



2011 and 2012 NFHS  
**BASEBALL**  
**UMPIRES MANUAL**

**ROBERT B. GARDNER, Publisher**  
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*Special thanks to subcommittee chairman Ken Allan and the members of the Umpires Manual subcommittee for their contributions to interscholastic baseball.*

## I. PREREQUISITES FOR GOOD UMPIRING

1. Being in proper physical condition is an essential requirement for a baseball official. The game requires the umpire to move quickly to obtain the proper position to render the best judgment on a play. An umpire who is not in sufficient physical condition to work a game is a hindrance to his/her partner and possibly the successful completion of the game. Today's athletes work hard to be prepared to participate at a high level and no less should be expected from the officiating crew.

2. Decisions must be made positively and with good timing, and umpires must not be too hasty in calling a play. Umpires must guard against rendering decisions prematurely. It is considered the best procedure, when an umpire has to run to get into position on a play, to come to a stop where he can see all of the action clearly. Try to make all decisions while stopped. A signal may however be made while moving. It is necessary to know where the ball is when a decision is made. The fielder may drop the ball on a tag play, or pivoting during a double play, or he might juggle the ball on a force play. After only a momentary hesitation for the purpose of coming to a decision, the call should be made forcefully. Timidity or over hesitation indicates a lack of confidence. All play should be called in a confident manner, which can be developed. Positive action does much to have the umpire's judgment accepted. Good umpires cultivate their voices to increase the authority implied by the spoken word. A strong voice is a valuable asset. All calls should be made loudly and clearly so that players of both teams can hear them. Occasionally, a decision will be questioned, no matter who makes it, or how it is made.

3. Good umpiring is dependent, to a large extent, upon a complete knowledge and understanding of the rules. In fact, to be a competent umpire, it is necessary to know the rules thoroughly. Some decisions are repeatedly made, so that with experience they come by reflex. The correct way to prepare oneself for most effectively making decisions of this kind is through continued study of all possible situations. Then, basic fundamentals become second nature and correct interpretations are virtually automatic. To know the rules thoroughly requires constant and analytical study. It is not sufficient to only read the rules, but they must be studied so that mental pictures of plays and situations result. Having developed clarity in the mental pictures, the umpire will be able to immediately recognize the situation and correctly rule on it automatically. Those who guess and who don't know the rules soon lose the confidence of players, coaches, spectators and fellow officials.

4. Proper umpiring mechanics are essential in attaining the best coverage. Many umpires who know the rules well fail to be accepted because their mechanics are poor. When a crew or a team of umpires uses proper mechanics, it is rare for a play to occur without one of them being in the desired position to see all of

the play clearly. Mechanics, or play coverage, must be mastered if the umpire is to be successful. First, a proper position for various situations must be learned, then the coverage must be practiced so that the positioning virtually becomes a reflex action. Position and coverage should be discussed and reviewed regularly at clinics with the opportunities to practice the mechanics being made available to all umpire candidates, including both the veterans and the neophytes. It is important that all umpires take the best position possible for any given play without being in the way of any player or thrown ball. An umpire should opt for the best angle first then move into get as close as possible.

5. Umpires are encouraged to ignore spectator comments. If warranted, the umpire should request that game management handle unruly or unsportsmanlike behavior from spectators. Every crowd will include a number of people who heckle an umpire. Many persons believe that to do so is a legitimate part of a ball game. Fans not only lose respect for an umpire who in any way reacts to criticism, but if he gives evidence of being conscious of heckling, their criticism becomes more intense. Umpires should ignore all but extreme profane, racist or derogatory comments. In those situations, umpires need to request home team's management to properly handle the issue.

6. An umpire must be loyal to his partners. He must, through his actions and when necessary his words, endorse and support the decisions of his fellow crew members. Each umpire in a crew must be willing to accept responsibility and never attempt to shift any blame to another member of the crew. Avoid all media discussions and interviews and refer any requests for comments by the media to the respective state association. Public criticism of a fellow official should never occur nor be tolerated.

7. The efficient umpire will not "showboat" or render his judgment calls in a manner that brings undue attention to himself. Competent umpires effectively execute their duties without flair. The umpire who discharges his responsibility with dignity and in conformance with accepted signals and procedures will encourage the players and spectators to accept his decisions. Being overly dramatic all too often does not accomplish the purpose for which it is intended, and such actions frequently cause the players to lose confidence in the decisions made by an "actor." Quiet dignity is much more effective. Umpires should not be officious but neither can they tolerate disrespect. In no case will an umpire ever attempt to coach a player.

8. Umpires must be courteous to players and coaches but avoid visiting with them immediately before, during or after the game. An umpire must remain professionally courteous and respect the teams desire to win. They must never argue with the players, coaches or team representatives. Any discussion should be brief. A dignified attitude will often preclude and prevent an argument.

9. The successful umpire will hustle and be alert throughout the game. These characteristics are closely associated and there is no substitute for either of them.

The head must be kept erect, and the umpire must have the appearance of one who can properly discharge his responsibility and who is qualified to officiate the game. At the time the ball is pitched, he should never have his arms folded.

10. The judgment necessary in making a decision is acquired through experience. Baseball game decisions must be made on the basis of fact. First, cover the play as the accepted procedure provides. More importantly, rule on the play exactly as it was seen. Every umpire must acknowledge that he will sometime err in his judgment no matter how conscientious and efficient he is and regardless of his position and rules knowledge. When the most respected umpires “boot one” they continue to work to the best of their ability. The fact that an umpire makes a rare mistake need not cause him to be unduly humble nor to be embarrassed. After an error, the umpire must never attempt to even it up. Each call is made on its own merits. Frequent errors in rule interpretation or in judgment quickly cause the players, coaches and spectators to lose confidence.

11. Umpires working together must have a mutual respect. The best rapport is obtained when there is a friendly attitude toward each other. Friendliness and respect for members of the crew (and profession) contribute to confidence in one another. Every umpire should strive to support his partner, or partners, throughout the entire contest. When one umpire requests an opinion from another concerning a given play which has been ruled upon, the opinion should be given courteously to the umpire requesting it and to him only.

12. Umpires must make a conscientious effort not to infringe on the duties and responsibilities of each other. There is no cause for greater embarrassment than to have opposing decisions made by umpires on a given play. If proper mechanics are followed, there should be no conflicting decisions.

13. Umpires must strive to get all their decisions correct. The players and coaches deserve our best effort. While we are concerned about getting “it right,” there are some calls that can be changed and there are some that cannot. Any umpire’s decision that involves judgment is final. If there is any reasonable doubt about a misapplication of a rule, the coach may ask that the correct ruling be made. The umpire making the decision may ask another umpire for any additional information before making a final decision. No umpire shall criticize or interfere with another’s decision unless asked to provide input by the umpire making the call. The umpire-in-chief may rectify any decision in which a reversed decision places another team at a disadvantage. The umpire-in-chief also has the authority to make a final decision on a point not covered by the rules.

There are calls where a partner should provide automatic assistance. These calls include when a batted ball hits a batter in the batter’s box, a caught/uncaught third strike, and if a foul tip is caught or dropped or trapped. Additionally, there are some calls that may be reversed if the umpire making the decision gains additional information from a partner. These situations are a checked swing that is

called a ball, a question on whether a foot was pulled by the fielder at a base, whether a swipe tag was made, a dropped ball after a tag, and if the ball was juggled on a force play at first. Other calls that may be reversed include whether a home run was fair or foul, whether a hit was a home run or a ground-rule double, the catch of a foul fly, the catch of a fair fly with no runners on base, and the declaration of a balk when the pitcher's foot was not on the pitcher's plate.

Additionally, there are some calls that cannot be changed. These include calls on close force plays, tags on non-force situations, a checked swing when a strike is first called, and the catch or no catch of a fair fly with runners on base.

As an umpire, recognize situations when you may want to request assistance, such as those where you are blocked from having a good view. If the situation is such that it could be appropriate to request help, it is best to do so immediately. Also, if you are 100 percent confident of your call, there is no need to ask for assistance simply because the coach did not like your decision. Coaches are not entitled to a second opinion. Avoid being talked into asking for assistance as well as having lengthy conversations if you do ask for more information. Hold these conversations away from players and coaches. If a call is changed, the decision to do so lies with the official who made the original call; all the other official did was provide some information, he does not change the call.

## **II. A CODE OF ETHICS FOR BASEBALL UMPIRES**

Schools have entrusted officials to assist them in the education and development of their youth through athletics. This requires officials to be independent, impartial and responsible to the people they serve. In recognition of these expectations, the following is a Code of Ethics to be used as guidelines for ethical standards of conduct.

1. Honor all contracts regardless of possible inconvenience or financial loss.
2. Devote time, thought and study to the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to carry out these rules so that one may render effective and credible service in a fair and unbiased manner.
3. Remember that while your work as an umpire is important, you must conduct yourself in such a way that spectator attention is directed to the student athletes playing the game and not at you.
4. Dress and maintain your appearance in a manner befitting the dignity and importance of the great game of baseball.
5. Constantly uphold the honor and dignity of the avocation in all personal conduct and relations with the student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, colleagues and the public, such that one is a worthy example to the athletes under one's jurisdiction.
6. Be fair and unbiased in your decisions, rendering them without regard to the score or next year's contract. Show respect for the players and coaches desire to

win. The umpire's job is to make calls and render decisions.

7. Give your complete cooperation to the schools which you serve and to the state association which you represent.

8. Work with fellow officials and the state association in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during debate of points or rules at issue.

9. Be firm but not overbearing; courteous, but not ingratiating; positive, but never rude; confident, but never "cocky;" friendly, but not companionable; calm, but alert.

10. Be prepared both physically and mentally to administer the game.

11. Do not smoke or use smokeless tobacco on or in the vicinity of the playing field, nor drink any alcoholic beverages on the day of the game.

12. Do not give information which might be used by a team's future opponent.

13. Keep in mind that the game is more important than the wishes of any individual player or coach or the ambitions of any individual umpire.

14. Being a sports official bears great responsibility for engendering public confidence in sports. Officials ensure games are played fairly, by the rules, within the spirit of the rules and in a safe manner. Officiating takes a great deal of preparation, continuing education and commitment of time.

### III. GENERAL REMINDERS

1. A pleasing personal appearance is invaluable to an umpire. An umpire who looks professional will sell his call more often. The poorly dressed umpire suffers a loss of respect which may diminish credibility as well. The proper uniform is a clean, pressed, navy blue pullover shirt, or by state association adoption. The proper uniform slacks are a pair of clean and pressed gray slacks. The hat is to be navy blue and a sized hat is recommended. A light blue turtle neck may be substituted for a shirt when wearing a coat. If an undershirt is to be worn under a light blue shirt, it must be black, if the undershirt is visible. A navy blue sweater (worn on bases only) blazer, windbreaker, or windshirt worn over the appropriate shirt is acceptable. The trouser belt should be black leather. Socks should be black. A pair of gray gym shorts should be handy to wear under slacks in emergencies. Umpires working a particular game should be dressed alike. Never should an umpire be on the field without wearing a cap. The plate umpire should wear shoes designed for safety that include hard toes. The base umpire should wear the conventional oxford type baseball shoe, or black oxfords with golf type cleats or ripple soles. Primarily black shoes designed for umpiring should be worn. The plate umpire needs to have a ball and strike indicator, a small plate brush, a protective supporter and cup, ball bag, lineup cards and a pen or pencil for lineup changes. A chest protector, sturdy mask with a throat protector, and shin guards are standard equipment for the plate umpire. Umpires should have

access to a rule book. When a state association requires an identifying emblem, this should be worn as designated by the umpire's home state high school association.

2. The umpires' dressing room should be kept free from visitors. Prior to the game it is used by the umpires for the purpose of preparing themselves for a professional engagement, and the atmosphere of the dressing room should be conducive to such preparation. Umpires are expected to have a pregame discussion, and upon occasion, discuss matters in confidence. When dressing quarters are cluttered with casual visitors, it is impossible for the umpires to properly utilize this time. Umpires prefer, and should be accorded, the privilege of showering and dressing in privacy following the game. Many times they want an opportunity to review specific plays or situations. It is to the advantage of the officials to conduct this review while all of the factors are fresh in their minds. It is not professional for coaches and managers to visit these quarters, either before or after the game. It is preferred that they discuss any business on the field.

3. A thorough knowledge of dead-ball and delayed dead-ball situations is necessary. This knowledge is invaluable to the umpire. It is decidedly to his advantage to study and know each and every situation in which the ball becomes dead immediately, or becomes dead in a delayed situation.

4. It is universally acknowledged umpires have made notable contributions to the development of baseball traditions. It is the duty of every umpire to contribute all that he or she can to maintain the great traditions in baseball by giving this chosen profession or avocation the best service possible. To maintain and continue high standards, it is necessary that each and every umpire carry out each assignment to the best of his or her ability. Throughout the country umpires have been and are admired for their integrity. Respect the game and the game will respect you.

#### **IV. PREGAME PREPARATIONS**

There are important pregame responsibilities which must not be neglected. It is imperative that umpires arrive well before game starting time. Ideally, most umpires should be on the field at least 30 minutes before the game. Because high school games are played after school, most umpires have to leave work early or are just getting off and may not be able to arrive an hour before the game. Regardless, umpires should not arrive so close to game time that their pregame duties are neglected. The management should be immediately notified of the umpires' arrival. Umpires should gather for a pregame conference while getting dressed to help them prepare for the game. If the game involves tournament play, it may be necessary to toss a coin to determine which team will be designated as the host and which will be the visiting team if this has not been determined

previously by the tournament manager.

Umpires should then examine the playing field closely, making certain that it is properly marked, that the pitcher's plate is legal in every respect and familiarize themselves with the boundaries, fences and screens. This is also the time to look for potential safety problems or risks. It is well for the crew to be together on a tour of the field, so that any points or questions concerning safety and ground rules which may arise can be considered and the conclusion made known to the appropriate individuals. All obstacles which could or may create dead-ball situations should be specifically noted and examined. Each team should be notified of its allotted time for infield drill by game site management.

Ten minutes before the scheduled game time, after the umpire's pregame conference, move onto the field. Check each team's equipment for illegal or unsafe equipment. Bats, helmets and catcher masks/helmet combinations must be thoroughly inspected. Illegal batting helmets and catcher's helmets must be brought to the attention of the coach and should be stored so that they will not be used during the game. Both umpires should check each team's equipment together in case there are questions. At least five minutes prior to the scheduled time for starting the game, the umpires and team head coach and/or team captains should meet at home plate for a pregame conference to check lineups (home team first) and to discuss ground rules or any other matters pertinent to the game. Remember to ask coaches whether all their players are legally and properly equipped, and share your expectation that they exhibit good sporting behavior. Don't forget to check about DH or speed-up rules.

## V. RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A GAME

1. The plate umpire is designated as the umpire-in-chief and he has the sole authority to forfeit a game. He is responsible for announcing "Play" and for giving the hand signal to start the game or to resume play. He will proceed to start the game only after he is positive that the pregame ground-rules discussion at home plate is clearly understood by representatives of both teams. The umpire-in-chief has the responsibility to determine when the lights should be turned on. If at all possible this should be done prior to the beginning of an inning. When there is more than one umpire, the umpire-in-chief (plate umpire) shall be stationed behind home plate to rule on balls, strikes, fair and foul balls, and to make all decisions on the batter, other than those delegated to the base umpire, when he is stationed at the foul line. The plate umpire is responsible for most tag-ups at third and most runners touching third. When the base umpire is covering a fly ball in the outfield, the plate umpire is responsible for observing whether or not certain runners tagged up.

2. With no runners on base, the base umpire shall position himself approximately 10 to 12 feet behind the first baseman with both feet in foul territory. The

base umpire's right foot should be adjacent to, but not touching the foul line and his body should be squared to home plate. When a fly ball or line drive is hit to an area of the outfield which is the responsibility of the base umpire (from the center fielder to the right field), and the base umpire determines that it is a trouble ball, he will then go out to rule on fair/foul and catch/no catch. A trouble ball is:

- a. Fair/foul decisions down the right field line.
- b. Home runs.
- c. Balls off the outfield wall.
- d. Diving catches by the outfielder.
- e. Catches at the warning track or at the wall.
- f. Catches made by the outfielder with his back towards the infield.
- g. Catches made by the outfielder below his waist on a full run.
- h. Three players converging on a fly ball.

The base umpire will communicate to his partner, "I'm going out!". This will alert the plate umpire that he is now responsible for the batter-runner.

The base umpire will get as far as he can on the play in the outfield, getting a good angle on the play. His first determination is if the ball will be either fair or foul, then he must determine whether it is a catch or no catch.

The base umpire must come to a complete stop when making his decision, after which he will signal.

3. Bounding balls batted toward first or third bases are ruled upon by the plate umpire. The base umpire must refrain from making a decision on these plays because he is not as close to them as the plate umpire. When a batted ball hits near a foul line beyond first or third base, and the base near which the umpire is stationed, the base umpire must then make the ruling except when such batted ball is hit so hard it forces him to move rapidly for self-protection, and as a consequence, he loses sight of the ball. It is obvious that whenever the base umpire must go into the outfield to rule on a play, the plate umpire must step into the infield and observe base runners as they advance. The plate umpire must be careful not to leave home plate unguarded in case a decision must be made there.

4. Any umpire may call a balk and/or signal a delayed dead ball or call time-out. However, under no circumstances should an umpire be so eager to declare time-out that he does so when a play is about to occur.

5. Don't make a decision on a play while on the run. Your head is a camera, with your eyes being the lenses. Move the camera and the lenses move, creating a blurry picture. Get set and see the play as you are stationary. Make a better decision and then if you need to, make your signal on the run. Your vision is much better from a stationary position than while running.

6. On every batted ball the progression of responsibilities is as follows:
- a. fair or foul;

- b. catch or no catch;
- c. in play or out of play;
- d. awarding bases

7. Always strive to get angle over distance. Get too close and everything blends in and distorts your vision. Get too far and you don't seem credible. Angle is defined as nothing obstructing your view of the play.

8. Proper angle leads to proper distance;  
Proper distance leads to proper use of eyes;  
Proper use of eyes leads to proper timing;  
Proper timing leads to proper judgment.

## VI. THE PLATE UMPIRE

1. Positioning of the hands is critical. The first concern is protection.

This is accomplished with a right-handed batter by placing the left elbow in the inside of the left leg when you're down in the box position. The hands are down behind the catcher, loose so that they will give. Do not put a hand on a knee, for if the ball hits the hand in that position, there is no give. Hand bones are easily broken.

The resting of a forearm on the top of a thigh instead of tucking the elbow of that arm on the inside of the leg is not a good protective position, but one that many umpires use. It only takes one good hit on an elbow to make you wish you had tucked it in. Your hands should not touch the catcher; this is a bad habit. Some catchers will tell you to move back, that you bother them and interfere with their freedom of movement.

2. Establish a good line of sight. Your line of sight, when you're down in the box position, should be somewhat over the left shoulder of the catcher when the batter is right-handed. After the pitch has been released, don't move to follow it. The view over the plate should be complete. Don't let the head of the catcher block the view of the outside pitch. If it does, adjust your stance a little to get an unobstructed view. The box style seems to make outside pitches the hardest to call.

If a plate umpire who is working the inside-protector style is getting hit with foul balls too often, it's usually because he is working too high and is not taking advantage of his best available protection, the catcher.

Another problem with the inside protector occurs with a side-arm, left-handed pitcher and a left-handed batter who crowds the plate. This combination makes it difficult to pick the pitch up until it is well on its way. Your time to size it up becomes much too brief. To remedy this sometimes you have to move to the top of the catcher. Avoid moving to the outside of the catcher to see the pitch.

3. Visualize the strike zone. The rules book defines the strike zone. Hopefully, umpires, the batter, other players, managers and spectators are familiar with the rules-book definition. Since each, however, must somehow visualize this "dotted

line rectangle” over home plate in his own mind, and since every mind works differently, each person involved has his unique visualization of the batter’s strike zone. As an umpire you have the best vantage point as well as the responsibility for determining whether the ball is in the strike zone. You are the only person in the park whose sole concern at that instant is whether it is a strike or a ball. A suggestion to establish a consistent strike zone might be to develop reference points for the inside strike and the top of the strike zone. For example, for a right-handed batter the umpire in the slotted stance may use his left leg to establish the inside zone and when squatting behind the catcher use a reference point on the mask to establish the height of the zones.

4. Avoid making the call too quickly. There will be times when you will notice your timing deteriorating. Proper timing is watching the ball from the pitcher’s hand all the way into the catcher’s glove (move only your eyes! DO NOT move your head! Moving your head distorts the image and can expose you to serious injury). Quickly replay the pitch in your mind to make sure you saw what you saw and then make a call.

5. Proper strike-call mechanics make the difference. One always has to be conscious of timing. If you’re off, it’s better to be a little slow than to give the appearance of having made a snap judgment. Hasty calls invite mistakes and the appearance of mistakes.

The strike call motion is started after the ball is in the catcher’s mitt. When the pitch is a strike, start the upward strike-arm movement out in front of you as you begin to stand up. Some step backwards one step. This can be optional. It also depends to some extent on how close you are to the catcher. Sometimes you can’t bring your strike arm forward without hitting the catcher. Bring the arm up in front of you for at least half of the strike call. Fist is closed. Do not have the thumb up in the air. Bring the fist up to eye level or higher, letting the arm bend naturally for a simple strike. For a bit more emphasis, you can chop the fist down to the left or right slightly. For a third strike call, alter the mechanics to make the call different from other strike calls.

6. Fingers help communicate. Some umpires, when they feel the information is needed, extend the fingers to indicate the number of balls and strikes. This is especially good at amateur ball fields that don’t have a prompt and accurate operator of the ball-strike display or have no scoreboard at all. If you choose to show the strike count with your fingers, do it so all can see. The two-count is more visible if you extend your index and little fingers. It is important that the count be known and if the board has it wrong, announce the correct count and show it with your fingers.

When making the strike motion, be sure that you let the people on the left side of the diamond see the call. That is why it is recommended that you start your strike motion in front of you. Umpires who call strikes to the right of their body

hide the strike arm from the people on the third-base side.

7. Remove mask with left hand. Mask removal when you're wearing the inside protector should be done with the left hand. The mask need never be in the right hand. This leaves the right hand free for calling the out. Some umpires seldom take their mask off, probably because they haven't learned to do it without their cap coming off with it. You'll have less trouble if you lift the bottom out from the chin, using the top of the mask as a hinge. Bring it straight out and up, clearing the visor. Tossing the mask aside is a part of the catcher's technique. This is not permissible for umpires, nor is parking the mask on the top of the head.

8. Plate umpire works to side and rear of catcher. The plate umpire wearing an inside protector works a bit to the side and to the rear of the catcher; which side depends on batter. With left-handed batters, he works to the catcher's right; with right-handers to the left. It is important the umpire not get too far forward, placing himself in danger of being hit by the bat on the follow through.

9. Stance is important. The umpire's stance for getting the best perspective from which to judge the pitch is assumed after the catcher has settled down to receive the pitch. Placement of the feet is crucial to stance. The most common method is a catcher-like crouch behind the catcher.

10. For best protection, face the pitcher. Don't expose the unprotected side of your body. The toes of the umpire are pointed towards the pitcher. Try to keep the forward foot pointed towards the pitcher, not angled. The instep is vulnerable to a pitched or foul ball. The protection afforded by the outside padded tongue of the plate shoe is considerably lessened if the foot is angled. Also a mask with extended throat protection may be desirable because the inside protector does not protect the neck or throat.

11. Call out both strikes and balls. If the pitch is a strike, yell, "Strike!" loudly so all can hear. If it's a ball, say, "Ball!" There is a reason for calling both balls and strikes audibly. If you don't call the ball out loud, proper timing of strikes is harder to maintain. Poor timing can give the impression of guessing.

Audible calls of non-swinging strikes should vary in intensity, tone and length depending on their importance in the game. Ball calls vary much less, with ball four possibly getting more emphasis than earlier balls.

12. Develop your basic strike motion. Bend your elbow to make a right angle as you raise your fist to eye level or higher. You then can move your fist to the right or left to give the emphasis needed. Some umpires indicate the number of strikes with their fingers at the end of the strike call.

Bringing the arm and fist forward and up rather than to the right and up in the first part of the strike call lets all who are on the left side of the diamond, as well as those on the right, see the strike motion. Don't end the motion with the fist too low or your body will hide it from those on the opposite side.

On third strikes, or other called strikes that are crucial, you can step back with

either foot and bring the fist down across your body like pounding a nail. This is just one emphatic style of calling a strike. There are almost as many ways as there are umpires. You'll find your own style after applying these basics in many games. Experiment.

On swinging strikes, say nothing, just raise your fist.

On ball four, simply announcing "Ball Four!" is sufficient; do not point to first base.

13. Out call varies little. The out call of the home plate umpire is basically the same, whichever protector he is wearing. The arm movement is virtually the same, differing only slightly due to stance.

The out call starts low and ends nearly in a stand-up position. If the mask is removed before the out sign is given, it is held, of course, in the left hand.

As always, fit the emphasis to the closeness of the play or the game situation. The voice emphasis is matched to the emphasis of the body language and both must fit the action.

The call is made with the right hand, the elbow being straight out from the shoulder and bent at 90 degrees with the fist clinched.

14. Develop a style that works. It takes many games trying various methods to come up with a style that communicates well and fits you. Watch other umpires. Try their techniques that appeal to you. If they work for you, use them. Nearly always the third called strike is made with some kind of foot movement and body language to differentiate it from the first two strikes.

Remember, on swinging third strikes, the batter has already communicated the drama of the moment to all. A perfunctory motion is enough. But you are the communicator on the called third strike.

15. Follow the action. As a plate umpire, your duties don't stop when the ball is hit. First, watch to see if the batter is going to run. If he does, move out from behind the catcher to get a better look at the play.

On the ground ball hit to the infield, head towards first base, either down the running lane or on the infield grass. Try to get at least 10 to 15 feet from home plate, the farther the better, but stop in time to watch the play at first. This initial hustle shortens the distance to where the action is. It also gives you a better vantage point from which to see runner infractions. Sometimes what starts as a routine play develops into a difficult situation for the base umpire. If the plate umpire has moved properly, he will be where he can see what is happening and be of assistance to his partner, if his help is requested.

16. Help the base umpire. On a fly ball hit to the outfield, go farther. Many times you go as far out as the pitcher's mound to watch the catch in the outfield. See if the ball is caught, not trapped or dropped. It's your job to observe the catch, if the base umpire doesn't elect to go to the outfield. It's the base umpire's job to see if the runner touches the bases.

Remember, don't get away from home plate too far if there is a potential play there.

Going to the infield is really just doing your job right. Many people will call it hustling. It becomes easier, the more you do it. It soon becomes a habit, a good one.

17. Use good judgment. As important as mechanics is in umpiring, it is not what an umpire is usually judged on, either by school or league officials, managers, players or fans. Most would call you a good umpire if they thought your judgment was good on ball-strike, safe-out, and fair-foul calls. Strive to exercise your best judgment and strive to be consistent. Each supplements the other.

If you want to advance in umpiring, what can you do after your ability to exercise good judgment has been established? You increase your mastery of mechanics. You improve your appearance. You increase your understanding of the rules and their application to the game situations.

One of the most difficult tasks that an umpire can have is interpreting a rule to an upset manager. Stay calm and give a complete explanation of the rule and its application to the play. This will go a long way towards gaining his respect, and towards building your reputation as a competent rules umpire. A good reputation does not come without considerable consistent effort. Repeated reading and study of the rules and case books, discussion of rules and plays with other umpires, attending rules meetings, viewing films and other presentations all contribute.

18. Your reputation precedes you. At nearly every game there are people who are knowledgeable in baseball and involved directly or indirectly in recruiting. They notice and remember umpiring, both good and bad. When you're hustling for umpiring jobs, those who hire will be likely to know something about you.

Remember, umpiring begins when you enter the park. From that point on, someone is watching you. On the other hand, when you leave the game, the only person you have to be satisfied with is yourself. Don't be overly critical of your performance. Things may seem bigger to you than to an outsider.

Hustle is synonymous with baseball. It's not just for players; it's for umpires, too. In fact, umpires have a lot to do with setting the tone of a game for everyone.

