FHSAA Baseball

3-Person Mechanics

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NOTES

INDEX

Title	Page
• Overview of Basics	4
• Definitions	4
• Coaching Points	4
• Responsibilities	5 - 6
• Nobody On	7 – 8 - 9
• Runner @ 1st Only	11
• Runner @ 1st & 2nd	12 - 13
• Runners @ 1st & 3rd	15 -16
• Runner @ 2nd or 2nd & 3rd	17 – 18 - 19
• Runner @ 3rd Only	20 - 21
• Bases Loaded	22
• Infielders Playing "In"-Umpire Inside	23
• Line Drive & Pop-Up Coverage – Plate	24 - 25
• Line Drive & Pop-Up Coverage – Bases	26 – 27
• Field Diagram	29

NOTES

Overview of Basics

3 PERSON - MECHANICS

The philosophy of this three-person system is to make it similar to the two-person system. Having a thorough knowledge of 2-person mechanics is essential when learning these basic 3-person mechanics, which is an enhancement of the 2-person system. One more official, a few more mechanics, simply means better coverage. The FHSAA acknowledges that other 3-person systems exist, however, **it is expected that this 3-person system be used for all FHSAA State Series contests.**

The following pages include the basic responsibilities of each umpire for 3-person mechanics. Although you should know and understand each position, it may help you to read, just before a game, that position you will be working. You may also visit the link listed below to view the video which was made to train umpires utilizing animated arrows to illustrate umpire movements per this manual.

https://youtu.be/epvKtx_SHHY

A good pre-game with your partners is essential and mandatory. The 3-person mechanics allows for better coverage on fly balls to the outfield, double plays, pickoffs, rundowns and plays at the plate. It also gives another pair of eyes for pitching infractions with an umpire at a corner, allowing a clear look at the pitcher's foot crossing over the back edge of the pitcher's plate, leaning toward home before a pick-off, and the compliance (or non-compliance) of the pitcher's feet in the **two** legal starting positions.

Definitions

1. **Umpire abbreviations**: PU = Plate, U1 = 1st Base, U3 = 3rd Base
2. **Runner abbreviations**: BR= Batter runner, R1= runner @ 1st, R2= runner @ 2nd & R3= runner @ 3rd.
3. **Pause, read, and react**: Pause (hesitate momentarily), read (reaction of fielder), and react whether to go out on the ball or not. Crew can choose if U1 or U3 from the line will go out on everything or trouble balls only.
4. **'Trouble ball'**: Is any batted ball that has a chance to be fair/foul, possible home run, fielders converging, trapped ball, or an over the shoulder or below the waist catch.
5. **The 'working area'**: The working area is defined as the area behind the mound between the B and C position (midway from the back of the mound to the cutout in front of 2nd base).
6. **The 'V'**: The area between F7 and F9 in the outfield.
7. **Timing**: The definition of timing is prioritizing. If you complete your duties in the proper priority (see play finish, decide what happened, and then announce what happened) your percentage of correct calls will increase, and your timing will be great.

Coaching Points

1. Umpires must come to a complete stop and set before making a call. The purpose for this technique is to be certain the head is still, and eyes are focused on play.
2. On all pitches, base umpires must be in a set (hands on knees) position. With no runners on, you may use an aggressive standing set if crew agrees. No matter what, both base umpires are to be the same.

3. Angle over distance. It is better to get the right angle to see the whole play than it is to get closer to the play. On plays to the outfield, the umpire should get the best angle to see if ball is trapped or bounces before entering glove. Rimming the infield is moving across back edge of the infield while reading the ball to the outfield, getting a better angle on the play.
4. **1st Base Umpire**, when coming inside, does not 'pivot' but peeks over his shoulder for the touch. ("Pivoting" has been found to cause physical problems over course of umping career).

Responsibilities

1. **Fair/Foul coverage**: PU has fair/foul coverage to the front edge of the base on both lines and entire line that becomes uncovered by a base umpire. An umpire in 'A' or 'D' covers fair/foul from the front edge of their base and beyond. The umpires may use the cutout as a guide for fair/foul responsibility when touched by a fielder before passing the base.

2. **Infield line drive and pop-up coverage**: PU always has the pitcher and catcher on pop-ups and line drives unless a pop-up is over pitcher's head with an umpire inside. When U1 and U3 are on the lines, PU has corner infielders (F3 & F5) moving in and toward the middle. If either U1 or U3 are inside, PU has uncovered line moving in, back and toward the line and the other corner infielder moving in. When U1 and U3 are on the lines, they have corner infielders on their side, (U1-F3) (U3-F5) back and toward them and middle infielder on their side moving in, back and toward them (U1-F4) (U3-F6) and the opposite middle infielder toward the middle (U1-F6) (U3-F4). With an umpire inside he has all infielders moving toward the middle, all plays by respective middle infielder and other middle infielder moving in. With U1 or U3 inside, the other base umpire has infielders on their side moving back and toward them. (U1-F3 & F4) (U3-F5 & F6) (See diagrams, pages 21-24.) A fly foul ball between home and 1st bases or home and 3rd base with respective umpire on the line, that umpire and PU bracket the ball and the umpire inside has all plays on the bases. If R3 only, U3 stays on the line and U1 moves inside. With none on, the other umpire moves inside as the other umpire helps PU. The umpire the fielder is facing when making the catch is responsible to make the call. With U1 and U3 on the lines and a pop up to F5 (not near line) or F6, U3 moves toward 2nd and makes call if fielder is facing him; PU makes call otherwise. If a pop up to F3 or F4, U1 moves into fair territory to make the call unless either infielder is in front of him; then PU makes the call.

3. **Outfield fly ball coverage**: With umpires in 'A' and 'D', U1 & U3 split the outfield, and one of them goes out on all trouble fly balls. With umpires on the corners, if the fly ball is in the 'gray area' between U1 and U3 coverage, U1 should read the ball and aggressively go out, or move into the infield. U1 has F8 straight in, back and toward 1st base line when U1 and U3 are on the lines. U3 rims the infield toward 2nd base to read U1 and react accordingly; staying out if U1 comes inside or moving inside if U1 goes out. (Pause, Read and React). The umpire in 'B' or 'C' takes fly balls in the 'V'. PU and the umpire on the line take fly balls down either line. Although he has responsibility for ruling on the catch, the umpire inside (B or C) does not cross the base path to go out on trouble balls. When U1 or U3 are inside and has the 'V', it is acceptable if the umpire on the line reads a trouble ball to center field (F8) and goes out, meaning you revert to 2-person mechanics. Communication is key in this situation so as not to have both base umpires on the ball and nobody watching the plays/touches on the bases or a double call is made. IF U1 or U3 DOES NOT GO OUT AND FLY BALL IS IN THEIR AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY…they are still responsible for catch/no catch. PU is only responsible for outfield

coverage when he has the foul line uncovered because U1 or U3 are inside. OPTIONAL: Crew can choose to go out on all fly balls if in U1 or U3's area of responsibility when he is on the line. U1 or U3 are to NEVER go out on a trouble or fly ball when in 'B' or 'C' position.

4. **Check swings**: No matter their positions, PU goes to U1 for RHBs and to U3 for LHBs

5. **If a runner is on first base, U1 stays in 'A'**: Rationale: Better coverage for potential close 'back-end' of a double play and U3 in 'B' or 'C' is in good position for front end. U3 does not turn with the throw to 1st but maintains his focus at 2nd watching for interference. U1 is also in 'A' with none on, R3 only and any time there are TWO outs. (Optional with 'two outs', R2 or R2 & R3)

6. **Rotation Plays: Nobody on or R3 only** and a ball hit cleanly to the outfield-and neither U1 or U3 goes out, U1 covers 1st, U3 moves in and covers 2nd PU covers 3rd and U1 rotates to cover home. PU should start to move toward 3rd and U1 toward home as soon as BR commits to 2nd. Once BR reaches 2nd and commits to 3rd each completes their rotation; PU to 3rd and U1 to home. (If U1 or U3 goes out with nobody on or R3 only, PU does not rotate to 3rd).

   With R1 or R1 & R3, PU covers play on R1 advancing to 3rd if ball goes to the outfield. U1 has touch at 1st staying in foul and moving toward home, then rotates home as soon as R1 reaches 2nd and commits to 3rd and U3 takes responsibility for the BR at that point. In the R1 & R3 case, PU should not move up towards 3rd until he is certain there will not be a play on R3 at home and glance back to ensure R3 touches home. If U1 goes out on trouble ball, U3 has 1st base responsibility.

