently to a good **Calling Position**. Starting further from the base creates a larger arc and requires more movement to establish a good **Calling Position**.

From either starting position, umpires can move to the **Leading Edge** or the **Second Base Diagonal Angle** as a play develops. Umpires should not move further towards the **1BLE** than the **Alternate Starting Position** as this puts the base between the umpire and the play and creates a parallax error judging when the runner is in contact with the base.

End of Play Counter Rotations

When all plays conclude, U1 should initiate **counter rotations** to the new umpire positions required for the next pitch.

- **U1 is at HP:** Time to be called by U1 at HP, and then that releases all umpires to **counter rotate**.
- **U1 is not at HP:** U1 needs to move toward the starting position to release U2/U3, and then U2/U3 move toward their starting position to release PU.

Lead umpires need to wait to be released from their position to ensure the incoming umpire has control of the area. If the lead umpire moves away too early, it can result in no umpire in control of a base where a potential play could occur.

Errors Due to Timing and Focus

Timing is critical to making a correct call. Umpires must observe the play, consider all the inputs, make a decision, and communicate the decision. Rushed timing can produce errors in reasoning and may mean that these steps are not done properly or in order. A slight pause, especially on a close play, gives the umpire time to make a good decision and to have presence when making the call.

In particular, an umpire who makes a rushed decision may base their decision on the last thing that they saw. On a force play, where the runner reaches the base and then the fielder receives the throw, an umpire who rushes the call is likely to call the runner out because they are still processing the input of the throw being caught when they communicate the decision.

Excessive focus on one element of a play can also result in errors. For example, an umpire who is too focused on a tag being made may fail to see that the runner is already in contact with the base, or an umpire who concentrates on the runner and turns their head with the runner or on the ball into the glove without waiting for all elements to come together will often receive incorrect images. Our brain looks for affirmations; seeing them in the wrong order or at different times can affect decision-making. Slower timing will also help the umpire in this situation make the right call, because it will allow their brain to process additional inputs.

Errors Arising from Moving or Taking a Stationary Position

In foundational mechanics, umpires are taught to be still to watch the play. This is to ensure that the umpire has a stable frame of reference. An umpire moving on a force play may make an incorrect call because they do not have a stable frame of reference or experience to read the complete play. The base and fielder are both generally stationary on a force play, and an umpire who is still when they are watching a force play can judge whether the runner or the ball arrives first.

In elite play, stationary positions can also create errors on tag plays, in particular secondary plays, even on the same runner. This is because three of the four elements are moving, with only the base being stationary. An umpire who moves with the play will have a better view of more inputs in this scenario. Moving around the base can also assist the umpire to create a fuller mental picture of the play, and with good timing, make the right call.

Each of these types of errors highlights the importance of seeing and processing the **Four Essential Elements** on every play.

Purpose of the Five and Six-Umpire Systems

Managing outfield fly balls that could result in a catch, trapped ball or home runs is a particularly important part of the game. However, plays at bases, especially with multiple runners, which can leave plays with insufficient coverage and angles for plays, are equally important. Plays closer to home will affect the overall game result, so having 3B and HP coverage is paramount.

Five and Six-Umpire Systems can be useful for finals and games of high standard and allow base umpires to stay in the infield area to ensure that all bases are covered at all times and the best opportunity to get an advantageous position for each call.

The use of **Five-Umpire Systems** is usually for games where umpires are used to running **Three-Umpire Systems** without going out. By using two outfield umpires keeps the three umpires covering bases. The use of **Six-Umpire Systems** allows two outfield umpires to cover the outfield responsibilities and the remainder to cover the bases.

APPENDIX 5b. Three-Umpire System

Pre-Game Plate Meeting and Between Innings Positions

At the pre-game plate meeting, PU stands behind the batter's boxes at the point of the plate. U1 and U3 stand on their respective sides in front of the batter's boxes.

Between innings, all umpires stand off the fair/foul lines.

- PU stands one third of the way from HP to 3B.
- U1 stands halfway from HP to 1B.
- U3 stands two thirds of the way from HP to 3B.

U1 Starting Position

No runners on or runner only on 3B

U1 starting position should be **approximately** 5.5m (18 ft) behind 1B, just off the line in foul territory.

Runner on 1B

U1 starting position should be **approximately** 3.5m (12 ft) behind 1B in foul territory.

All other situations

U1 starting position should be **approximately** 3.5m (12 ft) back, **approximately** 2/3rds from 1B, between 1B and 2B bases.

- U1 may need to adjust their position based on the position of the second base fielder, to ensure that the umpire does not interfere with the fielder's attempt to make a play.
- U1 should generally be closer to 2B than the second base fielder but should move to the 1B side of the fielder when required.

U3 Starting Position

No runners on

U3 starting position should be **approximately** 5.5m (18 ft) behind 3B, just off the line in foul territory.

Runner on 1B

U3 starting position should be **approximately** 3.5m (12 feet) at the **SBDA position, or up to the 3BLE on the 1B side** with an **unobstructed view** of the batter and home plate.

U3 may prefer to use the **alternate starting position** at the **SBDA.** in this situation to avoid being in a throwing lane or to gain an **unobstructed view** of the batter and home plate. Either the **standard starting position** at the **SBDA** or the **alternate starting position** will put the umpire in a proactive position, close to the **SBDA**, with minimal movement required to establish an **observation position** and **calling position** on a tag play**.**

Runner on 2B but not on 3B

U3 starting position should be **approximately** 4.5m (15 feet) behind 3B base, just off the line in foul territory.

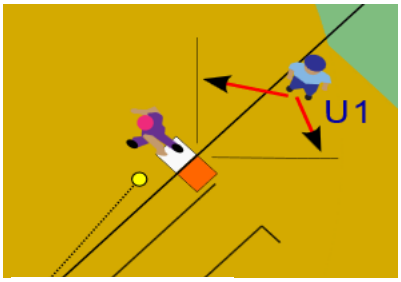
Runner on 3B

U3 starting position should be **approximately** 3.5m (12 feet) behind 3B base, in foul territory, up to 2 metres (6 feet) off the line. The umpire should use this area to ensure they have an **unobstructed view** of the pitcher, runner, the batter and home plate and not be visually affected by the runner leading off 3B on the release of the pitch.

Pickoff Plays

U1 Pickoff at 1B when starting at 1B

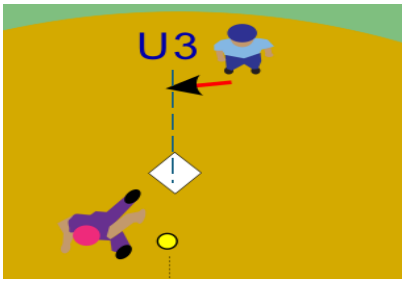
On a pickoff (throw back) at 1B, U1 moves from the starting position, keeping all **Four Essential Elements** in front. On reading the play, U1 should move forward or gain an angle **approximately** 3m (10 ft) from the base in foul territory, provided the umpire does not move beyond a 45-degree line through 1B. If the umpire reads the play will be at the leading edge they may step inside to fair territory.



Pickoff play 1B

U3 Pickoff at 2B

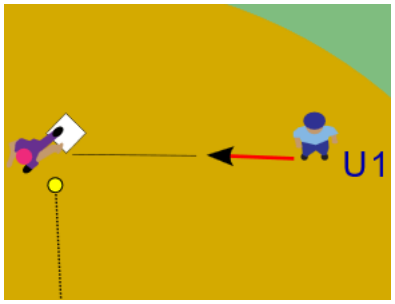
On a pickoff play (throw back) at 2B, U2 moves from **SBDA position** to a position **approximately** 3 meters (10 feet) back, keeping all **Four Essential Elements** in front by moving to see an **unobstructed view** of the play.



Pickoff play 2B

U1 Pickoff at 2B

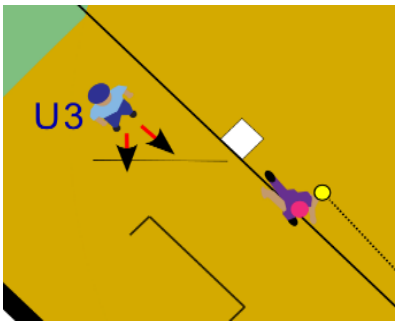
On a pickoff (throw back) at 2B, U1 moves from the starting position, keeping all **Four Essential Elements** in front. On reading the play, U1 should move forward or gain an angle **approximately** 3m (10 ft) from the base



Pickoff play 2B, U1

U3 Pickoff at 3B

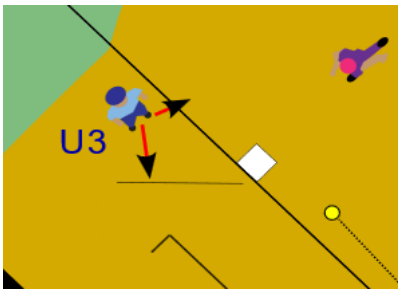
On a pickoff play (throw back) at 3B, U3 moves to a position **approximately** 3 m (10 ft) from the base in foul territory, keeping all **Four Essential Elements** in front by moving to see an **unobstructed view** of the play. The umpire should not move down in foul territory beyond a 45-degree line through 3B. Observing the runners return path will help lead you to the best position to see into the tag, or the leading edge as required.



Pickoff play 3B

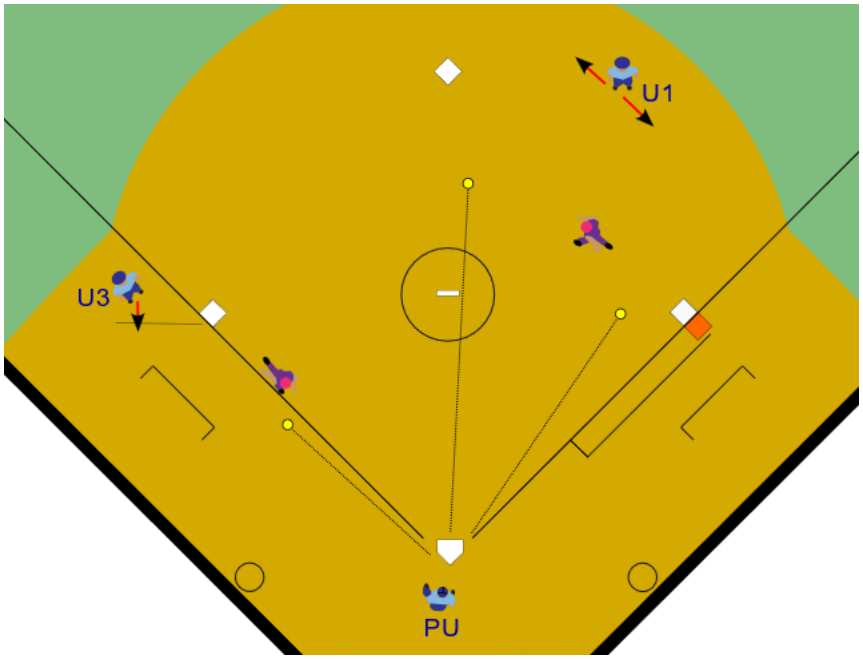
Free runner from 2B to 3B (tag play)

U3 should observe the runners base path and fielder positioning and may stay in foul territory with an **unobstructed view** to look into a potential tag or move to the leading edge of the base as the play dictates.



Free runner tag play 3B

Runner 1B and 3B. Pickoff and steal responsibilities



Runner 1B. and 3B. Pickoff and steal responsibilities

Tag Ups

When neither base umpire goes out on a fly ball:

- Base umpires take responsibility for the runner at their base. Additionally:
  - U3 takes responsibility for 2B if no runner is at 3B, and runners at 1B and 2B.
  - U1 takes responsibility for 1B and 2B when runners at 1B, 2B, and 3B.
- PU takes responsibility for 3B when U3 starts at 2B or rotates to 2B.

When one of the base umpires goes out on a fly ball:

- The base umpire that remains on the infield takes responsibility for tag ups at 1B and 2B.
- PU takes responsibility for the tag up at 3B.
-

Note: When base umpires are rotating inside the diamond using the Inside / Outside theory, an umpire may not be able to see both the first touch of a fly ball and the runner's lead off. In this situation, the base umpires should:

- Rotate inside the diamond quickly to improve their chance of seeing both the catch and the tag up.
- Glance over their shoulder when required to see the catch or tag up as they rotate.
- Seek assistance from other umpires as needed.

Leadoffs

U1 is responsible for the lead-off calls for runners at 1B and 2B. U3 is responsible for the lead-off call for a runner at 3B.

Batter Runner or Last Runner to third base.

In a three-umpire system when either U1 or U3 go out, the remaining umpire brings the BR all the way to 3B base to allow PU to go home. If the fly ball is caught and the remaining umpire is in an advantageous position to take the last runner to 3B, and they can effectively communicate with the plate umpire, they should. This supports the PU to be at home for important plays.