19. Call 'em, don't explain 'em. Your ball-strike calls are not to be routinely explained, such as, "Ball! Low," "Ball! Inside," or "Strike! Caught the corner." If the catcher asks where a certain pitch was, tell him. The catcher should not ask repeatedly, "Where was the pitch?" If he does, you should tell him that you're not going to explain every pitch to him. Tell him that he is perfectly aware of where he caught the pitch-low, outside, etc. From that point on, don't discuss pitches. Agree with the catcher if he should ask. For example, if he asks, "Was it low?" Answer, "Yes," without comment.

If you give some thought to the matter of explaining pitches, you'll realize that the catcher or pitcher seldom asks where a called strike was. When a catcher

repeatedly asks about a ball call, it's really a form of protest or the catcher is inexperienced. You, as the umpire, have to distinguish between the two. If you're convinced it's a bona-fide request for information, give a short, matter-of-fact reply.

A batter from time to time will inquire if what he swung at and missed was a strike. Give him the information he asks for. "No, I thought it was a little high," if that is what you thought. Make it short and don't editorialize.

20. Don't award the walk. Pointing to first on ball four isn't really a help to the batter or his team. A batter who has his head in the game knows the count. If he doesn't head towards first, don't prompt him by pointing. Let him stand there a moment or two. It will help him and his coach, making both aware that he should be revising his perception of the game situation, pitch by pitch. Any embarrassment at a pause or having to ask when you've called ball four, instead of trotting off to first will teach him to be more attentive. He soon learns you're not going to do that part of his head work for him.

21. Know how and when to call time-out. The calling of time is a frequent duty of an umpire. When the time-out doesn't need to be called, you can allow play to wait without calling time. If the batter asks for time to get set, many times the pitcher will wait.

When the time-out doesn't need to be called, you may delay play without calling time. If the batter asks for time to get set with no runners on, simply raise your hand and give the "Do Not Pitch" sign. When the batter is set and everyone is ready, drop your arm or beckon the pitcher to pitch and play resumes.

When the batter steps out of the batter's box unexpectedly and you decide to give him time, quickly throw up your hands and yell, "Time!" When added emphasis is needed, take a few quick side steps opposite the batter. This gets you out where you are more visible and shows that you have no intention of calling a pitch if one is made. Calling time quickly and clearly either stops the pitcher comfortably or lets the pitcher make a soft pitch, if he can't stop.

Don't overdo time-outs. Let them play unless there is a valid reason for calling time. Don't call time too quickly when it would prevent the completion of play. Don't grant a player's request for time unless he has a bona fide reason. For instance, if a relay man wants time so he can throw the ball to the pitcher, don't grant it. The offense has a right to any error made on the throw.

Once time is called or the ball becomes dead, whatever the occasion, the following occurs: (1) the ball becomes live when it is held by the pitcher in a legal pitching position (provided the pitcher has engaged the pitcher's plate), (2) the batter and the catcher are in their respective boxes, and (3) the umpire calls "Play" and gives the appropriate hand signal.

With time back in, the pitcher is no more under obligation to pitch than he would be ordinarily.

22. When a balk occurs, the ball is dead immediately. Whenever a balk occurs, the umpire will throw up his hands, which signifies the ball is dead, and call "balk." Whenever an illegal pitch occurs, the umpire will throw up his hands and call "illegal pitch." When a balk occurs, each runner is awarded one base. On an illegal pitch, a ball is awarded the batter. Since the ball is dead immediately, nothing will be permitted to happen, even if the pitcher delivers a pitch or attempts to pick a runner off a base.

23. A balk or illegal pitch may need to be explained, but never demonstrated by the umpire. Possibly there are times when it is permissible to explain what constituted the balk. In a game where learning is not a priority but the outcome of the game is, such an explanation is out of place, because it is to the advantage of the defensive team and not the umpire's duty. If you tell how the balk was committed, it will be avoided. It's the manager's job, however, to instruct his pitchers in what is legal and what is not. Your job is to umpire the game.

When challenged after you penalize an illegal pitch or action, simply state, without explanation, that there was an illegality. More explanation of what constituted the illegality is permissible as learning becomes a priority over a winner-loser decision.

Balk calls and illegal pitches that are questioned can possibly best be explained to coaches or pitchers after the game, if you care to do so and if they are interested. This is a courtesy you might wish to extend. It will help the offending pitcher to avoid the same mistake and penalty in the future.

It's perhaps better to discuss the balk with the pitcher's coach, possibly with the pitcher listening in, rather than to take up the matter directly with the pitcher. This lets the coach do the coaching.

24. Infield-fly signals need to be communicated. The infield-fly situation frequently arises in a game. When it does, umpires should have a signal to give one another before the pitch is made. One umpire gives an agreed-upon sign and the other umpires acknowledge, usually by reciprocating with the same sign. A variety of signals are used. Pick one that is not so conspicuous as to be immediately recognizable by the players. Your purpose is to communicate to your fellow umpires, not to inadvertently coach the players.

When the hit ball is judged to be an infield fly, the infield fly-signal is given. It is the right hand raised overhead, with your index finger pointing at the ball. At the same time yell, "Infield fly! If fair, batter's out!" "If fair" can be included regardless of the trajectory of the ball in relation to the foul line. This habitual qualification takes care of the fly that ends up foul, and causes no problem when the fly is obviously fair.

Don't be in a hurry to call the infield fly; make your call as the ball starts downward. This seems to inform the runner(s) in adequate time, while enabling the umpire to judge whether the ball "can be caught by an infielder with ordinary

effort.” If an outfielder catches a ball that could have been caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, the infield-fly rule is still in effect.

Usually the plate umpire calls the infield fly first. This doesn't excuse a base umpire from making the call first, if the plate umpire hasn't yet made the call when the field umpire judges the hit ball to be an infield fly. Each umpire is responsible for making the infield fly call. When your partner calls the infield fly, regardless of how you see or how you feel about his judgment, you have to go along. This preserves the essential image of umpire unity and discourages players from challenging the call.

Any misunderstanding among umpires on the call should be discussed between the umpires after the game. If there's a misunderstanding, likely a review of the rule is in order.

25. Give the catcher room. Keeping out of the way of the catcher on a foul ball is quite tricky. If you understand the basic moves of the properly taught catcher, it's easier.

When a right-hander fouls off an inside pitch, the catcher should turn to his left, because the fouled ball usually goes up over his left shoulder, if his stance is normal. You should be as aware as the catcher that the ball was on the inside when fouled and, therefore, you should be ready to turn to the left with him.

When a right-hander fouls an outside pitch, the ball, by the same token, goes up over the catcher's right shoulder. The properly trained catcher automatically whirls to his right in this case as does the properly trained umpire.

Reverse the above for a lefty.

Keep your eye on the catcher, not the foul ball. His job is to catch the foul; yours, to stay out of his way while following the action. As the catcher moves to find and catch the ball, move with him, but at a safe distance in case he changes direction. If the catcher runs to the fence, dugout or elsewhere, follow him. Being close to this kind of play makes the call of the catch easier. Trot back to your position. That's hustle again.

All catchers aren't orthodox in the way they cover fouls. Some are not well trained, and all make a wrong move now and then. Try to figure out, as best you can, what a catcher is likely to do. Give him adequate room to do it, and if possible, adequate room to do the unpredictable. Never put your hand on the catcher's back.

26. “Keep the plate clean. Attempt to do so during natural pauses in the game and between half-innings. Stopping play to clean the plate when not necessary can disrupt the game and a team's momentum. The small plate brush is a must for the plate umpire. It can be placed in your ball bag, in a shirt pocket, a coat breast pocket or the back pocket of your trousers without being too noticeable.

There is a correct way to clean the plate. Do so in a quick and professional manner. When you start cleaning the plate, face the spectators and the catcher's

box. If your pants were to tear, only the infielders would see it. If the batter or catcher requests that the plate be clean, do so promptly and willingly. Use this opportunity to communicate with the catcher or the batter if there is a need to do so.”

27. Avoid ambiguous fair-foul calls. It is important that you use completely different gestures when you call a batted ball fair or foul. For the foul call, turn your body towards foul territory, extend your arms above your head, and bring them down to waist level in the direction of foul territory. Yell, “Foul!” as emphatically as you gesture. If the call is crucial to the game or just barely foul, yell, “Foul! Foul! Foul!” Using any other additional words might cause the call to be misunderstood. The earflaps of helmets and crowd noise make hearing difficult for players. Alternately the foul can be signaled by extending the right arm, fist clenched, towards foul territory as you shout, “Foul!”

Calling “Foul!” halts all play. It is not reversible.

When the ball is judged fair, use no verbal call, but point towards fair territory while keeping your eye on the ball. The knowledgeable runner thinks “foul” when he hears an umpire make a verbal call in a fair-foul situation.

On long fly balls hit down the baseline that are the plate umpire’s call, immediately remove your mask. Spring down the baseline following the ball as far as you can before it’s time to make a decision. You should be on the foul line if possible. The call shouldn’t be made on the run. Stopping makes for more accuracy. On sharp line drives, you may not have time to remove your mask or move for a better look. Get the best look you can and make the call.

28. React immediately to a batted ball which hits the batter. When the ball goes from the bat directly to the dirt and then strikes the batter or catcher, immediately yell, “Foul!”

Kill play quickly by throwing your arms up and calling, “Foul!”

29. Indicate foul tips. When a foul tip is legally caught, the umpire should give a foul tip signal. The signal for the foul tip adopted by the NFHS is to brush the palms of the hands above the head as they pass each other. The sign can be quickly repeated two or three times, if you wish. You may have to inform the batter and catcher of your decision, if they didn’t see the sign. Reasons for this gesture include: it informs fans of the foul tip, it alerts runners that the ball is alive, and it gives scorers who are thorough the information they need for the scorebook. Most of the time foul tips can’t be detected at a distance. If the foul tip is uncaught, it becomes a foul ball.

30. Stay on top of the slow roller. One play that makes the plate umpire hustle is the batted slow roller down a foul line. Don’t hesitate. Get out from behind the plate and as close to the ball as possible without getting so close that you cause interference with the fielding of the ball. Some umpires take their mask off on this play, if they have time.

Another play that calls for hustle by the plate umpire is on a long, hard-hit fly

ball near the right-field foul line, when the base umpire elects to go to the outfield to follow the play on the ball. The plate umpire moves quickly to the infield, circling the pitcher's mound for a possible play at second, while watching the tag at first. If the runner attempts a double, your hustle will put you at second base before the runner, right on top of the play. After all, the runner had to go the long route, while you took the short cut. Done right, it's beautiful. It will earn you respect and contribute to your reputation. You won't be required to do this often, but when the situation arises, be ready.

31. A good ball boy helps. Passed balls or wild pitches that go to the fence or backstop are a potential problem for the plate umpire. An unretrieved ball is a safety hazard. It also could cause confusion if a live ball goes into the same area. If you can, manage to get a good ball boy to retrieve balls. It will speed up the game. When the ball goes by the catcher, give him another ball. Be sure there are no runners on base before doing so. The ball boy retrieves the passed ball. Instruct him to bring the retrieved balls to you at the end of each half inning. Tell him that if you get short of balls during play, you will beckon to him to bring you some. Tell him not to throw or toss them to you, since they can get away so easily, causing confusion and delay of the game.

If you don't have a ball boy and the catcher is retrieving the ball, throw a new ball to the pitcher while the catcher is going after the ball, or have the on-deck batter retrieve the ball. Again, don't hand the catcher a new ball or throw one to the pitcher if the wild pitch or passed ball is still alive.

32. Be alert to a play at home. On a passed ball with a runner on third, a play at home is likely. Remove your mask quickly, if you think you have time. Set yourself at a right angle to the catcher's throw. This gives you a good angle on the play at home. Most importantly, watch the ball and the catcher going after it, otherwise you don't know where he will be when he makes the throw. You know where the runner is headed, so that's not the problem. Make sure the catcher gets the ball and makes the throw. Then after it's judged to be accurate, follow the flight of the ball as you turn to watch the play. Too quick a turn could get you hit by a badly thrown ball. If there is no throw, there's no play. Take adequate time on this call. You know the tagging player must retain possession of the ball. It's very embarrassing to make an out call and have the ball roll out from under the players. If this happens, you've obviously made the call too quickly. When you are certain that the play is complete, make your call emphatic with appropriate body language. After all, your call takes its importance from the importance of the play.

One way to be sure that the tagging player has retained possession of the ball is to ask to see it. Or you can tell the runner he's out if the tagger has the ball. He'll get the idea and produce it, and then make the call.

33. Don't disagree openly. If you don't agree with a call your partner makes, wait until after the game and discuss the call or play with him in private. Never discuss such a difference in the hearing or in view of the fans, coaches or players.

This is the quickest way there is to get both of you in trouble.

Many potential differences between umpires can be avoided by discussing troublesome rules and ground rules privately before the game. Working with the same partner in many games makes this and many aspects of umpiring easier.

Remember you are a team. You usually are judged as such. If your partner uses bad judgment, it reflects on you. If he is a good umpire and has earned a high level of respect, some of this attitude will also be transferred to you.

34. To err is human. Umpires are human. Missed pitches or errors in judgment will happen. Umpires should do their best to have as few as possible. When you boot a call or miss a pitch, DO NOT resolve to even the call next time. Once called, that is it, it's over and done. Such a resolve blows your objectivity. There is no way you can right the call. A missed pitch or a booted call is just that; it's missed and gone forever.

How many pitches can an umpire miss in a game and still feel that he had a good day? You know you're going to miss some. If we were to put the figure at seven or nine, those attending the game might disagree. Stop and analyze it. That's a miscall an inning in a seven- or nine-inning game. That seems high, especially to a manager, but he's thinking of a miscall an inning against him. He doesn't consider the miscalls in his favor. If after the game you were to ask each manager how many pitches you missed, you might get an answer of perhaps three or four. Add them together and that's about where you come out. In few other professions where split-second judgments are required would a higher degree of accuracy be expected.

35. Your reputation needs consistency. A good reputation is not easy to earn in umpiring. Many games are needed to establish it. One of the easiest ways to enhance your reputation is by being consistent in your ball-strike calls. Each umpire seems to develop his own strike zone (adjustable to batter height and stance) and, hopefully, to stay with it. This usually gets him the reputation of a low-ball or high-ball umpire. You also can become known for having a small strike zone or a large one. This fact is recognized and accepted by managers, players and knowledgeable fans. Most umpires don't purposely set out to earn any type of reputation, it just seems to develop. It isn't bad to have people think that way about your umpiring. Not being consistent may gain you an unenviable reputation sooner than you wish. Your consistency helps the players and managers by letting them use their skills and strategy in a known frame of reference.

36. See 'em better, call 'em better. To work the plate consistently, you must consistently take the same position behind the catcher. Whether you work the scissors, the box or the knee, your head should be in the same position every time. The level of your head should place your chin at the top of the catcher's head, with your head slightly behind and in the slot between the catcher and the batter. If the position of the catcher and/or the batter make it impossible for you

to see the pitch, adjust the best you can. As a last resort, move to a position above and directly behind the catcher's head. You will be able to see the corners, but will lose some perspective on the low pitch. Go back to the normal position as soon as the batter or catcher allows it.

Seeing the pitch well sometimes depends on the catcher. His stance just before the pitch may cause a problem in your following the flight of the ball. The better the catcher and pitcher, the easier it is to umpire and the more fun it is. If you are getting bona-fide criticism from the pitcher, catcher or manager and you know that you're having difficulties, you'll want to show some response. The important thing here is to know the difference between legitimate complaints and cry-baby carping.

37. Learn to deal with flinching. Flinching is usually an erratic problem. It can irritate the umpire far more than it affects his umpiring. The umpire also is concerned, and rightly so, with his image, if the flinching is so pronounced that it is noticeable to the fans or players.

It's puzzling in that it can come and go without apparent reason. Many have worked consecutive games without a hint of a flinch and then had it occur.

Remedies include forcing yourself to wait as long as you can before getting into the just-before-the-pitch stance. This shortens the time of stressful concentration.

38. Keep the pitcher from the plate. A pitcher from time to time will be unhappy with an umpire's call. As a result, he might approach the area of home plate to voice his objections. Being inexperienced or overwrought, he might not realize at the moment that technically no player or manager can object to a ball-strike call. In addition, there is an unwritten understanding among umpires that no player, especially the pitcher, can come to the area of home plate to argue about the call of a pitch.

In high school baseball, the pitcher may not know this, or he may know but hasn't learned to discipline himself. If you feel you must communicate with the pitcher, a recommended method is to share your concerns with the catcher and send him to the mound. Explain that it is his duty to keep his pitcher on the mound and to tone down his display of displeasure at adverse calls. Be firm but polite.

39. Be prepared to handle catcher and manager complaints. The catcher is already in the area of home plate, so how do you deal with him in the same situation? Ordinarily, the catcher is permitted to make remarks in a mild, quiet tone as long as he is facing the pitcher. Never let the catcher turn around to protest more than once. Warn him. A good way to do that without embarrassment to him is to brush the plate, look him in the eye, and explain your dissatisfaction. Take a more stern action the next time it happens.

A manager who constantly protests strike calls from the bench sets a bad

example in field manners. His actions should be dealt with subtly. One way is to talk to him between innings, telling him he should show some restraint. If he feels he has a legitimate gripe, he should not be ill-mannered in presenting it. His manners, good or bad, will be seized upon as a pattern by his players. He should come to you between innings in a gentlemanly manner to make his point. In the event he doesn't choose this method and persists in "hollering" and physically displaying his objections, take appropriate action. Be sure that what you do is necessary and just. Use your best judgment and then act.

Whenever you deal with a manager or player, don't purposely embarrass him. Don't look for trouble; it's unnecessary. It will come without any help from you. Your best preparation to handle it when it comes is an attitude of calm and courtesy.

Do not argue with a coach. If a coach questions a judgment call, say something like "Coach, that's a judgment call and that's the way I see it. Let's play ball!" If he questions a rules interpretation, explain your ruling. Do not prolong conversation and resume play. If you have any doubt about your ruling, do not be afraid to ask your fellow umpire, and if you are incorrect, change your ruling. This discussion with your fellow umpire should be private and away from coaches and players — keep cool at all times.

40. Be productive between innings. Where to go between innings sometimes is a problem for the plate umpire. In a game where you are not having any trouble, walk down the foul line towards the team that is taking the field and encourage them to hustle out to their positions. Be tactful. Don't nag, but try to minimize delay. Then move back closer to the catcher's area, close enough to be able to supply another ball to the catcher should a warm-up pitch go past him.

The time the pitcher takes to throw his warm-up pitches is used for such tasks as getting the balls you need and inspecting them for playability. During this time you should be relaxed, perhaps going over in your mind your performance in the previous innings.

41. Avoid confrontation. Here are a couple of ways that you can avoid the possibility of trouble between innings. When you have a difference of opinion on balls and strikes with the team that just batted, do not go towards them as they take the field. If you do, it could be mistaken as a challenge. If you had trouble with the pitcher, avoid being where he will pass you on the way to the dugout. Don't chat with players. Answer their questions politely, and let that be the end of it. Above all, don't coach.

Make sure you have a clean plate to start the next half inning. If you need to sweep the plate, do it with vigor and return to your position promptly. Don't pass close to the next batter or have any conversation with him. Be careful not to kick dirt onto the plate after you just cleaned it.

42. A batted fair ball is signaled by pointing to fair territory, and no verbal call

is given. When the ball is batted foul, call out in a loud voice “foul ball” and signal it foul by first putting both hands over your head and then motioning to foul territory. Declare the ball dead as soon as it becomes dead. Don’t call foul ball prematurely. Remember, it is not foul until it becomes dead. If the ball is in foul territory between home and first base or home and third base, don’t call the ball foul until it settles on foul territory, or touches the person of an umpire or a player, or any object foreign to the natural ground.

43. The plate umpire shall observe the runner touching or retouching third. If there is a foul ball that requires the plate umpire to leave the plate with the catcher to observe the catch, the base umpire will have responsibility to observe a runner tagging at third. For plays at the plate, the plate umpire should first set up a few steps behind the plate and on the third base line extended through the plate, and then adjust a few steps to either side depending on the throw and the play. The plate umpire needs to establish a clear line of sight through the play and not be screened from the play by either the catcher or the runner. On a play at home in which the runner misses home plate and the catcher missed tagging the runner, the umpire will make “no call.” Following the play and subsequent action, if the defense makes a valid and legal appeal, the plate umpire will then call the runner out.

44. Keep the baseball supply given you at the start of the game rotated. Do not try to save a newer ball for the darker innings. If it is too dark to play, stop the game. Be sure you have a minimum of three baseballs to start the game. They should not be scuffed or torn. You have the responsibility to approve them. Throw out any balls that become unplayable, being certain you have at least two to finish the game. If the home team runs out of baseballs, check with visiting team. If it is unable to furnish them, ask to see the home team’s practice balls and select the best ones to complete the game.

45. Use sound preventative officiating when a new player enters the game. Ask the player or his coach, the substitute’s name, number and who is to be replaced.

46. Be alert to unsportsmanlike comments from the dugouts and take immediate action to halt them. Frequent unsportsmanlike comments may cause you to lose control of the game. If you have trouble determining who is making the comments, inform the coach that you will remove someone in the area on the next occurrence.

47. Be sure the batter is in the batter’s box when establishing his position. Quickly glance at his bat to be sure it is legal. Take note of his stance to establish his particular strike zone.

48. Responsibility on fly balls. With no runners on, the plate umpire must be prepared to rule on balls hit to left field. The base umpire will rule on balls hit to right field. On balls hit to center field with no one on base, the plate umpire will take those balls hit to center that move the center fielder to his right or towards

left field. The base umpire will be responsible for balls hit to center field that move the center fielder in or back or toward right field. The base umpire must go out on when a possible fair/foul call is possible, when a fly ball will be caught below the waist of the right or center fielder (possible trap), when two fielders are converging on a tough catch, or when a ball may be a home run. If a fly ball is a “can of corn,” he may pivot in the infield and take the runner, leaving the home plate umpire the call on the fly ball. On all routine fly balls, the plate umpire will move out into the area of the pitcher’s mound and shout “out” so his partner can hear him. The base umpire moves into the infield. If the ball is dropped, he then checks to see if the batter-runner tags first base, that F3 does not obstruct and then moves for possible play at first or second. When the base umpire moves to the outfield to rule on a possible trap, the plate umpire must rule on plays at all bases and should move to the center of the diamond where he can move in any direction. After the base umpire makes his ruling, he should head for home plate to make a possible ruling on a throw made there.

## VII. THE BASE UMPIRE

1. Initial position on the field is step one. With no runners on base, the base umpire shall position himself approximately 10 to 12 feet behind the first baseman with both feet in foul territory. The base umpire's right foot should be adjacent to, but not touching the foul line and his body should be squared to home plate. Don't let the first baseman out of your sight. If he has to make a quick move, it shouldn't come as a surprise to you. Your peripheral vision should enable you to avoid player interference or crowding. Use your head and eyes to keep from having to scurry out of the way of players.

2. With no runners on, assume Position A. This position is in foul territory; don't straddle the foul line, about 10 or 12 feet behind the first baseman. If the first baseman moves toward home, you can move a few steps as well. If he moves back to the outfield grass, move back as well, but the distance between you two will diminish. But do not ever allow yourself to be even or ahead of the first baseman's position. Be aware of all fielder positions and if the batter is left-handed or right-handed. At the time of the pitch, the base umpire shall be stationary.

3. Stride with the pitch. One move, a simple one at that, that the base umpire will find helpful is the step toward the batter at the time of the pitch. Timing is important. You'll get a feel for it. Usually the stride is made about the time the pitcher releases the ball. If the pitch is not hit, relax and return to your original position. You do this on each pitch. This move keeps you alert, attentive and ready for any play. It also shows to players and fans that you are interested and alert.

4. Exhibit proper posture on the field at all times. Don't fold your arms. That

gives the wrong image. Your arms simply can be relaxed at your sides. Your legs shouldn't be crossed. Place your feet far enough apart to be comfortable. This helps you concentrate on the game. It goes without saying that you should keep your mind on the game at all times. Don't let it wander to other subjects. If you do, it's only a matter of time until you're in trouble and trying to catch up on the game.

The base umpire must be alert so that he can rule on half-swings, if requested by the plate umpire. Do not react to any appeals by defensive players or coaches. Only provide a ruling when requested by the plate umpire. If you believe that the batter did swing, give a closed fist signal above your shoulder, saying "Yes, he went." If you rule that the batter did not swing at the pitch, give a safe signal while saying, "No, he did not go."

5. Keep style in perspective. Safe-out calls are to the base umpire what ball-strike calls are to the plate umpire. Just as the strike gestures of all plate umpires must have the basic elements in common, so also the basic elements of the out sign of all umpires must be similar. This holds true of ball calls and safe signs, too. The receivers of the information as to whether the player was safe or out need to get the message instantaneously without having to figure it out. If an individual umpire's safe and out signs were too dissimilar, instant mass communication couldn't take place. Where then, does individual umpire style come in? Just as in anything else where style is not the sole end, style in umpiring comes in most naturally through individual differences that appear as the umpire seeks to do his functional best. Using his whole body to communicate in the fashion and with the emphasis that the game situation demands projects this style. You cannot justifiably be accused of "showboating" if you use all the emphasis at your command to call a player safe or out when the play was crucial to the game. Proper timing in making calls is just as important for the base umpire as it is for the plate umpire in calling balls and strikes.

6. The mechanics for calling an out are simple. The out call is a standup one and basically the same everywhere with only minor individual style variations. Feet are spread so you're comfortable, knees flexed, and body bent forward slightly at the hips. The back is kept straight. The position of your hands at the start of the out call is very important. Your hands should be down close at your side. This gives you a starting place for the signal. Keep the fingers of your left hand lightly against your thigh. Wait until after the play is completed. Don't be in a hurry to call it. Most of the time the play is so obvious that it virtually calls itself.

7. Avoid ambiguity. The position of the left hand is very important in all out calls. Keep your left hand down at your side during the entire out sign. This keeping of the left arm close to the body ensures that the out call is done with one arm, as it should be.

The fans and players don't get the impression that you started to give the safe

sign and changed your mind. There will be no guessing as to which sign you made.

Suit your simultaneous verbal call to the emphasis of the physical call and phrase it for, and direct it to, the offensive player. You could say, "He's out!" But if you say, "You're out!" you're getting to the principal one who must be convinced.

8. Calling a player safe need not be routine. If you're moving, come to a halt as you begin the sign. With your feet shoulder width or wider, hands should rise and fully extend in front of the body up to shoulder height. At the same time, the arms will move in front of the body to each side in a continuous motion. That's all there is to a routine safe sign. But if the play demands more emphasis or if you want to show your appreciation of a good play, bring your arms in from the extended position, possibly crossing them in an x in front of you, and re-extending them. You can repeat this a number of times depending on the amount of emphasis you wish to give. Another way of emphasizing the call is to take a couple of quick side steps, either with the arms extended or while making repeated safe signs. The safe call is just as important as the out. Plays that are not close need not be emphasized. Sometimes there is no call, because there is no play on the runner. When a double has been hit, you obviously don't give the safe sign as the runner rounds first.

You might find that you have a tendency to inattentively look down when you're making the safe call, thinking the action is over. Don't. You could miss other significant action.

Your vocal call should correspond in emphasis with that of the physical call. "You're safe!" or "Safe! You're in there!" with proper emphasis usually does it. If your voice tends to go shrill on the call, you might try, "Safe! No! No! No! You're in there!" or something similar. The resonance on the "N" sound lowers the pitch of the voice and lends authority to the call.

9. Timing is critical. With the safe call, as with all calls, timing is of the essence. If premature, it could be rendered wrong by action that was continuing. Allowing too long a time to elapse between the action and the call gives the appearance of uncertainty.

10. Double-play situation. Watch the ball being fielded by the infielder starting the double play. Watch the ball being thrown to the pivot man. Watch the throw for its accuracy and let the throw lead you to the play. Your judgment of the play will involve:

- a. Listening for the ball hitting the pivot man's glove.
- b. Seeing the pivot man's foot touch base.
- c. Don't turn head too soon on the front end of the double play. If the ball is dropped by the pivot man, judge if the force play was completed and the pivot man dropped the ball while taking it out of his glove for the relay

throw.