   With R1 and R2 or bases loaded, and a ball hit cleanly into the outfield, PU will remain at home. U1 and U3 will assume responsibility for all bases. U1 will come inside and take the BR to 2nd or any play back to 1st. This is called the **slide play or reverse rotation. The reverse rotation is also used if the crew uses the option of U1 being at 1st with 2 outs and runners at 2nd or 2nd and 3rd. The reverse rotation is also an OPTION for the crew to use (instead of a standard rotation) with runners on 1st and 3rd.**

   When PU rotates to 3rd: When PU is required to rotate to 3rd and U1 covers home, PU should stay in foul territory using the base as a starting point to move with the throw for an initial play at 3rd; the same as taking plays at the plate. Rationale: It is a better view of the play coming at you and the additional responsibilities for overthrows/dead ball since U1 is already at the plate for a play there. When there is no initial play and runner attempts to go home, or simply rounds 3rd, PU must move to not impede the runner and should be aware of a play back into 3rd once the runner has rounded. PU does not return to home when U1 is there. If U1 goes out, the crew reverts to a 2-person system which means that for plays at 3rd, PU would initially move inside to the cutout.

7. **Overthrow responsibility**: If U1 is in 'A', he has overthrows at 1st once it is certain that BR or R1 has committed to 2nd and the ball is beyond 1st base. If overthrow is between 1st base and home, PU takes. PU has overthrow that goes beyond 1st base until U1 takes responsibility. U3 in 'D'-R3 only, PU has pick-off overthrow. R2 & R3, U3 has if beyond the bag and U1 has all bases. If PU rotates to 3rd, he has overthrows there that go beyond the base and all overthrows if U1 is not at home. If U1 rotates home, he has overthrows down first base line and between 3rd base and home.

8. **Signaling**: Signals are imperative as part of the communication between the officials along with any verbal communication. Crews may choose the 'way' they signal. Signals are the same as 2-person with the rotation signal given two additional times and two new ones: With 'none on' or 'R3 only' the rotation signal is given; PU may have BR on a triple. With 'R3 only' U1 and U3 has a signal the crew agrees upon as a reminder if either goes out the other has all plays at all bases. The other new signal is the 'reverse rotation' when there is R1 and R2, bases loaded, and 1st and 3rd (if crew chooses this option).

Nobody On

1. **POSITIONS:**
    a. PU is at the plate.
    b. U1 and U3 are between 6-10 feet behind the first baseperson and 3rd baseperson respectively. The foot closest to the foul line is within 6 inches of the foul line, feet are parallel, and you can use a standing set or hands on knees set.

2. **On a Clean Hit:**
    a. PU rotates to 3rd for possible play on BR, staying in foul territory for any play. (See page 6, #5; PU not impeding the runner rounding 3rd and possible play back into 3rd).
    b. U1 watches touch at 1st and plays back in and then rotates home once BR reaches 2nd and commits to 3rd.
    c. U3 moves to 2nd for possible play on BR.

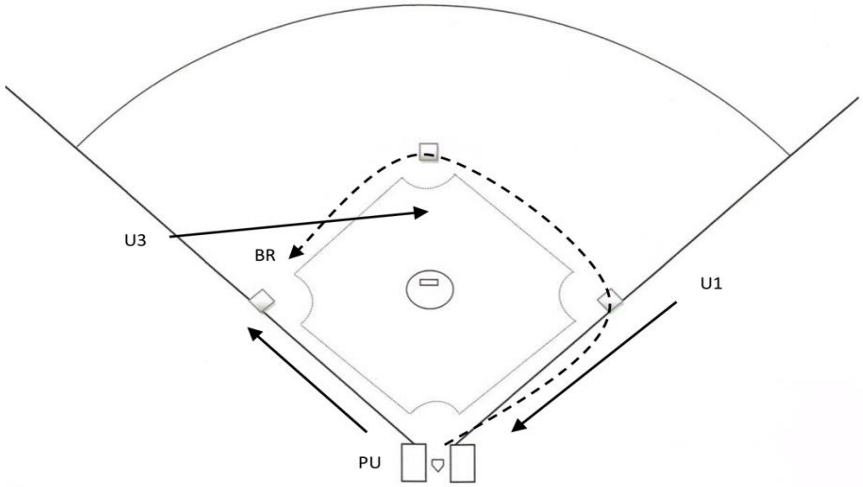
3. **Trouble Ball, U1 goes out:**
    a. PU responsibilities are to watch touch at 1st and plays back in and then return home once BR reaches 2nd
    b. U1 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Once out, stay out.
    c. U3 moves to the infield and has BR at 2nd and 3rd bases.

4. **Trouble Ball, U3 goes out:**
    a. PU stays home watching field of play; an extra set of eyes on catch/no catch. He has any play on BR at home.
    b. U1 moves inside and takes BR to 3rd
    c. U3 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Once out, stay out.

ROTATION, NONE ON

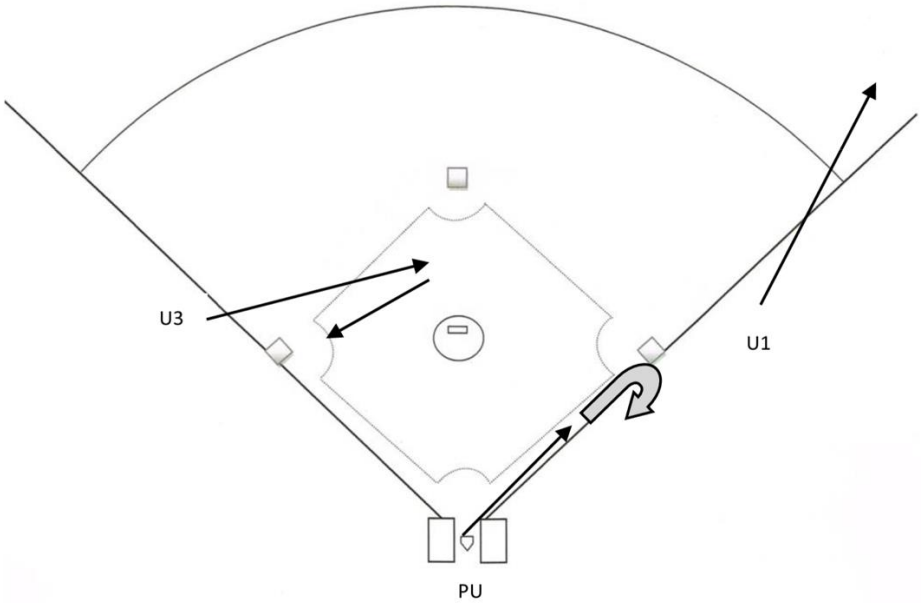
On clean hit, PU has BR into 3rd. U1, staying foul, watches touch, rotates home once BR reaches 2nd. U3 moves inside, has plays at 2nd.

PU makes call from foul territory at 3rd. PU only rotates to 3rd if U1 or U3 did not go out.



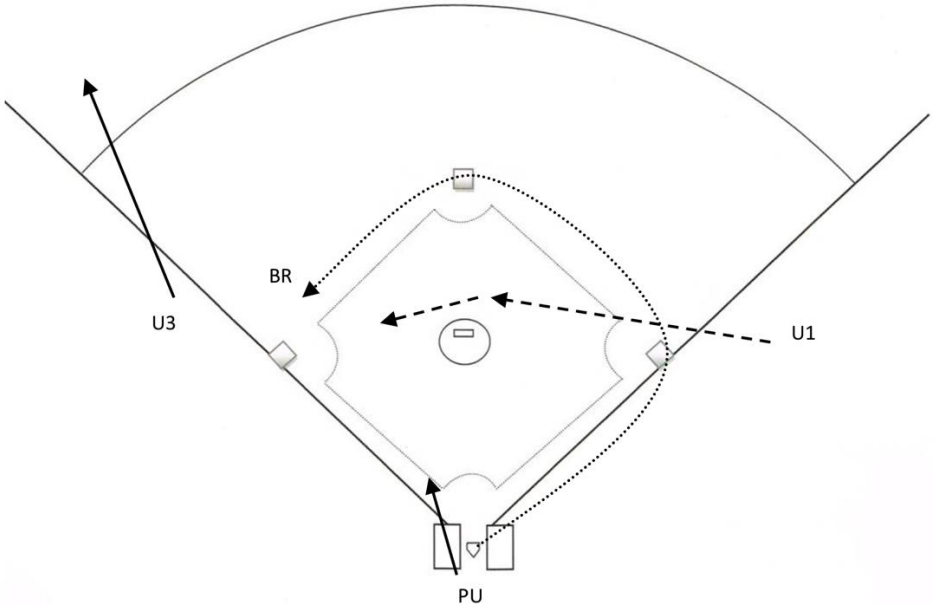
NONE ON, U1 GOES OUT

PU has touch and any plays at 1st base. Once BR reaches 2nd base, PU retreats home. U3 has BR and 2nd and 3rd bases. U1 stays out.