Live Ball Play from Infield

U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B - No runners on base or runner on 3B

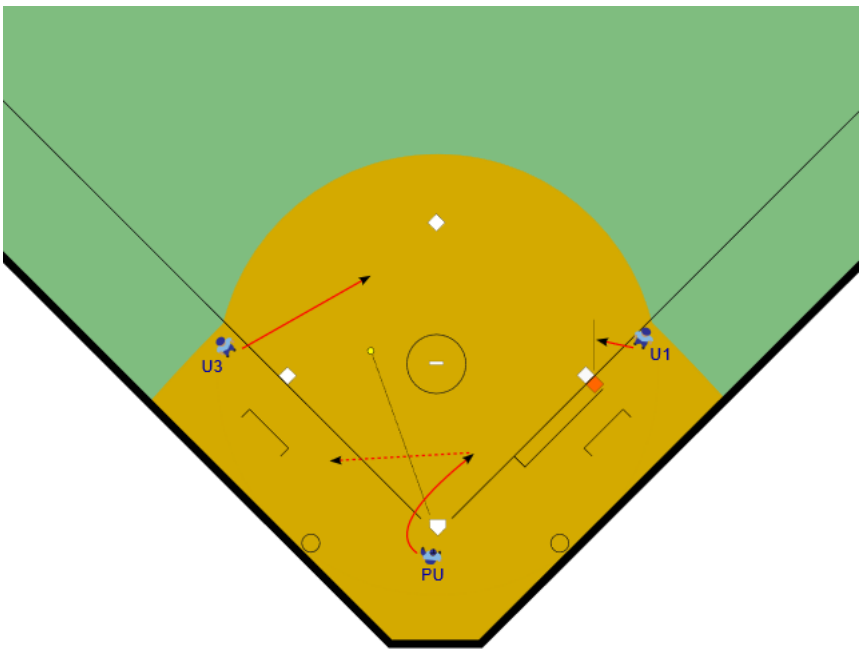


Figure 6 U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B; Infield Play - No Runners On

PU - **No runners on base:** Trails the **BR** approximately one third of the way to 1B (and further if required) for potential tag, watch for interference by **BR** or to assist at 1B if required; responsible for fair/foul call. Rotates to 3B if the **BR** reaches 1B and begins to advance to 2B.

U1 - **Ball thrown from fair territory** – Move into fair territory but no further than a line at 45 degrees through 1B.

U1 - **Ball thrown from foul territory** – Move into foul territory but no further than a line at 45 degrees through 1B.

For both situations, if the **BR** advances safely to 2B and begins to advance towards 3B, rotate home mirroring the runner's progress to 3B.
If the play on the BR is a tag closer to HP than 1B, PU should make the call. If there is a swipe tag both PU and U1 should communicate and the umpire with the better view of the tag should make the call.

U3 - **No runners on base:** Rotate inside for any call at 2B.

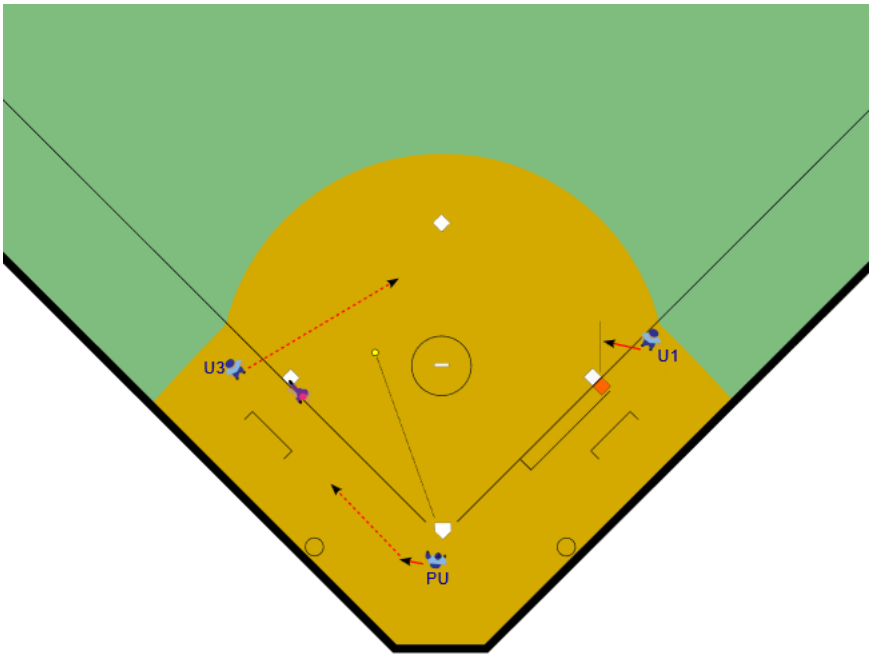


Figure 7 U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B; Infield Play - Runner on 3B

PU - **Runner on 3B:** Clear catcher to left of catcher to see a play at home plate or any of the bases. Use **Leading Edge** or **POP** as required for an **Observation Position** and potential **Calling Position**. Be aware of squeeze plays and quick plays at the plate.

U1 - **Runner on 3B:** Ensure U3 has released from 3B position toward 2B. If U3 remains at 3B, U1 is required to cover 1B and 2B by rotating toward 2B on the outside of the diamond.

U3 - **Runner on 3B:** Stay at 3B until the runner commits home, then rotate inside for any call at 2B.

U1 at 1B; U3 at 2B - Runner on 1B

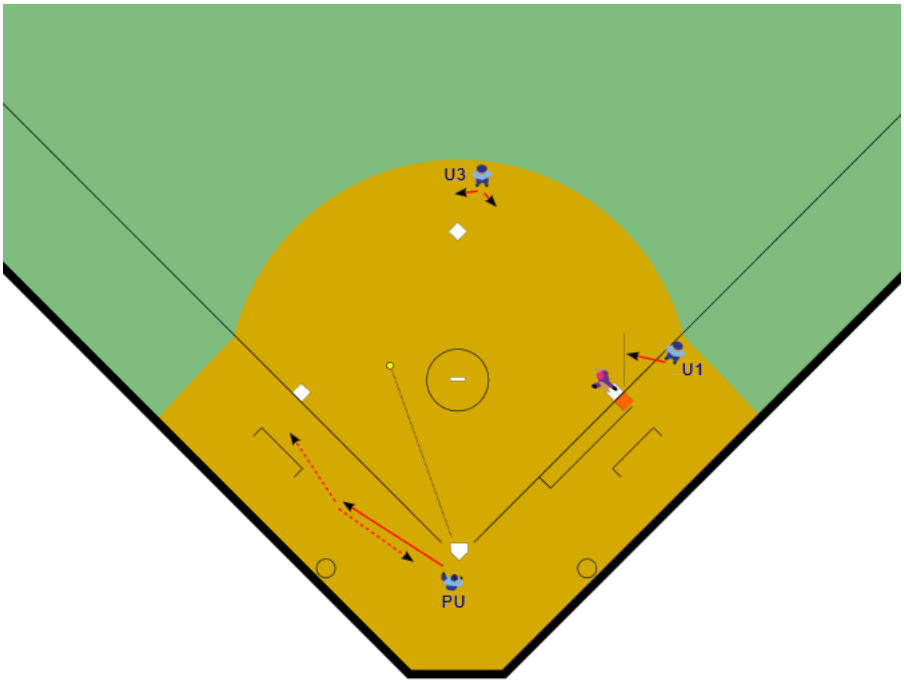


Figure 8 U1 at 1B; U3 at 2B; Infield Play

PU - Clear the catcher and move to position for fair/foul call. Hold if needed to judge potential **BR** interference, then rotate to 3B. As the runner approaches 3B, check that U1 has rotated home and be prepared to rotate back to HP ahead of the runner if U1 has not been able to (e.g. because of an overthrow at 1B where U1 is avoiding interfering with the play).

U1 - **Ball thrown from fair territory** – Move into fair territory but no further than a line at 45 degrees through 1B.

U1 - **Ball thrown from foul territory** – Move into foul territory but no further than a line at 45 degrees through 1B.

For both situations, once **BR** advances safely to 1B or is put out, and the lead runner progresses past 2B, move to **POP** area at HP for a possible call.

U3 - Remain on the outside of the diamond, working angles and distance for any call at 2B. Potential for force and tag plays at 2B as various plays are possible – steal, bunt, or hit.

U1 at 2B; U3 at 3B - Runner at 2B or multiple runners on base

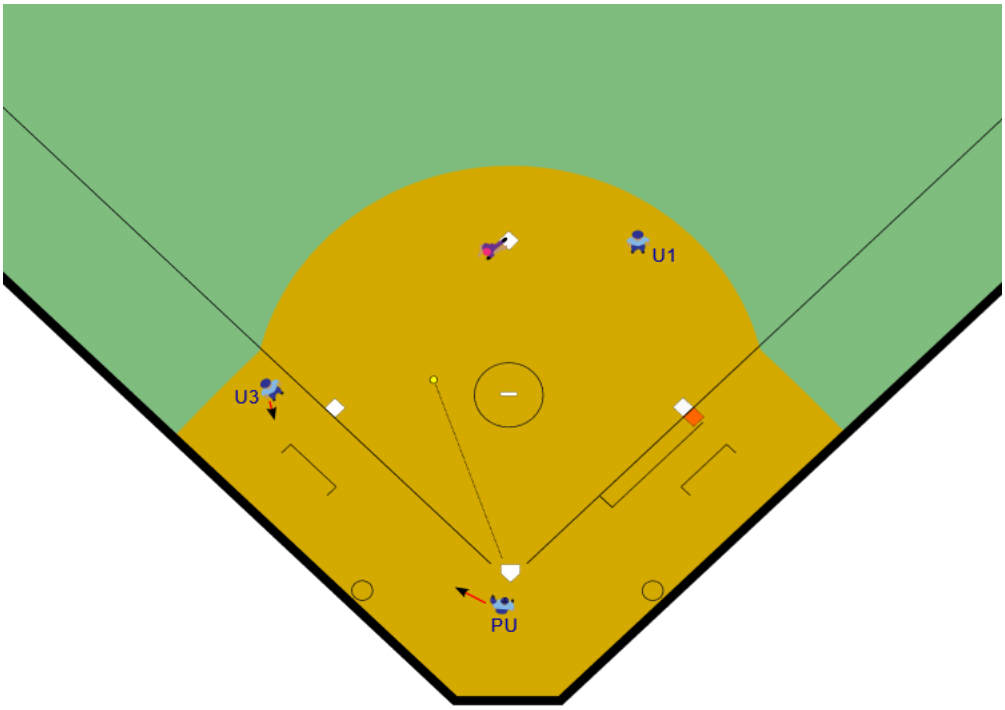


Figure 9 U1 at 2B; U3 at 3B; Infield Play

PU - Clear the catcher and move to position for fair/foul call. Move to see possible **BR** interference. Move to **POP** for any call at HP. With a runner at 3B on some plays, some positions may need to be prioritised for other potential calls. Read the play, be where you need to be for the evolving play.

U1 - Remain between 1B and 2B working angles and distance for any calls at 1B and 2B.

U3 - Remain on the outside of the diamond, working angles and distance for any call at 3B.

Ground Ball to Outfield

U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B - No runners on base or runner on 3B only

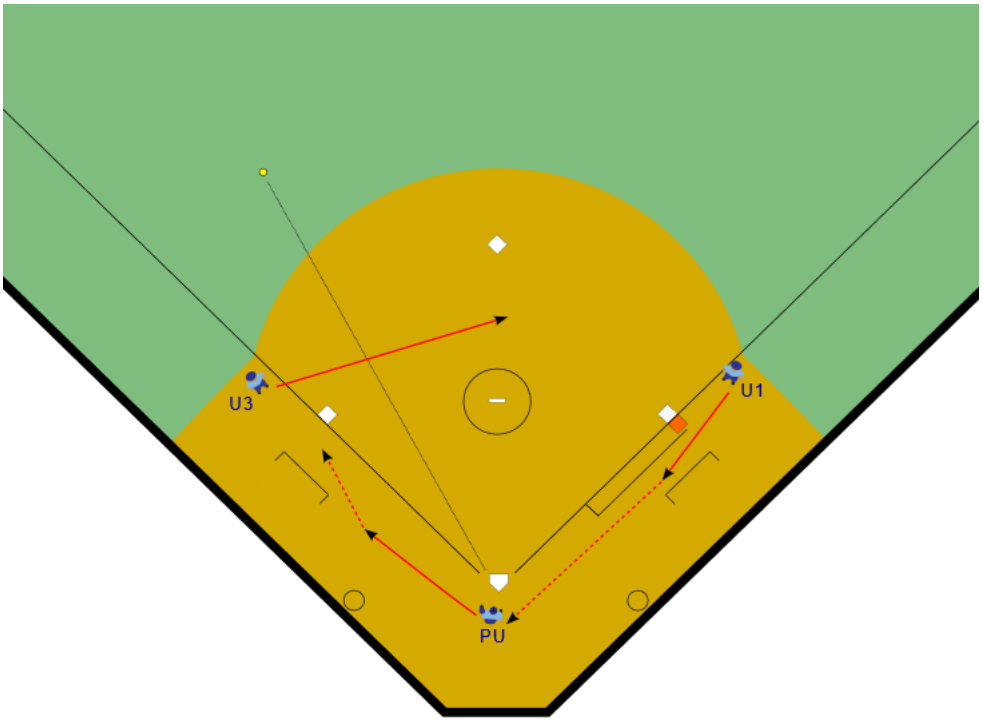


Figure 10 U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B Outfield Ground Ball

PU - **No runners on base:** Move into holding position; be prepared for the call at 3B on the **BR**.