- d. Picking up the relay throw to first while getting into position to make the call there.
- e. Again watching for the first baseman's foot to tag base and listening for the ball hitting his mitt.
- f. Being aware to ask for help from the plate umpire on tag play when pivot man's throw pulls first baseman off the base.

11. Obstruction or interference may be ruled by any umpire who sees it. Always signal a delayed dead ball or a dead ball, whatever the situation demands. Since an obstruction or interference call might create a controversy, the use of the proper signal when such infraction occurs often precludes an argument. It also is evidence of umpire competency, as well as control of the game. Don't let the controversial nature of your call or non-call of interference/obstruction, influence what you rule. Make the call exhibiting confidence and certainty.

12. While on a force play, an umpire does not want to be too close to the play, on a tag play you can be closer to the play itself; but keep in mind having the proper angle is more important than the distance from the play. Again, the umpire should take a position at an angle where the umpire can see the area between the base and the runner. (When taking your position to make a call, be sure you are stopped, and not moving with your head perfectly still.) A base runner who is tagged while off the base is not out if the fielder fails to hold the ball. Runners sometimes beat the throw but overslide or miss the base, so the decision should not be made until the play is completed. It is a rather common error to rule on these plays prematurely. (This "timing" is a skill that is learned over the years and is paramount to good umpiring.)

## **VIII. OBSERVING BASES**

1. As a principle, on most routine plays, the base umpire is responsible for watching the batter-runner touch first and second base, as well as watching the runner from first touch second base.

2. The plate umpire, on most routine plays, is responsible to watch the runner touching and retouching third base, as well as home plate.

3. If the base umpire goes out on a fly ball, the plate umpire shall try to observe all runners. NOTE: The primary responsibility of the umpire is the ball. If an umpire does not see a runner miss a base he cannot make the call. However, if he doesn't know if a ball is caught on fair or foul territory, it makes no difference if a base is missed. At the conclusion of playing action, if the umpire has observed any runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball, the umpire shall call the runner(s) out following a valid appeal by the defense.

## **IX. PROCEDURE AT END OF GAME**

When the game is completed, each umpire should take care of his own equipment, and then the crew should leave the field together. Before leaving the field, the plate umpire should return the baseballs to the home management. It is not advisable to discuss the game with anyone. When there has been any flagrant irregularity associated with the game, report it at once to the proper authorities.

## **X. COMMUNICATIONS AND SIGNALS**

1. Communication signals for umpires are desirable and, in fact, essential. These signs enable one umpire to let a fellow worker or crew member know, unobtrusively, his judgment of a specific play. Umpires can and should agree, upon a simple system of such signals before the game starts. An umpire who wants to get the judgment of a fellow umpire can do so quickly. The simplest signals are preferable. A batter's "half-swing" is a situation in which the plate umpire will sometimes desire the opinion of his fellow umpire before making his decision even though in the final analysis the plate umpire is the sole judge of balls and strikes and his decision is final. On occasion his vision may be blocked. It is now universally accepted that if the barrel end of the bat is swung so that it is in front of the batter's body or ahead of it, it is a strike. Do not judge the quality of the swing, but rather the attempt to legitimately strike at the ball. This criterion provides a positive basis upon which the judgment or decision can be made. If the plate umpire has been blocked out, or is in doubt even though he saw the action, he may request help from the base umpire or umpires by pointing to the base umpire from whom he seeks help with his left hand. The base umpire will respond with a strike signal if he feels the batter did swing. If he feels that the batter did check his swing in time, he will give a safe signal quickly, and shall also provide a verbal "No, he did not!" These simple and easily understood signals are examples of those which have been devised to assist umpires in communicating with each other.

2. Signaling is a very important aspect of umpiring. Decisions are relayed to the players, coaches and spectators by their use. The adopted signals are dignified, informative and meaningful and, therefore, shall be used by all umpires. Poorly executed and unauthorized signals serve only to confuse. The manner in which a signal is given determines, at least to a degree, its acceptance by players, coaches and spectators.

## **XI. BASIC UMPIRING POSITIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS**

The plate umpire will be designated as U1; the field umpires will be numbered counterclockwise from first to third as U2, U3 and U4 (in a 4-man crew). For the purpose of describing the positions of the umpires on the field, the following

terminology will be used throughout this manual:

(1) POSITION A. Both feet in foul territory, approximately 10 feet behind the first baseman. This will be the basic position with no runners on base.

(2) POSITION B. Approximately halfway between the pitcher's mound and second base, on the first-base side of the infield, more or less on a line extended from the plate through the edge of the mound, with the feet positioned parallel to the pitcher's plate so

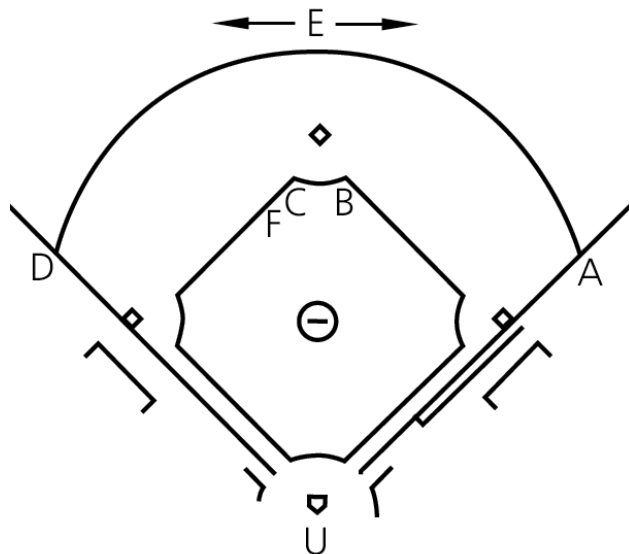
the umpire can move to cover a pickoff attempt at first or an attempted steal of second. This will be the position used with first base occupied in the two-man system.

(3) POSITION C. Approximately halfway between the pitcher's mound and second base, on the third-base side of the infield, more or less on a line extended from the plate through the edge of the mound, with the feet positioned parallel to the pitcher's plate so the umpire can move to cover any attempted pickoff or steal at any base. This position will be used in any situation with runners occupying bases other than first base in the two-man system.

(4) POSITION D. Both feet in foul territory, approximately 10 feet behind the third baseman.

(5) POSITION E. In the outfield area behind second base, shifted to the side to which the batter is most likely to hit.

(6) POSITION F. Inside the infield and similar to Position C, but at the edge of the grass on the shortstop side. (FIG. 6)



## XII. GAME SITUATIONS

Knowing the following game situations will help instill confidence in your conduct of games. All these are common situations which occur often.

(1) RAIN. The game is in the hands of the umpires after the exchange of lineup cards. Before suspending play in a rain situation, the rain should be hard enough to make the field unplayable. After play has been suspended, a 30-minute delay should be announced. Play may be resumed at any time the umpire-in-chief declares the field to be playable. Areas of primary concern should be the pitcher slipping during his delivery or the batter slipping in the batter's box. Either of these could easily result in injury, and the safety of the players and officials should be foremost in an umpire's mind. If rain continues after the 30-minute

period, declare the game a rainout. Use good judgment. You should play the game if possible. For any other possible game-ending procedures, please refer to Rule 4 in the NFHS Baseball Rules Book.

(2) **CALLING "TIME."** The object is to keep the game moving, so only call "Time" when necessary. Remember, a coach or player cannot call "Time"; he may only request it. Only an umpire can call "Time."

(3) **FOUL TIP.** A foul tip is always a strike, and the ball remains live and in play. The plate umpire must be alert for foul tips on bunts and squeeze plays and on swinging strikes, especially third strikes. Field umpires also should be on the alert for foul tips in case they should be asked for help. The plate umpire also should remember to signal foul tips — raise both hands up to where they are clearly visible, then rub the palms together and signal strike.

(4) **FAIR AND FOUL BALLS.** U1 has the responsibility of the fair/foul call on the ball from the plate up to the front edge of the bag down the first and third base lines in any system. In 2-man mechanics with a runner on, U1 has the fair/foul call from the plate down both lines to the foul pole. If there are no runners, U2 in Position A has the fair/foul call from in front of the first-base bag to the foul pole. If U1's view of the play is blocked, U2 can help on a ball down the line.

In 3-man mechanics, U2 in Position A and U3 in Position D would have the fair/foul call from the front of the base to the foul pole on their respective sides. If U2 or U3 moves into the infield, U1 would then have the fair/foul call down the uncovered line from the plate to the foul pole. When signaling a fair ball, the umpire should point toward fair ground, but make no vocal call. On a foul ball, he should both point away from fair ground and vocally call, "Foul ball!" As in any other play situation, only the umpire making the call should give a signal. Remember, double calls are an invitation to trouble! On foul balls only, after the initial call, it is acceptable and recommended for the other umpires to "echo" the foul call.

(5) **SACRIFICE FLY.** Each umpire must know whose responsibility it is to make the call on a runner leaving the base on a fly ball before the ball is touched. In the 2-man system, U1 always has the runner at third, his tag, and the touch of the ball by the defense. U2 has the tag and touch if there is only one runner at first or second. If there are two or more runners, U1 has the lead runner and U2 has the other runner(s). In making his call, the umpire must line up the runner with the touch of the ball. The umpire must be certain the runner left early. The benefit of any doubt should be given to the offense.

(6) **INFIELD FLY.** It is a common practice for umpires to signal each other when there are less than two outs and the bases loaded or runners on first and second bases. This signal is meant as a reminder that an infield-fly situation exists and should be given by each umpire prior to each batter when there is an infield-fly situation. Common methods are for the umpire to hold his right hand against his chest in a fist or to touch the bill of his cap with the index finger. Remember, a

fair fly ball that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort is an out, even if the ball is dropped. This holds even if the catch is made by an outfielder. The ball is alive, and runners may advance at their own risk. Make a vocal call, "Infield fly, if fair, batter is out!" Do not call the play too soon; wait until the ball is on its downward arc, especially on windy days, so you can be sure the ordinary effort part of the rule is met. A good guideline for ordinary effort is whether the infielder can turn and face the infield while waiting to make the catch.

(7) **AWARDING BASES.** When the ball leaves the playing area, the umpire should call, "Time," and then make the appropriate award of bases. It is not important to know the location of runners at the time the ball became dead; awards are always made based on the position of the runners at the time of the pitch or throw which made the ball become dead. Know which part of the rule is to be enforced in making awards. U1 generally has the best position to determine the location of the runner(s) in a dead-ball situation.

(8) **CHECK SWINGS.** A batter's half swing or checked swing may require the umpire to seek help from his fellow umpire. On occasion his vision may be blocked. If U1 has been blocked out or is in doubt even though he saw the action, he may request help from the base umpire or umpires by pointing with his left hand to the base umpire from whom he seeks help. If U1 is sure the batter has swung, he should point to the batter with his left hand saying, "Yes, he did," then signal a strike. This should prevent any doubt as to whether U1 has seen the play. If the catcher blocks U1's view, or if U1 is simply not sure, he should step away from the plate, point to the umpire he is asking and say, "Did he go?" U2 should answer truthfully either saying, "No, he did not," accompanied by a safe signal or by saying, "Yes, he did," accompanied by a strike signal. Although official and college rules require U1 to check with his partner when requested to do so, high school rules do not have such a requirement. Remember, there is no appeal on a strike call.

(9) **DOUBLE PLAY (INTERFERENCE CALL AT SECOND BASE).** Since U2 has both out calls at second and at first in a 2-man system, he must turn with the throw to first in order to make the call there. U1 must move out to watch the play at second base for possible illegal slides or runner interference. If, in the judgment of U1, the runner at second interferes and prevented a possible play at first, then the batter-runner also shall be called out.

(10) **PICKOFFS.** Field umpires must be alert for pickoffs since they can happen quickly. Position B allows U2 to move quickly to get the best possible angle on a call at first base. Be sure the runner is out; a close play doesn't mean the runner is out. With the angle you can get in a 2-man system, most plays will look close. The first step should be toward the foul line at a point half way between the plate and first base, i.e., the 45 degree line; then turn to the base. This will improve your angle. Pickoffs at second require a step back, then turn with the throw into

the play. On pickoffs at third, use the same mechanics as at first. Stop and set before making the call on any pickoff play, then take a step or two toward the play after making the call. Make a call on a pickoff attempt only if there is a tag. Be sure to keep your eye on the ball; the catcher can pick off unwary runners.

(11) STEAL PLAYS. When the runner from first breaks for second, U2 should step backward toward the base, let the flight of the ball turn him into the play, get set, and make the call. On an attempted steal of third, U2 should first step toward the third-base line at a point midway between the base and the plate, then turn and move toward third; just as on a pickoff at first. This will improve the angle from which the play is called.

(12) TAG PLAYS. Do not try to outrun the players to the bases. Know the available shortcuts and move to get as close to a right angle as you can. Move quickly, get set, then watch the whole play and wait for the play to end before making your call. Be patient; don't anticipate. Be sure you know the location of the ball before you make your call, especially on close plays. Also, be careful not to get too close to the play; stay far enough back to see the entire play as it develops. Watch for defensive obstruction or offensive interference. A player on the defense must have the ball in order to block a base, including home plate. U1 should remove and hold his mask with his left hand; make the out call with the right hand.

(13) DISAGREEMENTS. Doug Harvey, among others, is said to have claimed umpiring is the only job where you are expected to be perfect on your first day and then get better every day thereafter. Since only the second of these expectations is likely, disagreements will arise. As an umpire, you must keep your cool. While players, coaches and fans all become emotional, umpires must remain in control when dealing with them. Most disputes in games can be dealt with quickly, and the amount of control an umpire has in a game is directly related to his ability to make decisions and to deal with the players and coaches involved in a firm but courteous manner. You should make the call you see, and see the call you make.

Do not be ashamed to ask your partner for help if you are blocked out. Your ultimate responsibility is to get the call right. If you do miss a call, don't dwell on it, or you'll probably miss the next one as well. The last resort is ejection of a player or coach, but if an ejection is needed, do it! Extreme verbal and/or physical abuse cannot and must not be tolerated. Such incidents must be reported through proper channels so they can be corrected.

(14) COACHES ON THE FIELD. Coaches should be on the field for coaching purposes only. Coaches will, however, come onto the field to discuss situations with umpires, usually in one of two areas — rules and judgment. Rules may need some interpretation, but keep explanations short and to the point. Explain what you saw and what you called, then politely ask the coach to leave. Stay calm and

do not argue. In most instances, a simple warning will suffice to get the coach off the field so play can be resumed.

(15) RUNDOWNS. If a rundown develops on a single runner on base, the coverage is straightforward – both umpires will move to work the rundown, boxing in both ends. If there are multiple runners on base, which runner is in the rundown will dictate how the rundown is worked. If the lead runner is involved in the rundown, both umpires will work it. If the trailing runner is involved, the plate umpire will not work the rundown as he needs to cover the action of the lead runner. He should never abandon the lead runner to work a rundown.

If you are involved in a rundown by yourself, do not over commit to one end of the rundown. Move back a few steps and work the rundown from the middle of the action. Be aware of possible obstruction, possible interference or the runner running out of the baseline to avoid a tag. With multiple runners, the umpires must know in advance which runner is entitled to which base in the event two runners are occupying the same base.

When working a rundown with both umpires, the umpire coming to assist should not move into position until the action of the rundown is going away from you. When you are able to become involved, step in to box the play and let your partner know you are there, “I’m here at this end.” When both umpires are involved, the umpire who is facing the runner when he is tagged has first responsibility for the call. A quick glance at each other should prevent double calls.

(16) BALKS. The umpire calling the balk shall point to the pitcher and call loudly, “That’s a balk!” The ball is dead at the time of the balk. Umpires should signal a dead ball while calling out, “That’s a balk!”

(17) SAFE AND OUT CALLS. These must be made clearly, both verbally and with the proper signal. Players must know what the call is for the purpose of completing a play or moving on to another. Use your voice in such a way that everyone will know what is happening. When making a call, move into position, stop, watch the entire play, and then make the call. After making a call, move a step or two closer to the play. Signal safe by bringing both arms together in front of the body at shoulder level. Spread them apart, with your palms parallel to the ground while calling “Safe!” in a clear, firm voice. Signal an out by raising your left hand to the middle of your upper body while raising the right arm to a right angle and making a fist with the right hand. Call, “Out!” in a clear, firm voice.

(18) TIMING PLAY. When there are two outs and a runner at second base, U1 must stay at the plate in a position to be able to determine if the runner touched the plate before or after a “non-force” third out occurs. The run will then be announced to both teams as being scored or not, depending on the call. With a runner at third only, U1 may observe the touch of the plate, and then move on to third for any call there on the batter-runner.

(19) APPEAL PLAY: The appeal rule in high school baseball is different than

other rule codes. It is essential that the officiating crew know the appeal rule and how they are to administer the rule during a game. When a umpire observes a base running error, he should make no verbal or non-verbal statement that could tip either team. If the defense does not appeal, after a pitch, the play will stand. It is important to remember that before a live ball appeal may occur, all playing action must be completed. During a live ball appeal, defensive players must tag the appealed base or runner with the ball. During a dead ball appeal, after runners have had the opportunity to complete base running responsibilities, either a defensive player or coach may verbally appeal a suspected infraction. Umpires must be aware of the conditions when a defensive team can no longer legally appeal or lose their right to appeal. They also must be familiar with the situations where, even if a runner where to retouch a base, he could still be out with a proper and legal appeal. Officials must know who has touch/tag responsibility for a base in a given situation. This should be covered in the pre-game conference. Only the official responsible for that base should rule on a proper appeal. Officials should let each other know, when an appeal occurs, who will rule on the appeal. Sometimes a simple glance at each other will be sufficient. The last thing we want is for one umpire to rule one way while another umpire rules the opposite. Officials should refrain from coaching or helping a team to properly appeal or undo a base running mistake.

# Official NFHS Baseball Signals

A. DO NOT PITCH



B. PLAY BALL



C. FOULBALL/TIME OUT/DEAD BALL



D. DELAYED DEAD BALL



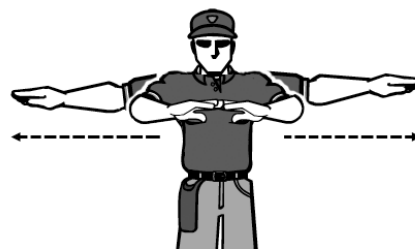
E. STRIKE/OUT



F. INFIELD FLY



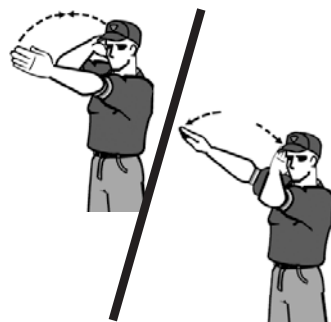
G. SAFE



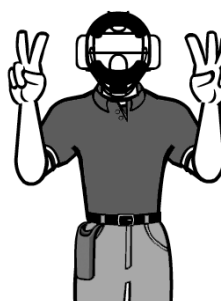
H. FAIR BALL



I. FOUL TIP



J. COUNT



K. TIME PLAY



- A. Right arm straight out front with palm outward and fingers up — signifies do not pitch, the ball is dead.
- B. Pointing with right hand index finger while facing pitcher — signifies play is to start or be resumed and simultaneously umpire calls "Play."
- C. Both hands open above the head — signifies foulball, time-out or ball is dead immediately.
- D. Left fist extended to the side at shoulder height — signifies an infraction for which (1) the penalty may be ignored or (2) bases may be awarded after no further advance is possible.
- E. Fist up and then out away from body. Coordinate, verbal call, "He's out!" or "Strike!", with the hammering action of the closed fist.
- F. Index finger of right hand is held above the head — signifies infield fly.
- G. Coordinate verbal call, "Safe." Signal also used for dropped balls in the outfield and to determine if a batter's checked swing was legal.
- H. Point toward fair ground with index finger. No verbal call.
- I. The palms of the hands glance off each other as they pass above eye level, followed by a strike call.
- J. Left hand indicates balls followed by the number of strikes thrown on the right hand. Verbally give count.
- K. Place two fingers of the right hand on the left wrist, as if on top of a watch. This signal will only be used in two-out situations where a time play involving a potential run is likely.

**XIV. 1-MAN MECHANICS****GUIDELINES FOR WORKING 1-MAN MECHANICS**

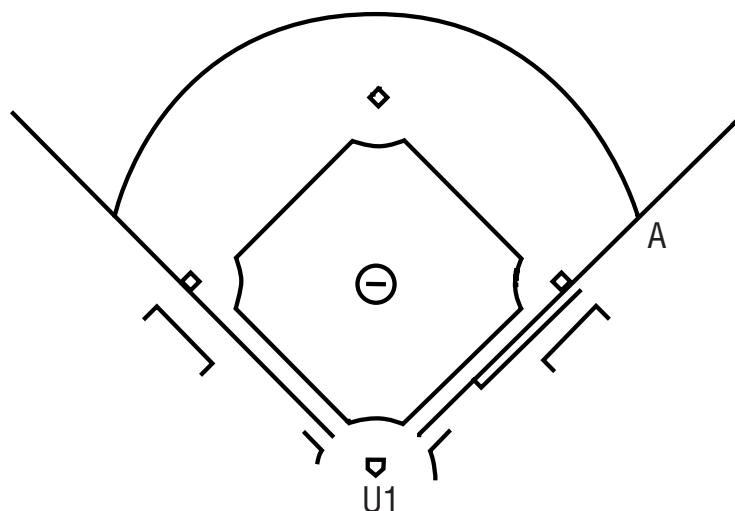
1. Remember, you can't possibly cover everything. But, when it comes to watching someone touch a base and knowing where the ball is, always keep your eyes on the ball.
2. Tell coaches at the pregame meeting you will work the game as hard as you can.
3. Also tell the coaches that whenever you brush off home plate, or are moving back to the plate from the infield, time is automatically out. However, take a quick look around to be sure nothing is happening before you brush off home plate or head back to the plate from the infield.
4. Anytime the ball is hit in fair territory, you must move out toward the center of the infield, unless a ball hit down the line requires your attention. Even then, you should still move out toward the center of the infield if you call the ball fair, or there is a possible play on a runner tagging up.
5. On long-distance calls, the general guideline is if the ball beats the runner and the tag is down, call the runner out.
6. Always know where the ball is and who has it.
7. When a ball appears to be going out of play, wait a little longer to be sure it is in an out-of-play area. Once you declare the ball out of play, there is no going back.
8. If you have a rules interpretation problem, don't necessarily be influenced by a coach who tells you how some other umpire handled the same play. The bottom line here is do what you think is fair and get the game moving. Nobody knows all the rules. Your job is to go out with the attitude that regardless of what happens, you will be able to apply the appropriate rule correctly. Do not allow games to get delayed with long discussions.
9. Don't allow very much complaining from coaches and players about your positioning, etc., as long as you are hustling. The best response is usually, "Coach, I am working as hard as I can for you." Then walk away.
10. Hustle! Hustle! Hustle!

## XV. 2-MAN MECHANICS

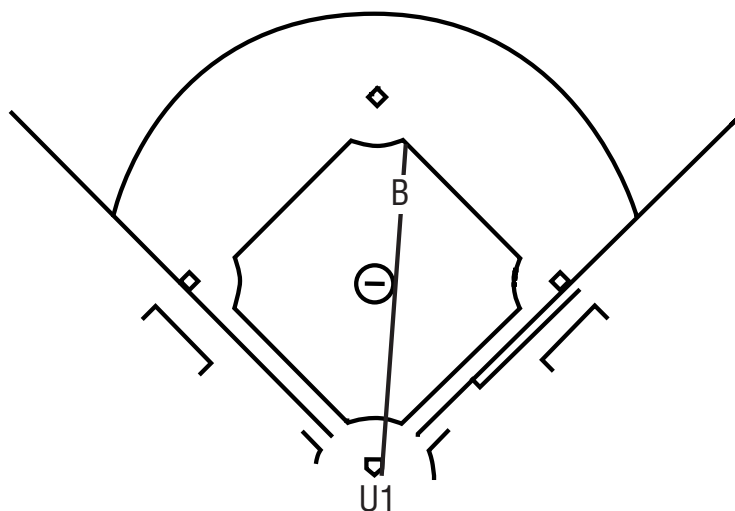
### STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

**ABBREVIATIONS:** The plate umpire will be described as U1 and the field umpire as U2. It is assumed that in all situations U1 will start out behind home plate. The three basic positions for U2 on the bases are described as follows:

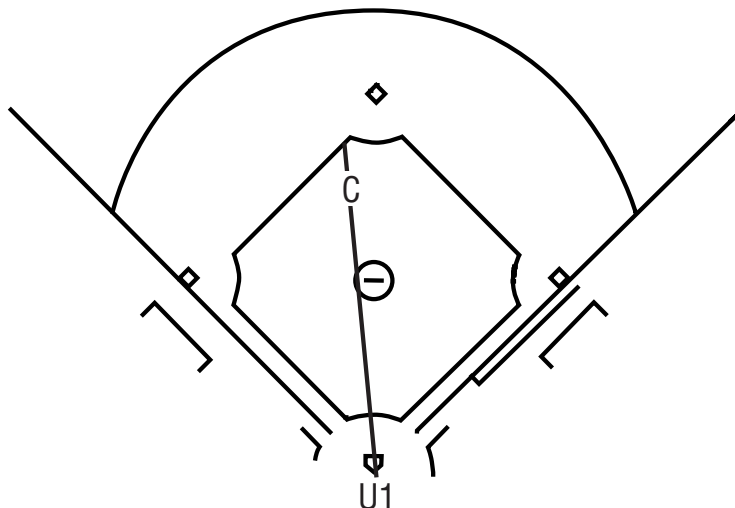
**POSITION A —** Both feet in foul territory, approximately 10 feet behind the first baseman. This will be the basic position with no runners on base.



**POSITION B —** Approximately halfway between the pitcher's mound and second base, on the first-base side of the infield, more or less on a line extended from the plate through the edge of the mound, with the feet positioned parallel to the pitcher's plate so the umpire can move to cover a pickoff attempt at first or an attempted steal of second. This will be the position used with first base occupied in the two-man system.



**POSITION C** — Approximately halfway between the pitcher's mound and second base, on the third-base side of the infield, more or less on a line extended from the plate through the edge of the mound, with the feet positioned parallel to the pitcher's plate so the umpire can move to cover any attempted pick-off or steal at any base. This position will be used in any situation with runners occupying bases other than first base in the two-man system.



#### GENERAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- U1:**
1. Call balls and strikes.
  2. Hustle! Just because you have the “dish” doesn’t mean it is your only responsibility.
  3. Rule on fair/foul situations from the plate to left-field foul pole. If U2 is in Position A, rule fair/foul on all batted balls that come to rest or are played upon in front of first base. Call fair/foul on all batted balls from the plate to the right-field foul pole if U2 is in Position B or C. Be careful not to call fair or foul too soon.
  4. Get your mask off and move on all batted balls.
    - a. On ground balls in the infield, come inside the infield and be ready to move to cover plays which are your responsibility and to help your partner. Watch ground balls close to the line carefully to make the fair/foul call. With a runner at third, be careful not to go with the ball. Watch the play from the base line extended so you can see the runner touch the plate.
    - b. On fly balls to the infield, call catch/no catch on foul flies up to both bags and fair flies to the left of second base or taken by the pitcher or catcher.
    - c. On fly balls to the outfield with U2 in Position A, call catch/no catch

on any fly ball that U2 does not go out on. You have responsibility on all fly balls hit to left field and balls hit to center field that move the center fielder to his right or towards left. If U2 is in the infield, call catch/no catch on all fly balls to left or right on which the outfielder moves toward his respective foul line.

- d. Remember to watch the tagup of any runner at third base or the lead runner in a situation involving multiple runners.
5. Be prepared to move to third base if a play happens there on a batted ball or to first base to help your partner on a throw behind the runner or in a rundown if possible.
6. With a throw from near home plate, observe the batter-runner's position in relation to the 3-foot running lane. If the batter-runner is not in the lane and interferes with the throw, call interference and the batter-runner out.
7. On a pop foul to the catcher, move with the catcher while observing him and not the ball. Do not remove your mask until the catcher has tossed his mask. If the catch is near the screen, position yourself so that you will know if the ball touched the screen.

