

# 2017 Fast Pitch Mechanics Manual

## Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 2017 Fast Pitch Mechanics Manual .....                  | 1  |
| GENERAL INFORMATION AND REGULATIONS FOR UMPIRES .....   | 3  |
| USSSA Umpire’s Uniform.....                             | 3  |
| THREE PART PRE-GAME EVENTS.....                         | 4  |
| Part 1 - Game Preparation Before you Arrive.....        | 4  |
| Part 2 - Before your Game.....                          | 4  |
| Part 3 - Pre-Game Conference.....                       | 4  |
| Between Innings.....                                    | 5  |
| Post Game Procedure.....                                | 5  |
| CALLING THE GAME - Plate Umpire .....                   | 5  |
| Calling Balls and Strikes .....                         | 6  |
| Balls and Strikes Count.....                            | 6  |
| Ball Rotation Procedure .....                           | 7  |
| Leaving the Home Plate Area.....                        | 7  |
| Calling Fair or Foul Balls.....                         | 7  |
| Fly Balls.....  | 7  |
| Pop Foul Fly’s .....                                    | 8  |
| Calls at Third Base.....                                | 8  |
| Rundowns.....   | 8  |
| Positions for Calling Plays at the Plate.....           | 8  |
| Appeal Play at Home .....                               | 9  |
| Run Counts on Third Out.....                            | 10 |
| Dead Ball Situations.....                               | 10 |
| Time Out.....   | 10 |
| Catcher Obstruction .....                               | 10 |
| Illegal Pitch.....                                      | 10 |
| Conferences.....  | 10 |
| Other Responsibilities .....                            | 11 |
| CALLING THE GAME - Base Umpire.....                     | 11 |
| Infield stance .....                                    | 11 |
| Force Plays .....                                       | 12 |
| Tag Plays.....  | 13 |
| Inside-Outside Theory.....                              | 14 |
| Pulled Foot .....                                       | 14 |
| Swipe Tag.....  | 14 |
| Three Foot Line .....                                   | 14 |
| Running Out of the Base Path.....                       | 15 |
| Interference.....                                       | 15 |
| Obstruction.....  | 15 |
| Collision.....  | 15 |
| Other responsibilities: .....                           | 16 |
| Assist the Plate Umpire with uncaught third strike..... | 16 |
| Managing the Game.....                                  | 16 |
| TWO-UMPIRE SYSTEM.....                                  | 17 |
| Fly Ball Tag-Up Responsibilities.....                   | 18 |
| Positioning and Coverage - General.....                 | 18 |
| Base Umpire “Slot” Position .....                       | 19 |
| Holding Zones .....                                     | 20 |
| No Runners on Base.....                                 | 21 |
| Runner on First Base Only .....                         | 22 |
| Runner on Second Base Only .....                        | 23 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Runner on Third Base Only.....         | 24 |
| Runners on First and Second Base.....  | 25 |
| Runners on Second and Third Base.....  | 26 |
| Runners on First and Third Base.....   | 27 |
| Bases Loaded.....                      | 28 |
| THREE UMPIRE SYSTEM.....               | 29 |
| Initial Position.....                  | 29 |
| Basic Rules.....                       | 29 |
| Fair/Foul.....                         | 29 |
| Tag Responsibilities.....              | 30 |
| Illegal Pitches.....                   | 30 |
| Check Swing.....                       | 30 |
| Plate Umpire.....                      | 30 |
| First Base Umpire.....                 | 30 |
| Third Base Umpire.....                 | 31 |
| No Runners on Base.....                | 32 |
| Runner on First Base.....              | 34 |
| Runner on Second Base.....             | 37 |
| Runner on Third Base.....              | 39 |
| Runners on First and Second Bases..... | 41 |
| Runners on Second and Third Bases..... | 45 |
| Bases Loaded.....                      | 47 |
| Between Inning Positioning.....        | 49 |
| FOUR UMPIRE SYSTEM.....                | 50 |
| SIGNALS.....                           | 51 |
| No Pitch.....                          | 51 |
| Play Ball.....                         | 51 |
| Dead Ball.....                         | 52 |
| Delayed Dead Ball.....                 | 52 |
| Strike / Out.....                      | 53 |
| Safe.....                              | 53 |
| Foul Tip.....                          | 54 |
| Infield Fly.....                       | 54 |
| Fair Ball.....                         | 55 |
| Count.....                             | 55 |
| Double.....                            | 56 |
| Home Run.....                          | 56 |

## **GENERAL INFORMATION AND REGULATIONS FOR UMPIRES**

1. The Umpire should not be connected in any way with either team.
2. The Umpire should be sure of the date, time and location of game.
3. The Umpire should arrive at the field at least 30 minutes before the game time.
4. The Official Umpire Uniform Standard for sanctioned play includes approved and licensed products.

### **USSSA Umpire's Uniform**

#### **All Umpires must be dressed in the official USSSA Umpire's Uniform**

- A. USSSA Licensed mesh pullover shirt. If a shirt is to be worn under the Umpire shirt, it shall be plain, short or long sleeve, and white, black or match the pullover shirt in color. Any exposed shelves shall match the color of the pullover shirt.
  - B. USSSA Licensed Fast Pitch Umpire cap. This will include the USSSA embroidery on the cap and the official licensed label inside.
  - C. Long heather gray slacks with black socks. Shin guards may not be exposed.
  - D. Gray or black ball bag. Only the Plate Umpire shall wear a ball bag.
  - E. Black belt.
  - F. Black polished shoes and black shoelaces.
  - G. Licensed windbreaker jacket, v-neck pullover may be worn as outside apparel.
- Note:** If more than one Umpire is used per game, they must be dressed alike.
- H. The Umpire behind the plate must wear a mask.

#### **Uniforms and equipment**

It is recommended that every Umpire have the following minimum equipment:

1. At least two pair of heather gray pants that are neatly pressed with no wrinkles and well maintained (no stains or rips)
2. At least two shirts in each color the tournament is using, well maintained, clean and wrinkle free.
3. Jackets can be either of the two types, but should fit, be clean, and wrinkle free.
4. Turtle neck when worn should be white or red.
5. At least four hats two for the plate and two for the bases, this allow you to alternate games.
6. At least two indicators one for hand and one for pocket.
7. One brush for both bases and plate duty.
8. A one to two inch black belt
9. Black socks
10. At least two pair of Black, clean shoes – plate shoes and base shoes
11. Black, clean ball bag.
12. Jewelry – NONE. We are asking the girls to wear no jewelry unless religious or medical, we should apply the same rule for the umpires.
13. Sweat bands for the arm or wrist are not recommended.
14. Chest protector, face mask, shin guards and cup (males) will be worn when working the plate.

## **THREE PART PRE-GAME EVENTS**

### **Part 1 - Game Preparation Before you Arrive**

#### **Appearance**

Always look professional and neat! Uniforms are to be clean and pressed. Shoes polished, pants hemmed, belts not frayed, hats clean and non-faded, ball bags clean. Have proper accessories to do the job. Ball/strike indicator, Umpires wallet, pencil, brush, coin, etc. Insure all equipment and uniforms are ready for the next day /weekend.

Make sure you have good instruction to the park you are to be at.

#### **Get Mentally Ready**

Arrive no later than 30 minutes prior to game time. Give yourself time to focus on your job! Talk with your partner about mechanics, coverage, and game situations. Collect required items; balls, medals, timer. Conduct a bat and helmet inspection if required by the tournament UIC. Watch pitcher for proper mechanics and delivery. Clear your mind and think -- SOFTBALL.

### **Part 2 - Before your Game**

#### **Always be on Time**

#### **UIC – Umpire Meeting**

When you arrive at park, the first thing you should do is contact the UIC or Tournament Director. Be prepared for an Umpire's Meeting prior to the scheduled start of the tournament each day. Plan to attend and be dressed for your plate or base assignment. Umpires must be present and ready to go at the meeting site; not in the parking lot, not at their assigned field nor in the restroom. This is important since games can begin 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start if teams are ready.

#### **Umpire – Umpire Meeting**

Find out who your partner is and discuss how you are going to work the game:

- Fair/Foul Coverage
- Infield Fly
- Tag-Up/Touches
- Fly Ball to the outfield
- Coverage of Third Base
- Dropped Third Strike
- Batted Balls that hit batter while in box.
- Check swings

Find Game balls and be on Field at home plate at least 5 Minutes before game time. Leave jewelry and cell phones in car.

### **Part 3 - Pre-Game Conference**

#### **This is your first opportunity to set the tone for the game.**

The home Plate Umpire conducts the pre-game conference and both Umpires should be at the conference.

Base Umpire stand at front of plate /home plate at back

Identify head coaches.

Have team captains introduce them self

Home Plate Umpire introduce Base Umpire then himself

Accept the lineup cards from the coaches. Check to see that the proper number of players is listed, that both first and last names are listed, and there are no duplicate numbers, and that substitutes are listed below the starters. Check to see if an additional player/DH is being used and they are listed in the correct spot. The Designated Hitter (DH) and Defensive Player (DP) are listed on same line. If there are any problems get them resolved then. Once the lineup card is good, hand it back to the coach and let him review it one more time, when you get it back then it becomes an official lineup Card.

Pre-game conference is not a rules clinic!! Be precise and cover only the necessary items.

Go over Ground Rule for that Field –

Any Unique Rules for that Field

Identify all openings in the field area that the ball may leave the field of play.

Cover the rule for a trapped ball– fielder will raise hands.

Note: No warnings may be issue at the Pre-game.

Cover the Thunder/Lighting rule

Cover the Run Rule/Time limit

Confirm game ending procedures (finish the inning, requires a winner)

Establish home team (conduct coin flip, higher seed choice)

Ask if all players are legally equipped and are all their players legal in accordance with the USSSA rules.

Important! Display an attitude that you want to be here and you enjoy what you are doing. Do not discuss

individual rules. Never set-aside a rule or play by rules that are not USSSA or league/tournament rules,

even though the coaches request and agree on a change. Do not discuss strike zone. Do not get into

personal discussions with players or coaches. Get the teams on the field and get the game started.

Never use terms like "on my field" or "when I'm the Umpire". This shows arrogance and sets the wrong

tone. You are only part of the game just like the coaches and players.

## ***Between Innings***

Plate and Base Umpires should avoid talking between innings and take appropriate positions on the field between innings. The Plate Umpire should position himself between home plate and first or third base while the Base Umpire takes a position in short right field. Coming together to talk between innings should not happen more than 2 or 3 times a game and never after a controversial call that ends an inning. Plate Umpire should position him/herself opposite the team taking the field. Exception: After a controversial call, Plate Umpire can position him/herself opposite the team the call went against to avoid hearing negative remarks that could lead to a coach or player getting ejected.

## ***Post Game Procedure***

The game is officially over once all the Umpires have left the field. After giving the defensive team a reasonable time for a possible appeal play, the Umpires should immediately leave the field together. If possible, they should exit on the side of least controversy, usually the winning side. Umpires are not responsible for monitoring any post game activity nor should they participate in any.

The Umpire team should proceed to the Umpire Area. They should report any problems or issues to the UIC. Always have a post-game conference between you and your partner(s). A good post-game conference may be the most beneficial aspect of umpiring especially in the event that you and your partner(s) may have had a rough outing. They should truthfully discuss and frankly thrash out any unusual plays or rulings with each other.

## ***CALLING THE GAME - Plate Umpire***

The Plate Umpire is the lead official and responsible for making decisions on points not covered by the rules. He/she cannot overrule his/her fellow Umpire's decisions. On plays involving a judgment call or when there is reasonable doubt that a decision may be in conflict with the rules, an Umpire may consult with his fellow Umpire before rendering a final decision. The calling Umpire will ask for information involving only the rule or call and use that information to confirm or change the call. Only the calling official should report the final decision.

The home Plate Umpire must develop proper timing and rhythm in making decisions. Develop a certain rhythm in making all calls and that rhythm should not vary. Change only the emphasis of the various calls. The Plate Umpire sets the tempo and controls the game. In order to do that, he must be in total control of himself, and developing a good sense of timing and rhythm does this. He must develop a good set of positions when calling behind the plate.

## Calling Balls and Strikes

Work the "slot". This is the position between the batter and the catcher where the Umpire can see the catcher's mitt and the outside corner of the plate. At times you may get "squeezed" by the catcher moving in to take a pitch on the inside corner. Try to elevate our head enough to see over the catcher should this situation arise. If the catcher continuously moves inside blocking your view, have a brief conversation with the catcher and tell her you cannot see because of her position and ask her politely to adjust. In this situation, as well as, a catcher who rises as the ball is being delivered, inform the coach and tell him you cannot call a strike if the catcher continues to use this tactic. He will have her adjust.

1. Plant your feet so you can see the catcher's mitt and outside corner of the plate.
2. Plant your feet giving the catcher ample room to pursue an inside/outside pitch or one in the dirt
3. Drop into your crouch as the pitcher separates her hands.
4. Lock into position, maintaining until the ball or strike has been verbalized. Once locked in position to see the pitch, never let your head follow the pitch. Maintain a locked position from the time you go in the crouch until rising to an erect position.
5. Do not make a call until the pitch crosses the plate or has been caught by the catcher. On off-speed pitches some Umpires have a tendency to rise from the crouched position early assuming the ball is high. Never assume a ball or strike and stay with the pitch until in the mitt. Never call a pitch before it hits the mitt, no matter how 'down the middle' it is.
6. In making the call, your first move is to step back with the left foot.
7. Rise from crouch and visualize the strike call or show the count as appropriate.

### Ball Calls:

All balls need to be verbalized. On close pitches, sharply verbalize "ball" confidently and timely after the ball hits the glove. On obvious balls, a simpler, softer call should be used yet loud enough for the catcher and batter to hear.

1. In calling a ball, move slightly toward the pitch to see where the pitch was located.
2. Make a crisp verbal call, "BALL".

### Strike Calls:

1. Raise your right hand above your head with the hand open. The palm of your hand should be facing the right ear.
2. Make a brisk verbal call; "STRIKE" as you drop your right arm to a 90-degree position while closing your right hand into a closed fist.

Don't be timid -- use a voice that is loud enough for the pitcher and coaches to hear! Always use proper softball mechanics.

After the call, drop your arms to the sides and relax between pitches awaiting your next call. Never take your eyes off the pitcher or the ball.

## Balls and Strikes Count

The Plate Umpire is responsible for keeping the proper count on the batter. Always give the number of balls on the batter with your left hand and the number of strikes on the right hand. Give the count verbally and always with the number of balls on the batter first. Say "Three Balls; Two Strikes". Do **NOT** say "3 & 2" nor "Full Count".