NONE ON, U3 GOES OUT

PU does rotate to 3rd on a triple. U1 has BR at all bases. PU stays home watching field of play; an extra set of eyes on catch/no catch. He has any play on BR at home. U3 stays out.



NOTES

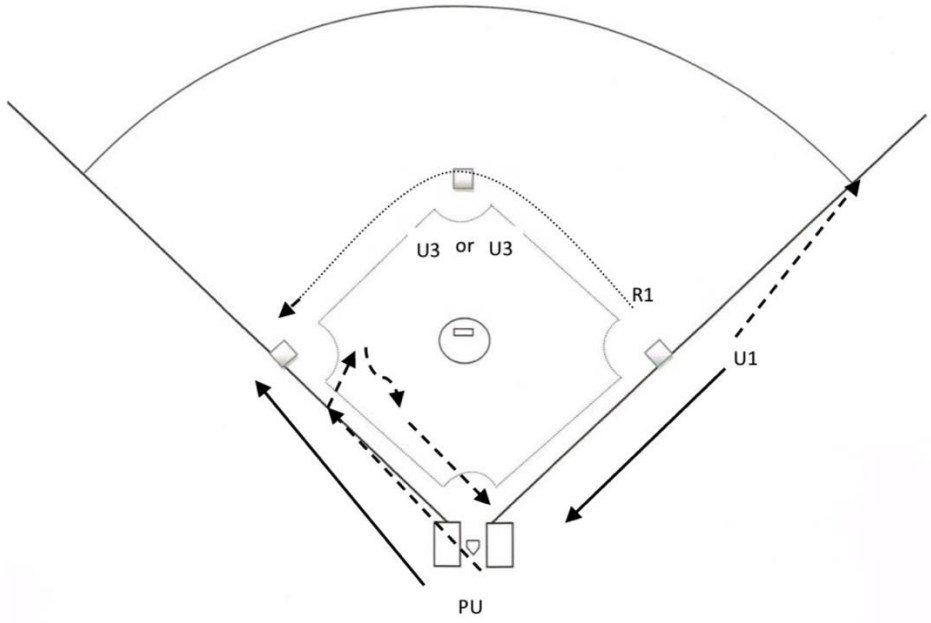
Runner @ 1st Only

1. **POSITIONS:**
   a. PU is at the plate.
   b. U1 is lined up to watch the pick-off about 6-8 feet behind base on an angle so that you can see pitcher and still watch RH batter for check swing.
   c. U3 is in Deep 'B' or 'C' position (optional) at edge of grass by the cutout with shoulders square to plate or to 1st base dugout if in 'C' and 3rd base dugout if in 'B'.

2. **On a Clean Hit: (U1 doesn't go out)**
   a. PU rotates to 3rd for possible play on R1, staying in foul territory for initial play. (See page 6, #5; PU not impeding the runner rounding 3rd and possible play back into 3rd.
   b. U1, staying foul, watches touch at 1st then rotates home once R1 reaches 2nd and commits to 3rd
   c. U3 has touches at 2nd and assumes responsibility of BR once U1 releases and rotates home.

3. **Trouble Ball, U1 goes out:**
   a. PU rotates to 3rd for possible play on R1, moving inside for any play. If overthrow at 3rd, then return home inside diamond for possible play there.
   b. U1 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Once out, stay out.
   c. U3 has responsibility at 1st and 2nd, same as 2-person. If PU returns home, U3 assumes responsibility for BR at 3rd.

R1 - ROTATION
If U1 goes out, PU moves into cutout at 3rd. <u>If U1 does not go out</u>, PU makes call at 3rd from foul territory, U1 rotates home once R1 reaches 2nd and commits to 3rd.



Runner @ 1st and 2nd

1. **POSITIONS:**
   a. PU is at the plate.
   b. U1 is lined up to watch the pick-off about 6-8 feet behind base (or first baseperson if playing off) on an angle so that you can see pitcher and still watch RH batter for check swing.
   c. U3 is in Natural 'C' position with shoulders square to plate.

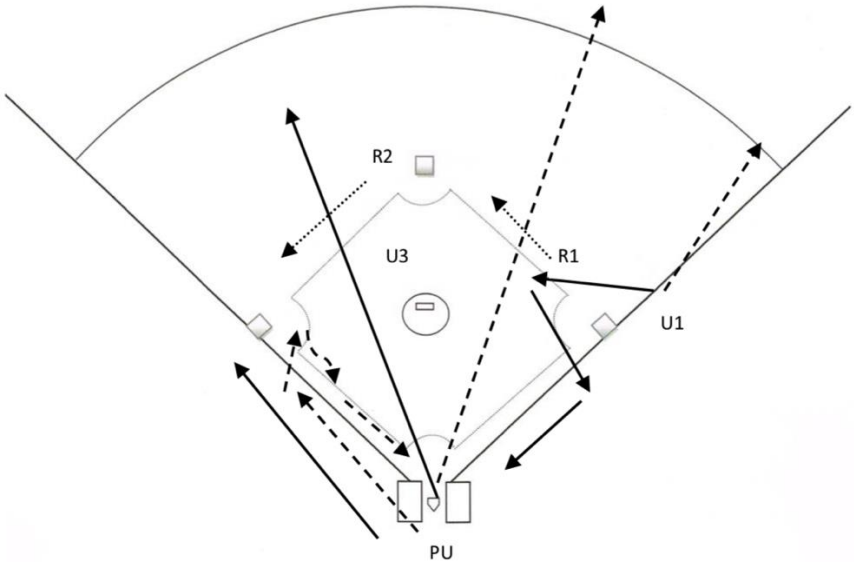
2. **On a Clean Hit:**
   a. PU stays at plate.
   b. U1 moves inside and takes BR to 2nd on the reverse rotation.
   c. U3 has runners on base at 2nd and 3rd and BR at 3rd.

3. **Trouble Ball, U1 goes out:**
   a. PU rotates to 3rd for possible play on R2, if tagging, moving inside for any play. If overthrow at 3rd, then return home inside diamond for possible play.
   b. U1 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Once out, stay out.
   c. U3 has both tag-ups, all plays and touches at 1st and 2nd and BR into 3rd.

4. **ROTATION if U1 does not go out on fly ball caught:**
   a. PU rotates to 3rd if R2 advances on a caught fly ball, taking any play from foul territory.
   b. U1 moves inside, has tag-up and any immediate play that possibly develops at 1st. If no immediate play he then moves to cover home if PU rotates to 3rd.
   c. U3 has tag-up of R2 and any plays at 1st and 2nd. (Exception: if a play is immediate at 1st base, U1 has).