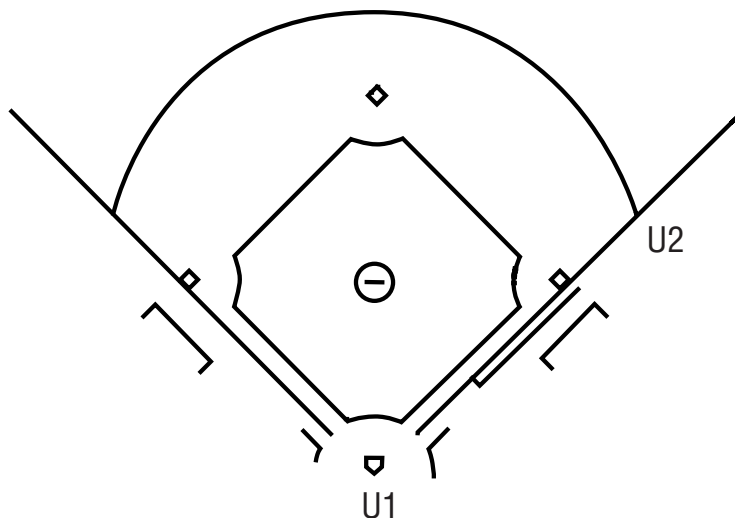
- U2:**
1. Hustle on every play to be in the best position possible to make your calls.
  2. When in Position A, take one or two steps toward home plate with the pitch.
  3. With no runners, you will always be in Position A; with a single runner at first, you will always be in Position B; with a runner as far as second base, you will be in Position C. This position stays the same; it is not dependent on the number of outs.
  4. In Position A, call fair/foul on balls hit down the first-base line from the front edge of the bag to the foul pole, especially on balls bounding over the bag. Be alert to help U1 on a slow roller or bunt down the line where he may be blocked out by the catcher or batter-runner. If you see a batted ball, contact the batter in the batter's box, call "Dead Ball!"
  5. The first play by an infielder is always your call, except at home plate. Let the ball take you into the play.
  6. Make catch/no catch calls on fly balls in the following situations:
    - a. Fly balls in the infield which are taken by the first or second baseman;
    - b. If in Position A, go out to make a call on any difficult catch by the right fielder or the center fielder moving any direction other than towards left field. Expect to go out on any fly ball to right or center that might involve a fair/foul decision, caught below the waist (possible trap), possible home run, or where two fielders converge. On routine flies come in and take a pivot; U1 will make the catch/no catch ruling.
    - c. If in Position B or C, fly balls to the outfield unless the catch is attempted by either fielder moving to the respective foul line. In this

instance U1 has both the fair/foul call and the catch/no catch. Do not cross the base paths to go to make a call.

7. Line up the tagup of a single runner, unless at third base, and on following runners in a multiple runner situation.
8. Be alert to either move to cover home plate if U1 is at third base and there are no following runners or to take a following runner into third if U1 has a play at the plate, as in a bases-loaded situation.

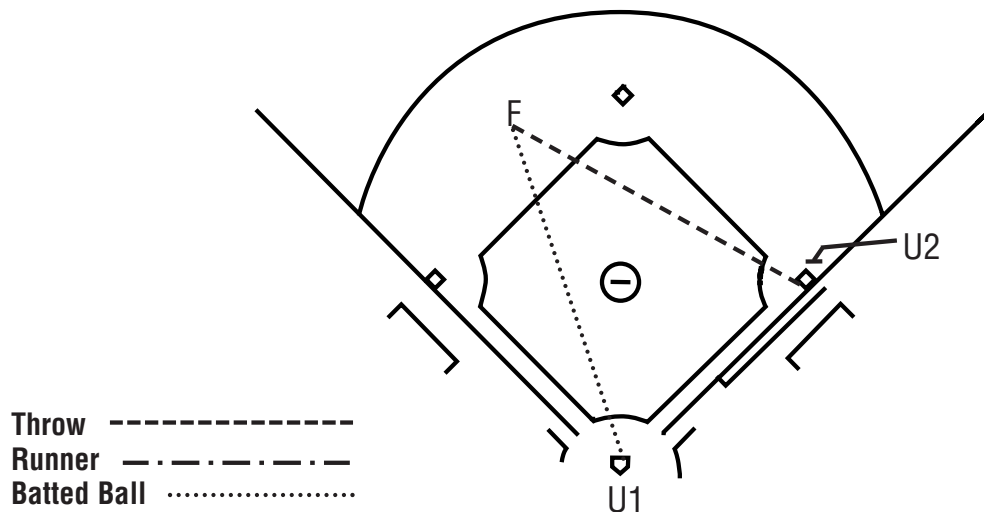
## FIELD MECHANICS AND COVERAGES

### ARTICLE 1: NO RUNNERS ON BASE

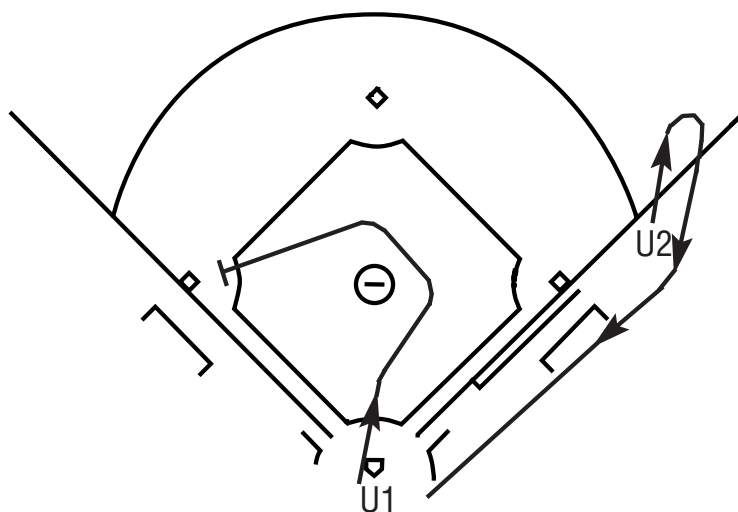


#### U1: COVERAGES:

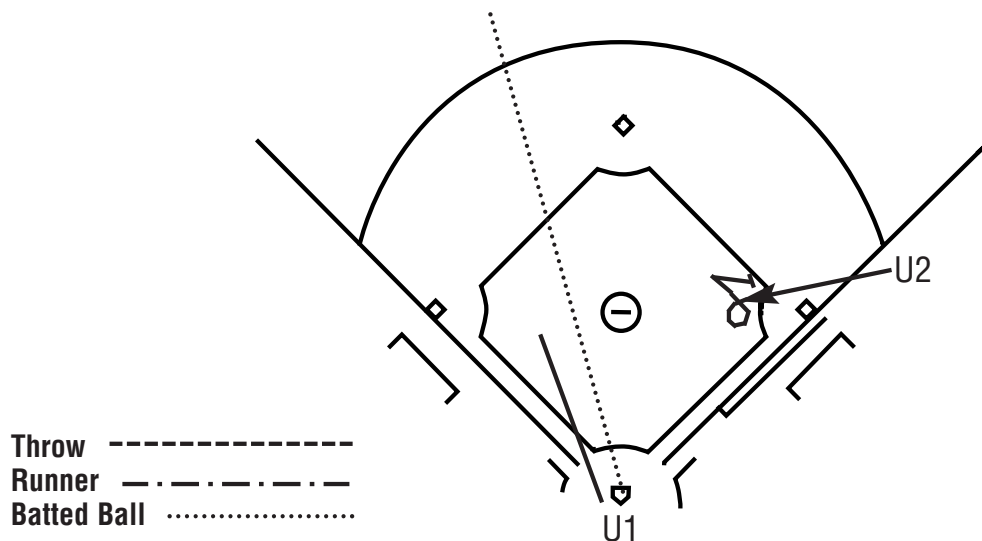
1. Move out on all batted balls; be ready to move to make call on batter-runner advancing to third base. You are responsible for the ground rules on an overthrow at first. In case of an overthrow, U1 should react toward foul territory with the path of the overthrown ball.



2. If U2 has the catch/no catch call on a fly ball, move to watch the batter-runner touch first base and be prepared to move to cover any attempted play on the batter-runner returning to first or to move to make a call at second base if U2 is held up by a ball down the line.



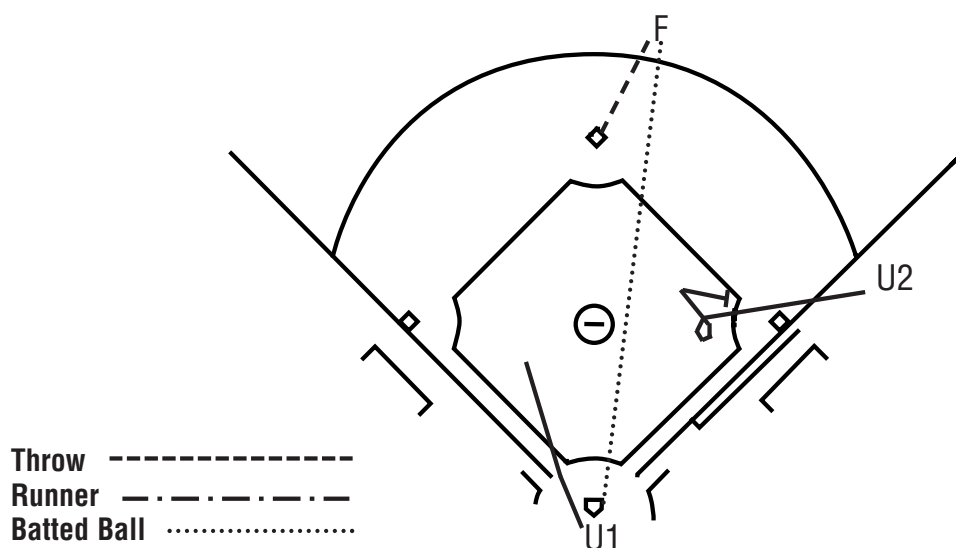
3. Call catch/no catch on all fly balls to the left side of the infield or fielded by the pitcher or catcher, and any foul fly balls fielded by the first baseman between the plate and first base.
4. Call catch/no catch on all fly balls to left field or on which the center fielder moves to his right (left field). On routine fly balls to center field or right field, call catch/no catch if U2 comes in to take a pivot. Make the call verbally to assist U2, who is watching the batter-runner touch first base.



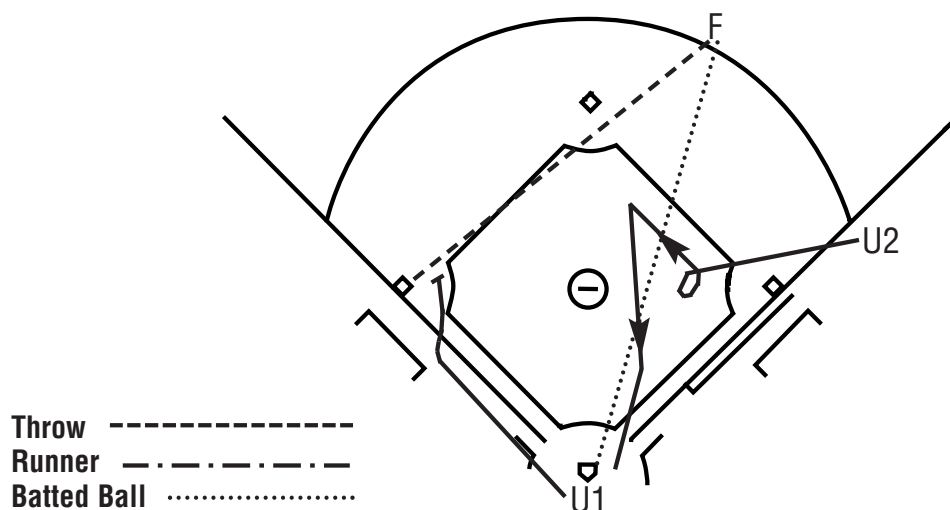
5. Call fair/foul on all batted balls down the third-base line to the foul pole in left field, and all batted balls that are played on or come to rest between home and the front edge of first base. Follow bunted balls down the line.

**U2: POSITION: A  
COVERAGES:**

1. Move to make all calls at first base on plays in the infield. To get a good angle, take three or four quick, hard steps toward the player fielding the ball, then set and let his throw turn you to the bag.
2. On base hits, come into the infield, pivot to watch the batter-runner touch first base, and be ready to move to second base if he should attempt to advance.

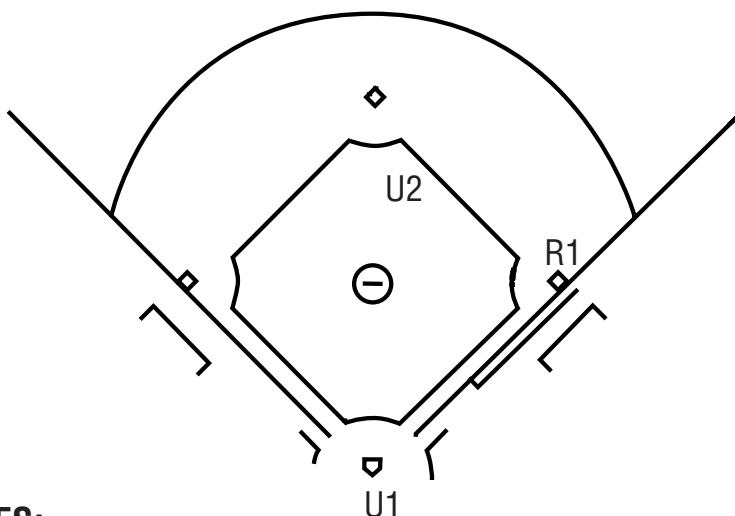


3. On an extra-base hit, take the batter-runner only as far as second base; U1 has him at third. Be alert for the runner returning to second or advancing home on an overthrow at third. Cover the plate for U1.
4. Go out on fair/foul or catch/no catch situations down the right-field line, getting an angle if possible. Be ready to return to take the play at the plate, since U1 has the bases behind you.



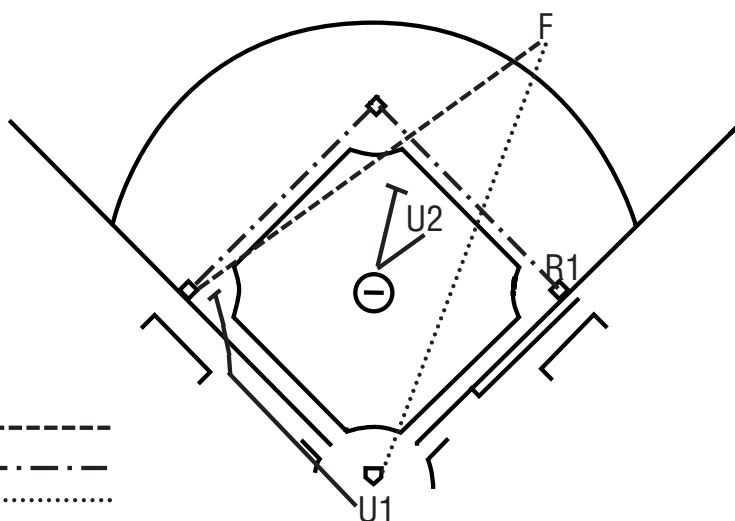
5. Go out on fair/foul or catch/no catch situations down the right-field line, getting an angle if possible. Be ready to return to take the play at the plate, since U1 has the bases behind you. Be sure to go over fly-ball coverages with your partner in the umpire pregame conference. It is important to communicate with each other on fly balls in gray areas. If you are going to take the catch, immediately call out, "I've got the ball!" This will alert your partner to watch the batter-runner.

**ARTICLE 2: R1 AT FIRST BASE ONLY**



**U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Move out on all batted balls; be ready to move to cover a play at third base. The second play in the infield at third base belongs to U1. If R1 advances to third on a base hit, that play at third belongs to U1 unless the ball was hit down the right-field line; in that case U2 would take R1 to third. Go back to the plate on an overthrow at third.

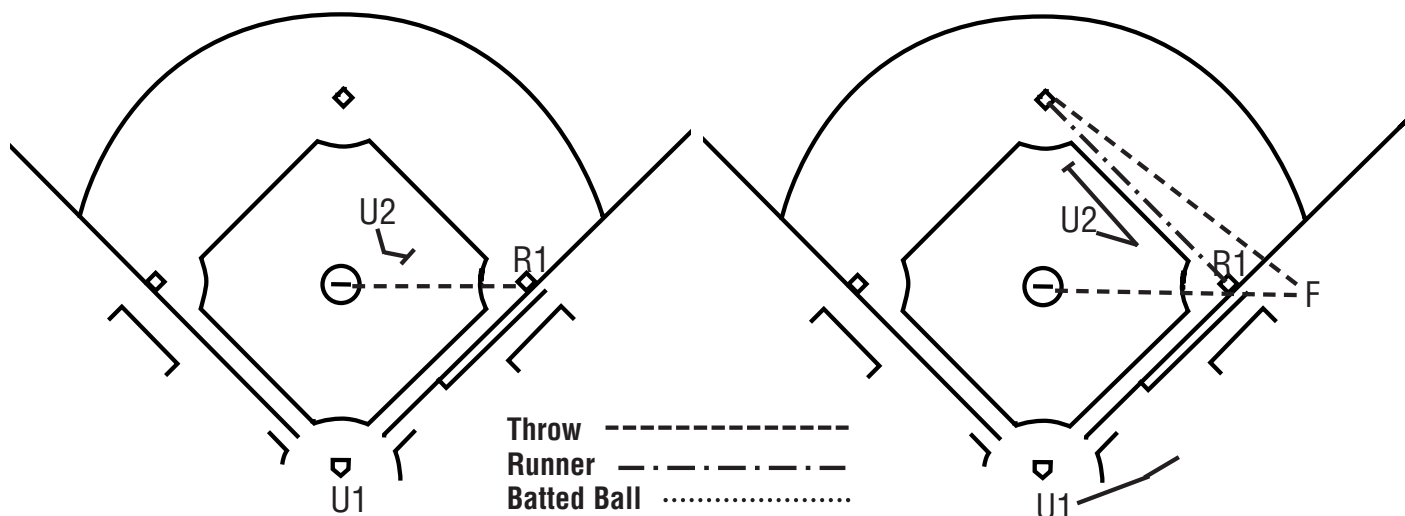


2. Watch all plays in the infield in order to be able to help if asked. Be sure to watch for interference by the retired runner at second base, then look quickly to see if the first baseman keeps his foot on the base. Only offer help if asked by your partner.
3. Call catch/no catch on all fly balls fielded by the pitcher or catcher or down either line, on all foul fly balls, and on any fly balls to the outfield on which the left or right fielder moves toward his respective foul line.
4. Call fair/foul on all balls down both lines to the foul poles. Follow bunted balls down the line.

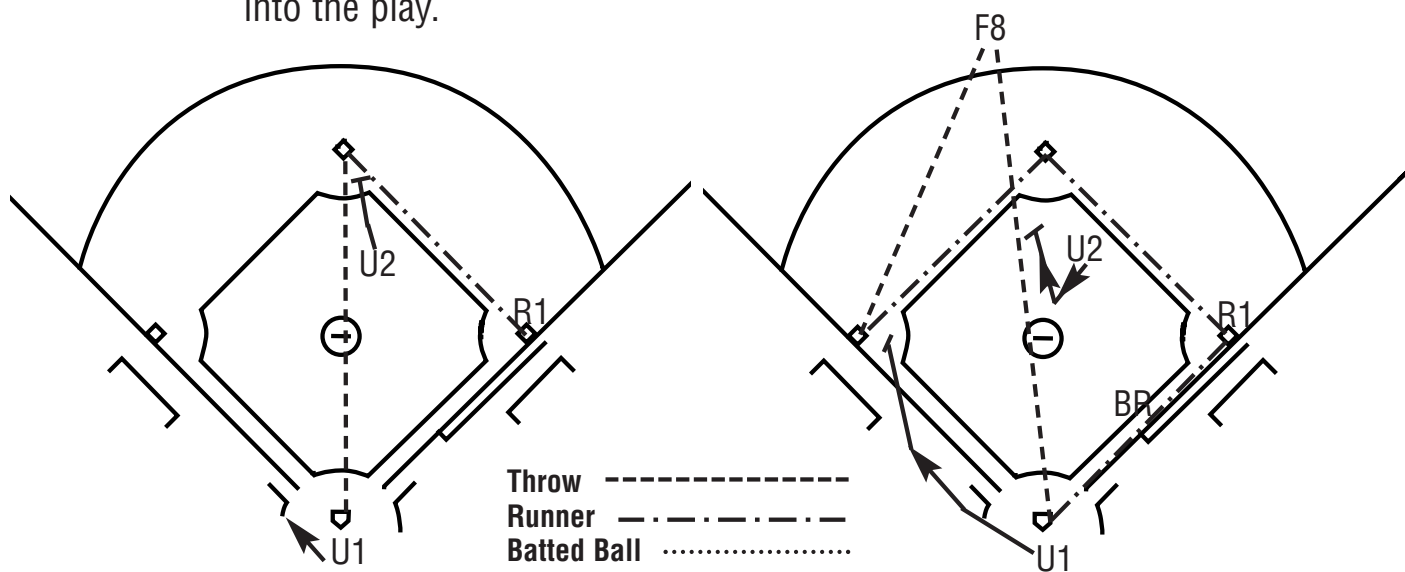
**U2: POSITION: B**

**COVERAGES:**

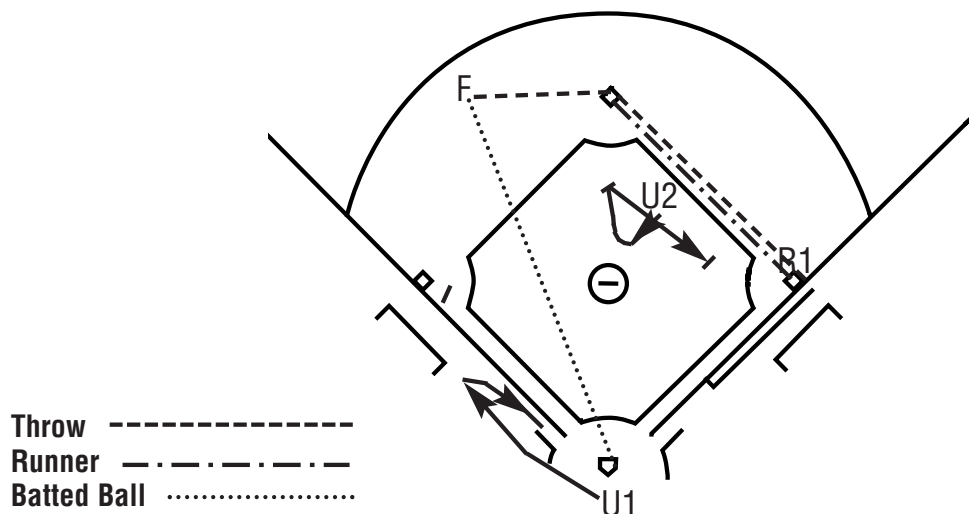
1. Be alert for pickoff attempts at first, either by the pitcher or catcher; be alert for possible balks. A quick step or two toward the plate before turning on a pickoff will improve your angle at first.



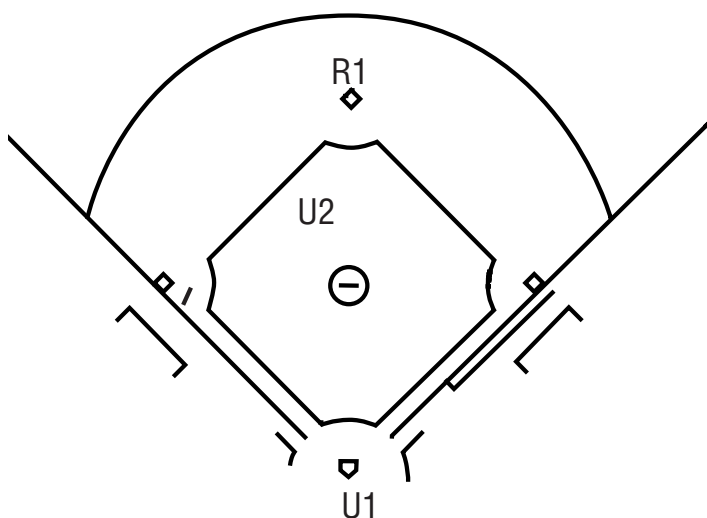
2. On an attempted steal of second, step back and let the throw turn you into the play.



3. On base hits, be sure to watch the runner from first touch second and the batter-runner touch first and any succeeding bases.
4. Call the first play in the infield; on double plays, after seeing the force at second, turn and move to see the play at first base.
5. Call catch/no catch on fly balls fielded in the middle of the infield and on fly balls to the outfield in between the left and right fielders.
6. Be alert to help your partner on checked swings, despite the poor angle you will have.



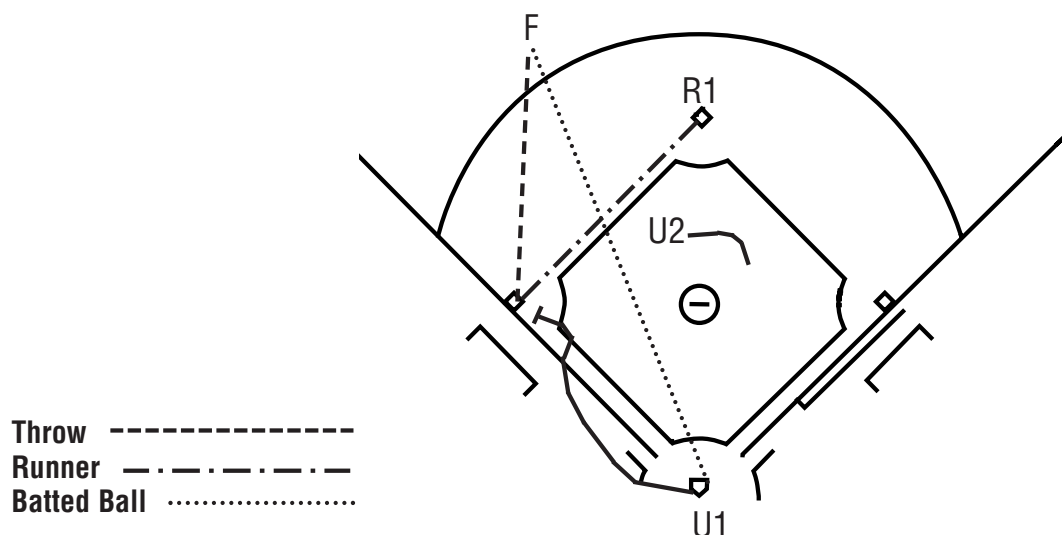
### ARTICLE 3: R1 AT SECOND BASE ONLY



### U1: COVERAGES:

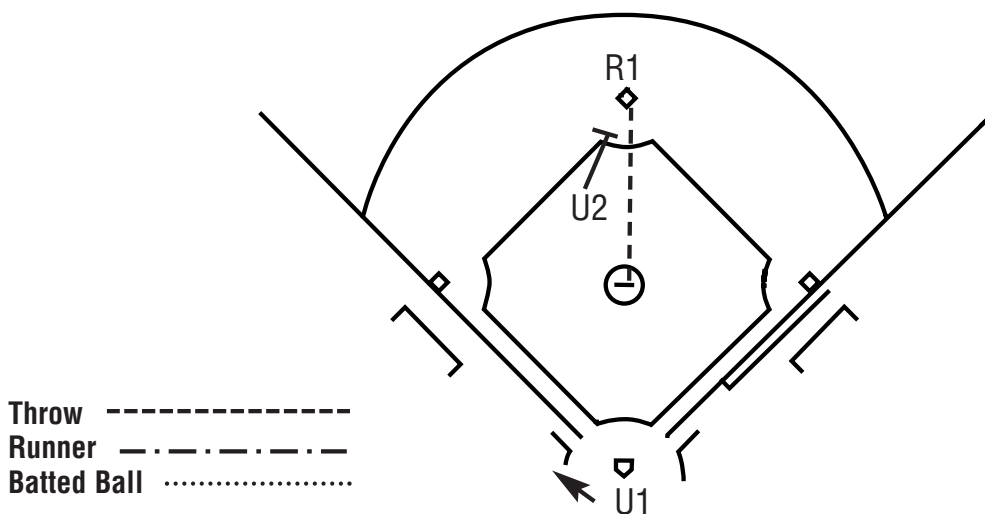
1. Rule fair/foul on ground balls from home plate to the foul pole down both lines; follow bunted balls down the line, but be alert for play situation at home plate; you are responsible for the runner touching third base.
2. On a base hit, move to line up R1's touch of third. Be prepared to cover the play of R1 advancing to home. If R1 returns to third base, U2 will cover that play.
3. On a ball hit in the infield where R1 is trapped between second and third, be sure to watch the batter-runner touch first, then move to third to help out your partner if the rundown continues. Chances are good that the batter-runner will try to advance to second base on a prolonged rundown.
4. Call catch/no catch on all fly balls fielded by the pitcher or catcher or down either line, on all foul fly balls, and on any fly balls to the outfield on which the left or right fielder moves toward his respective foul line.

