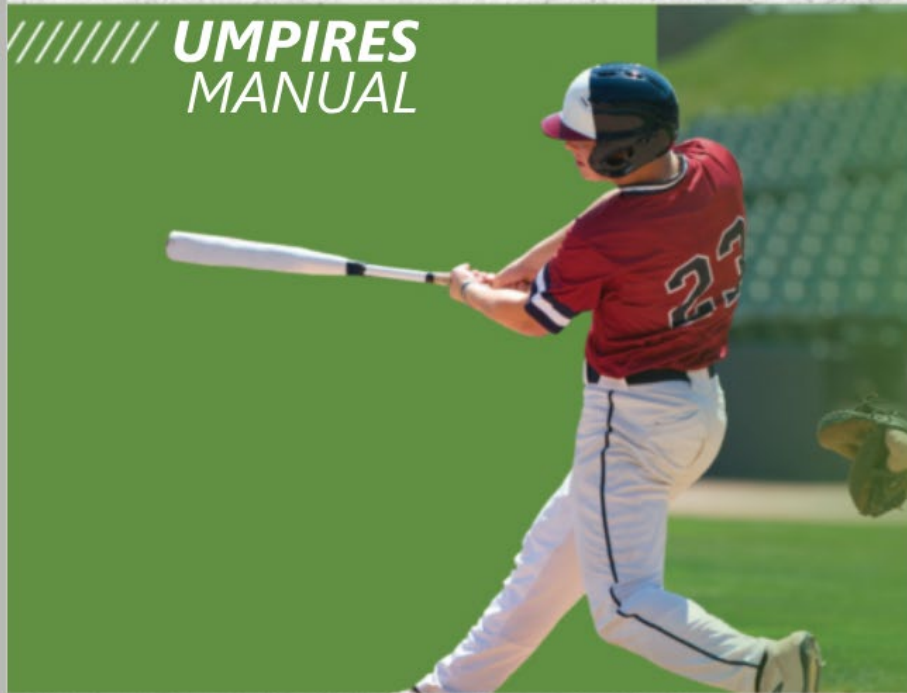


BASEBALL

////// **UMPIRES**
MANUAL



2025 and 2026 //



**PLAY.
PERFORM.
COMPETE.**
TOGETHER.



HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL

UMPIRES MANUAL 2025 and 2026

DR. KARISSA NIEHOFF, Publisher
B. Elliot Hopkins, Editor
NFHS Publications

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Introduction

Baseball continues to be one of the most popular sports in the country, especially at the high school level. With the growth in the number of athletes and teams, the need for umpires is greater than ever.

Unlike sports where you might have a set partner or crew, high school baseball umpires usually don't work with the same partner. Umpires typically work with a different partner every game.

Because of this, it's important for umpires to be on the same page when it comes to mechanics and prescribed play coverages. The illustrations in this book will give you the reference points to explain the proper mechanics and procedures.

In this book, the core concepts of the NFHS *Umpires Manual* are expanded, enhanced and graphically presented for easier understanding. In certain situations, *Referee* has recommended an alternate way to cover the play. We encourage all umpires to check with their leagues, associations, assigners and other governing bodies on the prescribed mechanics, procedures and coverages in their area.

Umpires are the third team on the field. And while umpires never win or lose the game, they are vital to the game. Working together as a team ensures the game will run smoothly and without any issues. This book will ensure that teamwork will be in sync.

Play ball!

Part 1

Definition of Terms

Acknowledge partner – When one umpire communicates movement to cover a potential play (“I’m going out,” “I’ve got third if he comes,” “I’ve got the ball,” etc.) his or her partner(s) should acknowledge the communication. Specifics of an acknowledgment vary widely among crews, often according to the situation. Depending on the crew, the acknowledgment can be as simple as pointing in the general direction of a base or as concise as a specific verbal reply. How you will acknowledge your partner should be determined during your pregame conference.

BR – The batter-runner.

Before the play – An abbreviation for one of the following phrases: “before a fielder attempts to tag a runner,” “before a fielder attempts a catch,” or “before the runner arrives at the base.” Ideally, an umpire will always assume a set position before the play.

Below the knee catch – A catch made “below the knee” is one which requires the covering umpire to signal the successful catch and (at times) verbally confirm, “That’s a catch!”; or, to signal “safe” and verbally confirm, “No!, No!” A catch is “below the knee” when the fielder reaches down below the knee, dives to make the play, falls before or after the ball arrives, makes a catch with his back turned to the infield; collides with another fielder as or immediately after reaching the ball.

Chest to the ball – Each umpire wants to maintain a position with the ball within his or her field of view. Keeping the chest pointed toward the ball allows umpires to keep the play in front of them. Although exceptions exist, umpires should turn their chest to the ball.

Clear the catcher – The plate umpire (PU) will clear the catcher when a play follows a pitch. To do so, step back with your back foot (right foot with a right-handed batter, left foot with a left-handed batter) first. That will increase the distance between your body and the catcher. Next, step with your opposite foot and move to your left, back from or around the catcher.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Clear the runner – At the conclusion of any play that requires PU to cover a runner’s safe advance to a base, U1 (two-umpire crew) must assume responsibility for that runner, thus releasing PU, who must return to his or her normal position. Before he or she can “clear the runner,” PU will wait for U1 to take responsibility for all runners by saying, “OK, I’ve got the runners.” At that time, PU can move out of the infield, into foul territory and assume his position at the plate.

Cutout – On diamonds with grass infields, the area adjacent to each base includes a semi-circular area of dirt extending approximately 13 feet from the base. The area where that dirt infringes on the grass infield is called the “cutout.” An umpire who is at the cutout is approximately 12-15 feet from the play.

Dead-ball signal – To indicate that time is out and the ball is no longer in play, an umpire will raise both hands slightly above his or her head, arms extended, palms forward, and call, “Time!”

Drift – Slight movement by a base umpire toward a base where a next play may occur; for example, the movement by U1 in the two-umpire system toward first base to see the back half of a potential double play.

Fielders – The defensive players, routinely designated by their numerical scorekeeping identifying numbers: F1 is the pitcher, F2 is the catcher, F3 is the first baseman, etc.

First-base line extended – An imaginary line that extends the first-base fair/foul line into foul territory behind the plate. PU will assume a position on selected tag plays at the plate and on fly balls that remain close to the plate area. Fair/foul decisions on batted balls down the right-field line should not be taken from this position.

45-foot line – The 45-foot line, which is three feet across and is drawn at the best possible angle to the first-base line 45 feet from the plate, marks the beginning of the runner’s lane. It is a visible benchmark for several position adjustments.

Glance at the runner – Although umpires are advised to “keep your eye on the ball,” you will find it necessary to glance at the runner on several occasions, including: as each runner tags up or touches each base, whenever a runner and fielder pass within close proximity (to observe obstruction or interference), and to monitor a runner’s progress as a play develops.

“Go” or “goes” – Under a variety of circumstances, a base umpire may be required to “go,” physically entering the outfield-grass area. If there are no runners on base, U1 or U3 “goes” to rule catch/no catch on a “trouble” ball and to determine fair/foul on a batted ball in flight down the right-field (U1) or left-field (U3) line.

Imaginary box – That area in fair territory bordered by the plate, the 45-foot line, the pitcher’s mound and the mid-point of the third-base line. The box is approximately 45 feet by 45 feet square. Plays that originate in the imaginary box are the ones that most often result in running-lane interference violations.

Opening the gate – A basic umpire’s movement which allows continued observation of a batted or thrown ball as the ball passes the umpire. To “open the gate,” begin in an upright stance with your feet comfortably apart; keeping your chest to the ball, take an initial step backward while pointing your foot toward the ball’s destination; as or before the ball passes your location, turn by stepping with your opposite foot and focus on the developing play. “Opening the gate” is similar to “clearing the catcher.”

Pause, read and react – A three-step method that will help you determine where you should go and what your responsibilities will be during a developing play. Pause: observe the initial action; Read: determine what play is going to develop and what position adjustment you should make; React: move into position for the anticipated play and, as appropriate, communicate your intentions to your partner. “Pause, read and react” is important in coordinating two-man umpiring coverage. It ensures that the umpires identically evaluate each developing play.

Pivot – The three-step movement used by U1 as he or she moves into the infield from position A. When a batted ball is hit to the outfield, U1 will pivot to observe the batter-runner’s touch of first base, anticipating the batter-runner’s advance toward second. A proper pivot occurs on the infield grass, one or two steps from the edge of the first-base cutout; it includes planting the left foot, turning the body counter-clockwise on the right foot as the batter-runner reaches first base, and stepping briskly with the left foot toward second base as the batter-runner continues around first.

PU – The plate umpire.

Play – The action that develops as a runner, the ball and a fielder arrive at the same place at approximately the same time. A play usually occurs at or near a base and normally requires an umpire’s decision. As the umpire, you must move to a play only when all three elements are coming together.

Position A – The “A” position is in foul territory, about 10-to-15 feet behind the first baseman, but generally no closer than 10 feet behind first base. In the two-umpire system, the base umpire stands in the A position when there are no runners on base. With three umpires, U1 stands there unless there is a runner on second only or second and third only and less than two outs. That position allows the base umpire to get into the infield to judge a play and/or take a runner beyond first base without interfering with the fielder.

Position B – The base umpire position on the first-base side of the middle of the infield. Position B is midway between the pitcher’s mound and second base, just to the first-base side of the mound. The umpire’s feet should straddle an imaginary line drawn from the plate through the edge of the dirt circle of the mound. When the pitcher takes his stance on the mound, the base umpire should be in a hands-on-knees set, shoulders square and chest directly facing the plate. On a two-umpire crew, U1 will be in position B when there is a runner on first base or runners on first and third bases. In a three-umpire crew, U1 will assume a “deep position B” (at the edge of the infield grass) when there is a runner on second or runners on second and third and less than two outs.

Position C – The base umpire position on the third-base side of the middle of the infield. Position C is midway between the pitcher’s mound and second base, just to the third-base side of the mound. The umpire’s feet should straddle an imaginary line drawn from the plate through the edge of the dirt circle of the mound. When the pitcher takes his stance on the mound the base umpire should be in a hands-on-knees set, shoulders square and chest directly facing the plate. In a two-umpire crew, U1 will begin in position C with all runner combinations other than nobody on, first base only or first and third base. With three umpires, U3 will begin in position C when there are runners on first and second, or a runner on second only or runners on second and third with two outs. Also with a three-umpire crew, U3 can assume a “deep C” position (at the edge of the infield grass) when there is a runner on first only, first and third, or when the bases are loaded.

Position D – In a three-umpire crew, Position D is U3’s position at the start of each inning and whenever a play begins with no runners on base. Position D is near the third-base line, standing with both feet in foul territory, at least 10-15 feet beyond third base and at least two steps behind the third baseman. U3 also assumes Position D (although much nearer third base) when, on a three-umpire crew, a play begins with a runner on third only, second only and less than two outs, or with runners on second and third and less than two outs.

Position E – In a four-umpire crew, Position E is U2’s position at the start of each inning in the outfield area behind second base, shifted to the side to which the batter is most likely to hit.

Read the throw – As a play develops, you must judge the quality of the throw. If the throw is good, you will maintain your position to observe the developing play; if the throw is bad, you adjust your position according to the throw.

Release runner to third – When the plate umpire on a two-umpire crew verbally informs U1, “I’ve got third if he comes,” or “I’ve got third if he tags,” U1 will observe the touch or tag-up at second base, then release responsibility for that runner to PU and assume responsibility for plays made on other (trailing) runners.

Rotate or Rotation – The movement of umpires. In general, umpire crews “rotate” in a clockwise direction. In a two-man crew, clockwise rotation generally describes PU’s movement toward third base. Three-umpire crews rotate often, with PU moving to cover third and U1 rotating to cover a play at the plate.

Rotation (reverse) – The coordinated movement of two base umpires, designed to shift responsibility for plays at second base. A reverse rotation occurs when U3 begins inside and U1 is not responsible for rotating home. Initially, U3 is responsible for plays at second and third. If the batter-runner attempts to advance to second base, U1 pivots and takes responsibility for the batter-runner at first and second.

Running lane – The three-foot-wide lane, beginning at the 45-foot line and extending to first base. A batter-runner is innocent of unintentional interference with a fielder covering first base if the batter-runner advances to first with both feet stepping on or inside the lines of the lane. The batter-runner can still be guilty of intentional interference even if the batter-runner is inside the lane.

Runners – Players from the team at bat are identified by their locations on base at the beginning of a play or sequence of plays: R1 is the runner who starts a scenario at first base, R2 at second, R3 at third.

Secondary play – Action that follows the defensive team's first attempt to retire a runner and is reasonably predictable. For example, when B1 hits a ground ball and the defense "holds" R3, the play at first base is the initial play; if R3 advances on the throw to first, the ensuing play at home is a secondary play. (See "subsequent play.")

Set for the play – You must come to a complete stop before the critical moment of any play and remain stationary until you make your decision. Just like a camera taking a picture, your eyes must be stationary to produce a clear image.

Set positions – There are two used by base umpires. Hands-on-knees set: With your feet slightly more than shoulder width apart, squat and lean forward slightly, and place your hands on your knees. Keep your back straight and your head up, looking at the play. Your arms should lock firmly to keep your head still and allow you to see the play. Use the hands-on-knees set prior to each pitch when you are in position B or C, and at your discretion as plays develop. Standing set: With your feet comfortably apart, keep your shoulders square to the play. Your knees should be slightly bent but your body remains upright with your hands at your sides. Do not use the standing set position prior to a pitch when you are in position B or C; use it at your discretion in position A and as plays develop. When set for a play at any base, your head, shoulders and feet should be in line and perpendicular to a line from your location to the base. By taking a position square to the bag, you will avoid a tendency to turn away from the play before it is complete.

Split at F8 – Indicates that the umpires divide the outfield in half. One umpire is responsible for all plays on all balls hit directly at the center fielder, across the outfield to the dead-ball area adjacent to the umpire's foul line; another umpire is responsible for all balls hit to the opposite side of the center fielder, across the outfield to the dead-ball area adjacent to the other foul line.

Starting position – The onfield location occupied by an umpire as a play begins, determined for the base umpire by the runner configuration.

Stays home – PU stays home and covers only plays at the plate when a play begins with a runner(s) in scoring position.

Step up, turn and face the ball – A three-step movement used by U1 or U3 in position B or C when the ball is hit. Using your foot nearest where the ball is hit, take one step forward; turn or pivot and move, chest to the ball; determine your next move or responsibility and execute.

Square to the bag – When set for a play at any base, your head, shoulders and feet should be in line and perpendicular to a line from your location to the base. By taking a position square to the bag, you will avoid a tendency to turn away from the play before it is complete.

Subsequent play – Action that follows the defensive team's first attempt to retire a runner but is not reasonably predictable. For example, when there is a squeeze bunt and collision at the plate, the tag play at home is the initial play; if after the play at home B1 advances toward second, the ensuing play at second is a subsequent play. (See "secondary play.")

The V – Indicates that a base umpire who starts inside is responsible for all plays on all balls hit directly at the left fielder, directly at the right fielder, and anywhere between those outfielders; another umpire(s) is responsible for all plays on all balls hit to the left fielder's right and across to the dead-ball area adjacent to the left-field line, and for all plays on all balls hit to the right fielder's left and across to the dead-ball area adjacent to the right-field line. Some umpires refer to this as the base umpire "having the cone."

Third-base line extended – An imaginary line that extends the third-base fair/foul line into foul territory behind the plate an unlimited distance. PU will assume a position on the third-base line extended in several instances including: to render fair/foul decisions on batted balls to the left of the plate, to observe a runner touching third base as another runner scores, and on selected tag plays at the plate.

Time play – Situation involving two outs and runners on base. If the batter-runner or another runner is retired on something other than a force play, the umpires must know if a runner or runners touched the plate before the third out was recorded.

Trouble ball – A batted ball hit to the outfield that will present a problem for the fielder. Examples: A fly ball that forces the left or right fielder to charge toward the foul line, a fly ball that forces an outfielder to charge straight in or straight back, a fly ball at which two or more fielders converge, any batted ball that will require a fair/foul decision in the outfield. When a trouble ball is identified in your area of responsibility, you must communicate with your partner, indicating which umpire will take the fair/foul and catch/no catch decisions. Use the "pause, read and react" method to identify and respond to a trouble ball.

Trail BR – Typically on routine ground balls, PU will follow the batter-runner toward first base, pausing at or near the 45-foot line to observe the developing play at first base.

U1 – U1 is the base umpire. In a three-umpire crew, U1 is the first-base umpire.

U2 – In a four-umpire crew, U2 is the second-base umpire.

U3 – In a three-umpire crew, U3 is the third-base umpire.

U1's or U3's outfield – That portion of the outfield in which the base umpire is responsible for determining whether a batted ball is caught in flight and, at times, whether a batted ball is fair or foul.

Working the wedge – The position an umpire should be trying to obtain for any tag play, especially plays at the plate. The umpire should adjust his or her position to see the catcher/fielder "open up" while receiving the throw and have a clear look at the ball, the runner and the plate/base all coming together.

Part 2

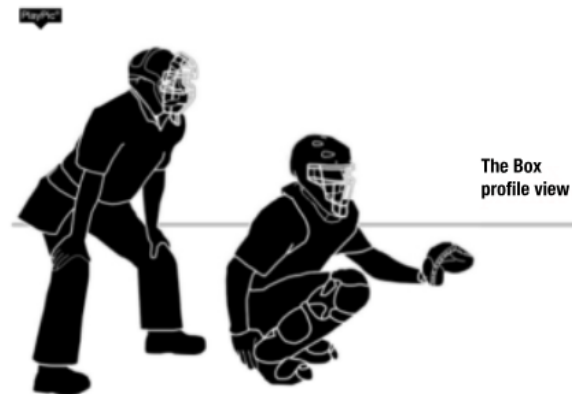
Working the Plate

There may not be a position in officiating with more focus or attention than the plate umpire in baseball. He or she is involved in every pitch and when properly rotating, a good share of plays in the field, too.

What that means is you have to be “on it” every pitch and every play, because if you are not, your credibility will suffer.

The important parts of the job that we’ll tackle here are your stance, tracking the pitch, calling it a ball or strike, using the indicator and finally plays at the plate itself.

WORKING THE PLATE



Your feet are spread slightly more than shoulder width apart and are placed in a heel-toe configuration, with your slot foot (left foot for a right-handed batter) slightly ahead of your back foot and your weight evenly distributed on the balls of your feet. As the pitcher delivers, bend at the knees, keeping your shoulders square to the pitcher, and lean slightly forward, into the pitch, to establish your head height and stability. The box stance is the easiest for beginning umpires because it provides good balance and it distributes stress evenly between the legs.

For a right-handed batter, your right hand is on your right knee, helping you feel locked in. That can be there because you are protected by the catcher and the risk of getting hit by a foul ball or wild pitch is minimal. Your left hand should be tucked so that your left elbow is on your thigh and your hand is between your legs. That hand is less protected so having it hang as opposed to being locked in allows for it to get hit with a less chance of being badly injured.



The Scissors
profile view



The Scissors
front view

Your legs will be fully open, similar to an open pair of scissors, with your feet directly behind each other one full stride apart. Your slot foot (left foot for a right-handed batter) is positioned approximately six inches behind the catcher's inside foot; your back leg is fully extended, knee straight, with the ball of the foot on the ground and the heel elevated. When the pitcher delivers, your slot-leg knee is bent at the best possible angle; the vast majority of your weight is on your bent leg; keeping your shoulders square to the pitcher, lean forward into the pitch and establish your head height and stability.

The scissors stance is difficult for beginning umpires because it provides poor balance and (due to the high number of right-handed batters) it places extreme stress on the left leg. By forcing you to lean forward, it also exposes your shoulder and collar-bone areas to potential injury.

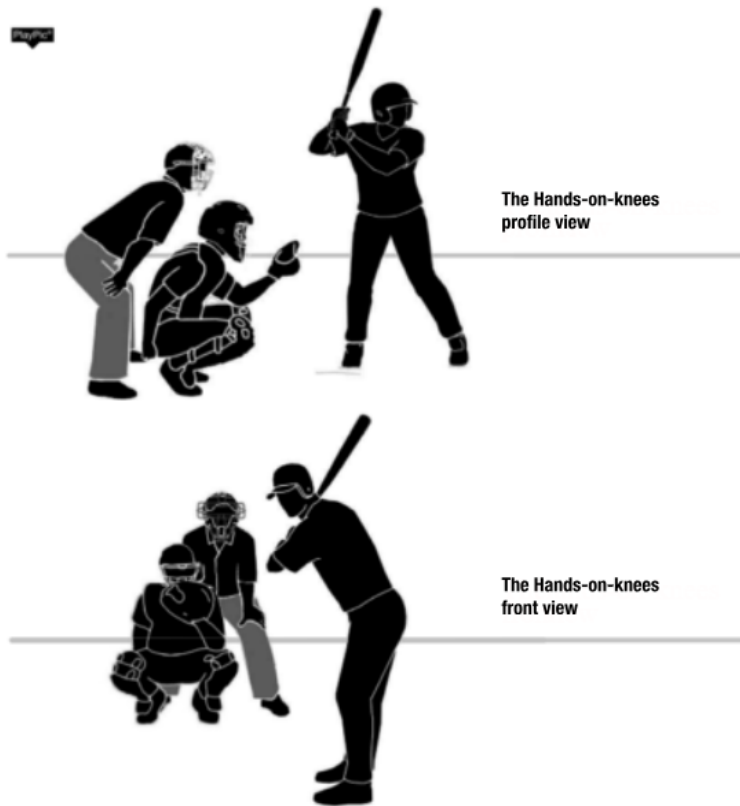


The Knee
profile view



The Knee
front view

The knee stance is similar to the scissors. Your feet will be directly behind each other, about one-half stride apart. Your slot foot (left foot for right-handed batters) is positioned approximately six inches behind the catcher's inside foot; your back knee will be on the ground. As the pitcher delivers, keep your shoulder square to the pitcher and your back essentially straight, but lean forward slightly to establish your head height and stability. The knee stance is fairly easy to learn, provides good balance and excellent stability, but it places heavy stress on the left leg (standing up after each pitch) and can hinder the plate umpire's movement reacting to batted balls.



The hands-on-knees stance is very similar to the box, but instead of having your feet in a heel-toe configuration, they are square, about six inches behind the catcher. As the pitcher delivers, bend at the knees, keeping your shoulders square to the pitcher, and lean slightly forward, into the pitch, to establish your head height and stability. The hands-on-knees stance is widely praised because it is easier to establish a consistent head height. However, umpires tend to get hit more and with the exposed hand being locked on the knee, there is no “give” in the hand and a direct shot is more likely to cause a severe injury.

Head Height and Position

Regardless of which stance you use, your head height and position should be consistent and identical.

Your position should be behind the catcher, looking between him and the batter. You must be able to clearly see the pitcher, the entire plate and the batter’s knees. To see all of those elements, it is important to move into “the slot” — that area between the catcher and the batter.

Ideally, your eyes should be on the inside corner of the plate, although there are times when the location of the batter and/or catcher may force you to adjust. If you must adjust — because for example, the catcher works inside — never move to a spot over the catcher’s opposite shoulder; instead, work higher over his head.

Two additional factors have tremendous impact on your view of the strike zone: head height and stability. Your head should be positioned so the bottom of your chin is even with the top of the catcher’s helmet. If you work with your head lower, your view of the knee-high pitch at or near the outside corner of the plate will be restricted.

To determine proper head height, use a dining room or folding chair to simulate a squatting catcher. Pretend the top of the chair back is the top of the catcher’s head. Practice dropping into your stance until it is a crisp, one-motion movement. Working in front of a mirror is a great technique; so is the use of videotape, if you can find someone who will tape you setting into your slot position. If you have a partner, work on it together.

Practicing Your Stance

You can practice your stance without being on a baseball diamond. In fact, it is a good idea to try those practice techniques and to become comfortable with the movement before you take the field.

For example, here is a simple practice method for the box stance (you can adapt the equipment to the scissors or knee stance on your own):

Get two pairs of shoes and two yard sticks (or any straight sticks, or even rope, about three to four feet long). Place one pair of shoes where a batter would stand in the batter’s box. Place the second pair where a catcher’s feet would normally be when set to receive a pitch. Place one of the sticks in a straight line, parallel to the pitcher’s rubber, behind the heels of the “catcher,” toward the batter. Place the toes of your slot foot on that stick. Place the second stick parallel to the first stick behind the heel of your slot foot. Place the toes of your back foot on the second stick, slightly more than shoulder width from your slot foot. Now turn the back foot out, about 30- to 45-degrees away from your slot foot. That will keep you from “kneeing” the catcher when you squat. Make sure the toes of your slot foot are pointed directly at the pitcher, so foul balls and wild pitches will carom off the steel toe of your shoe instead of the side of your foot.

Place your slot arm across your waist with your elbow tucked close to your side. Your other hand should grasp the top of your thigh, elbow tucked tightly against your side. Those arm positions will help protect the bones in your arms from pitched and foul balls, which can cause serious injury.

Tracking the Pitch

From the moment the pitcher releases a pitch until the ball arrives in the catcher's glove, your head should remain absolutely stable. If your head moves at all, your view of the strike zone will be blurred and your judgment will be inconsistent.

Here is an easy-to-understand parallel: If you suddenly jerk a camera the instant you press the shutter, the picture will be blurred and out of focus. That principle is the same when you view a pitch approaching the plate. If you keep your head still and follow the ball with only your eyes, you will see the pitch and location much better.

Follow the ball from the pitcher's hand to the catcher's glove by only moving your eyes. By following the pitch into the catcher's glove, you have the advantage of seeing how and where he caught the pitch. That will aid your ability to call it correctly. If the catcher catches the ball and then yanks the glove back toward the strike zone, he is telling you that he didn't think the pitch was a strike. Conversely, if he holds the catcher's glove still or slightly moves it (commonly called framing), he believes it was a good pitch. Not all pitches that are framed are strikes, but that is an additional tool you can use to aid your judgment.

Practice getting into your set position until you can drop into your stance smoothly and crisply. Have someone "soft toss" a rolled-up pair of white socks, underhand into the strike zone. Follow the ball with just your eyes all the way in and through the zone. Have your partner, who is tossing the ball, watch closely to see if your head moves or if you are drifting into or away from the pitch. Make sure the soft toss drill includes pitches that are up, down and near each of the corners. Have your partner note which pitches cause you to move and when you stay stable. Work on the pitches where movement is a problem.

Do not be concerned with calling balls and strikes until you can remain stable and follow the ball with only your eyes. Again, that practice exercise is well suited for a video camera. You will see yourself drift or move, even though you probably will not feel the movement.

With the marking sticks still in place, step back from the slot position, as you would when the ball is being returned to the pitcher. Get back into your slot position and proper foot position for several pitches. Practice getting into and out of the slot until you can place your feet into position without having to look down at them. Practice the "soft toss" with the chair, until you can sit down in your set position crisply, without having to check if your head is positioned at the proper height.

Practicing those techniques, either in front of a mirror or with the aid of a video camera, will enhance your ability to get into the slot and will help your confidence — in your calls and in yourself.

Calling the Pitch

Timing is critical on the pitched ball. Watch the ball with your eyes all the way to the glove, and watch the catcher catch the ball. Then make up your mind on the ball's location and call the pitch: ball or strike.

If the pitch did not cross through any part of the strike zone and the batter did not swing, it is a ball. To call a ball, remain in your stance and call, "Ball." The call should be loud enough for the pitcher, catcher and batter to hear. Only after you've made the call, should you come out of your stance.

If the pitch did cross through any part of the strike zone and the batter did not swing, it is a called strike. To call a strike, come out of your stance and call, "Strike." Again, the call should be loud enough for the participants to hear. In conjunction with your call, you should make an arm motion.

The two common ones are the hammer (like you are calling an out) or pointing out to the side. If you point to the side, it is imperative that you do not take your eyes off the action in front of you. Dropped third strikes and trapped foul tips are easily missed when plate umpires fly out of the plate area to emphasize a called strike. For that reason, it is recommended calling strikes using the hammer-fist call until you have enough experience to develop your own strike call without taking your eyes off the action in front of you.

If the batter swung at the pitch, you do not need to judge whether the pitch itself was a ball or strike. You also do not need to verbalize, "Strike," since everyone saw the batter swing. Come out of your stance and use the same signal as when calling a strike, only with no voice.

Half swings and the proper procedure for appealing them is covered later in this book.

Making Adjustments

If every catcher and every batter positioned themselves exactly the same on every pitch, your job as plate umpire would be easy. You could establish a "groove" in the slot, sit down in the same spot every time, and call all the pitches. In reality, it doesn't happen.

Catchers will "squeeze" the inside corner for their pitchers and take away your slot space. Batters will crowd the plate and take more of that space from you. Some catchers, especially those with little experience, work high and block your view of the plate.

As you gain experience, you'll read those situations and adjust your slot position to accommodate calling balls and strikes. Remember, the most important thing is to keep your head stable so you can see the plate area. If a catcher's position takes that view away, adjust. Your first adjustment is uPU: Work higher above the catcher's head when he crowds the inside corner. That will allow you to look down onto the plate area and improve your view of the plate, compared to the view you would have if you made no adjustment.

The second adjustment you can make on a catcher who sets up inside is to move farther into the slot, toward the batter. That will increase your viewing angle to the plate and reopen

the plate area (and strike zone). That move pushes the outside-corner pitch farther outside, but again, your goal is to see as much of the strike zone as possible. Never move to the catcher's outside shoulder.

Keeping and Signaling the Count

The plate umpire is responsible for keeping and signaling the count during a batter's plate appearance.

To keep the count, use an indicator. The plastic or metal device is about the size of a pack of chewing gum and is designed to be used in your left hand with knobs to keep track of balls, strikes, outs and sometimes innings.

Here are some guidelines for indicator usage:

Use it. Even with the best of memories, it's possible to lose the count. That is especially true after a conference that occurs during the middle of a batter's plate appearance or a pickoff play at a base.

While scoreboards are great for fans, they do not display the official count. A plate umpire should be diligent in displaying the count and trying to ensure that what is displayed on the scoreboard is correct. But the only count that is official is that of the plate umpire.

Not the focus. The plate umpire should never bring the indicator up to eye-level as if it is the only place he is focusing attention. The umpire should keep the indicator below chest level and glance at it while keeping the playing action as his main focus.

Say the count frequently. One way to avoid losing the count is to say it frequently during every plate appearance. Some supervisors recommend saying the count on the third pitch and then on decision pitches. Others recommend showing the count after the second pitch and every pitch thereafter. Either way, showing and saying the count frequently will avoid the problems of the base umpire and players not knowing the count or the count being lost.

At one time it was acceptable (or at least popular) for baseball umpires to indicate a full count by raising both fists. That is no longer recognized as a proper mechanic. A full count should be indicated by extending three fingers on the left hand and two on the right, as seen in PlayPic. Fists should only be raised to indicate no balls or strikes, as



A full count should not be indicated with two fists, but just as any other count, by extending three fingers on the left hand and two on the right.

in a 3-0 count. When using the hands to signal the count, give it verbally as well. The batter and catcher can't see your hands and need to know the count as well.

Lost count. Even with using it every pitch, sometimes the plate umpire can lose the count. Usually, the catcher or batter will quickly correct the error and the plate umpire can announce the correct count.

If a dispute remains, then the plate umpire should consult with his partner and go through the pitch sequence.

As a last resort, get with the official scorer or person keeping the pitching charts to see what count they have and if they can provide information to help get the correct count. Of course, they can't make you change what you have, but their input could have value.

Reset it. Make certain at the end of each batter's time at-bat to reset the balls and strikes to zero and update the correct number of outs. That is especially true at the beginning of each half-inning. Before dusting off the plate and resuming play, make sure you have all zeroes.

Some umpires have notched the wheels on their indicator so they can reset the indicator without looking at it. They simply turn the wheels until they feel the notches, and they know it's back to zeros.

Location. Another reason that the indicator should be held in the left hand is that one-handed calls (putting the ball in play, signaling strikes and outs and pointing for obstruction and interference) are made with the right hand.

As more umpires go to a hands-on-knees stance behind the plate, it is more comfortable to not have anything in the hands.

In those cases, umpires will keep the indicator in their pocket or ball bag. That is OK, as long as umpires are maintaining the count and outs actively. Relying on the scoreboard is a bad idea because the people in the press box will get distracted or will inadvertently reset the count after a pickoff.

Plays at the Plate

One of the most exciting moments in a baseball game is when a runner is trying to score and the catcher is about to get the ball and make a swipe tag on the runner, producing a huge dust cloud.

Time suddenly stops while everyone waits for the umpire's call. And as much as the umpire wants to rush that call and fuel the excitement, it is imperative that the umpire have excellent timing.

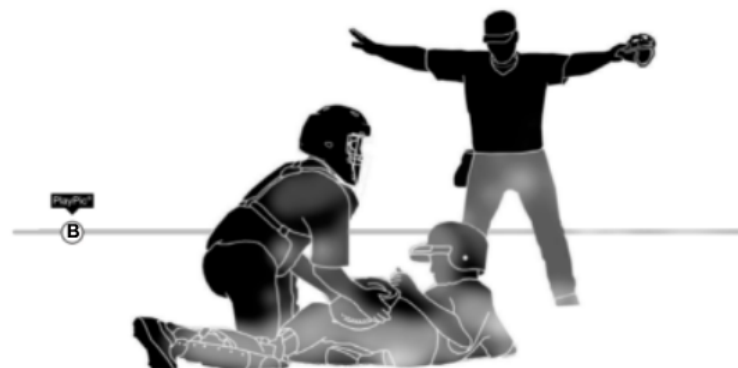
To get set up, the plate umpire should be 2-3 steps behind the plate and lined up with the point of the plate. That starting position enables the plate umpire to move toward either the first- or third-base line extended to get the proper angle for the throw as it arrives.

The umpire should let the throw and the set up of the catcher take him one or two steps in either direction from his starting point to obtain the best angle. The umpire wants to be looking through where the catcher “opens up” to make a tag, creating a clear view of the ball, the runner and the plate all coming together. This is commonly referred to as “working the wedge” or “wedge mechanics.”

In PlayPic A, (next page) the umpire is in position to rule on a tag play at the plate. If the runner has beaten the tag, it doesn't matter whether or not the catcher has the ball and the runner should be called safe (PlayPic B). If, however, the umpire is certain the tag was made first but the ball cannot be seen, he should point to the catcher and say, “Show me the ball!” (PlayPic C). If the catcher has possession of the ball, sell the out with an enthusiastic pump of the arm and a loud out call. If, as the dirt clears or the catcher shows the umpire an empty mitt, a confident and demonstrative safe call as in PlayPic B is appropriate.

If the ball is on the ground, many umpires indicate that by pointing and saying, “He doesn't have it! Safe!”

Do not ask the fielder to see the ball if you're already sure the runner is safe. That conveys lack of confidence in your decision. You should only ask to see the ball if the tag was properly applied but you cannot see it in the fielder's glove.



On a play at the plate, the umpire not only has to see tag applied (PlayPic A), but must also ensure the catcher holds on to the ball. When the umpire sees the ball on the ground, he can call the runner safe (PlayPic B) and should then indicate the ball is on the ground (PlayPic C).

Part 3

Working the Bases

A former college umpire and high school baseball coach was asked a question about umpiring, now that he was a coach.

"On your game today, you will have one umpire who is very good and the other who is below average. You get to pick who works the plate and who works the bases. Where do you put the umpires?"

He responded without hesitation, and if you think he put the better umpire behind the plate, you would be totally wrong.

"I want the weaker umpire behind the plate, because he will miss pitches, but probably not that many more in critical times than the veteran," he said. "On the other hand, I only get 21 or 27 outs on offense, and if he misses one on the bases, then it becomes a big deal."

WORKING THE BASES

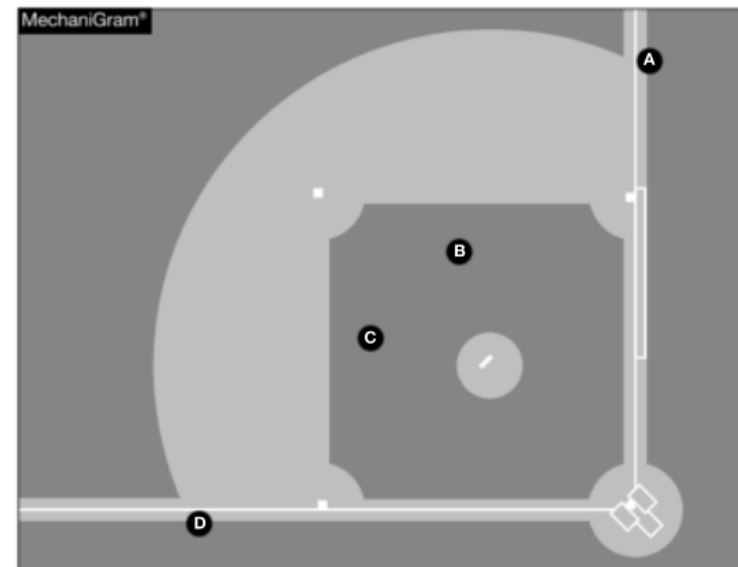
That anecdote illustrates the importance of working the bases. While you won't have as many decisions as the plate umpire, your decisions take on a much greater magnitude.

Therefore, it is imperative that you put as much or even more effort into working the bases as you do the plate. Working the bases consists of starting in the right position, knowing where to go when the ball is put into play, knowing what plays you are responsible for and calling the out-of-the-ordinary plays like a fielder forcing you into foul territory or a pulled foot/swipe tag.

Basic Positioning

The base umpire will work from one of four basic positions in the two- and three-umpire systems. Where exactly you start depends on runner configuration and that is covered in detail in the later chapters of the book. For now, we are just describing the positions and showing them in the MechaniGrams.

The "A" position. The "A" position is in foul territory, about 10-to-15 feet behind the first baseman, but generally no closer than 10 feet behind first base. That position allows you to get into the infield to make a play and take a runner beyond first base without interfering with the fielder. Remember, on a fly ball in that area or foul territory, the first baseman will be tracking the ball, not watching you. It is your responsibility to watch the fielder and get out of his way.



Depending on the runner configuration and number of umpires, each base umpire should start each play in one of the four basic positions shown.

The “B” and “C” positions. The “B” and “C” positions are mirror images of each other in the middle of the infield. The umpire should stand halfway between the mound and second base. The “B” position is on the first-base side of the mound, and the “C” position is on the third-base side.

In three-person mechanics, there will be situations where the umpire in the middle of the field should work in the “deep B” or “deep C” positions. Instead of being halfway between the mound and second base, the umpire is at the edge of the infield grass.



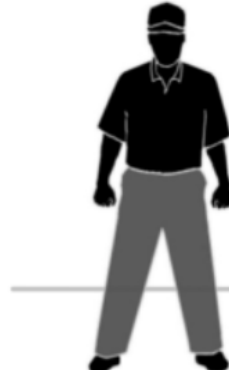
Hands-on-knees set profile view



Hands-on-knees set front view



Standing set profile view



Standing set front view

The “D” position. The “D” position is in foul territory, about 10-to-12 feet behind the third baseman, but generally no closer than 15 feet behind third base. It is only used in the three-umpire system. The same principles of clearing the fielder apply as in the “A” position.

Stances. In all positions on the bases, umpires can work in the standing set with your feet comfortably apart at shoulder width. However, once the pitcher engages the pitching plate, base umpires should go to a more ready position by going hands-on-knees set.

A hands-on-knees set is where you flex at the knees and “sit down” into your stance, leaning forward slightly, bending at the waist. In a good hands-on-knees set, you should be able to look forward comfortably; if you bend too far, you will have to strain your neck muscles to avoid looking down at the ground.

Play Responsibility

The back section of this book will take you through the specific responsibilities that each umpire is responsible for once the ball is batted into play. But the method for handling some plays is consistent throughout a game and are best described here.

Balks. With a runner on base, the base umpire must be aware of the pitcher trying to gain an illegal advantage. That is why it is important for the base umpire to be in the hands-on-knees set when the pitcher engages the pitching plate. All attention should be on the pitcher.

Although the plate and base umpire share responsibility on balks, the base umpire should concentrate on the pitcher coming to a complete stop and right-handed pitchers breaking their front knees before the jump turn. While it's common for people to think the base umpire should call the left-handed pitcher's step to first, that call belongs to the plate umpire.

When a balk is called the proper mechanic is to call time and then point at the pitcher and say, “That's a balk.”

Once a balk is called, it is OK to explain to the coach or pitcher what he did if he asks, but do not demonstrate.

Steal of second. An umpire in the “B” position (two umpires) or “C” position (three umpires) will have responsibility for the steal of second.

By starting out in the proper position, you can typically see the runner break for second out of the corner of your eye. Once he is committed to second, take one step backward and open up to the base. Keep your eyes on the ball at the plate because you need to also judge the half swing or be aware where the ball goes if the batter hits it.

Once the catcher throws, let the ball pass you and then turn and be square to the play at second base. You can remain in a standing-set position, although going to a hands-on-knees set is also permissible.

Just as the plate umpire does with plays at the plate, it is important to see the fielder apply the tag and the runner touch the base. If the runner has beaten the tag, it doesn't matter whether or not the fielder has the ball and the runner should be called safe.

If there is a tag before the runner arrives at the base, make sure the fielder retains control of the ball before calling the out. It is OK to ask the fielder to show you the ball before making the out call. Do not ask the fielder to see if the ball if you're already sure the runner is safe. That conveys lack of confidence in your decision. You should only ask to see the ball if the tag was properly applied but you cannot see it in the fielder's glove.

If the ball is on the ground, many umpires indicate that by pointing and saying, "He doesn't have it! Safe!"

Steal of third. An umpire starting in the "C" position in the two-umpire system or the "C" or "D" position in the three-umpire system will have responsibility for the steal play at third.

From the "B" or "C" position, you cannot see the runner break from second, so it is important to sneak a quick glance over your right shoulder once the pitcher has committed to pitch. You have time to glance and return your focus to the plate for the half-swing or to see the ball put into play.

If the ball is not put into play, the steal of third is different because the umpire doesn't have to worry about the throw hitting him. While that is better, it is tougher, because the umpire also cannot get as close to the play. Move toward the plate to develop as good an angle as possible and then turn to get a clear look at the play.

From the "D" position, the umpire needs only to take a couple of steps toward the play and get a clear look at the play.

Plays at first base from the "A" position. With no runners on base, a ground ball anywhere in the infield (and sometimes even to the right fielder) will result in a play at first base. Here are the keys for those plays.

Take the minimum steps necessary to obtain a 90-degree angle. Many times only one or two steps are needed. Many umpires are overrunning angles and getting too far into fair territory. That is taking them away from being able to see a pulled foot or potential swipe tag.

On many throws to first base that come from within the infield, it is not necessary for the first-base umpire to take more than one or two steps into fair territory in order to have the proper angle.

Get set. Once the first-base umpire has gotten into proper position, it is imperative that he be set before the play occurs. Moving while trying to judge a play greatly reduces the chance of getting that play correct.

It is not required that the umpire have his hands on his knees and be waiting for the play. However, he should be stopped (body completely still) and be focused on the base as the throw is released, unless it is a poor throw.

Poor throws. When a first-base umpire moves in from the foul line and sets up for the play, he should have his head on the ball and his body squared up to the potential play at first base. Once the fielder releases the ball, the umpire needs to determine whether a quality throw is being made to first base.

A quality throw is one that the fielder receiving the ball will stretch directly towards the thrower to receive the ball. A ball that is not a quality throw will take the first baseman off the bag and require the umpire to adjust. Too often, umpires are getting set with their 90-degree angle and then not adjusting when there is a bad throw.

In cases of a poor throw, a "read" step is needed. That step is necessary when the throw takes the fielder's mitt toward the foul line and enables the umpire to see the first baseman's foot in relationship to the bag and to observe a potential swipe tag. Many umpires get set for the initial throw, but do not react to a poor throw.

Plays involving 'pressure'. Umpires should be taking as many plays at first base in fair territory as possible. When the first baseman fields a ground ball and throws to the pitcher covering the bag, the umpire should still strive to remain in fair territory. Getting one or two steps in fair territory will enable the umpire to see the fielder step on the bag and to allow the batter-runner to run straight through the base without colliding with the umpire.

Pitchers are taught to touch the inside half of the bag, and an umpire in foul territory might not be able to see if the pitcher hits the inside corner or misses it entirely as he is making that play.

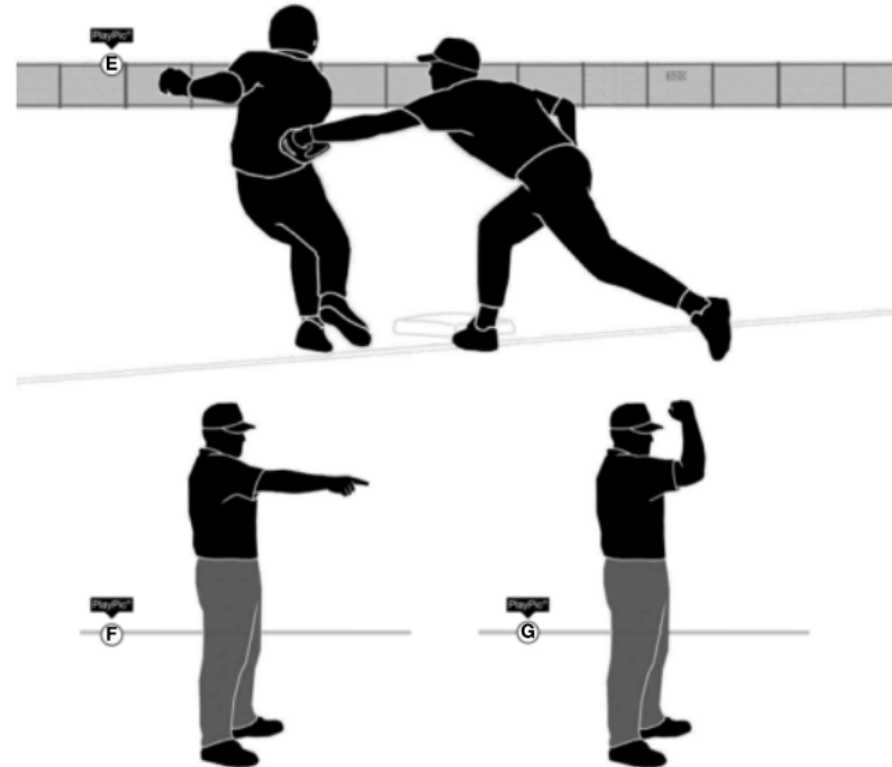
There are times when an umpire may need to go into foul territory to take a play at first base. A couple of instances are when a second baseman fields the ball going hard to his left or a first baseman fielding the ball deeply behind first base. In both of these instances an umpire would have to go into foul territory to see the throw while staying out of the throwing lane as to not get hit by a thrown ball.