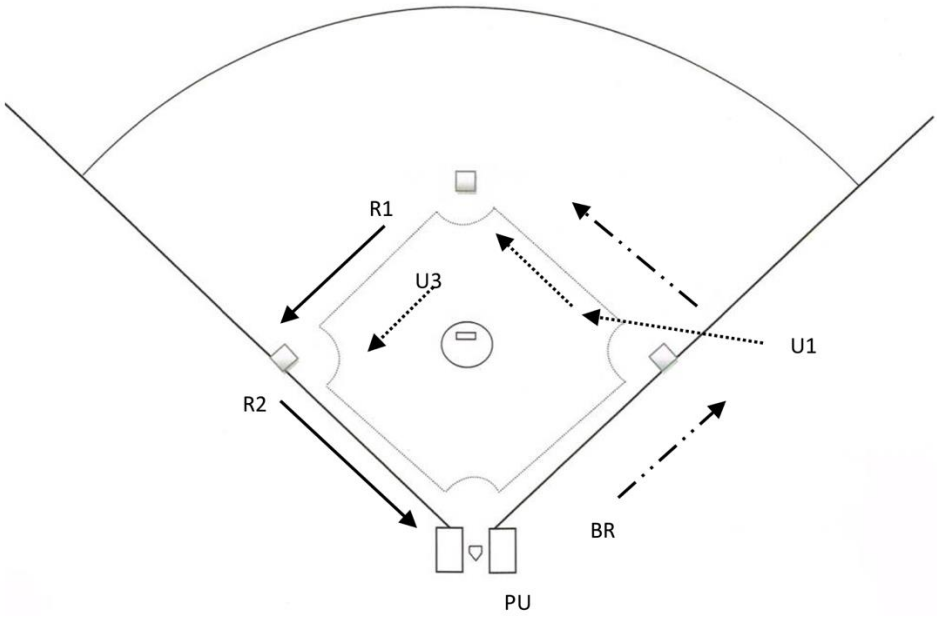
R1 & R2
ROTATION – Fly Ball Caught

U1 lined up for pick off. U3 is in Natural 'C'. Fly ball to outfield, caught, runner(s) advance - PU rotates to 3rd as in 2-man if R2 advances. If U1 goes out, PU moves into cutout for play at 3rd. If U1 does not go out, U1 has tag-up of R1 and rotates home - PU makes call at 3rd from foul territory.



R1 & R2
REVERSE ROTATION

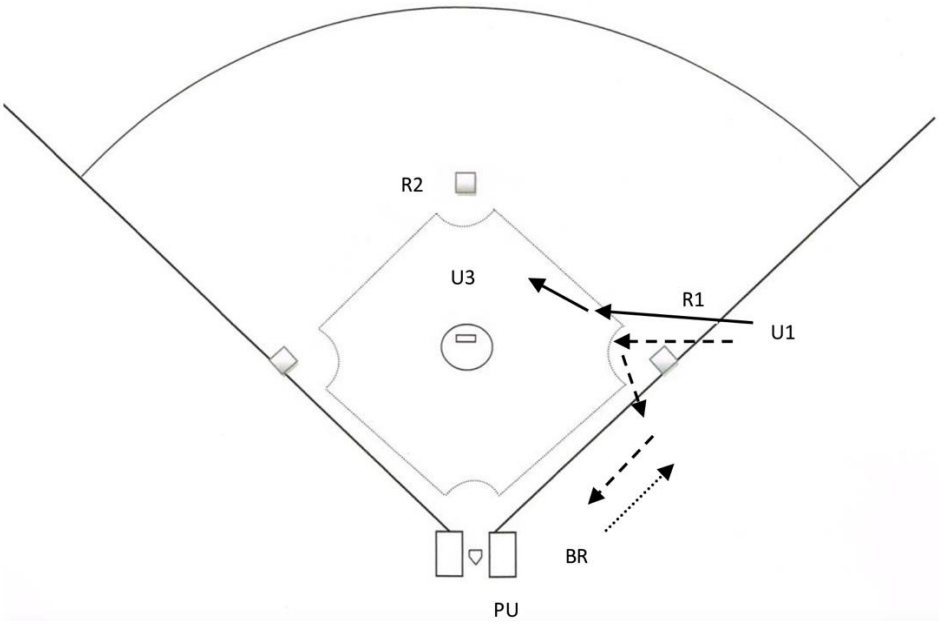
Clean hit, U1 moves inside – has R1 at 1st and BR at 1st and 2nd. U3 has R1 & R2 at 2nd and 3rd and BR at 3rd. PU stays home.



R1 & R2 – U1 Less than 2 outs & U1 doesn't go out.
OUTFIELD FLY BALL – ROTATE HOME OR REVERSE

U1 moves inside. If ball is caught, he moves into foul territory and rotates home if PU rotates to 3rd. - - - - - - - - ▶

If ball is dropped, reverse rotation; U1 ha BR into 2nd base. ⟶



NOTES

Runners @ 1st and 3rd

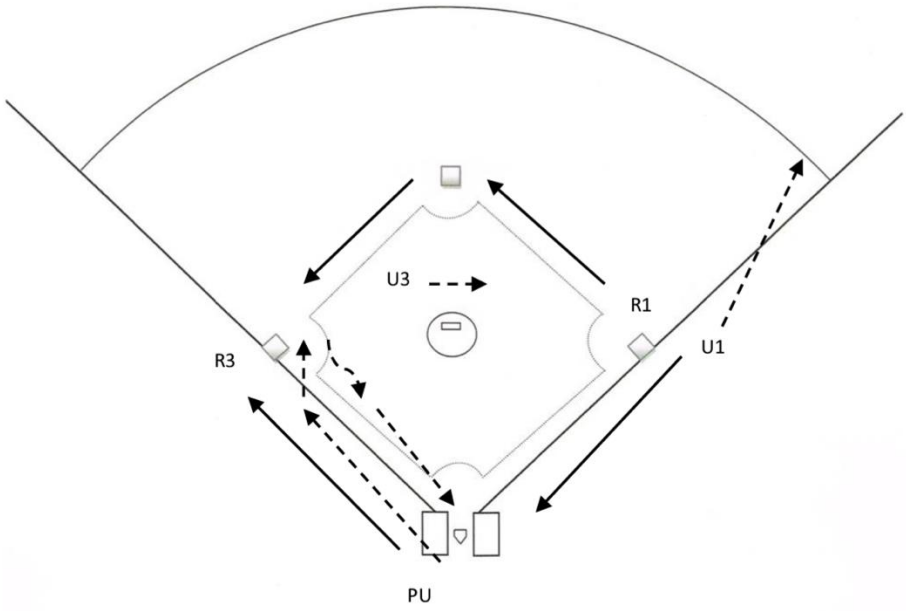
1. **POSITIONS:**
   a. PU is at the plate.
   b. U1 is lined up to watch the pick-off about 6-8 feet behind base (or first baseperson if playing off) on an angle so that pitcher can be seen and still watch RH batter for check swing.
   c. U3 is in Natural 'C' position with shoulders square to plate.

2. **On a Clean Hit: (U1 doesn't go out)**
   a. PU rotates to 3rd for possible play on R1, staying in foul territory for initial play. (See page 6, #5; PU not impeding the runner rounding 3rd and possible play back into 3rd .
   b. U1 watches touch at 1st, then rotates home once R1 reaches 2nd and commits to 3rd
   c. U3 moves to 'B' and picks up BR once U1 releases him.

3. **Trouble Ball, U1 goes out:**
   a. PU rotates to 3rd for possible play on R1, moving inside for any play. If overthrow at 3rd, then return home inside diamond for possible play. Has tag-up by R3 if caught.
   b. U1 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Once out, stay out.
   c. U3 moves to 'B' and watches touch at 2nd by R1, BR touches at 1st & 2nd and any plays on BR at all bases.

R1 & R3

Clean hit. PU rotates to 3rd as in 2-man watching R3 touch home – if U1 goes out, PU moves into cutout for play at 3rd, U3 moves toward 'B' to pick up BR. If U1 does not go out, PU makes call at 3rd rom foul territory, U1 rotates home once R1 reaches 2nd and commits to 3rd.