When to verbally give the count depends upon the situation. When the field has a scoreboard, it is only necessary to give the count when requested by a player or manager or to correct the scoreboard if it is incorrect.

When no scoreboard is available, the count should be given as follows:

1. When requested.
2. After a delay in the normal flow of the game.
3. Whenever the next pitch could produce a walk or a strike out.

## Ball Rotation Procedure

The ball should be kept in play until such time as it goes out of play. Keep in mind, the pitcher does have a choice of balls at the start of each inning. If both balls do not get into play in the first half of the first inning, the pitcher in the bottom half of the first inning **MUST** pitch with unused ball. In this situation, **NO CHOICE** is offered.

The Plate Umpire, before he relinquishes the second ball, must make sure that the pitcher hands or tosses the ball presently in the game to him. Then and only then, should the Umpire toss the second ball into the game for play. The pitcher has now made a choice and must pitch that ball.

## Leaving the Home Plate Area

Since the catcher usually leaves the plate area on the right side, the Plate Umpire should always leave on the left of the catcher and the plate. The main reason to develop this habit is avoiding a collision with the catcher. Usually with no runners on base or a runner at first base, the Plate Umpire should leave the plate on the left side; proceed about halfway to first base to observe the play being made at first. Try to straddle the foul line to get a good angle on this type of play. This type of positioning will assist you in the following:

1. Possibly assist on sweep tags made by the first baseman.
2. Three-foot line violations.
3. Any collisions made by the catcher and runner.
4. When a defensive player pulls his foot off the base.
5. On any overthrows and when the ball becomes blocked.
6. If a catch is bobbled or juggled.
7. Should the Base Umpire go to the outfield, you are in position to make a call on any plays that might take place.
8. Any tags made by the catcher or any other infielder on the batter-runner.

When there is a runner on first base, prepare yourself for a possible play at third on the lead runner. This is the Plate Umpire's responsibility, so be in position by moving directly toward third base to make the call.

## Calling Fair or Foul Balls

For fly balls hit near the base lines, the call is always fair or foul then safe or out. Batted balls that are either fair or foul need only to be called out. The calls should be called in a loud and decisive manner, leaving no doubt whether the ball is fair or foul.

NOTE: No vocal call as given on a fair ball. Only indicate by pointing toward the diamond that the ball is fair.

When there is no Base Umpire positioned at either foul line and the ball is hit into the outfield near a foul line, against or over the fence, the Plate Umpire should go out as far as possible to get a good look at the ball.

In judging balls hit a great distance directly down the foul lines fair or foul. The ball should be judged fair or foul as it passes the point where the outfield fence and the foul pole join. The Umpires are not to judge the ball fair or foul before it reaches this point, nor are they to judge the ball by where it lands outside the playing field. Always judge the ball fair or foul, when it leaves the park.

## Fly Balls

The Plate Umpire shall call all fly balls, fair or foul, safe or out, except in the event the Base Umpire should turn his back to the infield and go to make a call in the outfield. Once the Base Umpire turns his back to the infield, it becomes his call, fair or foul, safe or out. The Base Umpire should not return until the play is over.

NOTE: No vocal call is given on a fair ball. Only indicate by pointing toward the diamond that the ball is fair.

On fly balls, especially on possible trapped balls, do not work directly at the play, try to work for a good angle by looping around to get a good view of the ball coming down so you can see if a good catch is made. Give a good signal and use a loud voice to indicate safe or out.

## Pop Foul Fly's

The Plate Umpire's first priority is to avoid a collision with the catcher. Do not watch the ball once it has been popped up close to the plate area. The catcher must move his shoulders to move in any direction, so watch his shoulders, pivot out of his way, clear the area and find the ball.

Find the ball, watch the catcher move toward the backstop or the fence area, and observe the catch and look for the trapping of the ball against the screen or fence. On a pop fly near the lines, call fair or foul first, then whether the catch is out and legal.

REMEMBER, if there is a runner at third, your responsibility is the play at home if there is one.

## Calls at Third Base

In making a third base call, the Plate Umpire should be in foul territory halfway between third and home plate, watching the play develop. If there is going to be a play at third, the Plate Umpire should cut inside the infield and move as close to the base to make the call. This position provides the Umpire with the best position to make the call and also if there is an overthrow, the Umpire being inside, will avoid any interference with the players if the play continues. This position also provides good coverage of the home plate area, if the runner on an overthrow, continues home.

## Rundowns

When a rundown occurs, it is important that the Umpire moves to get the best perspective of both ends of the play. The best position of the Umpire should be at least fifteen (15) feet from the runner and moving parallel to the base line. It is not as important to run back and forth trying to follow the runner, as it is important to follow the ball. When the tag is ready to be applied, move quickly toward the tag getting at the best angle, also watching for an obstruction. Since most rundowns happen quickly, usually one Umpire covers the play.

When a single runner gets caught in a rundown, the two Umpires should work according to the following:

1. A runner between first and second base -- the Plate Umpire should take the trail position closest to first base. The Base Umpire should take the lead position at second base. The Plate Umpire should be inside the infield while the Base Umpire should be outside the infield.
2. A runner between second and third base - the Plate Umpire should take the lead position closest to third base, inside the infield while the Base Umpire takes the trail position closest to second, outside the infield.
3. A runner between third base and home plate -- the Plate Umpire will take the lead position nearest home plate,

Important reminder that communication is a **MUST** between the Umpires, telling each other who has the lead or the trail runner, and also call the play as a team rather than making a possible double call.

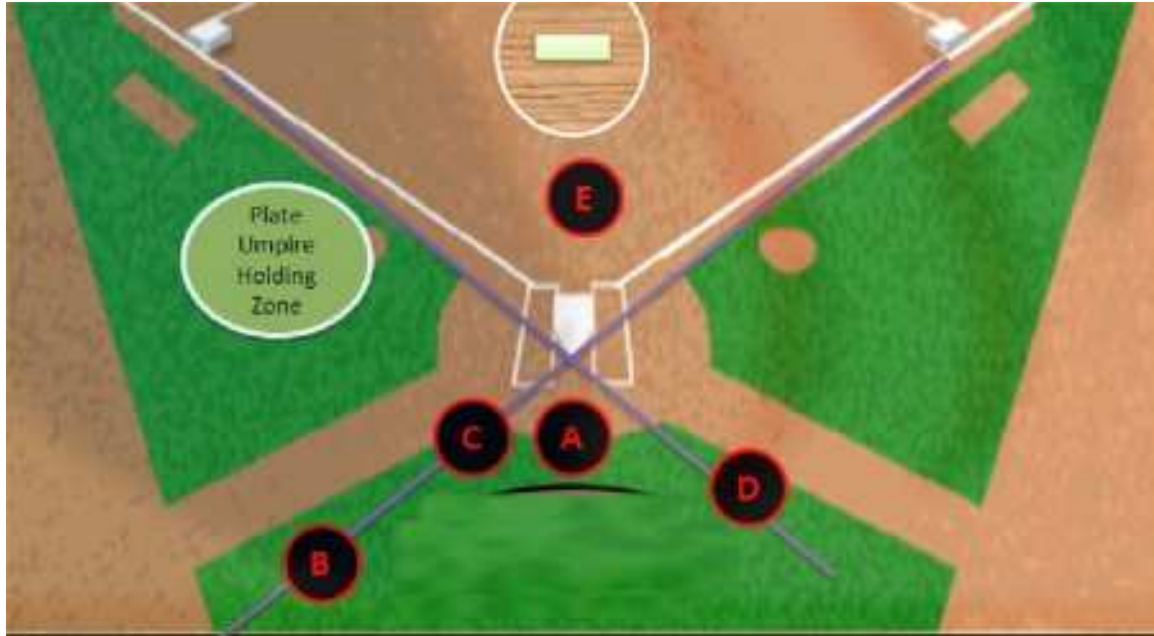
## Positions for Calling Plays at the Plate

There are different positions for making calls on tag plays at the plate:

When the Plate Umpire is returning from third base, the Plate Umpire should stay inside the infield, moving parallel to the base line and getting into a position ten (10) feet from home plate and ninety (90) degrees from the path of the runner.

When making the call, don't plant your feet. Make sure the weight of your body is on the balls of your feet, move toward the play as it develops, find the ball after the tag and then make your call with authority. The inside position is important on this situation because all four elements remain in front of you, the ball, the defense, the runner and the base. When the Plate Umpire has a play where the ball is coming from fair territory or a throw from the outfield, The Plate Umpire should assume a position in foul territory, ninety (90) degrees from the path of the runner just outside the deepest corner of the right hand batter's box. Make sure the weight of your body is on the balls of your feet, move toward the play as it develops, find the ball after the tag and then point at the ball with your left hand making your call with authority.





**POSITION "A"**

- \* This is the Umpire's original position at the time of the pitch.
- \* As a general rule, if the ball is put in play and the Plate Umpire remains in Position "A", the Umpire is in the wrong position!

**POSITION "B"**

- \* This is for force plays at the plate.
- \* The position is about 15 ft from home plate, along the 1<sup>st</sup> base line extended.

**POSITION "C"**

- \* This is for non-force plays when the throw home is on-line.
- \* The position is about 8 ft from home plate, along the 1<sup>st</sup> base line extended

**POSITION "D"**

- \* This is for non-force plays when the throw home is up the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line.
- \* This position is about 8 ft from home plate along the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line extended.
- \* This position allows the Umpire to clearly see the catcher attempt to make a sweep tag, determine if it is made, and determine if it is made before the runner reaches the plate.
- \* This position also allows the Umpire to determine if the catcher has the ball in her glove when the tag is applied.

**POSITION "E"**

- \* This is for when the Plate Umpire enters fair ground for a call at 3<sup>rd</sup> base and then must retreat because the runner attempts to score.
- \* This is the only time this position may be used for a call at the plate.
- \* The position is approximately 8 ft from home plate, in a direct line between home and 2<sup>nd</sup> base.
- \* This position is the best compromise for the Umpire to see a play right at the plate or a swipe tag by the catcher.

**Appeal Play at Home**

When a runner misses home plate and if the catcher misses the tag, the Umpire needs to hesitate momentarily to allow the players to complete the play. If the runner is not tagged the runner shall be declared safe. However, if the proper appeal is made to the Umpire, the runner is called out. The reason for the hesitation is to not give either team any indication that the play may not be over. Also the runner is always assumed safe in this situation until being put out. In order for the runner to be declared out, a proper appeal must be made.

## Run Counts on Third Out

When the situation occurs where the third out of the inning is the result of a tag play, with a runner close to or crossing home plate, The Base Umpire should realize the situation at hand and make his call loud and clear to aid the Plate Umpire with his situation at home. It is of the utmost importance that the Plate Umpire immediately indicates whether the run counts or does not.

A run does not count if the third out of the inning is a result of:

- 1) An out made before the runner crosses Home Plate.
- 2) A force out.
- 3) A preceding runner being put out on an appeal play.

## Dead Ball Situations

When calling a dead ball give an emphatic call, arms held high in the air and calling loudly DEAD BALL. The proper dead ball call serves two purposes:

1. It kills the play and avoids further confusion.
2. Gives you the Umpire the opportunity to consider the situation and then make the proper call.

## Time Out

To indicate the pitcher not to start a pitch, the Plate Umpire should raise his right hand if there is a right handed batter and the left hand if there is a left handed batter, with the palm facing the pitcher. A "NO PITCH" shall be declared if the pitcher pitches while the Umpire has signaled in this position. Time out shall be called for the purpose of suspending play. The proper signal is both hands, extended high above the head along with a verbal call. The time out call should be forceful, distinct and very apparent; to the fact that play has been suspended.

## Catcher Obstruction

Catcher obstruction occurs when the catcher hinders or prevents a batter from swinging at or hitting the ball. Catcher obstruction can occur during the back or the front swing and is ruled upon as a delayed dead ball. If catcher obstruction occurs prior to the pitch, anytime the contact is prior to the pitch, call DEAD BALL, move around in front of the plate and give everyone a chance to reset.

## Illegal Pitch

All Illegal Pitches should be called verbally by proclaiming "Illegal Pitch" and visually by making the delayed dead ball signal.

## Conferences

It is the Plate Umpire's responsibility to enforce the rules governing conferences both by the offensive and defensive teams. Once either team holds an offensive conference, the Umpire should inform that team that was their last charged offensive conference for that inning. In the same way if either defensive team is granted its third conference in the seven innings, the Umpire should inform that team that was their last charged defensive conference for that game (unless the game goes into extra innings).

The offensive team's conference can include any number of runners, players, coaches or the batter.

The defensive team's conference is charged when the manager, coach, or team representative confers with the pitcher. There is no charged conference when there are instructions yelled from the dugout area or talking with the other players, unless those players talk to the pitcher before the next pitch.

There is no charged conference if the offensive team confers with a batter or base runner when the defensive team requests a time out for a conference. Nor is it a charged conference when the defensive team takes advantage of the offensive team having a conference.

When the Umpire calls to play ball, both teams must start to play ball or be in jeopardy of having a charged conference called on them and enforcing the appropriate penalty.

## **Other Responsibilities**

When the ball is put into play by the batter, get out from behind the plate and see the play. Get the mask off immediately and in the left hand. Only balls & strikes should be called with the mask on. You may need to assist on the call or make a call at another base.

Communicate ball/strike count, outs, infield fly, timing play, etc. with your Base Umpire.

Document all substitutes, conferences, courtesy runners, team warnings.

## **CALLING THE GAME - *Base Umpire***

The Base Umpire is, if done correctly, the workhorse of the crew. He/she is responsible for being in the right place at the right time and making the majority of the close calls. On each pitch, the Base Umpire is responsible to observe the pitcher (for illegal pitches), the runner(s) (for leaving too early), the batter (for checked swings) and the catcher (for uncaught balls).

1. Assume the proper position in the field base on base runners.
2. Assume the proper stance when pitcher, on the pitcher pate, takes the sign.
3. Observe, in sequence, the pitcher, runner(s), batter and catcher.
4. Mover to proper position as play warrants.
5. Make the call.
6. Continue to navigate the field as other plays develop.
7. On a ball hit to the outfield that appears to be trouble, turn your back and go out to it. If the ball becomes a home run make sure as the Umpire that you know as exact as possible where and when the ball left the park.

Note: Base Umpire must move to the play and be in position to make a call with credibility. Once the call is made, remain in a holding position until the base is cleared or the ball is returned to the pitcher. Do not walk away from the play looking at an adjusting your indicator. Keep your attention on the players until the play is over.