When an umpire does need to go into foul territory, just taking one or two steps into foul territory is all that is needed. From that position, the umpire will still be out of the way of the batter-runner running through the base and will also have a look at the fielder's foot touching the inside of the base. Going too far into foul territory will take away the look at the inside edge of the bag and the umpire will not be able to tell whether the base was touched or not. Additionally, being too far foul will force the base umpire to look through the batter-runner's legs, making it difficult to tell when the bag was touched or when the fielder received the ball.

A pulled foot. When a high throw beats a runner to a base but forces the fielder off the base, umpires can indicate why the runner is safe by adding a signal to the safe signal. In the illustration on the previous page, the first baseman had to leap for the throw (PlayPic A on pg. 29) and the runner reached the bag safely before the first baseman touched the bag (PlayPic B on pg. 29). The umpire calls the runner safe (PlayPic C on pg. 29) and then a signal — a sweep of the arms (PlayPic D on pg. 29) — to confirm that the runner is safe because the fielder was off the base.



When the first baseman had to leap for the throw (PlayPic A), the runner was able to reach the bag before the first baseman touched the bag (PlayPic B). The umpire calls the runner safe (PlayPic C) and then signal with a sweep of the arms (PlayPic D) to confirm the fielder was off the base.



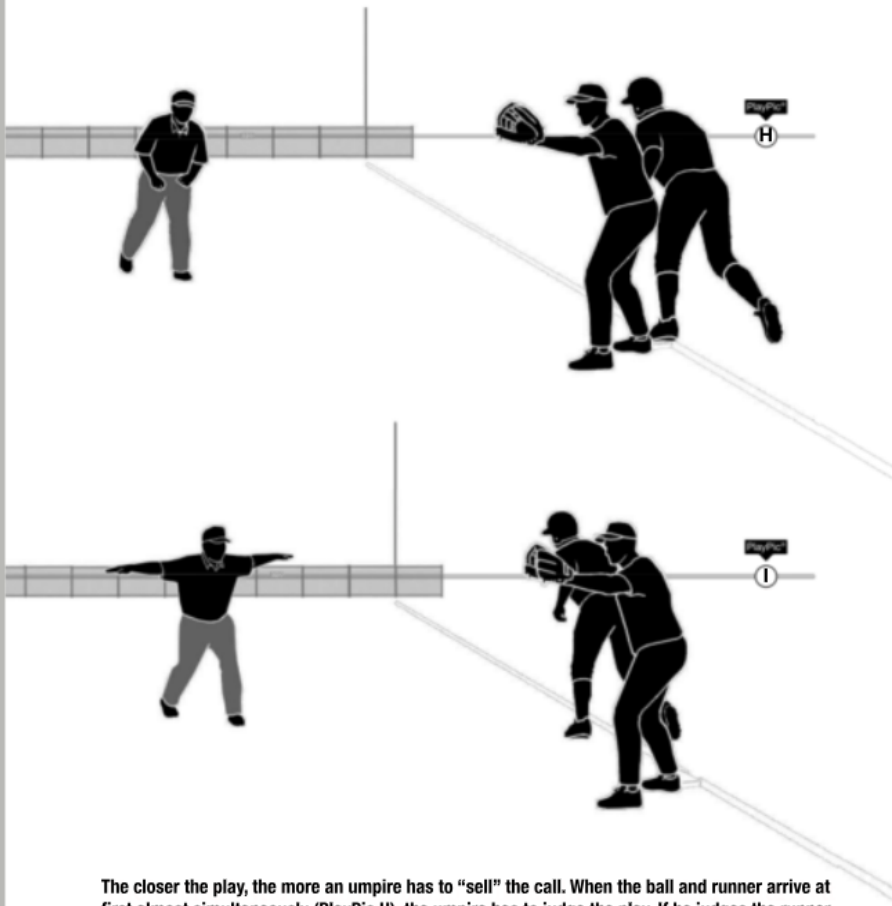
When the first baseman comes off the bag, he will usually attempt to tag the runner out (PlayPic E). When he is successful, the base umpire needs to point that he saw the tag (PlayPic F) and then call the runner out (PlayPic G).

A swipe tag. Many times, the defense gets an out even when a throw pulls the first baseman off the bag. A good first baseman will tag the batter-runner rather than attempt to step on the bag.

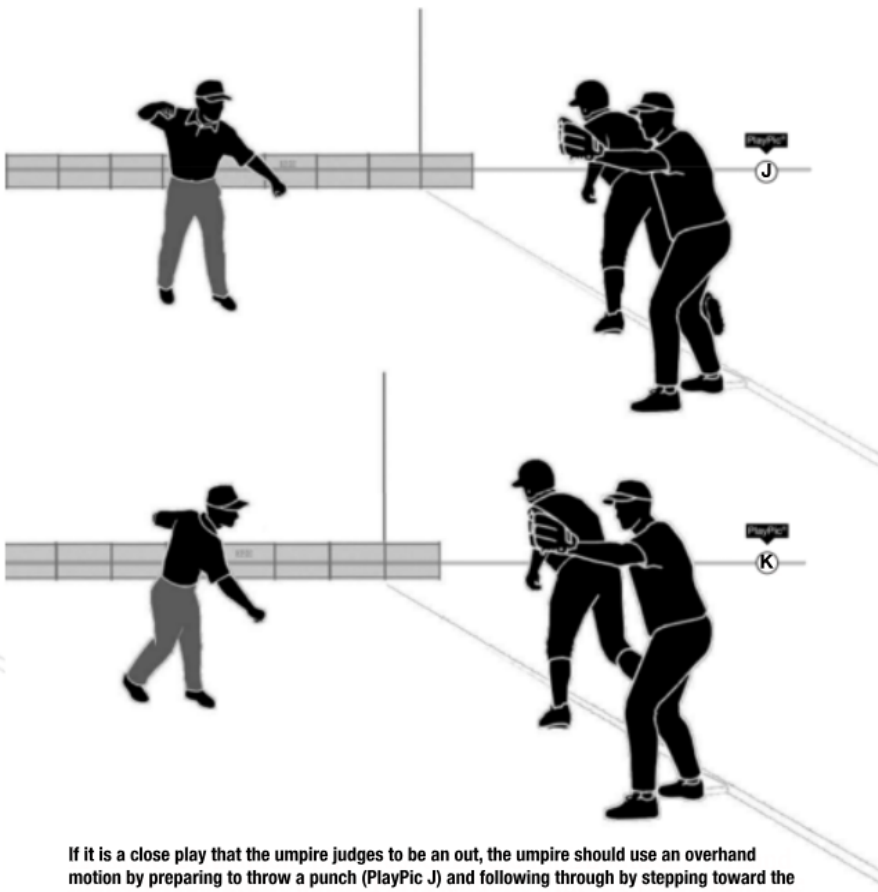
In PlayPic E, the throw has taken the first baseman just to the plate-side of first base and has tagged the batter-runner. If the umpire simply declares the runner out, an argument may ensue because the fielder did not touch the base with his foot. The umpire can prevent an argument and lend credibility to his call by pointing to the play (PlayPic F on pg. 30) and verbalizing, "On the tag," followed by the out signal and verbal declaration (PlayPic G on pg. 30).

'Selling' the Call

A routine out deserves a routine call. But many plays on the bases are a lot closer than a routine play. In those instances, base umpires can use their voice and body language to lend credibility to close calls. The technique is called "selling" the call. Below, the runner and the ball have arrived at first base at nearly the same time (PlayPic H on pg. 31). Because it's an extremely close play, the umpire must display confidence in his decision with a decisive call.



The closer the play, the more an umpire has to "sell" the call. When the ball and runner arrive at first almost simultaneously (PlayPic H), the umpire has to judge the play. If he judges the runner was safe, he can sell the call by stepping toward the play and aggressively signaling (PlayPic I).



If it is a close play that the umpire judges to be an out, the umpire should use an overhand motion by preparing to throw a punch (PlayPic J) and following through by stepping toward the bag and shouting, "Out!" (PlayPic K).

If the runner is judged safe (PlayPic I on pg. 31), the umpire steps toward the base, thrusts out his arms and says, "Safe!" in a loud, confident voice. An out call on a very close play is equally demonstrative, and is a two-step process. Again, step toward the base, bring the arm back as if preparing to throw a punch (PlayPic J) and follow through while shouting, "Out!" as shown in PlayPic K.

Remember that the sell technique should be saved for close plays. Using it all of the time is like shouting all of the time; after a while, people can't tell when you're really shouting and when you're speaking in your normal tone.

Philosophy of Positioning

At any moment during a game, each base umpire assumes the position on the field that will give him or her the best opportunity to rule correctly on the next play; as each play develops, each umpire adjusts his or her position to observe the ongoing action.

Two-umpire mechanics is a system of angles, distances, shared responsibilities and anticipation; the most important is anticipation. When you can reasonably predict what is most likely to happen next, you can establish your angle, cut the distance and meet your responsibilities; you can also move to the proper position before the play begins and adjust as it develops.

Of course, you could wind up in the proper position merely by following the action, the ball, or both. You could get to the right spot purely by accident, just because you have to be someplace. And in most situations you'd be lucky enough to see the play no matter where you are on the field — most plays don't really need an umpire. But when there is a decision to be made, it will be more accurate and will be accepted more readily if you are in a position to really see what happens.

If you've umpired for any amount of time, you've been told to "get in position" to make the call. That's good advice, even when it comes from angry players, coaches and fans who have no idea what that position is. It's the same advice this book offers, except here you'll get useful suggestions and the reasoning behind them. The suggestions will focus on helping you get into position in time to wait for the play to develop, because an umpire who can stand still and watch the action has a better opportunity to rule accurately on that action.

While "get in position" is good advice, it is incomplete. As you strive to be in the proper position to see a play, you must concentrate on seeing the entire play. Never look away from one play, hurrying to move to the next action, before you are certain the first play is over. Remember the sage advice offered by virtually every umpire training staff: "It ain't nothin' until I call it!"

Along with judgment, rules knowledge, concentration and courage, positioning is an important umpiring asset. When you are in a place on the field that offers an advantageous view of the action, your decision will be more confident, more often correct and more readily accepted by players, coaches and spectators.

It's important to understand the advantages of each position and its associated movement. When you understand why one position is better than another, you'll find yourself in great position throughout each game.

Proper Positioning

"Angle is primary; distance is secondary; closer is better, up to a point."

While no sentence can summarize everything you need to know about positioning, that one comes close. When you understand how angle, distance and proximity work together, you understand how your on-field position affects your opportunity to rule correctly on a given play. Let's consider each element.

Angle. Your line of sight must provide you with an opportunity to view an important, instantaneous activity (on a tag play) or combination of two activities (on a force play). To get the right line of sight, you have to establish the correct angle.

For decades, veteran umpires have preached to rookie umpires: Get the 90-degree angle. That's a wonderful starting point, if you understand what 90-degrees you are trying to get.

For example, on a tag play you would like to be looking at the space between the fielder's hand or glove (holding the ball) and the runner's body. Assume for a moment that the fielder has the ball and is waiting with his glove extended to tag the runner. As the runner slides, his movement establishes his line of action. Your standard "90-degree angle" would place your line of sight perpendicular to the runner's slide — a good starting point. You may have to adjust your angle to see over, under or around the fielder's body or the runner's body.

Distance. In theory, once you establish the proper angle, you have a reasonable opportunity to accurately view the action, regardless of the distance between your position and the play. The theory holds as long as you do not have to adjust your angle.

In reality, the final moments of virtually every play require some amount of adjustment. The greater your distance from the play, the more difficult it will be to make that adjustment, but if you have not first established the proper angle your ability to adjust is inconsequential.

Proximity. How close you want to be to a developing play depends on several variables, including the type of play, your mobility, your peripheral vision. Begin by moving to a position eight to 10 feet from a tag play; 15 to 18 feet from a force play. As you gain experience, adjust those distances to fit your own ability.

Part 4

Working as a Team

Whether it is two or three umpires working a game, you are a team on the field, and it is imperative that you work together to cover all of the plays that come up in a game.

Nothing looks worse when there is a runner sliding into third with a dramatic tag being made and no umpire is around to make the call. By communicating before and during the game, those problems can be avoided.

Specific rotations and initial play assignments make up the heart of this book, but the general communication tools listed here will get you started.

Before the First Pitch

A plate umpire will judge more than 150 pitches during a game and a base umpire will probably have more than a handful of close plays in the field, either fair/foul or catch/no catch calls.

But neither umpire has a reasonable chance of being successful during the game if the crew hasn't taken care of business before the ball is made live and the first pitch is thrown.

Here are things that every umpire needs to take care of in advance of every game.

Assignment calendar. When an assigner opens up the calendar for the season, it is imperative that umpires block out dates they are not available. Wedding anniversaries and birthdays are the same every year; so if you know you aren't going to be available on those days, block them out immediately.

Once your calendar is ready, accept the assignment as soon as its handed out. Barring unforeseen issues with work or family, you should be able to accept any assignment that comes your way if you have kept your calendar up to date.

A game should never get turned back unless you have permission from your assigner to take another game or one of those rare work/family issues occurs.

Confirm with home team, partner. About a week before the game, the umpires should communicate and confirm the site and time of the assignment. If there is a designated crew chief, the crew chief needs to be the one to reach out to the crew.

The crew chief should also make contact with the host school to confirm the game details as well. It doesn't look good for the crew to have a game on its schedule for 7 p.m. and the athletic director and teams have it as a 4 p.m. game on their schedules.

Part of confirming with the home team is being aware of potential weather issues. Teams are likely to switch the date, time and even location of a game if weather is going to threaten the game's original starting time. And coaches will often communicate with each other and assume that umpires will be available at their beck and call. By communicating with the coach in advance, you become a part of the equation.

Pack your bag. You should take all of your equipment and uniforms to every game. Just because you are assigned the bases doesn't give you an excuse to not have things when the original plate umpire doesn't show up or thought he was working the bases and didn't bring anything either.

Before going into the bag, make sure everything you are going to take is in good condition. Pants should be wrinkle-free and clean, which means getting them in the wash or to the dry cleaners more than once per season.

Don't forget that ball bags and shoes also need attention. It doesn't matter how clean the rest of your clothes look, if you come out with unpolished shoes and dirty bags, you won't look impressive. It's a good idea to throw the ball bags into the wash several times a season.

Getting there. If you've been to a field or stadium before, then you likely know where to park and where your locker room is (if you are fortunate to have one). If not, then that's something that hopefully you confirmed with the home team in your phone call.

Make certain you leave yourself plenty of time. A game gets off to a bad start if you are rushed because you got caught in typical rush-hour traffic. Sometimes, you have to leave before the rush hour hits in order to get there on time.

In the locker room. The locker room, if you get one, should be the place where you not only get physically ready, but also mentally ready.

The physical is what everyone thinks of — getting dressed, rubbing up game balls and leaving at the right time to be on the field when required.

The mental side is often overlooked. First, the game deserves your full attention, so when the entire crew has arrived, the cell phones should be turned off and put away. There are obvious exceptions, such as family situations, but gabbing with the umpires at another game site is not necessary.

When you start your pregame discussion, make sure it fits the crew that you are with for that game. Three veteran umpires who have worked together before probably don't need a complete discussion of all rotations. However, if it's one veteran and one new person on a varsity game, going through the whole pregame not only ensures coverage, but it will likely put the newer umpire at ease. The newer umpire will hear things he's heard before, and will grow more comfortable.

The list on [Page 42](#) gives you a complete rundown of the topics that should be covered during a pregame discussion.

No locker room. At a lot of high school fields, there is no locker room. Instead you are forced to dress and hold your pregame discussion by your cars.

In those cases, it is strongly recommended that you park as far away from the fans and teams as possible. Also, you should come to the game with your undergarments already on. There is nothing good that can come from getting naked in the parking lot of a high school.

You will sometimes have to ask people to leave you alone when you are in the parking lot area. It is important that you treat that area as you would your locker room. It is your area and that time before a game is when you are getting both physically and mentally ready for the game.

Going to the field. Make certain you arrive at the field in time to take care of all necessary pregame responsibilities before the plate meeting.

Use the time when you walk on to the field to give it an inspection. Take note of wind conditions or potential safety hazards.

Since the ground rules meeting will likely take five minutes, you need to arrive on the field 10 minutes before the start time in order to get the game started on time.

Get to the plate meeting and allow the plate umpire to do most of the talking for the crew. The only time a base umpire should be involved is during introductions, clarifying any ground rules that aren't clear and filling in anything that gets omitted. The plate meeting is when all special rules for that day are decided. If a ground rule or game-ending rule isn't declared and agreed upon at that meeting, then it can't be used that day.

After the meeting. One last thing to know before the meeting breaks up is if the National Anthem will be performed or played. If so, it looks better for the umpires to be together during that time.

Once the pregame activities are concluded, the base umpire or umpires should hustle to the outfield. However, they should not run to their positions at the same time the defense is taking the field. Let the defensive players clear the area before leaving the plate.

The plate umpire should use this time to watch pitches and establish a good rapport with the catcher. Observe if the pitcher has a normal delivery and how the catcher receives the ball. That also gets the mind right for the pitches that count.

Another thing to watch for is to see if the pitcher is throwing from the set position, and if he is, ensure he is coming to a complete and discernable stop. If he's not, now's the time to tell the catcher, "Make sure if he gets a runner on base that he stops."

As the pitcher throws his final warmup pitch and the catcher throws to second base, brush off the plate, take a deep breath and put the ball in play.

To everyone else, it may appear that the work has just begun.

But you know better.

Before Each Play

Just as a coach gives signals to his hitter and runners before a play, umpires have a set of signals they should use.

Before each new batter, confirm the number of outs with your partner. Also confirm if the plate umpire is going to rotate to third base when the ball is put into play or stay at home. Lastly, you need to know if the infield fly is in effect.

The plate umpire should initiate the signals and have them echoed back to him by the base umpire(s). By getting on the same page before the play, you dramatically increase the chances that every play will be covered.

During the Play

If umpires were robots and nothing out of the ordinary ever happened, this step would be unnecessary. After all, you communicated before the play, so why do you need to keep talking?

Unfortunately, umpires are human and sometimes forget to rotate when they just said they would, or rotate when they shouldn't. And sometimes, the way a ball is hit dictates a change in the normal coverage.

So if the plate umpire is supposed to rotate to third, he should still call out, "I've got third if he (the runner) comes." That lets the base umpire know that he no longer has to be concerned about that play. The reason for the communication is the plate umpire could have fallen down or just forgotten to rotate.

If the base umpire doesn't hear the plate umpire take the call, it still belongs to the base umpire. The base umpire cannot release the play until he knows the plate umpire has it covered.

Between Innings

There is plenty of time for umpires to talk before and after games. They should not need to get together between innings.

However, there are times when you do need to relay information to your partner. In those cases, the communication should be quick and umpires should return to their normal positions between innings. That is not the time to discuss where you are going for dinner or the funny joke that you heard at the office.

End of the Game

When the game is over, the crew should leave the field together. Sometimes the final play is controversial, so it is important that the umpires leave together and that one umpire isn't left on the field with the angry mob of players and coaches.

Your goal, however, should be to get off the field as quickly as possible. Once you are off the field and back in the locker room or at your cars, you can talk about anything that needs discussing.

A wrapup following each game can be more important than the pregame meeting. While plays and rulings are fresh in all of the umpires' minds, it is the perfect time to review situations that occurred during the game.

The most experienced umpire on a crew should initiate the discussion and be the one to admit mistakes first. That will open the discussion for lesser experienced umpires to feel

less threatened for admitting their mistakes. Umpires should never start the discussion by asking, "Did you see anything?" and being satisfied with no response. Successful umpires are aware of plays and/or situations in every game that could have been better handled.

Here are several topics that should be covered in each postgame review:

- Judgment plays
- Strike zone interpretation
- Proper positioning for plays
- Crew mechanics

Get the Call Right

Obviously, the goal of an umpire is to get every play correct. Realistically, that will never happen. Umpires are human and will make mistakes. Fortunately, in some cases, there is a mechanism in place in the rules for "getting a call right" when it has been potentially missed.

However, there are some pitfalls with that philosophy as well. Here are some general guidelines.

- By rule, there are some calls that can be changed and some that cannot. It is imperative to know the ones that can be reviewed by the umpire team.
- There are some calls that don't need to wait for an appeal or conference. For example when a batted ball hits a batter in the batter's box, a caught/uncaught third strike and if a foul tip is caught or dropped or trapped should be called immediately by the base umpire and not wait for an appeal.
- As a general rule, a decision that involves judgment is not reversible. Plays that involve misapplication of rules or that the calling umpire might not have seen fully are the calls covered by the guidelines for changing a call. Some of those calls are:
 - A checked swing that is called a ball;
 - A question on whether a foot was pulled by the fielder at a base;
 - Whether a swipe tag was made;
 - A dropped ball after a tag;
 - If the ball was juggled on a force play at first;
 - Whether a home run was fair or foul;
 - Whether a hit was a home run or a ground-rule double;
 - The catch of a foul fly;
 - The catch of a fair fly with no runners on base; and
 - The declaration of a balk when the pitcher's foot was not on the pitcher's plate.

Some calls just can't be changed. Those include:

- Calls on close force plays;
- Tags on non-force situations;
- A checked swing when a strike is first called; and
- The catch or no catch of a fair fly with runners on base.

Making the call. Umpires should always make their initial call. It is better to make the call and then discuss and make a change. The alternative is to not make a call and then go for help, only to find no help available. At that point, your credibility is totally blown.

Once you have made the call, if you realize that you may not have gotten the best look and a partner might be able to help, do so immediately. Read the reaction of the runners, fielders and coaches. Don't wait for the discussion with the coach. Instead, call time and seek help immediately.

However, if you are 100 percent confident of your call, there is no need to ask for assistance simply because the coach did not like your decision.

The most common play for help. The swipe tag/pulled foot is the most common play in which help is requested. Let's take a ground ball to the infield and go through the procedure that should be followed.

With no runners on, the plate umpire should move toward the 45-foot line in order to assist with the potential pulled foot/swipe tag scenario at first base.

As discussed, the base umpire shall make the call. If the offensive coach believes you when you called the out, he won't argue and no discussion will ensue.

If the reaction or argument convinces you that you need help, then seek it. If the request appears wide open, it's OK to ask from across the diamond (Justin, did he pull his foot? Or Kim do you have a tag?)

The plate umpire shall make no call, but instead, shall answer the base umpire's question. Immediately after that answer, the base umpire shall uphold or reverse his call.

If the base umpire asks for help and the plate umpire answers in a way that would change the call, the base umpire has NO choice but to change the call.

If there is potential problem in the quick answer, the plate umpire and base umpire should get together (away from the coaches and players) and have a quick discussion. Example: If the plate umpire saw a tag, but believes it was late, he can't truthfully answer the "Do you have a tag?" question without causing further problems.

With runners on base, the base umpire will be in the middle and the plate umpire will have other responsibilities (force-play-slide rule, play at home), therefore, the base umpire cannot ask for help on that play. If the plate umpire "sees" the play at first, he likely wasn't looking where he was supposed to be looking.

Rundowns

While rundowns can be exciting plays for fans to watch, they are among the toughest to umpire. Those are the rare plays when the umpire will likely be on the move and making the call all at the same time.

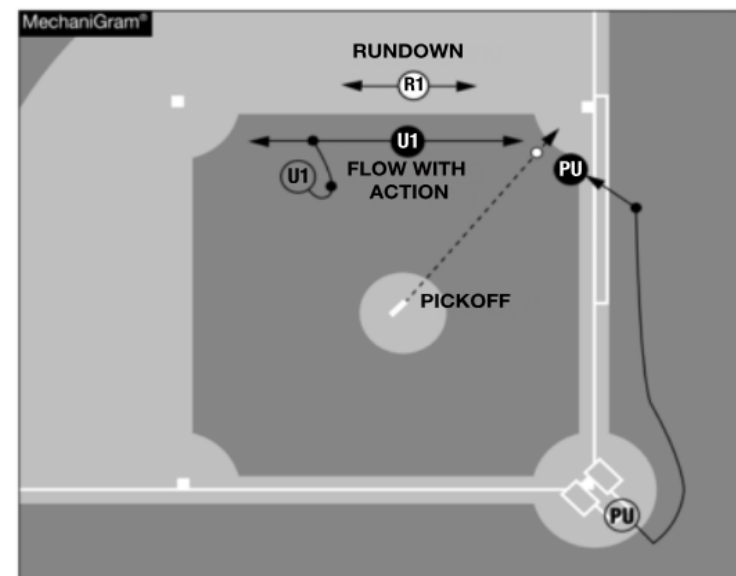
How many rundowns you'll see in a season depends on the style of baseball played by the teams you umpire. Teams with aggressive baserunning tendencies — those that attempt a lot of stolen bases or hit-and-runs — will often find themselves in more rundowns. Regardless of individual style, however, you are likely to have a few rundowns each year.

Because of the nature of the play — a runner trapped between two bases — a three-umpire crew will find rundowns relatively easy to cover. The crew will be able to station one umpire at each base and watch the rundown unfold.

In a two-umpire crew, however, few situations provide better opportunities for umpire teamwork than a rundown.

The two keys are distance and timing. The lead umpire (the one originally responsible for the runner) must establish his position at a comfortable distance to the basepath so he can flow laterally between the bases to observe the activity. The other umpire must understand how and when to step into the coverage.

In the MechaniGram, U1 is the lead umpire as R1 attempts to get back on a pickoff throw. U1 must read the play and move aggressively toward either first or second if he senses a play developing there. But if he reads a rundown, U1 should square his shoulders to the



On a rundown between first and second base, U1 will stay with the runner until PU can get to the first-base cutout and assist. PU should only move in to the cutout while the runner is going away from first base.



runner and move laterally, approximating the runner's progress. U1 will not try to keep up with the runner; instead, he will shadow the runner's movements and let R1 lead him laterally along the basepath. By remaining 10 or more feet from the basepath and flowing with the play, U1 will have a reasonable angle for a tag at either base.

The plate umpire must recognize the rundown and move toward one end of the action — logically, the first-base side. Move aggressively to the play but stop and hold about 20 feet from first base in foul ground. That prevents a collision with players participating in the rundown and precludes a double call. From the holding spot, wait for the play to move away from you, then advance to the edge of the first-base cutout and communicate verbally with your partner, "I've got this end."

Upon hearing the communication, U1 should acknowledge his partner, then conserve his own movement by flowing toward the second-base cutout, moving a bit closer to the basepath and focusing his attention on the runner's action from a more stationary position.

Once the umpires establish shared responsibility, the plate umpire should rule on tag attempts if the runner dives back to first, while U1 is responsible for activity between the bases. U1 also rules on a tag attempt if the runner dives into second.

Other points to remember regarding rundowns in a two-umpire crew:

- The plate umpire will never leave the plate to assist the field umpire on a play when another runner may attempt to score.
- If PU decides to assist U1, PU will retain all responsibility for resulting plays at the plate.
- Umpires must communicate and keep the field in proper officiating balance.
- PU must not be so eager to help that he "runs" U1 off the play.
- U1 must be aware of other runners. For instance, if R2 is trapped between second and third, R1 may anticipate R2 being safe at third or tagged out and attempt to advance to second. Only U1 can make that call.

Regardless of the number of umpires:

- During a rundown, a runner is out for leaving the baseline if he runs more than three feet away from a direct line between bases to avoid being tagged. If a runner deviates one step, he is likely still in the baseline.
- If a rundown results in two players on the same base, the trail runner is out if both are tagged.
- Don't forget about obstruction and interference. Either is a possibility in the action leading up to, during and immediately after a rundown.
- If you're unsure if the runner was tagged, observe the players' body language. Their actions will often help you make the call.

Time Plays

In baseball, a time play is not formally defined in any of the codes, but is generally understood to occur when it is important to know if a run scored before the third out of the inning was made or not.

For example, with a runner on second and two outs, the batter singles is out at second trying to stretch the base hit. If R2 crosses the plate, before the batter's out, then the run scores. If not, then no run scores.

On a time play, each umpire has a set job to do.

For the base umpire, it's nothing out of the ordinary. In fact, it is critical that the base umpire do everything correctly and normally. If, in the play example above, B1 was safe at second, then there is no time play to be called.

The base umpire needs to not rush his call — the plate umpire can see when the tag was applied and that's the important time, not when the base umpire calls the out.

For the plate umpire, recognition that a time play is possible is key. In the play above, seeing the batter stretch the single into a potential double is the most significant clue. The plate umpire should be directly behind the plate, in line with the potential play on the bases. See if the tag is made before or after the runner who is attempting to score crosses the plate. Don't make any signal until the base umpire calls the runner at second out. If that runner is safe, then you don't have to judge the time play.

When the base umpire does make the out call, only then should you indicate emphatically whether to score the run or wave it off.

Pregame Preparations

1. Prior to arrival at game site:

- a. Contact partner(s) one to two days prior to the game;
 - (1) Confirm game time, meeting time (if carpooling) and game site;
 - (2) Confirm plate/base assignments;
 - (3) Confirm crew shirt color.

2. Upon arrival at game site (45 to 60 minutes prior to game):

- a. Inform game administrator (if present) or home team's head coach of crew arrival.
 - (1) Let the game administrator or home team's head coach know the crew will be at home plate 5 to 10 minutes prior to game time.
 - (2) Confirm game start time.
- b. Walk the field if possible.

3. Umpire Pre-Game Conference (while dressing):

- a. Review current year rule changes and points of emphasis;
- b. Fair/foul ball responsibilities;
- c. Check swing responsibilities and mechanics;
- d. Outfield fly ball responsibilities with no runners on and with runner(s) on;
 - (1) Routine fly balls;
 - (2) Trouble ball situations – catch/no catch;
 - (3) "V" between the outfielders.
- e. Infield fly ball and line drive responsibilities with no runners and with runner(s) on;
- f. Batted ball contacting the batter (dead ball immediately or the crew doesn't have it);
- g. Base touches and tag up responsibilities;
- h. Overthrow responsibilities;
- i. Balk (dead ball) responsibilities including legal and illegal pitching positions;
- j. Non-verbal signals:
 - (1) Outs;
 - (2) Standard rotation – (Plate umpire rotates to third base with R1 only or R1 and R3 and R1 advances to third);

- (3) Reverse Rotation – (3- and 4-person crews);
- (4) Infield fly;
- (5) Base umpire going out on trouble ball;
- (6) Appeal;
- (7) Time Play;
- (8) PU coverage of third base on fly ball, tag up with runners on first and second;
- (9) Partner has information on a play to share – protocol for play review request by coach;
- (10) Eye contact.

- k. Handling Arguments (keep it one-on-one, head coach and one umpire) including verbal warnings, written warnings and restrictions and ejections;

- l. Coverage on force plays, illegal slides, double-play balls;

- m. Handling charged conferences and pitching changes;

- n. Handling dugouts;
 - (1) Bench jockeying;
 - (2) Celebrations – players leaving dugout during live- and dead-ball situations
 - (3) Location of players and coaches;
 - (4) Arguing balls and strikes.

- o. Fights – control players before fight starts, procedure if a fight/altercation should occur;
 - (1) Home team players (who is responsible for);
 - (2) Visiting team players (who is responsible for).

- p. Other:
 - (1) Hustle at all times.
 - (2) Runner at third, tag up on a foul fly ball down the right-field line – U1 can assist PU on tag up at third;
 - (3) Communicate;
 - (4) Pitcher's feint to third base, then disengages with pitcher's plate and throws to first base (legal);
 - (5) Pitcher going to mouth on the mound, on the pitcher's plate;
 - (6) Unusual Ground Rules
 - (7) Get together on unusual situations;
 - (8) Get the plays right;
 - (9) Have fun out there;
 - (10) Rundowns – covering umpire has it all until another umpire communicates "I've got this end."
 - (11) Appeals (live and dead ball);
 - (12) Positions during pregame conference and during National Anthem.

4. Pre-game Conference with Head Coaches and Team Captains:

- a. Umpires, head coaches and team captains (if available);
- b. Plate umpire does all talking after introductions and handshakes;
- c. Home team's head coach reviews ground rules;
- d. Receive home team's lineup card first. Plate umpire looks over all substitutes, confirms DH situations (traditional DH, player/DH or straight 9). Same with the visiting team's line up card. Lineup cards become official after the lineup cards are accepted by the plate umpire;
- e. One 7-inning game (unless otherwise noted);
- f. Sportsmanship is the main concern;
- g. Speed-up ruled and state association adoptions;
- h. Confirm with both head coaches that their respective teams are legally and properly equipped. A verbal confirmation from both head coaches is required;
- i. All substitutes through the plate umpire;
- j. Remind both teams to hustle and wish them good luck.

5. After pre-game conference with head coaches and team captains:

- a. Assume positions for National Anthem;
 - (1) All umpires should take their hats off and face the flag respectfully;
 - (2) Each umpire should raise the hat over the heart in unison as the music begins until it ends.
- b. After the National Anthem, umpires shall hustle to their respective positions.

Part 5

Signal Chart

**Play or Play Ball**

Point with the right hand directly at the pitcher. Call forcefully, "Play ball!"

**Do Not Pitch**

Hold the right arm straight out with palm outward and fingers up. That signifies that the ball is dead and the pitcher should not pitch.

**Out**

Begin in a set position. Stand with your shoulders square to the play, keeping your head still. Bring your right arm up, arm extended and parallel to the ground. Bend the elbow 90-degrees; close your fingers into a fist, thumb tucked along the front of the curled fingers and facing you. Motion your right forearm forward and then back, as if pounding a nail. Declare loudly, "He's out!" as you knock on a door. Return to a set position.

**Foul Ball, Time Out, Dead Ball**

Extend both arms in front of your body, slightly higher than your shoulders and wider than shoulder width. Extend your hands out, fingers together and pointed up, palms forward as if trying to stop something with your hands. Declare, "Time!" In any dead-ball situation, the ball must be put back into play.

**Fair Ball**

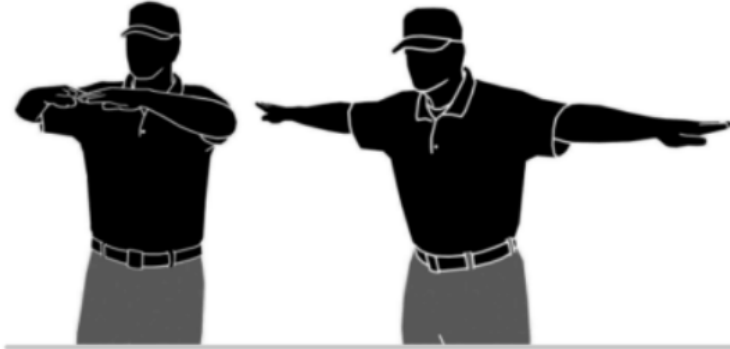
Move as close to the ball as safety and the play will allow, then straddle the foul line. Come to a standing-set position before the play happens. Point to fair territory with the hand and arm on that side of your body.

**Infield Fly**

Begin in a set position; when the ball is hit, pause, read and react; step up, turn and face the fielder(s) and the play. When the ball is descending and you are convinced the batted ball is an infield fly, point straight up with your right hand and declare, "Infield fly!" If the batted ball is near foul territory, the verbal call is, "Infield fly, if fair!" If the batted ball is fair but uncaught, signal an out and declare, "He's out! He's out! The batter is still out!" If the batted ball becomes an uncaught foul ball, signal and declare a foul ball.

**Strike**

As PU, stand up from your stance and step back away from the catcher. Continue watching the ball, normally in the catcher's possession; bring your right arm up, arm extended and parallel to the ground. Bend the elbow 90-degrees; close your fingers into a fist, thumb tucked along the front of the curled fingers and facing you. Motion your right forearm forward and then back, as if pounding a nail. Declare loudly, "Strike!" as you knock on a door. Then, relax as you prepare for the next pitch. Verbalize a strike so that your voice can be heard in the outfield. When U1 responds to P's question about a checked swing, the strike signal is used to indicate that a batter did swing. On a swinging strike, you do not verbalize the call.



Safe, Uncaught Third Strike, "Did Not Go"

Begin in a set position. Stand with your shoulders square to the play, keeping your head still. Bring both hands together, shoulder high. Extend both arms straight out parallel to the ground in front of your chest, shoulder high. The fingers of each hand are straight and together, thumbs along forefingers. Sweep both arms out, separating toward the sides of your body even with your shoulders until the arms are fully extended along the lines of your shoulders. Call, "Safe!" (not "He's safe!") as you sweep your arms. Return your arms, still parallel to the ground, in front of your chest. Drop your arms to your sides and resume a set position. When U1 responds to P's question about a checked swing, the safe signal is used to indicate that a batter did not swing. The same signal indicates a catcher did not catch a third strike.



Foul Tip

Scrape the fingers of one hand across the other hand to indicate a batted went directly to the catcher's hands and was legally caught by a fielder then signal a swinging strike.



Time Play

Tap one wrist with two fingers on the opposite hand.



Double-Tag Rotation

Bump both fists on top of each other with the index finger of the right hand extended, signalling that the PU will rotate to third on a double-tag situation.



Information Available

Umpires can indicate they have relevant information for a partner by tapping two times over their left chest (heart).



Rotation
Official NFHS signal. Thumbs and pinkie finger extended. Arms down by side. Rotate hands to indicate movement.

Part 6

Crew of One

Basic Principles

1. Pregame conference

The meeting with head coaches and team captains follows normal procedures. Remind the coaches at the pregame meeting that one-umpire mechanics mean some decisions will be made in less than ideal positions. Encourage the coaches to take that into account before protesting a call and that you will, like them and their players, give your best effort and hustle throughout the game.

2. Status of the ball

Always know where the ball is and who has it.

3. Order of responsibilities

On any ball put in play, first determine fair or foul, then catch or no-catch, then finally safe or out. The next priority is runners (tagging up, touching bases, advancing or returning).

4. Movement on batted balls

Anytime the ball is hit in fair territory, you must first take steps to clear the batter and catcher while removing the umpire mask then moving toward the center of the infield, unless a ball hit down the line requires your attention. Even then you should still move out toward the center of the infield if you call the ball fair, or there is a possible play on a runner tagging up.

5. Dead-ball area rulings

When a ball appears to be going out of play, wait a little longer to be sure it is in an out-of-play area. Once you declare the ball out of play, there is no going back.

6. Steal attempts

On runners stealing second base or third base, call the pitch first and then move out from behind the catcher to the left side toward the base a few steps, get set and make the call. For pickoff attempts, try to move to get a clear view to see the play. The general guideline on long-distance calls is if the ball beats the runner and the tag is down, call the runner out.

7. Angle over distance

As you move to get in position to view a play and make a call, angle takes priority over proximity.

8. Prioritize

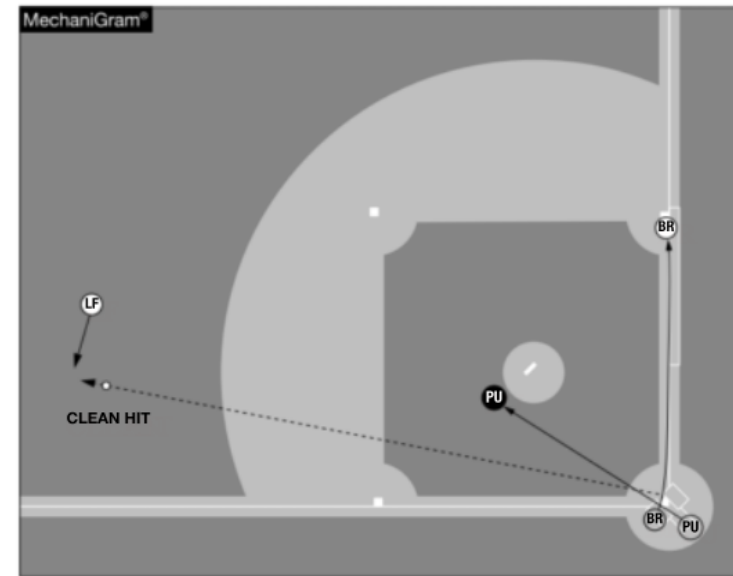
Since you can't possibly cover everything, the umpire must develop priorities and use common sense. Concentrate on the most important aspect of the play and move on to the next.

9. Dead-ball situations

Call time whenever the play is over and you turn your back to return to home plate, and when you go to brush off home plate.

10. Complete authority

If there is only one umpire, you have complete jurisdiction in administering the rules and may take any position you desire, preferably behind the catcher.

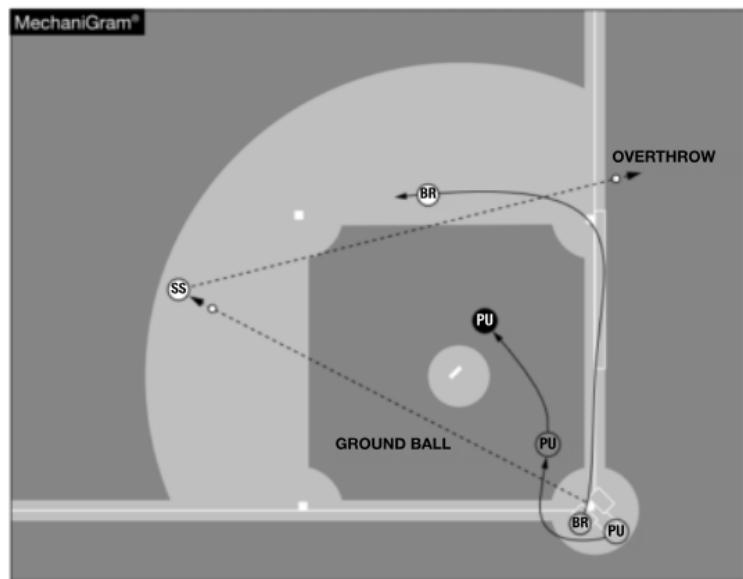
11. Hustle, hustle, hustle.**NO RUNNERS ON, CLEAN HIT TO THE OUTFIELD**

Action on the field: A clean hit to the outfield.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Move out to the pitcher's mound and observe. Be aware of a throw back to first base.

NO RUNNERS ON, GROUND BALL IN THE INFELD

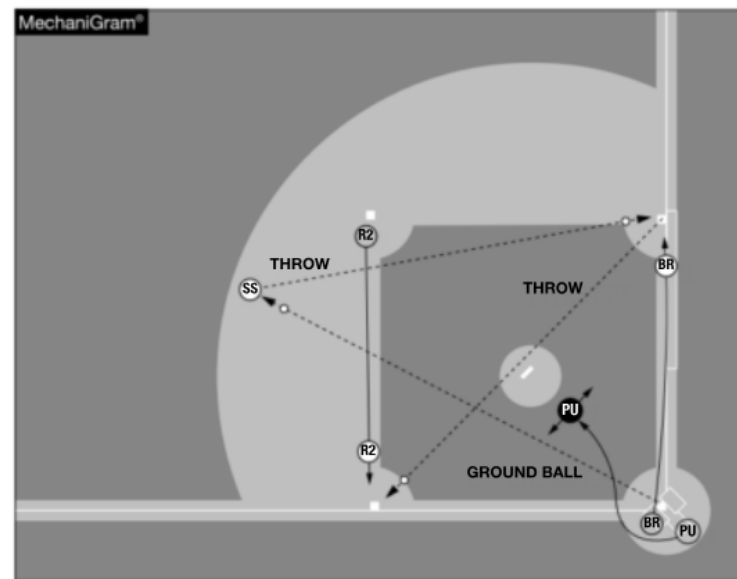


Action on the field: Ground ball to shortstop, overthrow on the play at first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Clear batter and catcher before moving toward first-base side of pitcher's mound. Be prepared to rule on overthrow while standing behind pitcher's mound in case of play at second base.

RUNNER ON SECOND BASE, GROUND BALL IN THE INFELD

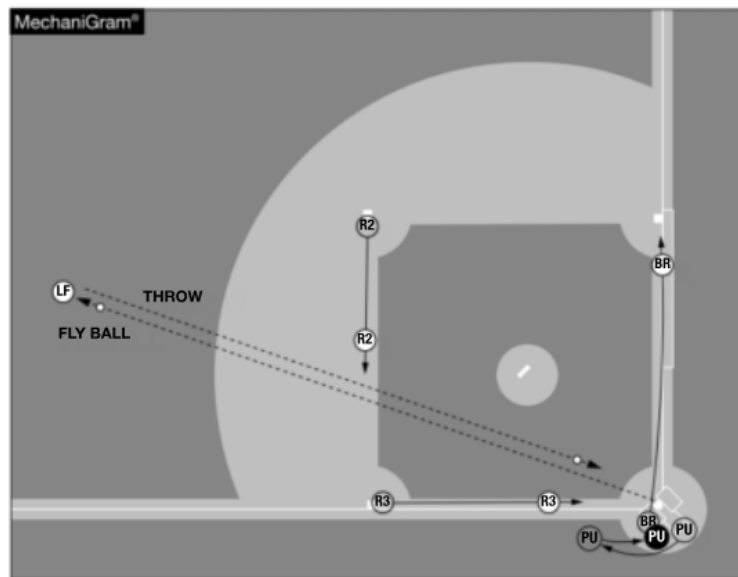


Action on the field: Ground ball to shortstop with a runner on second base, second throw to third base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Rule on play at first base before moving toward the third-base side to observe a possible play at third base. Come to a stop before making a call.

RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD, FLY BALL TO THE OUTFIELD



Action on the field: Fly ball to left field with less than two outs, runners on second and third base each tag up and attempt to advance.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Move to the best spot to see the tag-ups of R3 and R2. After the ball is caught, move to home plate for a possible play. Be aware of a cutoff in an attempt to retire R2 instead.

Part 7

Crew of Two

Basic Principles

1. Angle is primary, distance is secondary

This mechanics manual points out areas, not specific spots, for umpires to take plays. With only two umpires, you're not going to be able to get as close as you'd like on some plays. Work to get the best angle to make the call.

2. The plate umpire (PU) will move

Helping on a pulled foot at first base ... helping on slides at second base ... covering plays at third base ... PU is responsible for much more than balls and strikes.

3. Studying two-umpire mechanics will help you understand three-umpire mechanics

The two-umpire system is the basis for many coverages with multiple umpires.

Basic Outfield Coverage

A. Do not go out automatically on all fly balls in your coverage area.

B. Pause, read and react. Then go hard and get a good angle. Be stopped when the play occurs.

C. Four conditions that should guide an umpire on when to go to the outfield when bases are empty:

1. The outfielder turns and begins to run toward the outfield fence (possible home run).
2. Multiple players converging on a fly ball.
3. A catch being made below the waist.
4. Outfielder moving toward the foul line and possible fair/foul decision.

D. If in doubt, go out on fly balls in your coverage area.

1. If you are going out, go out hard.
2. Leave no doubt in your partner's mind about whether or not you are going out.
3. Signal your partner by raising your arm if you are going out.
4. If you are not going out, hold your arm out to your partner with your palm facing him and continue with your responsibilities.

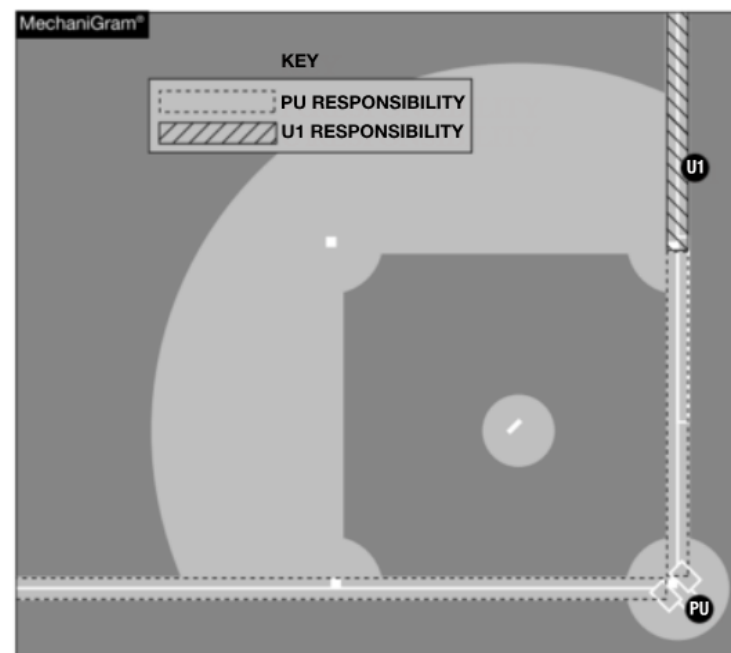
5. Once you go out, do not return until the play is complete.
 - a. Exception: With no runners on base and U1 goes out, U1 would return to the plate for any play on the batter-runner there after ruling no catch, fair/foul and when no more trouble exists (ball can't get under a fence).
6. U1 positioned within the infield never crosses the base path to observe catch/no catch.

Overthrows

Overthrow responsibility belongs to the plate umpire with one exception.

If the base umpire (with no runners on) goes to the outfield and then rotates to home, overthrow responsibility will then belong to the base umpire at the plate on all overthrows, except the plate umpire (rotated to third) will have the overthrow at third base that goes toward the outfield.

FAIR/FOUL COVERAGE



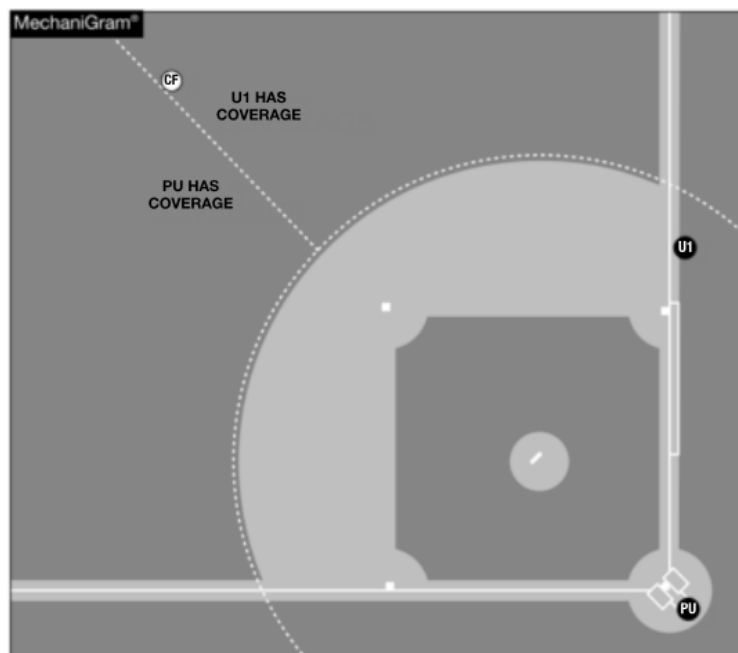
Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has responsibility for balls up to first base and all balls along the third-base line.

U1: Has responsibility for balls that hit first base and/or beyond.

INITIAL POSITIONS AND OUTFIELD COVERAGE



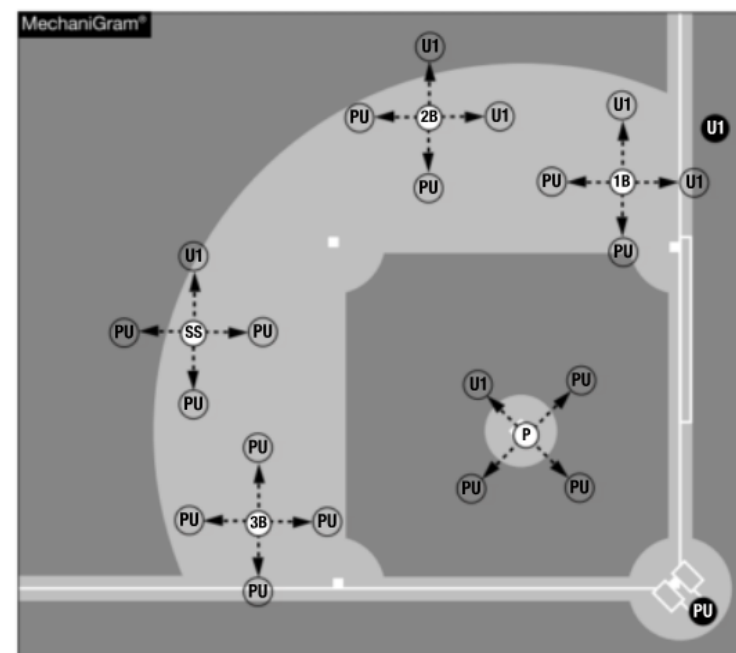
Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has center fielder moving toward the left-field foul line.

U1: Is in the "A" position. U1 dictates outfield coverage and has the center fielder straight in and straight back and any ball to the right fielder. U1 only makes the calls on fly balls in that area when he goes out on a fly ball. If U1 comes in, pivots and takes the runner, then PU will make the call on the fly ball.

INFIELD CATCH COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

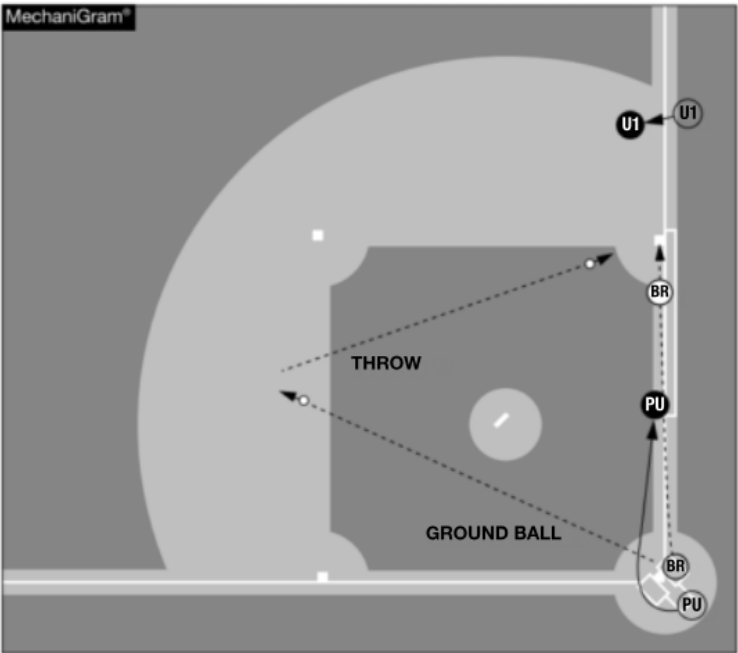
PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the first baseman moving in or right.
3. By the third baseman in all directions.
4. By the shortstop moving in, out or toward third base.
5. By the second baseman moving in or toward second base.

U1 has catches:

1. By the first baseman moving left or out.
2. By the second baseman moving out or toward first base.
3. By the shortstop moving toward second base.
4. By the pitcher moving back.

ROUTINE GROUND BALL



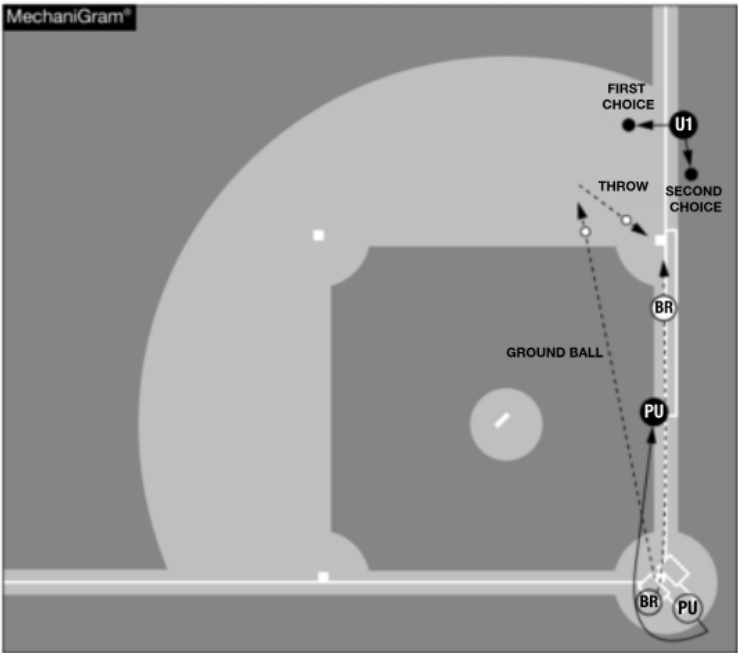
Action on the field: Ground ball to shortstop, throw to first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves toward first base to assist U1 on swipe tag or pulled foot by the first baseman. Will also watch for potential running-lane interference.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on plays at first base.

GROUND BALL WITH PRESSURE



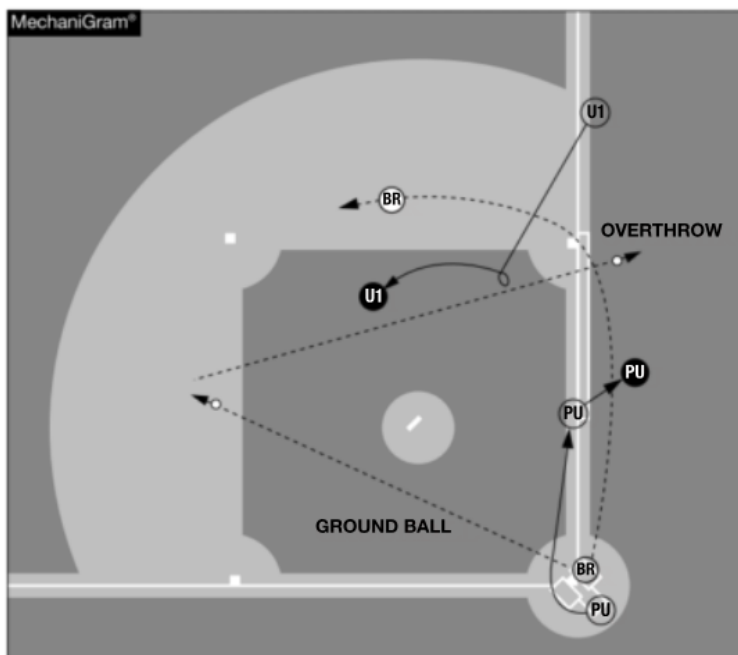
Action on the field: A ground ball is hit that either takes the second baseman to his left or the first baseman has to make a play with the pitcher covering first. That situation is referred to as "pressure" since the umpire is getting the ball and one or more fielders is headed directly at him or her.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves toward first base to assist U1 on swipe tag or pulled foot by the first baseman or pitcher (if he is covering first base).

U1: Ideally, U1 will be able to move one or two steps fair and remain out of the way of the play. Especially when the pitcher covers first base, he will often touch the inside of the bag with his foot, so the U1 needs to be in fair territory to see that. If being in fair territory puts him in the way, then U1 can move one step foul. Be wary of the batter-runner bearing down and not looking where he is running.

PLAYS WITHIN THE INFELD: OVERTHROW



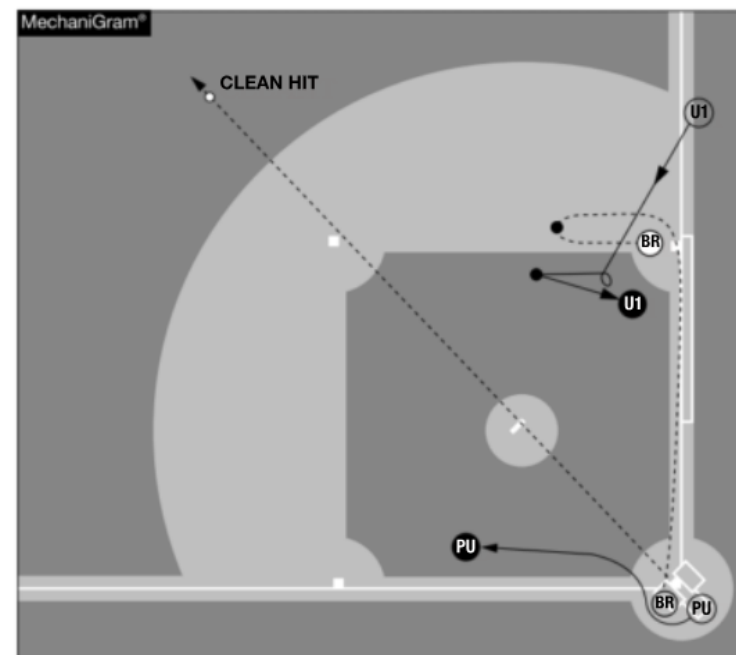
Action on the field: Ground ball to shortstop, overthrow to first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Observes the ball and rules if it enters dead-ball territory, moving into foul territory as necessary. Returns to the plate for any possible plays on the batter-runner.

U1: Enters the infield and has all plays on the bases. The goal should be to move into the infield ahead of the runner. However, if the runner makes a quick turn, U1 might have to let the runner pass and move in behind him.

CLEAN HIT TO THE OUTFIELD



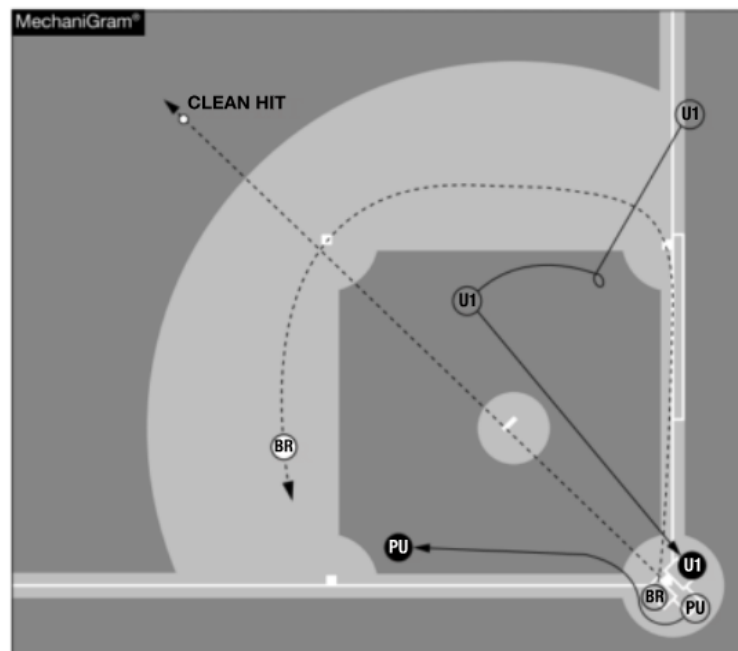
Action on the field: A clean hit to the outfield.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves out of the dirt circle and observes the play. Has all plays on batter-runner into third base.

U1: Enters the infield with a pivot and prepares for all plays on the batter-runner at first base and second base.

EXTRA-BASE HIT TO THE OUTFIELD



Action on the field: A clean hit to the outfield results in the batter advancing beyond first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves out of the dirt circle and observes the play. PU returns home for any potential play at the plate.

U1: Enters the infield with a pivot and prepares for all plays on the batter-runner at first base, second base and third base.

Crew of Two: Runners on Base

General Information

If there's a runner on first, bases loaded or any other runner combination, three coverages remain constant with at least a runner on base in the two-umpire system: fair/foul responsibilities, infield catch coverage and outfield coverage.

Fair/Foul Responsibilities

PU: Has responsibility for all balls on both the first- and third-base lines and all foul fly balls.

U1: Has no fair/foul responsibility down foul lines. But we do require that they help with the batter being hit in the batter's box.

Infield Catch Coverage

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the third baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
3. By the first baseman moving back or toward the foul line.

U1 has catches:

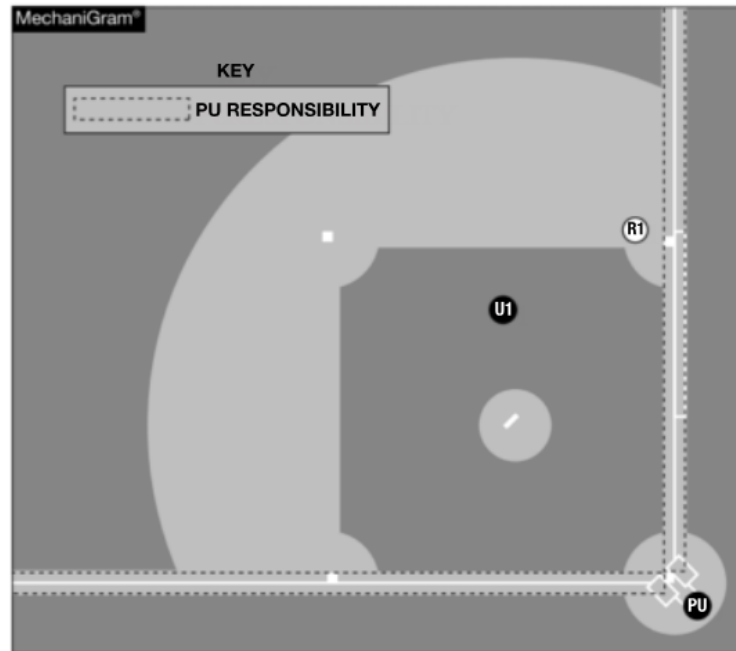
1. By the pitcher moving back.
2. By the shortstop moving in all directions.
3. By the second baseman moving in all directions.
4. By the third baseman moving in or toward the middle of the field.
5. By the first baseman moving in or toward the middle of the field.

Outfield Coverage

PU: Has the left fielder (or potentially the shortstop or third baseman) moving toward the left-field foul line and the right fielder (or potentially the second baseman or first baseman) moving toward the right-field foul line.

U1: In the "B" or "C" position, U1 has outfield coverage from the left fielder straight in or straight back to the right fielder straight in or straight back. That area is commonly known as the "V."

FAIR/FOUL COVERAGE



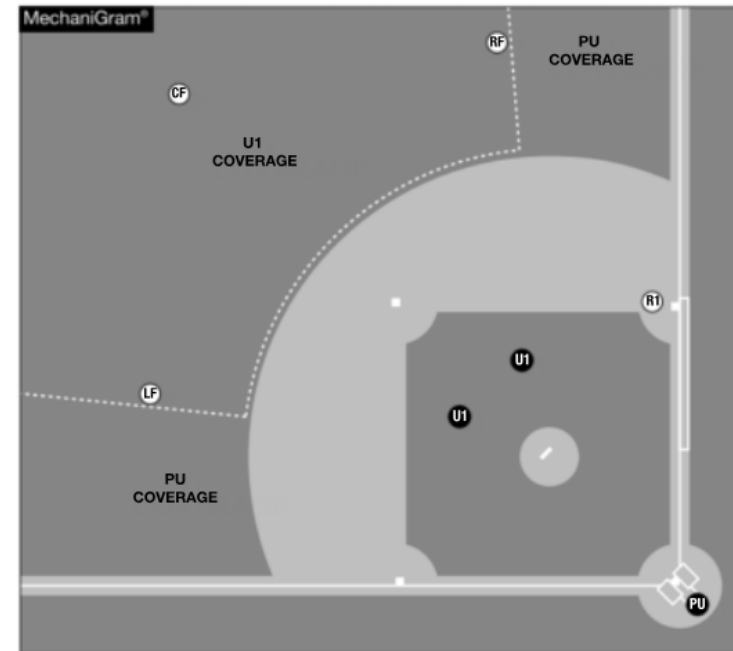
Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has responsibility for all balls on the first- and third-base lines.

U1: Has no fair/foul responsibility down foul lines. But we do require that they help with the batter being hit in the batter's box.

OUTFIELD COVERAGE



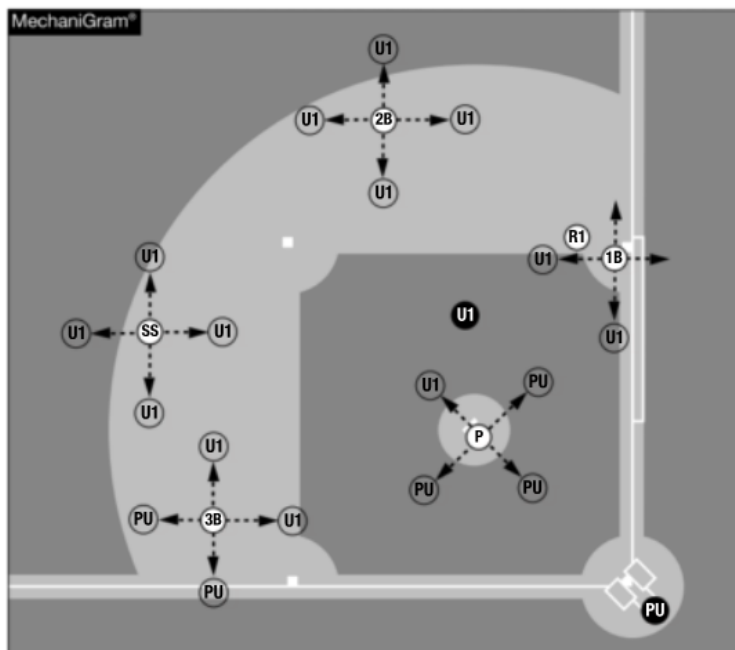
Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has the left fielder (or potentially the shortstop or third baseman) moving toward the left-field foul line and the right fielder (or potentially the second baseman or first baseman) moving toward the right-field foul line.

U1: In the "B" and "C" position, U1 has outfield coverage from the left fielder straight in or straight back to the right fielder straight in or straight back. That area is commonly known as the "V."

INFIELD CATCH COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the third baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
3. By the first baseman moving back or toward the foul line.

U1 has catches:

1. By all infielders moving toward the middle of the field.
2. By the shortstop moving in all directions.
3. By the second baseman moving in all directions.
4. By the third baseman moving in.
5. By the first baseman moving in.

Crew of Two: Runner on First

General Information

Initial Position: U1 will start in the "B" position. However, it is important to be aware of several factors that might cause you to adjust from the basic starting position. Among those factors:

Game situation: Is a bunt in order? Adjust forward a step or two. When a bunt does occur, it will be easier to move into position and prepare for a play at first base; if the bunt is missed and a pickoff throw goes to first, again it will be easier to move into position. Is the game one-sided? That means conservative base running, few steals and almost no bunting, so you can move back one or two steps from your normal position. That will make it easier to set and adjust when a tag play develops at second base.

Defensive tendencies: If the pitcher (in particular, a left-hander) has a good pickoff move, you may want to adjust forward a step or two toward the plate. On a pickoff play, that will open the angle between your line of sight and the runner's return path to first base. Make the same adjustment, although not by as many steps, if the catcher makes pickoff throws himself.

The runner: If R1 is a recognized base stealer or if the situation seems right for a steal, or if the defense is not attempting to hold the runner on, adjust back from your normal position.

The batter: For your safety, if B1 is an unusually strong, left-handed pull hitter, consider adjusting back a step. That will give you more time to react to a ball batted in your direction. You'll rarely be hurt by that step because the kind of power hitter we're discussing rarely has a runner steal in front of him. Coaches don't want to "take the bat out of his hand."

Potential plays: PU and U1 share responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches. U1 will have a tough time seeing if a right-handed pitcher stops since U1 is in the "B" position.

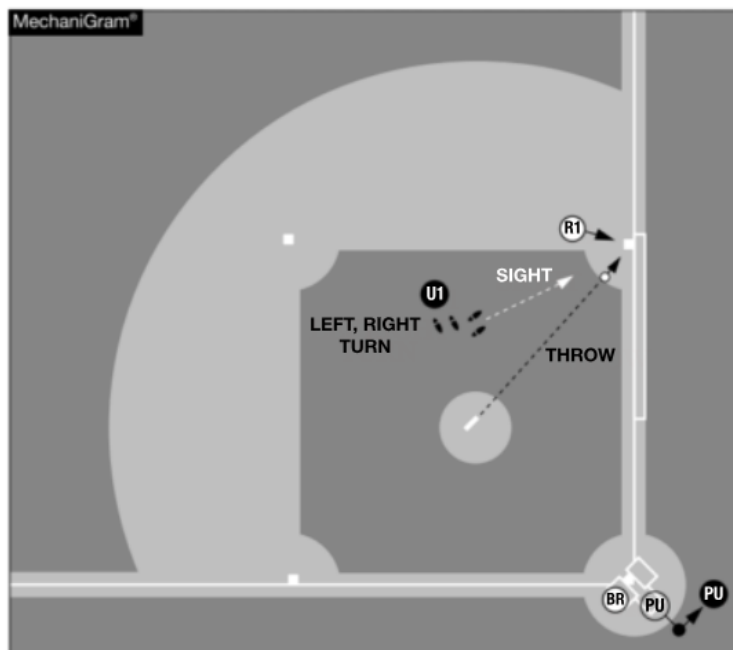
PU is also responsible for:

1. Calling the pitch
2. All fair-foul calls
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. Slides at second base on potential double plays
5. R1 advancing from first to third on any batted ball to the outfield

U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pick off attempt at first base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by your partner) on a checked swing
3. Stolen base attempt by R1
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield
5. Plays at first, second and third on batted balls in the infield
6. Plays on R1 at second or on BR at first or second on base hits
7. Plays on R1 or BR at any base if PU has to cover a fair/foul down the right-field line

PICKOFF AT FIRST



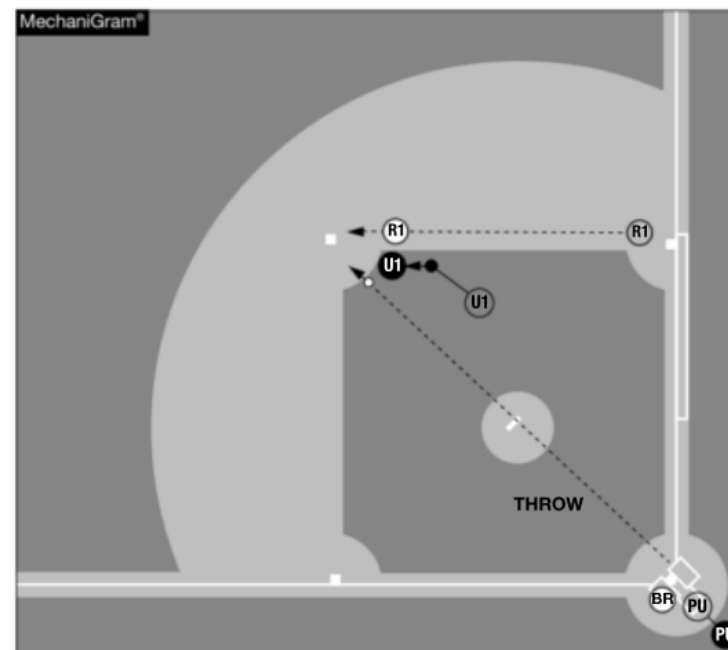
Action on the field: Before pitching, the pitcher attempts to pick off the runner at first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Watches the pitcher for potential balks then takes a step out from behind the catcher to observe the action or in case ball is overthrown.

U1: Watches the pitcher for potential balks before throwing. Once the pickoff attempt has started, U1 should take a quick step with his left foot and turn and step with the right foot at the same time to square up to the bag. Be stopped when F3 tags R1. If R1 is out or safe on a close play, take two or three steps after the tag while making the call to give the appearance that you were closer to the play.

STEAL OF SECOND



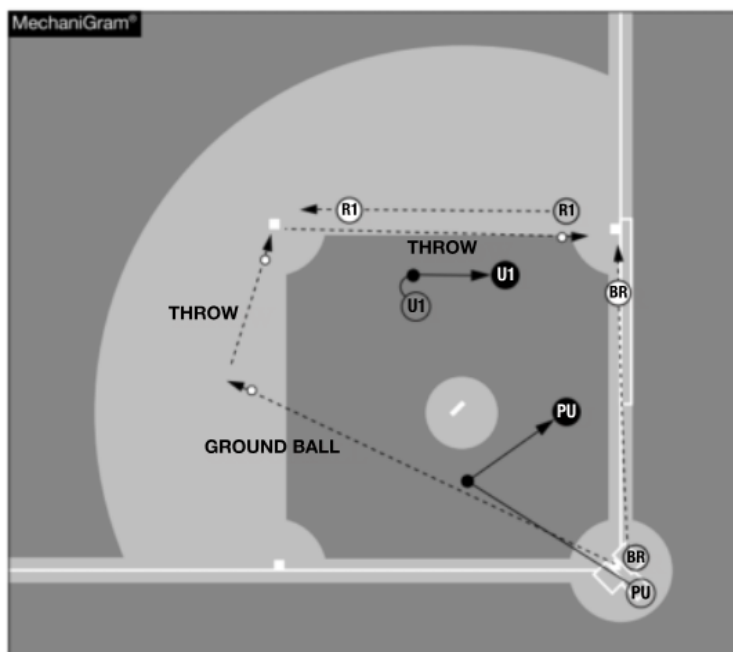
Action on the field: The batter swings and misses at the pitch as R1 attempts to steal second base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Signals the swinging strike without taking his focus off the play at hand. Ensures the batter does not interfere with the catcher's throw and that the catcher does not obstruct the batter's swing. Steps out as needed to observe the play.

U1: Takes a backward step or two as the throw is released from the catcher. Keeps eye on the ball and turns as the ball passes U1. Comes to a hands-on-knee set to see the play at second base. If the play is a swipe tag out, ensure the fielder retains possession of the ball before making the out call. If the runner is safe, no delay is necessary.

GROUND BALL TO THE INFIELD



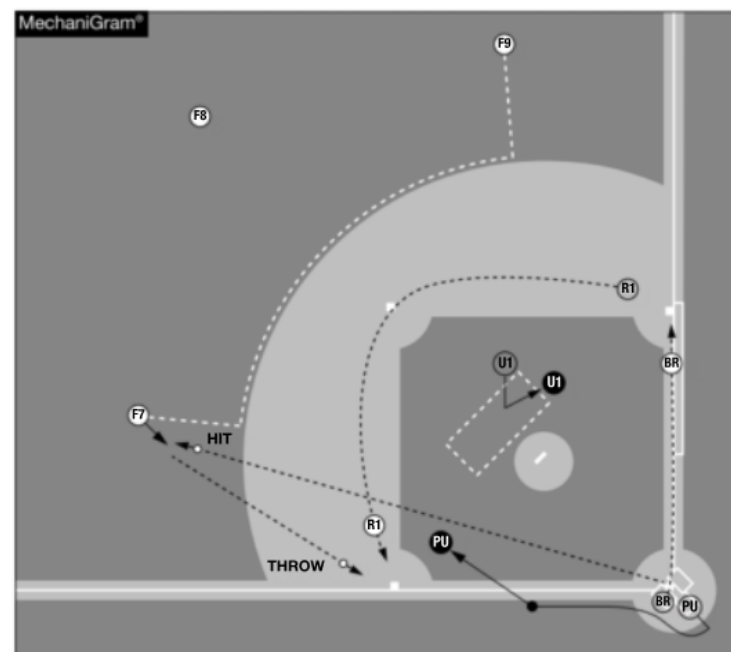
Action on the field: Double-play ground ball to the shortstop, with a throw to second base followed by a throw to first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves to the third-base side of the pitcher's mound to assist U1 on the slide at second base by R1. PU has secondary responsibility for assisting U1 on a swipe tag and/or pulled foot at first base. On any batted ball within the plate area or near the first-base line, PU must remain with the batter-runner to observe him running within the running lane.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on plays at first or second base, including a "drift" toward first on a potential double play.

BASE HIT TO THE OUTFIELD



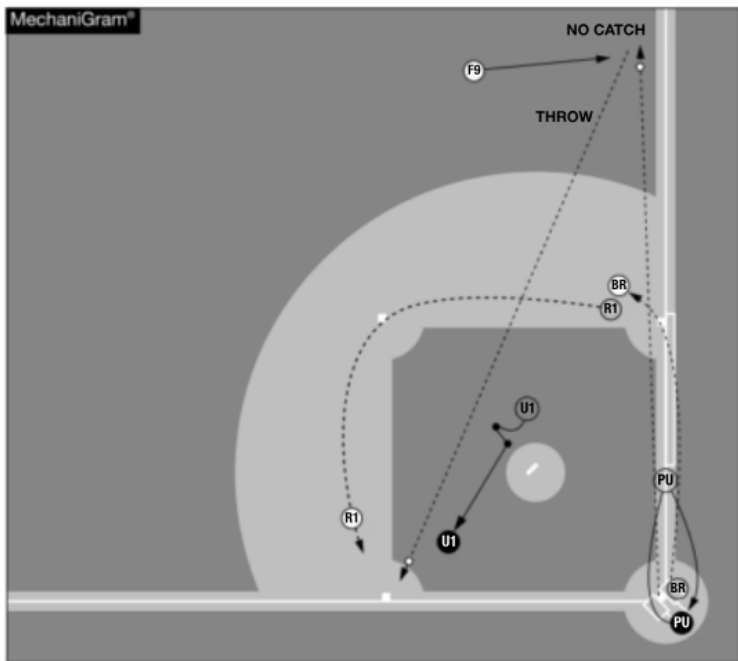
Action on the field: A clean hit to left field, no catch; R1 advances to third base, drawing a throw there.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves halfway toward third. Reads R1 and the ball and when it appears both will arrive at third base at the same time, communicates to U1 that PU has the play at third and moves into the cutout for the play at third base on R1. In the case of an overthrow, PU retreats to home for all possible plays at the plate.

U1: Moves into the working area and reacts to the play. Has all plays at first and second base.

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD, NO CATCH, PU STAYS ON THE LINE



Action on the field: Deep fly ball along the right-field foul line, no catch; PU remains along the line; R1 advances toward third base, drawing a throw there; the batter-runner rounds first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Must remain near the foul line to rule on fair/foul and catch/no catch. PU will communicate to U1 that PU is "on the line" and will not have normal rotation coverage.

U1: Has any plays that develop at first, second and third base. U1 must not overcommit to the play at third base in case of a subsequent play on BR at either first or second base.

Crew of Two: Runners on First and Second

General Information

Initial Position: U1 will start in the “C” position. However, it is important to be aware of several factors that might cause you to adjust from the basic starting position.

Player request: Frequently, in position C you will obstruct the runner's or shortstop's view of the pitcher or the plate. Before a player asks you to move, and you always should, consider which direction. Moving forward or back a step alters your position in the player's view and doesn't cut your angle as much as moving right or left.

Game situation: Is a bunt in order? Adjust forward a step or two. When a bunt does occur, it will be easier to move into position and prepare for a play at first or third base; if the bunt is missed and a pickoff throw goes to first, again it will be easier to move into position. Remind each other of an infield fly situation.

Defensive tendencies: A pickoff throw to first by the pitcher is unlikely, although not impossible. However, many aggressive catchers like to throw behind the runner at first. If the defense has a reputation for unusual plays or the catcher is unusually aggressive, you may adjust forward a step or two. Resist moving toward the center of the infield, because that will put you in the line of a throw to second base.

The runners: Steals of third and/or double steals are not as common, but still happen a lot in high school baseball. Once the pitcher has committed to pitch, glance back at R2 to see if he's breaking for third. If you expect a steal, adjust forward from your normal position to create a better angle at third base.

The batter: If the batter is a right-handed hitter, consider adjusting back a step. That will give you more time to react to a ball batted in your direction. Especially if that batter is a power hitter, his coach will be less likely to steal and “take the bat out of his hand.”

Potential plays: PU and U1 share responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches. U1 will have a tough time seeing if a left-handed pitcher stops since U1 is in the "C" position. And while either umpire may call an infield fly, it is better if PU makes the call since he has the wide view of the field.

PU is also responsible for:

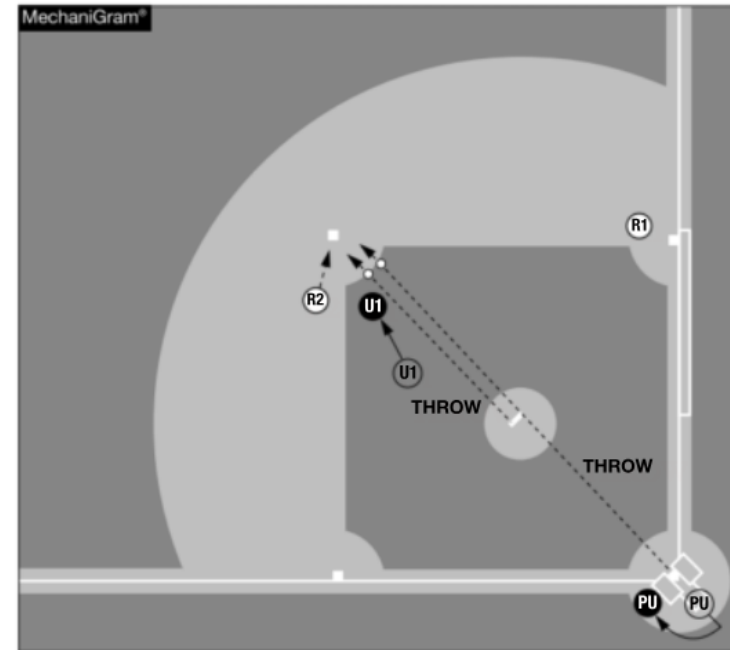
1. Calling the pitch
2. All fair-foul calls
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. Slides at second or third base on potential double plays
5. R2 advancing from second to third on any caught fly ball in the outfield

U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempts at first or second base by the pitcher or catcher

2. Help (when asked by your partner) on a checked swing
3. Stolen base attempts by R1 and/or R2
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield
5. Plays at any base on batted balls in the infield
6. Plays at any base (except home) on base hits
7. Plays on R2 at third if PU has to cover a caught fly ball down the right-field line

PICKOFF THROW TO SECOND



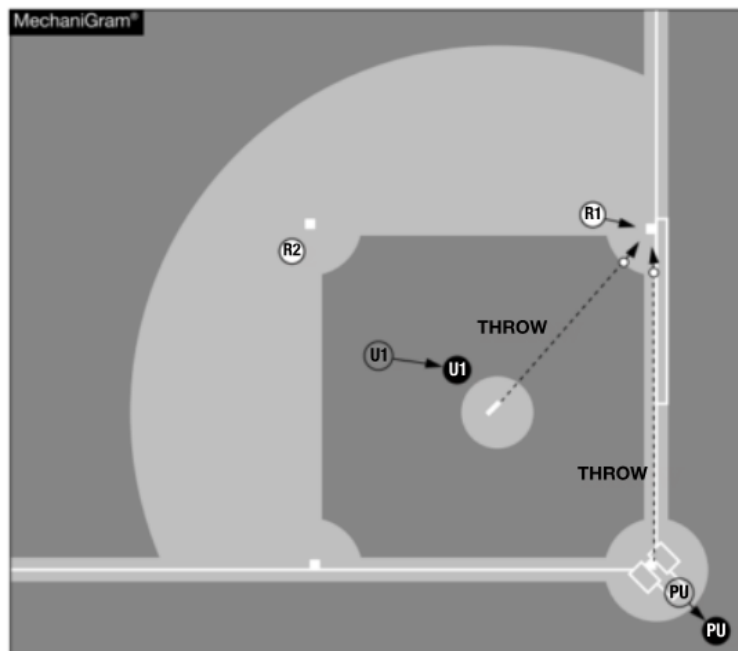
Action on the field: Before pitching, the pitcher attempts to pick off the runner at second base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Watches the pitcher for potential balks then takes a step out from behind the catcher to observe the action.

U1: Watches the pitcher for potential balks before throwing. Once the pickoff attempt has started, U1 should take a quick backward step and turn with the ball as it passes him toward the fielder. If possible, U1 should come to a hands-on-knee set to see the play at second base. If the play is a swipe tag out, ensure the fielder retains possession of the ball before making the out call. If the runner is safe, no delay is necessary.

PICKOFF THROW TO FIRST



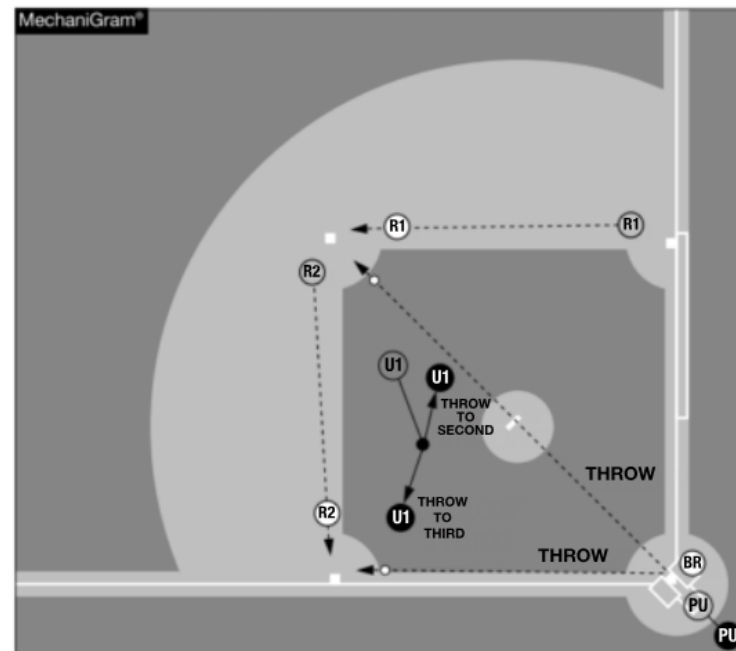
Action on the field: Before pitching, the pitcher attempts to pick off the runner at second base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Watches the pitcher for potential balks then takes a step out from behind the catcher to observe the action or in case ball is overthrown.

U1: Watches the pitcher for potential balks before throwing. Once the pickoff attempt has started, U1 should take a quick step with his left foot and turn and step with the right foot at the same time to square up to the bag. Be stopped when F3 tags R1. If R1 is out or safe on a close play, take a step or two after the tag while making the call to give the appearance that you were closer to the play. Don't overcommit toward first in case F3 makes a snap throw to second or R2 attempts to advance to third.