PU - **Runner on 3B base:** Move into holding position, check runner from 3B base touching HP (head check); be prepared for the call at 3B on the **BR**.

U1 - **No runners on base:** Move down the foul line and be prepared for outfield to 1B force out plays. Use **Dynamic Movement** to establish a position for any calls that may be required at 1B. Rotate to the **POP** area, **only** if the **BR** progresses from 2B to 3B, for a possible call at HP, pushing PU to 3B.

U1 - **Runner on 3B base:** If U3 has rotated to 2B, rotate home to the **POP** area, **only** if the **BR** progresses from 2B to 3B, for a possible call at HP, pushing PU to 3B. If U3 remains or is delayed at 3B, U1 is responsible for calls at 1B and 2B. U1's first movement may be to button hook keeping all **Four Essential Elements** in front and to give U1 the option of rotating to HP or covering 1B and 2B.

U3 - Rotate inside for any call at 2B. Remain at 3B only if it appears that there may be a play on the runner coming back to 3B. In most cases, the runner will advance home safely on a ground ball.

U1 at 1B; U3 at 2B - Runner on 1B

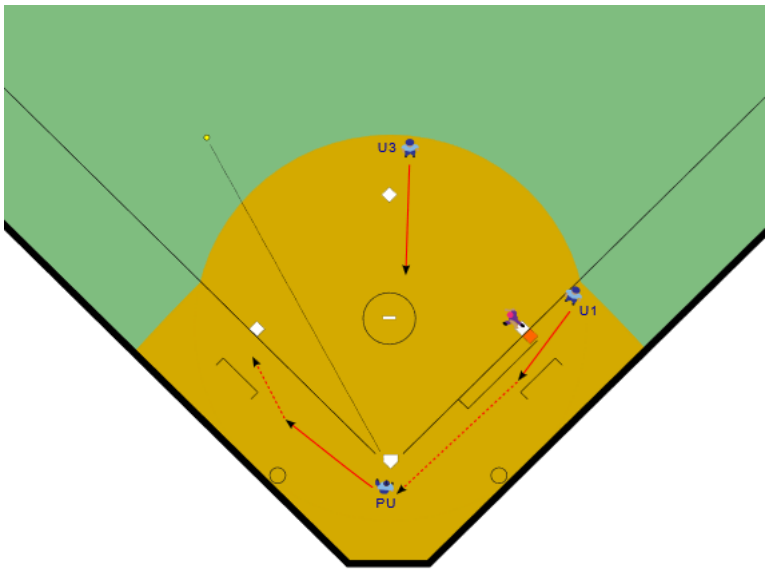


Figure 11 U1 at 1B; U3 at 2B Outfield Ground Ball

PU - Rotate to 3B. Check that U1 correctly rotates to HP, and if they do not be prepared to move to 3B or HP to cover any play.

U1 - Use foul territory to move toward HP. Once BR touches 1B, rotate to HP towards **POP** area and push PU to 3B.

U3 - Move inside the diamond, taking control of any call at 2B. Ensure PU is moving to 3B and U1 moving toward HP on BR touching 1B. Be ready for any call at 2B and 1B when U1 rotates to HP. If PU covers a play at HP, be ready to backfill to cover 3B.

U1 at 2B; U3 at 3B - Runner at 2B or multiple runners on base

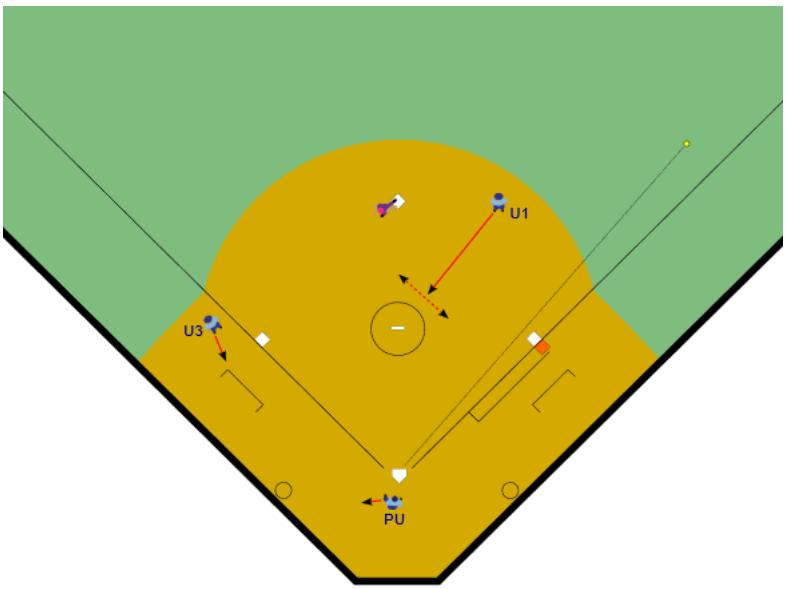


Figure 12 U1 at 2B; U3 at 3B Outfield Ground Ball

PU - Remain at HP, use **POP** area as play develops.

U1 - Move inside the diamond, taking control of any call at 1B and 2B.

U3 - Move down the line in foul territory to a point even with the bag and allow the **Four Essential Elements** to dictate whether to rotate inside or go back out beyond the baseline.

Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Area

The outfield fly-ball coverage area for umpires depends upon the starting position of the base umpires.

When either U1 or U3 goes out to judge fair/foul or to cover a fly ball to the outfield, the remaining base umpire **must** move inside the diamond; they have responsibility for all calls at 1B or 2B, and rotate to 3B ahead of the **BR** for possible calls on the **BR** at 3B base.

Note: If the fly ball is caught and the remaining umpire is in a position to take the last runner to 3B, and they can effectively communicate with the plate umpire, they should. This supports the PU to be at home for important plays.

U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B - No runners on base or runner on 3B

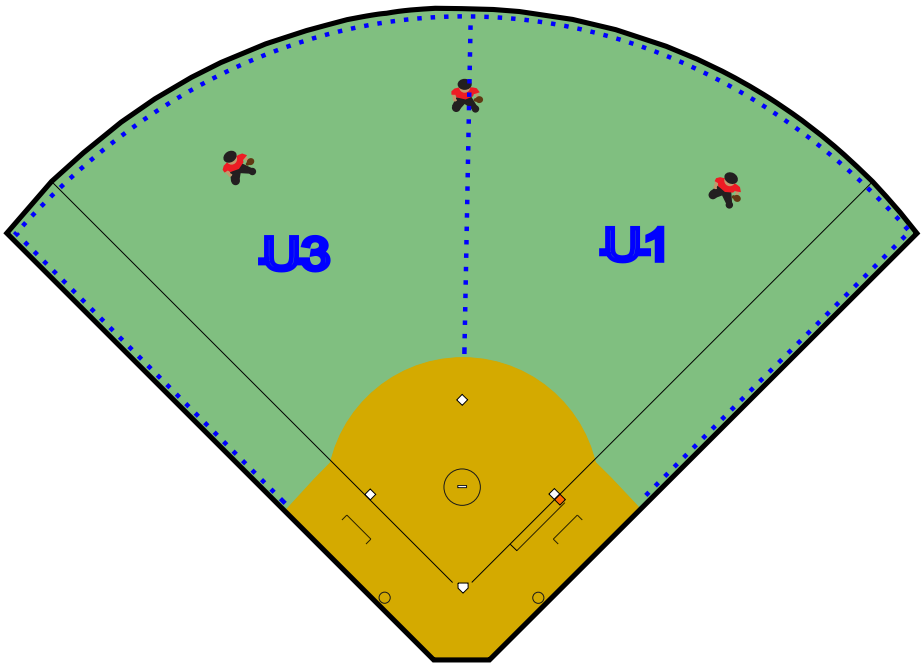


Figure 13 U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Area

U1 - is responsible for fly balls to F8 (fielding in the normal position) moving toward RF and foul.

U3 - is responsible for flyballs to F8 (fielding in the normal position) and moving towards LF and foul.

U1 at 1B; U3 at 2B - Runner on 1B

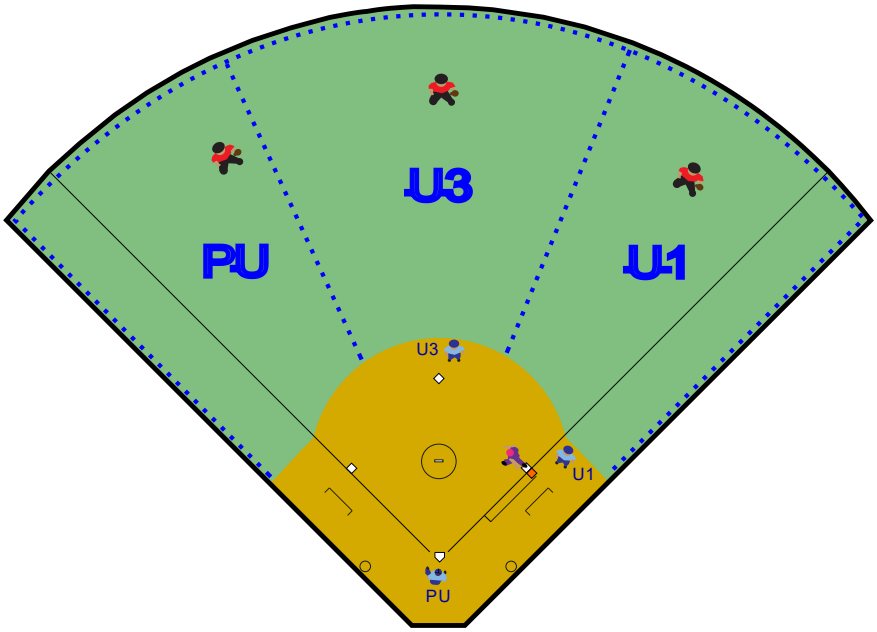


Figure 14 U1 at 1B; U3 at 2B Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Area

PU - takes fly balls to F7 and foul.
U1 - is responsible for fly balls to the RF area and foul. This means that U1 may take balls directly behind U3.
U3 - is responsible for fly balls to F8 and F7 moving toward CF.
Note: U1 taking fly balls to F9 keeps them out of the runner's base path and allows U3 to more easily get inside to cover plays and watch the tag up.

U1 at 2B; U3 at 3B - Runner at 2B or multiple runners on base

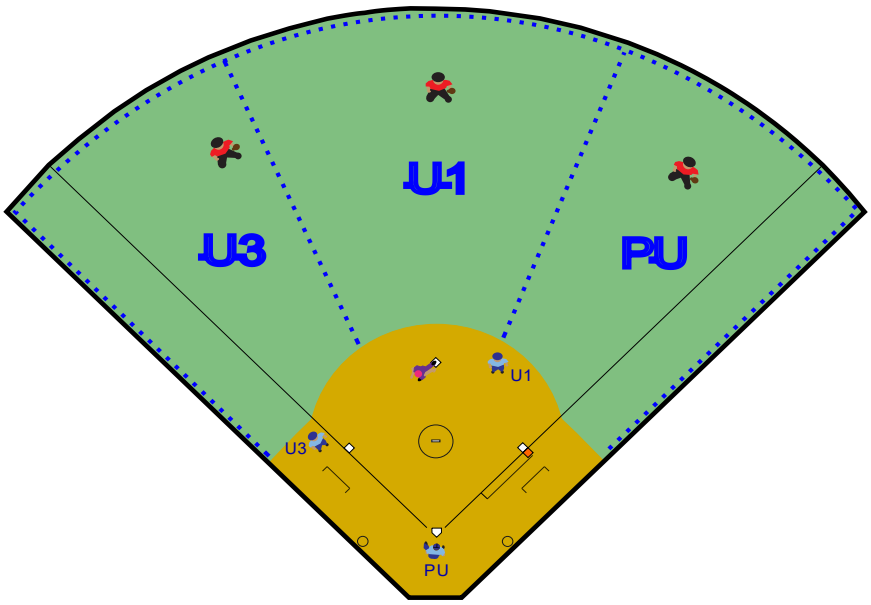


Figure 15 U1 at 2B; U3 at 3B Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Area

PU - is responsible for fly balls to F9 and foul.
U1 is responsible for fly balls to F8.
U3 - is responsible for fly balls to F7 and foul.

Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Movements

U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B - No runners on base or on 3B

U1 Goes Out - Fly Ball to right field

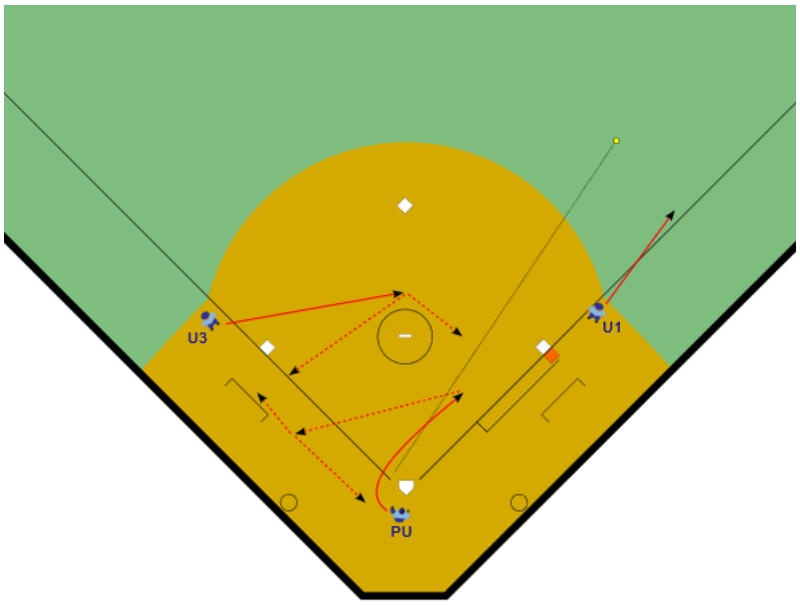


Figure 16 U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B; U1 goes out; no runners on

PU - **No runners on:** watch the potential catch, or move to the appropriate position to make primary call at 1B on throw from RF if no catch. Move into holding position after release of 1B to U3. Retreat to the plate for a possible call at home, as U3 brings the **BR** into 3B.

U3 - **No runners on:** Rotate inside for any calls at 2B, responsible for any calls at 1B and 2B base once the **BR** passes 1B.

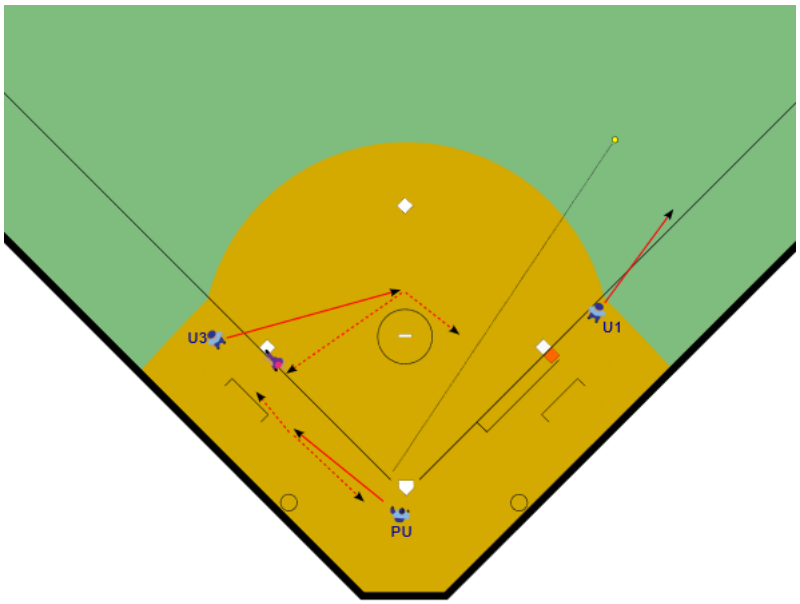


Figure 17 U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B; U1 goes out; Runner 3B

PU - **Runner on 3B base:** Rotate to the holding position, observe as the play develops and move to 3B or HP as needed.

U3 - **Runner on 3B base:** Rotate inside for any calls at 1B and 2B, bring **BR,** or **last runner** to 3B.

U3 Goes Out - Fly Ball to left field

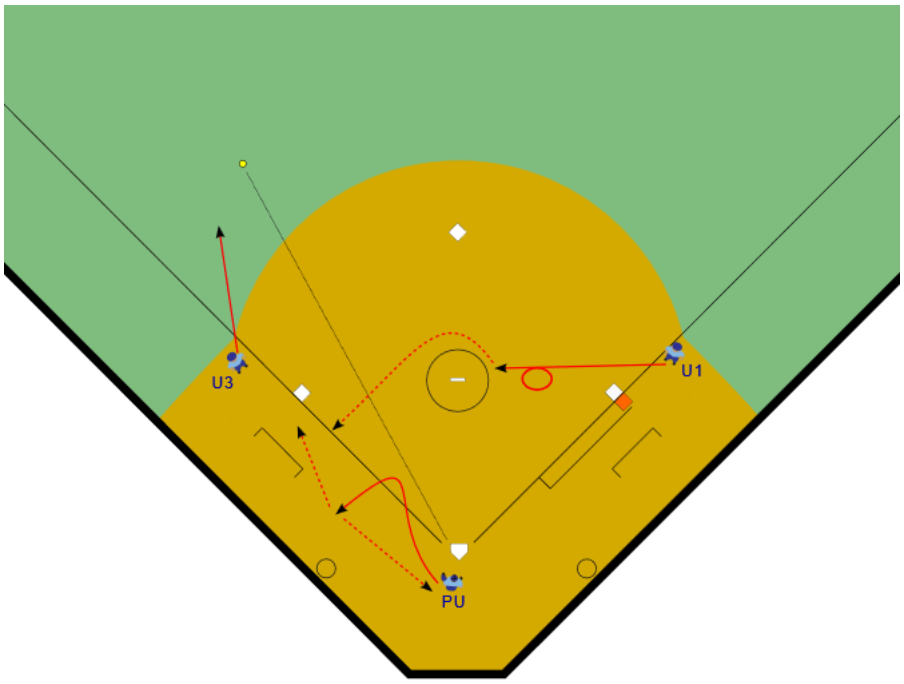


Figure 18 U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B; U3 goes out; no runners on

PU - **No runners on:** Move out in front, **approximately** halfway toward the 2.44 m (8-foot) circle in the direction of the ball to watch the catch; then move to the holding position. Retreat to HP for a possible call at home, as U1 brings the **BR** into 3B.

U1 - Button hook inside for any calls at 1B and 2B, bring **BR,** or **last runner** to 3B.

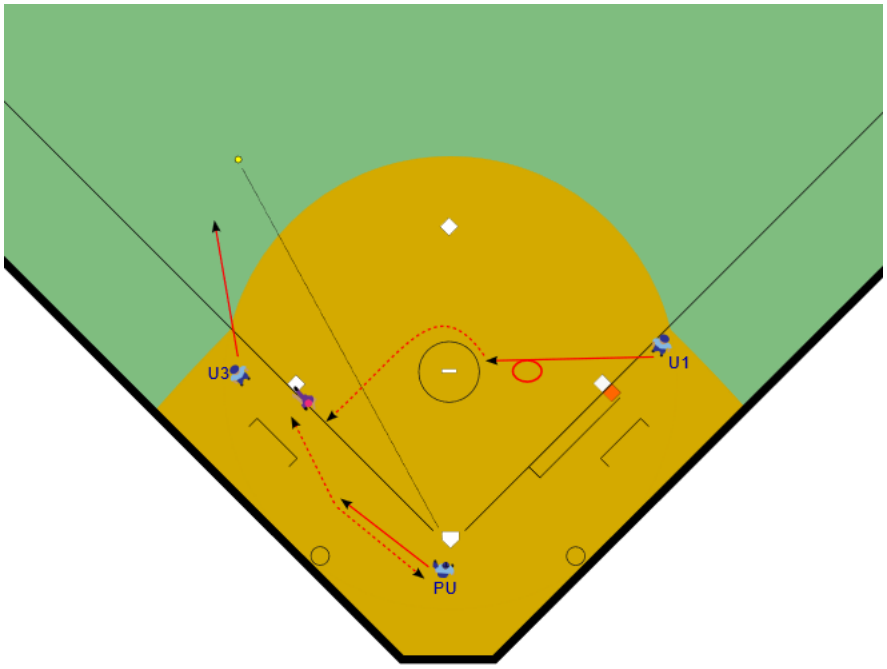


Figure 19 U1 at 1B; U3 at 3B; U3 goes out; Runner 3B

PU - **Runner on 3B base:** Move into holding position, move to 3B or HP depending upon expected location of next play. Retreat to HP as U1 brings the **BR,** or **last runner** into 3B.

U1 - (repeated from no runners on base) Button hook inside for any calls at 1B and 2B, bring **BR,** or **last runner** to 3B.

U1 at 1B; U3 at 2B - Runner on 1B

U1 Goes Out - Fly Ball to right field

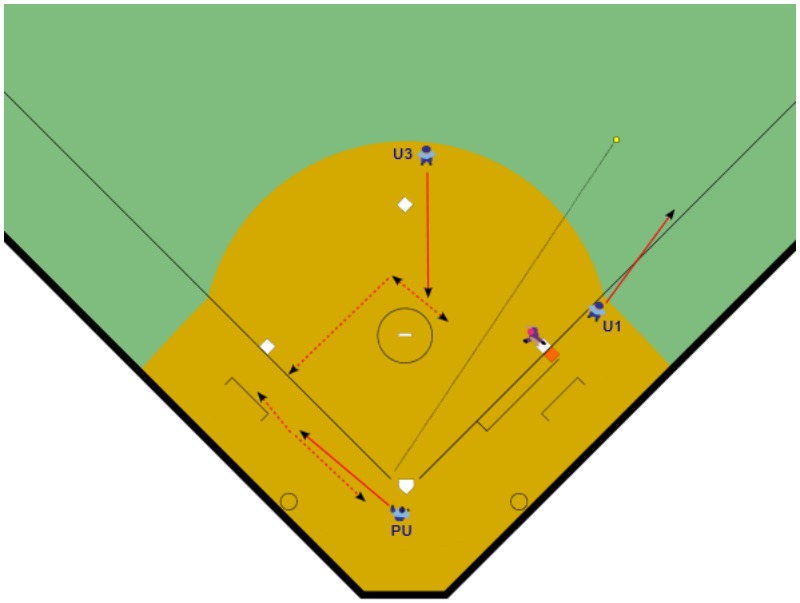


Figure 20 U1 at 1B; U3 at 2B; U1 goes out

PU - Trail the **BR** one third of the way to 1B for a possible assist at 1B and watch the catch. Move to the holding position; be prepared to move to either 3B or HP for any play that develops. Retreat to the plate as U3 brings the **BR,** or **last runner** into 3B.

U3 - Button hook inside for any calls at 1B and 2B, bring **BR,** or **last runner** to 3B.

U3 Goes Out - Fly Ball to centre field

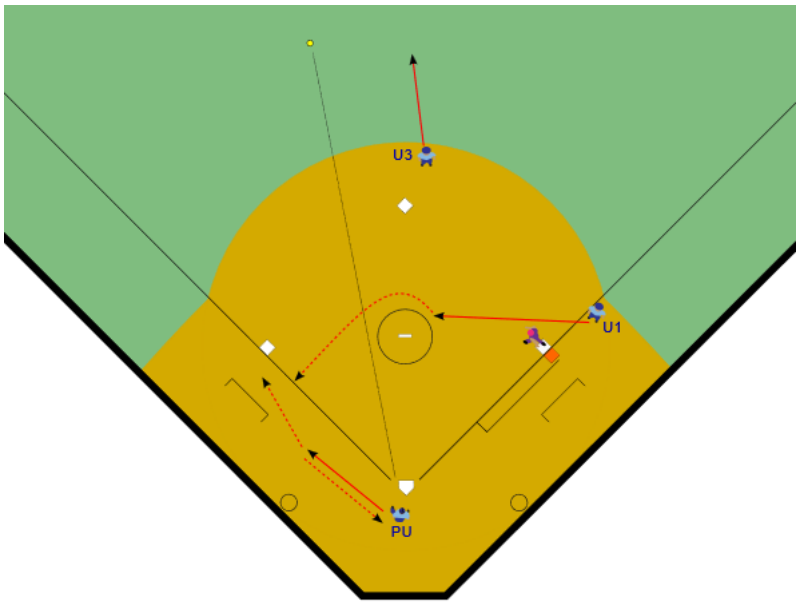


Figure 21 U1 at 1B; U3 at 2B; U3 goes out

PU - Move out in front, **approximately** halfway toward the 2.44 m (8-foot) circle in the direction of the ball to watch the catch; then rotate to the holding position. Be prepared to move to either 3B or HP for any play that develops. Retreat to the plate as U1 brings the **BR,** or **last runner** into 3B.