## **Infield stance**

Two stances are recognized as proper while on the bases. The bent-over stance with hands on the knees is the most widely accepted stance. The erect stance with one foot forward of the other followed by a forward lean or 'walking' a few steps as the ball is delivered is the other. Wide stances with the legs spread wider than the shoulders is not recommended as it takes extra effort and time to get into position to follow runners of close-in to make a call.

## **CALLING THE BASES**

The Base Umpire makes known his decisions by using both the vocal and manual expression. Indicate "safe" when the runner beats the throw, and "out" when the play beats the runner.

When there is a close play it deserves the entire vocal force and power of gesture at hand. An easy or routine out should be given by the hand making it obvious that the runner is out or safe.

For fairly close plays, wide open tag plays and run-downs, the easy decisions, call with medium emphasis as to voice and gesture that is called for. Keep full power in reserve for the really close ones.

The "safe-out" or "out-safe" calls are the result of poor timing. If the Base Umpire (or any Umpire calling out or safe) would give a "slight hesitation" and replay over in your mind what you just saw, you as an Umpire will never have another "out-safe" call. On the close plays; "SEE IT, REPLAY IT, AND THEN CALL IT". If you will hesitate for the length of time that it just took you to read that last quote; your timing will automatically improve. Your judgment will improve as well; and you will become a more consistent Umpire because you have just seen the play twice. Remember your judgment can't do you any justice without good timing. Judgment and timing go hand in hand. On these calls or any other call always hold it and sell it.

Anytime the Base Umpire's back is turned away from the Plate Umpire for the deep fly ball or the possible trap play, the Base Umpire has all the responsibility for fair or foul, and out-safe decisions on the ball. It is most important that the Base Umpire who goes out remembers that he must stay in the outfield and never drift back to the infield for a play on the bases. This decision would cause two Umpires to make a decision on the same play. Even if both calls were right, it still would look bad.

When the Base Umpire has the proper angle on the play, the ball, the defensive player and the runner are all in one view. When calling the tag play, make sure you have a good view of the base. In force outs, keep your eyes on the base and look and hear the ball come into the glove. A Base Umpire should know where the ball is being thrown from and never take your eyes off the thrower until the ball is released.

The most important part of umpiring is to hustle on all the plays that occur. When you run just to run, it is not hustling, at least not productive hustling. The good Umpire quickly finds the position for the best possible angle and makes the call.

## Force Plays

For a force play at first base if the ball is hit and the fielder is getting into position to field the ball, the Base Umpire should also be getting into position. When the fielder gets the ball, the Umpire should stop at least fifteen (15) feet from first base. As the fielder releases the ball, then and only then should the Umpire turn into the base. Watch and let the ball take you into the play for a play cannot be made without the ball.

Concentrating on the base, the Umpire should be looking for the following:

1. The runner touching the base;
2. The first baseman catching the ball and staying on the base, and;
3. If the fielder is juggling the ball.

Proper positioning, at least fifteen (15) feet from the bag is most important because a position too close to the bag restricts the angle, closes the range of vision and may cause the Umpire to interfere in the play. Sound is another important element in making your calls. While concentrating on the base and allowing peripheral vision to aid you in seeing the play develop, the sound of the ball hitting the glove will help determine which arrived first -- the ball or the runner. It is always important too never take your eyes off the ball, but equally important, never depend on sound alone to make a call. There may be crowd noise, infielders or the coach yelling, that may interfere with your hearing the ball hit the glove.

In making the call, the only consideration left to ensure proper timing, is the slight hesitation, to allow a clear mental picture to develop in your mind. This technique shows that you are in control of yourself and it is the manner in which you handle yourself that is more convincing.

Always try and show consistency in making your calls. If you are too quick on every call and then use the "slight hesitation", the players will think you may be guessing or undecided on that play. So it's important that you try and be consistent in all your calls, the easy ones as well as the hard ones.

Remember that by positioning yourself at the proper distance (at least fifteen [15] feet) from the base, your peripheral vision will allow you to see the entire play.

There are four basic positions for calling force plays at first base:

NOTE: The following theories are not exact positioning on every play. However, they are good basic position's to approach most plays with. It is more important to gain the proper angles on every play. The definition of a proper angle is: Any angle that allows the Umpire to view the WHOLE PLAY.

- 1). The 90-degree Position: the Base Umpire Comes inside the infield -- positioning himself about fifteen feet from first base, Perpendicular (90 degrees) to the line of flight of the ball being thrown. On all ground balls hit from the shortstop to the third base line, this includes most balls hit to the third baseman. The Base Umpire should come inside the infield to get in position, staying a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from first base and perpendicular (90 degrees) to the line of flight of the ball when thrown. This position allows excellent use of your peripheral vision which is a basic to good timing and sound judgment.

2). The Right-at-them Position: The Base Umpire comes inside the infield, directly at the fielder fielding the ball. Stop as the fielder fields the ball and let the throw turn you into the play at first base. On all ground balls hit from the shortstop's left side to the second baseman, the Base Umpire should move inside the infield, right at the player who is fielding the ball. When the fielder fields the ball, the Umpire should stop and let the player's throw turn him into the play at first base. The Umpire should be at least fifteen (15) feet from the base and remembering not to turn your head or body toward first base until the throw takes you there. REMEMBER always keep your eyes on the ball.

3). Foul Ground Position: *This position should be used only when absolutely necessary.* This outside position should be used only on balls hit to the first baseman, the second baseman's extreme left, or to a short right field, where the throw is coming to the first baseman, from near the foul line. The Umpire should stay outside the infield in foul territory and move towards home to make the call. This position leaves the Umpire very vulnerable, and whenever possible, the Umpire should move inside the infield, unless forced to stay outside by the throw to the first baseman or another fielder coming near the first base line.

From the outside position there are problems that can develop. These are some examples: 1). Hard to determine whether a first baseman juggled the ball or pulled his foot: 2). The Umpire winds up in position too close to the play, affecting his peripheral vision, timing and usually his judgment; 3). A coach legally in the coach's box must be asked and or assisted in vacating the box if you need the room: 4). An overthrow might hit you, and: 5). Puts the Umpire behind the runner who may advance the second base. To overcome some of these problems, don't crowd the play, maintain a distance to keep your peripheral vision and free movement and remember on an errant throw, get quickly inside the infield and take the runner into second base.

4). On a double play, take two steps toward second base then quickly run parallel to first base -- second base line. Don't take your head and eyes off the ball and let the flight of the ball turn your head and body into the play at first base.

There are four basic elements an Umpire should keep in front of him and unobstructed as much as possible, they are as follows:

- 1). The ball,
- 2). The defensive player making the play,
- 3). The batter-runner and
- 4). The base and the area where all four elements meet.

## Tag Plays

As the play develops, positioning, angles and peripheral vision play an important role in tag plays, just as they did in force plays. The major difference on a tag play is the fact that the Umpire should complete his call with his "nose" right on the tag.

As the tag play develops, make sure you keep all the elements in front of you, the ball the defense, the runner and the base, as well as the area where they all come together. As the runner and the ball near the tag area, start to move in. Come in to about five (5) feet from the play, positioning yourself at the best angle to see the tag. Usually the best unobstructed angle is **90 degrees** from the path of the runner, just short of the base at the point of contact.

The unobstructed angle is the most important thing to remember and that not letting the defensive player or the runner get between you and the tag being made. Remember that the best angle may move as the tag and the runner's slide is being made. The Umpire must also move to keep an unobstructed view of the play.

As you watch the play develop and start to move in, turn your concentration on whether the tag was made prior to the runner reaching the base or the runner beating the tag to the base. If the runner beats the thrown

and the tag, indicate safe providing the runner doesn't slide past the base. If on the other hand, the ball beats the runner and the tag is made, making sure the fielder has the ball in his possession, point to the ball with your left hand and declare the runner out.

In both of these plays, remember, it's best to "hesitate slightly" before making your call of safe or out.

On a play where a good hard slide causes a collision making you lose sight of the ball. Tell the defensive player immediately to show you the ball as you are pointing at him and moving around the play, when you see the ball, keeping your head right on the play, call the runner out.

It is important to remember as the Umpire to not stand still, but move around the play to watch the tag and find the ball.

## **Inside-Outside Theory**

The concept is to keep everything in front of you.

- When the ball is hit inside the diamond (anything on the infield), stay **OUTSIDE** the diamond.
- When the ball is hit outside the diamond, move **INSIDE** the bases.

This puts all four elements, the ball, the runner, the defensive, and the base where you can easily see them.

### **Buttonhook**

The key to the inside-outside theory is movement. The key to movement to the inside-outside theory is the buttonhook. The buttonhook is a term used for the method of moving from outside the diamond to the inside. As you move toward the inside of the diamond you should be concentrating on the runner(s) for which you are responsible. Make sure you do NOT interfere with anyone, checking for the tag of the base, obstruction or inference while glancing to pick up the ball in the outfield

As you are moving inside the diamond, you should be: watching the runner, glancing to pick up the ball. Once inside the diamond 12 to 15 feet, pivot (or buttonhook) into the play, watch to see if the runner touches the base. Move parallel to the runner. Check for obstruction. Obtain the proper angle for a tag play. Occasionally the Base Umpire may stay outside the diamond to keep all key elements (ball, base, runner, fielders) in front of the Umpire. This technique is called rimming.

### **Pulled Foot**

When the ball arrives before the runner at a base, and the fielder pulls his foot, you as the Umpire do not want anyone to think the runner has beaten the throw. As the Umpire, move toward the base, pointing with your left hand at the base or the fielder, and vocally telling everyone he pulled his foot off the base.

### **Swipe Tag**

When a throw pulls a fielder off a base and it is necessary for the fielder to make a swipe tag, the Umpire should move toward the base, point with his left hand and indicate vocally that the fielder has made a tag, calling the runner out.

### **Three Foot Line**

A violation of the three-foot running lane is an example of an interference call and calls for the Umpire to take charge. The Umpire should step into the play, throwing arms high above the head, shouting **DEAD BALL**. Step toward the point of interference, point at the spot of interference with the left hand and give a strong overhand out signal. At this time the runners must be instructed to return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference

## Running Out of the Base Path

Running out of the base path to avoid a tag is also a violation, but does not result in a dead ball. The Umpire should point with his left hand indicating that the runner ran out of the base line and follow with a strong over-head signal. Other runners may continue to advance at their own risk and the Umpire should react accordingly. Reminder: Whereas the base line is a line directly from base to base, a runner's base path is only restricted to a direct line to the next base when a play is being made on her.

## Interference

For interference calls, a vigorous dead ball signal should be given with both arms extended high in the air above your head with a vocal call of DEAD BALL. Halt any further play as soon as possible, as continued play only adds to the confusion. Three things must occur on an interference call: 1) the ball becomes dead: 2) an out is called, and 3) all runners must return to the base they were at, at the time of the interference.

## Obstruction

There are three types; 1) obstruction on a runner who is not being played on, DELAYED DEAD BALL, 2) obstruction on a runner being played on, DEAD BALL, and 3) catcher obstruction.

If obstruction is called on a runner being played on, throw your arms high above your head giving the dead ball signal, and call DEAD BALL. Stop all play, point to the violator and award the bases accordingly.

For obstruction on a runner who is not being played on, display the delayed dead ball signal. Remember that you are only going to protect that runner to the base he would have reached had there been no obstruction. Once the runner has reached the base he would have reached had there been no obstruction, stop giving the delayed dead ball signal.

If the runner is put out prior to reaching the base he would have reached had there been no obstruction, it should be treated the same as a runner being played on, DEAD BALL. Award that runner the base he would have reached and award ALL other runners the base they would have reached had there been no obstruction.

Catcher obstruction is a DELAYED DEAD BALL call, with the Plate Umpire waiting to see the result of the play prior to enforcement.

## Collision

When there is contact between an offensive and defensive player, it doesn't necessarily mean that either interference or obstruction has occurred. This is definitely not the case. The field is laid out in such a manner that it, in itself, puts the defensive and the offensive players on a collision course.

If a batter hits or tops the ball on a slow roller toward first base close to the foul line, and the batter-runner, running in a direct line to first base. The runner can be on a collision course with the first baseman or the catcher. So each player has the legal right -- the batter-runner, running at a direct line to first base; the catcher coming out from behind home plate to field the ball; or the first baseman coming toward the ball to field it.

The Umpire has three questions to answer before interference or obstruction can be called. 1) Did the batter-runner alter his direction in any way to draw contact, in an attempt to get an obstruction call? 2) Did the catcher or first baseman alter their attempt to field the ball in any way to draw the interference? 3) Could the catcher or the first baseman actually make an out on the play?

Another example that may cause a collision is the errant throw up the line at first base. The batter-runner collides with the first baseman while attempting to make a play on an errant throw up the line. The runner

certainly has the right to the base line in this case and equally so; the first baseman should have the right to field an errant thrown ball. It is the result of the normal flow of the game and should be ruled as incidental contact with no effect or penalty on the play.

What adds to the pressure of making the call is that the Umpire must make a decision immediately. The Umpire has to react, and not have the time to think about it. That's why the Umpire must have a thorough understanding of the situation, so that an immediate decision can be made, with authority and decisiveness.

### **Other responsibilities:**

Enforce the 'Look Back Rule'

Watch for runners leaving early

Assist the Plate Umpire with ball/strike count, infield fly, timing play, appeals, and outs

Assure runners touch bases

Assist the Plate Umpire with uncaught third strike

### ***Managing the Game***

The goal of every Umpire should be to perform his/her duties professionally and with mutual respect between the coaches and players. There is no place for an ego or attitude as an Umpire. Displaying either, before or during a game, creates resentment and disrespect. When approached by a coach, follow these simple steps:

1. Listen to the coach without interrupting
2. Determine if the inquiry or request is reasonable (i.e. fill in a hole at the pitcher's plate, retrace the batter's box, remove a scuffed ball from play, give time to wipe off wet balls, etc)
3. Manage the request professionally. Get help from the UIC or Director if warranted. Always take action if a safety related situation is involved.
4. Never lose your temper or show disgust! Do not raise your voice, nor use profanity nor get into an argument with a coach. Give a ranting coach a few seconds to calm down as long as he/she doesn't use profanity, degrade you as an Umpire or continue to delay. Use statements such as: "this is how I saw the play" or "My call was made based on ...".
5. Never threaten a coach with ejection! By threatening to eject a coach, you have openly admitted that the coach has committed an action worthy of him/her being removed from the game. By not ejecting him/her at that point, you have failed to do your job. Any actions by that coach after that point that incites others, causes injury or adversely affects the outcome of the game can be directly related to your inaction in enforcing of the rules of conduct.