DOUBLE STEAL



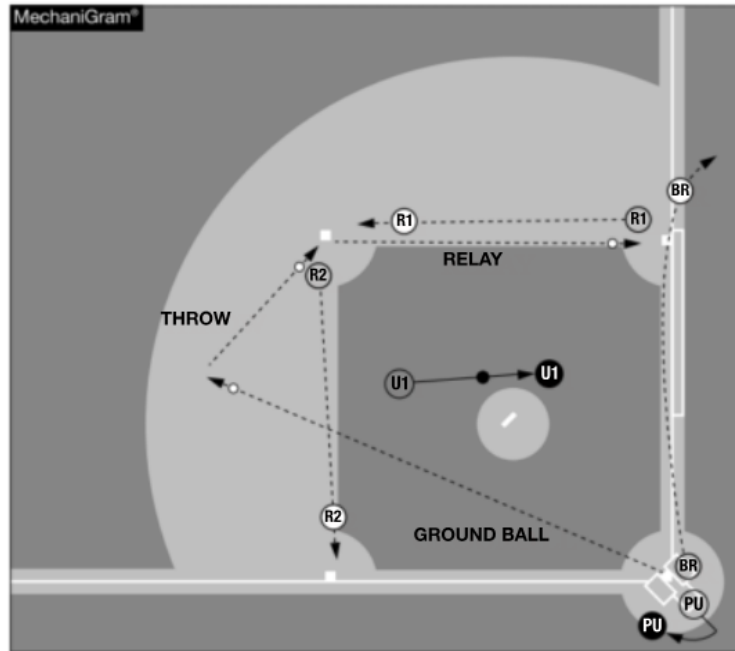
Action on the field: The batter swings and misses at the pitch as R2 attempts to steal third and R1 attempts to steal second base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Signals the swinging strike without taking his focus off the play at hand. Ensures the batter does not interfere with the catcher's throw and the catcher does not obstructs the batter's attempt to swing. They have force-play-slide responsibilities.

U1: When the runners start to steal, takes several steps forward and reads F2's throw. If F2 throws to third, step toward third. If F2 throws to second, move back toward second, watching the ball and turning as it passes you. If either runner is out or safe on a close play, take a step or two after the tag while making the call to give the appearance that you were closer to the play. Don't overcommit toward that call in case the fielder makes a snap throw to the other base.

GROUND BALL TO THE INFIELD



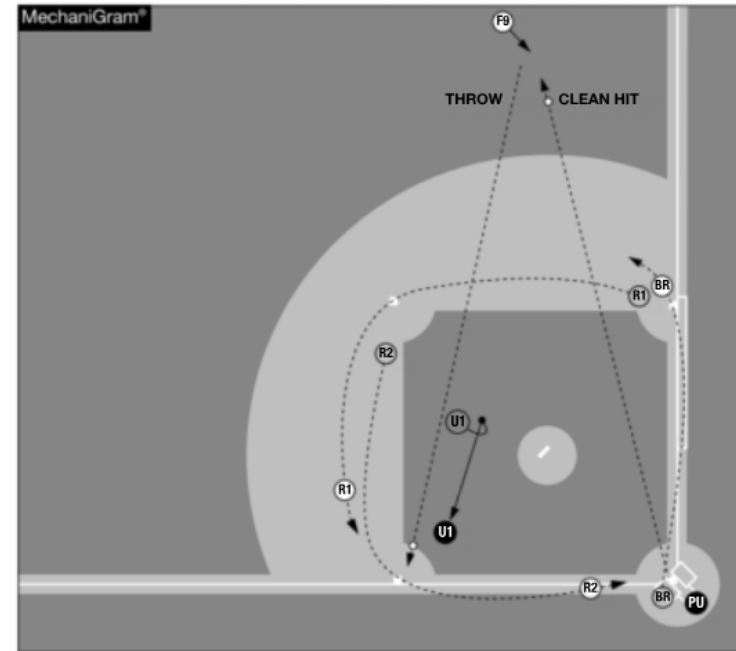
Action on the field: Ground ball to the shortstop, who attempts to start a double play by throwing to second to retire R1. The relay then goes to first in an attempt to retire BR.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves to a position to assist U1 on the slide. Cannot move into the infield since there is potential for R2 to try and score. Must also observe R2's touch of third. PU has secondary responsibility for assisting U1 on a swipe tag or pulled foot at first base.

U1: When ball is hit, moves toward the back of the mound to be in position for play at second base. As throw is released from second to first, makes the initial out call while drifting toward first. Be set for both plays. Don't overcommit to first base as there might be a snap throw across the infield to third base.

CLEAN HIT TO THE OUTFIELD



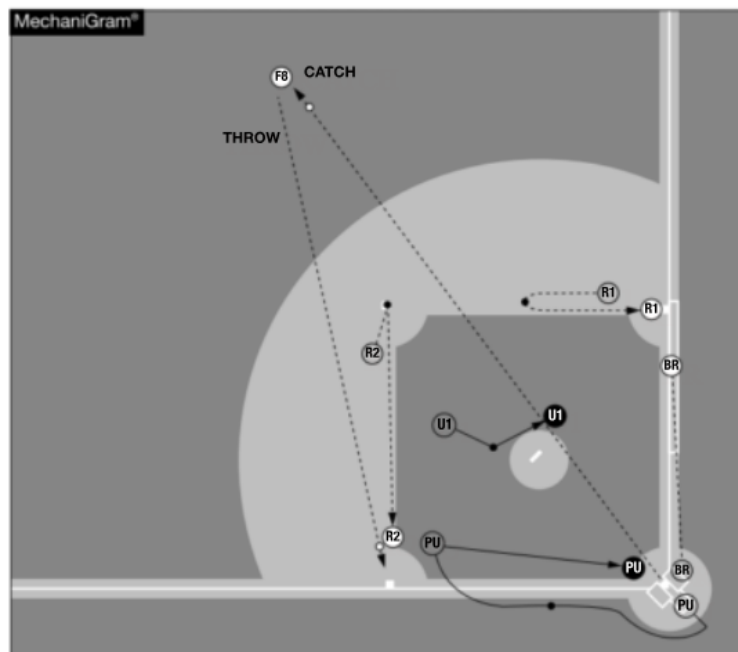
Action on the field: A clean hit to right field; R2 advances toward the plate; R1 advances toward third base, drawing a throw there; the batter-runner advances to first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Observes R2's touch of the plate and all base touches at third base (except BR). PU moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

U1: Observes base touches at first and second base on all runners and at third on BR. U1 moves to a position to rule on all plays on the bases. Don't overcommit to any one base because of a possible second play at another base.

FLY BALL TO CENTER FIELD, CATCH



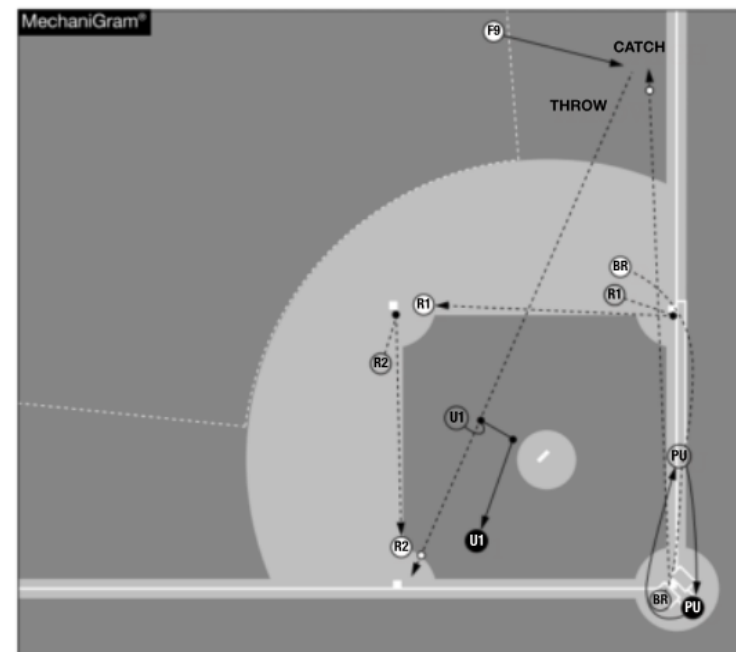
Action on the field: With zero or one out, a routine fly ball caught by the center fielder; R2 tags at second and draws a throw to third base; R1 returns to first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves halfway up the line toward third base. When R2 attempts to advance, PU moves into the third-base cutout for the play there. If a play develops at third base and R2 then attempts to advance to the plate, PU must retreat in fair territory for any play at the plate. If the ball is not caught, PU returns to the plate for all plays there.

U1: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch. If the catch is routine, U1 can easily move back for an angle on both runners as they tag up. If the catch is not routine, move forward for the catch, sacrificing the best angles on the tags. U1 then moves into a position for any plays at first or second base. If the ball is not caught, U1 moves to a position to rule on any play on the bases.

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD, CATCH



Action on the field: Fly ball down the right-field line caught by the right fielder; R2 tags up at second and draws a throw to third base; R1 also tags up and advances to second base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves to the best position possible to view the fair/foul and catch/no catch. PU must communicate to U1 that PU is "on the line" thus notifying U1 that PU will not be at third base for any play there. PU returns to the plate for any plays there.

U1: With no responsibility for the catch/no catch, U1 retreats to the back of the mound and observes R1 and R2 tagging up. U1 moves to a position to cover all plays on the bases.

Crew of Two: Bases Loaded

General Information

Initial Position: U1 will start in the “C” position. There will be the very rare attempted triple steal, but you should not adjust for that slight possibility. With bases loaded, there will also be fewer pickoffs, so you might be able to work a step or two deeper than normal. However, you must still be ready for pickoff throws from both the pitcher and catcher.

Potential plays: PU and U1 share responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches. U1 will have a tough time seeing if a left-handed pitcher stops since U1 is in the “C” position. And while either umpire may call an infield fly, it is better if PU makes the call since he has the wide view of the field.

PU is also responsible for:

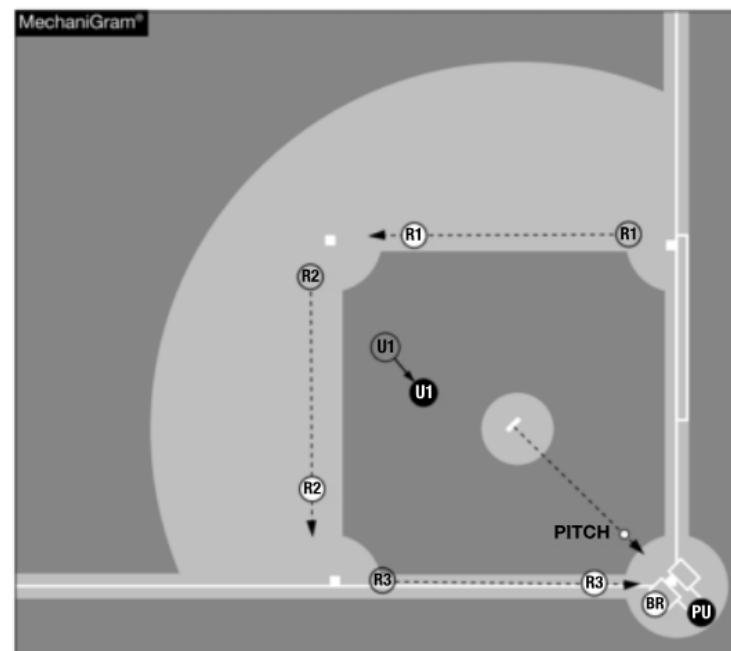
1. Calling the pitch
2. All fair-foul calls
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. Observing R3's tag up if he attempts to advance home on a fly ball
5. Slides at second or third base or at the plate on potential double plays
6. Infield fly responsibilities

U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempts at any base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by your partner) on a checked swing
3. Stolen base attempts by R1 and/or R2
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield
5. Plays at any base on batted balls

CREW OF TWO: BASES LOADED

STEAL OF HOME



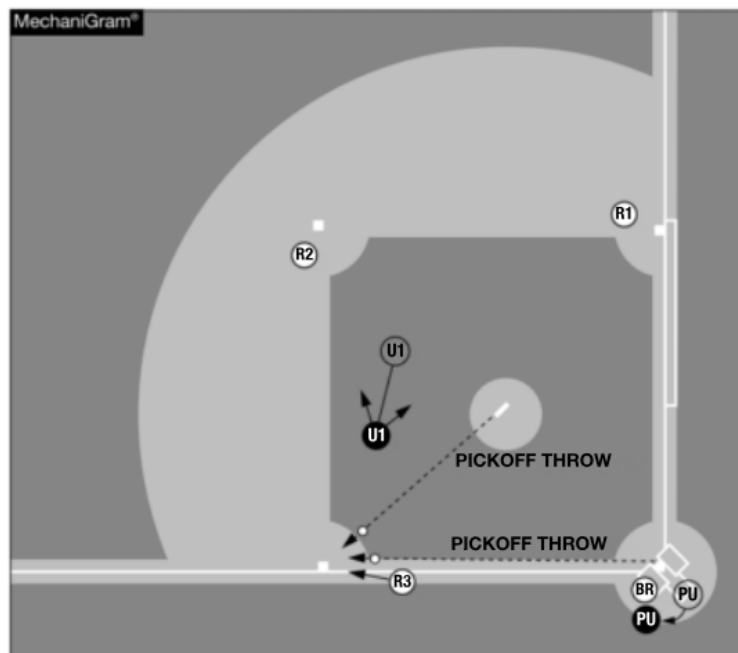
Action on the field: All three runners attempt to steal bases.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Must ensure the pitcher did not commit a balk when the runner broke from third. Must judge whether the pitch is a ball or strike before judging the play at the plate. Must be aware of potential interference by the batter or obstruction by the catcher.

U1: Moves several steps forward to be in position to rule on potential secondary plays at second or third base. Observes the play at the plate and assists if PU asks for help on a potential dropped ball on the tag play at the plate.

PICKOFF THROW TO THIRD



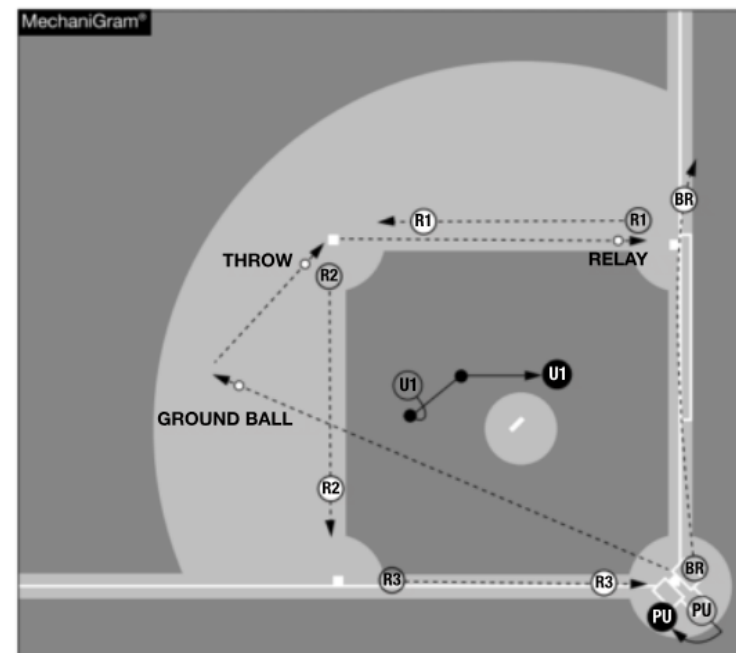
Action on the field: Before pitching, the pitcher attempts to pick off the runner at third base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Watches the pitcher for potential balks then takes a step out from behind the catcher to observe the action or in case ball is overthrown.

U1: Watches the pitcher for potential balks before throwing. Once the pickoff attempt has started, U1 should take a quick step toward the mound to open up the angle for the tag play at third base. Comes to a hands-on-knee set to see the play at third base. If the play is a swipe tag out, ensure the fielder retains possession of the ball before making the out call. If the runner is safe, no delay is necessary. Do not overcommit to third base in case there is a secondary throw at another base.

GROUND BALL TO THE INFIELD



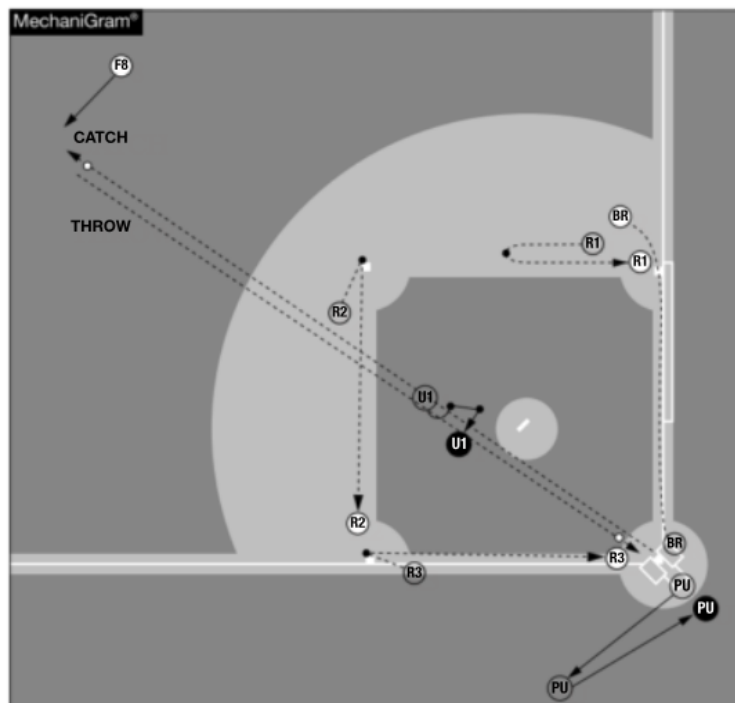
Action on the field: The batter hits a ground ball to F6, who throws to second for the first out. F4 then turns and throws to first for the second out. R3 advances home and R2 advances to third.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Because R3 is headed home, PU cannot move to the middle of the infield. PU observes the action, in particular the slide at second base. If there is interference on the slide, PU must step into the infield as the call is made to make it appear he was closer to the play than he was.

U1: When the ball is hit, takes one step forward and turns with the ball. As the throw heads toward second base, U1 steps toward first base. U1 gets into a standing-set position for the play at second, then moves one more step toward first while calling the play at second. U1 then gets set for the play at first. If R1 was safe at second, moves back toward second after play ends and calls R1 safe again to ensure players knew call. Do not overcommit to first base in case there is a subsequent play at another base.

FLY BALL TO LEFT-CENTER FIELD, CATCH



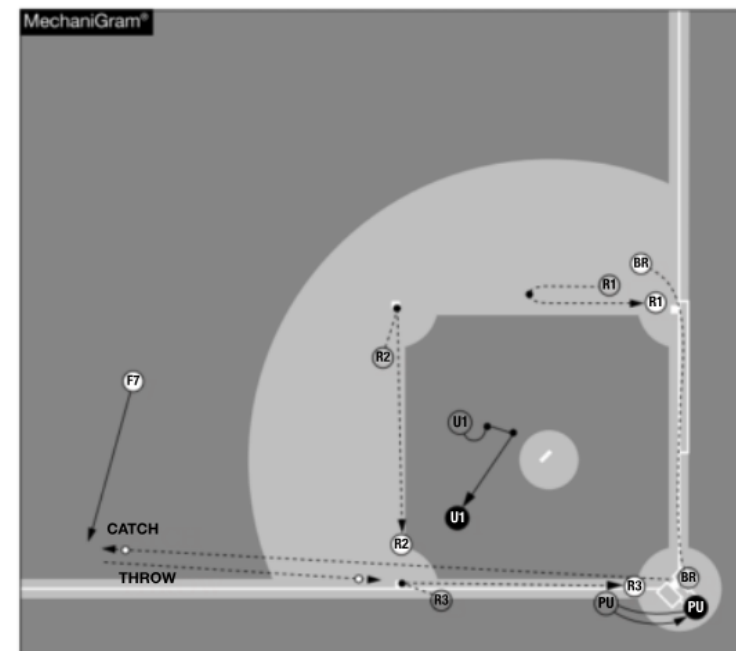
Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the center fielder; R3 tags up at third and draws a throw to the plate; R2 tags up at second and advances toward third base; R1 retreats to first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves to a position to best view R3's tag up at third base and returns to the plate for all plays there.

U1: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch. U1 reads the runners and throw and moves to a position to rule on all plays on the bases. Has tag up by R2 and R1.

FLY BALL DOWN THE LEFT-FIELD LINE, CATCH



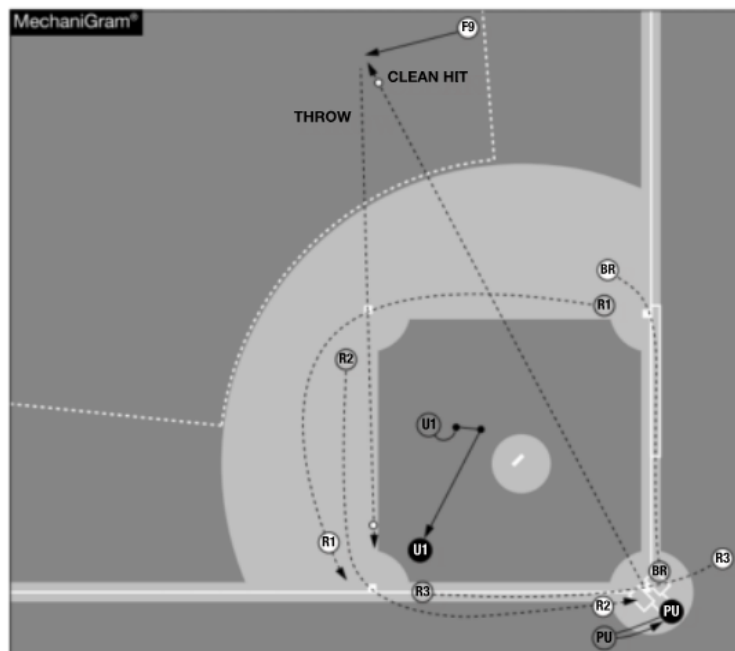
Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the left fielder near the foul line; R3 tags up and draws a throw to the plate; R2 tags up and advances toward third base; R1 retreats toward first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves to the best position possible to view the fair/foul and catch/no catch. Also observes R3's tag up. PU returns to the plate for all plays.

U1: Retreats and observes tag ups of R2 and R1. U1 reads the runners and throw and moves to a position to rule on all plays on the bases.

CLEAN HIT TO THE OUTFIELD



Action on the field: A clean hit to right-center field; R3 advances to the plate; R2 advances to the plate; R1 advances toward third base, drawing a throw there; the batter-runner rounds first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Observes R3's touching of the plate and the third-base touch of R2 (and R1 if advances home). PU moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

U1: Observes base touches at first and second on all runners and third base by the batter-runner. U1 moves to a position behind the mound and adjusts to rule on any play on the bases.

Crew of Two: Runners on First and Third

General Information

Initial Position: U1 will start in the "B" position.

Game situation: Because so much can happen, staying in the "B" position is best, without adjusting forward or backward. This runner configuration is probably the most challenging for a base umpire because so much can happen. Invariably, the offense will try to steal second, and the defense, through a series of real and feint pickoff moves will try to prevent it. And when a throw does go to second, R3 will break for home.

Potential plays: PU and U1 share responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches. U1 will have a tough time seeing if a right-handed pitcher stops since U1 is in the "B" position.

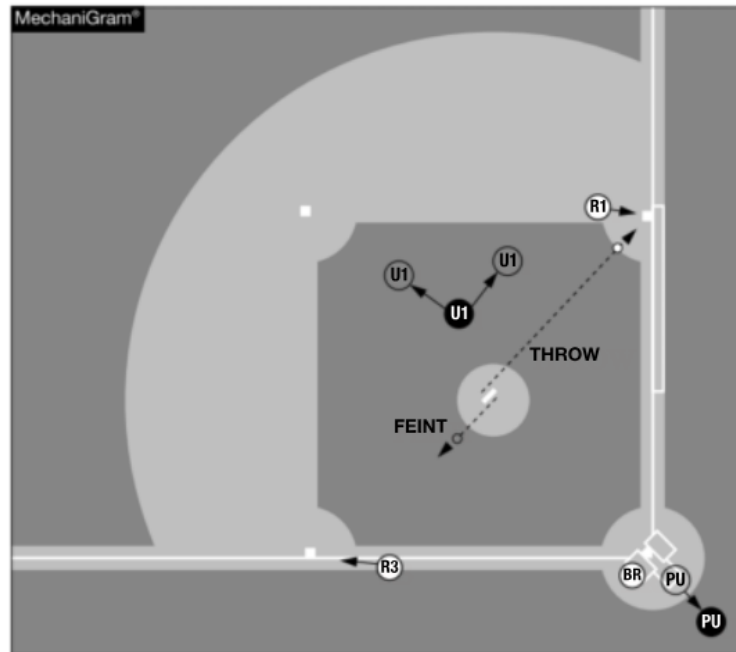
PU is also responsible for:

1. Calling the pitch
2. All fair-foul calls
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. R3's tag at third base on a fly ball
5. Slides at second base on potential double plays
6. R1 advancing from first to third on any batted ball to the outfield

U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pick off attempt at first base or third base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by your partner) on a checked swing
3. Stolen base attempt by R1 (and the accompanying trick plays)
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield
5. Plays at any base on batted balls in the infield
6. Plays on R1 at second or on BR at any base on base hits
7. Plays on R1 at third base if PU has to cover a fair/foul or catch/no catch down the right-field line

THIRD-TO-FIRST MOVE



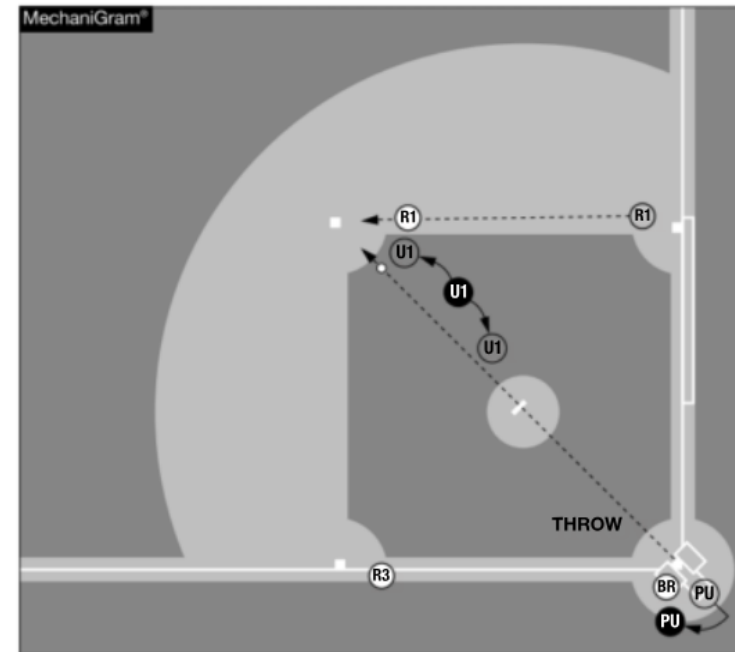
Action on the field: The pitcher fakes to third before turning and throwing to first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Watches the pitcher for potential balks then takes a step out from behind the catcher to observe the action or in case ball is overthrown.

U1: Watches the pitcher for potential balks before throwing. Once the pickoff attempt has started, U1 steps in as F1 fakes to third. U1 then takes another step as F1 throws to first. Be stopped when F3 tags R1. If R1 is out or safe on a close play, take two or three steps after the tag while making the call to give the appearance that you were closer to the play. Don't overcommit toward first in case F3 makes a snap throw to third or home. Be wary of following too close to a rundown involving R1, since the defense will most likely throw home if R3 attempts to advance.

STEAL OF SECOND



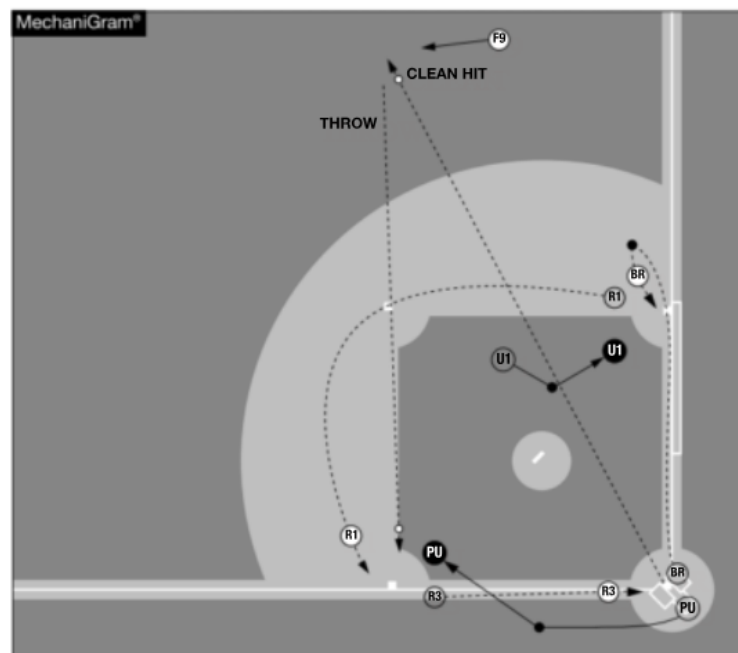
Action on the field: The batter swings and misses at the pitch as R1 attempts to steal second base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Signals the swinging strike without taking his focus off the play at hand. Ensures the batter does not interfere with the catcher's throw. The likelihood of interference is increased when the catcher has made a poor throw.

U1: Observes the pitch and initial throw to second. Turns with the ball and gets stopped for the play at second base. Don't overcommit into the second-base cutout because the defense will try a number of plays to prevent R3 from scoring. The catcher could throw to third or the middle infielder could cut across and cut off the throw. U1 must be ready for the tag of R1 at second, R1 getting into a rundown between first and second or the defense making a snap throw in order to retire R3 at either third or home.

CLEAN HIT TO THE OUTFIELD



Action on the field: Clean hit to right-center field, no catch; R3 advances toward the plate; R1 advances toward third base and draws a throw there; BR rounds first and returns there.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Reads R1 and the ball and moves halfway up the third-base line, while observing R3 touch the plate. When it is apparent that the ball and R1 will arrive at third base, PU moves into the third-base cutout for the play.

U1: Observes base touches at first and second base and is responsible if BR advances toward third base.

Crew of Two: Runner on Second

General Information

Initial Position: U1 will start in the “C” position.

Player request: Frequently, in position C you will obstruct the runner’s or shortstop’s view of the pitcher or the plate. Before a player asks you to move, and you always should, consider which direction. Moving forward or back a step alters your position in the player’s view and doesn’t cut your angle as much as moving right or left.

Game situation: Is a bunt in order? Adjust forward a step or two. When a bunt does occur, it will be easier to move into position and prepare for a play at either first or third base; if the bunt is missed and a throw goes to second, you will have plenty of time to move toward the second-base cutout. If the game is one-sided, you can expect a more conservative offensive approach and move back one or two steps from your normal position.

The runner: A straight steal of third is not very likely, but does happen more in high school baseball than at more advanced levels. Once the pitcher has committed to pitch, glance back at R2 to see if he’s breaking for third. If you expect a steal, adjust forward from your normal position to create a better angle at third base.

The batter: If BR is a right-handed power hitter, you might move a step backward. Moving back will give you more time to react to a ball batted in your direction.

Potential plays: PU and U1 share responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches. U1 will have a tough time seeing if a left-handed pitcher stops since U1 is in the “C” position.

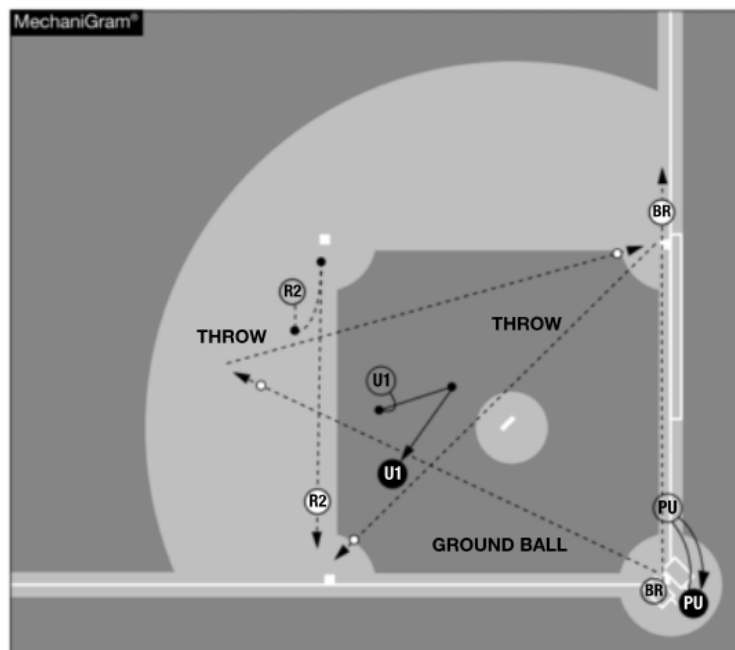
PU is also responsible for:

1. Calling the pitch
2. All fair-foul calls
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. R3’s touching third base if he attempts to score
5. Assisting U1 on pulled foot/swipe tags at first base.

U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at second base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by your partner) on a checked swing
3. Stolen base attempt by R2
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield
5. Plays at any base involving R2 or BR

PLAYS WITHIN THE INFIELD



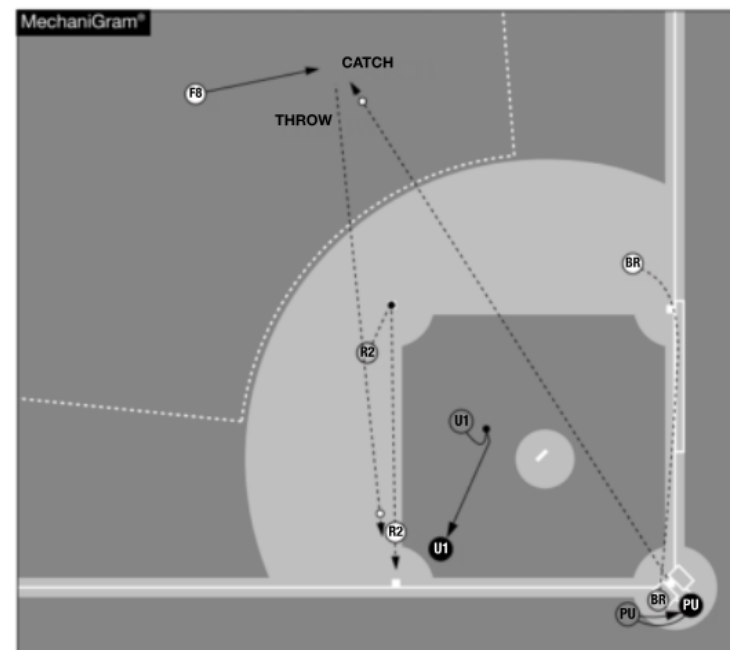
Action on the field: Ground ball to shortstop with a throw to first base; R2 advances toward third base on the throw and draws a throw to third base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Observes the action at first base to assist on swipe tag or pulled foot by the first baseman and then returns to the plate for any play there.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on all plays at first, second or third base.

FLY BALL TO THE OUTFIELD, CATCH



Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the center fielder; R2 tags up and advances toward third, drawing a throw there.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves out from behind the catcher and observes the action. PU is responsible for all plays at the plate.

U1: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch. U1 observes R2's tag up. U1 moves to a position to rule on all plays on the bases.

Crew of Two: Runners on Second and Third

General Information

Initial Position: U1 will start in the “C” position. Since there is no runner on first base and no reasonable possibility of a steal of third base, you can work one or two steps deeper than normal in most instances. From the deeper position, you are still in good position to rule on pickoffs at either second or third base.

Game situation: If the infield is playing “in,” adjust your position left or right to allow the shortstop plenty of room to field a batted ball. With the infielders playing in, there is little chance of a pickoff throw.

Potential plays: PU and U1 share responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches. U1 will have a tough time seeing if a left-handed pitcher stops since U1 is in the “C” position.

PU is also responsible for:

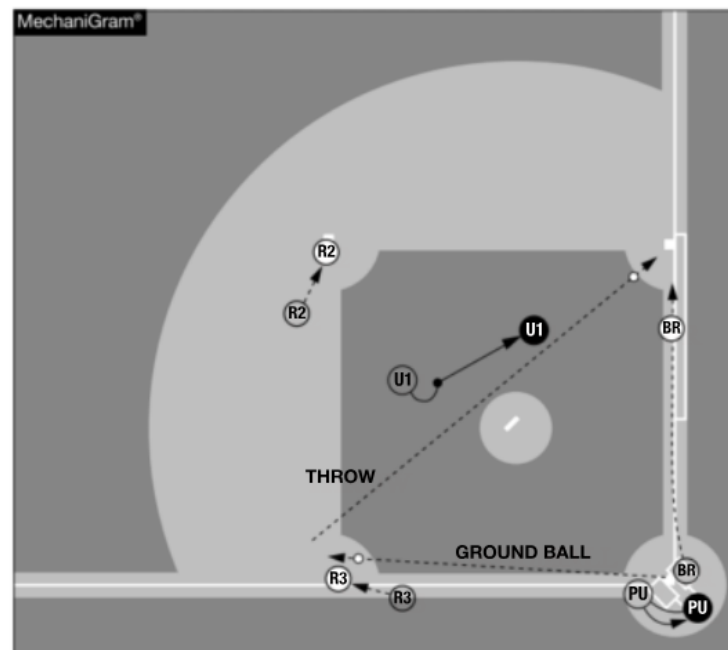
1. Calling the pitch
2. All fair-foul calls
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. R3's tagup at third base on a fly ball
5. R2's touching third base if he attempts to score on a base hit
6. Any runner touching the plate and any plays at the plate

U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at second or third base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by your partner) on a checked swing
3. Stolen base attempt by R2
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield
5. Plays at any base involving R2 or BR

CREW OF TWO: RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD

GROUND BALL TO THE INFIELD



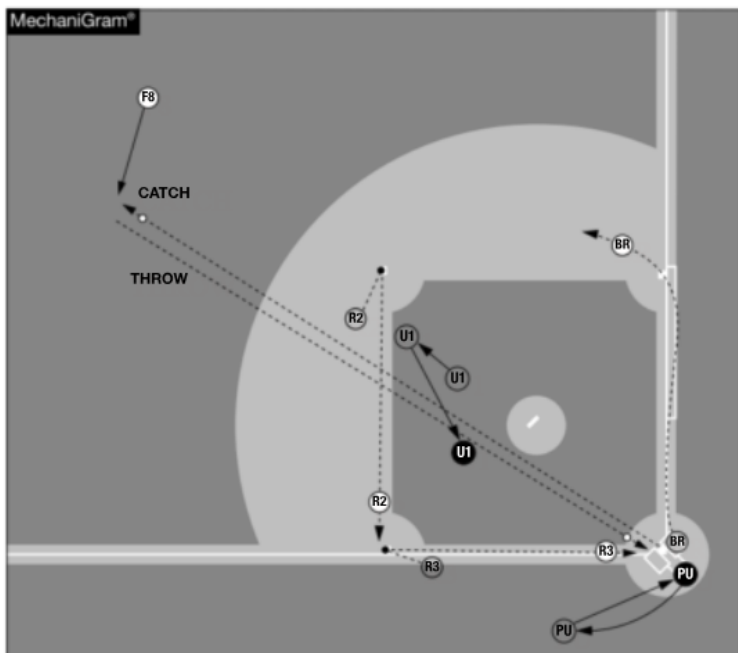
Action on the field: Ground ball to third base with a throw to first base; R3 retreats to third base; R2 retreats to second base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has secondary responsibility for assisting U1 on swipe tag and pulled foot at first base. PU cannot overcommit to first base, because all touches and plays at the plate are also P's responsibility. PU also has all overthrow responsibilities at first base and all running-lane interference responsibilities.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on all plays at first, second or third base. U1 cannot overcommit to first base in case of a second play in the infield once the out is made at first base.

FLY BALL TO LEFT-CENTER FIELD, CATCH



Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the left fielder; R3 tags up and advances toward the plate, drawing a throw there; R2 tags up and advances toward third base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves to the best position possible to observe R3's tag up. PU returns to the plate for all plays there.

U1: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch. U1 observes R2 tagging up. U1 moves into position for all plays on the bases.

Crew of Two: Runner on Third

General Information

Initial Position: U1 will start in the "C" position. Since there is no runner on first base, you can work one or two steps deeper than normal in most instances. From the deeper position, you are still in good position to rule on pickoffs at third base.

Game situation: If the infield is playing "in," adjust your position left or right to allow the shortstop plenty of room to field a batted ball. Since you are working deeper, be ready to move quickly on a batted ball within the infield.

Potential plays: PU and U1 share responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches. U1 will have a tough time seeing if a left-handed pitcher stops since U1 is in the "C" position.

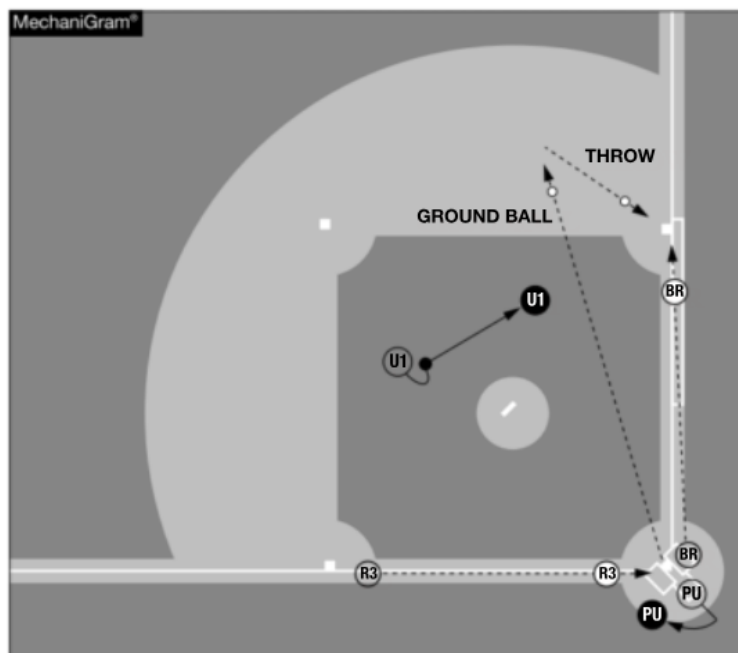
PU is also responsible for:

1. Calling the pitch
2. All fair-foul calls
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. R3's tagup at third base on a fly ball
5. Any runner touching the plate and any plays at the plate

U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at third base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by your partner) on a checked swing
3. Fly balls in your area of the outfield
4. Plays at any base involving any runner

GROUND BALL TO THE INFIELD



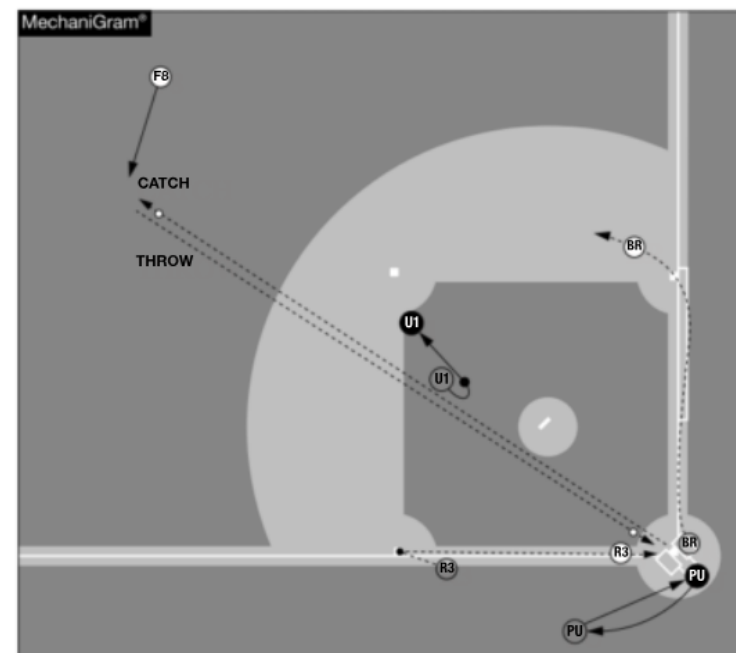
Action on the field: The batter hits a ground ball to the second baseman. R3 heads toward home on the play.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Steps out from behind the catcher and observes R3 touch the plate. Provides minimal assistance on potential swipe tag/pulled foot at first base.

U1: Moves toward the mound and gets set for the play at first base. Do not cross into the path of a fielder's potential throw home.

FLY BALL TO THE OUTFIELD



Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the center fielder; R3 tags up and advances toward the plate, drawing a throw there.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves to the best position possible to view R3's tag up and the catch. PU returns to the plate for all plays there.

U1: Moves to the best position for the catch/no catch. U1 has all plays on the bases, including any throw back into third base.

Part 8

Crew of Three

Basic Principles

1. **Box 'em in.** Having the third umpire often allows umpires the luxury of having one umpire in front of a runner and one umpire behind a runner — but not always!
2. **Communication is crucial.** You have to know where your partners are — and what they're doing — in order to function as a unit. Communicate both with signals and verbally.
3. **Infield umpires do not go out.** In college and higher level games, sometimes an umpire positioned in the middle of the diamond may cross the basepaths and head into the outfield for better coverage. However, that assumes that the other two umpires can read the situation and adjust. In high school play, it is better for umpires not to go out in that situation.

Basic Outfield Coverage

1. Do not go out automatically. On fly balls, rely on the same "Pause, read and react" concept as in the two-umpire system. When you make the decision to go out, go hard and get a good angle. Be stopped when the play occurs.
2. When to go out. Four conditions that require an umpire to go to the outfield from the "A" and "D" positions:
 1. The outfielder turns and begins to run toward the outfield fence (possible home run).
 2. Multiple players converging on a fly ball.
 3. A catch being made below the waist.
 4. Outfielder moving toward the foul line and possible fair/foul decision.
3. When in doubt, go out. If in doubt, go out on fly balls in your coverage area.
 1. If you are going out, go out hard.
 2. Leave no doubt in your partners' minds about whether or not you are going out.
 3. Signal your partners by raising your arm if you are going out and verbalize, "I'm going out."
 4. If you are not going out, hold your arm out to your partners with your palm facing them.
 5. If you do not go out, you still maintain responsibility for the catch.
 6. Once you go out, do not return until the play is complete.