5. Call safe/out on R1 advancing after a caught fly ball, except a fly down the right-field line. If going to make a call at third, watch for the pitcher moving to third to back up the play.



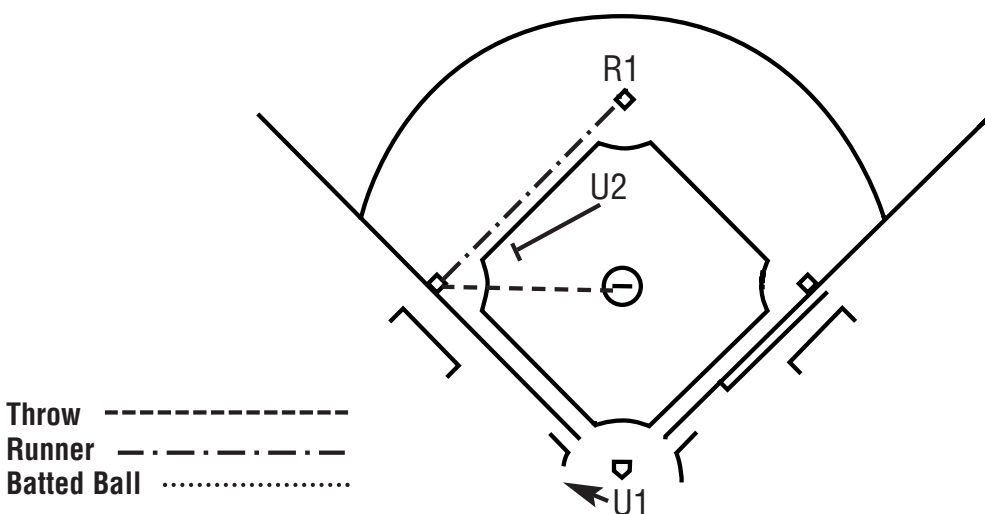
**U2: POSITION: C  
 COVERAGES:**

1. Watch out for possible pickoff attempt at second by either the pitcher or catcher.

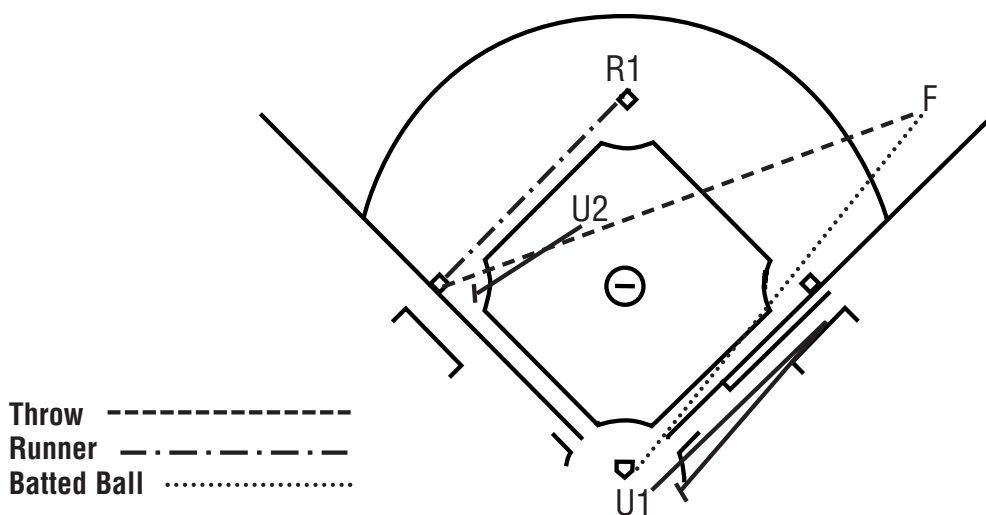


2. Be alert for attempted steal of third base. A quick step toward the plate before turning to move to the base will improve your angle on the steal play.
3. On ground balls in the infield, watch the ball as it is fielded and let the throw take you to the play. Remember that the play is not always to first base, so don't anticipate. If the play is to first, move toward the base, get

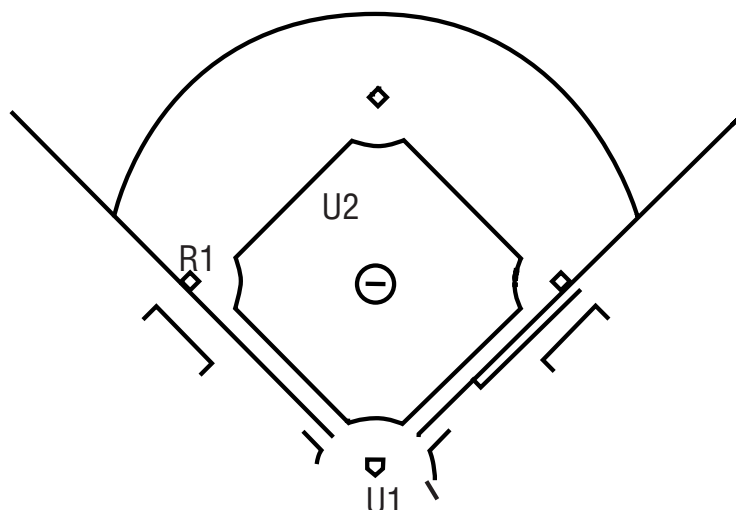
- set, make the call, and then take a step or two toward the base after making the call.
4. Call catch/no catch on fly balls fielded in the middle of the infield and on fly balls to the outfield in between the left and right fielders.
  5. Move to line up the tag of R1 advancing to third after a caught fly ball; U1 has the play at third and you will have any subsequent play at the plate. If U1 has gone down the right-field line to rule catch/no catch or fair/foul, you must take R1 into third base.



6. On routine fly balls or plays in the infield on which R1 is not advancing to third, be alert for throws to second base attempting to catch R1 off the base.
7. On base hits, watch the batter-runner touch first and second.

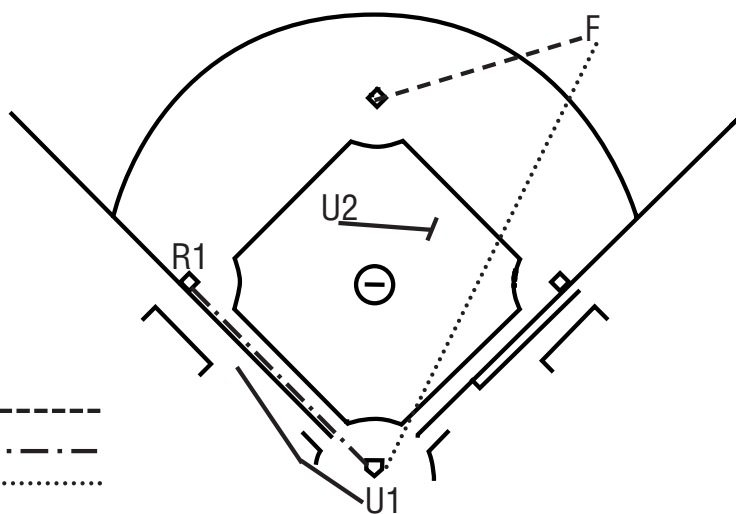


ARTICLE 4: R1 AT THIRD BASE ONLY



U1: COVERAGES:

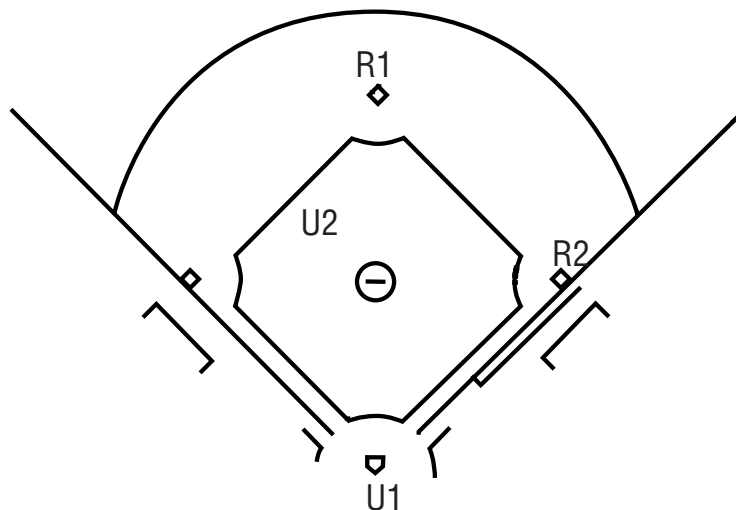
1. Movement is limited because of potential play at the plate; make all calls on R1 advancing to home plate.
2. Be alert for possible squeeze or attempted steal at home. Make sure pitcher's delivery is legal, and be sure to call the pitch first, then the play.
3. Call fair/foul on all balls down both lines to the foul poles.
4. Call catch/no catch on all fly balls fielded by the pitcher or catcher or down either line, on all foul fly balls, and on any fly balls to the outfield on which the left or right fielder moves toward his respective foul line.
5. On fly balls on which there is a potential advance of R1 to home, move to line up the tag.
6. On base hits, be sure to watch R1 touch home plate, then be alert to move to cover third if necessary.



Throw -----  
Runner - - - - -  
Batted Ball .....  
U1

**U2: POSITION: C****COVERAGES:**

1. Be alert for possible pickoff attempts by either the pitcher or catcher. Make sure the pickoff move is legal.
2. On ground balls in the infield, watch the ball as it is fielded and let the throw turn you into the play. Remember, the first play is not automatically to first; don't anticipate.
3. Call catch/no catch on fly balls fielded in the middle of the infield and on fly balls to the outfield in between the left and right fielders. Stay in; do not cross the base paths to go out to make a call.
4. On base hits, watch the batter-runner touch first and second bases.

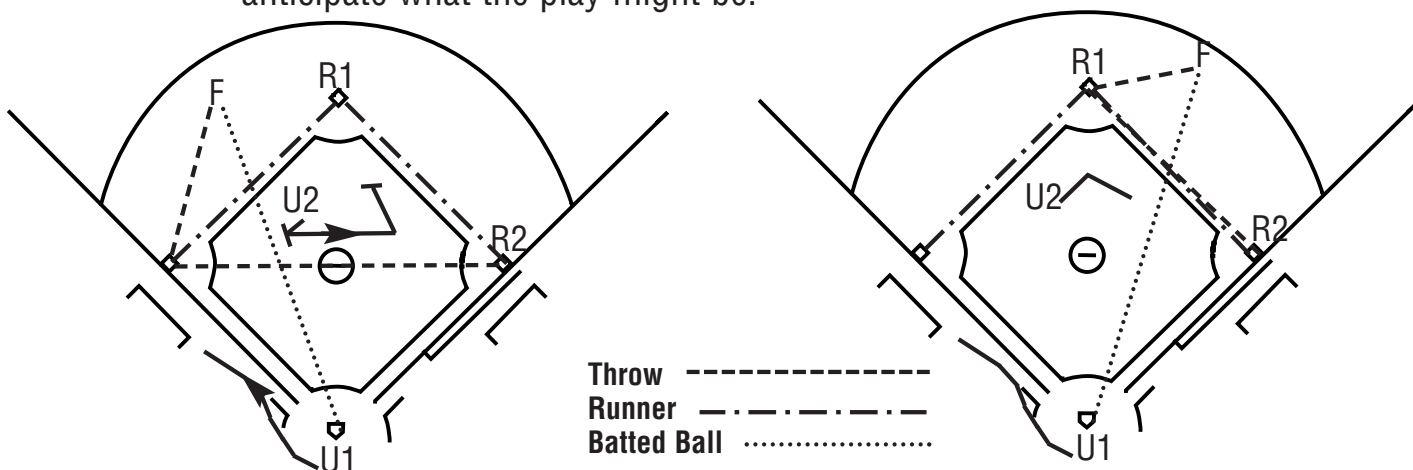
**ARTICLE 5: R1 AT SECOND BASE AND R2 AT FIRST BASE****U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Be aware of the infield-fly situation with less than two outs; signal your partner.
2. Call fair/foul down both lines to the foul poles.
3. Call catch/no catch on all fly balls fielded by the pitcher or catcher or down either line, on all foul fly balls, and on any fly balls in the outfield on which the left or right fielder moves toward his respective foul line. Observe the tag on R1 at second base on any fly ball hit to the outfield.
4. On ground balls in the infield, move to watch the slide of a retired runner on a double-play attempt; watch the touch of third base by advancing R1. Move to be able to make a call at third if the first play in the infield is at first or second; any succeeding play at third is yours. It is unlikely, but a potential play at the plate following a bobbled ball or a double-play attempt would be yours as well.
5. Move to make the call on R1 advancing after a caught fly ball unless ruling on a ball down the right-field line.

6. On base hits, move to watch RI touch third base and be ready to retreat to make a call on RI advancing to the plate. Also be ready to move to third for a play on R2.
7. Be prepared to call the play at third base if it is the second play in the infield, unless RI is advancing to home.

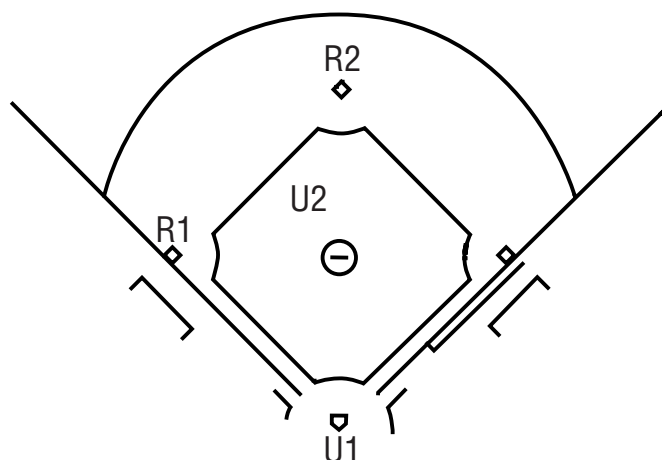
**U2: POSITION: C  
COVERAGES:**

1. Be aware of the infield-fly situation with less than two outs; signal your partner.
2. Call catch/no catch on fly balls fielded in the middle of the infield and on fly balls to the outfield between the left and right fielders. Be alert for line drives which may become double plays.
3. Call the first play in the infield; on double plays, after seeing the force out, turn and move to get position for the back end of the play. Don't anticipate what the play might be.



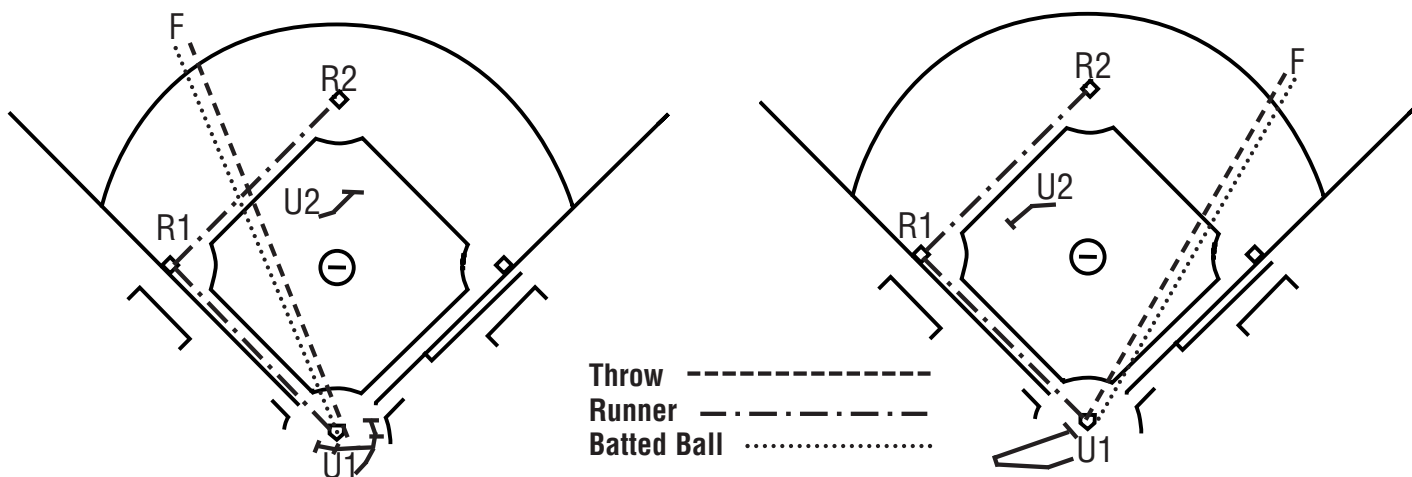
4. On fly balls to the outfield, observe the tag of R2 at first base. R2 advancing to second or R1 coming back is yours; be prepared to take R1 into third if U1 has a fair/foul call down the right-field line.
5. On base hits, watch R2 touch second base, then turn to pick up the batter-runner touching first. Make all calls at second or first; be prepared to take following runners into third if U1 has a call at home.

**ARTICLE 6: R1 AT THIRD AND R2 AT SECOND**

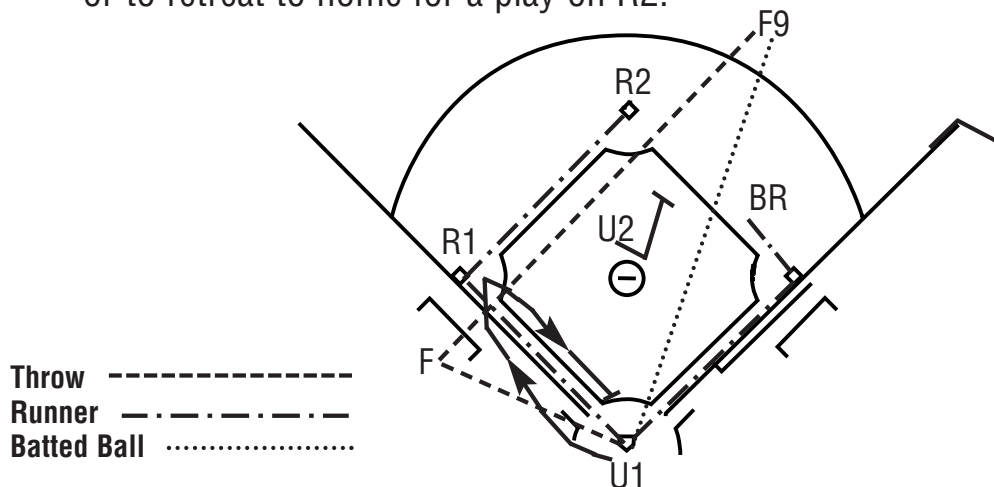


**U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Movement is very limited because of potential play at the plate; make all calls on R1 advancing home.
2. Be alert for possible steal of home or squeeze play. Make sure pitcher's delivery is legal; be sure to call pitch first, then the play.
3. Call fair/foul down both lines to foul poles.
4. Call catch/no catch on all fly balls fielded by the pitcher or catcher or down either line, on all foul fly balls, and on any fly balls to the outfield on which the left or right fielder moves toward his respective foul line.
5. Move to line up the tag of R1 at third on any fly ball to the outfield. Make calls at home plate from base line extended.

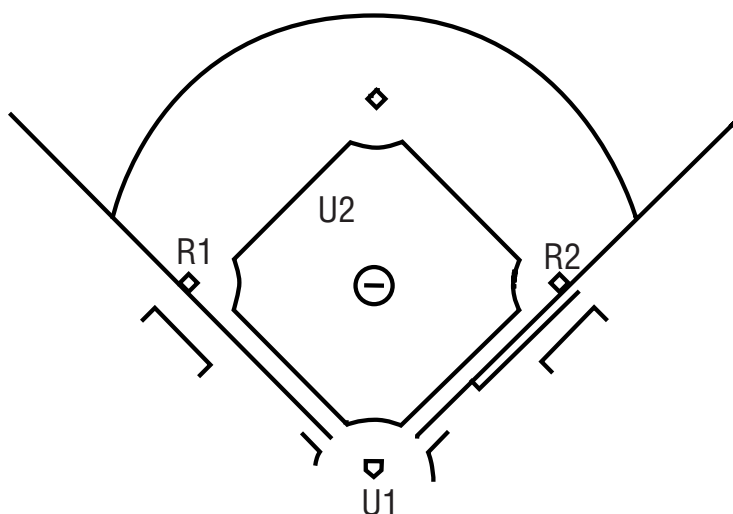


6. With two outs, be alert for a time play situation involving R2 and the batter-runner. Signal your partner. Watch the play on R2 and listen for your partner's call to determine if R1 scores before the third out.
7. On a ground ball in the infield with the first play being made at first, move up the third-base line in foul ground. Watch R1 touch home and get into position to make a call on R2 at third.
8. On a base hit, move up the third-base line in foul ground as above. Watch R1 touch home plate, then get in position to either move to third or to retreat to home for a play on R2.

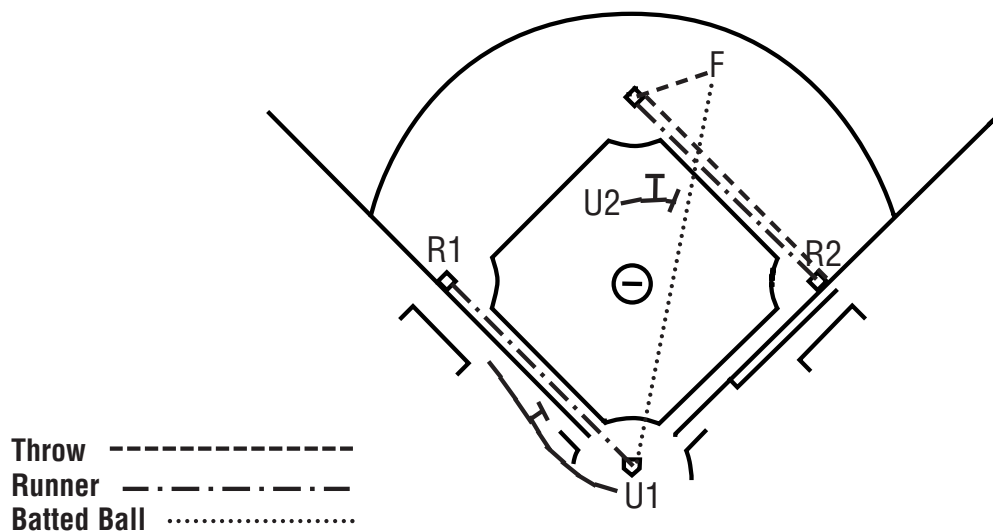


**U2: POSITION: C****COVERAGES:**

1. Be alert for possible pickoff attempts at second or third by pitcher or catcher. Be sure pitcher's move is legal.
2. Call catch/no catch on fly balls fielded in the middle of the infield and on fly balls to the outfield in between the left and right fielders.
3. On fly balls to the outfield, move to line up the tag of R2 at second base.
4. With two outs, be alert for a time play situation involving R2 and the batter-runner. Signal your partner. Make the out call on the batter-runner in a loud voice so your partner can hear.
5. On base hits, watch the batter-runner touch first base and be prepared to either take him into second base or returning to first base.

**ARTICLE 7: R1 AT THIRD AND R2 AT FIRST****U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Make all calls on R1 advancing home. Be alert for a possible steal of home or a double steal. A squeeze is less likely, but not impossible.
2. Call fair/foul down both lines to the foul poles.
3. Call catch/no catch on all fly balls fielded by the pitcher or catcher or down the lines, on all foul fly balls, and on any fly balls to the outfield on which the left or right fielder moves toward his respective foul line.
4. On any play situation, move to watch R1 touch home plate, then cover other plays. On ground balls in the infield, your second responsibility is to watch the play at second for interference with an attempted double play.



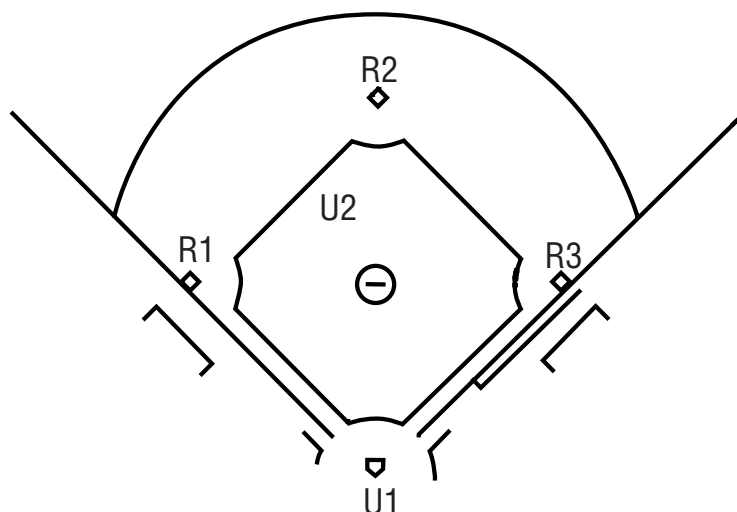
5. If the first play on a ground ball is on R1 at home, remember it is not a force.
6. On fly balls to the outfield, move to line up the tag of R1 at third base, then move back to the plate.
7. On base hits, move toward third in foul ground, ready to cover third on a play there or to retreat to the plate if R2 attempts to score on the hit.

#### U2: POSITION: C

#### COVERAGES:

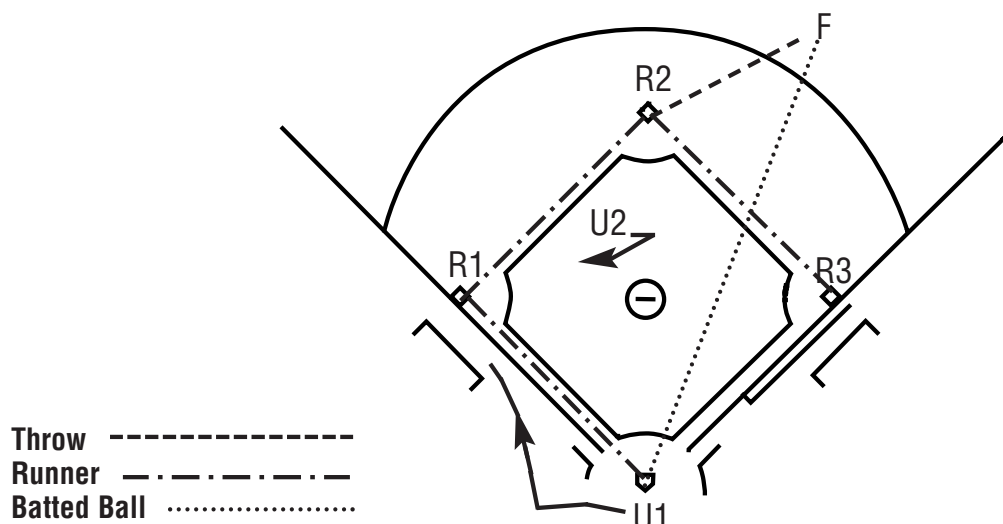
1. Be alert for pickoff attempts by the pitcher or catcher at first or third. Make sure the pitcher's move is legal on the feint to third followed by a throw back to first.
2. Especially with two outs, watch for the delayed double steal rundown play. Be sure to make a loud and clear call on the putout because of the time play potential.
3. Make any call on the first play by an infielder, if not at the plate. Be alert for line drives which may become double plays. On ground ball double plays, watch the force out, then move and turn to get into position for the call on the back end of the play.
4. Call catch/no catch on fly balls fielded in the middle of the infield and on fly balls to the outfield between the left and right fielders.
5. On base hits, watch R2 touch second, then look to see the batter/runner touch first. Stay aware of the positions of the runners and your partner, since R2 could either try to return to second or get caught in a rundown between second and third, in which case the play at second is yours. If the batter/runner attempts to reach second, the play at second is also yours. Obviously, communication will be important in avoiding double calls, or worse, no calls.