If a coach's actions deserve a warning, simply go to the coach and say "Coach you have been warned".

If a coach's action warrants his/her removal, simply tell the coach "you have been ejected from this contest, please leave immediately". If he/she continues to argue, briefly remind them that the game may be forfeit if they continue to delay.

The key to doing this is not get emotional or angry. Remember the hotter it gets on the field, the cooler you must stay. The reputation of a good Umpire is not how many coaches he has thrown out but how many he has kept in the game.



## **TWO-UMPIRE SYSTEM**

The Plate Umpire should be prepared to take share of the base plays. The lead runner, if there is more than one on the bases, is the Plate Umpire's responsibility. To do the job properly, the Plate Umpire must go to a holding zone in foul territory between home and third base, then immediately pick up the lead runner, and prepare to make the call on the runner, whether it be at third base or the plate. If there are two runners on base and the next batter hits for extra bases, which will score the lead runner without a play, the Plate Umpire pays little attention other than noting that the runner touched third base and the plate. Attention then is directed to the second runner and the play that may be made. The Base Umpire, meanwhile, ascertains that all runners touch second and first bases and takes whatever play is made on the batter-runner. If the batter-runner advances to third on the hit, and a play is made, it is the Base Umpire's call. If this is the third out of the inning, the Base Umpire quickly and vociferously makes the call, so that the Plate Umpire may announce whether a runner scoring on the same play has touched home before the third out is made.

The proper position for the Base Umpire to assume at the start of the game is down the right field foul line in foul territory about 18-21 feet beyond first base. The Base Umpire is responsible for making the out, safe or trap call when he/she goes out, and the Plate Umpire will pick up all runners for both tagging up and touching bases.

There are six times a Base Umpire will make a call at third base.

1. On the batter-runner on a triple with no runners on base.
2. On trail runners into third base.
3. On a steal to third base.
4. On any return throw from the plate or a cut-off player.
5. A throw-back by the catcher in an attempt to pick off a runner occupying third base immediately following the pitch.
6. On the first play in the infield by an infielder on a batted ball.

Each Umpire has equal authority to call leaving a base too soon on the pitch. Be in position to make the call. The Base Umpire should observe the pitcher as they watch the runner. Use common sense and think the game. If more than one runner is on base, which runner is logical to make a steal attempt? Observe that runner closer than the other runner(s). Do not guess a runner out. Be sure she actually left the base too soon.

## **Fly Ball Tag-Up Responsibilities**

**The Plate Umpire has tag responsibilities under the following situations:**

1. All runners at third base.
2. The runner at second base with runners at first and second base.

**The Base Umpire has tag responsibilities under the following situations:**

1. All runners at first base.
2. The runner at second base with runners at second and third bases or second base only.
3. Runners at first and second base when the bases are full.

NOTE: These tag-up procedures should be followed at all times, UNLESS there is COMMUNICATION between both Umpires. These responsibilities are covered in the duties listed on the following pages.

NOTE: In most instances, the Plate Umpire is responsible for watching the batter-runner touch first base.

## **Positioning and Coverage - General**

Initial positioning with runners on bases is described on the following pages. When mechanics dealing with each situation differ, they will be covered individually, however, there are several basic responsibilities that will not be duplicated.

In all situations, the Plate Umpire will call all balls hit fair and/or foul. The Plate Umpire will move out and up the foul line to make these calls, remembering not to make the call too quickly.

The Plate Umpire should always be alert and move to a position to help his/her partner in case of a run down.

If the Base Umpire goes to the outfield for a possible trapped ball, or goes out on a ball hit close to the foul line, once the Base Umpire turns his/her back, the calls will be the Plate Umpire's. The Plate Umpire must move into the infield and revert to the one Umpire system, covering all bases.

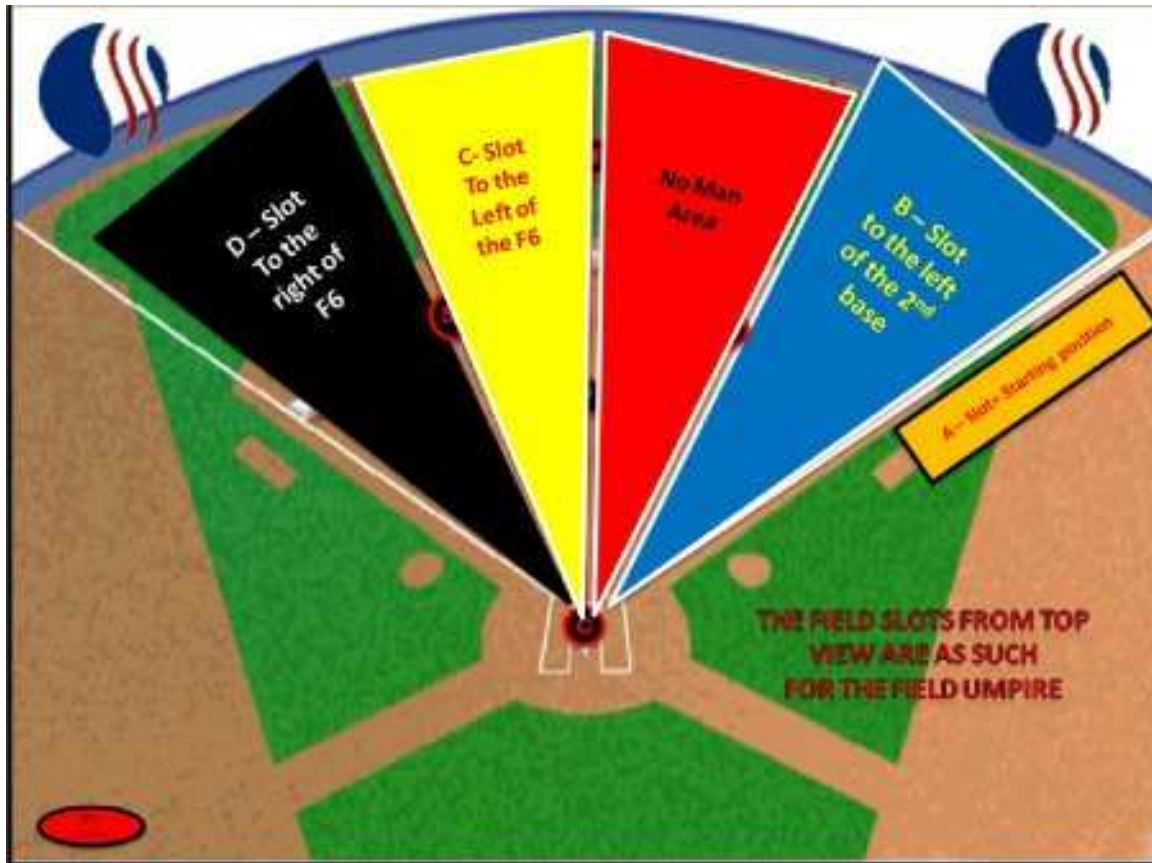
On routine fly balls to the outfield, the Plate Umpire (with no runners on or with a runner at first base) will go to the center of the infield in the direction of the batted ball. With runners in scoring position, the Plate Umpire will stay in foul territory. The Base Umpire will move inside the bases, watching the assigned runner tag-ups listed above. The Base Umpire follows the Inside-Outside Theory on all balls hit. This was described under the Base Umpire section of the manual.

The Base Umpire must be alert for snap throws and a possible pick-off of each runner.

Both Umpires must hustle at all times, never take their eyes off the ball and be in the correct position on all calls. The following responsibilities deal with the individual situation.

**REMEMBER, ANY TIME YOU DEVIATE FROM THESE PROCEDURES, COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR PARTNER.**

## Base Umpire "Slot" Position



The A-Slot is 18-21 feet past First Base in foul territory  
The B-Slot is to the left of the Second baseman  
The C-Slot is to the left of the Shortstop  
The D-Slot is to the right of Shortstop

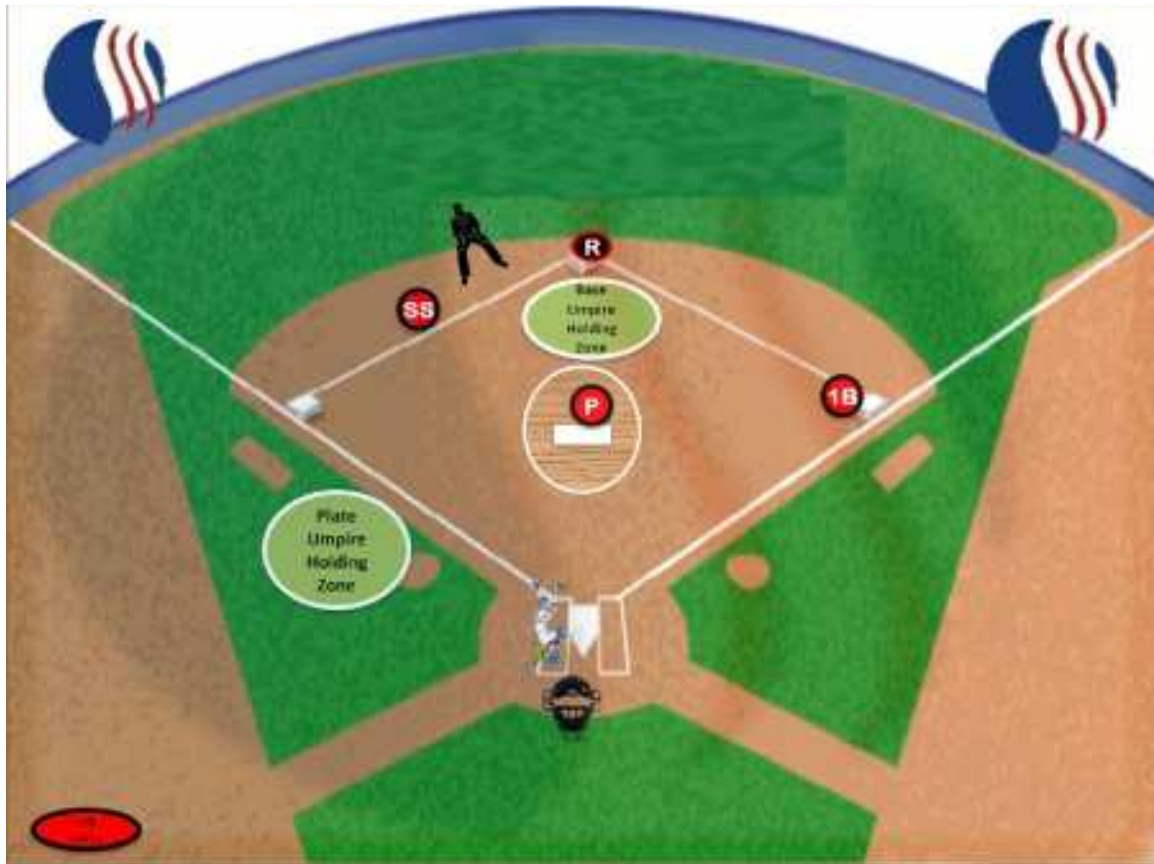
### *Modified "C" Position*

With runners on first and third or third base only, the modified C position may be used. The modified C position is when the Base Umpire takes a position just to the left field side of second base, not off the right shoulder of the short stop. This puts you closer to second for making the call on an attempted double play and closer to first for a play at first base.

#### Need in Mechanics Manual

BASE UMPIRE POSITIONS A,B,C,D  
PLATE UMPIRE POSITIONS A-E  
HOLDING DIAGRAMS  
Uncaught third strike  
~~Button Hook; Inside-Outside~~

## Holding Zones



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Key to Diagrams: Mask - Plate Umpire; BU - Base Umpire; Filled Base(s) – Runner(s)

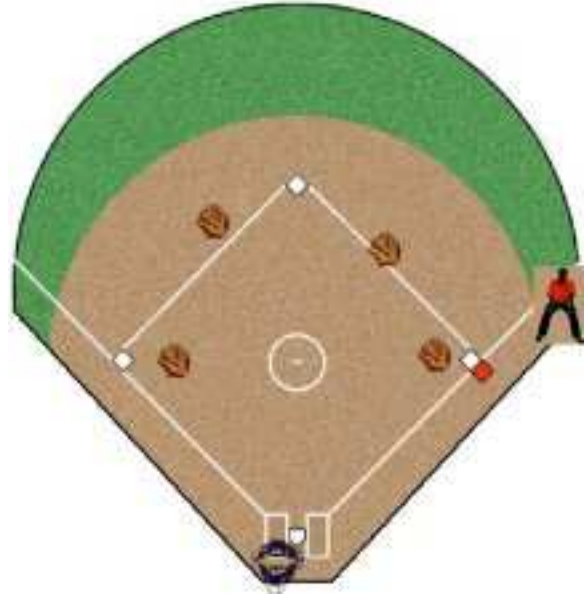


## No Runners on Base

### PLATE UMPIRE:

1. On ground balls hit to the infield, come out left of the catcher and move toward first base to aid your partner should he/she need your help.
2. On a ground ball hit near the foul line, stay at home plate and determine fair/foul.
3. On routine fly balls, not down either line, move to the center of the infield in the direction of the batted ball. Help the Base Umpire on runner touching first base.
4. On a fly ball near the foul line, stay close to home or the foul lines determine fair/foul, safe/out.

Note: On a base hit to right field where the Base Umpire is trapped in foul territory, the Plate Umpire should be prepared to move toward the center of the infield so if the runner advances past first base, the Plate Umpire can cover 2nd and 3rd base.



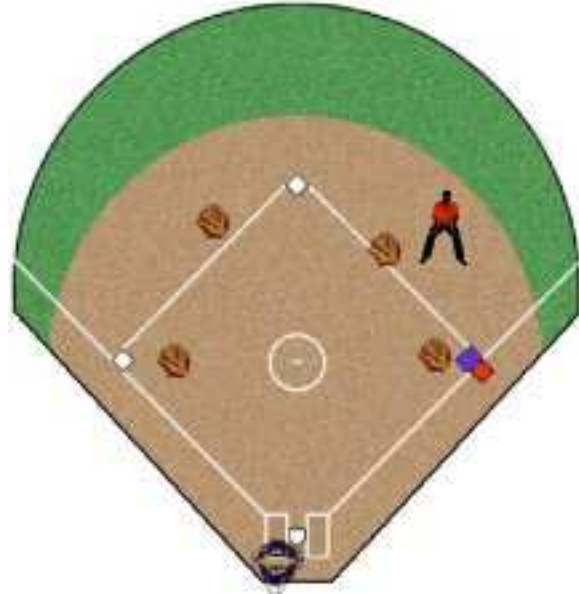
### BASE UMPIRE:

1. Position yourself 18 - 21 feet beyond first base in foul territory.
2. On base hits move inside diamond to second base for a possible play there. Responsible for the batter-runner all the way to third base. If there is a line drive to short right field, the Base Umpire may move into foul territory, 90 degrees and square to first base to make the call to avoid the throwing lane. In this case, the Plate Umpire needs to be prepared to cover 2<sup>nd</sup> base.
3. On fly ball, buttonhook and watch batter/runner touch first base. Occasionally the Base Umpire may stay outside the diamond (rimming) to keep all key elements (ball, runner, fielders) in front of the Umpire.