CREW OF THREE: BASIC PRINCIPLES

Rotations

When the plate umpire moves to cover third and U1 moves to cover home — a rotation, which occurs only on clean base hits and routine fly balls to the outfield (where no umpire is going out on a trouble ball) — the umpires can time their movements by mirroring the movements of a runner. For example, in a rotation with U1 covering home with a runner on first base, U1 can advance home as R1 advances from second to third.

Overthrows

A. Nobody on base

All overthrows will be taken by PU with the exception of when the crew has rotated and that responsibility will revert to U1, who has rotated to the plate.

B. Runner on first base or first and third

PU will have responsibility for overthrows with the exception of when the crew has rotated and U1 has rotated to the plate. U1 will then have that overthrow. In instances when the crew reverts to two umpires, PU has all overthrows. On plays at third base taken by PU when the crew has reverted to two umpires, the overthrow will be taken from inside as well as the possible play at the plate.

C. Runners on first and second

PU will take all overthrows with the exception of when there is a tag-up rotation and U1 has rotated to the plate. U1 will then assume that responsibility. When the crew reverts to a two-umpire system and PU has a tag play at third base, PU will take that play at third, the overthrow and possible play at the plate from the inside.

D. Runners on second and third, third base only or bases loaded

PU has all overthrow responsibilities.

General Concepts And Terminology

While one may think that adding an umpire to the traditional 2-umpire high school umpiring crew would make each individual umpire's job easier, the opposite is true. For most, 3-umpire mechanics are the most complicated and difficult to master. It is a blend of concepts from both 2-umpire mechanics (which most of us are intimately familiar with) and 4-umpire mechanics (of which many of us have very little knowledge). When working in a 3-umpire crew each umpire **MUST**, before the first pitch to each new batter (or whenever the runners' positions on the bases change), mentally review responsibilities should the ball be put in play. One's pre-pitch mental review should be reinforced by all three members of the crew when they use standardized hand signals to signal each other the proper crew movement on a ball hit to the outfield.

Ideally, 3-umpire mechanics seek to keep one umpire in front of the lead runner always. However, this is not always possible; especially when an umpire goes out to the outfield on a "trouble ball." Like the base umpire in a 2-umpire crew, base umpires in the 3-umpire crew use the "Pause-Read-and-React" technique to determine whether a batted ball to outfield is a "trouble ball" requiring a base umpire to "go out" to the outfield, or whether it is a routine fly ball or clean base hit not requiring an umpire to go out.

When both base umpires start in foul territory (with no runners on base or a runner on third base only), they split the outfield coverage. The first-base umpire has the center fielder straight-in/straight-back all the way to the right-field foul territory. The third-base umpire has the center fielder moving toward left field all the way to left-field foul territory.

When one of the base umpires is in the middle, outfield coverage differs on whether the batted ball is a "trouble ball" or whether it is a routine fly ball or clean base hit. If the batted ball is a trouble ball, the wing umpire (the umpire on the foul line) has the center fielder straight-in/straight-back all the way to the foul territory on that umpire's side of the field. The umpire in the middle has the "wedge" between the center fielder moving toward the open side (the side of the field with no base umpire on the foul line) to the wing fielder on the open side. The PU takes the wing outfielder moving toward the foul line. However, if the batted ball is not a trouble ball but rather is a routine fly or clean base hit in the "V" (the area of the outfield between the left fielder and right fielder) no umpire will go out and the umpire in the middle will be responsible for the catch/no catch.

When one of the base umpires goes out to the outfield on a trouble ball, the remaining two umpires (the PU and the other base umpire) will revert to 2-umpire. Reverting to 2-umpire is a common phrase used by umpire instructors to teach 3-umpire mechanics. When a crew reverts to 2-umpire it means that the two umpires remaining in the infield will use 2-umpire mechanics to cover the bases. This usually means the remaining base umpire will "open-up" in the working area behind the mound and cover any play at most (if not all) the bases. The PU, instead of immediately busting into the third-base cutout as the base umpire would on a rotation (see the next paragraph) would use the 2-umpire mechanic of telling the remaining base umpire, "I have third if the runner comes," and then only bust into the third-base cutout if both ball and runner are heading into the base.

When no umpire goes out on a batted ball to the outfield, the umpires use various movements to keep an umpire ahead of the lead runner. With no runners on base, the third-base umpire will run to the second-base cutout to rule on an attempted double, the PU will run to third base to rule on an attempted triple, and after having watched the batter/runner touch first and second base, the first-base umpire will run home to rule on an attempted inside-the-park home run. Likewise, with a runner on first only, the PU will take any plays at third base against R1 or the B/R and the first-base umpire will take any plays at the plate. The movement of the PU to third base and the first-base umpire to home plate is called rotating or a rotation. As set forth in the diagrams that follow, a rotation is also used on a fly ball with runners on first and second base with less than two outs when R2 tags up and tries to advance to third base. This is called a tag-up rotation.

In other situations (as set forth in the diagrams that follow) the third-base umpire will take all plays at second base against an R2 and R1 as well as all plays at third base, while the first-base umpire will come into the infield grass and pivot (same as in 2-umpire mechanics) and take the B/R into second base (in addition to ruling on any play at first base). When the first-base umpire pivots and takes the B/R into second base (allowing the third-base umpire to move into the third-base cutout) this is called a slide or a reverse rotation.

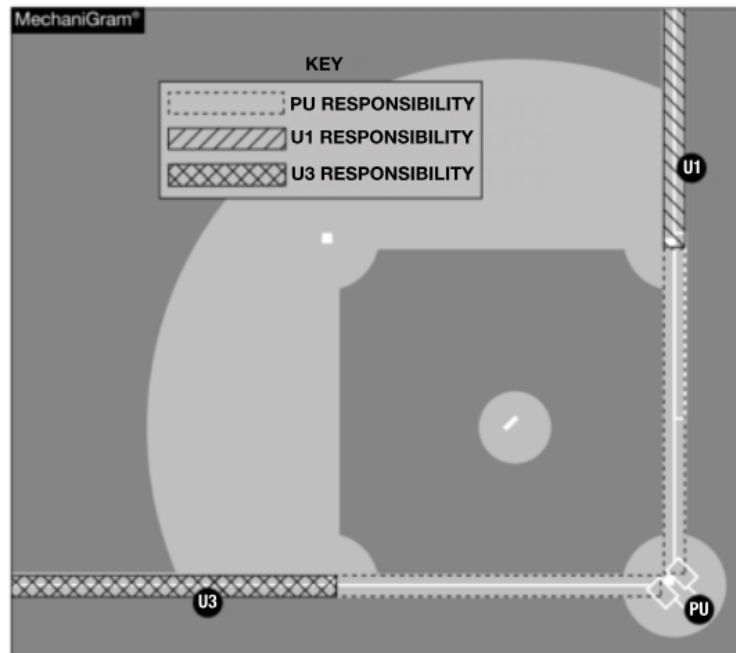
Another concept that can be difficult to grasp is when exactly an umpire should begin the rotation or slide. To assist an umpire in making this determination, we use the concept of mirroring. An umpire is mirroring when the umpire is doing the same movements as a base runner that is parallel to the umpire. For instance, with a runner on first base only, on a clean base hit to the outfield where the crew is rotating, the first-base umpire should not run toward home plate until R1 has touched second base and is advancing to third base. In fact, as R1 is running to third base, U1 should be running to the plate. If you look at a baseball field, one can see that the baseline between second and third base is parallel to the baseline between first base and home plate. Thus, as R1 is running from second to third base, U1 should be running in foul territory between first base and home. When U1 is doing this, U1 is mirroring R1. U1 should arrive at the plate area as R1 is arriving at third base. Likewise, with no runners on base, the PU should run up to third base as the B/R is running from first base to second base. The PU should arrive at third base as the B/R is arriving at second base. In this manner, the PU is mirroring the B/R.

One final rule to remember about crew movements: if the batted ball does not leave the infield, then the crew does not rotate or reverse rotate/slide. Rotations and slides are only used on clean base hits and routine fly balls to the outfield (where no base umpire has gone out). Most importantly, when working in a 3-umpire crew do NOT be afraid to verbally communicate with your partners. Communicating with your partners, both by using hand signals and verbally, is crucial to successfully working in a 3-umpire crew.

NORMAL ROTATION — On clean base hits to the outfield with 1) no runners on, 2) runner on first base only and 3) runner at third base only, PU rotates to make calls at third base, U3 covers plays at second base and U1 rotates to cover plays at home plate.

REVERSE ROTATION ("SLIDE") — On clean base hits to the outfield with 1) runners on first and second base, 2) runners on first and third base, and 3) bases loaded the PU remains at home to watch plays at the plate, U3 takes the lead runner(s) from first and second into third base. U1 takes the B/R all the way to second base.

FAIR/FOUL COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action.

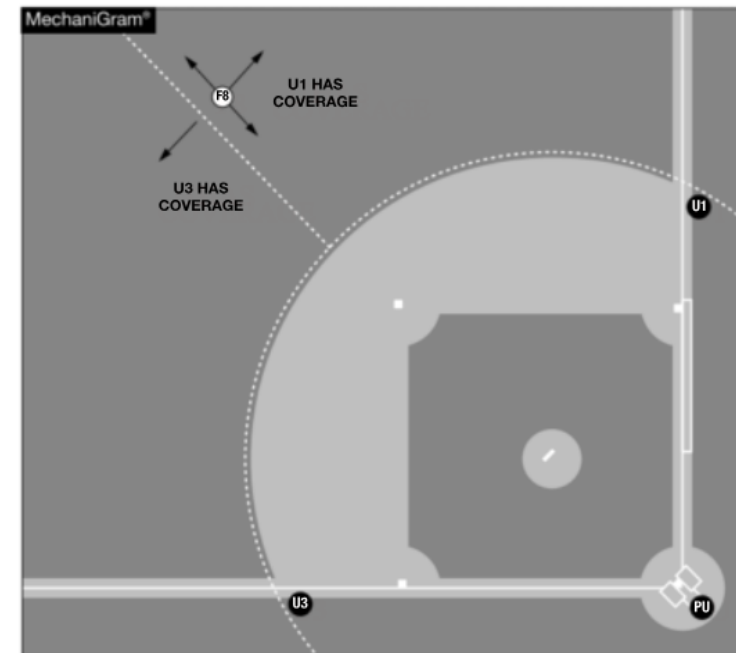
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has responsibility for balls up to first base and third base, including all foul territory.

U1: Has responsibility for balls that hit first base and/or go beyond.

U3: Has responsibility for balls that hit third base and/or go beyond.

INITIAL POSITIONS AND OUTFIELD COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has no outfield responsibility.

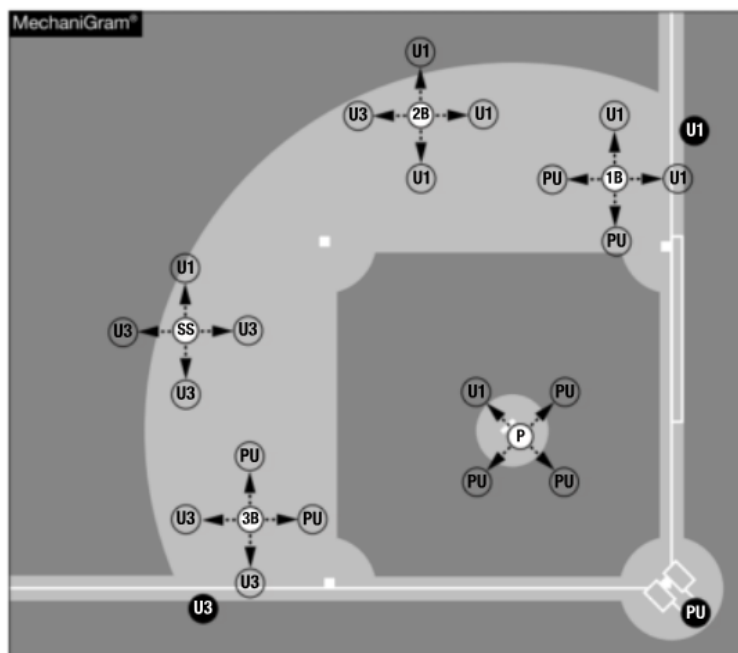
U1: Starts in the "A" position. U1 dictates coverage or responsibility, has the center fielder going straight back, coming straight in, when he turns to his left and when he moves toward right field. U1 also has all balls to the right fielder.

U3: Starts in the "D" position. U3 has the center fielder when he turns to his right. U3 also has all balls to the left fielder.

If an umpire goes out on a fly ball, verbalize, and stay out until the play is over.

Note: For all routine fly balls, rotations are similar to a clean hit.

INFIELD CATCH COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the first and third baseman moving toward the plate or toward the middle of the infield.

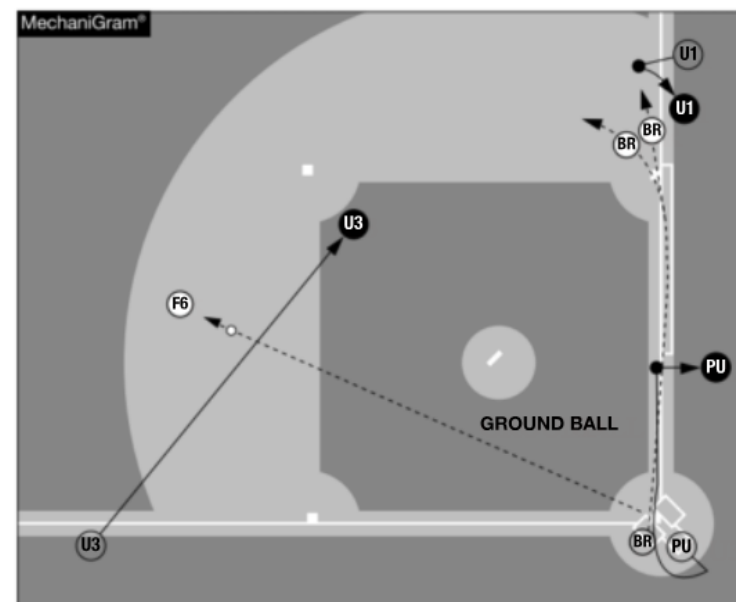
U1 has catches:

1. By the second baseman moving in, out or toward first base.
2. By the shortstop moving toward second base.
3. By the first baseman moving back or toward the line.
4. By the pitcher moving back.

U3 has catches:

1. By the shortstop moving in, back or toward third base.
2. By the second baseman moving toward second base.
3. By the third baseman moving back or toward the line.

ROUTINE GROUND BALL



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: BR hits a ground ball to F6, who is unable to throw toward first base in an attempt to retire BR.

Umpire responsibilities:

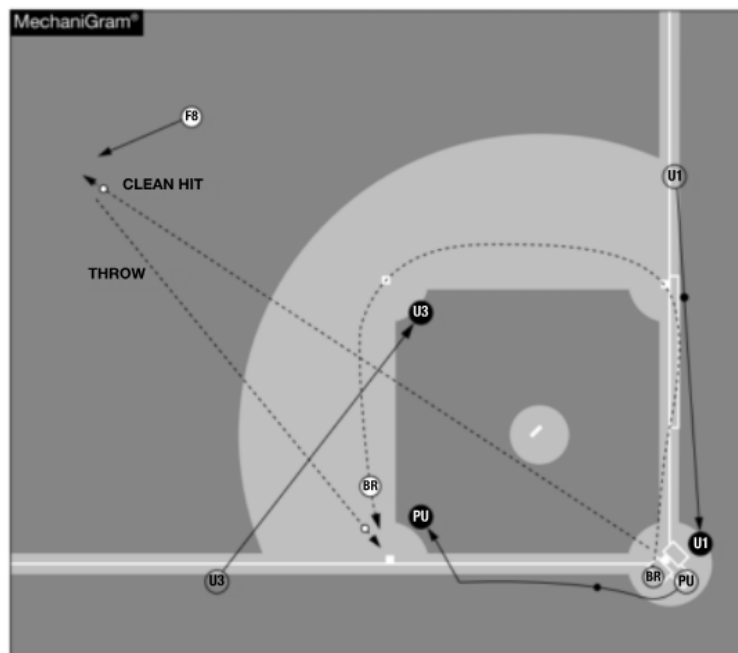
PU: Clears the catcher, removes mask and moves toward the 45-foot line. Does not take eye off ball and stops when it becomes apparent there will be no play at first base. If F6 throws, moves into position for potential overthrow and to assist on possible swipe tag or pulled foot scenarios.

U1: When the ball is hit, moves into fair territory and tries to get a 90-degree angle to judge play at first base. When no throw comes, moves into position in case a late throw comes in an attempt to pick off BR.

U3: When the ball is hit, moves toward second-base cutout for any plays on the batter-runner at second base. Stays out of potential throwing lane for F6 until it is clear F6 will not make a throw toward first base. Also, takes any plays on the batter-runner at third base.

At the end of play, position yourself for next play and repeat signals.

CLEAN HIT TO THE OUTFIELD



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: A deep clean hit to the outfield with the batter-runner advancing toward third base, drawing a throw there.

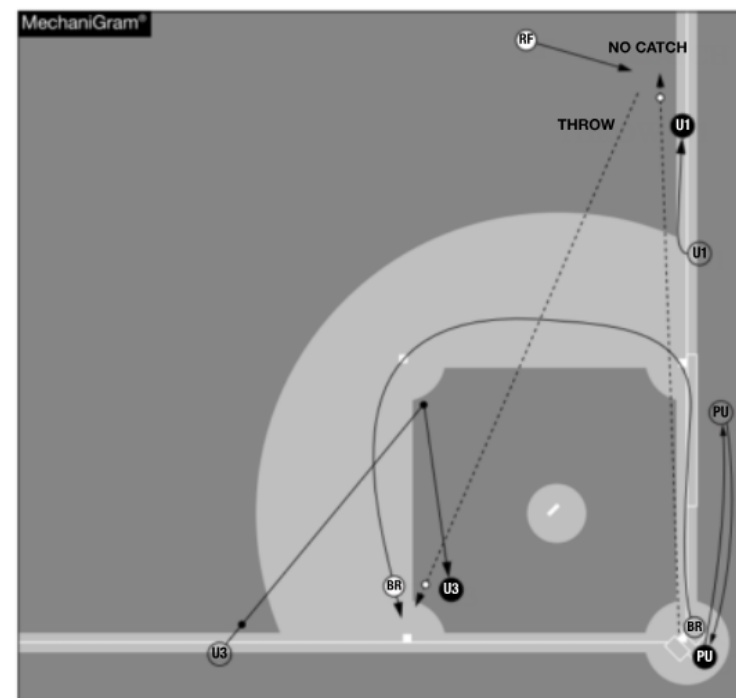
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Removes mask and moves halfway toward third, reads the ball and moves to the cutout for any play on the batter-runner at third base.

U1: Observes batter-runner's base touch at first base and begins to move toward the plate if the batter-runner commits to third base.

U3: Enters the infield and has all plays on the batter-runner at second base.

TROUBLE BALL: U1 GOES OUT



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball to right field, no catch; the batter-runner advances toward third base, drawing a throw there.

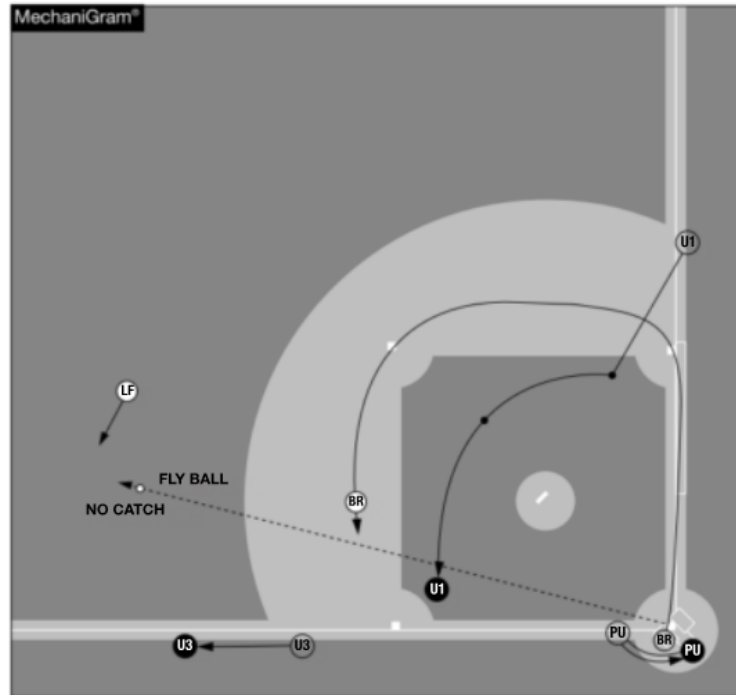
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Removes mask and moves to first base for any play on the batter-runner. Responsible for throws back to first base on a batter runner. Once the batter-runner reaches second base, PU returns to the plate for any play there.

U1: Goes out on the fly ball to rule on fair/foul and then the catch/no-catch and stays out until play is over.

U3: Has all plays at second and third base.

TROUBLE BALL: U3 GOES OUT



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball to left field; no catch; the batter-runner advances toward third base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has any play on the batter-runner at the plate.

U1: Moves to the infield for any play on the batter-runner at first, second or third base.

U3: Goes out on the fly ball to rule on fair/foul and the catch/no-catch and stays out until play is over.

Crew of Three: Runner on First

General Information

U1 Initial position: U1 will start in the "A" position, but only 8 or 10 feet behind first base. U1 must be able to see the pitcher and the runner.

U3 Initial position: U3 will start in the "Deep B" or "Deep C" position, at the edge of the infield grass.

Before the play: On a base hit, the umpires will be rotating. Make sure you give each partner the number of outs and a signal that you know that a rotation is possible. Unlike in two-umpire mechanics, umpires automatically rotate on a base hit. There is no need for PU to read if there will be a play at third, since U1 will be rotating home.

Potential plays and responsibilities: All three umpires have responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches.

PU is also responsible for:

1. Calling the pitch
2. Fair/foul calls up to the first-base bag and all fair-foul calls down the third-base line
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. R1 advancing from first to third on any batted ball to the outfield

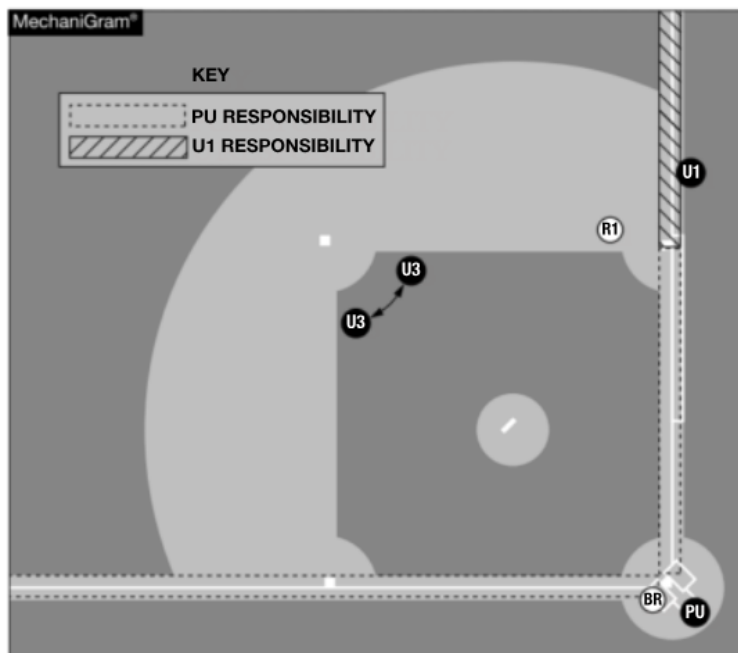
U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at first base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a right-handed batter
3. Fair/foul calls from the first-base bag down the right-field line
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U1 can and should go out if necessary)
5. Any play at first involving BR (if you don't go out)
6. Any play at home involving R1 and BR (if U1 doesn't go out)

U3 is also responsible for:

1. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a left-handed batter
2. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U3 should never cross the infield dirt)
3. Any play at second involving R1, including any potential illegal slide
4. Any play involving BR at second or back into first if U1 has gone out or rotated
5. R1's tag at first base if U1 goes out

FAIR/FOUL COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action.

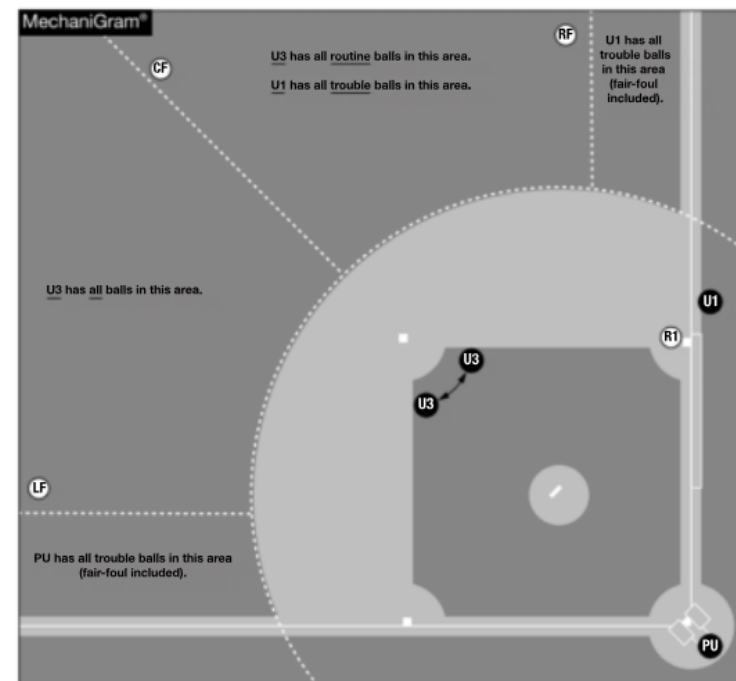
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has responsibility for all balls on the third-base line and up to first base.

U1: Has responsibility for all balls that hit first base or go beyond first base.

U3: Has no foul-line responsibility.

INITIAL POSITIONS AND OUTFIELD COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

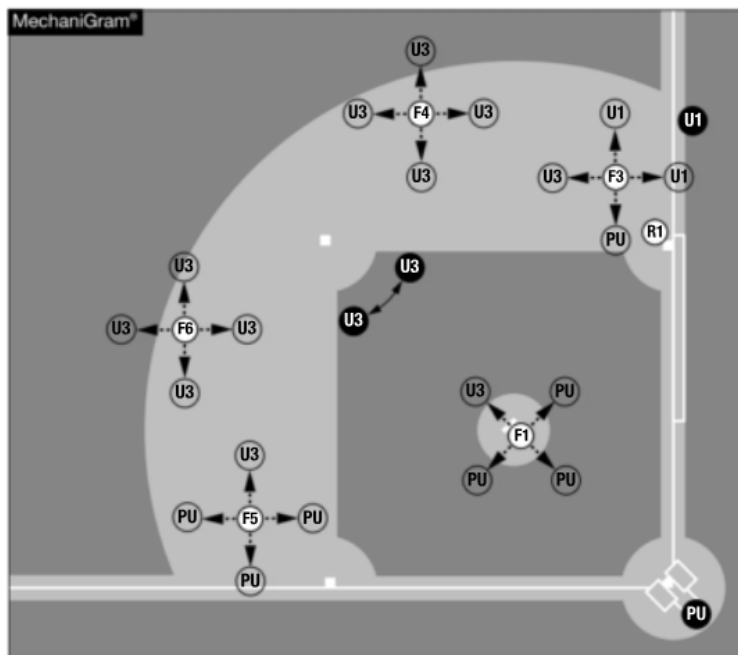
PU: Has catch/no-catch responsibility if the ball is hit where the left fielder moves any distance toward the foul line.

U1: Starts in the "A" position. U1 retains coverage on all trouble balls from the center fielder coming straight in or straight back to right-field out of play. If U1 goes out, the crew reverts to the two-umpire system.

U3: Starts in either the "Deep B" or "Deep C" position. U3 has all responsibility for all routine balls from left field to right field, and all trouble balls in the left-center field wedge.

Note: For all routine fly balls, rotations are similar to a clean hit.

INFIELD CATCH COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right including foul territory before first base.
2. By first baseman moving in.
3. By the third baseman moving in, back or toward the foul line including the whole foul territory.

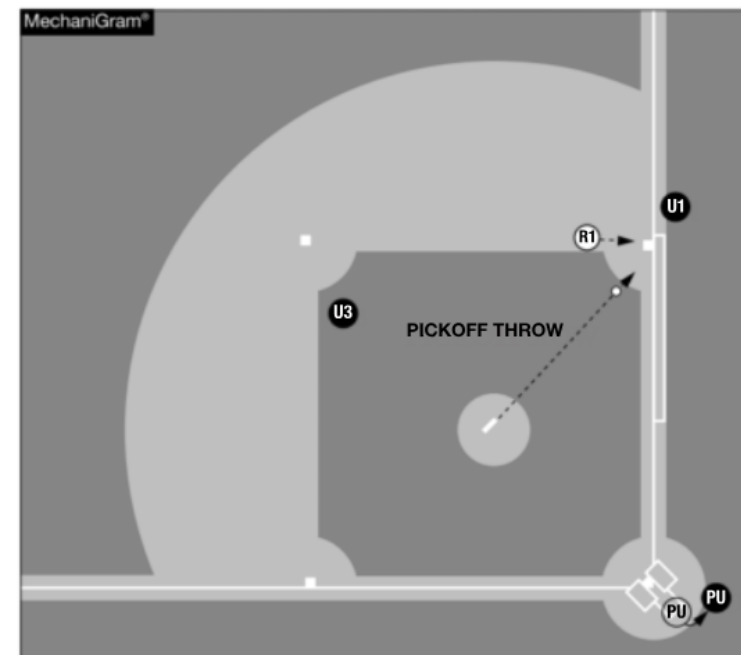
U1 has catches:

1. By the first baseman moving back or toward the foul line including foul territory beyond first base.

U3 has catches:

1. By all fielders moving toward the middle of the field.
2. By the pitcher moving back.
3. By the second baseman and shortstop moving in all directions.

PICKOFF AT FIRST



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Before pitching, the pitcher attempts to pick off the runner at first base.

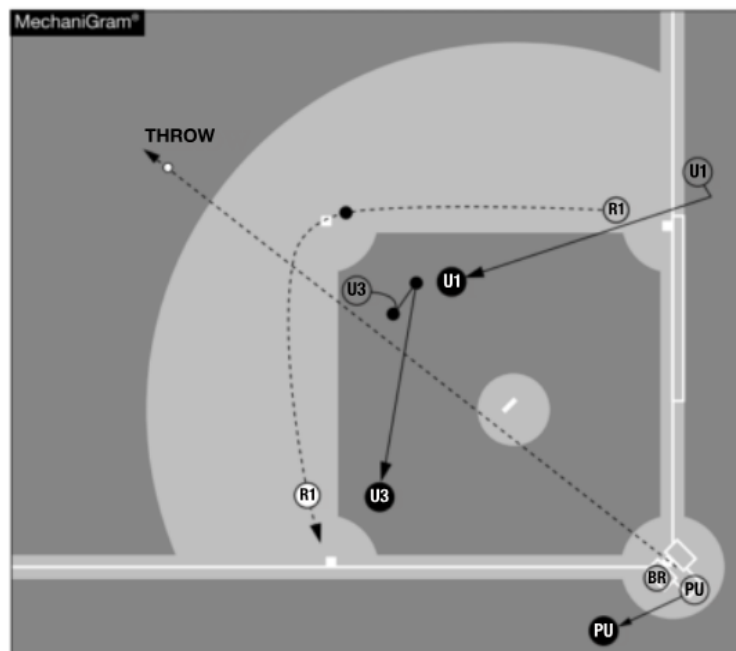
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Watches the pitcher for potential balks then takes a step out from behind the catcher to observe the action or in case ball is overthrown.

U1: Watches the pitcher for potential balks before throwing. Positioning should require no movement to see the pickoff throw or tag. If the play is a swipe tag out, ensure that F3 retains possession of the ball before making the out call. If the runner is safe, no delay is necessary.

U3: Watches the pitcher for potential balks before throwing. Is responsible for all plays at second and third base, including if R1 ends up in a rundown.

STEAL OF SECOND WITH POTENTIAL OVERTHROW



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: The batter swings and misses at the pitch as R1 attempts to steal second base. F2's throw goes into center field and R1 attempts to advance to third.

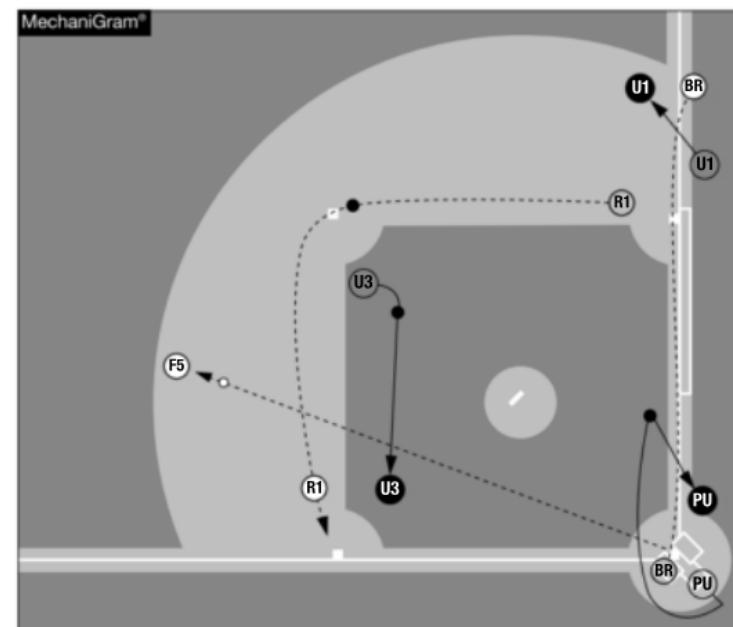
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Signals the swinging strike without taking his focus off the play at hand. Ensures the batter does not interfere with the catcher's throw. The likelihood of interference is increased when the catcher has made a poor throw. Observes the play.

U1: Observes the pitch and initial throw to second. As R1 heads toward third, U1 moves aggressively toward second base in case R1 ends up in a rundown.

U3: Takes a step toward the second-base cutout. Turns with the ball. When the throw goes into center field, moves aggressively toward the third-base side of the mound to open up the angle for the tag play at third base.

GROUND BALL TO THE INFIELD WITH POTENTIAL DOUBLE PLAY



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: The batter hits a ground ball toward third base. A double play is possible.

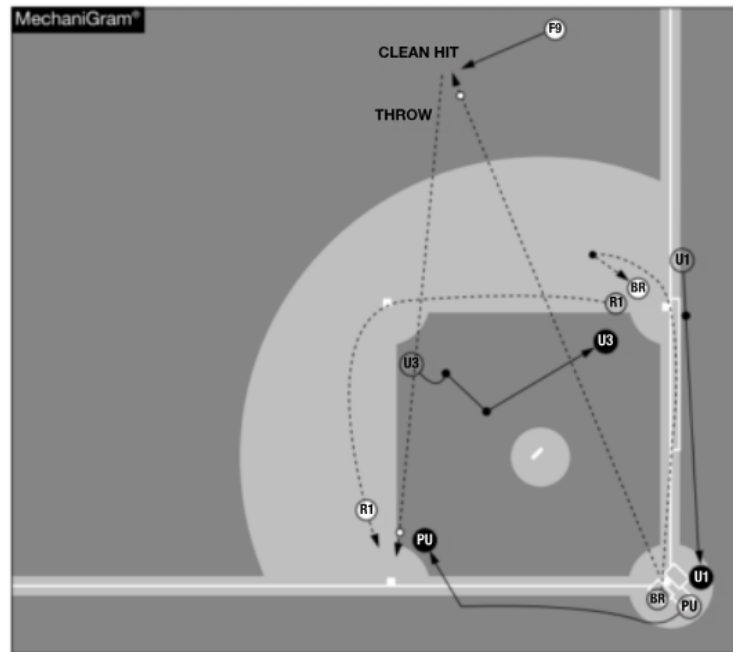
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: If necessary, stays near the third-base line in case of a potential fair/foul decision. Trails BR up the first-base line to assist with possible pulled foot/swipe tag play, including overthrow into dead-ball area. Is responsible for any play at the plate.

U1: Obtains 90-degree angle in fair territory to prepare to judge play at first base. Throw could come from F5 or from the fielder covering second base.

U3: Takes a step toward the mound and opens up to the ball. When it's clear a double-play will be attempted, U3 steps toward the side of the cutout where the throw will be coming from to better see the catch of the throw and the transfer of the ball from the glove to throwing hand. Judges play (including potential illegal slide/including potential force play slide) at second base. If R1 is safe at second and advances toward third, U3 moves aggressively toward the third-base cutout for the tag play at third base.

CLEAN HIT TO THE OUTFIELD



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Clean hit to right field, no catch; R1 advances toward third base, drawing a throw there; batter-runner rounds first and returns there.

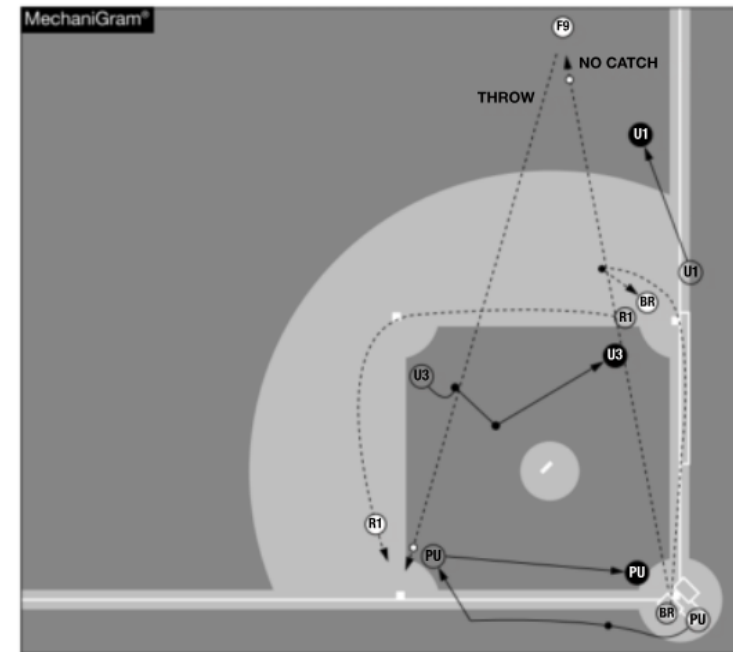
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Reads R1 and the ball and moves into a position for any plays at third base on R1.

U1: Observes BR's base touch at first base and begins to move toward the plate when R1 touches second base and commits to third base.

U3: Observes R1's base touch at second base and begins to move toward first base if R1 commits to third base. Has any play where R1 returns to second and has all plays on the batter-runner returning to first and at second base.

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD, NO CATCH, U1 GOES OUT



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball to right field, no catch; R1 advances toward third base, drawing a throw there; BR rounds first and returns there.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Rotates to third base for any play on R1 and must verbally communicate his position to U3. If a play develops at third base and R1 then attempts to advance to the plate on a wild throw, PU must retreat (in fair territory) for any play there.

U1: Pause, read and react. Goes out on the fly ball. Judges fair/foul (if necessary) and catch/no catch. Does not return to the infield.

U3: Has all plays at first and second base and plays at third base on the batter-runner.

Crew of Three: Runners on First and Second

General Information

U1 Initial position: U1 will start in the "A" position, 10-15 feet behind first base. U1 must be able to see the pitcher and the runner. U1 can move closer if F3 is holding R1 on the base.

U3 Initial position: U3 will start in the "C" position. Since third base is open, U3 cannot start in the deep position. There is a possibility of R2 stealing third.

Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals. On a base hit, the umpires will be in a reverse rotation, with U1 trailing BR into second base. With less than two outs, the infield-fly rule will be in effect. On a fly ball to the outfield with less than two outs, PU will be rotating to third and U1 will rotate home (if U1 does not go out). Make sure you give each partner the number of outs and appropriate signals.

Potential plays and responsibilities: All three umpires have responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches.

PU is also responsible for:

1. Calling the pitch
2. Fair/foul calls up to the first-base bag and all fair-foul calls down the third-base line
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. R2 advancing after tagging up on a caught fly ball with less than two outs
5. Any play at the plate except for routine fly ball with R2 tagging and advancing with less than two outs

U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at first base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a right-handed batter
3. Fair/foul calls from the first-base bag down the right-field line
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U1 can and should go out if necessary)
5. Any play at first or second involving BR (if you don't go out)
6. Any play at home involving R2 on a caught fly ball with less than two outs

U3 is also responsible for:

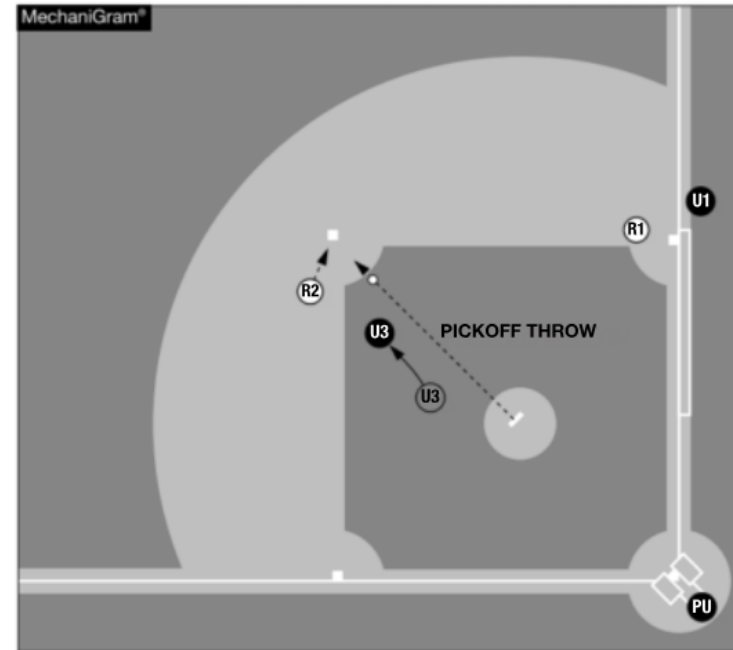
1. Pickoff attempt at second base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a left-handed batter
3. Stolen base attempt by either R1 or R2.
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U3 should never cross the infield dirt)
5. Any play at second involving R1, including any potential illegal slide
6. Any play at third involving R2, including any potential illegal slide.

Exception: PU will take R2's advance to third on a caught fly ball with less than two outs.

7. R2's tag up at second base if it is a caught fly ball.
8. R1's tag at first base if U1 goes out.

CREW OF THREE: RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

PICKOFF THROW TO SECOND



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Before pitching, the pitcher attempts to pick off the runner at second base.

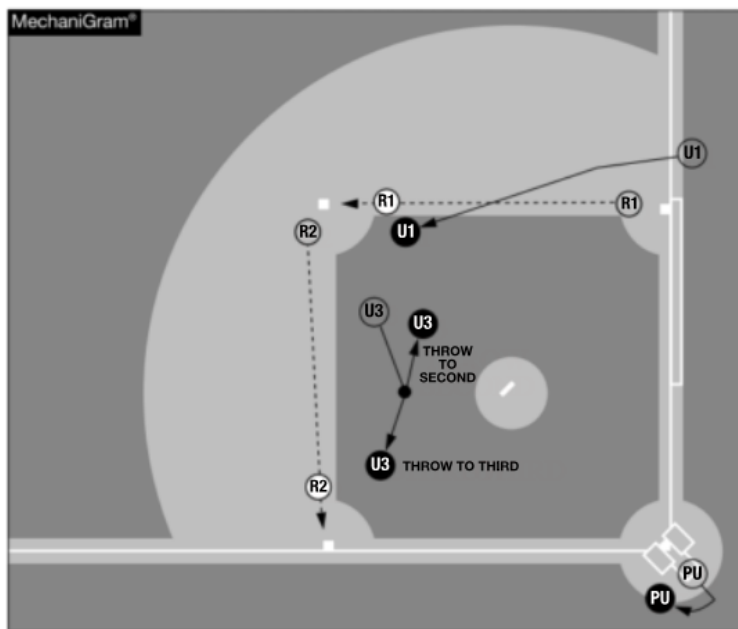
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Watches the pitcher for potential balks then takes a step out from behind the catcher to observe the action.

U1: Watches the pitcher for potential balks then observes the action.

U3: Watches the pitcher for potential balks before throwing. Once the pickoff attempt has started, U3 should take a quick backward step and turn with the ball as it passes him toward the fielder. Comes to a hands-on-knees set to see the play at second base. If the play is a swipe tag out, ensure the fielder retains possession of the ball before making the out call. If the runner is safe, no delay is necessary.

DOUBLE STEAL



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: The batter swings and misses at the pitch as R2 attempts to steal third and R1 attempts to steal second base.