RUNNERS ON 1ST AND 3RD - "CLEAN HIT"

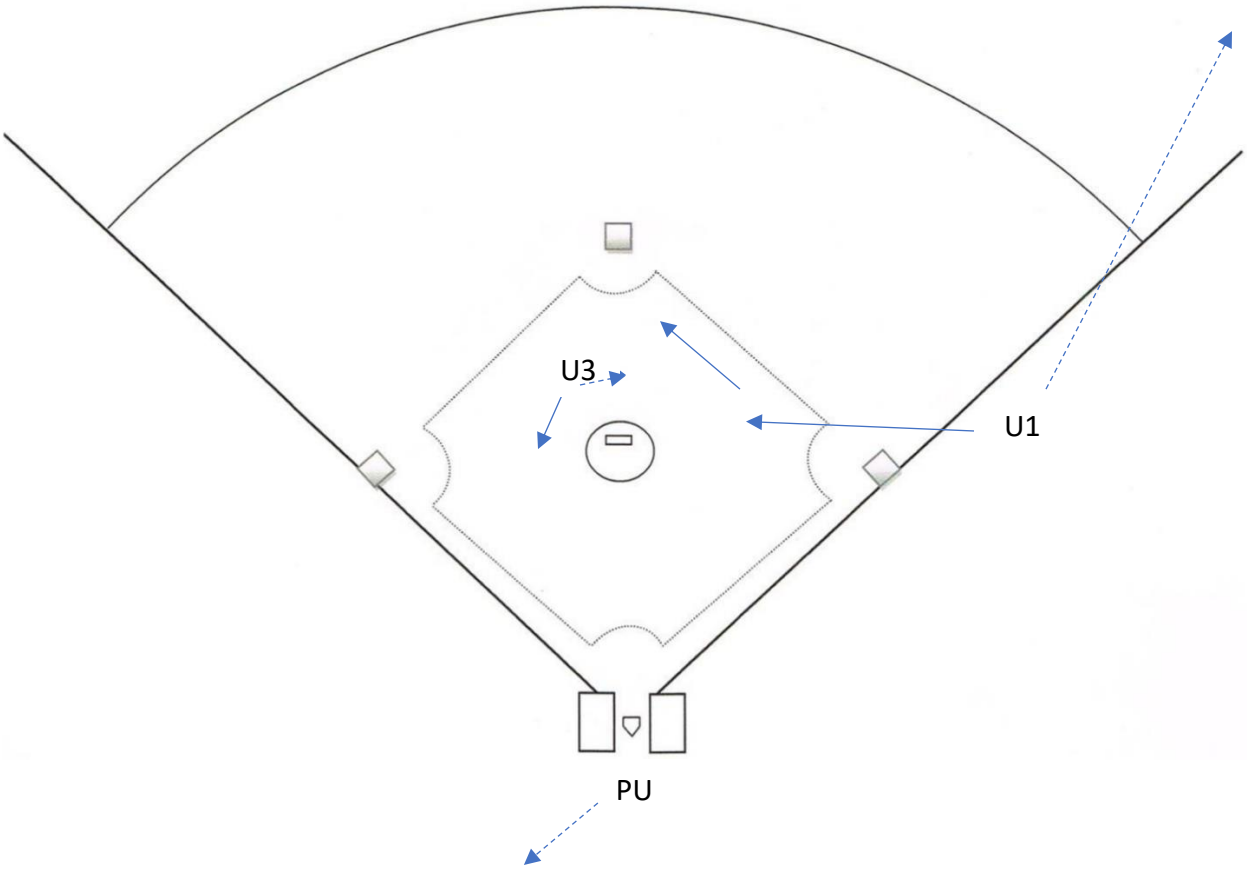
REVERSE ROTATION OPTION

"Clean hit," U1 moves inside-has BR at 1st and 2nd, U3 has R1 at 2nd and 3rd, PU stays home.

COMMUNICATION is very important

U1 needs to communicate to U3 to slide towards 3rd when BR commits to 2nd

If U1 goes out, PU stays home and gets a panoramic view of the possible catch and tag-up of R3, then moves to get the best angle for any plays at the plate. U3 moves to middle of the working area and has all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.



Runner @ 2nd or 2nd and 3rd

1. **POSITIONS:**
    a. PU is at the plate.
    b. U1 is in Deep 'B' position at edge of grass by the cutout with shoulders square to plate or 3rd base dugout. (optional)
    c. U3 is in 'D' position, 6-10 feet behind the 3rd baseperson. The foot closest to the foul line is within 6 inches of the foul line, feet are parallel using hands on knees set.

2. **On a Clean Hit:**
    a. PU stays home.
    b. U1 has all touches and plays at 1st and 2nd.
    c. U3 from foul territory uses base like plate to move with throw, to rule on all possible plays, including tag-up by R3.

3. **U3 goes out:**
    a. PU has tag-up by R3 and stays home.
    b. U1 has all plays at all bases.
    c. U3 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Once out, stay out.

OPTION with 2 outs:

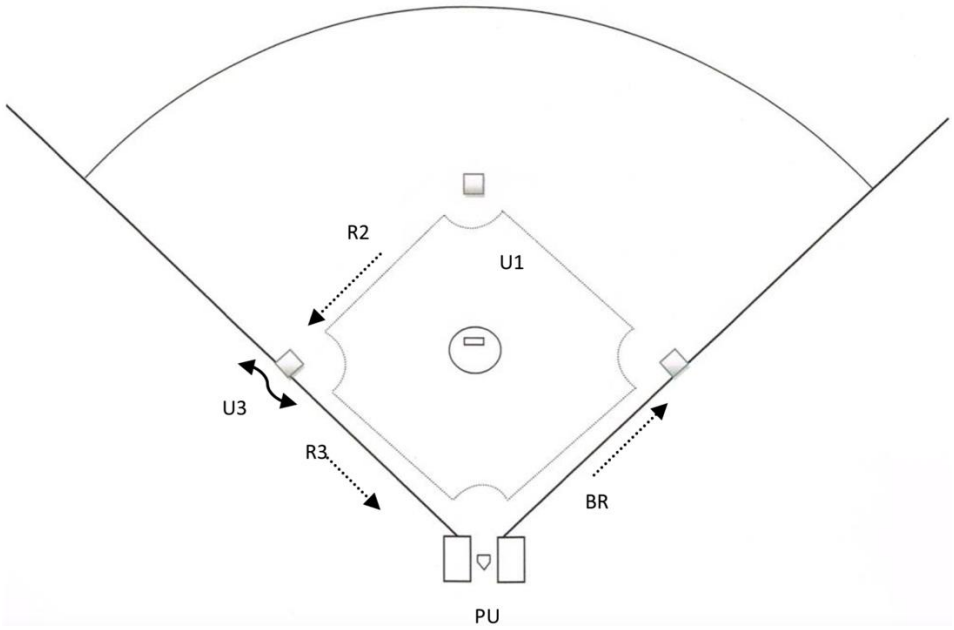
1. **POSITIONS:**
    a. PU is at the plate.
    b. U1 is lined up about 6-8 feet behind 1st baseperson.
    c. U3 is in Natural 'C' position with shoulders square to plate.

2. **On a Clean Hit:**
    a. PU stays home.
    b. U1 has touch at 1st and any play on BR at 1st and 2nd. (Reverse rotation).
    c. U3 has touch at 2nd and all plays at 2nd and 3rd.

3. **U1 goes out:**
    a. PU has touches at 3rd and home.
    b. U1 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Once out, stay out.
    c. U3 has touches at 1st and 2nd and plays at all bases.

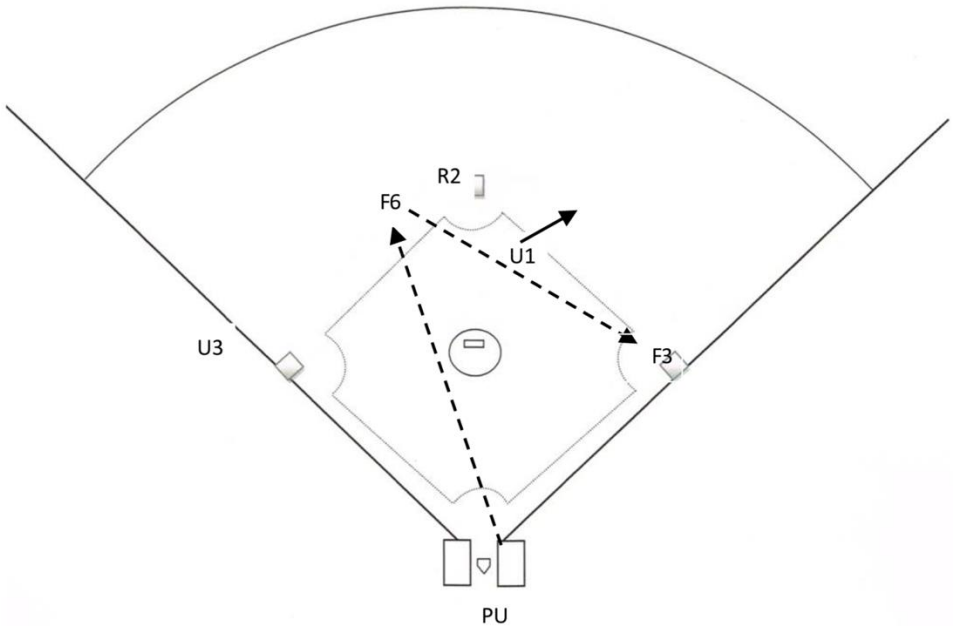
R2 or R2 @ R3

U3 has touch/tag-up and plays at 3rd <u>unless he goes out; then PU has touch/tag-up and U1 has all plays at all bases</u>. If U3 does not go out, he uses 3rd base as 'point reference' for plays at 3rd, staying foul and moves depending on where play takes him.