## Runner on First Base Only

### PLATE UMPIRE:

1. On batted balls to the infield, come out left of the catcher. Move up first base line to observe the play in case you are needed to help with the play, then drift towards third base to cover the base runner.
2. On routine fly balls, not down either line, move to the center of the infield in the direction of the batted ball. Be prepared to move to third base if the lead runner advances beyond second base.
3. Should the runner on first base steal second base, pick up the runner if they advance toward third base, and be prepared to take the runner home..



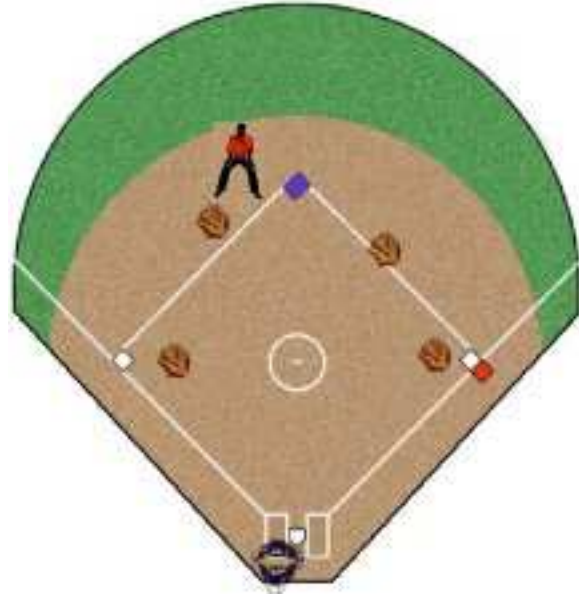
### BASE UMPIRE:

1. Take a position about halfway between first and second base and outside the base line. This position will normally place the Umpire two or three steps behind and to the left side of the second baseman. Be aware of the possible throw back from the catcher to the first baseman. The Base Umpire has this responsibility.
2. If the runner attempts to steal second, move toward the base staying behind and out of the way of the fielder. Should the throw be wild, move inside the base paths and be prepared to pick up the possible runner at home. The PLATE UMPIRE has third base coverage.
3. On base hits to the outfield, immediately come inside the diamond, button hook and take the batter-runner all the way to third base.
4. On a double play, take one step toward second base and make the call there. Allow the flight of the ball to turn you and move parallel with the baseline toward first base as the ball takes you into the play.
5. Has tag responsibility for runner at first base.
6. Takes single runner all the way to third base after the catch.

## Runner on Second Base Only

### PLATE UMPIRE:

1. On base hits, move toward third base and ensure the lead runner legally touches third base. Be ready and in position to make a call by going down the left field foul line in foul ground. When about 15 feet from third base, quickly move into the infield for good position for the call.
2. If the first play is at first base, and there is a throw to third, the Plate Umpire has the call at third.
3. On a fly ball, move from behind home plate to the holding area between home and third base. Be prepared to move into the infield or back to home plate depending on how the play develops.



### BASE UMPIRE:

1. Take position two or three steps behind and to the left of the shortstop. Be cautious not to interfere with the outfielder's view of the batter or a play by the infielders. This is ONLY intended to be a starting position. The situation may dictate altering the position. It may be acceptable in certain situations to position to the right shoulder.
2. On any ball hit to the infield, wait until the fielder commits, take the call on the first throw unless it is to home plate. If the first throw is to first, second, any subsequent throw to third base is covered by the Plate Umpire. Do not take your eyes off the ball.
3. On all balls hit through the infield or to the outfield that you do not go out on, immediately come inside the diamond, buttonhook and take the batter-runner all the way to third base.
4. On routine fly balls to the outfield move into the infield to a position between the pitching rubber and the base line. You are responsible for the tag-up of the runner, and after the ball is caught, follow the runner into third base.
5. Take the batter-runner to third base, watching that she touches all bases. When the ball is in the outfield, take a position deep enough in the infield to allow movement for a play at either base.
6. On an attempted steal or third, move toward third base and be prepared for a call.

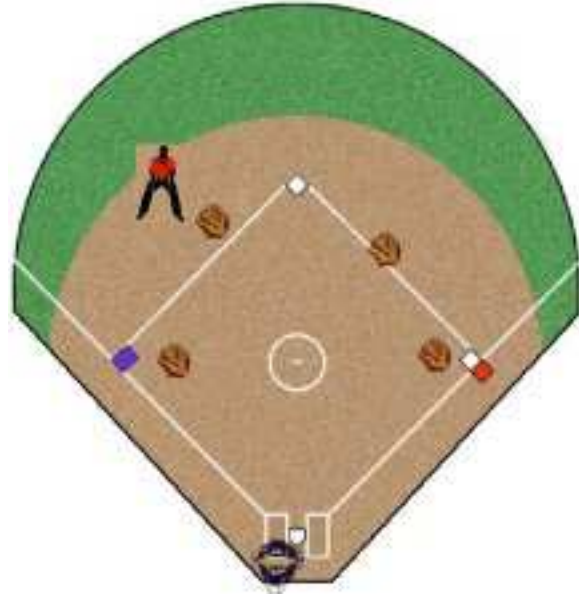
## Runner on Third Base Only

### PLATE UMPIRE:

1. If a fly ball is hit, get out from behind home plate and line up the runner on third base and watch the tag-up.
2. On base hits, move toward third base watching the runner. If the runner goes home, drift back toward home plate and watch the runner touch home plate.

### BASE UMPIRE:

1. Take a position two or three steps behind and to the right of shortstop (not down the third base line). Be cautious so as not to interfere with the outfielders' view of the batter or a play by the infielders.
2. If a ball is hit to the infield wait until the fielder commits herself, then move quickly toward the base where the play is being made. Don't take your eyes off the ball.
3. Call all plays made on the first throw of the ball unless it is to home plate.
4. Take the batter-runner into third base and see that all bases are touched.
5. has throw back responsibilities at third.

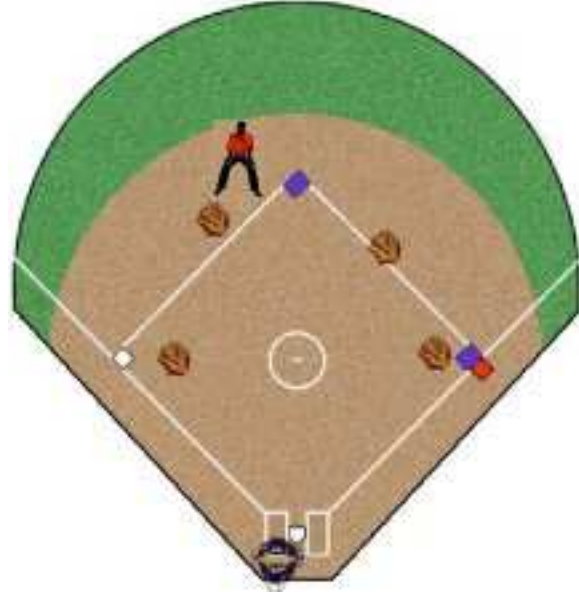




## Runners on First and Second Base

### PLATE UMPIRE:

1. On a fly ball, you are responsible for the tag at second base. Move from behind home plate and line up the lead runner watching for the tag-up.
2. On base hits, you are responsible for the lead runner at third base and at home. Move toward third base in foul ground. If the lead runner comes home and there is no play made on her, drift toward third base but watch the runner touch home plate.
3. On steals if the runner from first advances past second base you are responsible for the runner coming to third base.
4. Be ready and in position to make a call at third base by going down the left field line in foul ground. When you are about 15 feet from third base quickly move into the infield for good position on the tag play.
5. Be ready and in position to make a call at third base by going down the left field foul line in foul ground. When you are about 15 feet from third base quickly move into the infield for good position on the tag play.



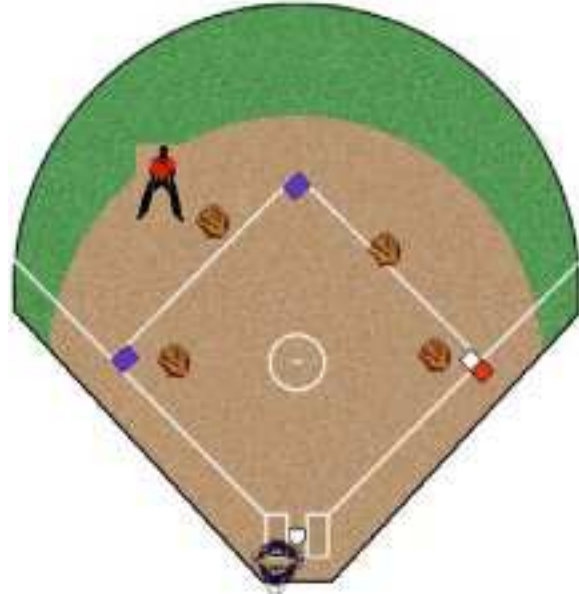
### BASE UMPIRE:

1. Take position two or three steps behind and to the left of the shortstop. Be cautious so as not to interfere with the outfielder's view of the batter or a play by the infielders.
2. On any ball hit to the infield, wait until the fielder commits himself then take the first throw unless it is to home plate. If the first throw is to first or second base, the Plate Umpire covers any subsequent throw to third base. Do not take your eyes off the ball.
3. If the runner attempts to steal third, move parallel with the runner toward the base to make the call.
4. On routine fly balls to the outfield, you are responsible for the tag-up of the runner on first, Move into the infield to a position between pitching rubber and the baseline.
5. See that the runner and batter touch second and first base. When the ball is in the outfield, take a position deep enough in the infield to allow you to move in for a play at either base.

## Runners on Second and Third Base

### PLATE UMPIRE:

1. If a fly ball is hit, position yourself in line with the runner on third base and the fielder making the play and watch the tag-up.
2. On base hits move toward third base. If the lead runner comes home and there is no play on her drift toward third but watch the runner touch home plate. If there is a play at home, move back to a position in the rear and left side of the right-handed batter's box.
3. If the play is at first base, watch the lead runner touch home plate, then go to third for a possible play on the second runner.



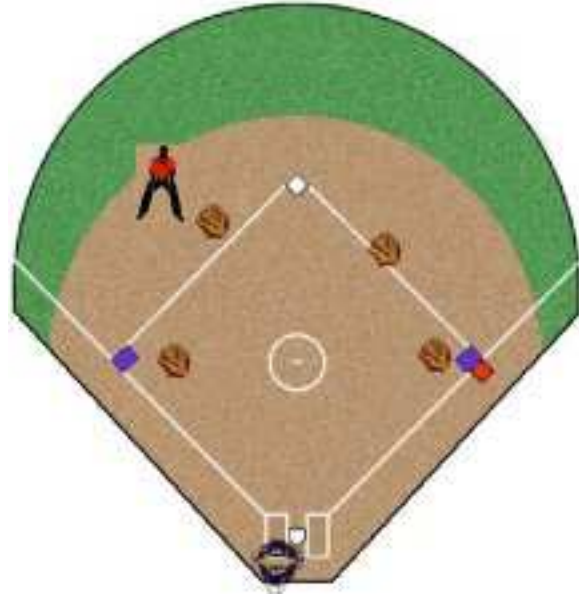
### BASE UMPIRE:

1. Position yourself two or three steps behind and to the right of the shortstop. Position yourself as to not interfere with the view of the outfielder.
2. On any ball hit to the infield, you are responsible for the first throw unless it is to home plate. If the first throw is to first or second, the Plate Umpire covers any subsequent throw to third.
3. On fly balls, get inside the infield quickly, button hook and line up the runner on second base and take the runner to third base after the catch.
4. On fly balls, get inside the infield quickly and button hook. Position yourself in line with the runner on second and the fielder making the play. Take the runner to third base after the catch.
5. On all balls hit through the infield or to the outfield that you do not go out on, immediately come inside the diamond, button hook and take the batter-runner all the way to third base.

## Runners on First and Third Base

### PLATE UMPIRE:

1. If a fly ball is hit, move from behind home plate and line up the runner on third base and watch the tag-up.
2. On base hits move toward third base. If the lead runner comes home and there is no play made on her, drift toward third but watch the runner touch home plate. If there is a play at home, move back to a position in the rear and left side of the right-handed batter's box.
3. If the play is at first base, watch the lead runner touch home plate, then go to third for a possible play on the second runner.



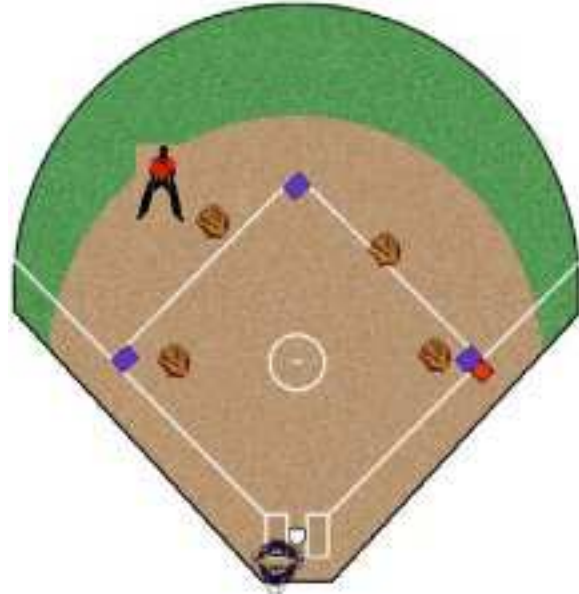
### BASE UMPIRE:

1. Take a position two or three steps behind and to the right of the shortstop. Be careful not to interfere with the outfielder's view of the batter or a play by the infielders.
2. On any ball hit to the infield, take the first throw unless it is to home plate. If the first throw is to first or second base, the Plate Umpire covers any subsequent throw to third base.
3. If a ball is hit to the infield wait until the fielder commits herself, then move quickly toward that base. Don't take your eyes off the ball.
4. On a base hit get inside the infield quickly and watch the runner on first touch second base. Be alert for a play at that base. Take the batter-runner as far as third base. Watch her touch each base.
5. On fly balls, get inside the infield quickly, button hook and line up the runner on first base. After checking the runner tag up at first base, be prepared to take her into second and/or third base.