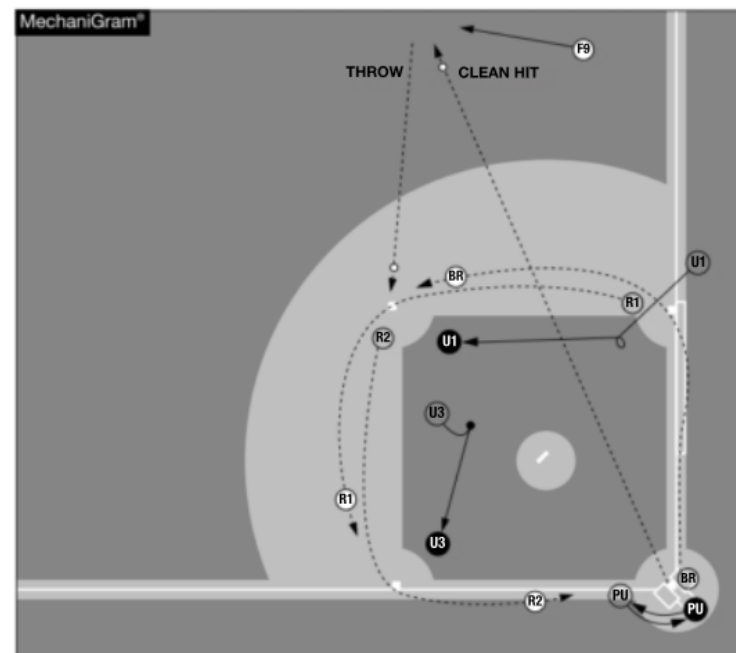
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Signals the swinging strike without taking his focus off the play at hand. Ensures the batter does not interfere with the catcher's throw.

U1: Observes the action. Has no initial responsibility on either runner. Moves toward second base to assist with subsequent plays (snap throws back into second).

U3: When the runners start to steal, takes several steps forward and reads F2's throw. If F2 throws to third, step toward third. If F2 throws to second, move back toward second, watching the ball and turning as it passes you. If either runner is out or safe on a close play, take two or three steps after the tag while making the call to give the appearance that you were closer to the play. Don't overcommit toward that call in case the fielder makes a snap throw to the other base. Responsible for plays at either base unless U1 has come into second for a subsequent snap throw.

CLEAN HIT TO THE OUTFIELD OR ROUTINE FLY BALL WITH TWO OUTS



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Clean hit to right field, no catch; R2 advances toward the plate; R1 advances toward third base; BR advances toward second base and draws a throw there.

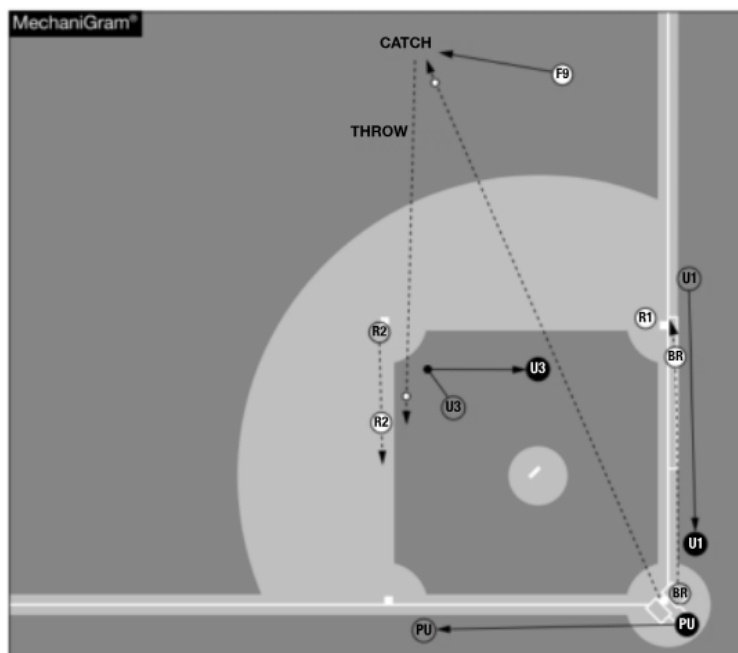
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: After reading that no base umpires are going out, stays home, observes R2 touching third base and observes the plate touch of all runners. PU moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

U1: Pause, read and react. Moves into the infield and observes the batter-runner's base touch at first and has all plays on the batter-runner at first and second base.

U3: Observes the base touches of R1 at second and third base and has all plays on R1 at second and third, plus R2 and BR at third base.

ROUTINE FLY BALL WITH LESS THAN TWO OUTS



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Routine fly ball to right-center field. R2 tags up and attempts to advance to third base.

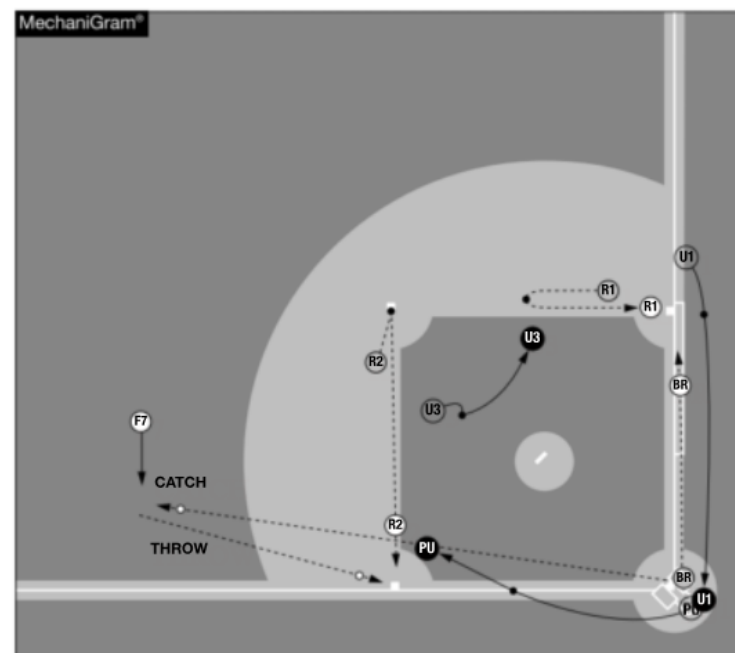
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Comes out from behind the plate. When R2 tags up and attempts to advance, moves up the third-base line for plays at third.

U1: When U1 reads it is a routine fly ball and R2 is tagging, starts walking toward home plate in foul territory. U1 is responsible for R1's tag up at first. When R2 advances to third, U1 goes home to cover plays at the plate. Mirror R2.

U3: Responsible for catch/no-catch and R2's tag up at second. When U1 goes home, U3 is responsible for all plays at first and second base. Please note communication with your crew is imperative.

TROUBLE FLY BALL DOWN LEFT FIELD LINE, CATCH



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball toward the left-field line caught by the left fielder; R2 tags up and advances toward third base, drawing a throw; R1 retreats toward first base.

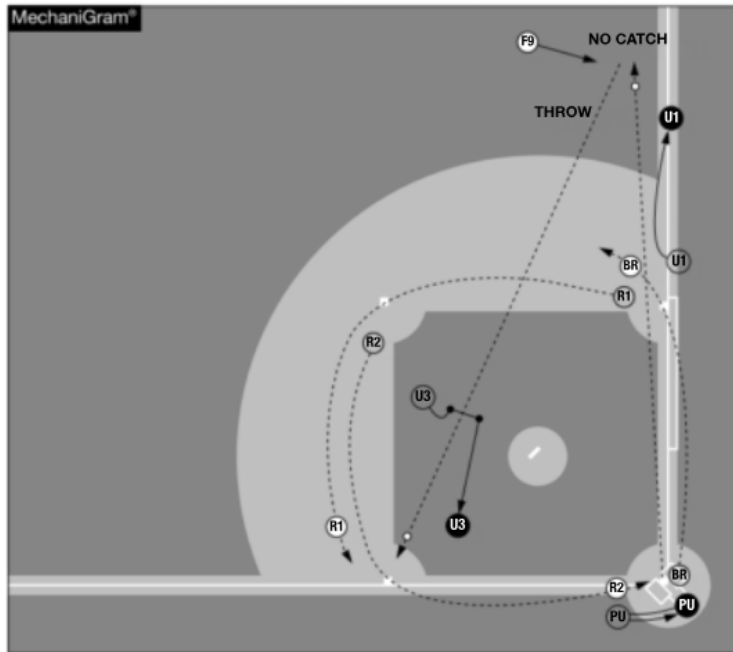
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Clears batter and takes mask off. Moves to the best position possible to view the fair/foul and catch/no catch. PU reads the runners and the ball and moves into a position for any play on R2 advancing to third base. If the ball is not caught, PU observes R2's base touch at third and returns to the plate for all plays there.

U1: Observes R1 and if R2 commits to third base, U1 commits to the plate for any play there on R2. If the ball is not caught, U1 moves into the infield and observes BR's base touch at first and has all plays on BR at first and second bases.

U3: Retreats and observes R2's tag up. U3 moves into position for any play at first or second base on R1. If the ball is not caught, U3 observes the base touches of R1 at second and third base and has all plays on R1 at second and third and R2 and BR at third base. Please note communication with your crew is imperative.

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD, NO CATCH, U1 GOES OUT



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball to right field, no catch; U1 goes out; R1 advances toward third base, drawing a throw there; R2 advances toward the plate; BR rounds first base, but does not advance to second.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Remains near the plate for all plays there. If the ball is caught, PU reads the ball and the runners and has any play at third base if R2 attempts to advance there. They have force-play-slide responsibility.

U1: Pause, read and react. Verbalize when going out. Moves to the best position possible to view the fair/foul and catch/no catch. Does not return to the infield for any play.

U3: Moves into the working area for all plays on the bases. If the ball is caught, U3 has the tag ups of R2 at second base and R1 at first base.

Crew of Three: Bases Loaded

General Information

U1 Initial position: U1 will start in the "A" position, 10 or 15 feet behind first base. U1 must be able to see the pitcher and the runner. U1 may move closer behind first base if F3 is holding the runner on base.

U3 Initial position: U3 will start in the "C" position.

Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals. On a base hit, the umpires will be in a reverse rotation, with U1 trailing BR into second base. With less than two outs, the infield-fly rule will be in effect. The plate umpire will not rotate on this play. Make sure you give each partner the number of outs and appropriate signals.

Potential plays and responsibilities: All three umpires have responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches.

PU is also responsible for:

1. Calling the pitch
2. Fair/foul calls up to the first-base bag and all fair-foul calls down the third-base line
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. R3's tag up, if he tries to advance on a caught fly ball
5. Any play at the plate

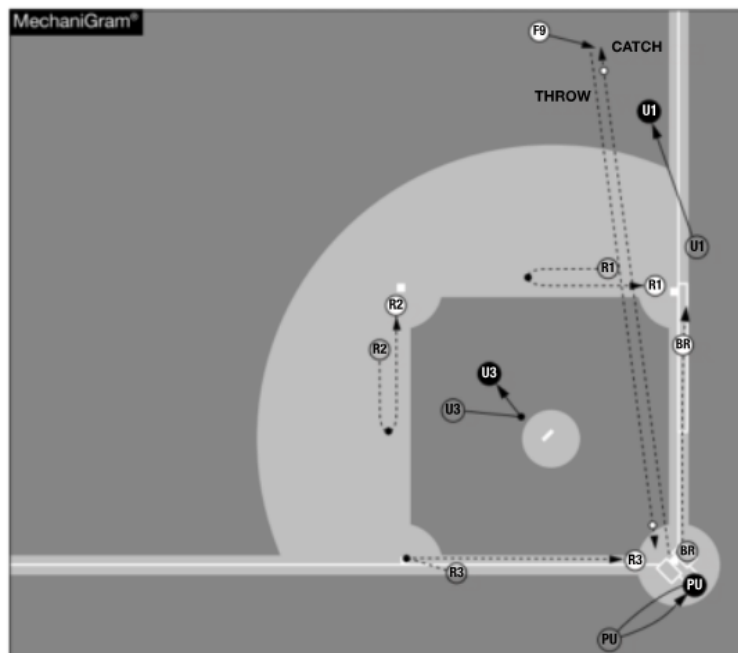
U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at first base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a right-handed batter
3. Fair/foul calls from the first-base bag down the right-field line
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U1 can and should go out if necessary)
5. Any play at first or second involving BR (if you don't go out)

U3 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempts at second or third base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a left-handed batter
3. Stolen-base attempt by either R1 or R2 (rare, but possible)
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U3 should never cross the infield dirt)
5. Any play at second involving R1, including any potential illegal slide
6. Any play at third involving R1 and R2, including any potential illegal slide
7. R2's tag up at second base if it is a caught fly ball
8. R1's tag at first base if U1 goes out

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD, CATCH, U1 GOES OUT



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the right fielder, U1 goes out; R3 tags and moves toward the plate, drawing a throw there; R2 and R1 stay near their bases.

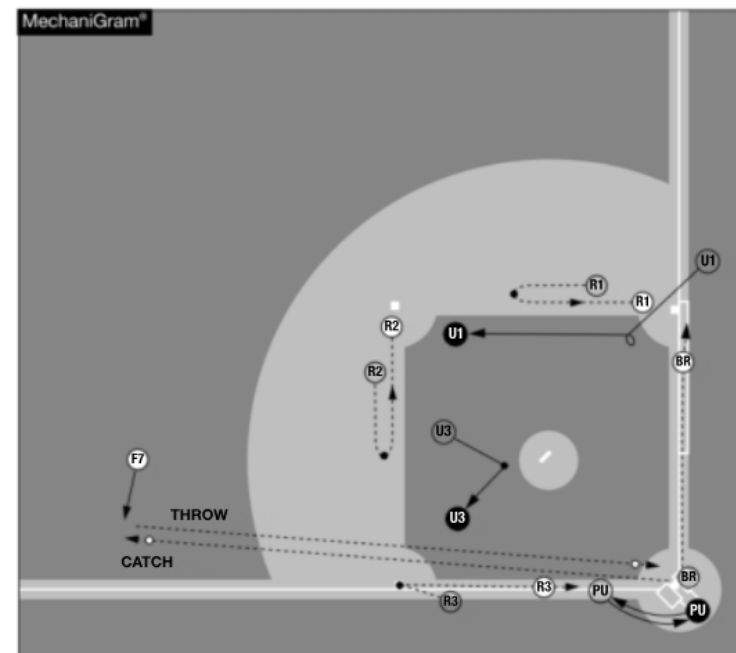
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Clear catcher and remove mask. Moves to a position to view R3's tag up at third base. P then returns to the plate for any play there.

U1: Pause, read and react. Verbalize going out. Moves to the best position possible to view the fair/foul (if necessary) and the catch/no catch. U1 does not return to the infield during the play.

U3: Retreats and observes potential tag-ups at first and second base. U3 reads the runners and moves into a position for all plays on the bases.

FLY BALL TO LEFT FIELD, CATCH



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the left fielder; R3 tags up and moves toward the plate, drawing a throw there; R2 and R1 stay near their bases.

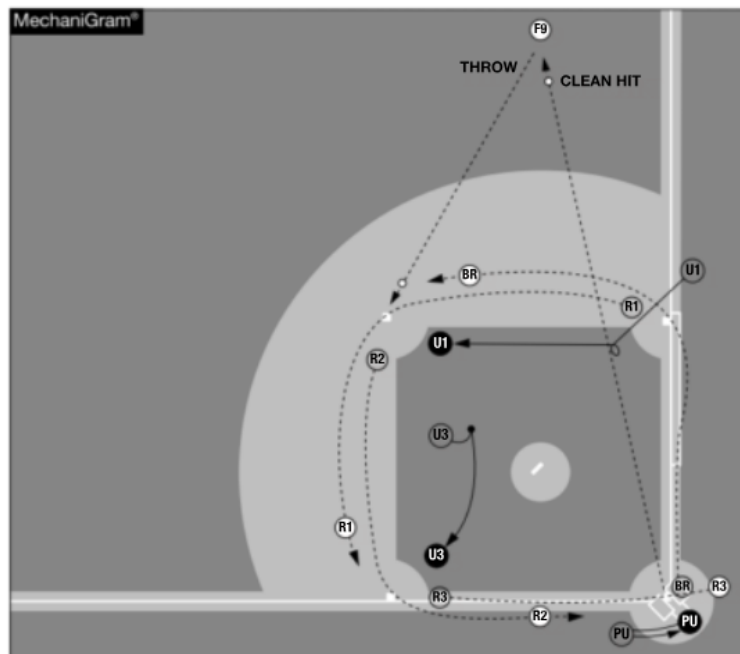
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves to the best position possible to view the fair/foul and catch/no catch. PU must also view R3's tag up at third base. PU returns to the plate for any play there.

U1: Moves into the infield and observes R1's potential tag up at first base and has any secondary play at second base. If the ball is not caught, U1 has all plays on BR at first and second base.

U3: Retreats to working area and observes R2's potential tag up. U3 moves into position for any initial plays at second or all plays at third base. If the ball is not caught, U3 observes the base touches at second and third base and has all plays on R1 at second and third, R2 at third and BR at third.

CLEAN HIT TO THE OUTFIELD



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Clean hit to right field, U1 does not go out; R3 scores; R2 moves toward the plate; R1 moves toward third base; BR moves toward second base and draws a throw there.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Clear catcher and remove mask. Observes all touches at home and R2's touch of third. PU moves into position for any plays at the plate.

U1: Moves into the infield and observes BR's touch of first and second. U1 has all plays on BR at first and second base.

U3: Observes R1's touch of second and third and BR's touch of third. U3 has all plays on R1 at second and third, R2 at third and BR at third.

Crew of Three: Runners on First and Third

General Information

U1 Initial position: U1 will start in the "A" position, 10 or 15 feet behind first base. U1 must be able to see the pitcher and the runner. U1 can move closer to first base if F3 is holding the runner on base.

U3 Initial position: U3 will start in the "C" position. From that position, U3 has a great angle on any potential pickoff into third base.

Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals. There are no rotations for this configuration. Make sure you give each partner the number of outs and a signal that you know that no rotation is possible.

Potential plays and responsibilities: All three umpires have responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches.

PU is also responsible for:

1. Calling the pitch
2. Fair/foul calls up to the first-base bag and all fair-foul calls down the third-base line
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. R3's tag up at third on a caught fly ball
5. All plays at the plate

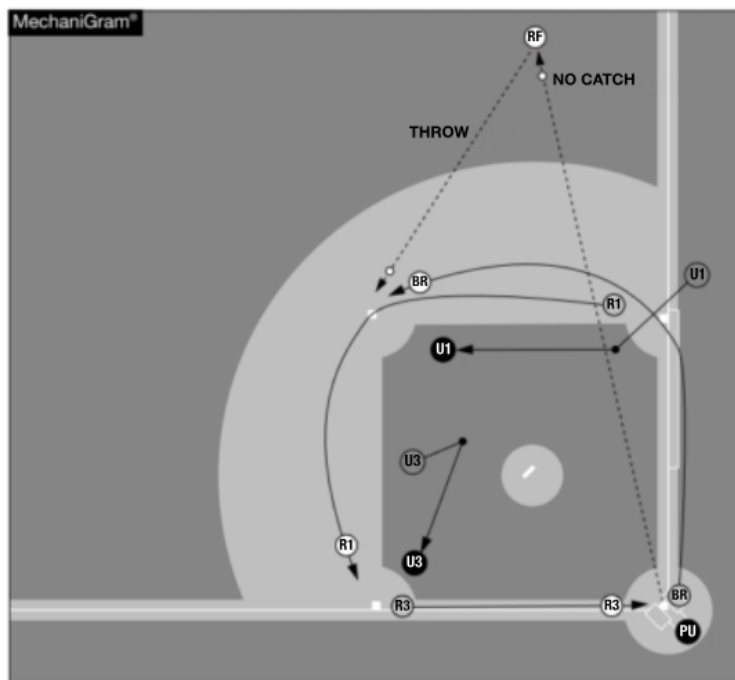
U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at first base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a right-handed batter
3. Fair/foul calls from the first-base bag down the right-field line
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U1 can and should go out if necessary)
5. Any play at first involving BR (if you don't go out)

U3 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at third base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a left-handed batter
3. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U3 should never cross the infield dirt)
4. Any play at second involving R1, including any potential illegal slide
5. All plays at third
6. Any play involving BR at second or back into first if U1 has gone out
7. R1's tag at first base if U1 goes out

CLEAN HIT OR ROUTINE FLY BALL TO THE OUTFIELD



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Routine fly ball to right field, no catch; R3 advances toward the plate; R1 advances toward third base; the batter-runner advances toward second base, drawing a throw there.

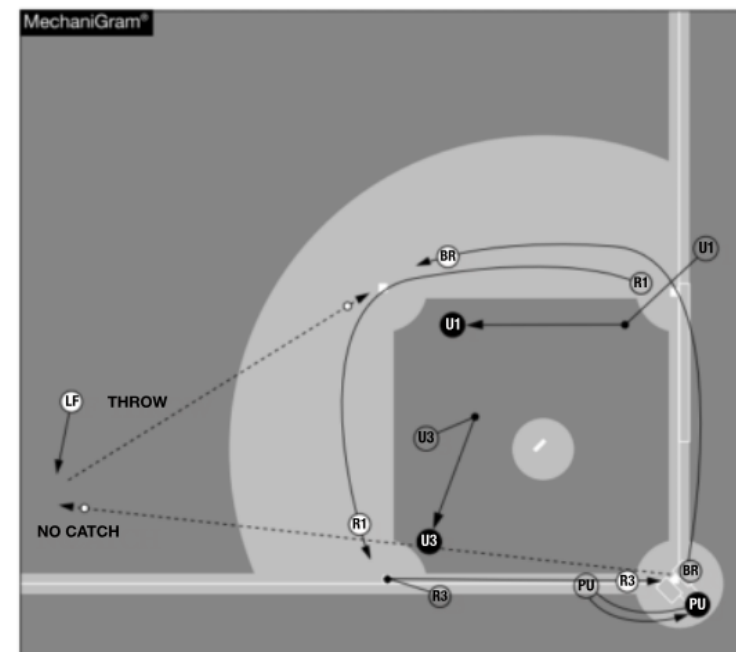
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Removes mask. Has R3's tag-up at third and observes the plate touch of all runners. PU moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

U1: Has R1's tag-up at first. Moves into the infield and observes the batter-runner's base touch at first and has all plays on the batter-runner at first and second base.

U3: Has catch/no-catch responsibility. Observes the base touches of R1 at second and third base and has all plays on R1 at second and third, plus the batter-runner at third base.

TROUBLE BALL DOWN THE LEFT-FIELD LINE



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Trouble ball down the left-field line. R3 and R1 tag up and advance.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Clear catcher and remove mask. Has fair/foul, catch/no-catch responsibility and R3's tag-up at third base. Returns to the plate for any plays there.

U1: Has all plays at first base and the batter-runner at first and second bases.

U3: Has all plays at third base and all plays on R1 at second base.

Crew of Three: Runner on Second

General Information

U1 Initial position with less than two outs: U1 will start in the "Deep B" position, at the edge of the infield grass. From that position, U1 has a great angle on any potential pickoff at second base. With two outs, U1 will shift to "A" position.

U3 Initial position with less than two outs: U3 will start in the "D" position, but not as deep as normal. U3 must be able to get into position for an attempted steal at third base. With two outs, U3 will shift to the "C" position.

Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals. There are no rotations from this configuration. Make sure you give each partner the number of outs and a signal that you know that no rotation is possible.

Potential plays and responsibilities: All three umpires have responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches.

PU is also responsible for:

1. Calling the pitch
2. Fair/foul calls up to the third-base bag and all fair-foul calls down the first-base line (less than two outs); fair/foul calls up to the first-base bag and all fair-foul calls down the third-base line (two outs)
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. All runners touching home and any play at the plate.

If less than two outs, U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at second base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a right-handed batter
3. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U1 should never cross the infield dirt)
4. Any play at first or second base
5. Any play at third if U3 goes out

If two outs, U1 is also responsible for:

1. Fair/foul calls from the first-base bag down the right-field line
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a right-handed batter
3. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U1 can and should go out if necessary)
4. Any play at first or second involving BR (unless out on trouble ball)

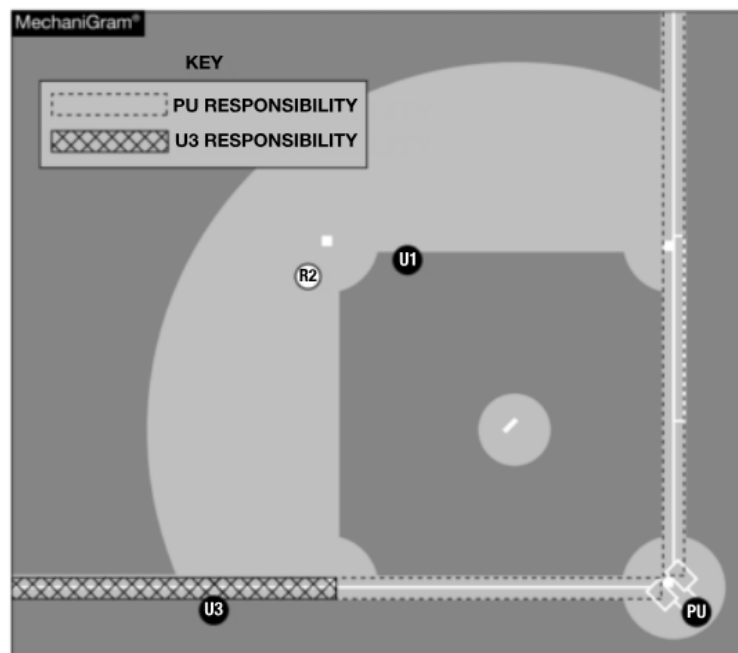
If less than two outs, U3 is also responsible for:

1. Fair/foul calls from the third-base bag down the left-field line
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a left-handed batter
3. Stolen base attempt into third base by R2
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U3 can and should go out if necessary when starting in the "D" position.)
5. Any play at third (if you don't go out)

If two outs, U3 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at second base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a left-handed batter
3. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U3 should never cross the infield dirt)
4. Any play at third

FAIR/FOUL COVERAGE WITH LESS THAN TWO OUTS



Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

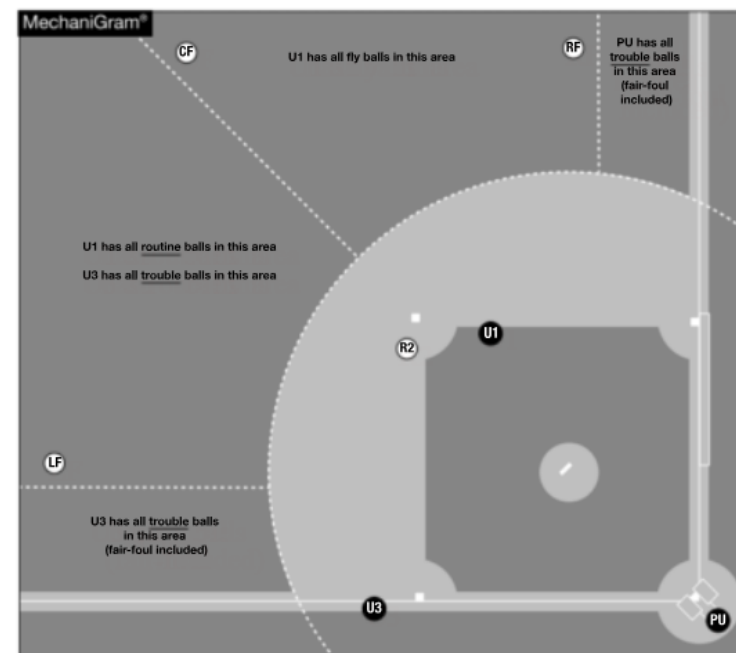
PU: Has responsibility for all balls along the first-base line and up to third base.

U1: Has no foul line responsibility.

U3: Has responsibility for all balls that hit third base or that go beyond third base.

Note: With two outs, revert to fair/foul coverage responsibilities with U3 inside.

INITIAL POSITIONS AND OUTFIELD COVERAGE WITH LESS THAN TWO OUTS



Action on the field: Less than two outs.

Umpire responsibilities:

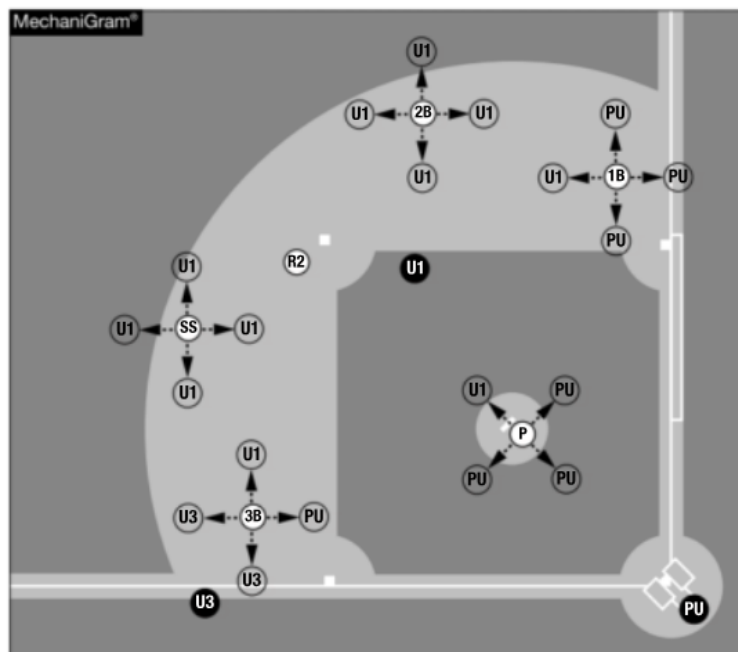
PU: Has catch/no-catch responsibility for any trouble balls taking the right fielder (or potentially the first or second baseman) toward the foul line.

U1: Starts in the "Deep B" position. Has any fly balls — routine or trouble — in the "V."

U3: Starts in the "D" position. U3 has any trouble balls which take the left fielder toward the foul line.

Note: With two outs, revert to outfield catch coverage responsibilities with U3 inside.

INFIELD CATCH COVERAGE WITH LESS THAN TWO OUTS



Action on the field: No action.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the first baseman moving in, back or toward the foul line.
3. By the third baseman moving in.

U1 has catches:

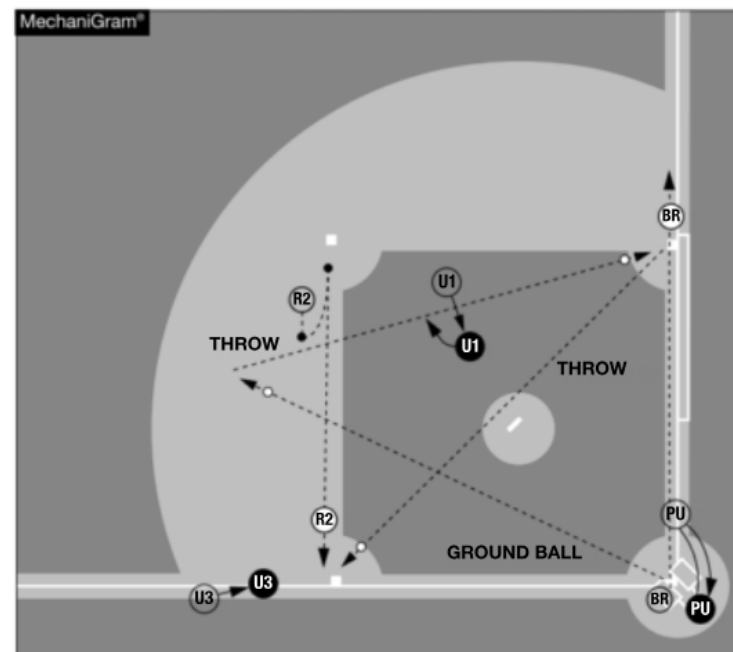
1. By all fielders moving toward the middle of the field.
2. By the pitcher moving back.
3. By the second baseman and shortstop moving in all directions.

U3 has catches:

1. By the third baseman moving back or toward the foul line.

Note: With two outs, revert to infield catch coverage responsibilities with U3 inside.

GROUND BALL TO THE INFIELD WITH LESS THAN TWO OUTS



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Ground ball to the shortstop with a throw to first base. R2 advances toward third base once F6 releases the throw to first. F3 makes the play at first and throws to third base.

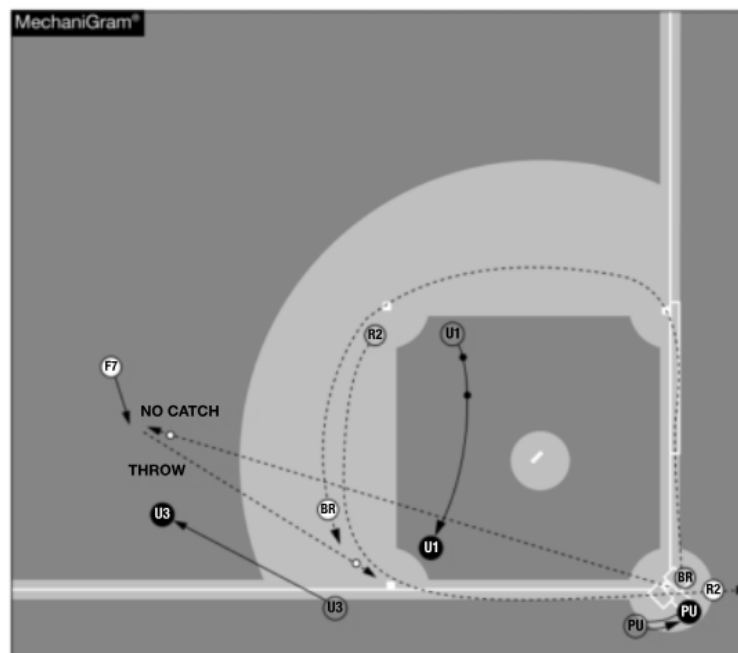
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Clears catcher and removes mask. Moves up the first-base line, but not all the way to the 45-foot line. PU cannot overcommit to first base since there is the potential of R2 attempting to score.

U1: Takes one step toward the mound when ball is hit. As F6 throws to first, moves several more steps toward the mound and is set for play at first base. If R2 retreats to second, U1 moves into position for any play there.

U3: Observes action when ball is hit. When R2 and throw converge at third base, moves into position for tag play or rundown.

FLY BALL TO LEFT FIELD, NO CATCH, U3 GOES OUT, LESS THAN TWO OUTS



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball to left field, no catch; U3 goes out; R2 advances toward the plate; BR advances toward third base and draws a throw there.

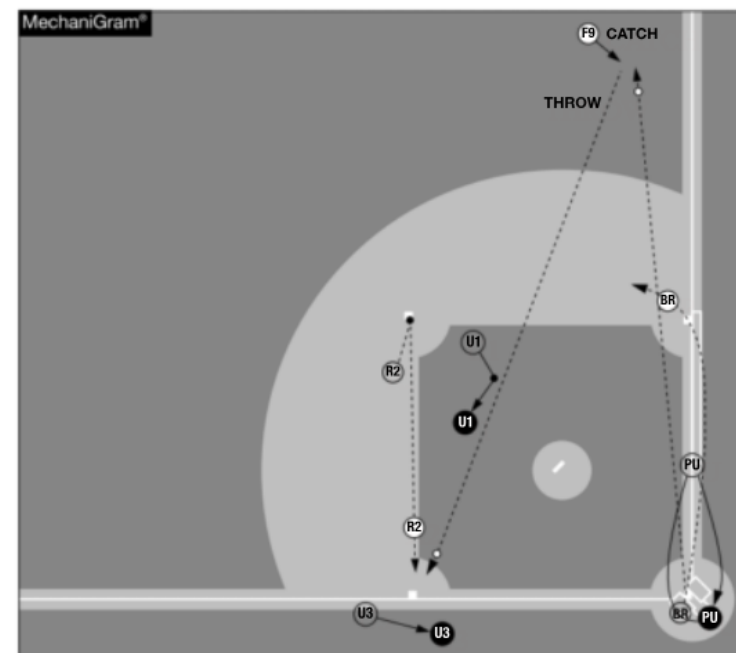
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Removes mask. Remains at the plate for all plays there and has the base touch of R2 at third and all base touches at the plate.

U1: Observes the batter-runner touch first base and moves into position for all plays on R2 and the batter-runner on the bases. If the ball is caught, U1 observes R2's potential tag up and has all plays at second and third base.

U3: Pause, read and react. Moves to the best position possible to view the fair/foul (if necessary) and catch/no catch. U3 does not return to the infield until the play is over.

FLY BALL DOWN THE RIGHT-FIELD LINE, CATCH, LESS THAN TWO OUTS



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the right fielder; R2 tags up and advances toward third base, drawing a throw there.

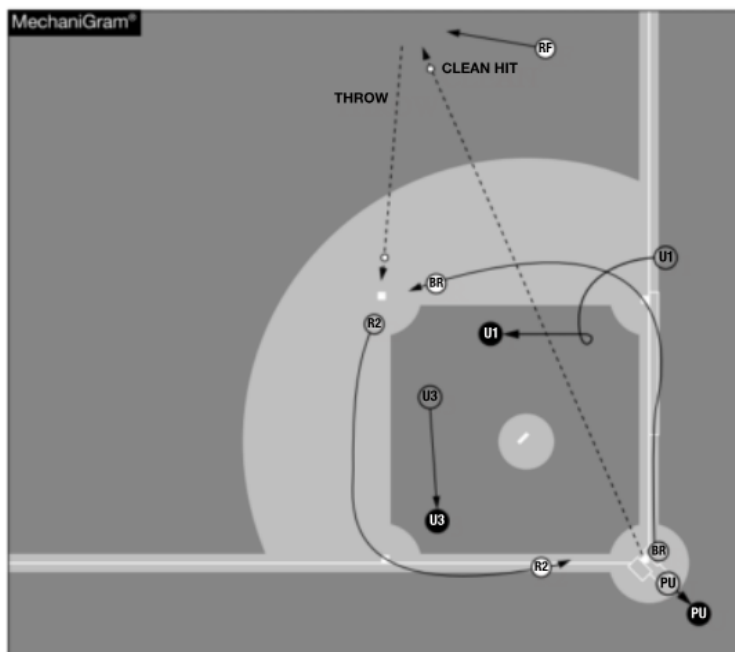
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Clears catcher and removes mask. Moves to the best position possible to view the fair/foul (if necessary) and catch/no catch. PU returns to the plate area.

U1: Retreats and observes R2's tag up. If the ball is not caught, U1 observes base touches at first and second base and has all plays at those bases.

U3: Moves into position for any play at third base on R2. If the ball is not caught, U3 observes base touches at third base and moves into position for all plays at third base.

CLEAN HIT OR ROUTINE FLY BALL TO THE OUTFIELD WITH TWO OUTS



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: With two outs, a clean hit to right field. R2 advances toward home. BR advances toward second base.

Umpire responsibilities

PU: Removes mask. Stays home, observes the plate touch of all runners. PU moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

U1: Observes BR touching first base. Pivots into the infield and has all plays on BR at first or second base.

U3: Responsible for any play at third base.

Crew of Three: Runners on Second and Third

General Information

U1 Initial position: U1 will start in the "Deep B" position, at the edge of the infield grass. From that position, U1 has a great angle on any potential pickoff at second base. With two outs, U1 will shift to "A" position.

U3 Initial position: U3 will start in the "D" position, but not as deep as normal. U3 must be able to get into position for an attempted pickoff at third base. With two outs, U3 will shift to the "C" position.

Before the play: There are no rotations from this configuration. Make sure you give each partner the number of outs and a signal that you know that no rotation is possible.

Potential plays and responsibilities: All three umpires have responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches.

PU is also responsible for:

1. Calling the pitch
2. Fair/foul calls up to the third-base bag and all fair-foul calls down the first-base line (less than two outs); fair/foul calls up to the first-base bag and all fair-foul calls down the third-base line (two outs)
3. Fly balls in your areas of the outfield
4. All runners touching home and any play at the plate
5. If U3 goes out, is responsible for tag up by R3

If less than two outs, U1 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at second base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a right-handed batter
3. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U1 should never cross the infield dirt)
4. Any play at first or second base
5. Any play at third if U3 goes out

If two outs, U1 is also responsible for:

1. Fair/foul calls from the first-base bag down the right-field line
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a right-handed batter
3. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U1 can and should go out if necessary)
4. Any play at first or second involving BR (unless out on trouble ball)

If less than two outs, U3 is also responsible for:

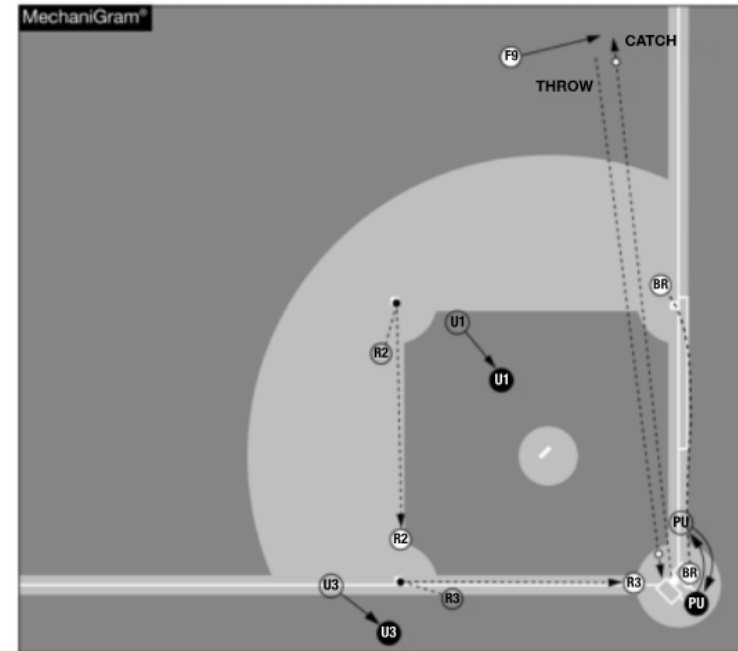
1. Fair/foul calls from the third-base bag down the left-field line
2. Pickoff attempt at third base
3. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a left-handed batter
4. Stolen base attempt into third base by R2
5. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U3 can and should go out if necessary when starting in the "D" position.)

6. Any play at third (if you don't go out)

If two outs, U3 is also responsible for:

1. Pickoff attempt at second or third base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a left-handed batter
3. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U3 should never cross the infield dirt)
4. Any play at third

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD, CATCH, WITH LESS THAN TWO OUTS



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the right fielder; R3 tags up and advances toward the plate, drawing a throw there; R2 tags up and advances toward third base.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Clears catcher and removes mask. Moves to the best position possible to view the fair/foul and catch/no catch, then moves into position to rule on all plays at the plate. Remember that the fair/foul and catch/no catch are the priorities. Move up the first-base line and back to the plate in foul territory.

U1: Observes R2's tag up at second base. U1 moves into position for any play at second base. If the ball is not caught, U1 observes base touches at first and second base and has all plays at those bases.

U3: Observes R3's tag up. U3 moves into position for all base touches and any play at third base.

Crew of Three: Runner on Third

General Information

U1 Initial position: U1 will start in the "A" position.

U3 Initial position: U3 will start in the "D" position, but not as deep as normal. U3 must be able to get into position for an attempted pickoff at third base.

Before the play: There are no rotations from this configuration. The base umpires must be aware of the possible need to cover each other's positions if one umpire goes out. Make sure you give each partner the number of outs and a signal that you know that the need for help on coverages is possible.

Potential plays and responsibilities: All three umpires have responsibility for balks and/or illegal pitches.

PU is also responsible for:

1. Calling the pitch
2. Fair/foul calls up to the first-base and third-base bag
3. R3 tagging up at third and any play at the plate.

U1 is also responsible for:

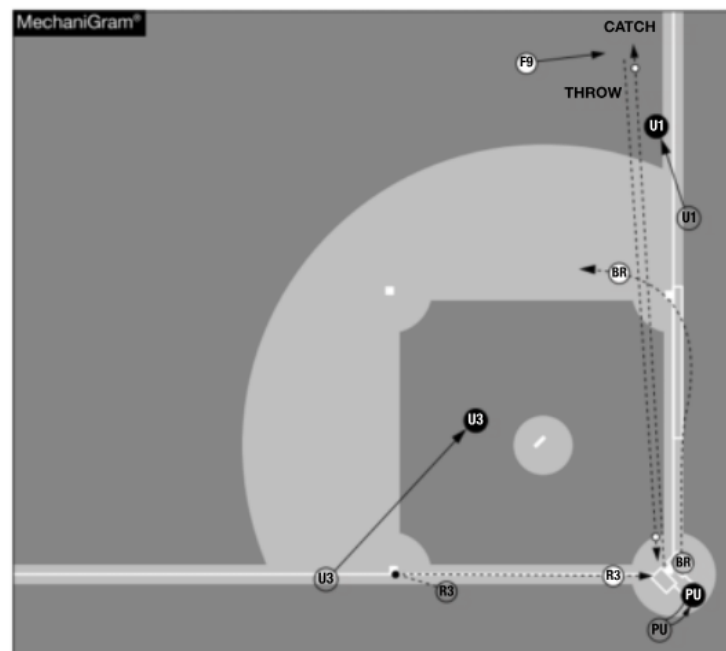
1. Fair/foul calls from the first-base bag down the right-field line
2. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a right-handed batter
3. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U1 can and should go out if necessary)
4. Any play at first base involving BR
5. Any play on the bases involving BR if U3 goes out
6. Has play at third base if U3 goes out and R3 tags and returns to third

U3 is also responsible for:

1. Any pickoff attempt at third base by the pitcher or catcher
2. Fair/foul calls from the third-base bag down the left-field line
3. Help (when asked by PU) on a checked swing on a left-handed batter
4. Fly balls in your area of the outfield (U3 can and should go out if necessary)
5. Any play at second or third involving BR
6. Any play on the bases involving BR if U1 goes out

CREW OF THREE: RUNNER ON THIRD

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD, CATCH, U1 GOES OUT



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the right fielder; U1 goes out; R3 tags up and advances toward the plate, drawing a throw there.