U1 - Button hook inside for any calls at 1B and 2B, bring **BR** to 3B. Keep the focus on the runner from 1B as there is a potential for a quick play at 2B.

PU covers hit to left field

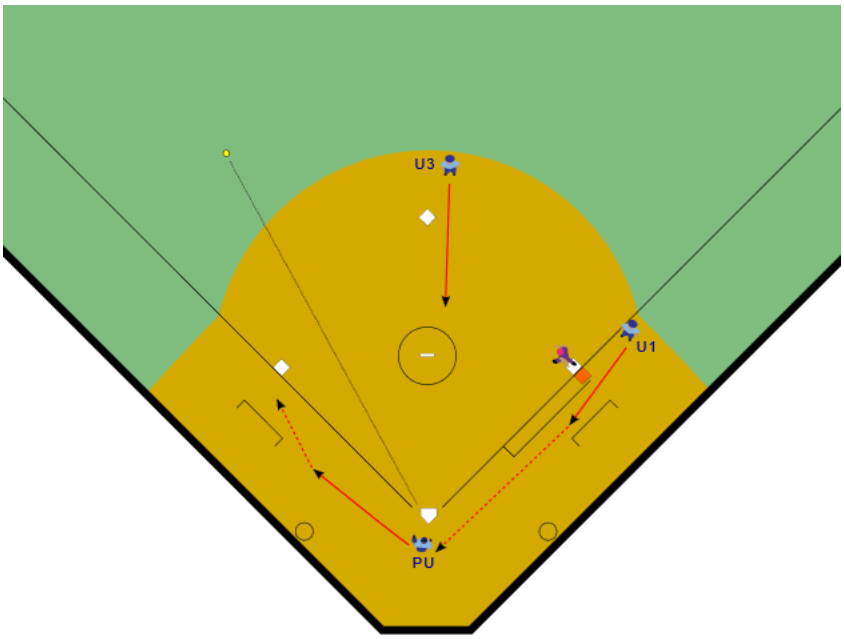


Figure 22 U1 at 1B; U3 at 2B; PU call on outfield fly to LF – same rotation as ground ball to outfield

PU - Move in the direction of the hit and take responsibility for a fair/foul and/or catch call. Rotate to 3B and take responsibility for any play.

U1 - Move down the foul line; be prepared to bounce inside for a possible call at 1B. Push PU and rotate to the plate, **only** if the **Lead Runner** progresses from 2B to 3B, for a possible call at HP.

U3 - Button hook inside for any call at 2B; responsible for the **BR** at 1B after the release by U1.

Note: Rotations in this situation are the same as for a ground ball to the outfield.

U1 at 2B; U3 at 3B - Runner at 2B or multiple runners on base

PU covers hit to right field

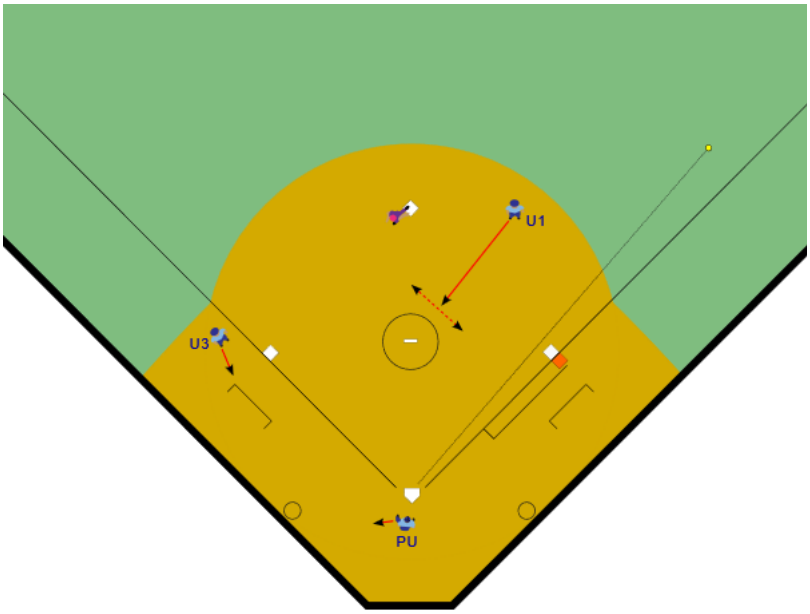


Figure 23 U1 at 2B; U3 at 3B; PU call on outfield fly to RF - same rotation as ground ball to outfield

PU - As the hit is toward the foul line side of the Right Fielder - move to the left of the plate to clear the catcher and get an **unobstructed view** of the ball.

Take responsibility for a fair/foul and/or catch call, moving onto 1BLE or into foul territory if required. After making any call on the hit, remain at HP **POP** area for possible call on runners.

U1 - Button hook inside for all calls at 1B and 2B.

U3 - Move down the line in foul territory to a point even with the base and allow the **Four Essential Elements** to dictate whether to rotate inside or go back out beyond the baseline for any potential play.

Note: Rotations are the same as for ground ball to outfield, except the PU additionally has the catch call. The rotations diagram is the same and repeated here for clarity.

U1 Goes Out - Fly Ball to centre field

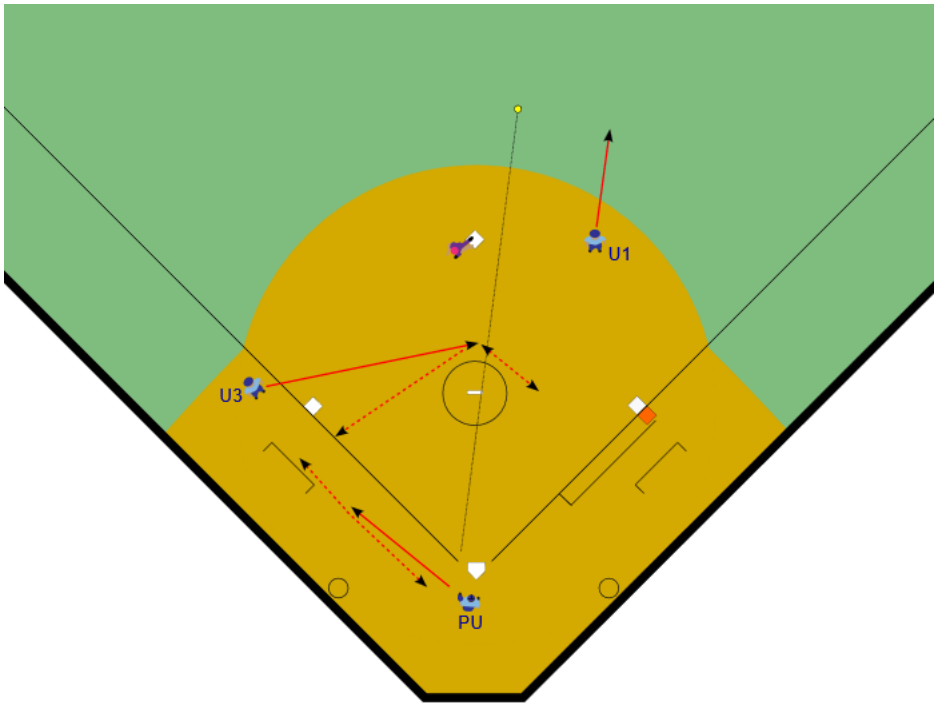


Figure 24 U1 at 2B; U3 at 3B; U1 goes out

PU - Move to the holding position; be prepared to move back to HP for the call at home or move to 3B for a possible call at 3B. Retreat to the plate as U3 brings the **BR,** or **last runner** into 3B.

U3 - Rotate inside for any calls at 1B and 2B, bring **BR** to 3B**,** or **last runner** into 3B

U3 Goes Out - Fly Ball to left field

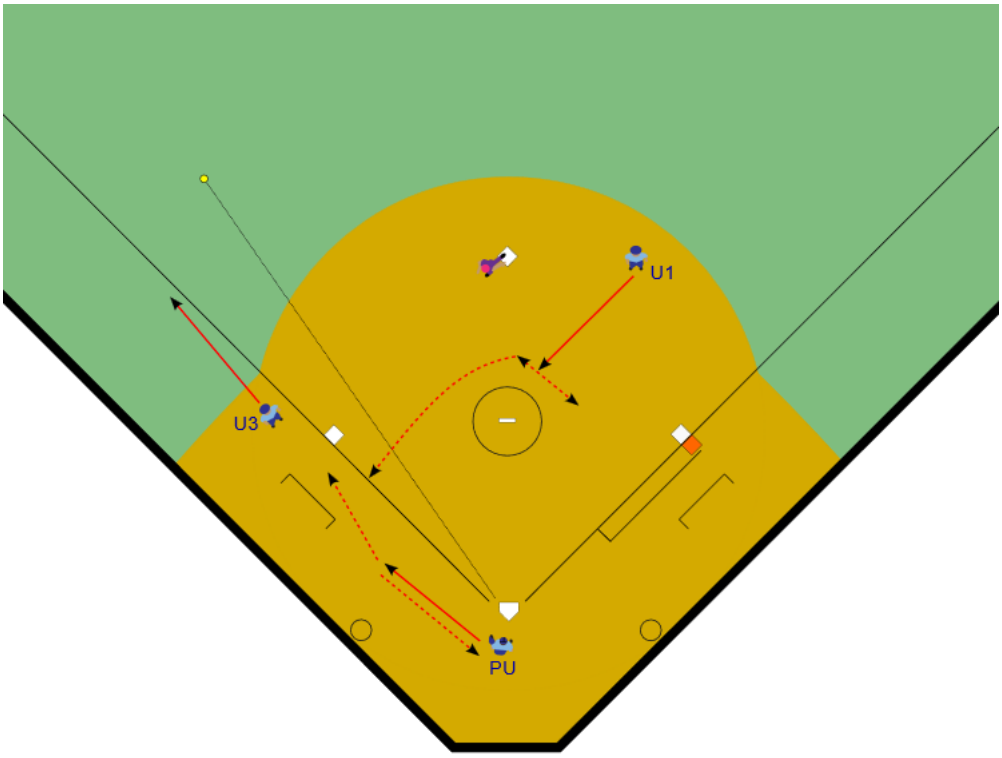


Figure 25 U1 at 2B; U3 at 3B; U3 goes out

PU - Move to the holding position; be prepared to move back to HP for the call at home or move to 3B for a possible call at 3B. Retreat to the plate as U1 brings the **BR,** or **last runner** into 3B base.

U1 - Button hook inside for any calls at 1B and 2B, and the **BR** into 3B.

Three-Umpire System Rotation Memory Map

The Three-Umpire System can be memorised by a number of key points:

- PU
  - trail BR with no runners.
  - use the 3B holding position.
  - anticipate plays at HP and use the **POP** area when at full rotation.
- U1
  - Communicate with your partner. Do not rush or unnecessarily delay a decision to go out.
  - Rotate inside the diamond whenever U3 goes out, or in foul territory if U3 is covering 2B. Button hook if in doubt so that you can adjust.
  - Get to the **POP** area when required.
- U3
  - Communicate with your partner. Do not rush or unnecessarily delay a decision to go out.
  - Rotate inside the diamond to take responsibility for 1B and 2B whenever U1 goes out. Move to a location past the line formed from the pitcher's plate to 2B.

1BFT = 1B Foul Territory
3BFT = 3B Foul Territory

3 Umpire System - Rotation Memory Map

Item	Key Input	PU	U1	U3
Starting Position	No runners		1B 5.5m	3B 5.5m
	Runner at 1B		1B 3.5m	2BDA 3.5m
	Runner at 2B or 1B,2B		2B 2/3rd 3.5m	3B 4.5m
	Runners at 1B,2B,3B or 2B,3B or 1B,3B		2B 2/3rd 3.5m	3B 3.5m foul
	Runner at 3B		1B 4.5m	3B 3.5m foul
Infield Hit Initial movement	No runners	Trail BR	Stay at 1B	2B
	Runner at 1B	Holding	"	Stay at 2B
	Runner at 2B or multiple runners	Clear catcher	Stay at 2B	Stay at 3B
	Runner at 3B		Stay at 1B	"
Outfield hit initial movement - ground ball	No runners	Track Hit	1BFT	2B
	Runner at 1B	Holding	"	Stay at 2B
	Runner at 2B or multiple runners	Clear catcher	Button Hook from 2B	3BFT
	Runner at 3B	Holding	1BFT	2B
Outfield hit initial movement - catchable	U1 going out - No runners	Track Hit	Goes out	2B
	U1 going out - all other situations	Holding	"	"
	U3 going out - No runners	Track Hit	Button Hook	Goes out
	U3 going out - all other situations	Holding	"	"
Subsequent movement	Base umpire stay in - No runners or R1 or R3	3B / HP	1B > 1BFT > HP	2B
	Base umpires stay in - all other situations	POP	1B/2B > 3B	3B
	U1 going out	3B/HP	Goes out	1B/2B > 3B
	U2 or U3 going out - no runners on	3B/HP	1B/2B > 3B	Goes out
Tag up responsibility by umpire	No umpires go out	R3 when U3 at 2B	R1, also R2 if runner at 3B	R3, or R2 if no runner at 3B
	U1 going out	R3	Goes out	R1+R2
	U3 going out	R3	R1+R2	Goes out

Figure 26 Memory Map for Three-Umpire System Rotations

APPENDIX 5c. Four-Umpire System

Pre-Game Plate Meeting and Between Innings Positions

At the pre-game plate meeting, PU stands behind the batter's boxes at the point of the plate. U2, U1 and U3 line up in front of the batter's boxes (from 1B line to 3B line). This enables the umpires to peel off to their starting positions after the plate meeting.