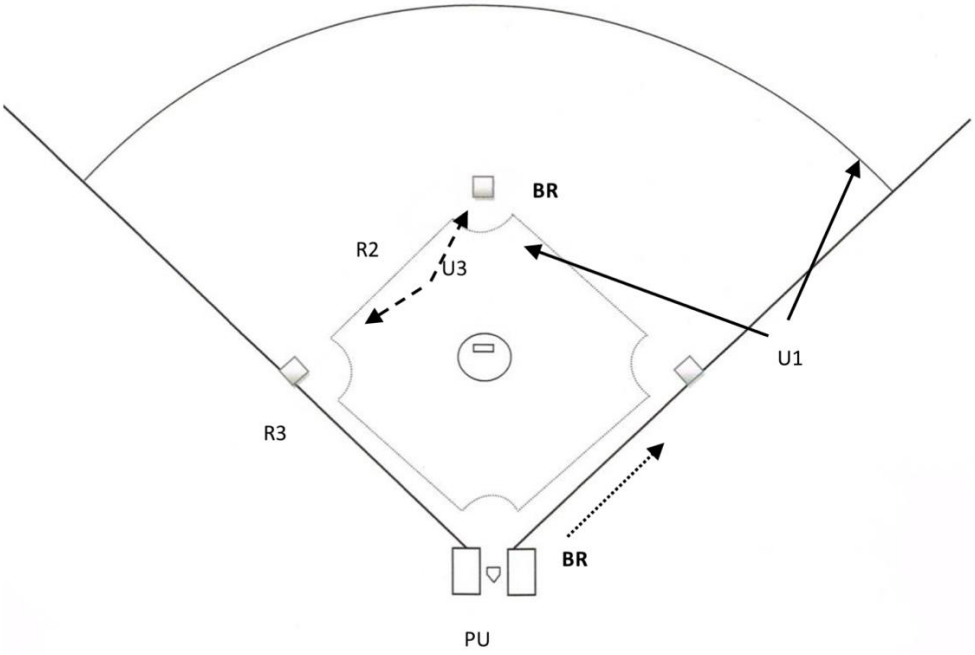
U1 in DEEP 'B'
Squeezed by Middle Infielder – Play to 1st base.

U1 steps back into the infield toward the foul pole to get an angle for a play at 1st base.



R2 or R2 & R3 (<u>2 outs</u>) U1 in 'A' (Optional)

PU has touches at 3rd. U3 has any play on R2 at 2nd and 3rd and on B/R at 3rd. U1 moves inside (Reverse Rotation) taking B/R to 2nd if U1 does not go out on trouble ball.



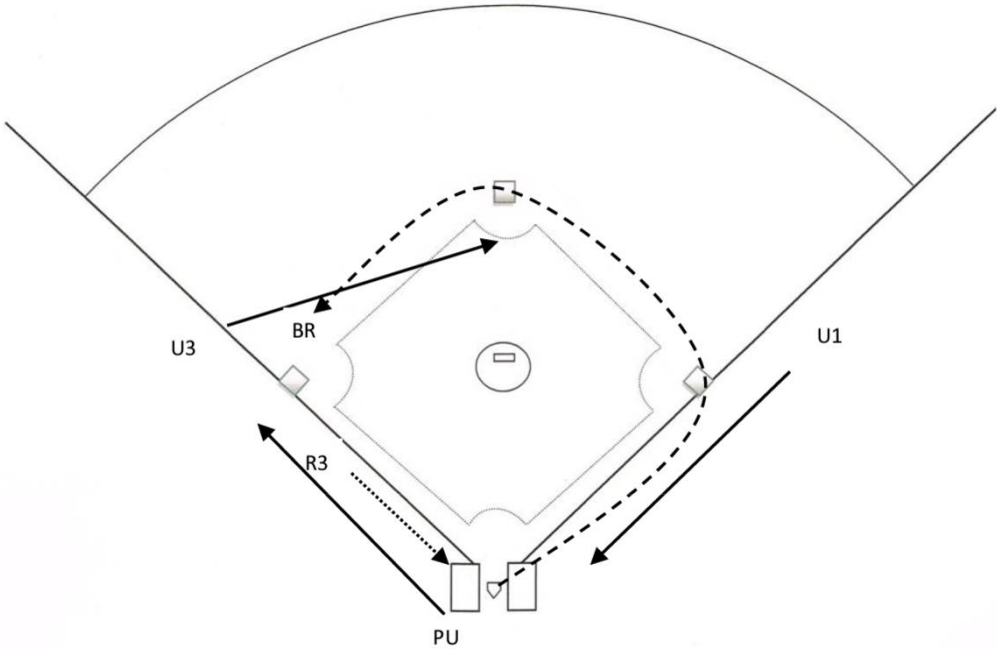
Runner @ 3rd

1. **POSITIONS:**
   a. PU is at the plate.
   b. U1 and U3 are between 6-10 feet behind the first baseperson and 3rd baseperson respectively. The foot closest to the foul line is within 6 inches of the foul line, feet are parallel and you can use a standing set or hands on knees set.

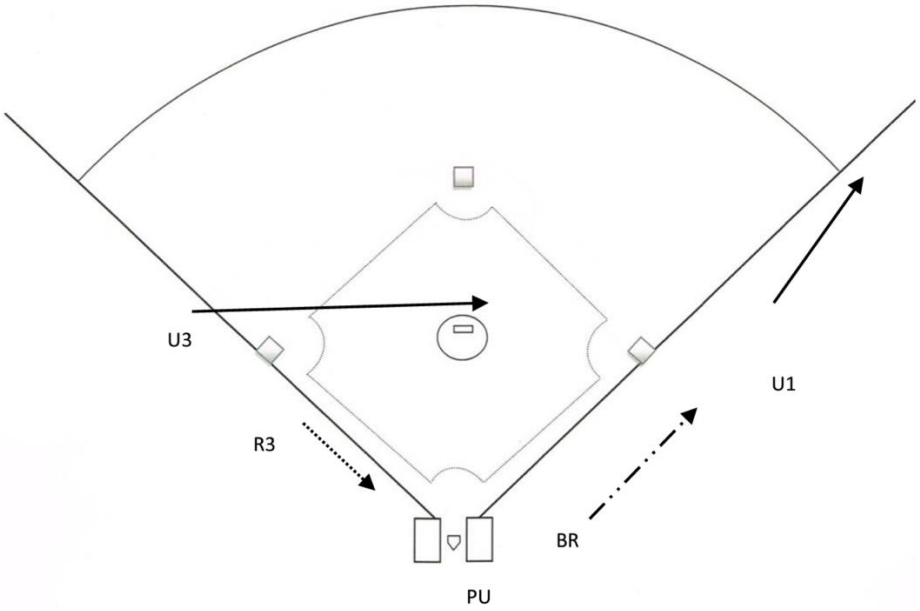
2. **On a Clean Hit:**
   a. PU rotates to 3rd for possible play on BR, while looking at touch by R3. (See page 6, #5; PU not impeding the runner rounding 3rd and possible play back into 3rd).
   b. U1 watches touch at 1st and plays back in, then rotates home once BR reaches 2nd.
   c. U3 moves to 2nd for possible play on BR.