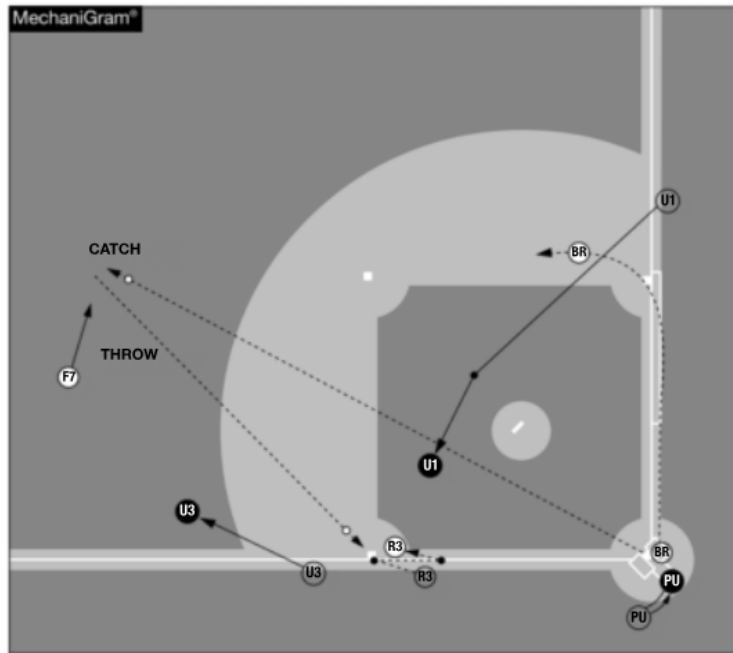
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves into a position to observe R3's tag up at third base. PU returns to the plate for any play there.

U1: Goes out and rules on the fair/foul (if necessary) and catch/no catch. U1 does not return to the infield during the play.

U3: Moves to the infield immediately. U3 moves into position for any play back into third involving R3. If the ball is not caught, U3 moves into position for all plays and touches on the bases.

FLY BALL TO LEFT-CENTER FIELD, CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Before the play: Give pre-pitch signals.

Action on the field: Fly ball to left-center field caught by the left fielder; U3 goes out; R3 tags up, advances a few steps toward the plate, then returns to third base, drawing a throw there.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves into a position to observe R3's tag up at third base. PU returns to the plate for any play there.

U1: Moves into position directly behind the pitcher's mound. U1 moves into position for all plays and touches on the bases, including any play at third base on R3.

U3: Goes out and rules on the fair/foul (if necessary) and catch/no catch. U3 does not return to the infield during the play.

Part 9

Crew of Four

Basic Principles

1. Better outfield coverage. Having four umpires allows for better angles on outfield coverage without sacrificing base coverage.
2. Know three-umpire mechanics. You must have a complete understanding of three-umpire mechanics to work with four umpires. Depending on who goes out on a fly ball, oftentimes the rest of the crew reverts to using three-umpire mechanics.

Line Drive Responsibilities

- A. Umpires will be held accountable to set their initial pre-pitch position with strong consideration given to line drive responsibilities.
- B. Umpires shall start with their inside foot next to the foul line and shall NOT straddle the line.
- C. U1 and U3 will position themselves no more than 6-8 feet behind the fielder with no runners on base. If the fielder is playing deep, U1 should cut this distance in half and be 3-4 feet behind the fielder. The umpire should never put himself in a position where a fielder could step into or dive into him on a line drive.
- D. U1 and U3 should be well positioned to see line drives hit at the feet of the first or third baseman in their normal positions (with a step or two forward) and to make that call.
- E. U1 and U3 will now take all line drives hit directly at and immediately in front of the first or third baseman. "Directly in front" refers to the immediate area in front of the fielder and in the immediate vicinity of his starting position. A fielder who moves a significant distance straight forward will remain the plate umpire's call.
- F. When positioned in the outfield, U2 should always work over the inside shoulder (closest to second base) of the middle infielder to be in the best possible position to rule on line drives in his coverage area.

Basic Outfield Coverage

- A. Umpires will not automatically go out on all fly balls with or without runners on base. Umpires are expected to read fly balls and only go out on a trouble ball. The philosophy is “if in doubt, go out.” That philosophy is not meant to replace the reading of fly balls. Pause, read and react techniques should always be utilized.
- B. Four conditions that require an umpire to go to the outfield from the “A” and “D” positions:
1. The outfielder turns and begins to run toward the outfield fence (possible home run)
 2. Multiple players converging on a fly ball
 3. A catch being made below the waist
 4. Outfielder moving toward the foul line and possible fair/foul decision
- C. If in doubt, go out on fly balls in your coverage area.
1. If you are going out — go out hard.
 2. Leave no doubt in your partners’ mind about whether or not you are going out.
 3. Signal your partner by raising your arm if you are going out.
 4. If you are not going out, hold your arm out to your partner with your palm facing him.
 5. If you do not go out, you still maintain responsibility for the catch.
 6. Once you go out, do not return until the play is complete.
 7. U2 positioned within the infield should never cross the base path to observe a catch/no catch.
- D. When a home run is hit with no runners on base, it is not necessary to have the entire crew fully rotate.
1. U3 can go out down the line and then come back to third base for touches at that base. If U2 goes out, U3 can easily take all touches at second and third. If U1 goes out, either U2 or the home-plate umpire should have the touch of first as U1 will not be able to get back to first after going out to see the batter-runner touch first base.
 2. The most important thing to remember is that the crew must communicate and read each other on this situation as the batter-runner is rounding the bases.

Overthrows**At the plate**

Plate umpire (or the U1 if there is a rotation to home) has responsibility on all overthrows to the plate.

At first base (toward the plate)

Plate umpire has primary responsibility on all overthrows.

At first base (toward outfield)

First-base umpire (or any umpire rotating to first base) has the primary responsibility on all overthrows.

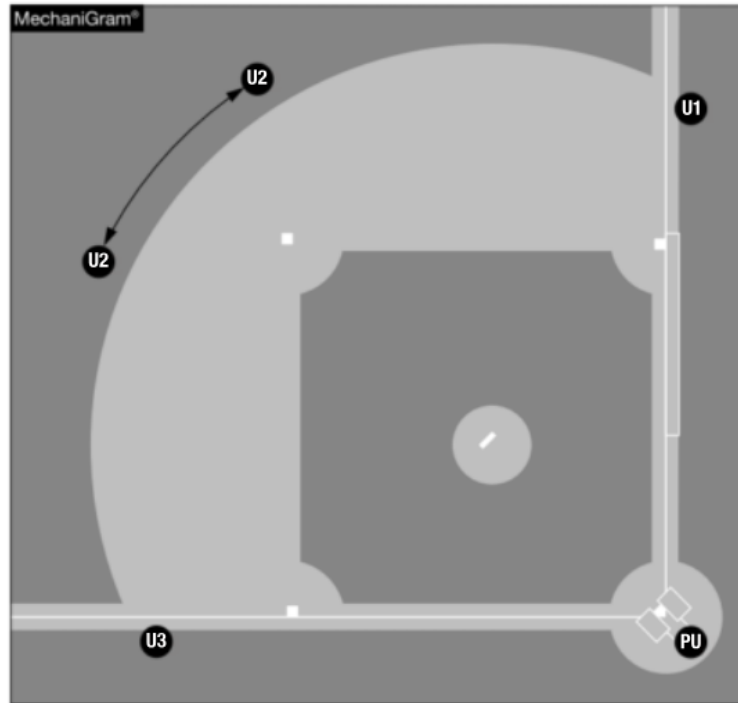
At third base (toward the plate)

Plate umpire (or the first-base umpire if there is a rotation to home) has primary responsibility on all overthrows. Exception: If the plate umpire has rotated to third base to rule on a play the plate umpire will have the responsibility of the overthrow at third base.

At third base (toward outfield)

Third-base umpire (or any umpire rotating to third base) has the primary responsibility on all overthrows.

INITIAL POSITIONS



Action on the field: No action

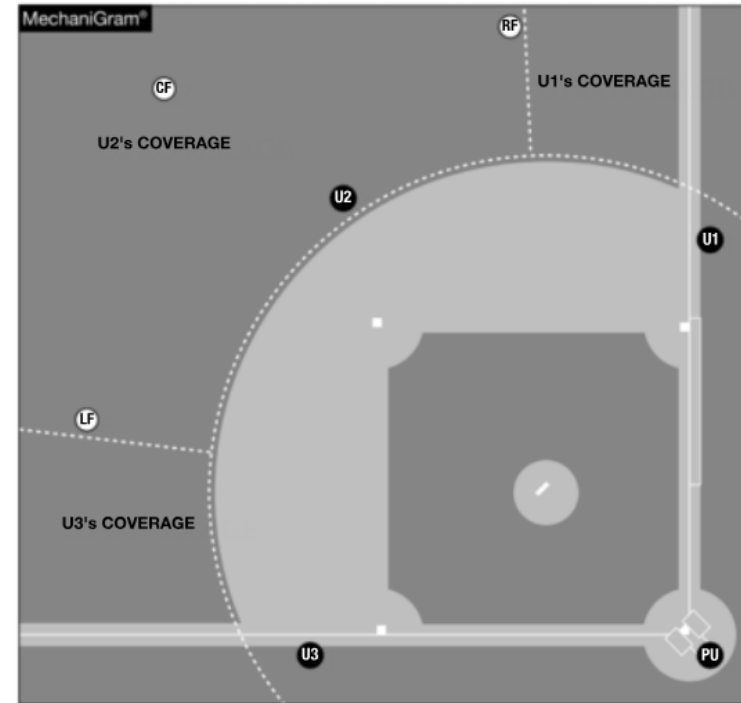
Umpire responsibilities:

U1: Starts in the "A" position.

U2: Should always work over the inside shoulder of the middle infielder to be in the best possible position to rule on line drives in his coverage area.

U3: Starts in the "D" position.

OUTFIELD CATCH COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action

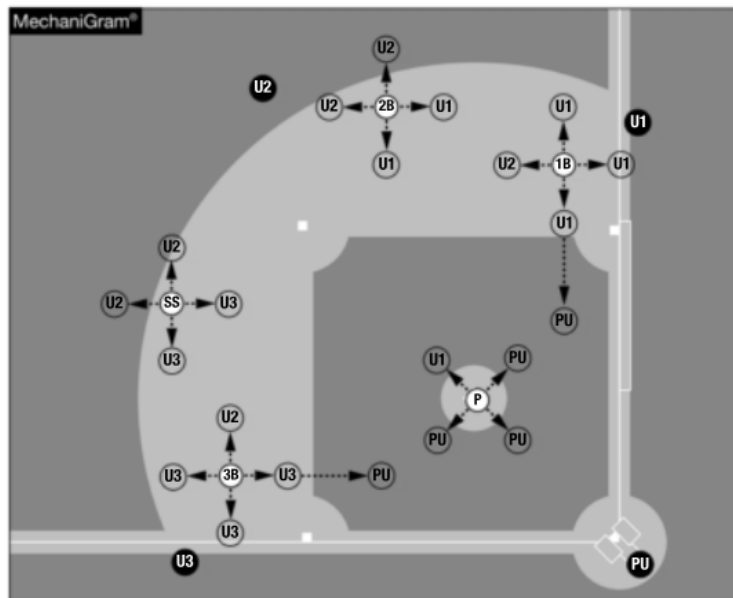
Umpire responsibilities:

U1: Has the right fielder moving toward the right-field foul line.

U2: Dictates coverage and has the left fielder straight in and straight back to the right fielder straight in and straight back.

U3: Has the left fielder moving toward the left-field foul line.

INFIELD CATCH COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action

Umpire responsibilities:

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the first and third basemen moving significantly in.

U1 has catches:

1. By the second baseman moving in or toward first base.
2. By the first baseman on line drives directly at or directly in front, moving back or toward the line.
3. By the pitcher moving back.

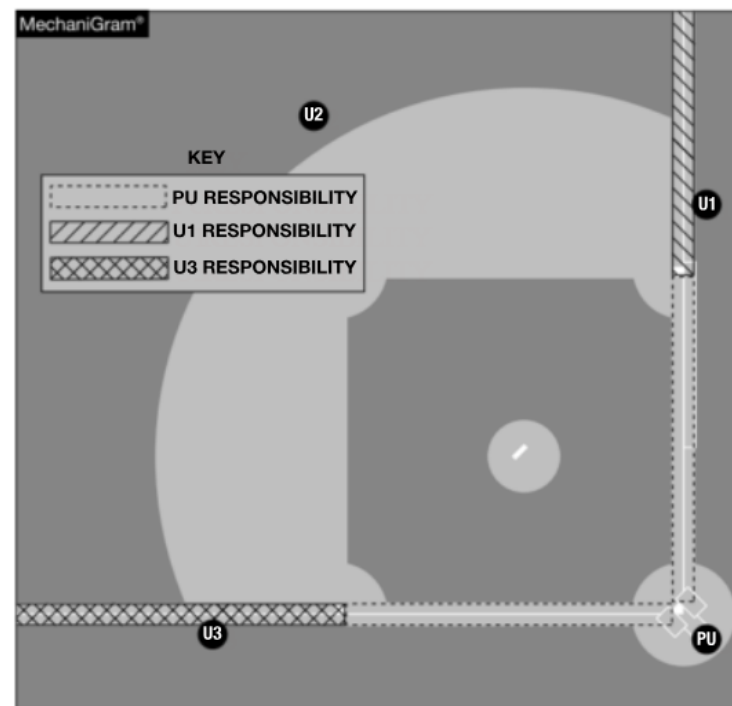
U2 has catches:

1. By the second baseman moving out or toward second base.
2. By the shortstop moving out or toward second base.
3. By the first baseman moving right.
4. By the third baseman moving left.

U3 has catches:

1. By the shortstop moving in or toward third base.
2. By the third baseman on line drives directly at or directly in front, moving back or toward the line.

FAIR/FOUL COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action

Umpire responsibilities:

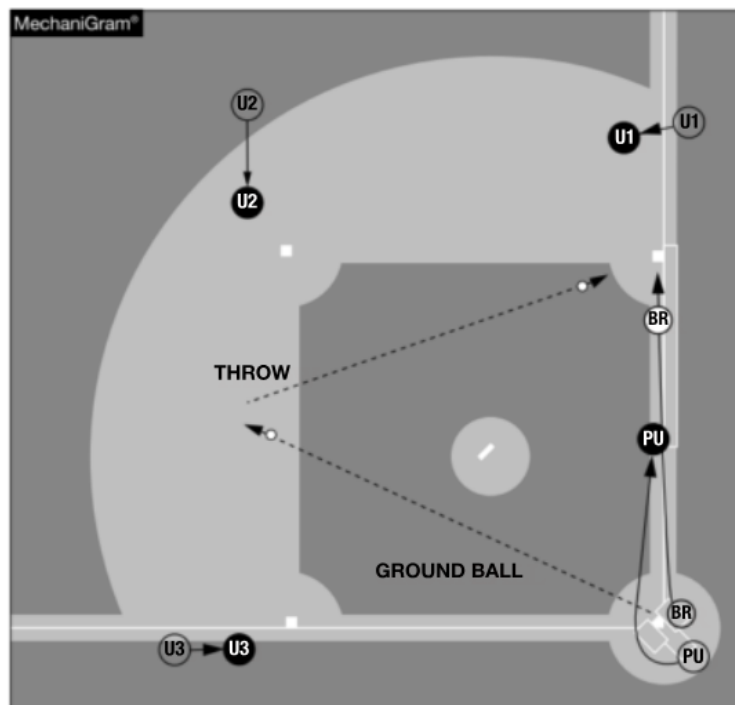
PU: Responsible for balls up to first base and third base.

U1: Responsible for balls that hit first base or go beyond.

U2: Has no fair/foul responsibility.

U3: Responsible for balls that hit third base or go beyond.

PLAYS WITHIN THE INFIELD



Action on the field: Ground ball to the shortstop, who throws to first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

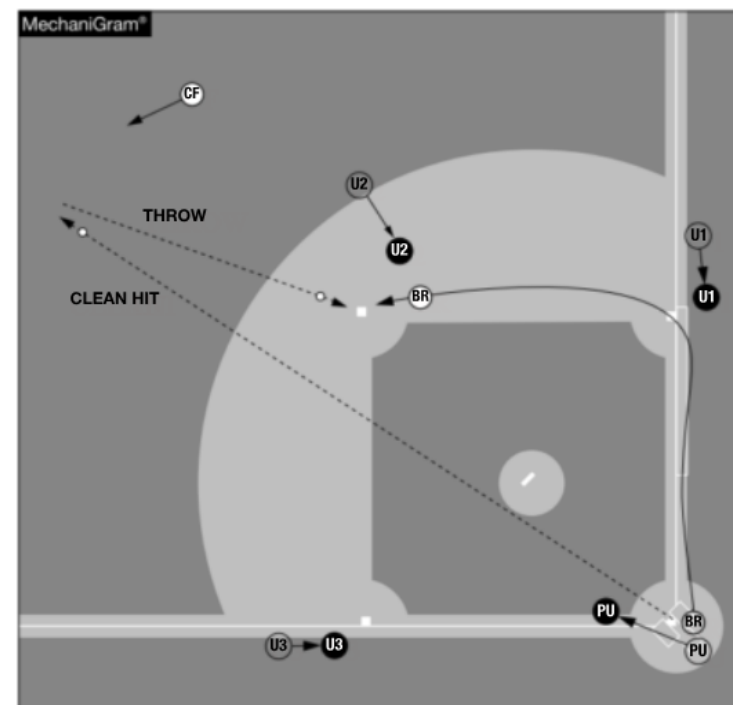
PU: Moves toward first base to assist U1 if asked on swipe tag or pulled foot by the first baseman.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on plays at first base.

U2: Moves toward second base. It is acceptable for U2 to take the play from the outfield side of second base.

U3: Observes.

CLEAN HIT TO OUTFIELD



Action on the field: Clean hit to center field, no catch; the batter-runner advances toward second base, drawing a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

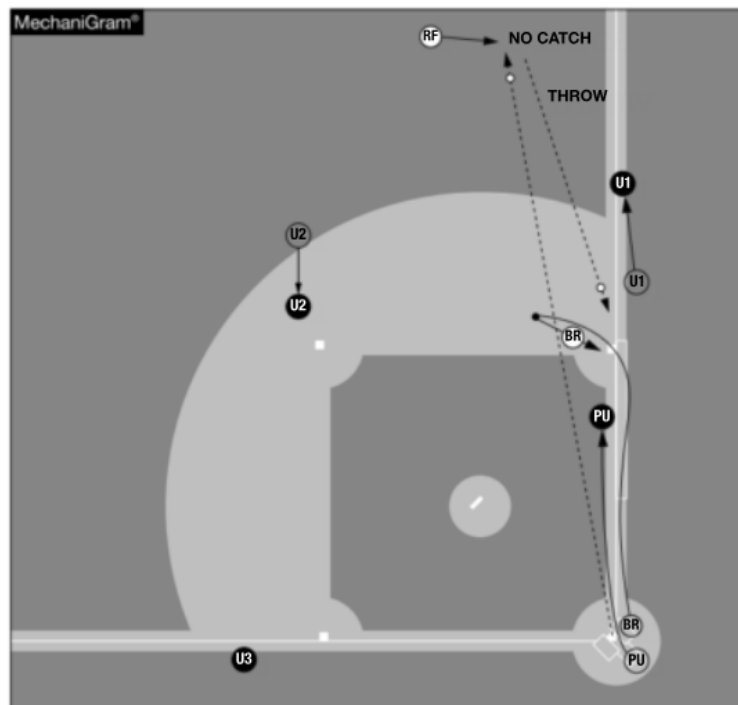
PU: Observes and has all plays at the plate.

U1: Observes the batter-runner touch first base.

U2: Moves toward second base and prepares for all plays on the batter-runner at second base. It is acceptable for U2 to take the play from the outfield side of second base.

U3: Observes and has all plays at third base.

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD: NO CATCH, U1 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball to right field, no catch; U1 goes out; the batter-runner rounds first base and returns, drawing a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

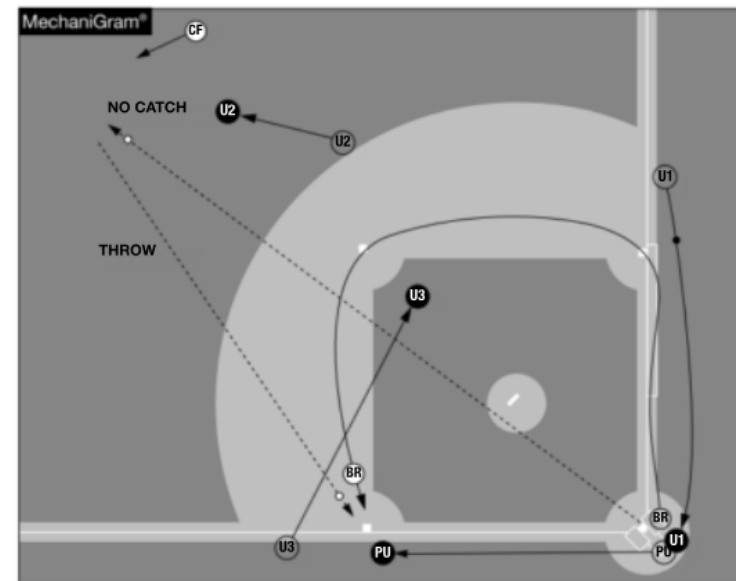
PU: Moves down the line toward first base for any possible throwback at first base on the batter-runner.

U1: Moves to a position to best view the catch/no catch.

U2: Moves into the infield at second base. It is acceptable for U2 to take the play from the outfield side of second base.

U3: Observes and has any play at third base.

FLY BALL TO CENTER FIELD: NO CATCH, U2 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Deep fly ball to center field, no catch; U2 goes out; batter-runner advances toward third base and draws a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves toward third base and has any play there on the batter-runner.

If a play develops at third base, PU can take the play in either fair or foul territory.

U1: Observes the base touch at first base and if the batter-runner commits to third base, U1 moves toward the plate for any play there on the batter-runner.

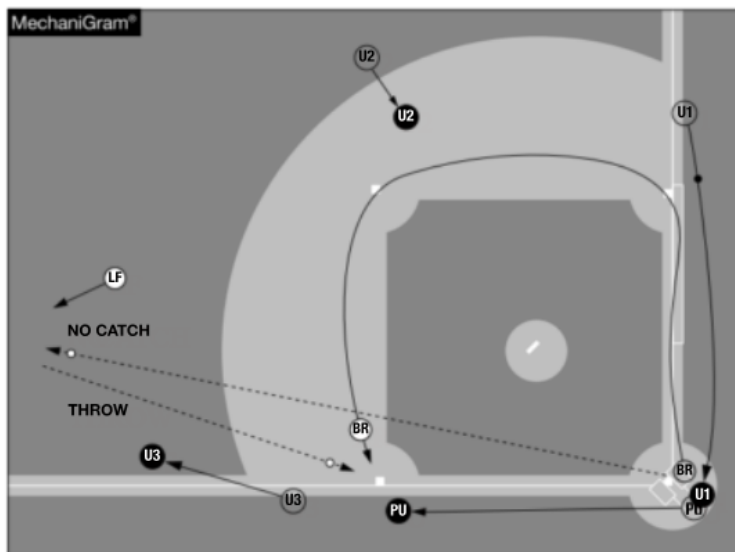
U2: Moves to a position to best view the catch/no catch.

U3: Has all plays at second base and observes the base touch there.

Note: This coverage also applies to home runs.

Note: On a routine fly ball to the outfield in U2's coverage area, U2 will remain responsible for the catch/no catch decision while he moves toward 2nd base on the outside of the diamond to be in position at 2nd base on a play should the center fielder drop the ball. When U2 is reading the fly ball on this play - U3 should start toward 2nd in case U2 decides to go out. U2 also has the option on this play to give up the fly ball completely and run into the diamond and take any potential play at second base from inside the diamond.

FLY BALL TO LEFT FIELD: NO CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball to left field, no catch; U3 goes out; batter-runner advances toward third base, drawing a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves toward third base and has any play or base touch at third base by the batter-runner. If a play develops at third base, PU can take the play in either fair or foul territory.

U1: Observes the batter-runner touch first base and, if the batter-runner commits to second base, U1 moves toward the plate for any play there on the batter-runner.

U2: Moves into position to cover plays at second base. It is acceptable for U2 to take the play from the outfield side of second base.

U3: Moves to a position to best view the catch/no catch.

Note: This coverage also applies to home runs.

Crew of Four: Runner on First

General Information**Fair/Foul Coverage**

The coverage is the same as with no runners on (see 9.5.4), with U2 in the “Deep B” or “Deep C” position.

PU: Has responsibility for balls up to first base and third base.

U1: Has responsibility for balls that hit first base or go beyond.

U2: Has no fair/foul responsibility.

U3: Has responsibility for balls that hit third base or go beyond.

Plays Within the Infield

The coverage is similar to plays with no runners on (see 9.5.5), with U2 in the “Deep B” or “Deep C” position.

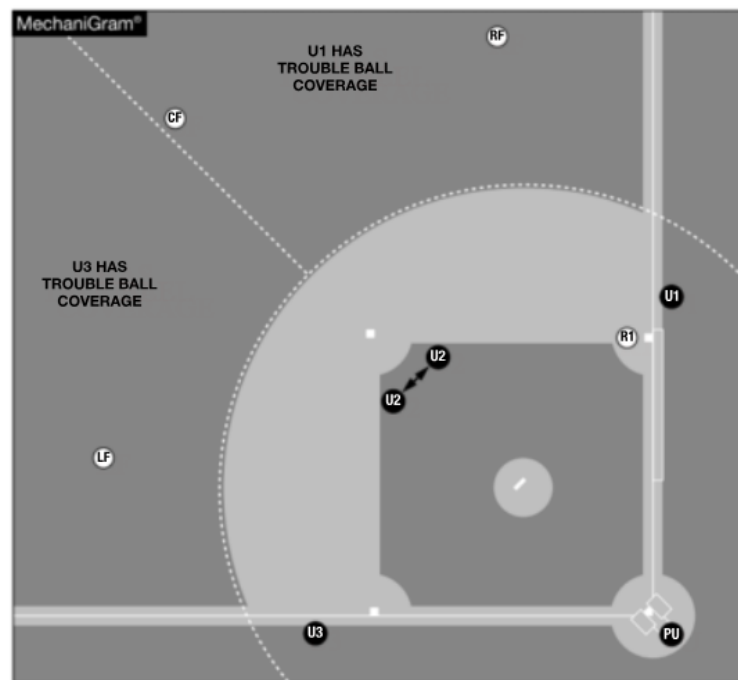
PU: Moves toward first base to assist U1 if asked on swipe tag or pulled foot by the first baseman.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on plays at first base.

U2: Has all plays at second base.

U3: Observes and has all plays at third base.

INITIAL POSITIONS AND OUTFIELD COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action

Umpire responsibilities:

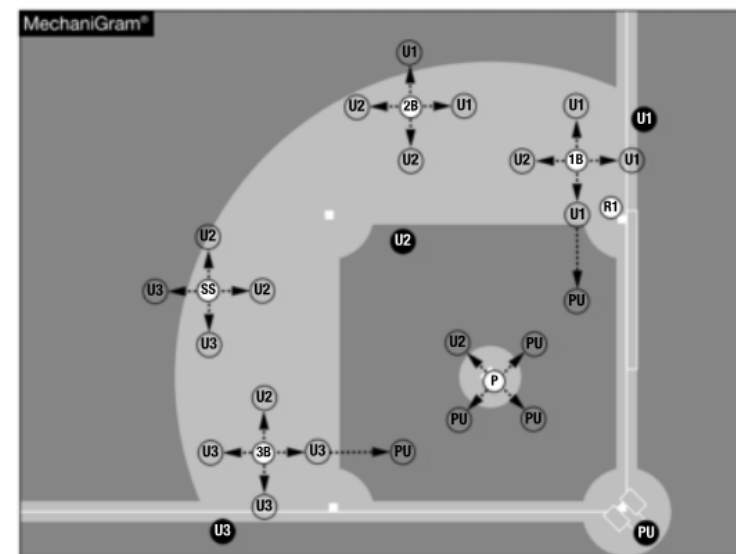
U1 is in the "A" position. U2 is in the "Deep B" or "Deep C" position, based on personal preference. U3 is in the "D" position.

U1: Has trouble balls from the center fielder straight in and straight back and when he moves toward right field. U1 also has all trouble balls to the right fielder.

U2: Has all routine fly balls from the left fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his left all the way to the right fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his right.

U3: Has all trouble balls with the center-fielder going to his right and all trouble balls to the left fielder.

INFIELD CATCH COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action

Umpire responsibilities:

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the first and third basemen moving directly toward the plate.

U1 has catches:

1. Immediately in front of the first baseman, out or toward the foul line.
2. By the second baseman moving back or toward first base.

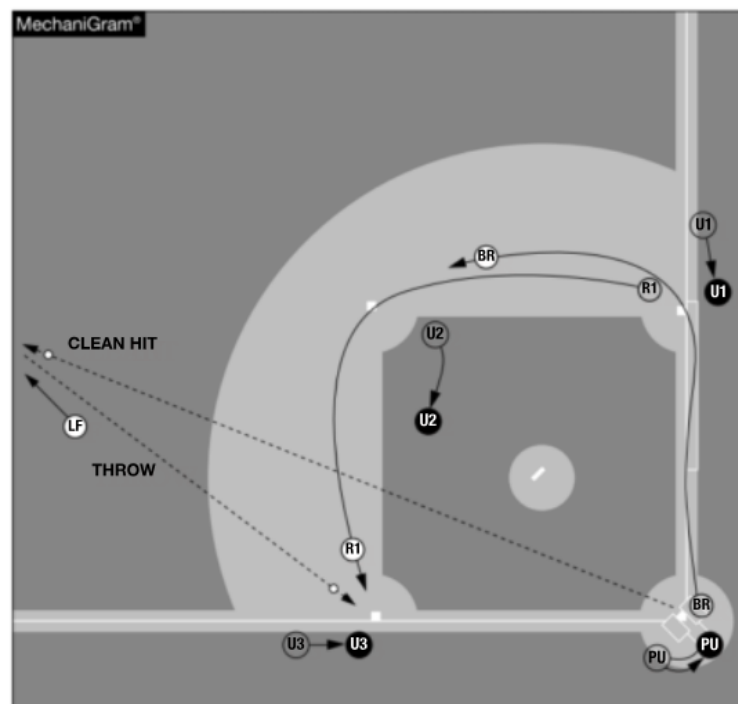
U2 has catches

1. By the second baseman moving in or toward second base.
2. By the shortstop moving in or toward second base.
3. By the third baseman moving toward second base.
4. By the first baseman moving toward second base.
5. By the pitcher moving back.

U3 has catches:

1. Immediately in front of the third baseman, out or toward the foul line.
2. By the shortstop moving back or toward third base.

CLEAN HIT TO OUTFIELD



Action on the field: Clean hit to left field; R1 advances toward third base, drawing a throw there; the batter-runner rounds first base

Umpire responsibilities:

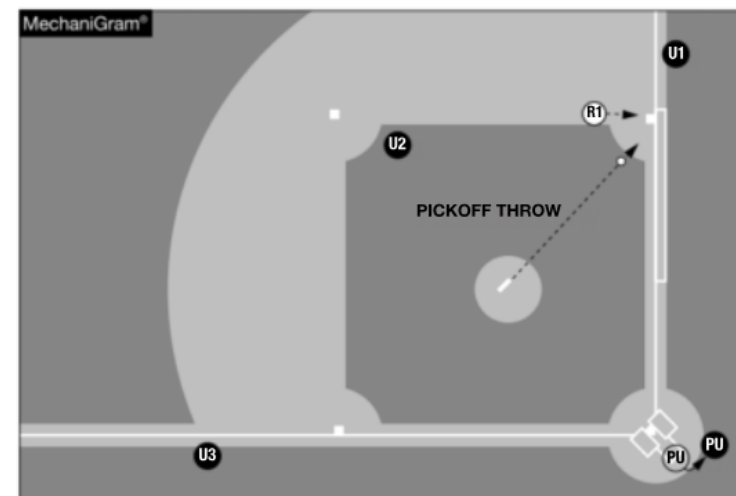
PU: Has all plays at the plate.

U1: Observes the batter-runner's base touch at first base.

U2: Observes R1's and the batter-runner's base touch at second base and has all plays there.

U3: Observes and has all plays at third base.

PICKOFF AT FIRST



Action on the field: Before pitching, the pitcher attempts to pick off the runner at first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

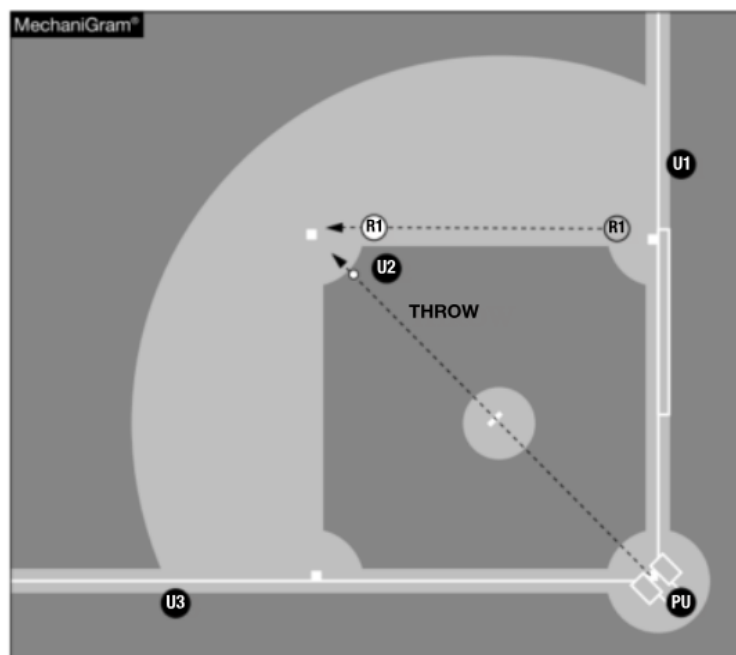
PU: Watches the pitcher for potential balks, then takes a step out from behind the catcher to observe the action or in case ball is overthrown.

U1: Umpires shall start with their inside foot next to the foul line and NOT straddling the line. U1's distance will be no more than 6-10 feet from the bag. U1's line of sight should be to the inside of the runner leading off with a clear view of the pitcher. When the first baseman is NOT holding the runner on first, U1 will position himself no more than 6-8 feet behind the fielder. The umpire should never put himself in a position where a fielder could step or dive into him on a line drive. For all back picks at first base, an umpire should always anticipate this pick from the catcher and be ready to quickly move as far as the play will allow.

U2: Watches the pitcher for potential balks before throwing. Is responsible for all plays at second base, including if R1 ends up in a rundown.

U3: Watches the pitcher for potential balks before throwing. Is responsible for all plays at third base, including if R1 ends up in a rundown.

STEAL OF SECOND



Action on the field: The batter swings and misses at the pitch as R1 attempts to steal second base.

Umpire responsibilities:

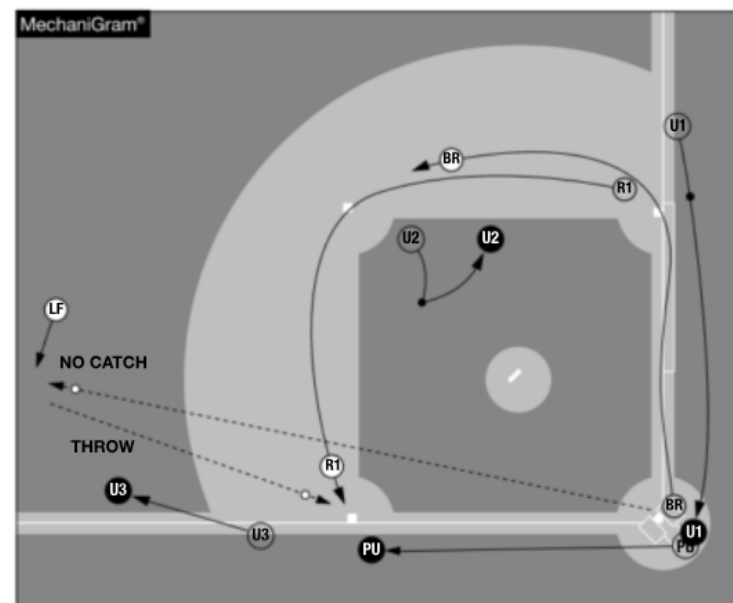
PU: Signals the swinging strike without taking his focus off the play at hand. Ensures the batter does not interfere with the catcher's throw. Observes the play.

U1: Observes the pitch and the initial throw to second.

U2: Umpires are not allowed to start in the infield and then run to a position out in the dirt looking straight down the baseline toward second base during a steal play. All steal plays must be taken between the B and C starting positions. Takes a step toward the second-base cutout. Keeps eye on the ball and turns as the ball passes U2. Comes to a hands-on-knee set to see the play at second base. If the play is a swipe-tag out, ensure the fielder retains possession of the ball before making the out call. If the runner is safe, no delay is necessary.

U3: Observes the pitch and the initial throw to second.

FLY BALL TO LEFT FIELD: NO CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball to left field, no catch; U3 goes out; R1 advances toward third base and draws a throw there; the batter-runner advances toward second base

Umpire responsibilities:

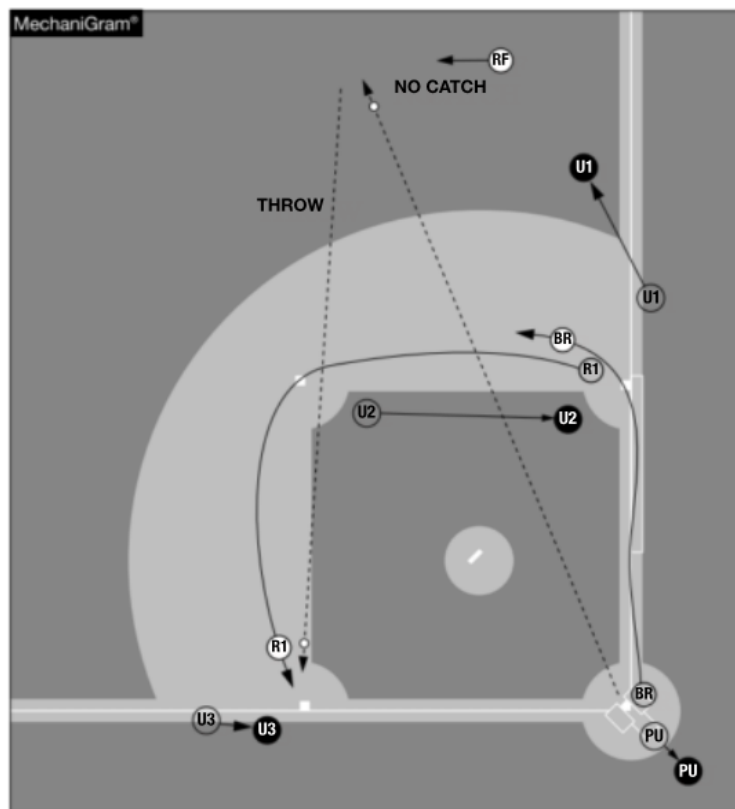
PU: Moves toward third base and, if R1 commits to third, PU rotates into position to rule on all plays there. If a play develops at third base, PU can take the play in either fair or foul territory.

U1: Observes all base touches at first base and begins to move toward the plate. If R1 commits to third base, U1 rotates to the plate for all plays there. If applicable, U1 observes R1's tag up.

U2: Observes all base touches at second base and has all plays there on R1. If R1 commits to third base, U2 assumes responsibility for the batter-runner and should move to a position to rule on any plays at first or second base.

U3: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch.

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD: NO CATCH, U1 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball to right field, no catch; U1 goes out; R1 advances toward third base and draws a throw there; the batter-runner rounds first base

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Reads the ball and the runners. If R1 commits to third base, PU returns to the plate.

U1: Observes the no catch.

U2: Observes all base touches at first and second base and has all plays there. U2 has all plays involving the batter-runner and R1 at first or second base.

U3: Observes all base touches at third base and rules on all plays there.

Crew of Four: Runners on First and Second

Infield Catch Coverage

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first base (see 9.6.2), with U2 in the “Deep B” or “Deep C” position.

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the first and third basemen moving toward the plate.

U1 has catches:

1. By the first baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
2. By the second baseman moving back or toward first base.

U2 has catches:

1. By the second baseman moving in or toward second base.
2. By the shortstop moving in or toward second base.
3. By the third baseman moving toward second base.

U3 has catches:

1. By the third baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
2. By the shortstop moving back or toward third base.

Fair/Foul Coverage

The coverage is the same as with no runners on (see 9.5.4), with U2 in the “Deep B” or “Deep C” position.

PU: Responsibility for balls up to first base and third base.

U1: Responsibility for balls that hit first base or go beyond.

U2: Has no fair/foul responsibility.

U3: Responsibility for balls that hit third base or go beyond.

Plays Within the Infield

The coverage is similar to plays with no runner on (see 9.5.5).

PU: Moves toward first base to assist U1 if asked on swipe tag or pulled foot by the first baseman.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on plays at first base.

U2: Has all plays at second base.

U3: Observes and has all plays at third base.

Clean Hit to Outfield

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first only (see 9.6.3), with U2 in the “Deep B” or “Deep C” position.

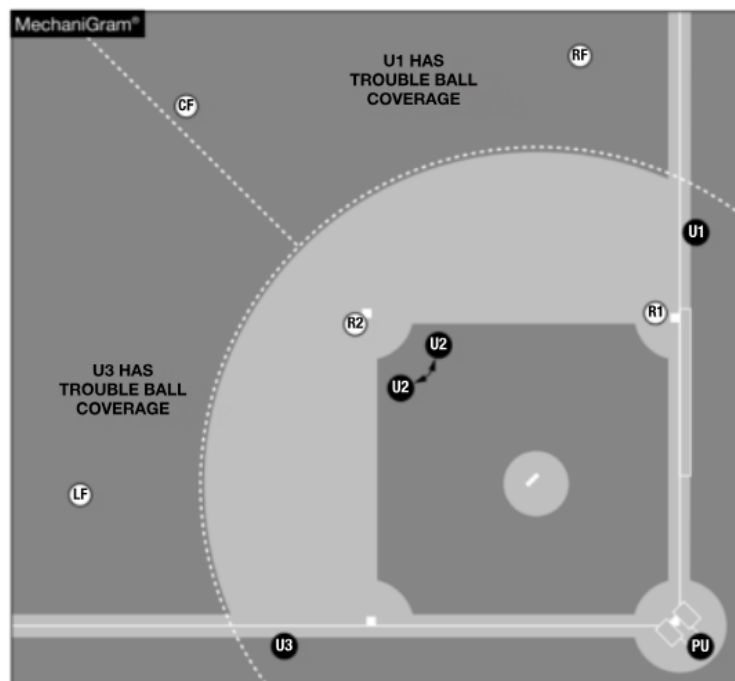
PU: Observes all touches at the plate and has all plays there.

U1: Observes the batter-runner's base touch at first base.

U2: Observes all base touches at second base and has all plays there.

U3: Observes all base touches at third and has all plays there.

INITIAL POSITIONS AND OUTFIELD COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action

Umpire responsibilities:

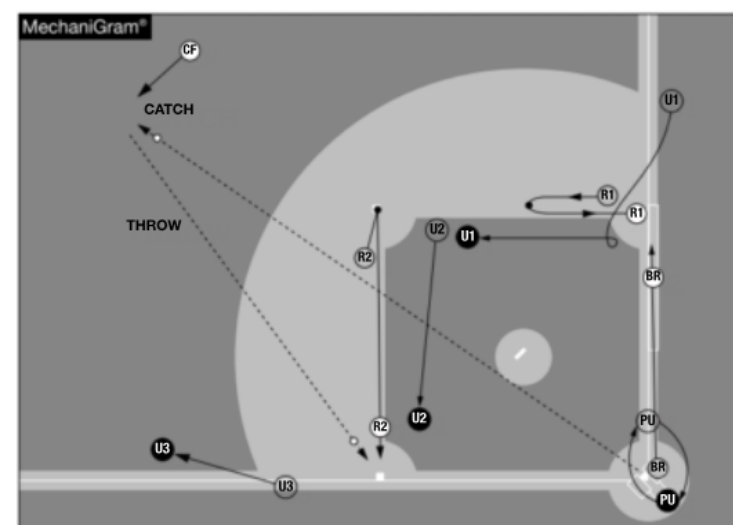
U1 is in the "A" position. U2 is in the "Deep B" or "Deep C" position, based on personal preference. U3 is in the "D" position.

U1: Has trouble balls from the center fielder straight in and straight back and when he moves toward right field. U1 also has all trouble balls to the right fielder.

U2: Has all routine fly balls from the left fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his left all the way to the right fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his right.

U3: Has all trouble balls with the center fielder going to his right and all trouble balls to the left fielder.

FLY BALL TO CENTER FIELD: CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Deep fly ball caught by the center fielder; U3 goes out; R2 tags up and advances toward third base, drawing a throw there; R1 returns to first base

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Is responsible for the tag-up at first base and any play that develops at home plate. PU should initially move in the direction of first base no more than a few steps off the dirt circle. Once you judge the tag-up at first base, return to the home plate area for any play that may develop there.

U1: Should be moving quickly towards second base (inside or to the outside of the diamond) while observing R2's tag-up at second base. U1 will take any play that may develop at either first or second base.