Between innings, all umpires stand off the fair/foul lines.

- PU stands one third of the way from HP to 3B.
- U1 stands one third of the way from HP to 1B.
- U2 stands two thirds of the way from HP to 1B.
- U3 stands two thirds of the way from HP to 3B.

Starting Positions – Base Umpires

The umpires' starting distance should enable them to move inside the diamond where required in time to see all runners touch bases and for any plays.

Starting position: U1

With no runners on, U1 preliminary starting position should be **approximately** 5.5m (18 ft) behind the base, just off the line in foul territory.

With a runner at 1B, U1 should take a position **approximately** 3.5m (12 ft) behind 1B in foul territory to have an **unobstructed view** of the pitcher, runner, batter and home plate.

Starting position: U2

- U2 should use the **SBDA positions** as described in the introductory section. Either position should be approximately 4.5m (15 ft) back from 2B.
- Runner on any base at approximately 3.5m (12ft) back from 2B.

Starting position: U3

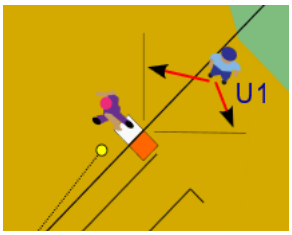
With no runners on, U3's preliminary starting position should be **approximately** 5.5m (18 ft) behind the base, just off the line in foul territory.

With a runner on 2B, U3 should take a position **approximately** 4.5m (15 ft) behind the base, just off the line in foul territory.

With a runner at 3B base, U3 should take a position **approximately** 3.5m (12 ft) behind 3B in foul territory so the umpire's view of the pitcher, runner, batter and HP is not obstructed by the runner leaving 3B on the release of the pitch.

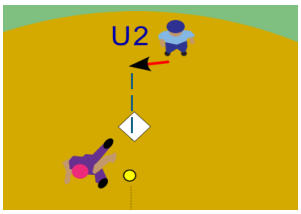
Pickoff Plays

On a pickoff (throw back) at 1B, U1 moves from the starting position, keeping all **Four Essential Elements** in front. On reading the play, U1 should move forward or gain an angle **approximately** 3m (10 ft) back from the play in foul territory, provided the umpire does not move beyond a 45-degree line through 1B. If the umpire reads the play will be at the leading edge, they may step inside to fair territory.



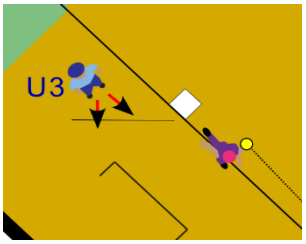
Pickoff play 1B

On a pickoff play (throw back) at 2B, U2 moves from **SBDA position** to a position **approximately** 3 meters (10 feet) back, keeping all **Four Essential Elements** in front by moving to see an **unobstructed view** of the play.



Pickoff play 2B

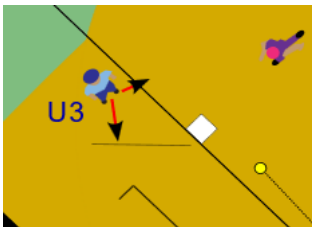
On a pickoff play (throw back) at 3B, U3 moves to a position **approximately** 3 meters (10 feet) back, keeping all **Four Essential Elements** in front by moving to see an **unobstructed view** of the play. The umpire should not move down in foul territory beyond a 45-degree line through 3B.



Pickoff play 3B

Free runner from 2B to 3B (tag play)

U3 should observe the runners base path and fielder positioning, and may stay in foul territory with an **unobstructed view** to look into a potential tag or move to the leading edge of the base as the play dictates.



Free runner tag play 3B

Tag-ups

When U1 goes out on a fly ball:

- U2 takes responsibility for the tag up at 2B.
- U3 takes responsibility for the tag up at 3B.
- PU takes responsibility for the tag up at 1B.

On a hard flat hit caught in right field where U1 goes out, U2 may not get inside in time to pick up the timing of the ball being caught and 2B runner tag up. U2 may then seek help from U3 on the tag up at 2B.

When U2 goes out on a fly ball:

- U1 takes responsibility for the tag up at 1B.
- U3 takes responsibility for to 2B including the tag up at 2B.
- PU takes responsibility for the tag up at 3B.

When U3 goes out on a fly ball:

- UI takes responsibility for the tag up at 1B.
- U2 takes responsibility for the tag up at 2B.
- PU takes responsibility for the tag up at 3B.

In summary, each umpire has the tag up at their base after any initial rotation. PU takes responsibility for the tag up at 1B when U1 goes out because PU has the **Four Essential Elements** in front of them at all times.
Note: When base umpires are rotating inside the diamond using the Inside / Outside theory, an umpire may not be able to see both the first touch of a fly ball and the runner's lead off. In this situation, the base umpires should:

- Rotate inside the diamond quickly to improve their chance of seeing both the catch and the tag up.
- Glance over their shoulder when required to see the catch or tag up as they rotate.
- Seek assistance from other umpires as needed.

Leadoffs

Each umpire is responsible for the lead-off call for a runner at their base.

Live Ball Play from Infield

PU - No runner on or runner at 1B: Trails the **BR** for approximately one third of the way to 1B for potential tag, watch for interference by **BR** or to assist at 1B if required; responsible for fair/foul call. Moves back to home when **BR** reaches 1B.

PU - All other situations: Work **POP** area. Ensure to maintain a clear view of any play.

U1 - **Ball thrown from fair territory:** Move into fair territory but no further than a line at 45 degrees through 1B.

U1 - **Ball thrown from foul territory:** Move into foul territory but no further than a line at 45 degrees through 1B.

U2&U3 - Work from starting positions around the runners on base. Move to see the **Four Essential Elements** at all times. Work for the best angles on force plays, aiming for 90 degrees to the throw and no more than 45 degrees off the **Leading Edge**. On tag plays, use **Dynamic Movement** to maintain a view of the **Four Essential Elements** on the **Leading Edge** or as the play dictates.

Ground Ball to Outfield

No base umpire goes out.

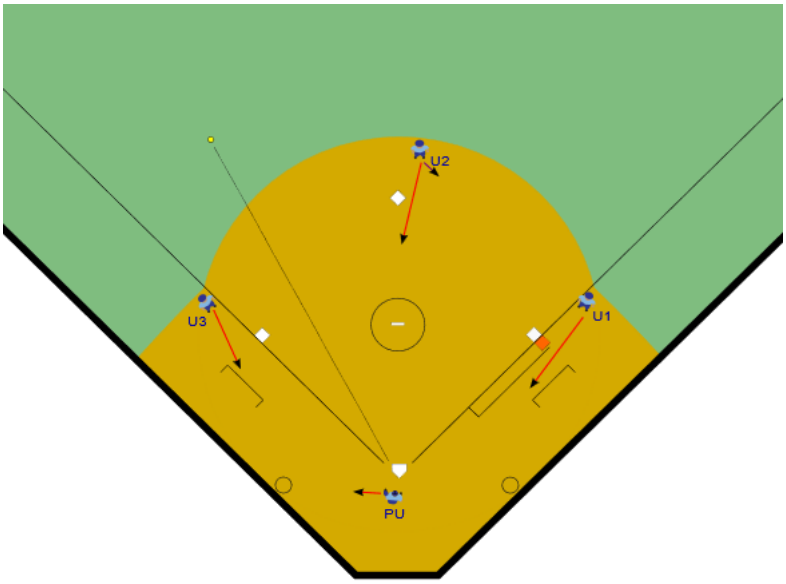


Figure 27 Outfield Ground Ball

PU - Move to the left of the plate, watch for interference by the **BR** or to assist at 1B base if required; responsible for fair/foul call. Work **POP** area as runners progress to HP. With no runners on base or runner at 1B PU may move inside the diamond toward the ball and observe.

U1 - Move down the line in 1B foul territory and be prepared to use **Dynamic Movement** for a possible call at 1B. For a possible outfield-to-3 play move further back in foul territory, 90 degrees to the throw.

U2 - Hit to RF/CF - Button hook inside for any call at 2B. Note: On a hit to RF, U2 may stay outside the bases past 2BDA toward Shortstop area providing they can keep all four essential elements in view and be able to dynamically move to a call at 2B if required.

U2 - Hit to LF - Stay out for an acute angle on the throw from LF for any call at 2B.

U3 - Move down the line in 3B foul territory to a point even with the bag, use **Dynamic Movement** and allow the **Four Essential Elements** to dictate positioning on any potential tag play.

Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Area

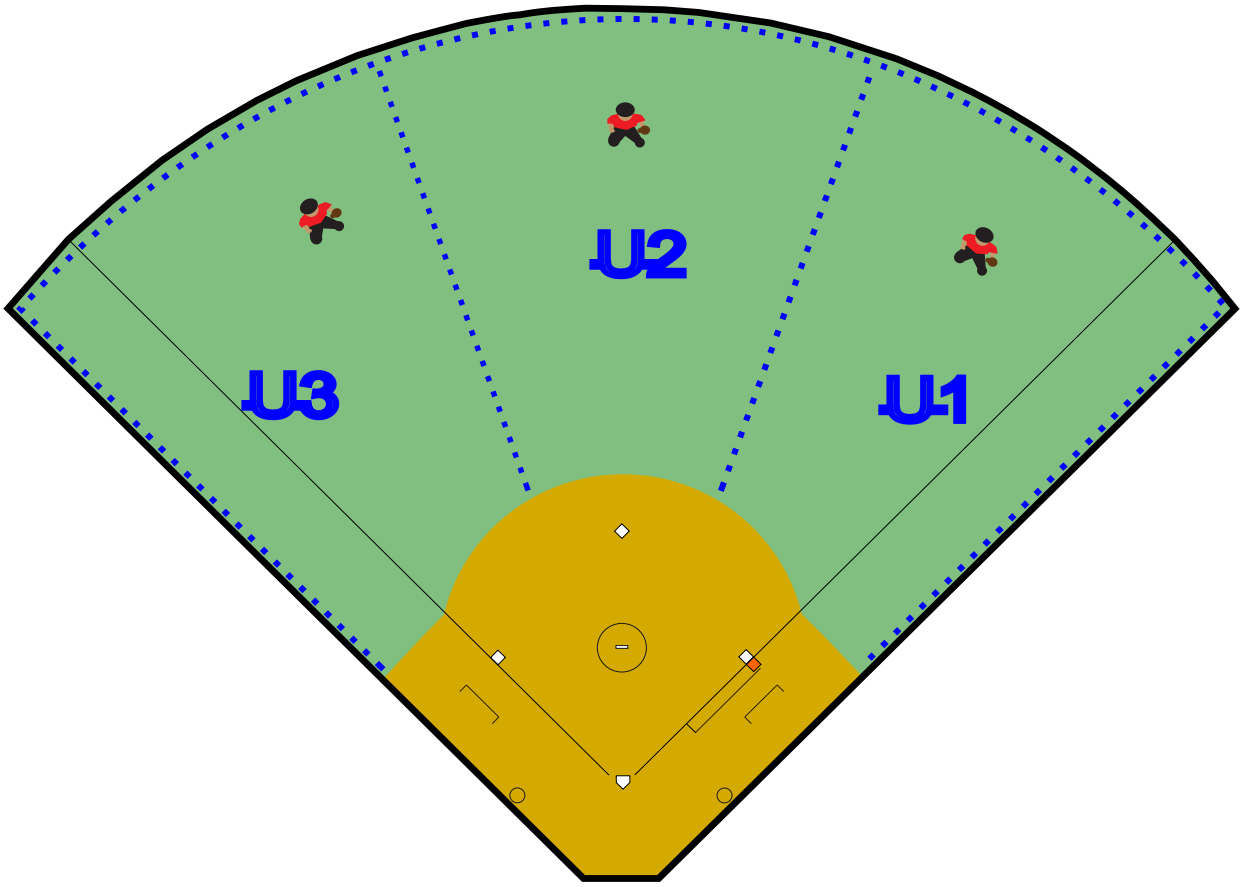


Figure 28 Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Area

Outfield fly-ball coverage area responsibilities for **Four-Umpire System** remain the same for all runners on base situations. U1 goes out for fly balls to right field and F8 running to right field; U2 goes out for fly balls to centre field; and U3 goes out for fly balls to left field and F8 running toward left field. **U1 or U3 should be given the first option** to go out by U2.