3. **Trouble Ball, U1 or U3 goes out:**
   a. PU stays home and has tag-up and touch of home by R3.
   b. If U3 goes out then U1 must get to the working area and if U1 goes out U3 must do so because they then assume all responsibility for plays on R3 and BR at all bases.
   (Crew should have signal for this mechanic)

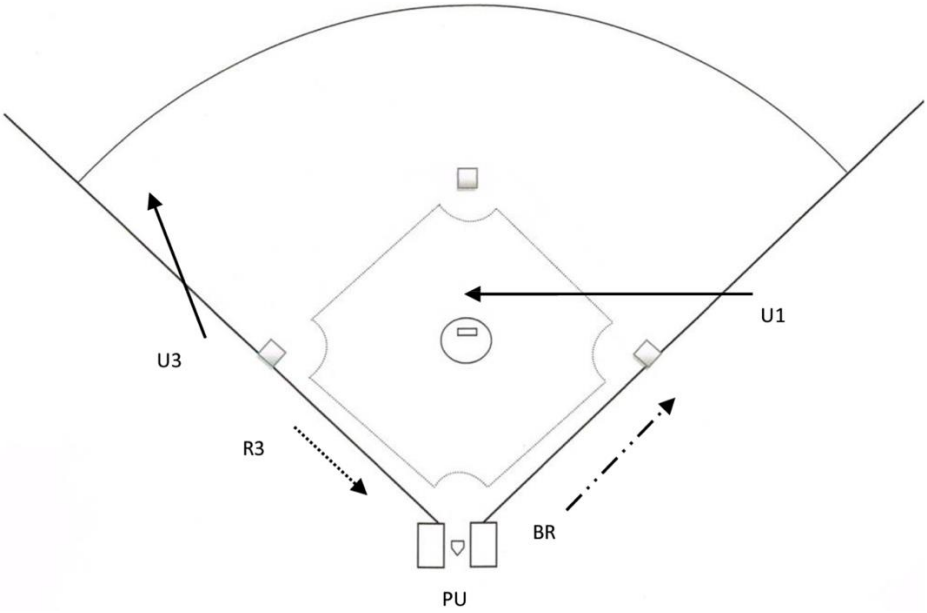
R3
U3 - 'D'. U1 – 'A'. On clean hit, PU rotates to 3rd staying foul and watching touch of R3 at home, U1 rotates to home once BR reaches 2nd.



R3-U1 goes out.
PU stays home. If U1 goes out, U3 has responsibility for plays of R3 at 3rd and BR at all bases therefore he must get to the working area. PU has tag-up of R3.



R3-U3 goes out.
PU stays home. If U3 goes out, U1 has responsibility for plays of R3 at 3rd and BR at all bases therefore he must get to the working area. PU has tag-up of R3.



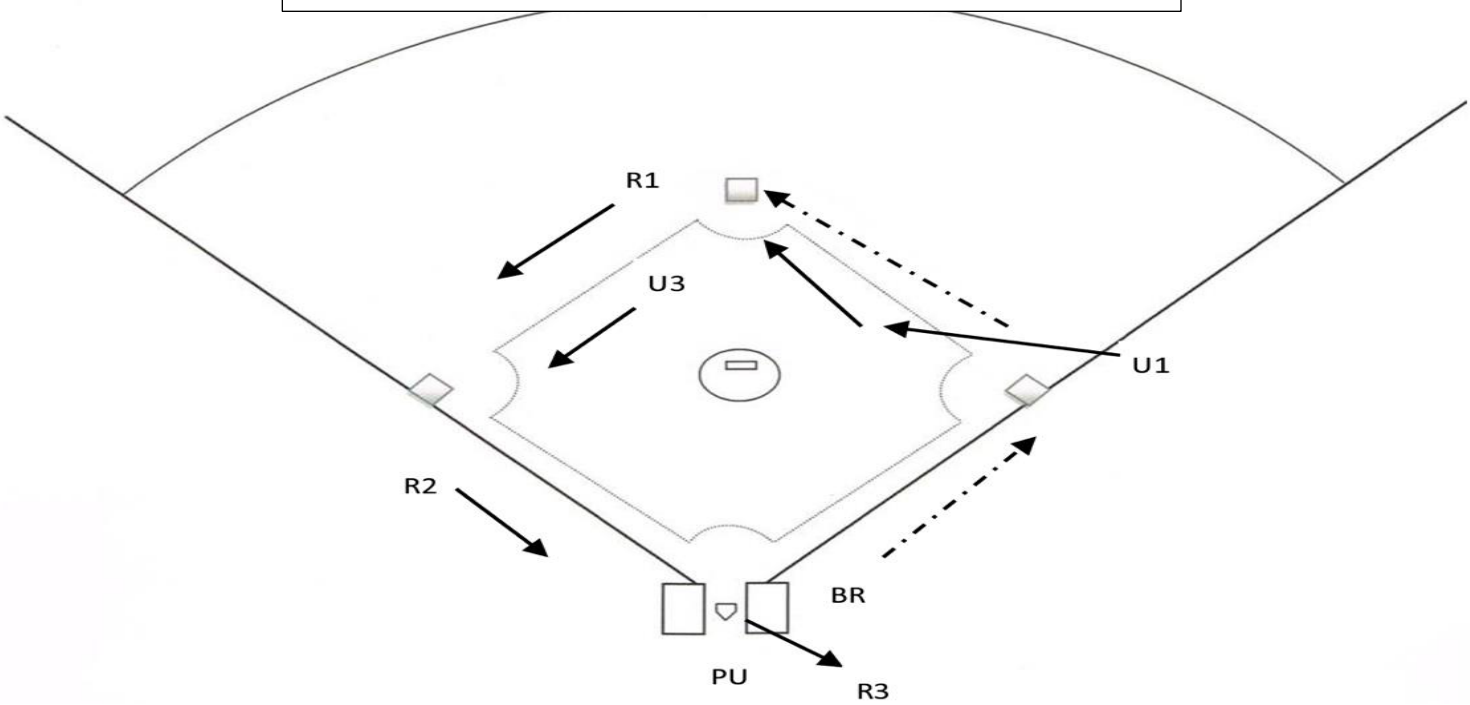
Bases Loaded

1. **POSITIONS:**
    a. PU is at the plate.
    b. U1 is lined up for pick-off about 6-8 feet behind base (or first baseperson if playing off) on an angle so that pitcher can be seen and still watch RH batter for check swing.
    c. U3 is in Natural 'C' position with shoulders square to the plate.

2. **On a Clean Hit:**
    a. PU stays at plate.
    b. U1 moves inside and takes BR to 2nd on the reverse rotation.
    c. U3 has runners on base at 2nd and 3rd and BR at 3rd.

3. **Trouble Ball, U1 goes out:**
    a. PU stays home and has tag-up and touch of home by R3.
    b. U1 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Once out, stay out.
    c. U3, moving to the working area, has tag-ups and/or touches at 1st and 2nd and all plays at all bases

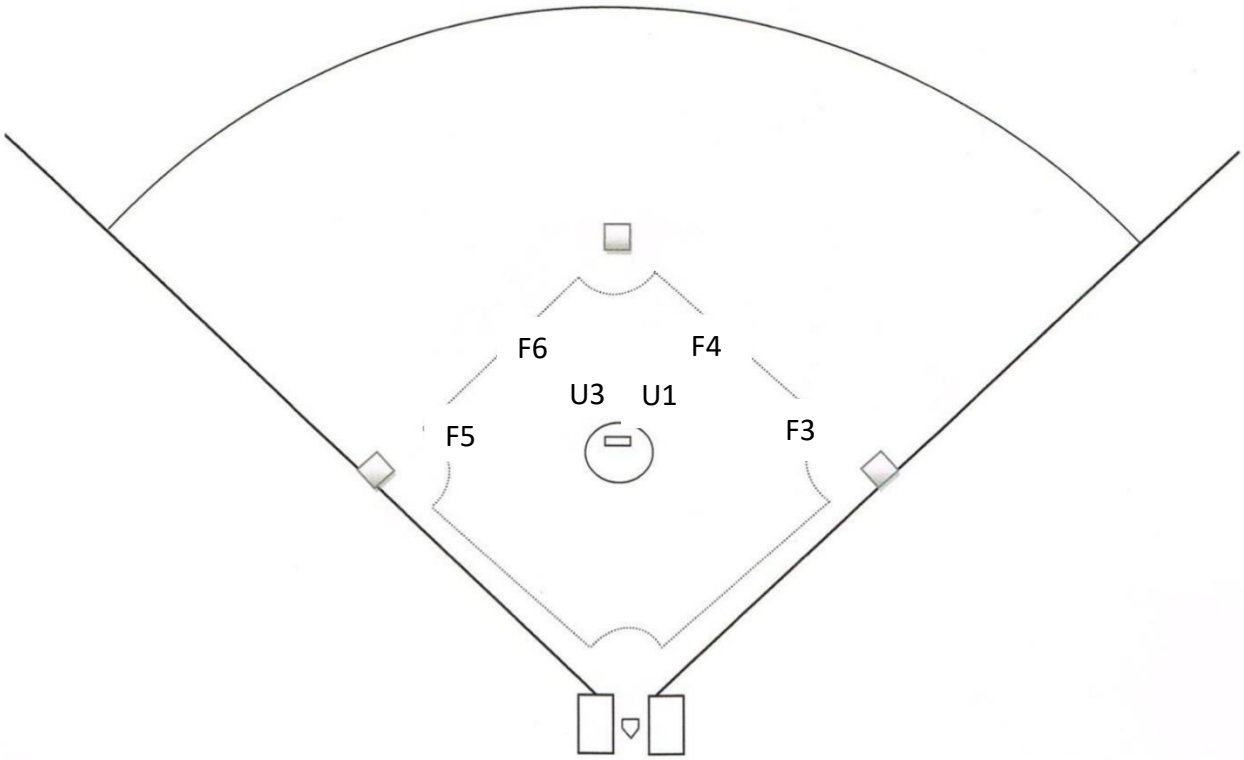
BASES LOADED
Reverse Rotation
PU stays home. U1 lined up for pick off. U3 is in Natural 'C'. If U1 does not go out he moves inside on **ANY** ball to the outfield; he has R1 @ 1st, BR at 1st and 2nd. U3 has R1 & R2 at 2nd & 3rd and BR at 3rd.