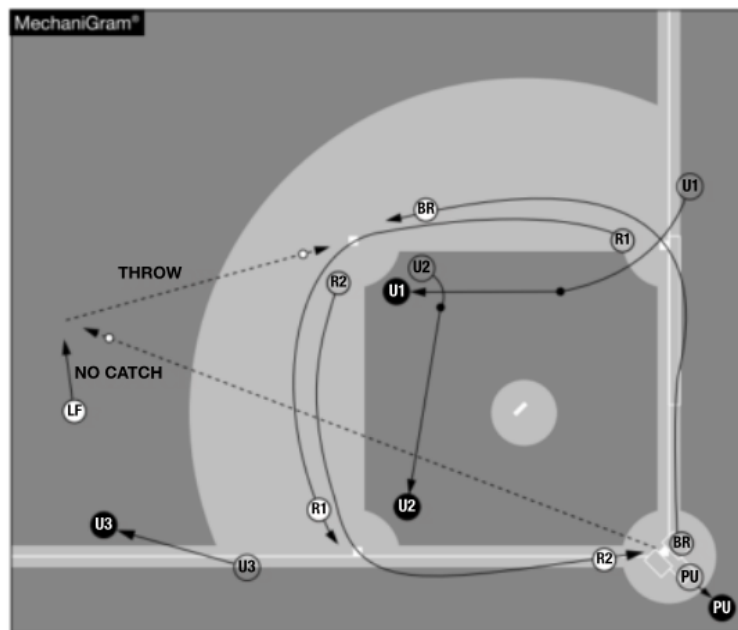
U2: Will work towards the area of third base (inside or outside of the diamond) and will be responsible for any play that develops at third base.

U3: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch in the outfield.

Point of Emphasis

This mechanic is only to be used when a fly ball is hit in U3's area. This will allow U2 to immediately release towards third base and get in the best possible position (inside or outside of the diamond) for any play that may develop there. U1 will have any play that develops at second base.

FLY BALL TO LEFT FIELD: NO CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball to left field, no catch; U3 goes out; R2 advances toward the plate; R1 advances toward third base; the batter-runner advances toward second base, drawing a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has R2's base touch of third base, then retreats to the plate and moves into position for all plays there.

U1: Enters the infield and has all plays on the batter-runner at first and second base.

U2: Observes R1's base touch at second base and has all plays there on R1 and all plays at third base.

U3: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch.

Crew of Four: Bases Loaded

Initial Positions and Outfield Coverage

U1 is in the "A" position. U2 is in the "Deep B" or "Deep C" position, based on personal preference. U3 is in the "D" position.

U1: Has trouble balls from the center fielder straight in and straight back and when he moves toward right field. U1 also has all trouble balls to the right fielder.

U2: Has all routine fly balls from the left fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his left all the way to the right fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his right.

U3: Has all trouble balls with the center fielder going to his right and all trouble balls to the left fielder.

Infield Catch Coverage

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first base.

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the first and third basemen moving toward the plate.

U1 has catches:

1. By the first baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
2. By the second baseman moving back or toward first base.

U2 has catches:

1. By the second baseman moving in or toward second base.
2. By the shortstop moving in or toward second base.
3. By the third baseman moving toward second base.
4. By the first baseman moving toward second base.
5. By the pitcher moving back.

U3 has catches:

1. By the third baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
2. By the shortstop moving back or toward third base.

Fair/Foul Coverage

The coverage is the same as with no runners on.

PU: Responsible for balls up to first base and third base.

U1: Responsible for balls that hit first base or go beyond.

U2: Has no fair/foul responsibility.

U3: Responsible for balls that hit third base or go beyond.

Plays Within the Infield

The coverage is similar to plays with no runners on.

PU: Has all plays at the plate and, if possible, moves toward first base to assist U1 if asked on swipe tag or pulled foot by the first baseman if there is no play on R3 at home.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on plays at first base.
 U2: Has all plays at second base.
 U3: Observes and has all plays at third base.

Clean Hit to Outfield

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first base.

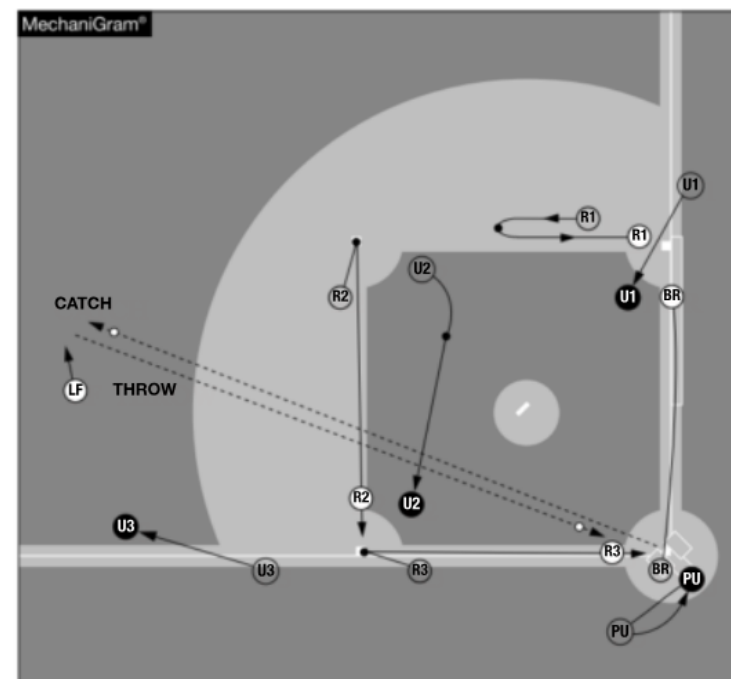
PU: Observes all touches at the plate and has all plays there.

U1: Observes the batter-runner's base touch at first base and has all plays there.

U2: Observes all base touches at second base and has all plays there.

U3: Observes all base touches at third and has all plays there.

FLY BALL TO LEFT FIELD: CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the left fielder; U3 goes out; R3 tags up and advances toward the plate, drawing a throw there; R2 tags up and advances toward third base; R1 remains near first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

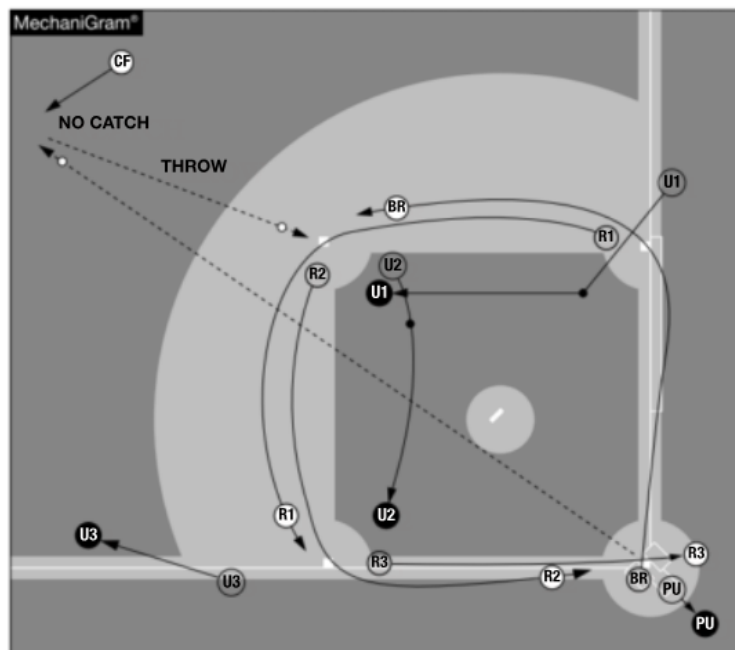
PU: Moves to a position to observe R3's tag up. PU retreats to the plate immediately for any play there.

U1: Observes R1's tag up and has all plays involving R1 at first base.

U2: Retreats and observes R2's tag up. U2 has all plays at third base and plays on R1 at second base.

U3: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch.

FLY BALL TO CENTER FIELD: NO CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball to center field, no catch; U3 goes out; R3 advances toward the plate; R2 advances toward the plate; R1 advances toward third base; the batter-runner advances toward second base, drawing a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

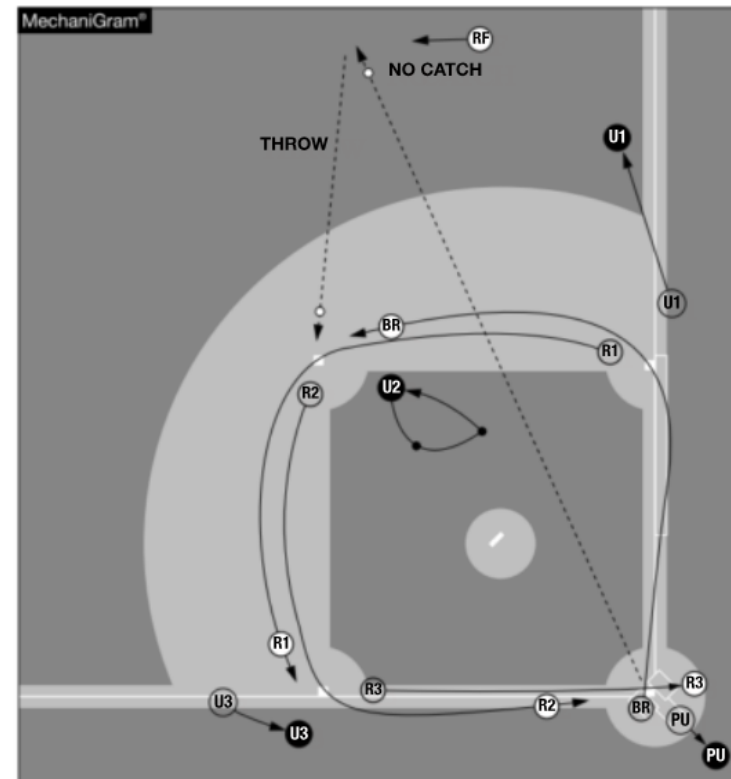
PU: Has R2's base touch of third and all touches and plays at the plate.

U1: Enters the infield, observes the base touch of the batter-runner at first base and has all plays on the batter-runner at first or second base. U1 is also responsible for any secondary play at second base.

U2: Observes base touches at second base and has any play there on R1. U2 also has all plays at third base.

U3: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch.

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD: NO CATCH, U1 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball to right-center field, no catch; U1 goes out; R3 advances toward the plate; R2 advances toward the plate; R1 advances toward third base; the batter-runner advances toward second base, drawing a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has all plays at the plate.

U1: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch.

U2: Has all plays at first and second base, including R1's tag up at first base and R2's tag up at second base if the ball is caught.

U3: Has all plays at third base, including R3's tag up at third base if the ball is caught.

Crew of Four: Runners on First and Third

Infield Catch Coverage

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first base only, with U2 in the “Deep B” or “Deep C” position.

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the first and third basemen moving toward the plate.

U1 has catches:

1. By the first baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
2. By the second baseman moving back or toward first base.

U2 has catches

1. By the second baseman moving in or toward second base.
2. By the shortstop moving in or toward second base.
3. By the third baseman moving toward second base.
4. By the first baseman moving toward second base.
5. By the pitcher moving back.

U3 has catches:

1. By the third baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
2. By the shortstop moving back or toward third base.

Fair/Foul Coverage

The coverage is the same as with no runners on, with U2 in the “Deep B” or “Deep C” position.

PU: Has responsibility for balls up to first base and third base.

U1: Has responsibility for balls that hit first base or go beyond.

U2: Has no fair/foul responsibility.

U3: Has responsibility for balls that hit third base or go beyond.

Plays Within the Infield

The coverage is similar to plays with no runners on, with U2 in the “Deep B” or “Deep C” position.

PU: Moves toward first base to assist U1 if asked on swipe tag or pulled foot by the first baseman if there is no play on R3 at home.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on plays at first base.

U2: Has all plays at second base.

U3: Observes and has all plays at third base.

Clean Hit to Outfield

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first base (see 9.6.3), with U2 in the “Deep B” or “Deep C” position.

PU: Observes all touches at the plate and has all plays there.

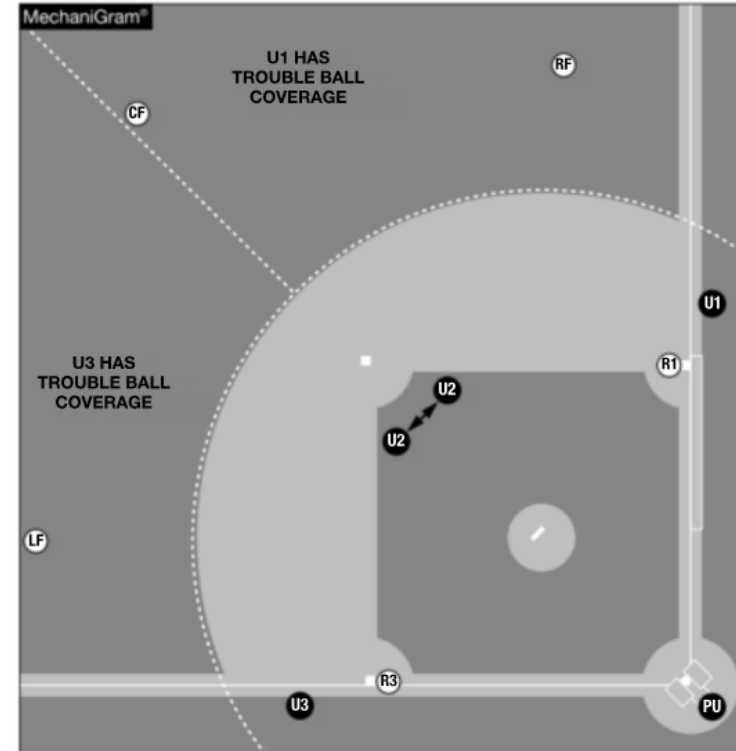
U1: Observes the batter-runner's base touch at first base.

U2: Observes all base touches at second base and has all plays there.

U3: Observes all base touches at third and has all plays there.

CREW OF FOUR: RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

INITIAL POSITIONS AND OUTFIELD COVERAGE



Action on the field: No action

Umpire responsibilities:

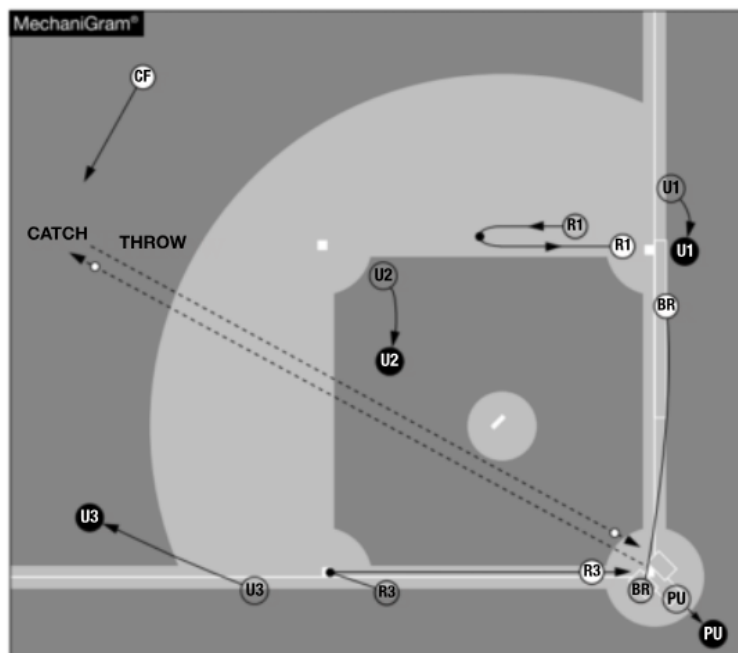
U1 is in the “A” position. U2 is in the “Deep B” or “Deep C” position, based on personal preference. U3 is in the “D” position.

U1: Has trouble balls from the center fielder straight in and straight back and when he moves toward right field. U1 also has all trouble balls to the right fielder.

U2: Has all routine fly balls from the left fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his left all the way to the right fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his right.

U3: Has all trouble balls with the center fielder going to his right and all trouble balls to the left fielder.

FLY BALL TO LEFT-CENTER FIELD: CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the center fielder; U3 goes out; R3 tags up and advances toward the plate, drawing a throw there; R1 returns to first base

Umpire responsibilities:

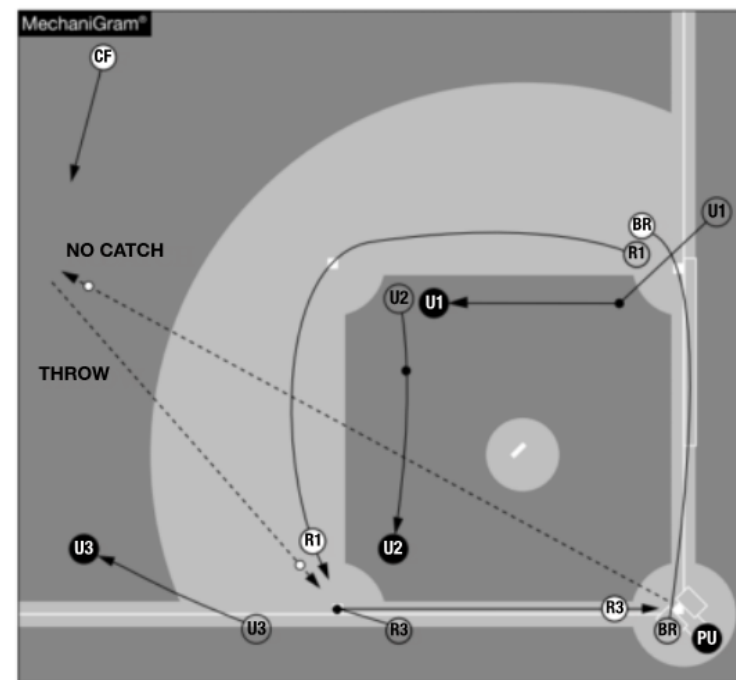
PU: Moves to a position to observe R3's tag up. PU retreats to the plate immediately for all plays there.

U1: Observes R1's tag up if applicable.

U2: Retreats and observes and has all plays at second and third base.

U3: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch.

FLY BALL TO LEFT-CENTER FIELD: NO CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball to left-center field, no catch; U3 goes out; R3, after going back to tag up, advances toward the plate; R1 advances toward third base and draws a throw there; the batter-runner rounds first base

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Stays home, observes the plate touch of all runners. PU moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

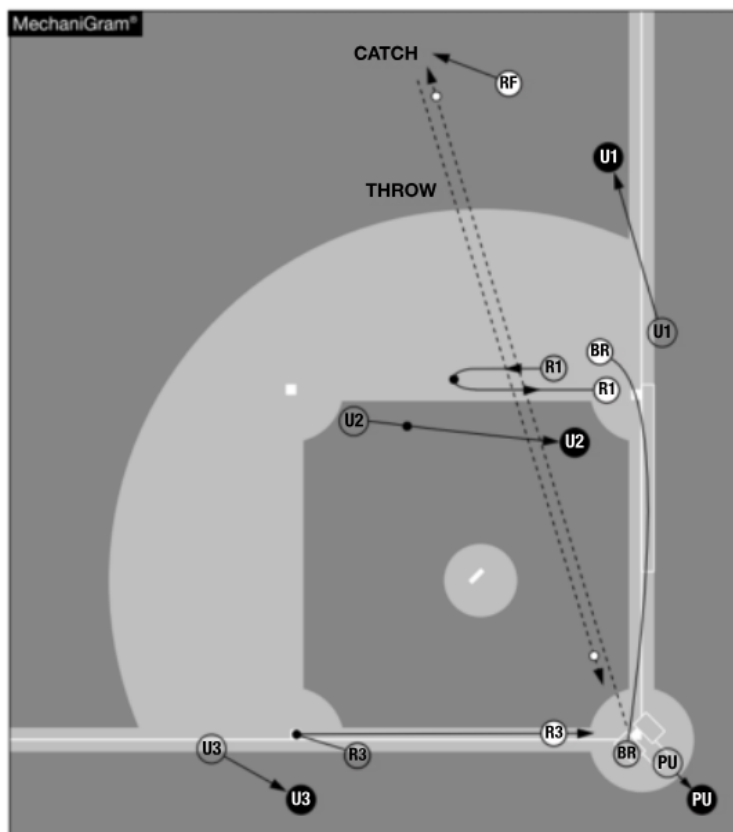
U1: Moves into the infield and observes the batter-runner's base touch at first and has all plays on the batter-runner at first and second base.

U2: Observes the base touches of R1 at second and third base and has all plays on R1 at second and third, plus the batter-runner at third base.

U3: Moves to the best position to view the catch/no catch.

Note: This coverage also applies to home runs.

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD: CATCH, U1 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the right fielder; U1 goes out; R3 tags up and advances toward the plate, drawing a throw there; R1 remains near first base

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has all plays at the plate.

U1: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch.

U2: Retreats and observes R1's tag up. U2 has all plays at first and second base.

U3: Moves to a position to observe R3's tag up and has all plays at third base.

Crew of Four: Runner on Second

Initial Positions and Outfield Coverage

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first base.

U1 is in the "A" position. U2 is in the "Deep B" or "Deep C" position, based on personal preference. U3 is in the "D" position.

U1: Has trouble balls from the center fielder straight in and straight back and when he moves toward right field. U1 also has all trouble balls to the right fielder.

U2: Has all routine fly balls from the left fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his left all the way to the right fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his right.

U3: Has all trouble balls with the center fielder going to his right and all trouble balls to the left fielder.

Infield Catch Coverage

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first base.

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the first and third basemen moving toward the plate.

U1 has catches:

1. By the first baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
2. By the second baseman moving back or toward first base.

U2 has catches:

1. By the second baseman moving in or toward second base.
2. By the shortstop moving in or toward second base.
3. By the third baseman moving toward second base.
4. By the first baseman moving toward second base.
5. By the pitcher moving back.

U3 has catches:

1. By the third baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
2. By the shortstop moving back or toward third base.

Fair/Foul Coverage

The coverage is the same as with no runners on.

PU: Has responsibility for balls up to first base and third base.

U1: Has responsibility for balls that hit first base or go beyond.

U2: Has no fair/foul responsibility.

U3: Has responsibility for balls that hit third base or go beyond.

Plays Within the Infield

The coverage is similar to plays with no runner on.

PU: Moves toward first base to assist U1 if asked on swipe tag or pulled foot by the first baseman.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on plays at first base.
 U2: Has all plays at second base.
 U3: Observes and has all plays at third base.

Clean Hit to Outfield

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first base.

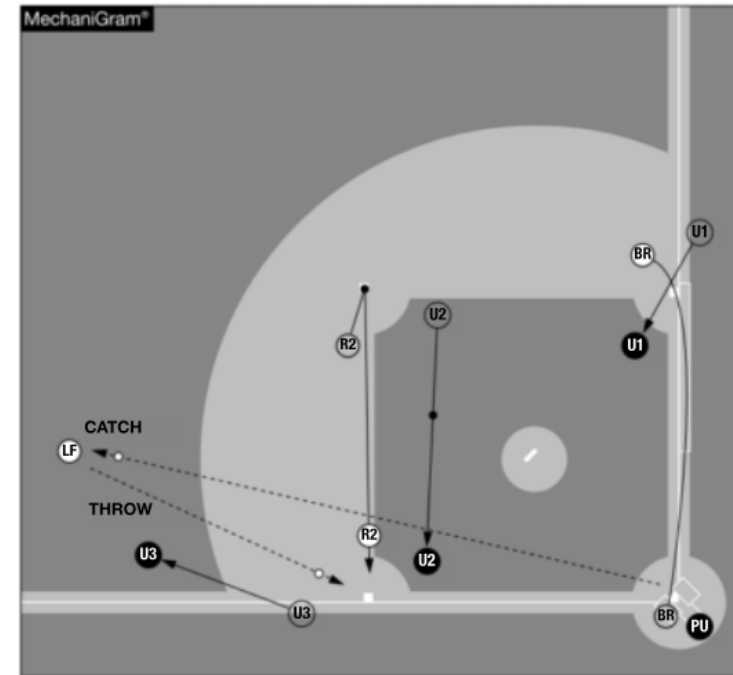
PU: Observes all touches at the plate and has all plays there.

U1: Observes the batter-runner's base touch at first base.

U2: Observes all base touches at second base and has all plays there.

U3: Observes all base touches at third and has all plays there.

FLY BALL TO LEFT FIELD: CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the left fielder; U3 goes out; R2 tags up and advances toward third base, drawing a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

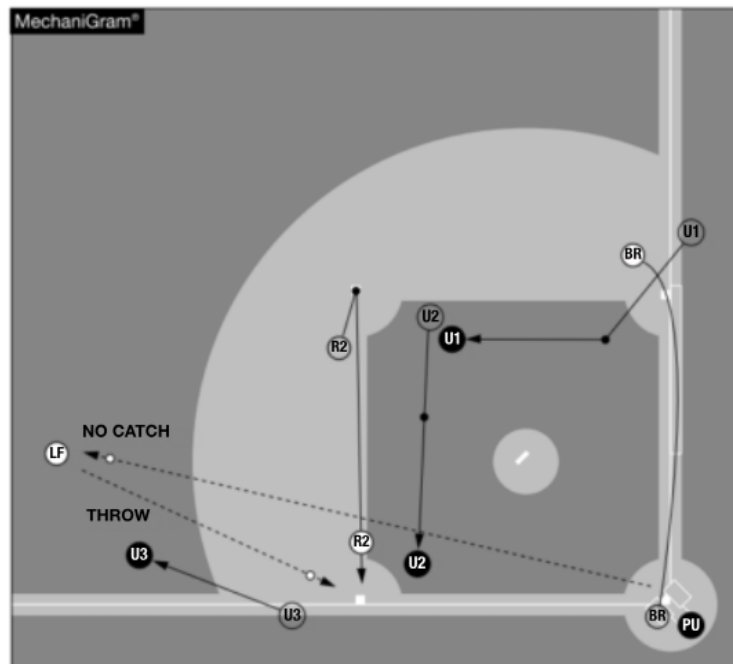
PU: Remains near the plate for all plays there.

U1: Observes the batter-runner at first base.

U2: Retreats and observes R2's tag up and has all plays at second and third base.

U3: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch.

FLY BALL TO LEFT FIELD: NO CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball to left field, no catch; U3 goes out; R2, anticipating possible catch, tags up and advances toward third base, drawing a throw there, BR advances toward second

Umpire responsibilities:

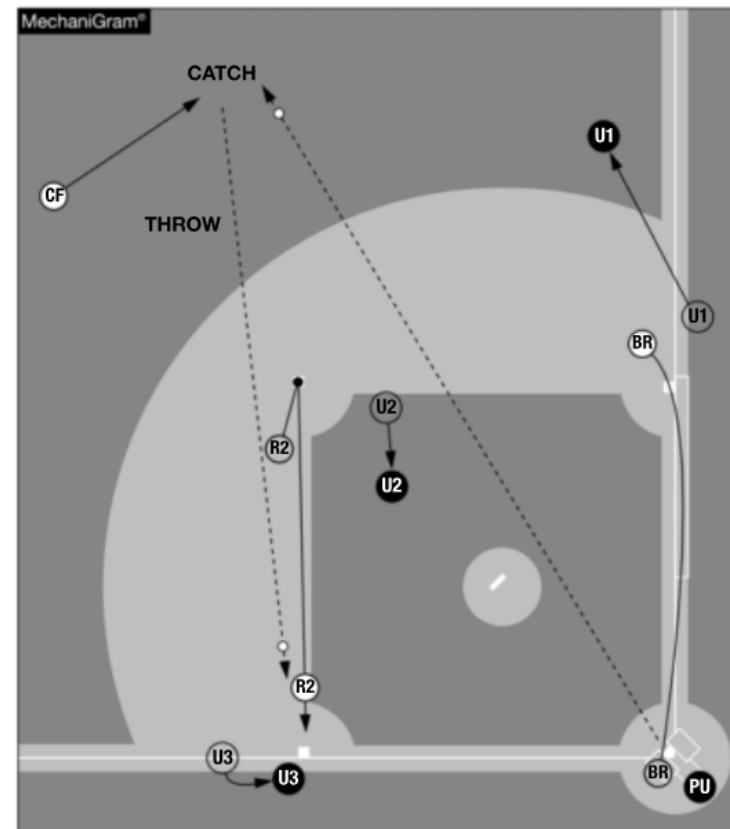
PU: Remains near the plate for all plays there.

U1: Moves into the infield to prepare for possible plays on the batter-runner at first or second base.

U2: Retreats and observes R2's tag up and goes to third base when R2 advances.

U3: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no-catch.

FLY BALL TO RIGHT-CENTER FIELD: CATCH, U1 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the center fielder in right-center field; U1 goes out; R2 tags up and advances toward third base, drawing a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Remains near the plate and has any play there.

U1: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch.

U2: Observes R2's tag up and has all plays at first and second base.

U3: Has all plays at third base.

Crew of Four: Runners on Second and Third

Initial Positions and Outfield Coverage

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first base. U1 is in the "A" position. U2 is in the "Deep B" or "Deep C" position, based on personal preference. U3 is in the "D" position.

U1: Has trouble balls from the center fielder straight in and straight back and when he moves toward right field. U1 also has all trouble balls to the right fielder.

U2: Has all routine fly balls from the left fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his left all the way to the right fielder going straight forward, straight back and to his right.

U3: Has all trouble balls with the center fielder going to his right and all trouble balls to the left fielder.

Infield Catch Coverage

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first base.

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the first and third basemen moving toward the plate.

U1 has catches:

1. By the first baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
2. By the second baseman moving back or toward first base.

U2 has catches:

1. By the second baseman moving in or toward second base.
2. By the shortstop moving in or toward second base.
3. By the third baseman moving toward second base.
4. By the first baseman moving toward second base.
5. By the pitcher moving back.

U3 has catches:

1. By the third baseman moving back or toward the foul line.
2. By the shortstop moving back or toward third base.

Fair/Foul Coverage

The coverage is the same as with no runners on.

PU: Responsible for balls up to first base and third base.

U1: Responsible for balls that hit first base or go beyond.

U2: Has no fair/foul responsibility.

U3: Responsible for balls that hit third base or go beyond.

Plays Within the Infield

The coverage is similar to plays with no runner on.

PU: Moves toward first base to assist U1 if asked on swipe tag or pulled foot by the first baseman if there is no play on R3 at home.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on plays at first base.

U2: Has all plays at second base.

U3: Observes and has all plays at third base.

Clean Hit to Outfield

The coverage is the same as with a runner on first base.

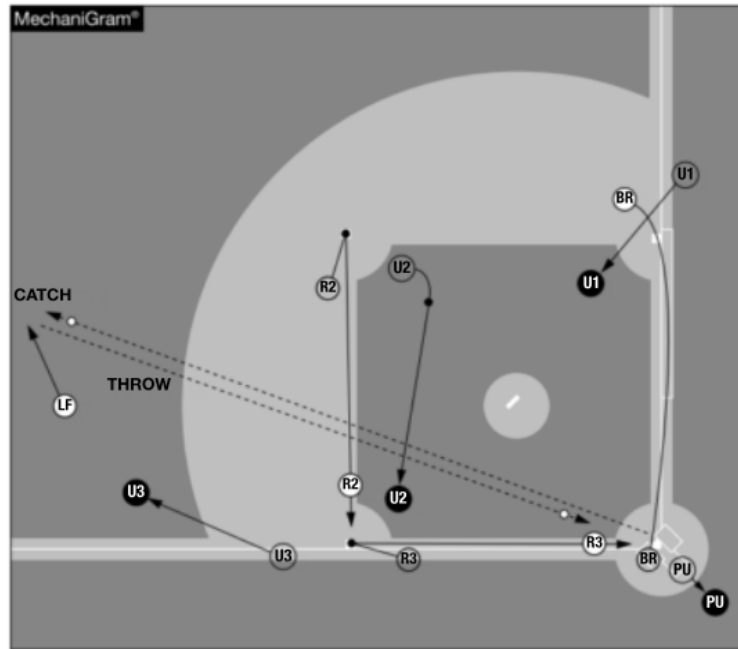
PU: Observes all touches at the plate and has all plays there.

U1: Observes the batter-runner's base touch at first base.

U2: Observes all base touches at second base and has all plays there.

U3: Observes all base touches at third and has all plays there.

FLY BALL TO LEFT FIELD: CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the left fielder; U3 goes out; R3 tags up and advances toward the plate, drawing a throw there; R2 tags up and advances toward third base

Umpire responsibilities:

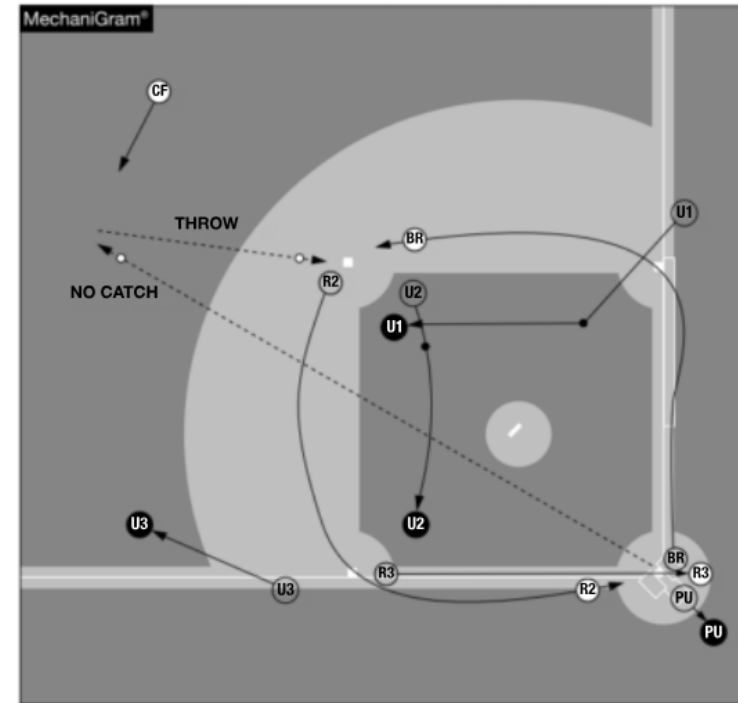
PU: Moves to a position to observe R3's tag up. PU immediately returns to the plate for all plays there.

U1: Enters the infield immediately and has all plays at first and second base on the batter-runner.

U2: Retreats and observes R2's tag up if applicable. U2 has all plays at second and third base on R2.

U3: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch.

FLY BALL TO LEFT FIELD: NO CATCH, U3 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball to left-center field, no catch; U3 goes out; R3 advances toward the plate; R2 advances toward the plate; the batter-runner advances toward second base, drawing a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

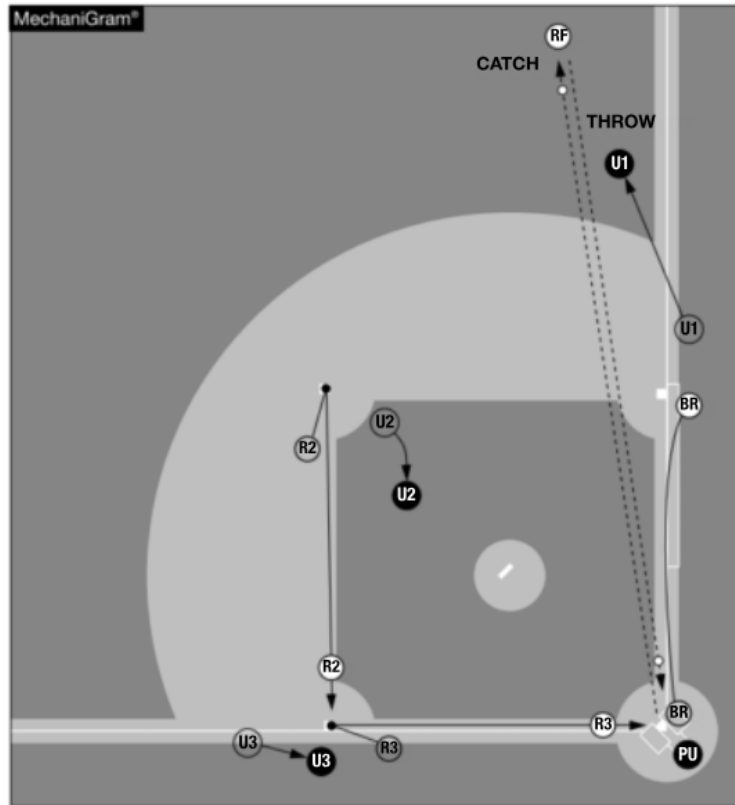
PU: Observes R3's tag up and returns to the plate for all plays there.

U1: Has all touches and plays on the batter-runner at first and second base.

U2: Has all plays on R2 and R3 at second and third base.

U3: Moves to the best possible position to view the catch/no catch.

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD: CATCH, U1 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the right fielder; U1 goes out; R3 tags up and advances toward the plate, drawing a throw there; R2 tags up and advances toward third base

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Has all plays at the plate.

U1: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch.

U2: Retreats and observes R2's tag up and has all plays at first and second base.

U3: Moves into position to observe R3's tag up and has all plays at third base.

Crew of Four: Runner on Third

Initial Positions

The coverage is similar to no runners on.

U1: Starts in the "A" position.

U2: Starts in shallow left-center field. With less than two outs, U2 must be able to get to third base for any throws back to third when U3 goes out or any plays at first base if U1 goes out.

U3: Starts in the "D" position.

Infield Catch Coverage

The coverage is the same as no runners on, with U2 in shallow left-center field.

PU has catches:

1. By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
2. By the first and third basemen moving in.

U1 has catches:

1. By the second baseman moving in or toward first base.
2. By the first baseman moving out or toward first base.
3. By the pitcher moving back.

U2 has catches:

1. By the second baseman moving out or toward second base.
2. By the shortstop moving out or toward second base.
3. By the first baseman moving right.
4. By the third baseman moving left.

U3 has catches:

1. By the shortstop moving in or toward third base.
2. By the third baseman moving out or toward third base.

Fair/Foul Coverage

The coverage is the same as no runners on, with U2 in shallow left-center field.

PU: Has responsibility for balls up to first base and third base.

U1: Has responsibility for balls that hit first base or go beyond.

U2: Has no fair/foul responsibility.

U3: Has responsibility for balls that hit third base or go beyond.

Plays Within the Infield

The coverage is the same as no runners on, with U2 in shallow left-center field.

PU: Moves toward first base to assist U1 if asked on swipe tag or pulled foot by the first baseman if there is no play on R3 at home.

U1: Moves into the best position to rule on plays at first base.

U2: Moves toward second base.

U3: Observes.

Clean Hit to the Outfield

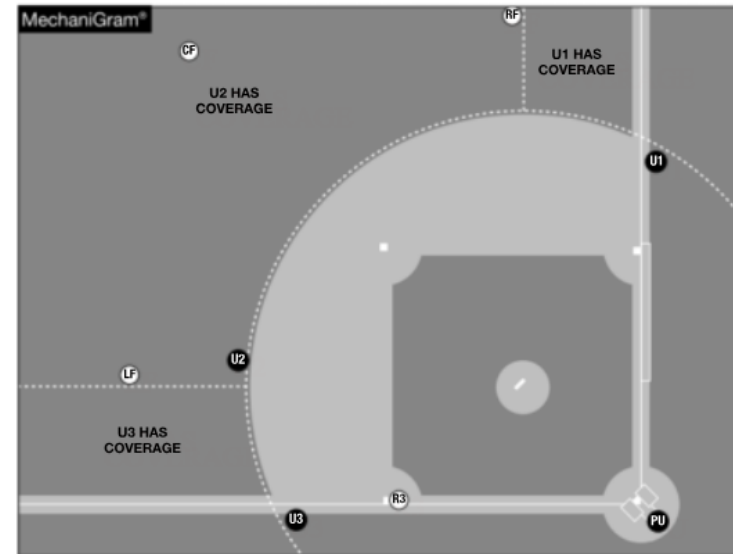
The coverage is the same as no runners on, with U2 in shallow left-center field.

PU: Observes and has all plays at the plate.

U1: Observes the batter-runner touch first base.

U2: Moves toward second base and prepares for all plays on the batter-runner at second base.

U3: Observes and has all plays at third base.

INITIAL POSITIONS

Action on the field: No action

Umpire responsibilities:

U1: Starts in the "A" position. Responsible for outfield catches when the right fielder goes straight forward, straight back or moves towards the foul line.

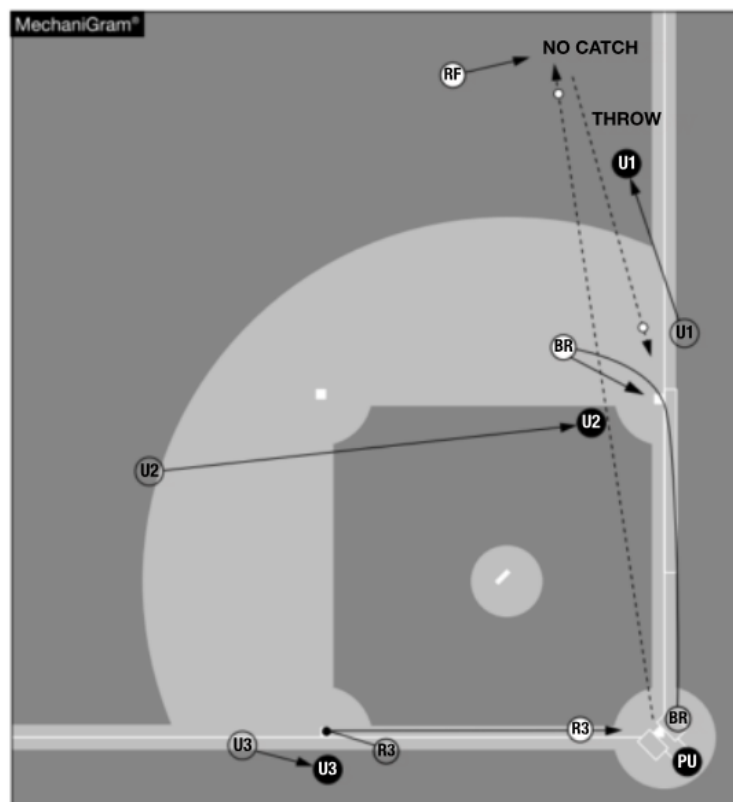
U2: Starts in the outfield (shallow left-center field w/ less than 2 outs) and will now go out on any trouble fly ball that takes the left fielder straight forward, straight back or to his left and all the way over to the right fielder who goes to his right. U2 is the "quarterback" when reading fly balls in this scenario. Anytime a ball is hit in a gray area, U2 will dictate coverage by either going out or coming into the infield.

U3: Starts in the "C" position. Responsible for outfield catches when the left fielder moves towards the foul line.

Point of Emphasis

U2 will no longer shift over toward third base with less than two outs. In this situation, U2 is required to be on the left-field side of second base. Utilizing this new mechanic, U2 will retain his normal coverage of having all trouble balls in the outfield "in the V" from left to right field. Additionally, U2 will be in better position to take a batter-runner back to first base should U1 go out. U2 should always remain over the shortstop's inside (left) shoulder closest to second base to help with all line-drive coverage.

FLY BALL TO RIGHT FIELD: NO CATCH, U1 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball to right field, no catch; U1 goes out; R3, after going back to tag up, advances toward the plate; the batter-runner rounds first base and returns, drawing a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

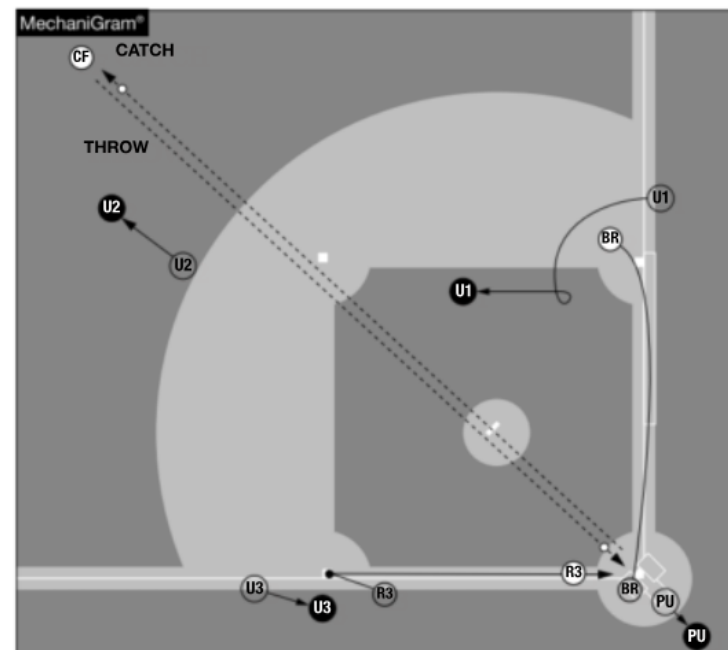
PU: Has all plays at the plate.

U1: Moves to a position to best view the catch/no catch.

U2: Moves into the infield at second base. U2 has all plays at first and second base.

U3: Observes R3's tag up and has all plays at third base.

FLY BALL TO CENTER FIELD: CATCH, U2 GOES OUT



Action on the field: Fly ball caught by the center fielder; U2 goes out; R3 tags up and advances toward the plate, drawing a throw there

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Stays home, observes the plate touch of all runners. PU moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

U1: Observes the batter-runner's touch of first and takes the batter-runner into second.

U2: Moves to a position to best view the catch/no catch.

U3: Lines up the tag of R3 and has the throw back at third base.

Point of Emphasis

With a runner on third base only, less than 2 outs and U2 goes out, U1 will take the batter-runner to second base allowing U3 to remain at third and lineup the tag. With two outs and U2 going out, U3 will come across the diamond and be responsible for any play that may develop at either second or third base.



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