## Bases Loaded

### PLATE UMPIRE:

1. If a fly ball is hit, get out from behind home plate, line up the runner on third base and watch the tag-up.
2. On base hits move toward third base in foul territory. If the lead runner comes home and there is no play made on her, drift toward third but watch the runner touch home plate. If there is a play at home plate, move back to a position at the rear and left side of the right handed batter's box.
3. If the play is at first base, watch the lead runner touch home plate, then go to third for a possible play on the second runner.



### BASE UMPIRE:

1. Take a position two or three steps behind and to the right of the shortstop. Be careful not to interfere with the outfielder's view of the batter or a play by the infielders.
2. On any ball hit to the infield, take the first throw unless it is to home plate. If the first throw is to first or second base, the Plate Umpire covers any subsequent throw to third base.
3. If a ball is hit to the infield wait until the fielder commits herself, then move quickly toward that base. Don't take your eyes off the ball.
4. On any ball hit to the outfield get inside the diamond quickly, button book and be prepared to make a call at first, second, or third base.
5. On fly balls, you have tag responsibility at first and second base. Move inside the diamond quickly, line up runner at first and second base to take tag ups. Be prepared for any play into second base.

## **THREE UMPIRE SYSTEM**

The three Umpire system, when properly employed ensures better coverage of everything that can occur on the ball field.

The two Umpire system provides adequate coverage for all but several situations that may arise, but the three Umpire system, when properly executed, insures greater coverage.

### **Initial Position**

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for starting play.

The Home Plate Umpire should be in the slot position on the inside between the catcher and the batter.

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for illegal pitches and calling balls and strikes.

The Plate Umpire judge's batted balls foul or fair as per the section on this mechanic.

The Base Umpires should position themselves twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet outside the base lines behind first and third bases at the beginning of the play.

The Base Umpires are responsible for illegal pitches such as replanting the foot and leaping.

The Base Umpires are responsible for runners leaving their base too early.

The First Base Umpire assists on the check swing of the right handed batter.

The Third Base Umpire assists on the check swing of the left handed batter.

The Base Umpire should only help the Plate Umpire on fair/foul decisions when they turn their back to the infield and go out on a ball hit near the fence or on a sinking line drive.

On all balls hit by the batter, all Umpires must move instantly.

### **Basic Rules**

The basic rules governing the coverage of the three Umpire system:

3. Rotation for the three Umpire system is always clockwise.
4. When the Umpires start the basic position from a counter rotated position; there will be no rotation. The counter rotated position is the basic position prior to any pitch when the Third Base Umpire is down the line at third base and the First Base Umpire assumes a position behind the second base player.
5. When one of the Base Umpires goes to the outfield, revert to the two-Umpire system.
6. When a Base Umpire turns his/her back to the infield to go to the outfield on a play, he/she should remain outside until the play has been completed.
7. There should be a Base Umpire going to the outfield on any ball hit in the air over an infielders head. A Base Umpire should make all the calls on trap/caught balls in the outfield.

You will note that we have stated the desired positions for Base Umpires throughout this section. These are guides, but not rigid rules. Situations arise whereby your position will have to vary from play to play. Each Umpire should select the exact position that will permit him/her to cover the play, yet not interfere with the play.

It's imperative that Umpires communicate both verbally and through eye contact. Glance at a forward base, if there is no vocal communication heard it would lead to mix-ups in covering the bases. The Umpires must assure complete coverage of everything that can occur on the ball field.

### **Fair/Foul**

The Plate Umpire judges batted balls and calls fair or foul balls up to first and third base.

The Plate Umpire has responsibility to make decisions on bounding balls hit over first and third base.

The Base Umpires should only help the Plate Umpire on these decisions when they turn their backs to the infield and go out on a ball hit near the fence or on a sinking line drive to watch for a trapped ball. NOTE: Once a Base Umpire turns his/her back to go out on a call, that Umpire NEVER returns back to the infield to make a call.

## **Tag Responsibilities**

The Plate Umpire has no tag responsibilities except when a Base Umpire goes out to the outfield and leaves a runner behind him.

When the Third Base Umpire goes to the outfield, the Plate Umpire has any runner on Third base.

When the First Base Umpire goes to the outfield, the Plate Umpire has any runner on First base.

The Third Base Umpire has the tag responsibilities at third base.

He will take the tag at second base when the First Base Umpire goes out to the outfield and turns his back.

He will take the tag at first base when starting at Second base and the First Base Umpire goes out to the outfield and turns his back.

The First Base Umpire has the tag responsibilities at first base and second base.

\*NOTE - on all tag up responsibilities, the procedures should be followed unless the Umpires communicate with each other.

## **Illegal Pitches**

The Plate Umpire is primarily responsible for illegal pitch violations.

The First Base Umpire and Third Base Umpire should assist on the leap and crow hop calls when positioned on the foul lines.

The First Base Umpire and Third Base Umpire should assist on the 24 inch calls when positioned by second base.

## **Check Swing**

Right handed batter: The First Base Umpire, when requested by the Home Plate Umpire, should assist on a check swing call on a right handed batter.

Left handed batter: The Third Base Umpire, when requested by the Home Plate Umpire, should assist on a check swing call on a left handed batter.

## **Plate Umpire**

On batted balls, the Plate Umpire should move in front of the plate and make all fair foul ball calls, unless one of the Base Umpires goes out to the outfield to make the call.

Always be prepared to revert to the two-Umpire system if one of the two Base Umpires goes to the outfield.

## **First Base Umpire**

The First Base Umpire should position himself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond the base in foul territory, also a step behind the first baseman.

When at first base, go with the first and second baseman and the right fielder on fly balls in foul territory to observe the legal catch.

The Base Umpires must be careful not to be surprised by a quick throw to any base by the outfielders.

Do not cross in front of the fielder covering first base, instead move toward home plate in foul territory. As the batter-runner passes, hook immediately behind the runner so as to have the runner, base, fielder and the ball in front of you.

Always watch the Third Base Umpire and observe his movement. When the Third Base Umpire goes to the outfield, be prepared to revert to the two-Umpire system.

Be prepared as the First Base Umpire on balls hit on the right side to go out and make the call on possible trapped balls.

### **Third Base Umpire**

As the Third Base Umpire, position yourself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond the base in foul territory and a step behind the third baseman.

Be prepared, as the Third Base Umpire, on balls hit on the left side to go out and make the call on possible trapped balls.

When positioned at third base, go with the third baseman, the shortstop or the left fielder on fly balls to observe a legal catch.

On run-downs between third and home, the Third Base Umpire should position himself on the infield side of the base and make the call if the runner is returning to third base. Watch for obstruction.

**ALWAYS REMEMBER** - Should you ever deviate from these procedures, communicate with your partners.

## No Runners on Base

### PLATE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

On balls that are hit come out left of the catcher.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls unless the Base Umpire is on the foul line and turns to cover a batted ball over their head.

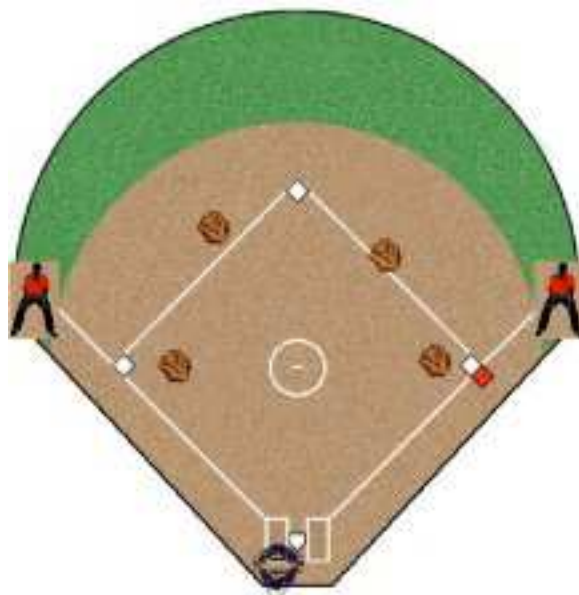
#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at Third Base.

Trail the runner down the first base line ready to assist your partner with a pulled foot or swiped tag. If the batter-runner continues to Second, Release towards third base for possible call. Take the batter-runner into Third and get a 90 degree angle on the foul line. If the batter-runner continues home, release the batter-runner to the First Base Umpire (look to see if the First Base Umpire is there. If not, stay fair and get possible angle for a play at the plate).

#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

Move out in front of home plate to follow the ball. If either Base Umpire goes out, trail the runner to first and assist in watching the batter-runner touch first. Return to home in foul ground and be prepared to move back to the plate for possible call at home



### FIRST BASE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Post yourself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond first base and a step behind the first baseman, in foul territory.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls when they are initially on the first base foul line and turn to cover fly balls over their head

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The First Base Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at First Base and eventually Home Plate.

On a ground ball in the infield, step into fair territory. Make the call at First.

When the ball is hit through the infield or to the outfield, move to the inside of the infield, buttonhook, pick up the ball and watch the batter/runner touch first base.

If the batter-runner continues to Second, Glance to your left on the play to make sure the Umpire at second base has move to the inside of the infield then release the batter-runner to the Third Base Umpire.

If there is a run down between First and Second, try to get outside unless the Third Base Umpire gets outside first. When you are sure the play is over at first base and the batter-runner isn't coming back to



First, get into foul territory and prepare yourself to move toward home plate for a possible play there. Be positioned on the right hand batter's box side of home plate.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

Go out on all fly balls hit between the center fielder to the right field deadball line.

If Third Base Umpire goes out on fly ball, come inside the diamond, buttonhook for any call at First base and take runner to third base.

**THIRD BASE UMPIRE**

***Initial Position:***

Position yourself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond third base and a step behind the third baseman in foul territory.

***Fair/Foul Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls when they are initially on the third base foul line and turn to cover fly balls over their head

***Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at Second Base.

When the ball is hit through the infield or to the outfield move to a position on the inside of second base for a possible play there. If the batter-runner continues to Second anticipate a possible rundown, stay inside unless the First Base Umpire is caught up inside, then go outside to 'bookend' the batter-runner. If the batter-runner continues to Third, glance to third to make sure the Plate Umpire is there for call. If there is a rundown between Second and Third, get outside to bookend the runner.

When the First Base Umpire goes out to cover the outfield, the Plate Umpire has responsibility to cover first base. When this happens, an Umpire is ahead as well as behind the runner.

If the batter-runner continues past second base, glance to your left to make sure the Plate Umpire has third base covered. If the base is not covered, take the batter-runner to third base.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

Go out on all fly balls from the center fielder to the dead ball line. Parallel the flight of the ball.

If the First Base Umpire goes out on fly ball, come inside the diamond and take the batter-runner to third base.

## Runner on First Base

### PLATE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

On balls that are hit come out left of the catcher.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls unless the First Base Umpire turns to cover a batted ball over their head.

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at Third Base.

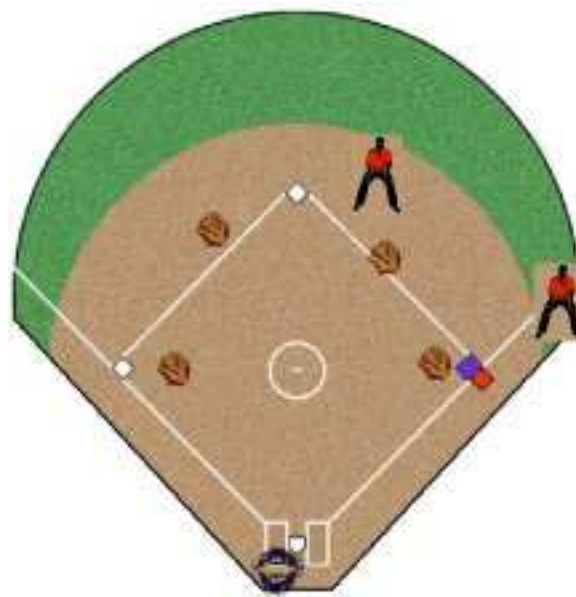
On balls that are hit come out left of the catcher.

When there is no play on the third base line or in front of the plate, watch and trail the batter-runner down to first base, prepared to help your partner on a call.

Be ready to cut across the infield to third base to get positioned for any calls at third base.

If the runner from first continues past third, release the runner to the First Base Umpire. Pick up the batter-runner if the batter-runner comes to third.

Be aware of possible rundown situations between second and third, then possibly third and the plate.



#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

On a fly ball to left field near the foul line the Plate Umpire moves down the foul line as far as possible to get a good angle on the catch. Be prepared to bounce back for any call at Third base.

Otherwise, trail the batter-runner to first base.

If the First Base Umpire goes out, Home Plate Umpire has tag responsibility at first base.

#### *Steal/Pick off Coverage:*

Step out from behind the catcher and watch play at first. If there is a bad throw, watch the ball for a possible dead-ball situation, head to third base and prepare for a possible play there. If there is a rundown between second and third, or third and the plate, stay inside to bookend the runner.

Anticipate a play at third base, Confirm that First Base Umpire is heading to cover the plate.

### FIRST BASE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Position yourself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond first base and a step behind the first baseman, in foul territory.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls on fly balls over their head on the first base foul line on which you turn to cover the catch.

***Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:***

The First Base Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at First Base and eventually Home Plate.

When the ball is hit through the infield or to the outfield, move into fair territory to the inside of the infield, picking up the ball and watch the runner touch first base.

Glance to your left on the play to make sure the Umpire at second base has moved to the inside of the infield.

Make sure on a ball hit, that a tag is made or if the batter-runner touches first base.

When you are sure the play is over at first base, rotate to home for any calls at home plate. Be positioned on the right hand batter's box side of home plate!

First Base Umpire is responsible for the double play tag off a line drive.

When the ball is in the infield, move into fair territory for the call at first. If the initial throw is to second prepare for a reutrn throw to first. If the initial throw is to first, make the call and then find the other runner. If the runner is continuing to third, head to the plate for a possible call. If the batter-runner continues to sencond, release the batter-runner to the Third Base Umpire and head to the plate.

If the runner gets into a rundown between first and second, come inside if possible to bookend the runner.

Don't commit too quickly to the holding zone between first and the plate in case there is a rundown between first and second.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

Responsible for fly balls to right field when right fielder goes toward foul line.

The First Base Umpire is responsible for the tag at first base.

Buttonhook inside the diamond to take tag up at first base.