Outfield Fly-Ball Coverage Movements

Fly-ball down 1B line (right field) - U1 goes out

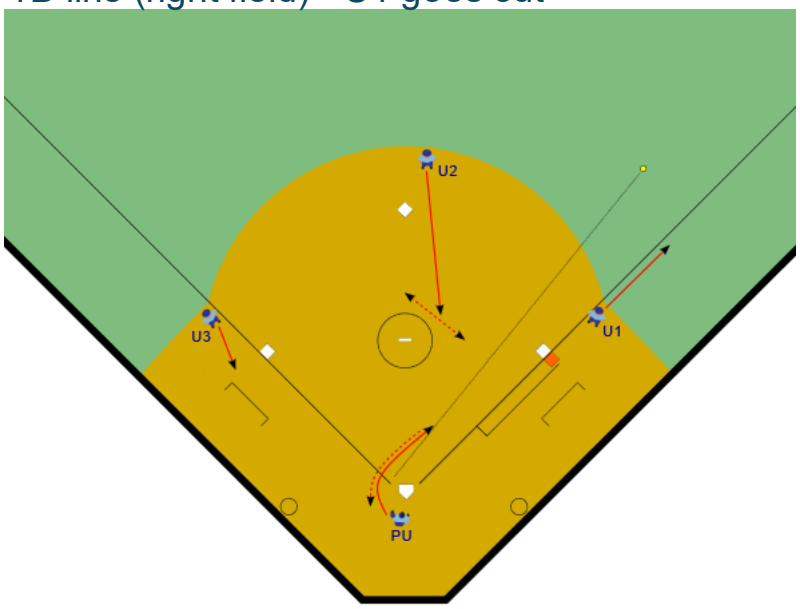


Figure 29 U1 goes out; no runners on or R1

PU - **No runners on or Runner on 1B:** Trail the **BR.** Watch the catch and assist with the call at 1B if requested. Move back to the plate for a possible call at home. Work **POP** area.

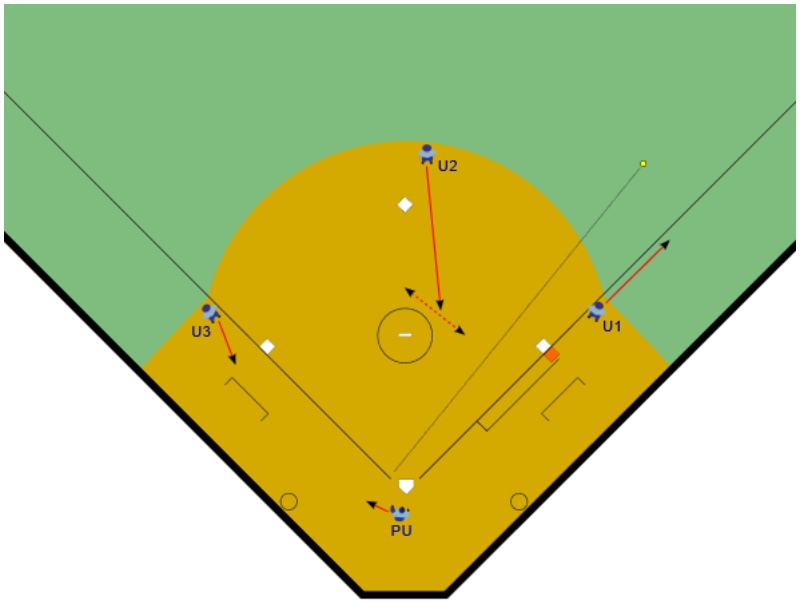


Figure 30 U1 goes out; all other situations

PU - **All other situations:** Move to the left of HP, watch the catch and assist with the call at 1B, if requested. PU may move inside the diamond toward the ball and observe. Work the **POP** area and be responsible for all calls at HP.
Note: All other situations occurs when runners are at 2B only, 3B only, 1B and 2B, 1B and 3B, 2B and 3B, or 1B 2B and 3B.

Base umpire situations:

U2 - Button hook inside, responsible for any calls at 1B and 2B.

U3 - Move down the line in foul territory to a point even with the bag and allow the **Four Essential Elements** to dictate whether to rotate inside or go back out beyond the baseline.

Fly-ball Centre field - U2 goes out

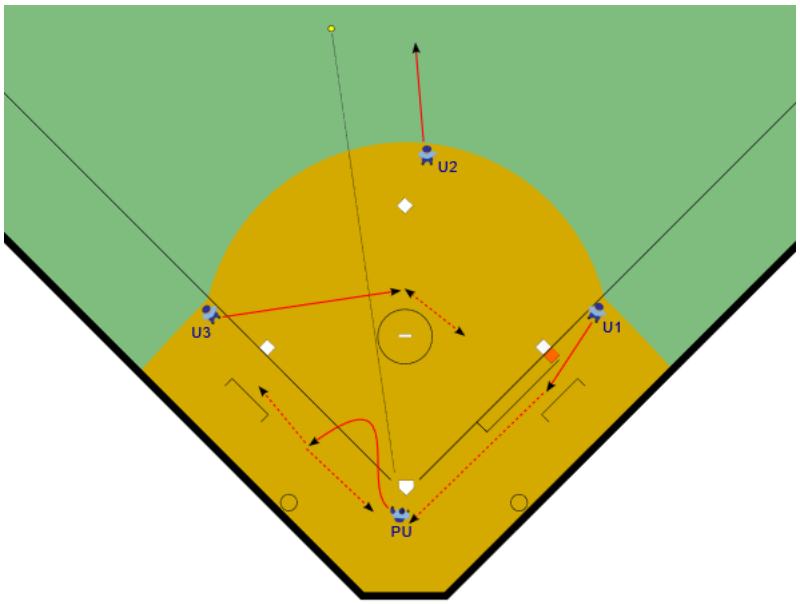


Figure 31 U2 goes out; no runners on or R1

PU - **No runners on or runner on 1B only:** Track the ball to assist in fly ball catch/no-catch coverage if requested. Move to the holding position; be prepared to move toward 3B using dynamic movement for the call at 3B. Ensure U1 has HP coverage.

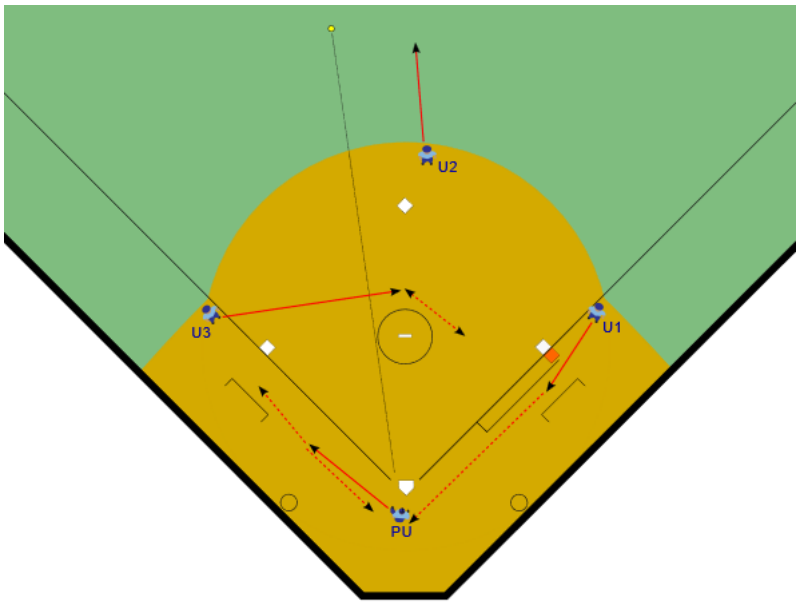


Figure 32 U2 goes out; all other situations

PU - **All other situations:** Move to the holding position; be prepared to move toward 3B and use dynamic movement for the call at 3B. If a quick play at HP occurs and U1 is not able to get to **POP** for the play, return to HP and make a call. Communicate with team members, indicating **Back Fill** situation required.

Note: All other situations occurs when runners are at 2B only, 3B only, 1B and 2B, 1B and 3B, 2B and 3B, or 1B 2B and 3B.

Base umpire situations:

U1 - **No runners on:** Move down the foul line; be prepared to use dynamic movement for a possible call at 1B base. Rotate to HP **POP** once the **BR** is past 2B, mirroring their run to 3B.

U1 - **Runners on:** Move down the foul line; be prepared to use dynamic movement for a possible call at 1B. Once the **BR** touches 1B, rotate to HP **POP** for any calls on runners. Be aware of situations where the PU returns to HP for the call, and you may have to cover back to 1B.

U3 - **No runners on:** Rotate inside for any call at 2B.

U3 - **Runners on:** Rotate inside for any call at 2B. Pick up any runner abandoned by U1 at 1B. Be ready for **Back Filling** to 3B if PU returns to make a call at HP.

Fly-ball down 3B line (left field) - U3 goes out

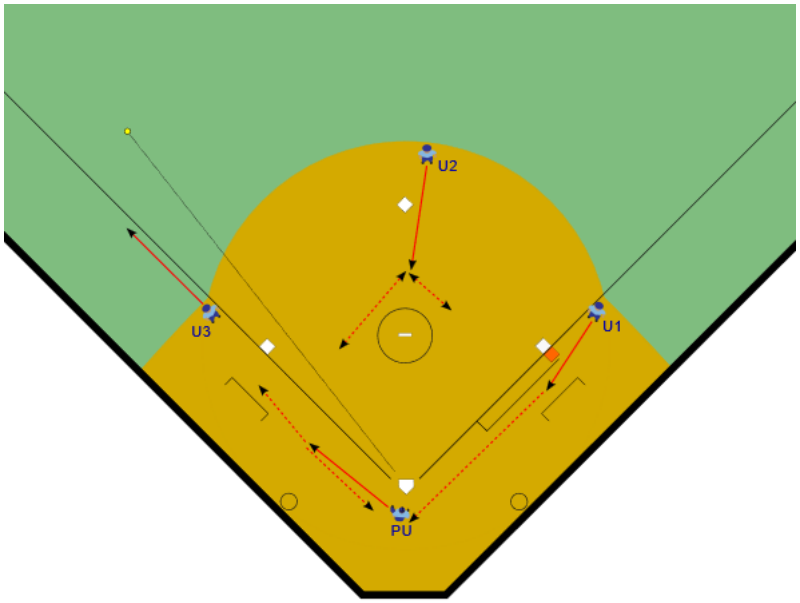


Figure 33 U3 goes out; all situations

PU - **No runners on or runner on 1B only:** Track the ball to assist in fly ball catch/no-catch coverage if requested. Move to the holding position; be prepared to move toward 3B using dynamic movement for the call at 3B. Ensure U1 has HP coverage.

PU - **All other situations:** Move to the holding position; be prepared to move toward 3B and use dynamic movement for the call at 3B. If a quick play at HP occurs and U1 is not able to get to **POP** for the play, return to HP and make a call. Communicate with team members, indicating **Back Fill** situation required.

Note: All other situations occurs when runners are at 2B only, 3B only, 1B and 2B, 1B and 3B, 2B and 3B, or 1B 2B and 3B.

Note: The location to assist in the catch/no-catch can be the holding position, and so only one rotation diagram is required.

Base umpire situations:

U1 - **No runners on:** Move down the foul line; be prepared to use dynamic movement for a possible call at 1B base. Rotate to HP **POP** once the **BR** is past 2B, mirroring their run to 3B.

U1 - **Runners on:** Move down the foul line; be prepared to use dynamic movement for a possible call at 1B. Once the **BR** touches 1B, rotate to HP **POP** for any calls on runners. Be aware of situations where the PU moves back to HP for the call, and they may have to cover back to 1B.

U2 **-** Button hook inside for any call at 2B; responsible for the **BR** at 1B and 2B base after the release by U1to HP. Be ready for **back-filling** to 3B if PU makes a call at HP.