ARTICLE 8: R1 AT THIRD, R2 AT SECOND, AND R3 AT FIRST



**UI: COVERAGES:**

1. Be alert for steal, passed ball or squeeze play. Call the pitch first, then the play.
2. Hold position on all balls in play to make calls on all runners advancing to home plate.
3. Call fair/foul on balls down both lines to the foul poles.
4. Call catch/no catch on all fly balls fielded by the pitcher or catcher or down either line, on all foul fly balls, and on any fly balls to the outfield on which the left or right fielder moves toward his respective foul line.
5. On all balls in play, first watch R1 touch the plate, then look to cover other plays, such as interference on an attempted double play.
6. Move away from the plate to line up the touch of R1 at third base on fly balls to the outfield. If it is clear there will be no play at the plate, move up the third-base line in foul ground while watching R1 score in case of a play at third base. Let your partner know you have third covered.



7. Be careful on a play at the plate not to get too close to the play, either on a force out or a tag, because you don't want to get taken out on the play.
8. Be alert for possible time play situations with two outs or infield-fly situations with less than two outs, and signal your partner in either situation.

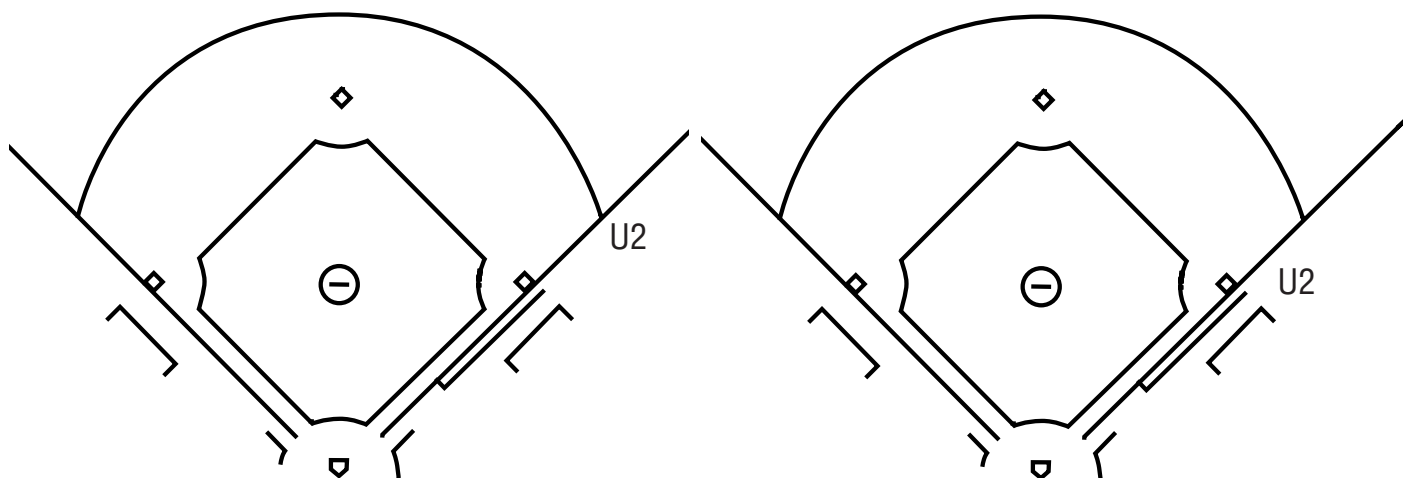
**U2: POSITION: C****COVERAGES:**

1. Be alert for any potential pickoffs. Make sure the pitcher's move is legal.
2. Call catch/no catch on fly balls fielded in the middle of the infield and on fly balls to the outfield in between the left and right fielders.
3. Make the call on the first play on a ground ball hit in the infield at any base except home.
4. Move to line up tag of R2 at second base on fly balls to the outfield; look back at first to get some hint as to R3's tag at first. If the throw after the catch goes to the plate, be ready to move to any base to make a call on an advancing or returning runner.
5. On base hits, watch R3 touch second, then look to see the batter-runner touch first, and be ready to go wherever you are needed to make a call. Generally, first and second are your call; third and home will belong to your partner. COMMUNICATE! In this situation, the two of you are hopelessly outnumbered by possible play situations.
6. Be alert to potential time play situations with two outs and infield-fly situations with less than two outs; signal your partner.

**XVI: 3-MAN MECHANICS****STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES – 3-MAN CREWS**

**ABBREVIATIONS:** The plate umpire will be referred to as U1, the first-base umpire as U2, and the third-base umpire will be referred to as U3. It is assumed that in all play situations, U1 will start out behind the plate. There are four basic positions for the base umpires: positions A, B, C and D. These positions are described as follows, and will remain unchanged, regardless of the number of outs:

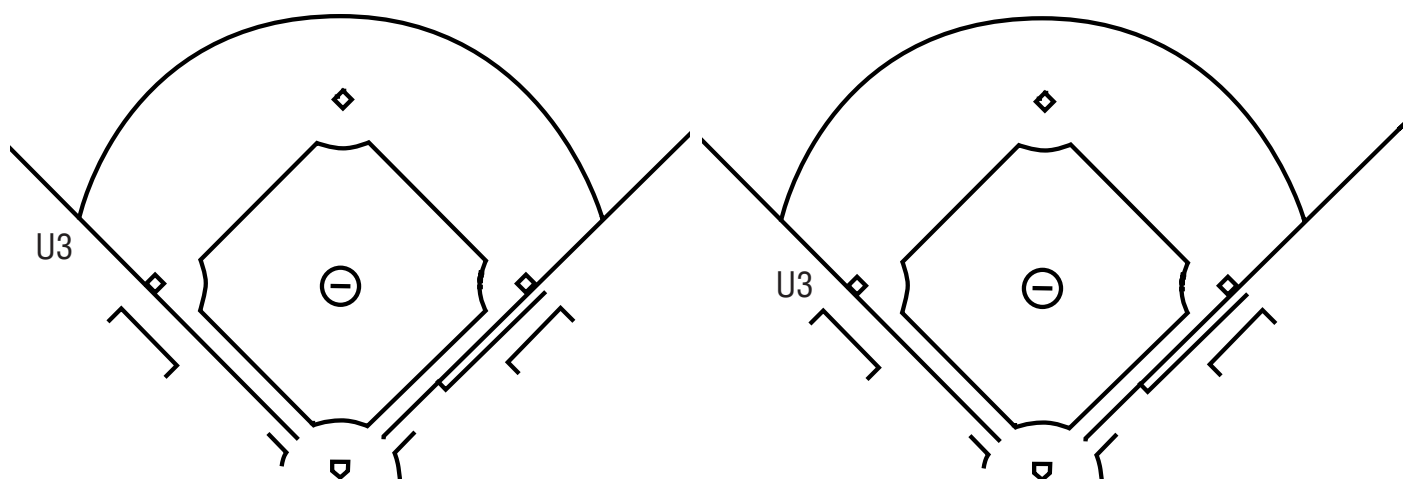
**Position A -** Both feet in foul territory, approximately 10 feet behind the first baseman.



**Position B** — At the infield cutout near second base, first-base side of the infield, feet parallel to the pitcher’s plate, able to move to cover a pickoff attempt at second base.

**Position C** — Halfway between the mound and second base, third-base side of the infield, feet parallel to the pitcher’s plate, able to move to cover a pickoff attempt or attempted steal at either second base or third base.

**Position D** — Both feet in foul territory, approximately 10 feet behind the third baseman.



If covering a base with runners on, Positions A and D are modified somewhat in that the umpire on the baseline will move up closer to the base, still in foul territory, in order to get an angle on the pickoff attempt and line up the pitcher’s foot crossing over the back edge of the pitcher’s plate.

**GENERAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- UI:**
1. Call balls and strikes.
  2. Rule fair/foul on any batted ball that is played on or comes to rest in front

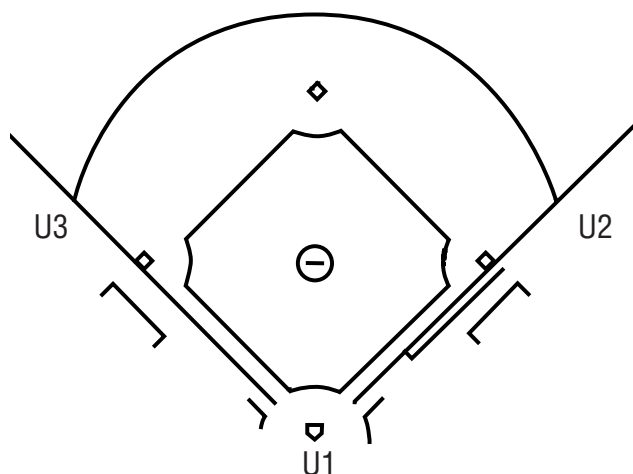
- of the front edge of the base down the first-base line with U2 in Position A and down the third-base line with U3 in position D. If either U2 or U3 is in the infield, rule fair/foul all the way to the foul pole on the open side.
3. Rule catch/no catch on all foul fly balls behind home plate and up to the first- and third-base bags, or on any fly balls which are taken by the catcher, and on fly balls or line drives to the pitcher.
  4. When the ball is hit, move out from behind the plate in order to be ready to go to cover a base or line up a fly ball when responsible for the touch or tagup.
  5. Signal partners to remind them of possible rotations on an ensuing play, or a possible infield-fly situation and any possible timing plays.
  6. Watch every play as if it were yours to call, both because your partners may appeal to you for help and because as umpire-in-chief you may be required to decide on play situations involving rules.
- U2:**
1. Make calls at first base on plays in the infield.
  2. Rule fair/foul on ground balls down the first-base line from the front of the bag, especially on balls bounding over the bag, and on fly balls from the bag to the foul pole if in Position A. Try and assist on any foul balls hitting the batter in the batter's box.
  3. Rule catch/no catch on fly balls and line drives in the infield which are taken by the first or second basemen.
  4. When in Position A, move with the pitch (one or two steps), so that when the ball is hit, you are ready to move and cover any plays for which you are responsible.
  5. Signal partners to remind them of possible rotations on an ensuing play, or a possible infield-fly situation and any possible timing plays.
- U3:**
1. Move toward Position C on ground balls or base hits in order to cover plays at second base.
  2. Rule fair/foul on ground balls down the third-base line from the front of the bag, especially on balls bounding over the bag, and on fly balls from the bag to the foul pole if in Position D. Try and assist on any foul balls hitting the batter in the batter's box.
  3. Rule catch/no catch on fly balls or line drives in the infield which are handled by the shortstop or third baseman.
  4. When in Position D, move with the pitch (one or two steps), so that when the ball is hit, you are ready to move and cover any plays for which you are responsible.
  5. Signal partners to remind them of possible rotations on an ensuing play, or a possible infield-fly situation and any possible timing plays.
  6. Rule on possible interference by runner at second base on an attempted double play.

**NOTE:** If either U2 or U3 goes out, coverage reverts to the two-man system. THE UMPIRE WHO GOES OUT STAYS OUT!

**CHECKED SWINGS:**

Respond only if U1 asks. U1 should appeal to U2 on right handers and U3 on left handers, even if they are in Positions B or C.

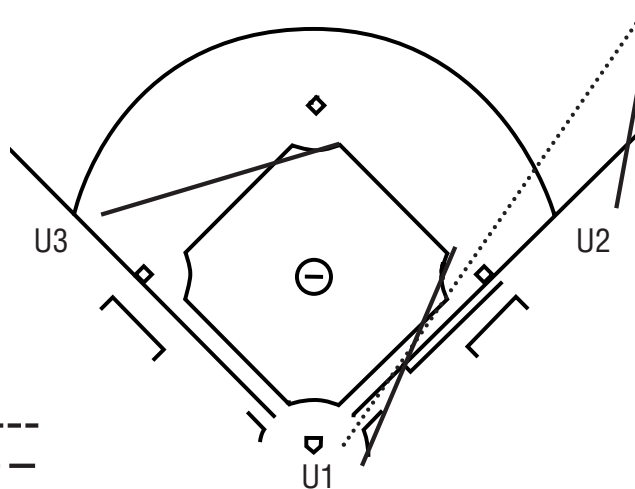
**ARTICLE 1: NO RUNNERS ON BASE**



**U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Move out on all batted balls; be ready to move to cover batter-runner advancing to third base.
2. If U2 goes out, move to watch batter-runner touch first base and be alert to cover attempted play on batter-runner returning to first.

(NOTE: SEE DIAGRAM.)



Throw -----  
Runner - - - - -  
Batted Ball .....  
U1

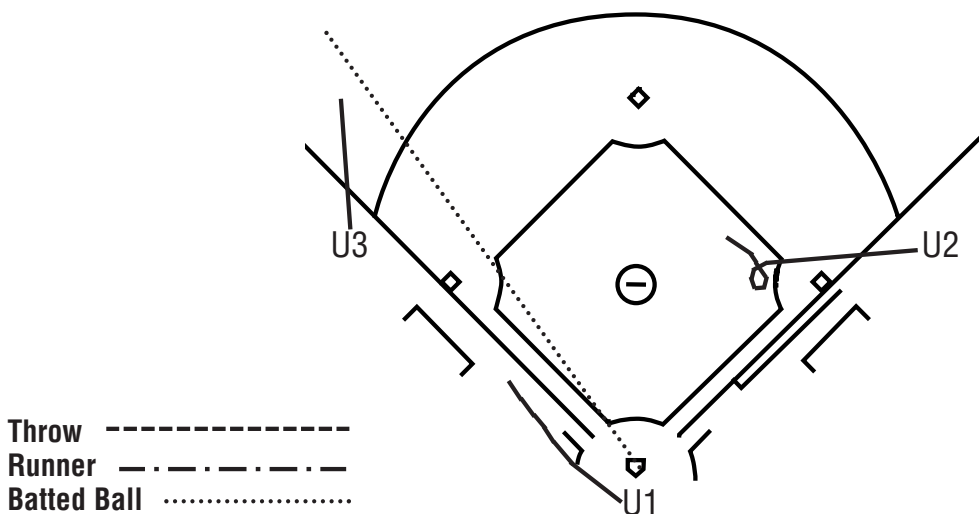
3. Call catch/no catch on all fair fly balls taken by the catcher, on fly balls and line drives taken by the pitcher, and on all foul fly balls between home and the first- or third-base bags.

4. Call fair/foul up to the front edge of the first- or third-base bags; follow bunted balls down the line.
5. Appeal checked swings on right-handed batters to U2 and on left-handed batters to U3.

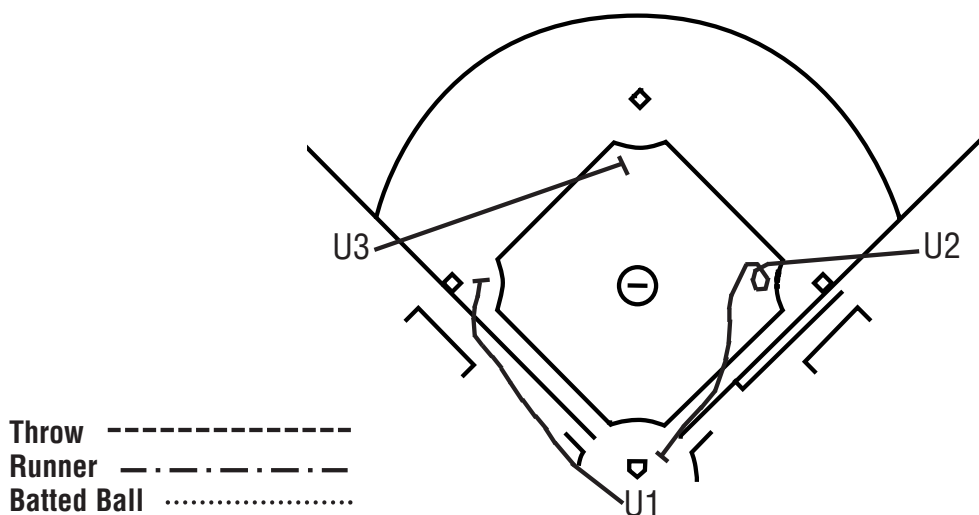
**U2: POSITION: A**

**COVERAGES:**

1. Move to make all calls at first base on plays in the infield.
2. If U3 goes out on a fly ball or is pinned at third base on a fair/foul call, come in, pivot, watch the batter-runner touch first base, and be ready either to take him into second base or to cover on a ball thrown behind him returning to first.



3. On a base hit, come in, pivot, watch the batter-runner touch first base, and be ready to cover on a ball thrown behind him returning to first.
4. On an extra-base hit, come in, pivot, watch the batter-runner touch first base, then be alert to cover home if U1 has gone to third base.

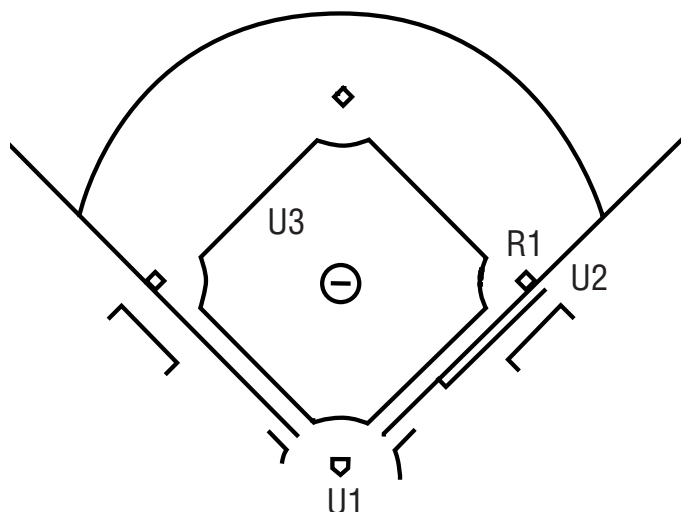


5. Call catch/no catch on fly balls to right field and on fly balls to center field that move the center fielder towards right field, on all fly balls or line drives taken by the first or second baseman, and on foul fly balls past the first base bag. Go out on potential problems.
6. Call fair/foul on ground balls past the front edge of the first-base bag or bounding over the bag and on all fly balls past the first-base bag.
7. Be alert to help on checked swings on right-handed batters if asked by U1.

**U3: POSITION: D  
COVERAGES:**

1. Move toward Position C on all ground balls or base hits in order to make calls on any plays at second base.
2. If U2 goes out, go toward Position C.
3. Call catch/no catch on fly balls to center field on which the center fielder moves back or comes straight in or moves toward left field, on any fly balls to left field, on all fly balls or line drives taken by the shortstop or third baseman, and on foul fly balls past the third-base bag. Go out on potential problems.
4. Call fair/foul on ground balls past the front edge of the third-base bag or bounding over the bag and on all fly balls past the third-base bag. (NOTE: If pinned at third on a fair/foul call, STAY!)
5. Be alert to help on checked swings to left-handed batters if asked by U1.

**ARTICLE 2: R1 AT FIRST BASE ONLY**



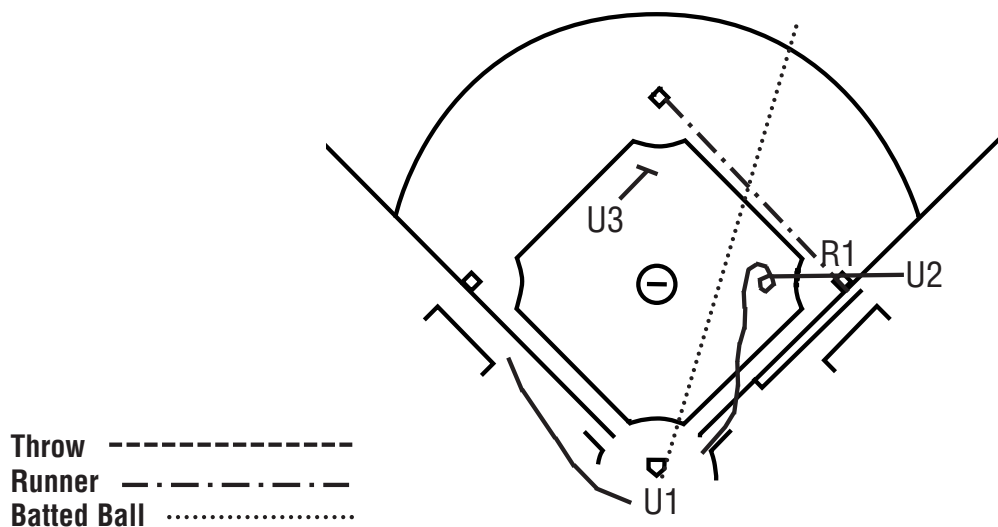
**U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Move out on all batted balls; be ready to move to cover play at third base.
2. Watch all plays in the infield in order to help if asked.
3. Call catch/no catch on fair fly balls taken by the pitcher or catcher, foul fly balls between home and the first- or third-base bags, and fly balls down the third-base line on which the third baseman and/or the left-fielder moves toward the third-base foul line. Call catch/no catch on fly balls down third-base line in which you also have fair/foul responsibility.
4. Call fair/foul up to the front edge of the first-base bag and all the way to the foul pole down the third-base line; follow bunted balls down the line.
5. If U2 goes out on a fly ball, watch the tag of R1 at first base and the touch of the batter-runner at first.
6. U1 moves to third on base hits and extra-base hits to make possible call on runner from first.

**U2: POSITION A:** Both feet in foul territory, 10 to 15 feet behind first base, in position to make call on pickoff.

**COVERAGES:**

1. Set up to get angle on pickoff — look through the runner, bag and first baseman toward pitcher; watch for balk on pickoff attempt. Signal safe/out on pickoff only if there is a tag.
2. Move to make all calls at first base on plays in the infield.
3. Watch batter-runner touch first base on a base hit; be ready to release batter-runner and move to cover home plate if U1 has gone to cover third base.

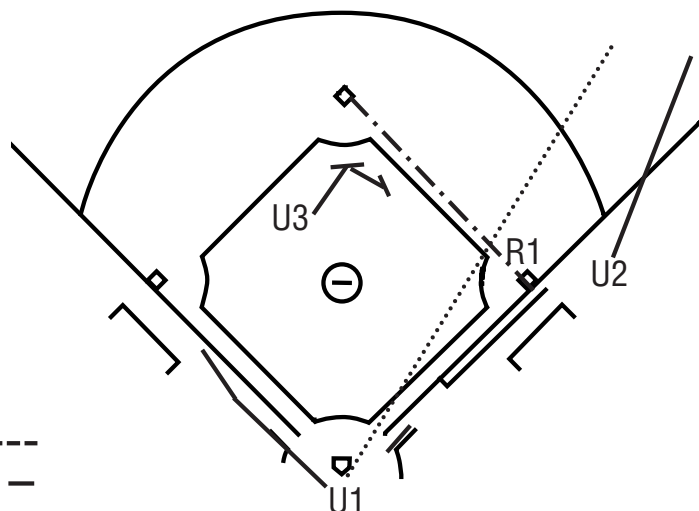


4. Call fair/foul on ground ball past front edge of first-base bag; move to call foul fly past first base.
5. Move to line up touch and tagup at first base on all fly balls if not responsible for catch/no catch, or on routine fly balls to right field.
6. Call catch/no catch on fly balls to right field, on fly balls that move the center fielder in/out/or to his left, on all fly balls taken by the first base-

- man or second baseman, and on all foul fly balls past the first base line.
- 7. Call R1 returning to first base on rundown; use outside position.
- 8. Be alert to help out on checked swings on right-handed hitters if asked by U1.

**U3: POSITION: C  
COVERAGES:**

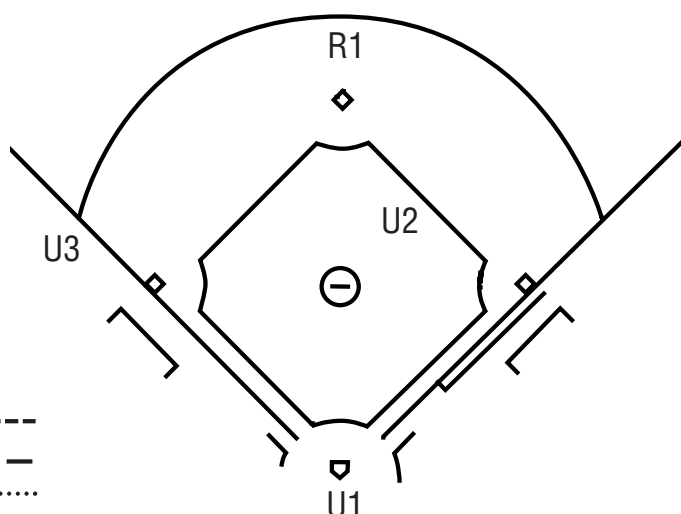
- 1. Turn with throw to make call on steal play at second base.
- 2. Move to cover both batter-runner and R1 if U2 goes out for any reason.



Throw -----  
 Runner .....  
 Batted Ball .....

- 3. Make all calls on plays at second base.
- 4. Be alert for interference/illegal slides at second base on double plays.
- 5. Call catch/no catch on fly balls to left field (unless there is a fair/foul call by U1), fly balls that move the center fielder to his right, on fair fly balls taken by the shortstop or third baseman (unless potential fair/foul calls); DO NOT leave the infield.
- 6. Call R1 advancing to second base on rundown; use inside position.
- 7. Be alert to help out on check swings if asked by U1.

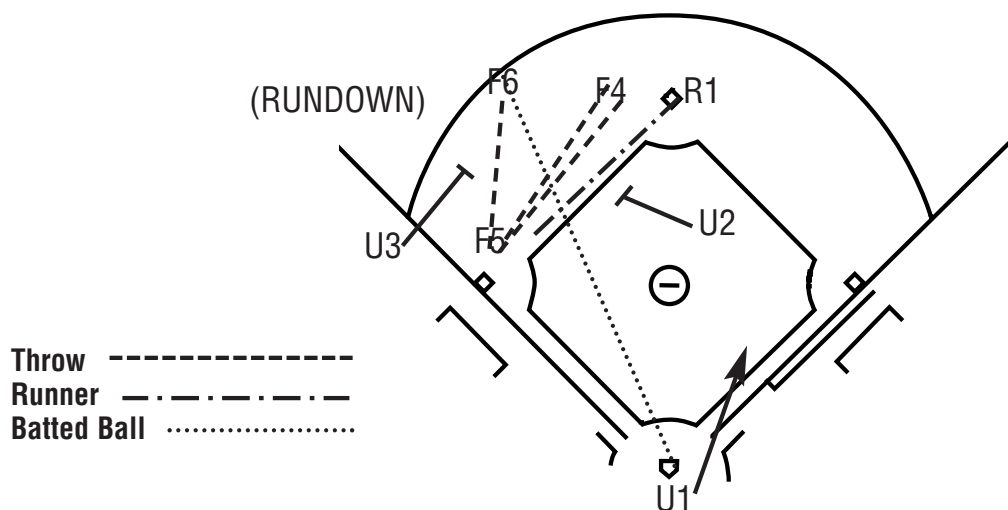
**ARTICLE 3: R1 AT SECOND BASE ONLY**



Throw -----  
 Runner .....  
 Batted Ball .....

**U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Rule fair/foul on ground balls from home plate to the front edge of the third-base bag and all the way to the foul pole down the first-base line; follow bunted balls down the line, but be alert for possible play situation at home, however unlikely.
2. When the ball is hit, move out from behind the plate; on a base hit, be ready to make a call on R1 advancing to home plate. On a play at the plate, set up along the third-base line extended.
3. If U3 goes out for any reason, watch R1 touch third base; be in position to move to make a call on R1.
4. On a ground ball in the infield, watch the batter-runner touch first base if R1 has been caught in a rundown between second and third.