If the Third Base Umpire has released, be positioned for calls at first and second base. Take last runner to third base.

After releasing runner if the Plate Umpire has moved inside at third base, rotate to the plate for any call at home.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The First Base Umpire is responsible for call at first base on a pick off or runner leaving early.

Read the play, make sure the runner doesn't stop and get into a rundown, before heading to home. Anticipate having to make a call at home.

**THIRD BASE UMPIRE**

***Initial Position:***

Position yourself 3 or 4 steps behind the second baseman and to his right between him and second base.

Always be aware to stay out of the outfielders' view of the batter or the play of the infielders.

***Fair/Foul Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls on fly balls over their head on the third base foul line on which you turn to cover the catch.

***Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at Second Base.

Make all calls at second base; Be alert for any possible calls at first.especially if the First Base Umpire has moved to the outfield.

Come inside the diamond for any play at second base.

On a ball hit through the infield, move to the inside of the infield so you can pick up the ball and be in good position to make a call at second base.

Glance over at third base to see if the Plate Umpire has that base covered, if not, be prepared to follow the runner to third base.

If the runner continues on to third, release the runner to the Plate Umpire. If the batter-runner gets in a rundown between first and second, adjust inside or outside depending on where the First Base Umpire is to bookend the runner. If there is a rundown between second and third, get outside to bookend the runner.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

Take all fly balls to left of right fielder. When First Base Umpire takes fly ball, come inside for tag up at first base.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for call at second base on a steal.

Be moving and anticipating the play.

Prepare to pick up the runner coming to second. If the runner rounds second and continues on to third, release her to the Plate Umpire. If the runner gets in a rundown between first and second, adjust inside or outside depending on where the first Base Umpire is to bookend the runner. If there is a rundown between second and third, get outside to bookend the runner.

## Runner on Second Base

### PLATE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls unless the Base Umpire is on the foul line and turns to cover a batted ball over their head.

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at Home Plate.

On balls hit, come out from behind home plate to the left of the catcher. Get in position for any play at home.

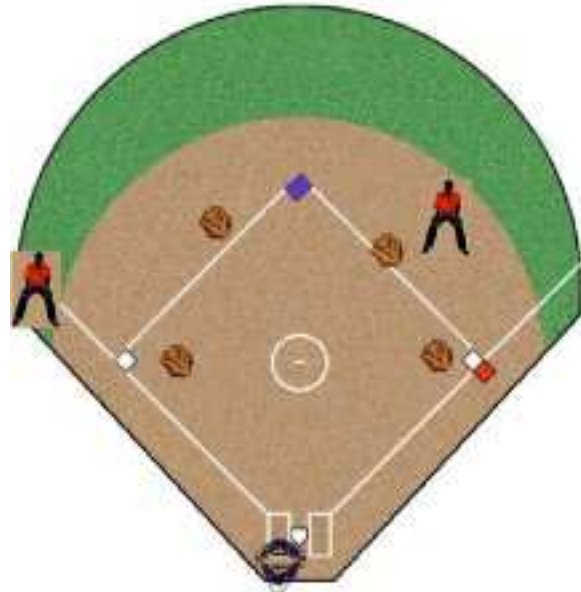
On balls hit close to the foul line, stay at home plate ready to make the call.

When the First Base Umpire goes out to cover the outfield, the Plate Umpire has responsibility to cover first base.

#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

Hustle toward third base in foul ground. Be prepared to take the calls into third and home. Responsible for fly balls hit to right field, when right fielder is going towards the foul line.

#### *Steal/Pick off Coverage:*



### FIRST BASE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Position yourself three (3) or four (4) steps behind the second baseman and to his left between him and first base.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

None

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for the calls at First Base and Second Base.

On a ball hit through the infield or to the outfield that you don't go out on, move to the inside of the infield, picking up the ball and watch the runner touch first base.

You now have throw back responsibilities at first on the batter-runner. Watch for the quick throw back to first base.

Take the batter-runner into second base.

Come inside the diamond and be prepared to take any calls at first or second base.

#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for the tag at Second Base.

The First Base Umpire is responsible for fly balls to right of the left fielder.

Take a position two or three steps behind and to the second base player's right. Take all fly balls to the right of the right fielder.

When Plate Umpire or Third Base Umpire takes fly ball, come inside and take the tag up at second.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The First Base Umpire is responsible for call at second base on a pick off or runner leaving early.

**THIRD BASE UMPIRE**

***Initial Position:***

Position yourself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond third base and a step behind the third baseman in foul territory.

***Fair/Foul Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls when they are initially on the third base foul line and turn to cover fly balls over their head

***Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at Third Base.

On a base hit to outfield, come inside the diamond and take calls at third base.

If the batter-runner continues past second base, take the batter-runner to third base.

Prepare yourself, for the throw back to third base on a line drive to the infield.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for fly balls between the left fielder to left field dead ball line.

When the First Base Umpire goes out to cover the outfield, the Third Base Umpire has responsibility to cover second base. In this case, hustle into the diamond for tag up at second base.

When reverting to two Umpire system, If Home Plate Umpire covers first base, cover second and third bases. Otherwise be prepared for plays at first and second base. Take the last runner to third base.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for call at third base on a steal.

## Runner on Third Base

### PLATE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

On balls that are hit come out left of the catcher in foul ground.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

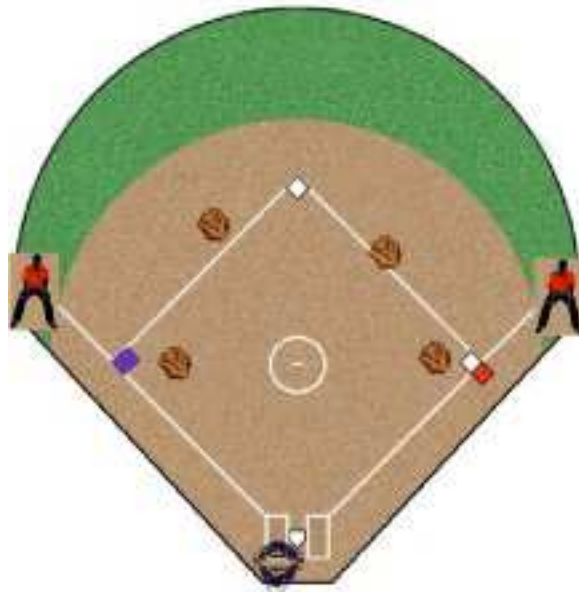
The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls unless the Base Umpire is on the foul line and turns to cover a batted ball over their head.

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for the calls at home plate on the initial runner. When the Third Base Umpire covers the batter-runner at second base, the Home Plate Umpire is responsible for calls at third base.

On a base hit, watch the runner from third touch home then move toward third base. Make the call if the batter-runner continues to third base. Make sure to look and see if the First Base Umpire is moving toward home plate.

When the First Base Umpire goes out to cover the outfield, the Plate Umpire has responsibility for the runner at third base.



#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for the tag at third base when the Third Base Umpire goes to the outfield.

If the Third Base Umpire goes out, move from behind home plate, in foul ground toward third base, line up the runner and make sure he tags up. Don't move more than halfway down the line, enabling you to get back to home plate if there is a play there. If the First Base Umpire goes out, make sure the batter-runner touches first base.

#### *Steal/Pick off Coverage:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for the call at home on a steal.

### FIRST BASE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Position yourself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond first base and a step behind the first baseman in foul territory.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls on fly balls over their head on the first base foul line on which you turn to cover the catch.

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for the calls at First Base and Home Plate.  
If Third Base Umpire goes out, revert to two-Umpire mechanics. The First Base Umpire is responsible for first base, second base and the batter-runner to third base.  
If the Third Base Umpire is unable to take the batter-runner into Second Base, the First Base Umpire must take the calls on the batter-runner at second base.  
On a ball hit through the infield or to the outfield that you don't go out on, Come inside the; move to the inside of the diamond, picking up the ball and watch the runner touch first base. Glance to your left on the play to make sure the Third Base Umpire has moved to cover second base. If not, take the batter-runner in to second base.  
Watch for the quick throw back to first base.  
When you are sure the play is over at first base and the Third Base Umpire is at second base, Release to foul ground and move toward home plate for a possible play there. Attempt to position yourself on the right hand batter's box side of home plate.  
If Third Base Umpire goes out, come inside and take batter-runner to third base.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

The First Base Umpire is responsible for the all fly balls between center field and right field dead ball line.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

None

**THIRD BASE UMPIRE**

***Initial Position:***

Position yourself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond third base and a step behind the third baseman in foul territory.

***Fair/Foul Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls when they are initially on the third base foul line and turn to cover fly balls over their head

***Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is primarily responsible for the runner at third base and then the batter-runner at second base.  
When the ball is hit through the infield or to the outfield, once the runner from third has gone home, move to a position on the inside of second base for a possible play there.  
When the First Base Umpire goes out to cover the outfield, the Third Base Umpire must watch the batter-runner to third base.  
If the batter-runner continues past second base, look to your left to make sure the Plate Umpire has third base covered. If not, take the batter-runner to third base.  
Prepare yourself, for the throw back to third base on a line drive to the infield.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for the all fly balls between center field and left field dead ball line.  
The Third Base Umpire is responsible for the tag at third base.  
If First Base Umpire goes out, hustle into the diamond, to watch the batter-runner touch first base. Be alert for any possible plays at second or first base. Take batter-runner into third base.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for call at third base on a pick off or runner leaving early.



## Runners on First and Second Bases

### PLATE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Move from behind home plate and get ready for any play at home.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls unless the Base Umpire is on the foul line and turns to cover a batted ball over their head.

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all calls at Home Plate.

The Plate Umpire will stay at home, since the Third Base Umpire has third base covered.

When the Third Base Umpire goes out to the outfield on a batted ball, plays at third base will be the responsibility of the Home Plate Umpire.

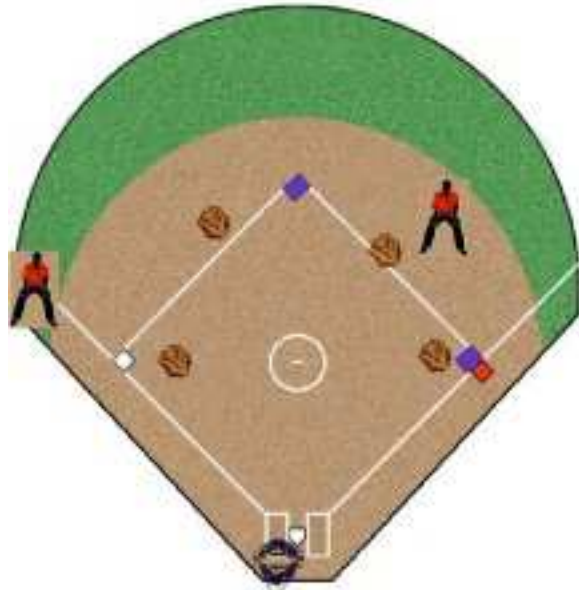
If the First Base Umpire goes out to the outfield on a batted ball, the Plate Umpire should move toward first base and watch for a throw behind the runner at first.

Be prepared to take calls into third and home.

#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

The Home Plate has the responsibility for the tag at first base if the First Base Umpire goes out.

The Home Plate has the responsibility for the tag at second base if the Third Base Umpire goes out.



#### *Steal/Pick off Coverage:*

### FIRST BASE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Position yourself three (3) or four (4) steps behind the second baseman and to his left between him and first base.

Be aware not to interfere with the outfielders' view of the batter or the play of the infielders.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

None

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for the calls at First Base and Second Base.

On a double play ball, take one step towards second base and then immediately start moving toward first base watching the ball. Always let the ball turn you to first base and try and position yourself close enough to first base to make the right call.

On base hits to the outfield, take a position two or three steps behind and to the second base player's right. Come inside the diamond and be prepared to take calls at second or first.

#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for fly balls to right of the left fielder.  
The First Base Umpire is responsible for tags at first base.  
On fly balls hit to the outfield when the Third Base Umpire takes fly ball, move inside the infield to take the tag at first base.  
Take a position two or three steps behind and to the second baseman's right.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The First Base Umpire is responsible for calls at first and second base on a pick off or runner leaving early.  
The First Base Umpire is responsible for call at second base on a steal.

NOTE: With runners on first and third base, the Umpire that is lined up on the first or third base foul line should be in position of at least three (3) feet inside foul territory. This will enable the covering Umpire the proper angle to observe the runner(s) leaving base early and/or illegal pitches.

**THIRD BASE UMPIRE**

***Initial Position:***

Position yourself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond third base and a step behind the third baseman in foul territory.

***Fair/Foul Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls when they are initially on the third base foul line and turn to cover fly balls over their head.

***Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at Third Base.  
Take all calls at third base so the ball and runner are always in front of you by using the inside-outside system.  
On balls hit to the outfield, move inside third base to watch the play on the runner at third base.  
If the throw is behind the runner at first base, the Plate Umpire may move down the first base line to make the call, if not, the Third Base Umpire is responsible.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for fly balls between the left fielder to left field dead ball line.  
Hustle into the diamond  
If the First Base Umpire goes out to the outfield, the Third Base Umpire is responsible for the tag at second. Move far enough inside the infield to watch both tags at first and second base.  
Take calls at first or second and last runner to third base.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for call at third base on a steal.  
NOTE: With runners on first and third base, the Umpire that is lined up on the first or third base foul line should be in position of at least three (3) feet inside foul territory. This will enable the covering Umpire the proper angle to observe the runner(s) leaving base early and/or illegal pitches.

## Runners on First and Third Bases

### PLATE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Move from behind home plate and be positioned for any play at home.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls unless the Base Umpire is on the foul line and turns to cover a batted ball over their head.

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all calls at Home Plate.

If the Third Base Umpire goes out and there is no play at home plate, the Plate Umpire is responsible for the play at third base. The First Base Umpire will pick up the batter-runner.

If the throw is behind the runner at first base, the Plate Umpire may move down the first base line to make the call.

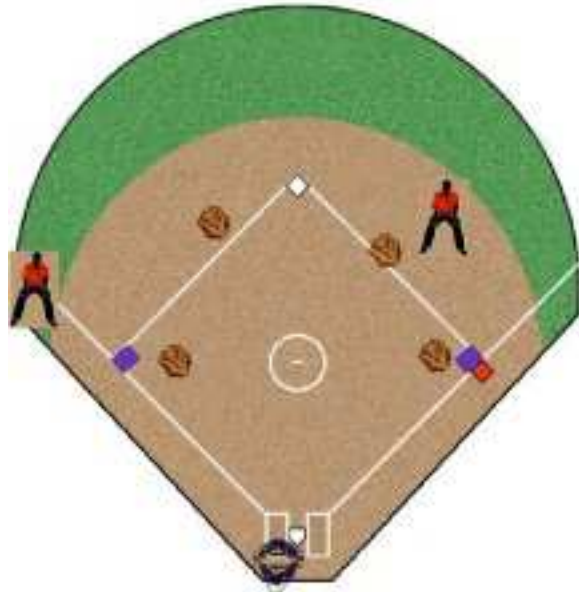
#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

If the Third Base Umpire goes out, the Plate Umpire is responsible for the tag at third base.