Four-Umpire System Rotation Memory Map

The Four-Umpire System can be memorised by a number of key points:

- PU
  - With no runners, or a runner at 1B only, track the hit to the outfield and trail **BR** one third of the way to 1B, and further if required.
  - Use the holding position when a runner is at 2B or 3B.
  - Anticipate plays at the plate and use **POP** when appropriate.
  - Communicate with the crew, especially U1, when staying at HP or coming back for a quick play at HP, and so **back-fill** situations occur.
- U1
  - Use 1B foul territory (1BFT) or go out. Never needs to button hook on a **Four-Umpire System**.
  - Communicate with PU when coming to HP and push PU up to 3B. Clear out away from HP when PU indicates **back-fill** situation.
- U2
  - Can stay out when no runners are on and hit to LF.
  - Must rotate inside the diamond in all other situations where U1 or U3 goes out.
  - Cover 1B when U1 goes out, and when U1 rotates home.
  - Be aware of **back-fill** (3B coverage when PU is at HP) and U1 progressing on to HP with PU at 3B (1B and 2B coverage).
- U3
  - Rotate to 2B any time that U2 goes out. Watch PU and U1 to see who covers the plate. Be aware of **back-fill** (3B coverage when PU is at HP) and U1 progressing on to HP with PU at 3B (1B and 2B coverage).
  - If U1 goes out, use 3B foul territory (3BFT) to maintain a view of the **Four Essential Elements** and move to the best **Calling Position** for any potential tag play.

BF = Back Fill
1BFT = 1B Foul Territory
3BFT = 3B Foul Territory

4 Umpire System - Rotation Memory Map

Item	Key Input	PU	U1	U2	U3
Starting Position	No runners on base		1B 5.5m	2BDA 4.5m	3B 5.5m
	No runner at the base, runner on the diamond		1B 4.5m	2BDA 3.5m	3B 4.5m
	Runner at the base		1B 3.5m foul	2BDA 3.5m	3B 3.5m foul
Infield Hit Initial movement	No runners or runner on 1B only	Trail BR			
	All other runner situations	Clear catcher			
Outfield hit initial movement - ground ball	No runners	Track Hit	1BFT	LF-Out,In	3BFT
	Runner on 1B only	Track Hit	"	In	"
	All other runner situations	Clear catcher	"	"	"
Outfield hit initial movement - catchable	U1 going out - No runners or runner on 1B only	Track Hit	Goes out	In	3BFT
	U1 going out - all other situations	Holding	"	"	"
	U2 going out - No runners or runner on 1B only	Track Hit	1BFT	Goes out	2B
	U2 going out - all other situations	Holding	"	"	"
	U3 going out - No runners or runner on 1B only	Track Hit	"	In	Goes out
	U3 going out - all other situations	Holding			"
Subsequent movement	No umpire out	POP			
	U1 going out	POP	Goes out	1B and 2B	3B
	U2 or U3 going out - no runners on	Holding/3B	POP	Goes out / 2B	2B / Goes out
	U2 or U3 going out - runner on 1B only	3B	POP	2B+1B	2B+1B
	U2 or U3 going out - all other situations	3B/HP (BF)	POP / BF 1B>2B	2B+1B / BF 3B	2B+1B / BF 3B
Tag up responsibility by umpire not starting at that base (PU needs to support tag ups for base umpires rotating in away from the catch)	U1 going out	R1			
	U2 going out	R3			R2
	U3 going out	R3			

Figure 34 Memory Map for Four-Umpire System Rotations

APPENDIX 5d. Five and Six Umpire System

Five Umpire System

In a **Five-Umpire System**, the two base umpires and PU stay in the infield and rotate around the diamond as per the field mechanics for the **Three-Umpire System**. The major difference is that the two umpires stationed on the fair foul lines in the outfield will move to the outfield to judge fly balls, trapped balls and home runs. This leaves the remaining umpires to take care of plays at bases or tag plays.

Pre-Game Plate Meeting and Between Innings Conduct

At the pre-game plate meeting, the ULF stands on the left next to the plate umpire, and the URF stands on the Right.

Between innings, the ULF and URF come down the line to where U3 and U1 starting positions are. Other umpires use the same between inning positions as a **Three-Umpire System**.

Starting Positions – Base and Outfield Umpires

See **Three-Umpire System** for U1 and U3 starting positions.
See Fig 34 ULF and ULR for **Five and Six-Umpire systems**.

ULF and URF preliminary starting position should be in front of the outfielder, halfway between the outfielder and the base umpire; up to one metre off the line in fair territory to have an unobstructed vision to home plate. If LF or RF are fielding in close, the outfield umpire should always be in front of the outfielder to accurately judge trapped balls.

Infield Rotations

For a **Five-Umpire System**, there are Three-Umpires on the infield. For base rotations, refer to the **Three-Umpire System** when no umpire goes out.

Fly-ball Coverage

ULF/URF – Responsible for all calls beyond the base umpire and behind the infielders (fair/foul, catch/no catch, and the status of a ball leaving the field of play). Responsibilities do not change with runners on base.

No base umpires go out.

On any fly ball to the outfield, both outfield umpires should run into fair territory parallel to the flight path of the ball until they get an angle on the play as required. Once it is determined which umpire should take the call, they should indicate by placing a hand on their chest and or verbalising.

Fair/Foul Responsibility

The plate umpire will take all fair/foul balls up to the starting position of U1 or U3, ULF and URF will take all other calls.

When tracking a ball leaving the field of play close to the foul pole, stay well back from the foul pole and on the foul line and ensure they have the correct depth to accurately track the batted ball over the pole or fence. For fair or foul calls, either move forward or backward on the line to accurately judge the flight and bounding ball.

Six-Umpire System

In a **Six-Umpire System**, the three base umpires and PU stay in the infield and rotate around the diamond as per the field mechanics for the **Four-Umpire System**. The major difference from a **Four-Umpire System** is that the two umpires stationed on the fair foul lines in the outfield will move to the outfield to judge fly balls, trapped balls and home runs. This leaves the remaining umpires to take care of plays at bases or tag plays and any other situation as required.

Pre-Game Plate Meeting and Between Innings Positions

At the pre-game plate meeting, the ULF stands to PU's left, and the URF stands to PU's right.

Between innings, the ULF and URF come down the line to where U3 and U1 starting positions are. Other umpires use the same between innings positions as a **Four-Umpire System**.

Starting Positions – Base and Outfield Umpires

See **Four-Umpire System** for U1, U2, and U3 starting positions.
See Fig 34 ULF and ULR for **Five and Six-Umpire systems**.

ULF and URF preliminary starting position should be in front of the outfielder, halfway between the outfielder and the base umpire; up to one metre off the line in fair territory to have an unobstructed vision to home plate. If LF or RF are fielding in close, the outfield umpire should always be in front of the outfielder to accurately judge trapped balls.

Infield Rotations

For a **Six-Umpire System**, there are no base rotations.

Fly-ball Coverage

ULF/URF – Responsible for all calls beyond the base umpire and behind the infielders (fair/foul, catch/no catch, and the status of a ball leaving the field of play). Responsibilities do not change with runners on base.

No base umpires go out.

On any fly ball to the outfield, both outfield umpires should run into fair territory parallel to the flight path of the ball until they get an angle on the play as required. Once it is determined which umpire should take the call, they should indicate by placing a hand on their chest and or verbalising.

Fair/Foul Responsibility

The plate umpire will take all fair/foul balls up to the starting position of U1 or U3, ULF and URF will take all other calls.

When tracking a ball leaving the field of play close to the foul pole, stay well back from the foul pole and on the foul line and ensure they have the correct depth to accurately track the batted ball over the pole or fence. For fair or foul calls, either move forward or backward on the line to accurately judge the flight and bounding ball.

Five and Six Umpire - Fly-ball Coverage Area ULF & URF

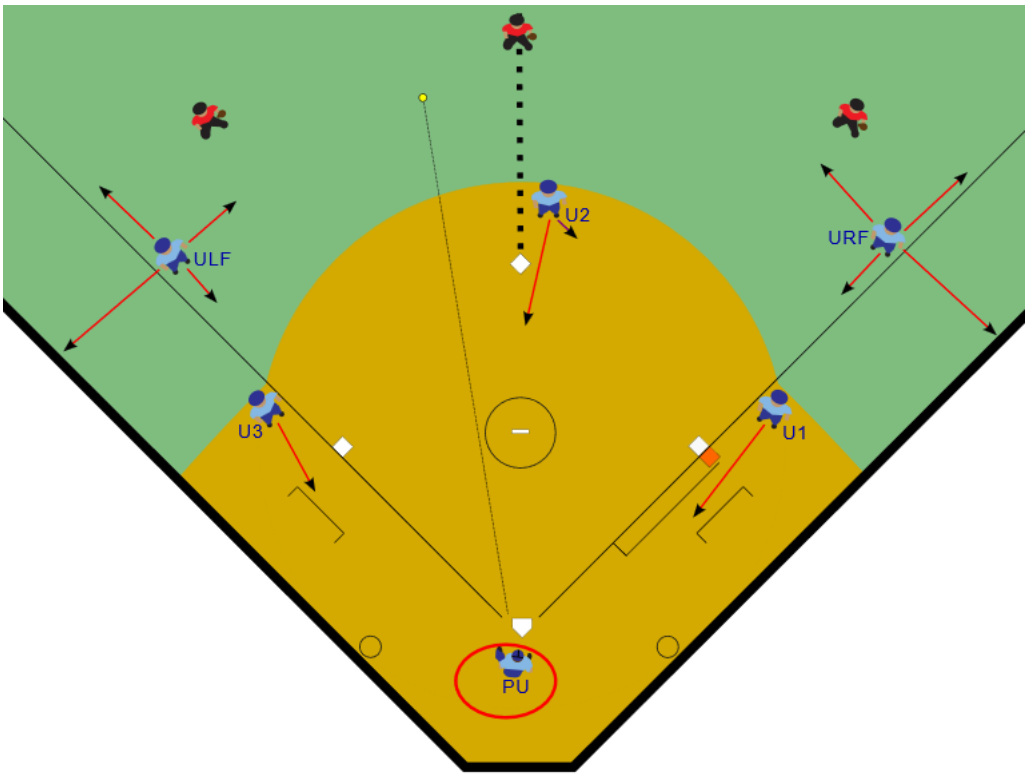
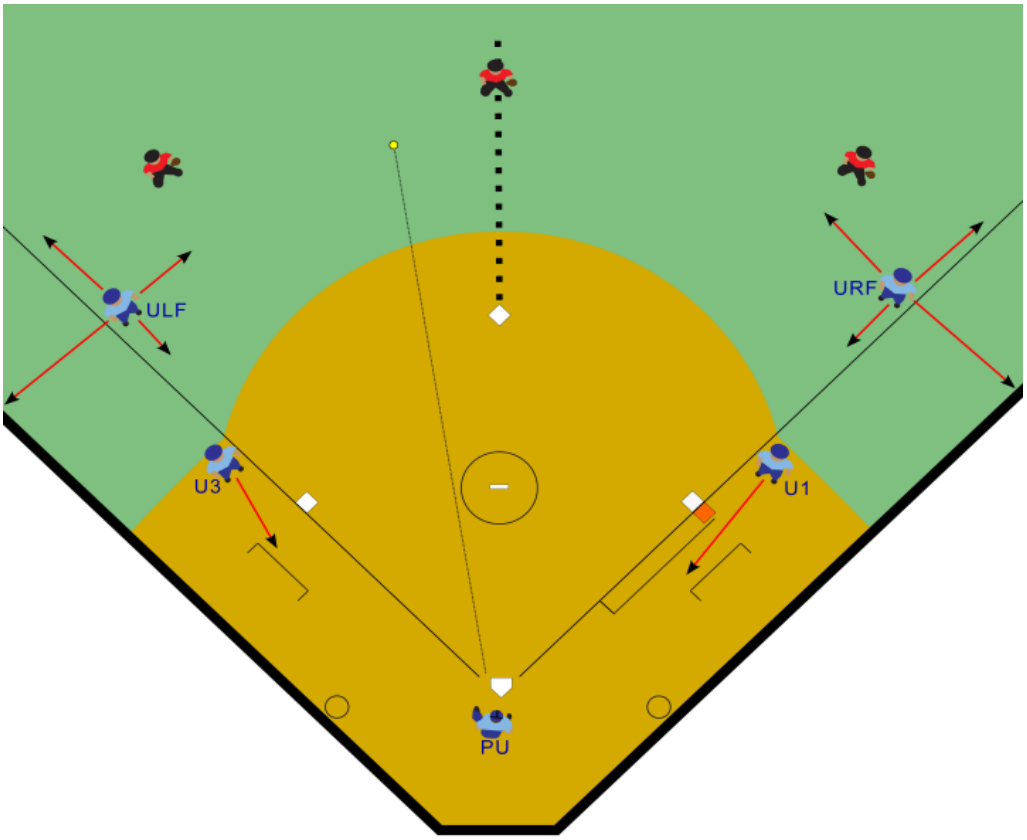



Fig 34 ULF and URF for Five and Six-Umpire systems