5. Call catch/no catch on fair fly balls taken by the pitcher or catcher, on fly balls to the outfield on which the right fielder moves toward the first-base foul line, and on all foul fly balls between home plate and the first-or third-base bags or down the right-field foul line.
6. Make all calls on runners advancing to home plate.

**U2: POSITION: B  
COVERAGES:**

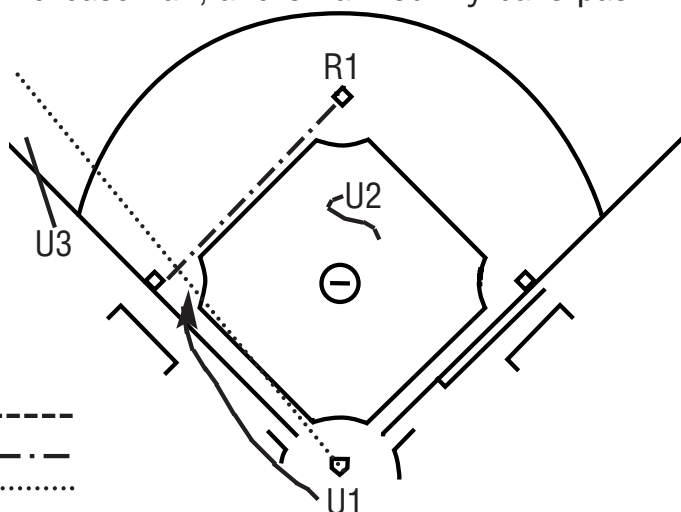
1. Move to make all calls on the batter-runner at first base; be alert for R1 being caught in between second and third on a ground ball.
2. Make all calls on R1 at second base.
3. Call catch/no catch on fly ball/line drives to the center fielder that move him to his left, fly balls to right field (unless there is a fair/foul call by U1), on fly balls taken by the first baseman or second baseman (unless there is a potential fair/foul call); line up tagup of R1 advancing from second after the touch of the caught fly ball.

- If U3 goes out for any reason, you are responsible for all plays on the bases. Be alert to help out on check swings by right-handed batters if asked by U1.

**U3: POSITION: D**

**COVERAGES:**

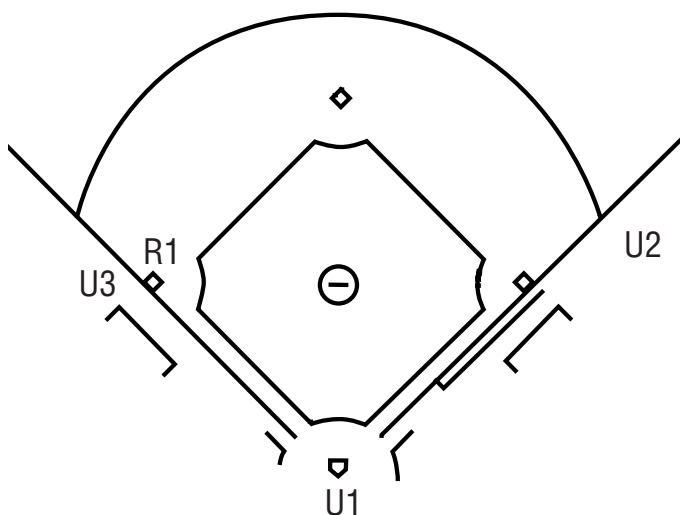
- Move to make all calls at third base on plays in the infield, or on R1 advancing to third base after tagging up on a fly ball and steal attempt at third.
- Call catch/no catch on fly balls to left field, fly balls to center that move the center fielder in/back/or to his right, on all fly balls taken by the short-stop or third baseman, and on all foul fly balls past third base .



Throw -----  
 Runner - . - . - .  
 Batted Ball .....

- Call fair/foul on ground balls past the front edge of third base or bounding over the bag and on all fly balls past third base.
- Be alert to help on checked swings if asked by U1.

**ARTICLE 4: R1 AT THIRD BASE ONLY**



**U1: COVERAGES:**

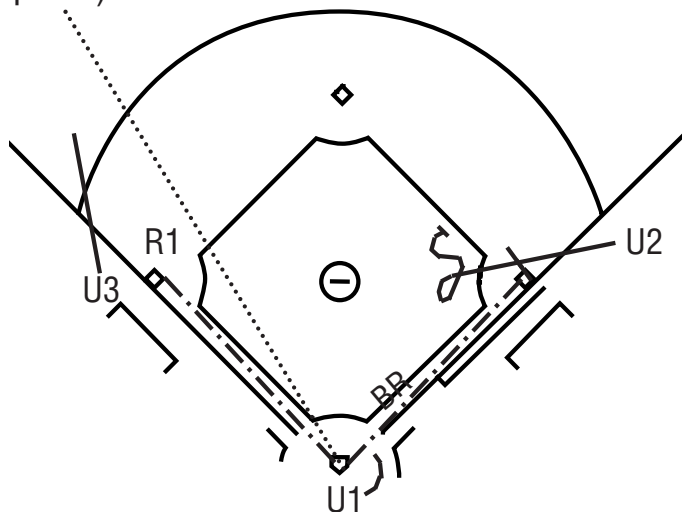
- Movement limited because of potential play at the plate; make all calls on R1 advancing to home plate.

2. Be alert to attempted steal of home, squeeze play or passed ball. Make sure the pitcher's delivery is legal and be sure to call the pitch first, then the play.
3. Move to line up tagup of R1 at third base if U3 goes out for any reason, or if the play is made by the left fielder coming in or moving toward the left-field foul line.
4. Call catch/no catch on fair fly balls taken by the pitcher or catcher, and on all foul fly balls from home plate to first and third bases.
5. Call fair/foul on ground balls from home plate to the front edge of first or third bases.

**U2: POSITION: A**

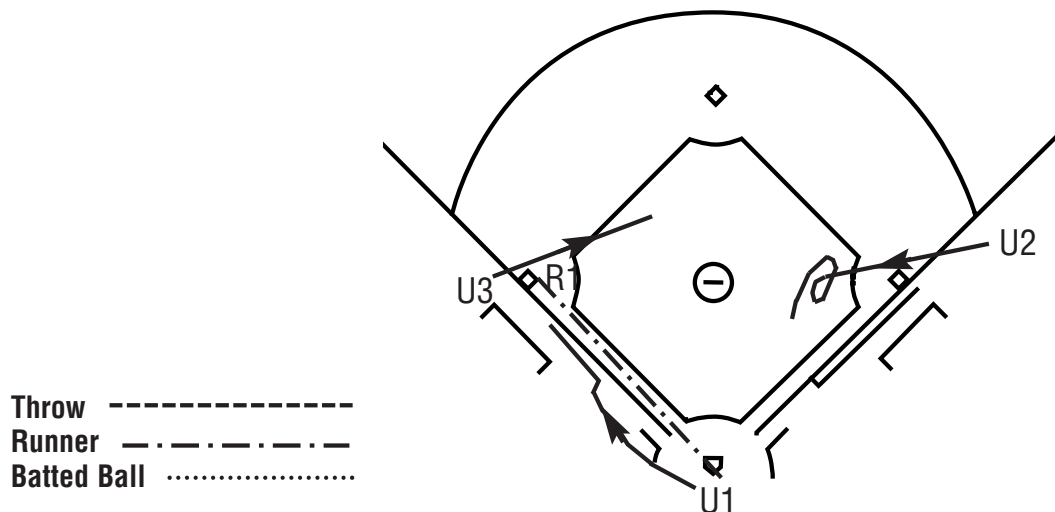
**COVERAGES:**

1. Move to make all calls at first base on plays in the infield.
2. If U3 goes out on a fly ball or is pinned at third base on a fair/foul call, come in, pivot, watch the batter-runner touch first base, and be ready either to take him into second base and third base or to cover on a ball thrown behind him returning to first. (No help from U1, who has potential play at the plate.)



Throw -----  
 Runner - - - - -  
 Batted Ball .....  
 U1

3. On a base hit, come in, pivot, and watch the batter-runner touch first base.
4. On an extra-base hit, come in, pivot, watch the batter-runner touch first base, and be alert to cover home if U1 has gone to cover third base. (Release the batter-runner when he reaches second base.)
5. Call catch/no catch on fly balls to right field and on fly balls to center field that move the center fielder towards right field, on all fly balls or line drives taken by the first or second baseman, and on foul fly balls past first base.
6. Call fair/foul on ground balls past the front edge of first base or bounding over the bag and on all fly balls past first base.

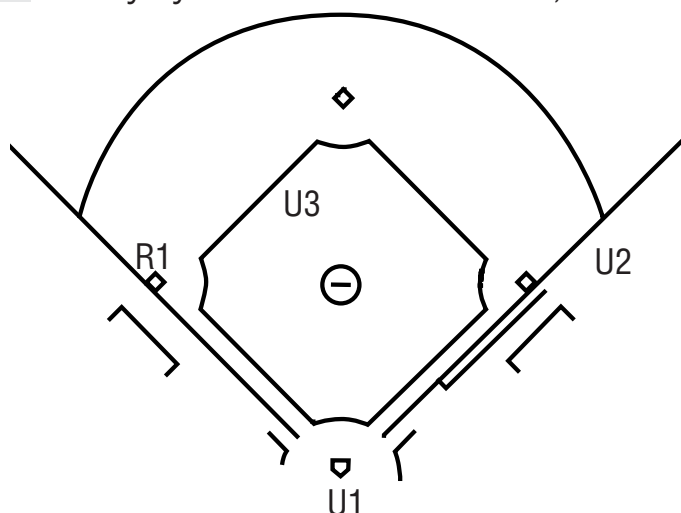


7. Be alert to help on checked swings by right-handed batters if asked by U1.
8. Be aware of a possible tough situation with a runner at third and U3 going out on a catch/no catch play. If the runner at third tags, moves towards home and then goes back to third, U1 cannot cover third as he must stay at home and U3 is in the outfield. You must be prepared to cover the play at third where the runner tags, moves toward home and then returns with a throw back to third base from the outfield.

**U3: POSITION D:** Both feet in fair territory, 10-15 feet behind third baseman. This will give U3 an unobstructed view of the batter in case U1 asks for help on a check swing by a left-handed batter.

**COVERAGES:**

1. Move to get angle on pickoff if necessary; hold position for fair/foul call if no pickoff; signal safe/out on pickoff only if tag is attempted.
2. On all fly balls to center field or right field, move into the diamond toward Position C. On any fly ball hit to the left fielder, move out to better rule on





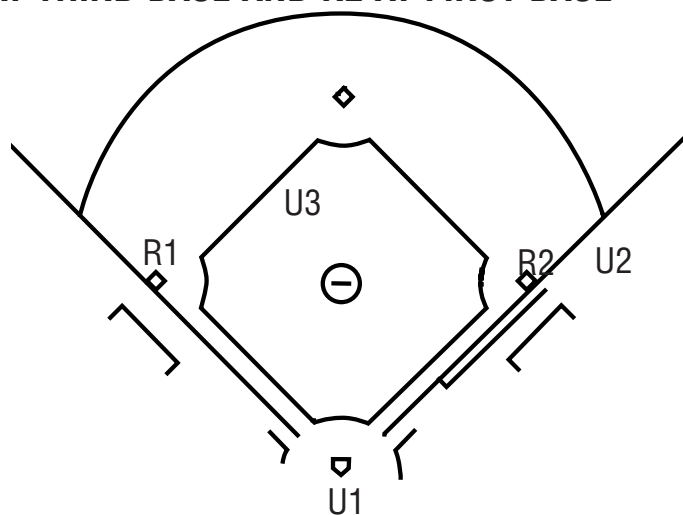
**U2: POSITION: A****COVERAGES:**

1. Set to get angle on pickoff; be alert for possible balk. Signal safe/out only if there is a tag.
2. On a base hit, watch batter-runner touch first base.
3. Make all calls on plays at first base, including the back end of double plays.
4. Call catch/no catch on fly balls to right field, on fly balls that move the center fielder in/out/or to his left, on all fly balls taken by the first baseman or second baseman, and on all foul fly balls past the first base line.
5. Be alert to fair/foul call on ball batted down the first-base line.
6. Signal time play to U1 with two outs, and infield fly with less than two outs.
7. Be alert to help U1 on check swings on right-handed batters if asked.

**U3: POSITION: C****COVERAGES:**

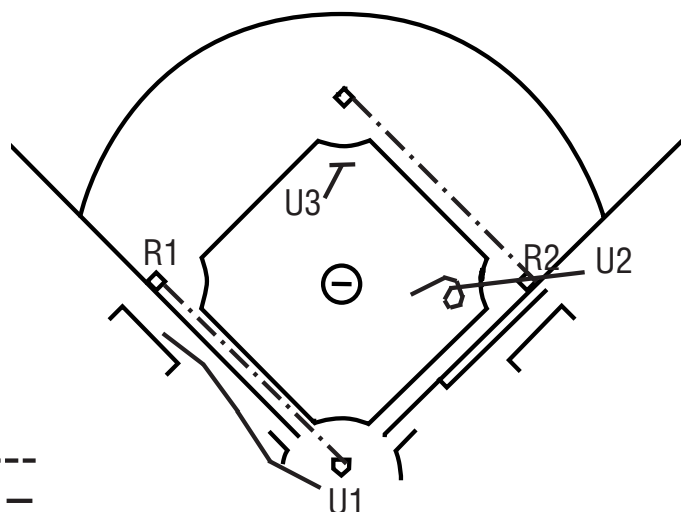
1. Be alert for pickoff at second base or attempted steal of third base. On steal attempt, be careful not to overcommit to third too early — throw on double steal may be to second base.
2. Call all plays at second base; watch runner interfering when breaking up double-play attempt.
3. Call play at third base if it is the first play in the infield, or on R2 or the batter-runner advancing to third base after a base hit.
4. On fly balls to the outfield, line up tag of runner at second base attempting to advance to third base; be alert to runner from first base attempting to advance to second on a throw.
5. Call catch/no catch on fly balls to left field (unless there is a fair/foul call by U1), fly balls that move the center fielder to his right, on fair fly balls taken by the shortstop or third baseman (unless potential fair/foul calls); DO NOT leave the infield.
6. Move to take tagups at both second and first if U2 goes out on a fly ball.
7. Signal time play to U1 with two outs, and infield fly with less than two outs. Be alert to help out on check swings by left-handed batters if asked by U1.

**ARTICLE 6: R1 AT THIRD BASE AND R2 AT FIRST BASE**



**U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Make call on R1 advancing home — be alert for steal, passed ball or squeeze attempt. Be sure to call pitch first, then play on runner.
2. Line up tag of R1 at third base on fly ball to outfield.
3. Call catch/no catch on fly balls on which the left fielder moves toward the left-field foul line, on all fly balls taken by the pitcher or catcher, and on all foul fly balls down the third-base line.
4. On any base hit, watch R1 touch home and move to cover play on R2 or batter-runner advancing to third.



Throw -----  
 Runner - . - . - . - . - .  
 Batted Ball .....

5. Call fair/foul to front of first base and to foul pole down third-base line; make call from base line extended to keep position for call on R1 advancing to home.

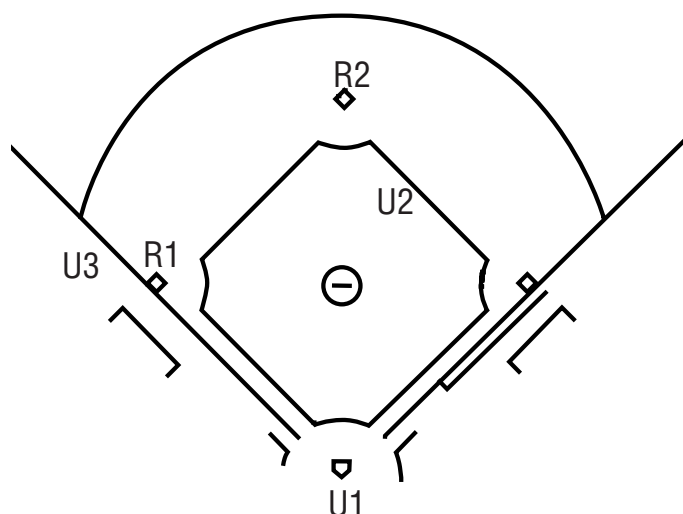
**U2: POSITION: A  
COVERAGES:**

1. Set to watch pickoff at first base; be alert for balk.
2. Move to line up tag of R2 at first base on fly ball; be prepared to make call on R2 returning to first.
3. Watch touch of first base by batter-runner; be prepared to move to plate for possible play if U1 goes to third to make call on advancing R2.
4. Call catch/no catch on fly balls to right field, on fly balls that move the center fielder in/out/or to his left, on all fly balls taken by the first baseman or second baseman, and on all foul fly balls past the first base line.
5. Call fair/foul on balls past front of first base.
6. Be alert to help U1 on checked swings by right-handed batters if asked.

**U3: POSITION: C  
COVERAGES:**

1. Be alert for possible steal attempt at second base — let the catcher's throw turn you into the play.
2. Make all calls at second base; watch for interference by R2 attempting to break up a double play.
3. Call catch/no catch on fly balls to left field (unless there is a fair/foul call by U1), fly balls that move the center fielder to his right, on fair fly balls taken by the shortstop or third baseman (unless potential fair/foul calls); DO NOT leave the infield.
4. Be ready to make call on R1 returning to third base after caught fly ball.
5. If U2 goes out, move to line up tag of R2 at first and touch of first by batter-runner; be prepared to make call on batter-runner advancing to second base or returning to first base. Be alert to help out on check swings by left-handed batters if asked by U1.

**ARTICLE 7: R1 AT THIRD BASE AND R2 AT SECOND BASE**



**U1:  
COVERAGES:**

1. Be alert to possible steal, passed ball or squeeze play; be sure to call the

- pitch first, then the play on advancing R1.
2. Call all plays on runners advancing to home plate.
  3. Move to line up tag on R1 advancing home on fly ball to left field.
  4. Call catch/no catch on fly balls on which the right fielder moves toward the right-field foul line, on any fly balls taken by the pitcher or catcher, and on all foul fly balls past first base.
  5. Call fair/foul to front of third base and to foul pole down first-base line; make call from base line extended in order to maintain position to make call on runner advancing home.

**U2: POSITION: B****COVERAGES:**

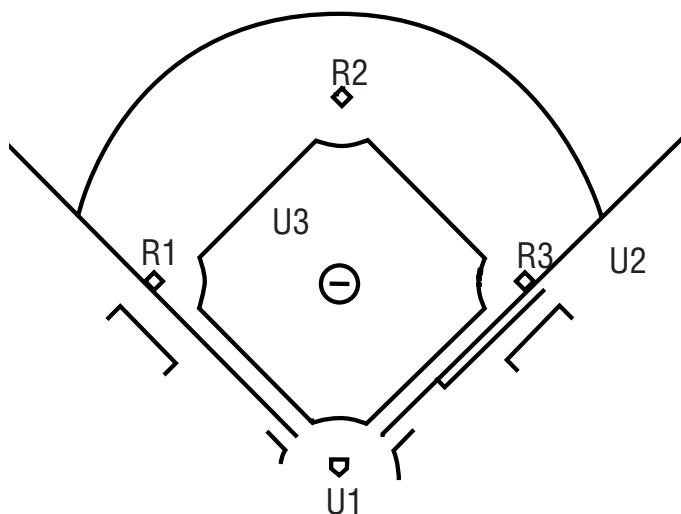
1. Be alert for pickoff play at second base.
2. Make all calls at first and second bases; move on base hit to watch batter-runner touch of first base and be in position to make call on him advancing to second base or returning to first.
3. Call catch/no catch on fly ball/line drives to the center fielder that move him to his left, fly balls to right field (unless there is a fair/foul call by U1), on fly balls taken by the first baseman or second baseman (unless there is a potential fair/foul call); line up tagup of R1 advancing from second after the touch of the caught fly ball.
4. Move to line up tag of R2 at second base on a fly ball; be ready to make call on R2 advancing to third base if U3 goes out on fly ball.
5. Signal time play to U1 with two outs.
6. Be alert to assist on checked swings by right-handed hitters if asked by U1.
7. If U3 goes out on a fly ball, be prepared to take plays at third, second and first.

**U3: POSITION: D****COVERAGES:**

1. Be alert for pickoff attempt at third base by either the pitcher or catcher.
2. Make all calls on plays at third base.
3. Move to line up tag of R1 at third base on fly ball to center or right field.
4. Call catch/no catch on fly balls on which the left fielder moves toward the left-field foul line, on any fly balls taken by the shortstop or third baseman, and on all foul fly balls past third base.
5. Call fair/foul on balls past the front edge of third base. Be alert to help out on check swing if asked by U1.

**ARTICLE 8: R1 AT THIRD BASE, R2 AT SECOND BASE, AND R3 AT FIRST BASE**

U1: COVERAGES:



1. Be alert for steal, passed ball or squeeze play; be sure to call pitch first, then play on runner.
2. Hold position on balls in play in the infield or outfield in order to be ready to make call on all runners advancing to home.
3. Make calls on all plays at home.
4. Move to line up tag of R1 at third base on fly balls.
5. Call catch/no catch on all fly balls taken by the pitcher or catcher, on all fly balls to left field on which the left fielder moves toward the left-field foul line, on all foul fly balls between home plate and first or third bases, and on all foul fly balls past third base.
6. Call fair/foul on batted balls up to the front edge of first base and all the way to the foul pole down the third-base line.

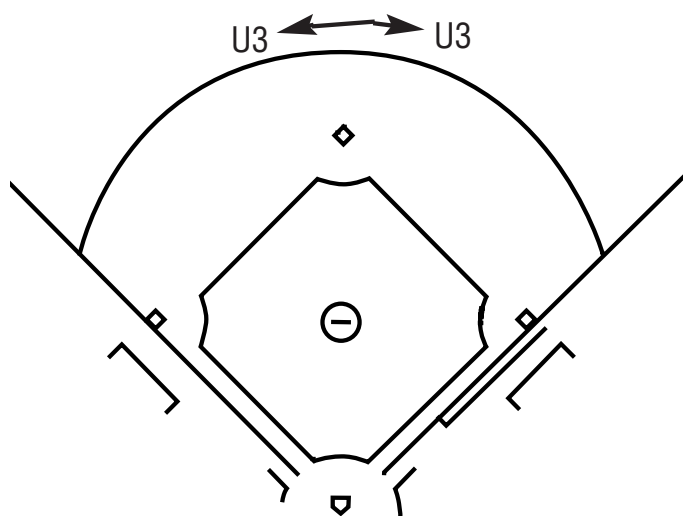


**SECTION XVII: 4-MAN MECHANICS**

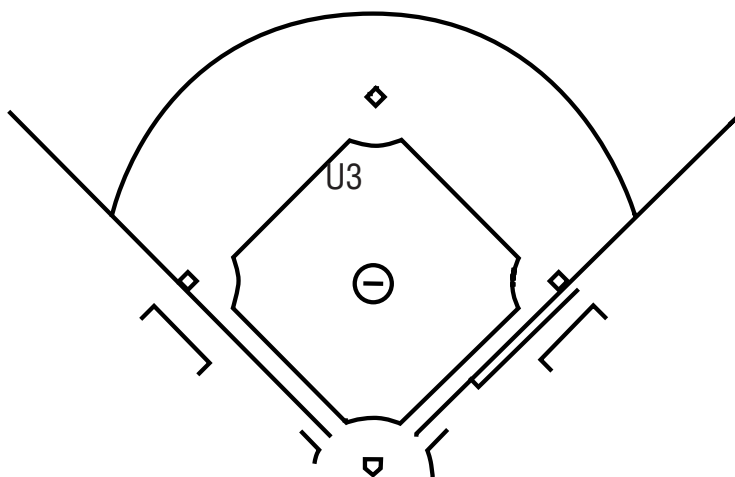
**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

**ABBREVIATIONS** — The plate umpire will be referred to as U1, the first-base umpire as U2, the second-base umpire as U3, and the third-base umpire as U4. The positions of the wing officials will be generally the same as for three-man crews (A, D), plus these positions for U3:

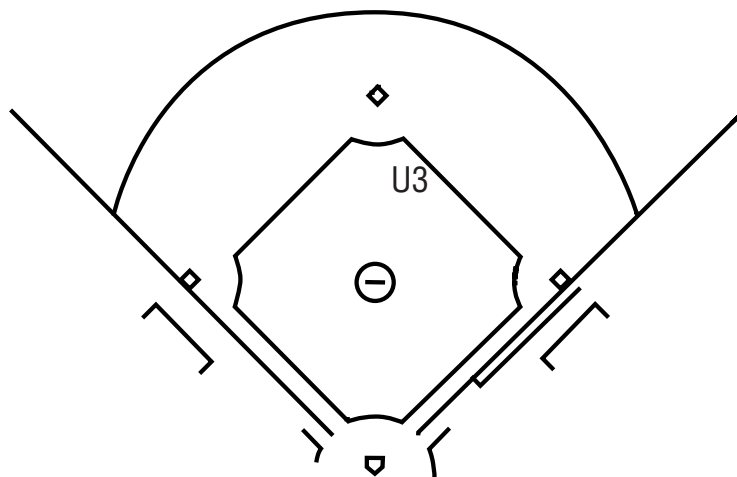
**Position E** — In the outfield behind second base, shifted to the side from which the batter hits.



**Position F** — Similar to Position C, but at the edge of the grass on the shortstop side of the infield.



**Position G** — Similar to Position F, but at the edge of the grass on the second base side of the infield.



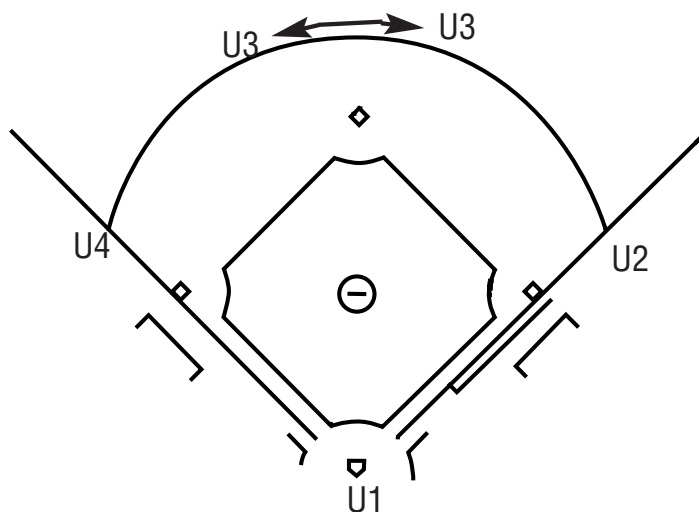
### GENERAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- UI:**
1. Call balls and strikes.
  2. Rule fair/foul down both first- and third-base lines on any batted ball that is played on or comes to rest in front of the front edge of the base.
  3. Rule catch/no catch on all foul fly balls behind home plate and up to the first- and third-base bags, or on any fly balls which are fielded by the catcher, and on fly balls or line drives to the pitcher.
  4. When the ball is hit, move out from behind the plate, both to watch plays and to be ready to move to a base to cover a play if either U2 or U4 goes out or moves to cover second base.
  5. Move to cover the tagup of a runner advancing home after a fly ball to left field.
  6. Signal partners in an infield-fly situation or when a two-out time play is possible.
  7. Watch every play as if it were yours to call, both because your partners may appeal to you for help and because as umpire-in-chief you may be required to decide on play situations involving rules.
- U2:**
1. Make calls at first base on plays in the infield on batted balls, putouts or pickoffs.
  2. Rule fair/foul on ground balls down the first-base line from the front of the bag, especially on balls bounding over the bag, and on fly balls from the bag to the right-field foul pole.
  3. Rule catch/no catch on fly balls that move the right fielder to the foul line. Read U3 on other fly balls to the outfield. You have plays by the first baseman and second baseman if U3 is "out." If U3 is "in," have fly balls hit to right field and to center field that moves the center fielder to is left, plays by the first baseman and plays by the second baseman that move him to first.