If the First Base Umpire goes out, the Plate Umpire is responsible for the tag at first base.

Move halfway between home plate and third base base in foul ground, from this position you can return to home plate if a play develops there.

Release towards third base after runner from third base touches home



#### *Steal/Pick off Coverage:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for call at home on a steal.

### FIRST BASE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Position yourself three (3) or four (4) steps behind the second baseman and to his left between him and first base. Be aware not to interfere with the outfielders' view of the batter or the play of the infielders.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

None

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for the calls at First Base and Second Base.

On the double play, take one step toward second base and then immediately start moving toward first base, keeping your eyes on the ball. Always let the ball turn you to first base and try and position yourself close enough to first base to make the right call.

On fly balls hit to the outfield, move inside the infield to take the tag at first base.

On a line drive to the infield, the First Base Umpire is responsible for the throw back to first base.

On a base hit to the outfield, hustle to a position two or three steps behind and to the second baseman's left. Come inside the diamond and be prepared to take calls at first or second base.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

The First Base Umpire is responsible for fly balls to right of the left fielder.  
The First Base Umpire is responsible for tags at first base.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The First Base Umpire is responsible for calls at first base on a pick off or runner leaving early.  
The First Base Umpire is responsible for call at second base on a steal.

**THIRD BASE UMPIRE**

***Initial Position:***

Position yourself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond third base and a step behind the third baseman in foul territory.

***Fair/Foul Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls when they are initially on the third base foul line and turn to cover fly balls over their head.

***Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at Third Base.  
Take all calls at third base so the ball and runner are always in front of you by using the inside-outside system.  
On balls hit to the outfield, move inside the diamond to watch the play on the runner at third base.  
If the throw is behind the runner at first base, the Plate Umpire may move down the first base line to make the call, if not, the Third Base Umpire is responsible.  
If the First Base Umpire goes out to the outfield, the Third Base Umpire is responsible for the play at second.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for fly balls from left fielder to the left field dead ball line.  
The Third Base Umpire is responsible for the tag calls at third base.  
If the First Base Umpire goes out, the Plate Umpire is responsible for the tag at third base.  
Hustle into diamond and take tag up at first base. Take calls at first or second base and the last runner to third base.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for call at third base on a pick off or runner leaving early.

## Runners on Second and Third Bases

### PLATE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Move from behind home plate and get ready for any play at home.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls unless the Base Umpire is on the foul line and turns to cover a batted ball over their head.

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

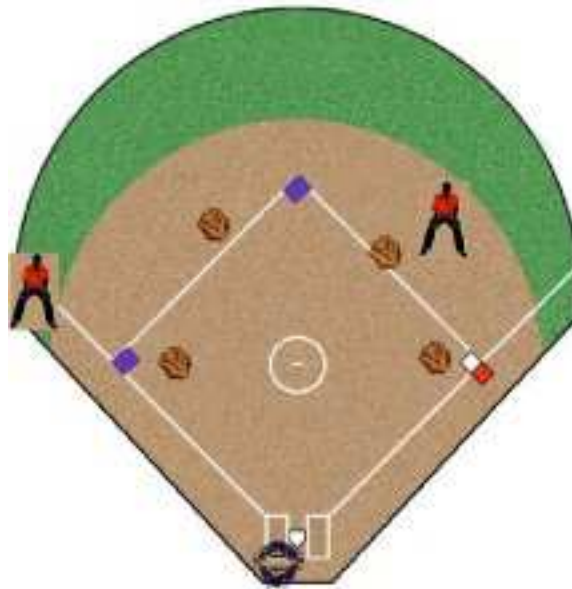
The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all calls at Home Plate.

If the Third Base Umpire goes out and there is no play at home plate, the Plate Umpire is responsible for the play at third base.

#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

If the either Base Umpire goes out, the Home Plate Umpire has the responsibility for the tag at third base.

Move halfway between home plate and third base in foul ground. From this position you can return to home plate if the play develops there or any possible play at third if batter becomes a runner.



#### *Steal/Pick off Coverage:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for call at home on a steal.

### FIRST BASE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Position yourself three (3) or four (4) steps behind the second baseman and to his left between him and first base. Be aware not to interfere with the outfielders' view of the batter or the play of the infielders.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

None

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for the calls at first base and second base.

On balls hit to the outfield, move inside the diamond to see the runner at second tagging up and batter-runner touching first base.

Be prepared to take calls at second or first.

On the double play, take one step toward second base and then immediately start moving toward first base, keeping your eyes on the ball. Always let the ball turn you to first base and try and position yourself close enough to first base to make the right call.

#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for fly balls to right of the left fielder.

The First Base Umpire is responsible for tags at second base.  
Come inside the diamond to take tag up at second base.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The First Base Umpire is responsible for calls at second base on a pick off or runner leaving early.

**THIRD BASE UMPIRE**

***Initial Position:***

Position yourself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond third base and a step behind the third baseman in foul territory.

***Fair/Foul Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls when they are initially on the third base foul line and turn to cover fly balls over their head.

***Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at Third Base.  
Come inside the diamond using the inside-outside system so that the ball and the runner are always in front of you.  
Watch for the quick throw back to third base on a line drive.  
If the First Base Umpire goes out, move  
If the First Base Umpire goes out, revert to two Umpire mechanics. The Third Base Umpire has the calls at first and second base. Hustle to the center of the infield and be ready to move either to first or second base for a call. Watch the tag up at second base. Watch batter-runner touch first. Take the last runner into third base.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for fly balls from left fielder to the left field dead ball line.  
The Third Base Umpire is responsible for the tag calls at third base.  
Responsible for fly balls from the left fielder to the left field dead ball line when left fielder is going towards foul line.  
If the First Base Umpire goes out to the outfield, the Third Base Umpire is responsible for the tag at second. Move far enough inside the infield to watch both first and second base.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for call at third base on a pick off or runner leaving early.  
The Third Base Umpire is responsible for call at third base on a steal.

## Bases Loaded

### PLATE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Move from behind home plate and be positioned for any play at home.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls unless the Base Umpire is on the foul line and turns to cover a batted ball over their head.

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for all calls at Home Plate.

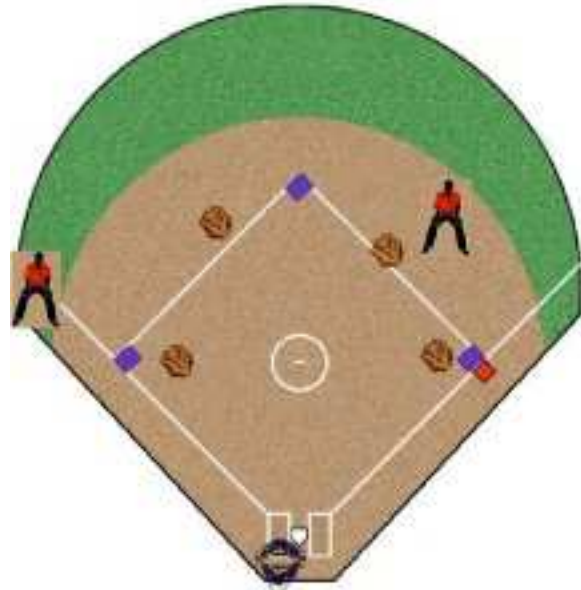
Take all plays at home plate when the ball remains in the infield.

If the Third Base Umpire goes out, plays at third base and home plate are the Home Plate Umpires' responsibility.

#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

If the either Base Umpire goes out, the Home Plate Umpire has the responsibility for the tag at third base.

Hustle towards third base in foul ground, and take the tag up at third base. Be prepared for any play at home plate. Watch runner touch home and release for any play at third base.



#### *Steal/Pick off Coverage:*

The Home Plate Umpire is responsible for call at home on a steal.

### FIRST BASE UMPIRE

#### *Initial Position:*

Position yourself three (3) or four (4) steps behind, the second baseman and to his left between him and first base. Be aware not to interfere with the outfielders' view of the batter or the play of the infielders.

#### *Fair/Foul Responsibilities:*

None

#### *Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for the calls at First Base and Second Base.

Take a position two or three steps behind and to the second base player's right. Come inside the diamond and be prepared to take calls at second or first.

On the double play, take one step toward second base and then immediately start moving towards first base, keeping your eyes on the ball. Always let the ball turn you to first base.

#### *Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:*

The First Base Umpire is responsible for fly balls to right of the left fielder.

The First Base Umpire is responsible for tags at first and second bases.

When Third Base Umpire takes a fly ball hit to the outfield, move inside the infield to see the ball being caught and the runners tagging up.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The First Base Umpire is responsible for calls at first and second base on a pick off or runner leaving early.

The First Base Umpire is responsible for call at second base on a steal.

**THIRD BASE UMPIRE**

***Initial Position:***

Position yourself twelve (12) to fifteen (15) feet beyond third base and a step behind the third baseman in foul territory.

***Fair/Foul Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for all fair/foul calls when they are initially on the third base foul line and turn to cover fly balls over their head.

***Force Out/Tag Out Responsibilities:***

The Third Base Umpire is primarily responsible for the calls at Third Base.

Come inside the diamond for any call at third base using the inside-outside to take all calls at third base.

Watch for the quick throw back to third base on a line drive.

If the First Base Umpire goes out, move to the center of the infield and be ready to move either to first or second base for a call.

***Fly Ball/Tag Up Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for fly balls from left fielder to the left field dead ball line.

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for the tag calls at third base.

If the First Base Umpire goes out, Third Base Umpire is responsible for tags at first and second bases. Hustle into diamond for tag up at second and first base.

***Steal/Pick off Coverage:***

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for call at third base on a pick off or runner leaving early.

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for call at third base on a steal.



## **Between Inning Positioning**

### **PLATE UMPIRE**

Position yourself twenty (20) feet from home plate, near the line in foul territory and facing toward the infield.

Alternate foul lines between innings by being on the side of the field as the team coming off the field.

### **FIRST BASE UMPIRE**

Position yourself on the edge of the outfield grass in fair territory behind the second baseman or where the second baseman would normally field his/her position and face the infield.

Although the Third Base Umpire is responsible for brushing off the pitching rubber after the last out of the previous inning, if he/she is in the outfield on a play that was the last out of the inning, the First Base Umpire should brush off the pitching plate.

### **THIRD BASE UMPIRE**

The Third Base Umpire is responsible for brushing off the pitching rubber after the last out of the previous inning.

Position yourself on the edge of the outfield grass in fair territory behind the shortstop or where the shortstop would normally field his/her position and face the infield.

## ***FOUR UMPIRE SYSTEM***

The four Umpire system provides an Umpire at every base, allowing for the best possible coverage for force or tag plays at each base, or on outfield fly balls.

With the four Umpire system, one of the three Base Umpires will always go to the outfield on each fly ball or line drive hit over any infielder's head. The second Base Umpire is responsible for the outfield area from the left to the right fielder.

He/she will spend more time in the outfield observing possible trapped balls or balls near the fence which may bounce over (under) or go over on the fly, than he/she will in making calls at second base. The First Base Umpire is responsible for all balls hit between the right fielder and the dead ball line, and the Third Base Umpire is responsible for all balls hit between the left fielder and the dead ball line.

When any of the Umpires go out, the remaining three Umpires revert to a three Umpire system of coverage as previously covered. This is true not only for tagups on all fly balls, but also for all force out or tag plays in the infield. Remember, when a Base Umpire goes out on a play to the outfield, he/she should ALWAYS stay out until all play has ceased.

Between inning mechanics are the same as the three Umpire system with the second Base Umpire staying in the out field area.

## **SIGNALS**

### **No Pitch**

Do Not Pitch – Signal toward the pitcher



### **Play Ball**

Verbally say “Play Ball”



### Dead Ball

Verbal Call: Time / Time Out / Dead Ball / Foul Ball



### Delayed Dead Ball

Left Arm Out; Fist Out



**Strike / Out**

Fist above head in hammer; arm at 90 degree angle



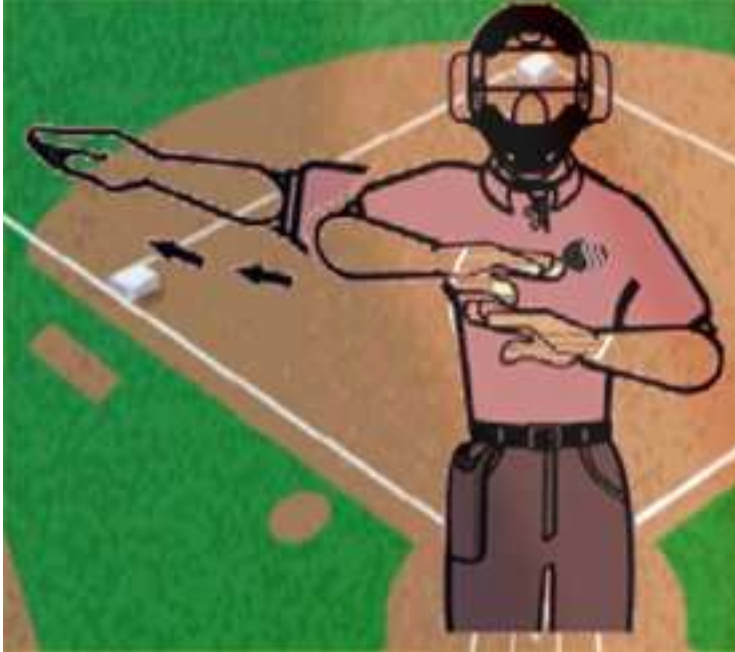
**Safe**

Verbal Call Safe



### Foul Tip

Fingers touch together chest high; followed by Strike call



### Infield Fly

Verbal Call: Infield Fly; Right hand high above head;



### Fair Ball

Point to infield (attempt to straddle foul line); No Verbal Call



### Count

Left hand indicates Balls; Right Hand indicates Strikes  
Verbal Call is Three Balls, Two Strikes NOT 3 & 2 NOT Full Count



## Double

Two fingers in air



## Home Run

Rotate fist of Right hand above head