- 
4. Move with the pitch (one or two steps), so that when the ball is hit, you are ready to move to make a call for which you are responsible.
  5. Be ready to move to cover the batter-runner advancing to second base if U4 has to stay at third base to cover an advancing runner and U3 has gone out on a fly ball.
- U3:**
1. You are the director as U2 and U4 will first read your action with regard to fly balls. If you are out, you have all fly balls hit directly at or between the left fielder and the right fielder, and no infield catch/no catch responsibility. If you are “in,” you do not have outfield catch/no catch responsibility, or plays hit to the shortstop or second baseman.
  2. Come into the infield on base hits to make calls at second base.
  3. With first base occupied and a potential steal play at second, assume Position F in order to be able to get the best angle on the steal play at second.
  4. With second base occupied, assume Position F. Rule catch/no catch on fly balls and line drives at the shortstop or second baseman.
- U4:**
1. Make calls at third base on plays in the infield - runners advancing or returning on batted balls, pick-offs and tagups of runners of fly balls to center or right field.
  2. Rule fair/foul on ground balls down the third-base line from the front of the bag, especially on balls bounding over the base, and on fly balls from the base to the left-field foul pole.
  3. Rule catch/no catch on fly balls that move the left fielder to the foul line. Read U3 on other fly balls to the outfield. You have plays by the third baseman and shortstop if U3 is out. If U3 is in, you have fly balls hit to left field and to center field that moves the center fielder in/out/ to his right and plays by third and the shortstop that move him to third.
  4. Move with the pitch (one or two steps), so that when the ball is hit, you are ready to move to make a call for which you are responsible.
  5. Be ready to move to cover the batter-runner advancing to second base on an extra base hit if U3 has gone out to rule on a fly ball.

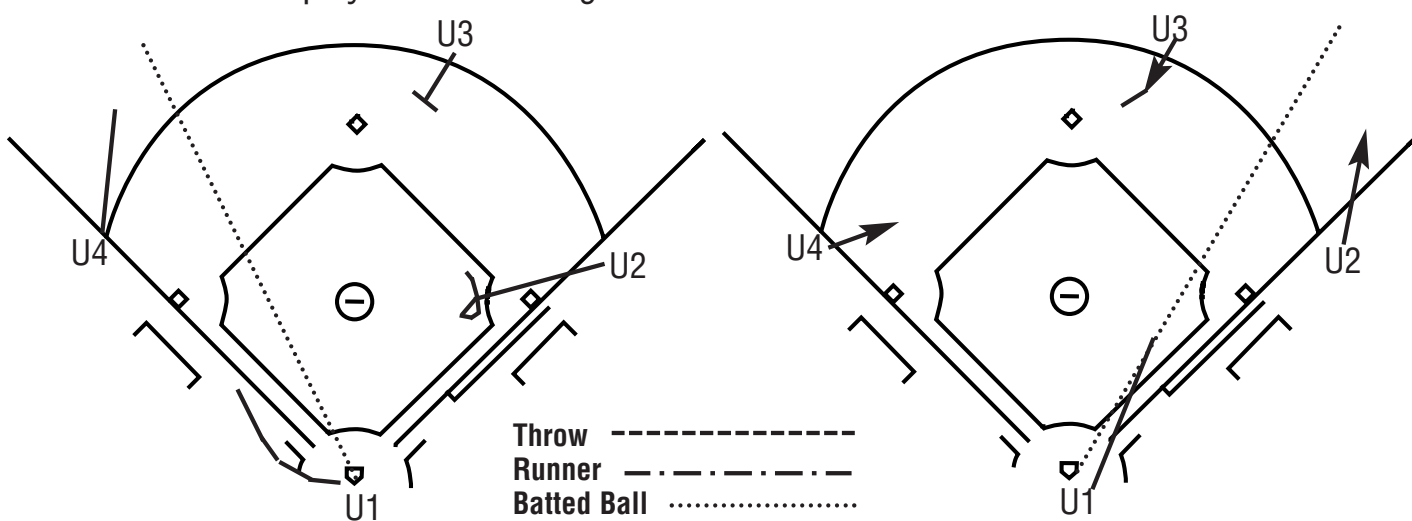
**CHECKED SWINGS:** U1 will appeal to U2 on right-handed batters and U4 on left handed batters.

**ARTICLE 1: NO RUNNERS ON**



**U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Call balls and strikes.
2. Rule fair/foul down both first- and third-base lines on any batted ball that is played on or comes to rest in front of the front edge of the base.
3. Rule catch/no catch on all foul fly balls behind home plate and up to first and third bases, or on any fly balls which are fielded by the catcher, and on fly balls or line drives to the pitcher.
4. When the ball is hit, move out from behind the plate, both to watch plays and to be ready to move to a base to cover a play at first if U2 goes out or a play at third if U4 goes out.



**U2: POSITION A: COVERAGES:**

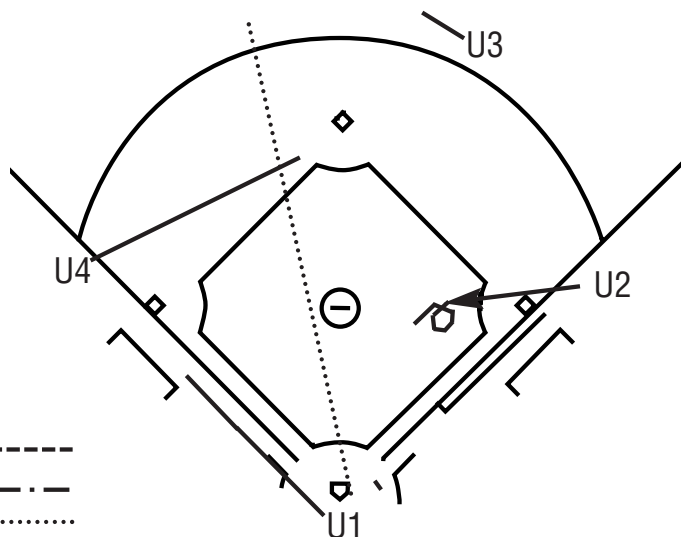
1. Make calls at first base on plays in the infield — batted balls, putouts or pickoffs.

2. Rule fair/foul on ground balls down the first-base line from the front of the base, especially on balls bounding over the base, and on fly balls from the base to the right-field foul pole.
3. Rule catch/no catch on fly balls and line drives in the infield which are fielded by the first or second basemen, or fly balls to the outfield on which the right fielder moves toward his foul line.
4. Move with the pitch (one or two steps), so that when the ball is hit, you are ready to move to make a call for which you are responsible.
5. Be ready to move to cover the batter-runner advancing to second base if U4 has to stay at third base to cover an advancing runner and U3 has gone out on a fly ball.
6. Be ready to cover home plate, if U1 has moved to cover third on a triple.

**U3: POSITION: E**

**COVERAGES:**

1. Rule catch/no catch on all fly balls between the left and right fielders. Go out on any other than routine catches: the wing men will cover for you.



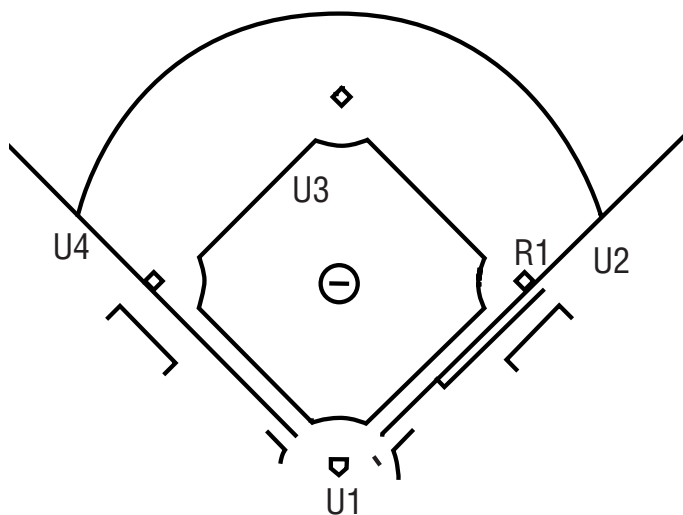
2. Come into the infield on base hits to make calls at second base.

**U4: POSITION: D**

**COVERAGES:**

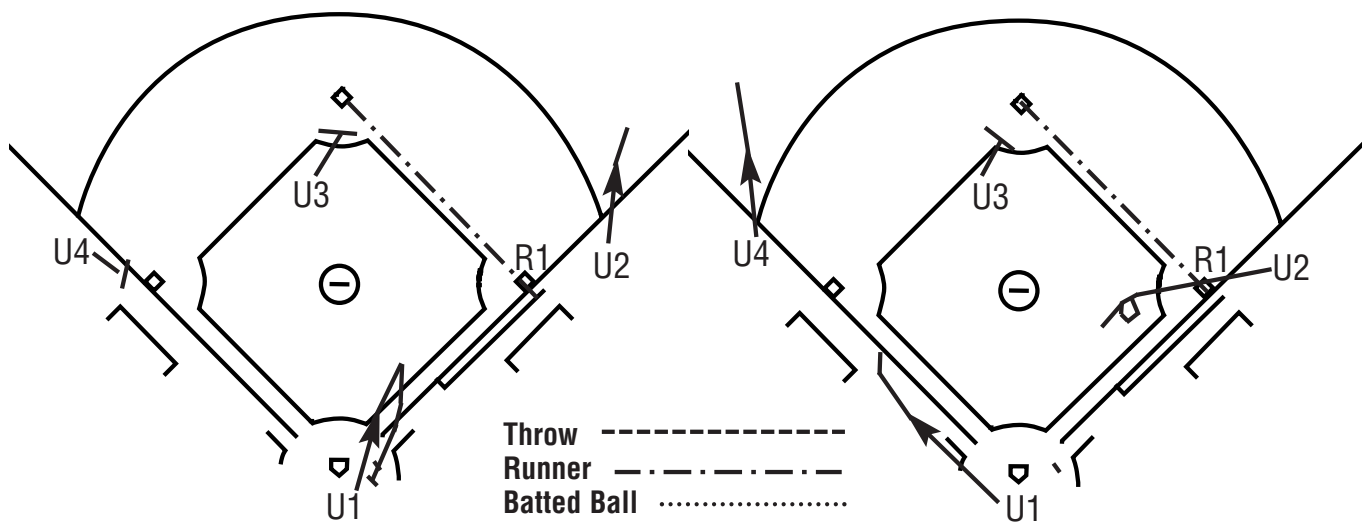
1. Rule fair/foul on ground balls down the third-base line from the front of the base, especially on balls bounding over the base, and on fly balls from the base to the left-field foul pole.
2. Rule catch/no catch on fly balls and line drives in the infield which are fielded by the third baseman or shortstop, or fly balls to the outfield on which the left fielder moves toward his foul line.
3. Move with the pitch (one or two steps), so that when the ball is hit, you are ready to move to make a call for which you are responsible.
4. Be ready to move to cover the batter-runner advancing to second base on an extra-base hit if U3 has gone out to rule on a fly ball.

ARTICLE 2: R1 AT FIRST ONLY



**U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Call balls and strikes.
2. Rule fair/foul down both first and third base lines on any batted ball that is played on or comes to rest in front of the front edge of the base.
3. Rule catch/no catch on all foul fly balls behind home plate and up to first and third bases, or on any fly balls which are fielded by the catcher, and on fly balls or line drives to the pitcher.
4. Move to cover at the vacant bag if either wing man goes out.
5. Has touch/tag at first by R1 if U2 goes out.



**U2: POSITION A:** Both feet in foul territory, 10 to 15 feet behind first baseman, in position to make call on pickoff.

**COVERAGES:**

1. Set up to get angle on pickoff - look through the runner, bag and first baseman toward pitcher; watch for balk on pickoff attempt. Signal safe/out on pickoff only if there is a tag.

2. Move to make all calls at first base on plays in the infield.
3. Watch batter-runner touch first on a base hit; be ready to release batter-runner and move to cover home if U1 has gone to cover third base.
4. Call fair/foul on ground ball past front edge of first base or bounding over the base; move to call foul fly past first.
5. Rule catch/no catch on fly balls hit to right field and to center field that moves the center fielder to his left, plays by the first baseman and plays by the second baseman that moves him to first.
6. Make call on runner returning to first in rundown from outside position.
7. Be alert to help on checked swings if asked by U1.

**U3: POSITION: F** Near the dirt on the shortstop side of second to cover steal attempt or forceout.

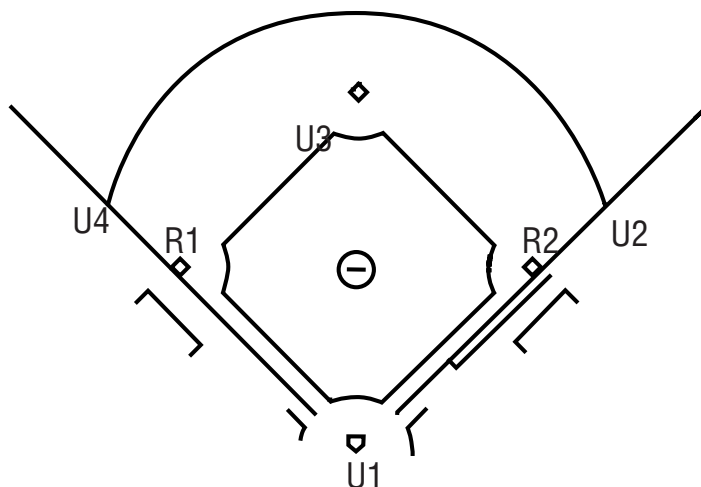
**COVERAGES:**

1. Turn with throw to make call on steal attempt at second base.
2. Make all calls on plays at second base.
3. Be alert for illegal slides/interference at second base on double plays.
4. Call catch/no catch on fly balls and line drives hit to the shortstop or second baseman. You have no outfield responsibility.
5. On rundown play at second base, use inside position.

**U4: POSITION: D**

**COVERAGES:**

1. Move to make all calls at third base on plays in the infield.
2. Call catch/no catch on fly balls hit to left field and to center field that moves the center fielder in/out/to his right and plays by third and by the shortstop that moves him to third.
3. Call fair/foul on ground balls from the front edge of third base or bounding over the base; move to make call on fly balls past the third-base base.
4. In rundown situation, make call on runner advancing or returning to third base.
5. Be alert to help on checked swings to left-handed batters if asked by U1.

**ARTICLE 3: R1 AT THIRD AND R2 AT FIRST****U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Call balls and strikes.
2. Rule fair/foul down both first- and third-base lines on any batted ball that is played on or comes to rest in front of the front edge of the base.
3. Rule catch/no catch on all foul fly balls behind home plate and up to first and third bases, or on any fly balls which are fielded by the catcher, and on fly balls or line drives to the pitcher.
4. Move to line up tag of R1 at third on fly ball to left field or if U4 has catch/no catch ball.
5. Movement limited because of R1 at third base and potential play at the plate until after the run has scored; on a base hit down the line, you may move to cover at third.

**U2: POSITION A:** Both feet in foul territory, approximately 10 to 15 feet behind first baseman.

**COVERAGES:**

1. Set up to get angle on pickoff — look through the runner, bag and first baseman toward pitcher; watch for balk on pickoff attempt. Signal safe/out on pickoff only if there is a tag.
2. Move to make all calls at first base on plays in the infield.
3. Watch batter-runner touch first on a base hit; be ready to release batter-runner and move to cover home if U1 has gone to cover third base.
4. Call fair/foul on ground ball past front edge of first base or bounding over the base; move to call foul fly past first.

5. Rule catch/no catch on fly balls hit to right field and to center field that moves the center fielder to his left, plays by the first baseman and plays by the second baseman that moves him to first.
6. Make call on runner returning to first in rundown from outside position.
7. Be alert to help on checked swings if asked by U1.

**U3: POSITION: F** Near the dirt on the shortstop side of second to cover steal attempt or forceout.

**COVERAGES:**

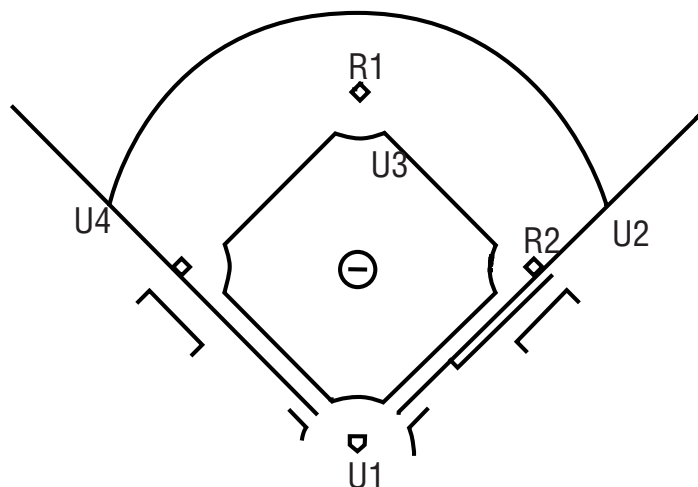
1. Turn with throw to make call on steal attempt at second base.
2. Make all calls on plays at second base.
3. Be alert for illegal slides/interference at second base on double plays.
4. Call catch/no catch on fly balls and line drives hit to the shortstop or second baseman. You have no outfield responsibility.
5. On rundown play at second base, use inside position.
6. If U2 or U4 goes out to rule on a fly ball, move to cover R2 or R1 returning to base after catch.

**U4: POSITION:** Both feet in foul territory, 10 to 15 feet behind third baseman

**COVERAGES:**

1. Move to make all calls at third base on plays in the infield.
2. Set up to get angle on pickoff attempt with R1 at third; signal safe/out only if there is a tag.
3. Move to line up tag of R1 at third advancing on a fly ball to center or right field, or on which the left fielder moves toward center.
4. Call catch/no catch on fly balls hit to left field and to center field that moves the center fielder in/out/to his right and plays by third and by the shortstop that moves him to third.
5. Call fair/foul on ground balls from the front edge of third base or bounding over the base; move to make call on fly balls past third base.
6. In rundown situation, make call on runner advancing or returning to third base.
7. Be alert to help on checked swings to left handed batters if asked by U1.

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**ARTICLE 4: R1 AT SECOND AND R2 AT FIRST**
**U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Call balls and strikes.
2. Rule fair/foul down both first- and third-base lines on any batted ball that is played on or comes to rest in front of the front edge of the base.
3. Rule catch/no catch on all foul fly balls behind home plate and up to first and third bases, or on any fly balls which are fielded by the catcher, and on fly balls or line drives to the pitcher.
4. Move to cover at the vacant base if either wing man goes out or leaves to cover another base.

**U2: POSITION:** Both feet in foul territory, 10 to 15 feet behind first baseman, in position to make call on pickoff.

**COVERAGES:**

1. Set up to get angle on pickoff — look through the runner, bag and first baseman toward pitcher; watch for balk on pickoff attempt. Signal safe/out on pickoff only if there is a tag.
2. Move to make all calls at first base on plays in the infield.
3. Watch batter-runner touch first on a base hit; be ready to release batter-runner and move to cover home if U1 has gone to cover third base.
4. Call fair/foul on ground ball past front edge of first base or bounding over the base; move to call foul fly past first.
5. Rule catch/no catch on fly balls hit to right field and to center field that moves the center fielder to his left, plays by the first baseman and plays by the second baseman that moves him to first.
6. Make call on runner returning to first in rundown from outside position.
7. Be alert to help on checked swings if asked by U1.

**U3: POSITION: F**

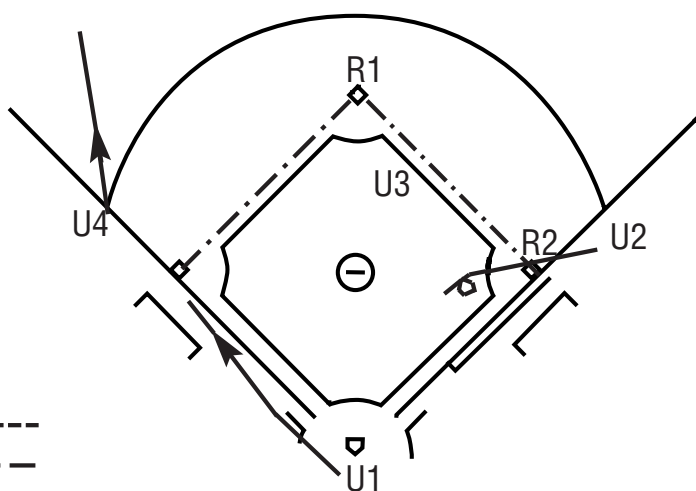
**COVERAGES:**

1. Watch for pickoff attempt at second base.
2. Make all calls at second base except tagup of advancing R2 unless you have gone out on a fly ball.
3. Be alert for illegal slides/interference at second base on double plays.
4. Call catch/no catch on fly balls and line drives hit to the shortstop or second baseman. You have no outfield responsibility.
5. If U4 goes out to rule on a fly ball, move to cover R1 returning to the base. U1 will be at third for the possible advance. If U2 goes out to rule on a fly ball, move to cover R2 advancing to second.
6. U3 – Position should be a Deep B, edge of the grass and dirt to second-base side of second baseman to cover plays.

**U4: POSITION: D**

**COVERAGES:**

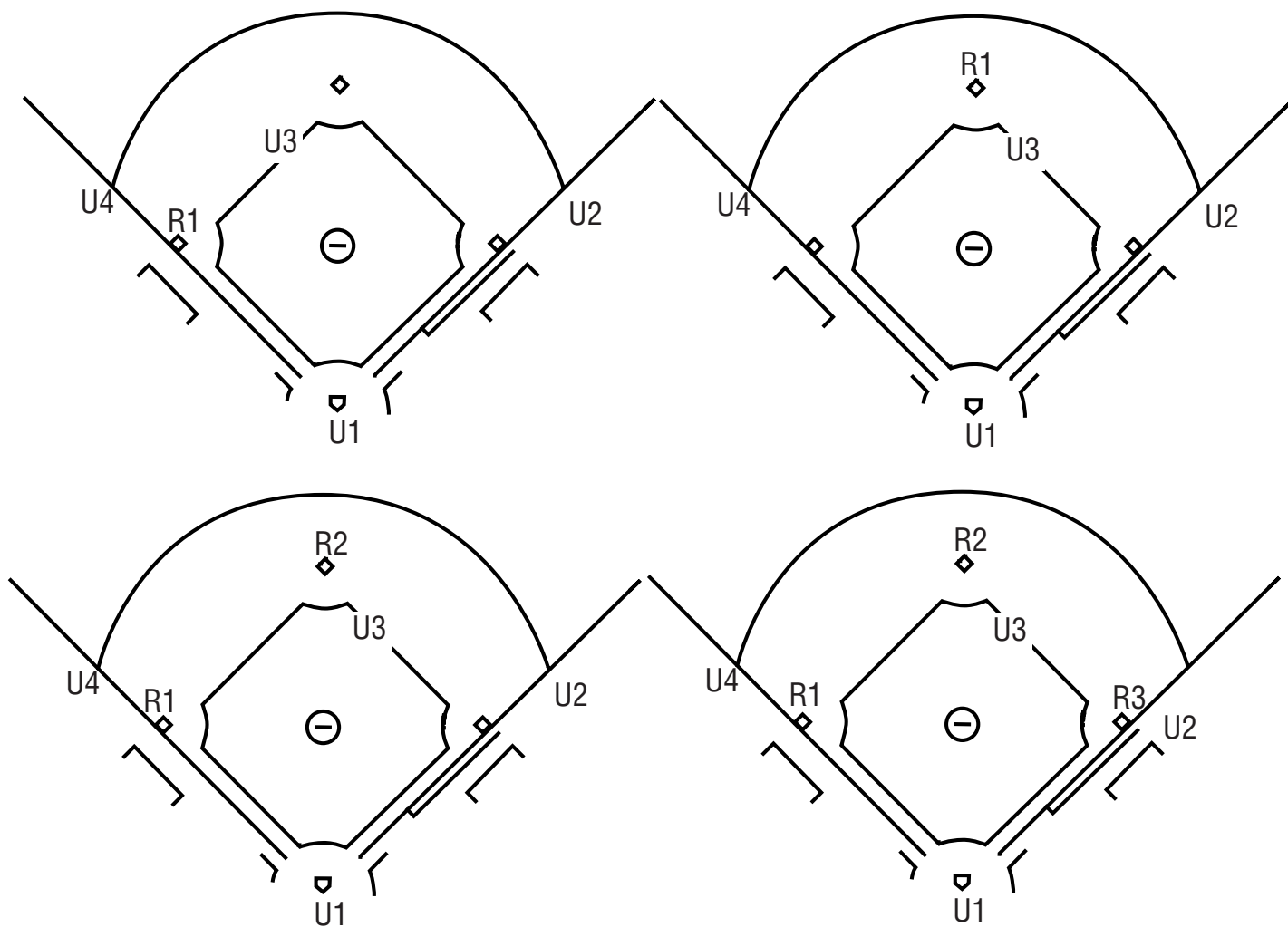
1. Move to make all calls at third base on plays in the infield.
2. Call catch/no catch on fly balls hit to left field and to center field that moves the center fielder in/out/to his right and plays by third and by the shortstop that moves him to third.
3. Call fair/foul on ground balls from the front edge of third base or bounding over the base; move to make call on fly balls past third base.
4. Be alert to move to cover second base if U3 has gone out to rule.



Throw -----  
 Runner - - - - -  
 Batted Ball .....  
 (Note: The diagram uses a dashed line for a throw, a dotted line for a runner, and a solid line for a batted ball path.)

5. In rundown situation, make call on runner advancing or returning to third base.
6. Be alert to help on checked swings to left-handed batters if asked by U1.

**ARTICLE 5: R1 AT THIRD (I); R1 AT SECOND (II); R1 AT THIRD AND R2 AT SECOND (III); R1 AT THIRD, R2 AT SECOND, AND R3 AT FIRST (IV)**



**U1: COVERAGES:**

1. Call balls and strikes.
2. Rule fair/foul down both first- and third-base lines up to the front edge of the bases on any batted ball that is played on or comes to rest in front of the front edge of the base.
3. Rule catch/no catch on all foul fly balls behind home plate and up to first and third bases, or on any fly balls which are fielded by the catcher, and on fly balls or line drives to the pitcher.
4. Move to line up tag of R1 at third on fly ball to left field or if U4 has catch/no catch call.
5. Movement limited because of R1 at third base and potential play at the plate until after the run has scored; if U4 goes out, move to cover not only a tagup at third, but any succeeding plays at third.

**U2: POSITION:** Both feet in foul territory, approximately 10 to 15 feet behind first baseman.

**COVERAGES:**

1. Set up to get angle on pickoff — look through the runner, base and first baseman toward pitcher; watch for balk on pickoff attempt. Signal safe/out on pickoff only if there is a tag.
2. Move to make all calls at first base on plays in the infield.
3. Watch batter-runner touch first on a base hit; be ready to release batter-runner and move to cover home if U1 has gone to cover third base.
4. Call fair/foul on ground ball past front edge of first base or bounding over the base; move to call foul fly past first.
5. Rule catch/no catch on fly balls hit to right field and to center field that moves the center fielder to his left, plays by the first baseman and plays by the second baseman that moves him to first.
6. Make call on runner returning to first in rundown from outside position.
7. Be alert to help on checked swings if asked by U1.

**U3: POSITION: For G (see diagrams)****COVERAGES:**

1. Watch for pickoff attempt at second base.
2. Make all calls at second base except tagup of advancing R2 unless you have gone out on a fly ball.
3. Be alert for illegal slides/interference at second base on double plays.
4. Call catch/no catch on fly balls between left and right field, or on fly balls or line drives fielded by the shortstop or second baseman unless they are moving toward the foul line on their side; go out on tough calls.
5. If U4 goes out to rule on a fly ball, move to cover R2 or R1 returning to a base after a catch.
6. If U2 goes out to rule on a fly ball, move to cover R2 or R3 returning to a base after a catch.

**U4: POSITION: D****COVERAGES:**

1. Move to make all calls at third base on plays in the infield.
2. Call catch/no catch on fly balls hit to left field and to center field that moves the center fielder in/out/to his right and plays by third and by the shortstop that moves him to third.
3. Call fair/foul on ground balls from the front edge of third base or bounding over the base; move to make call on fly balls past third base.
4. Be alert to move to cover second base if U3 has gone out to rule catch/no catch.
5. In rundown situation, make call on runner advancing or returning to third base.
6. Be alert to help on checked swings to left-handed batters if asked by U1.