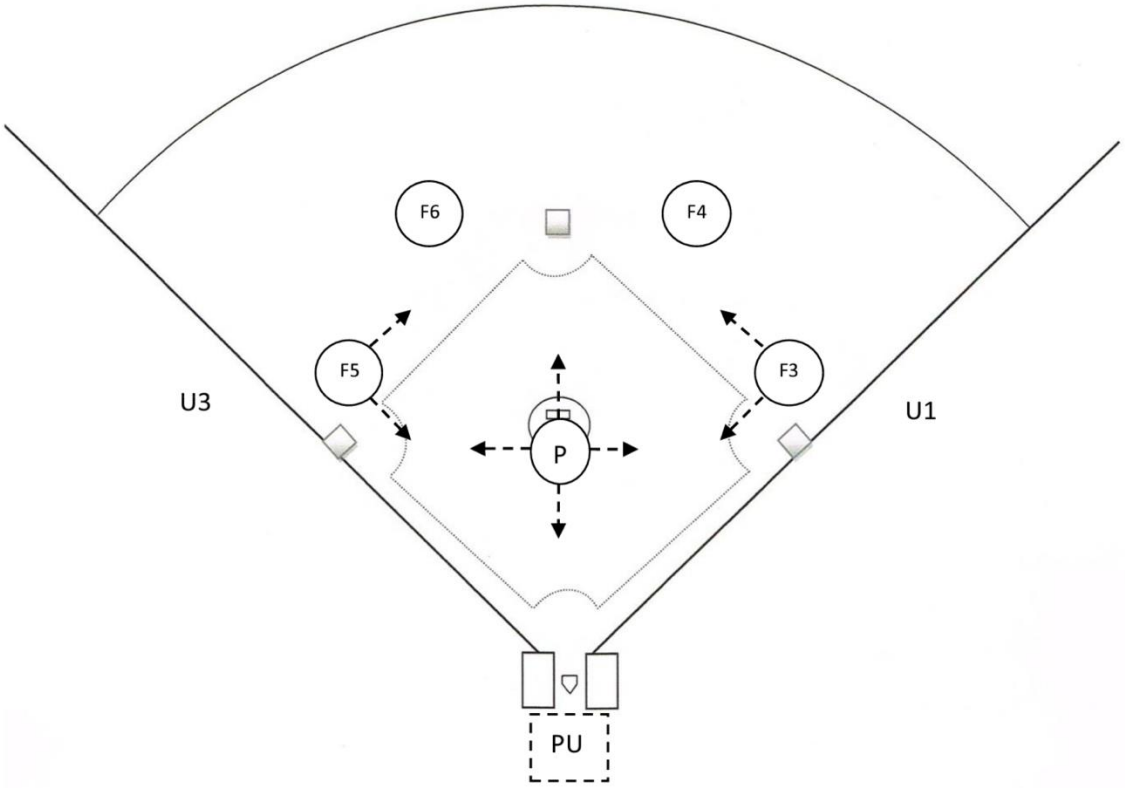
INFIELDERS PLAYING "IN"-UMPIRE INSIDE

U1 AND U3 (depending on who is inside) should position themselves in the front portion of the working area, 1 step inside of mound, 6 feet back of the mound, and shoulders square to the plate.

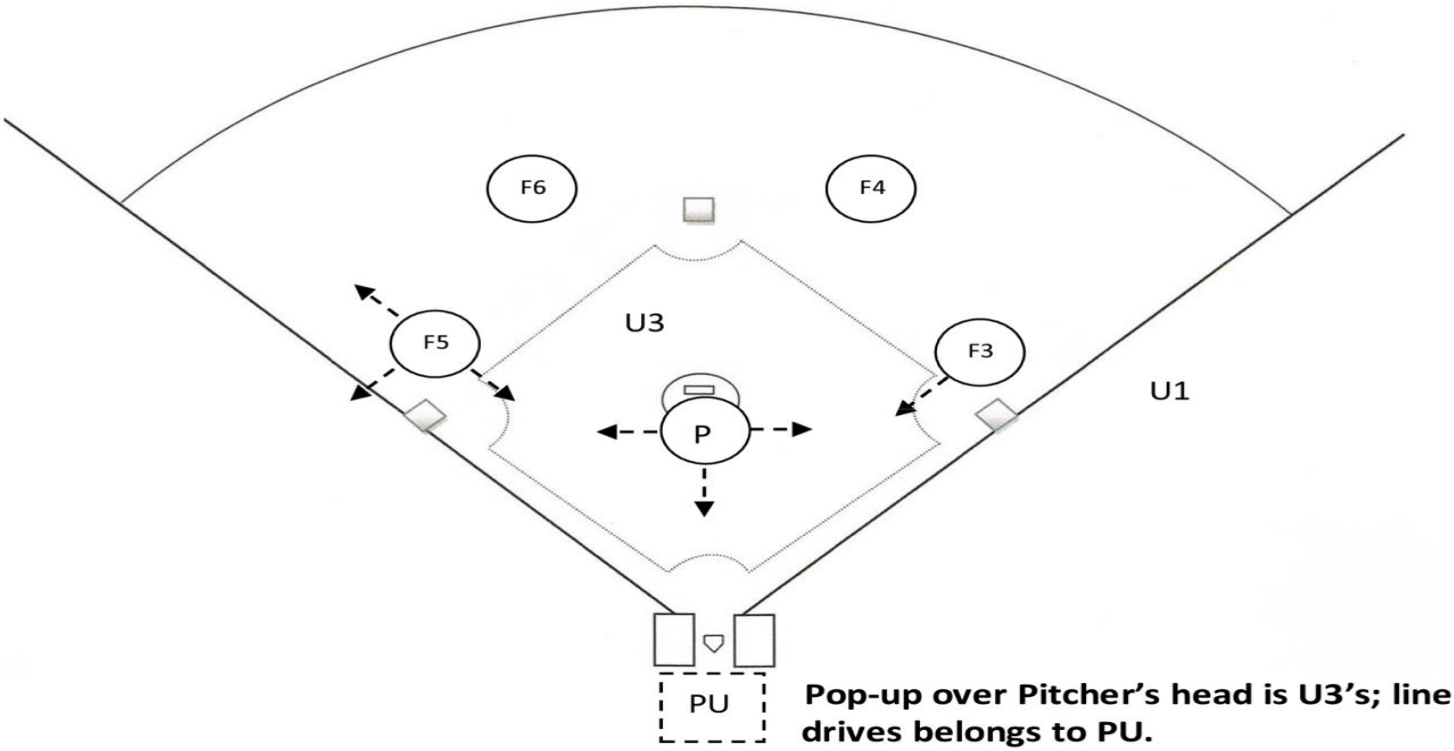
When "inside," U1 and U3 should **never** position themselves behind the infielders.



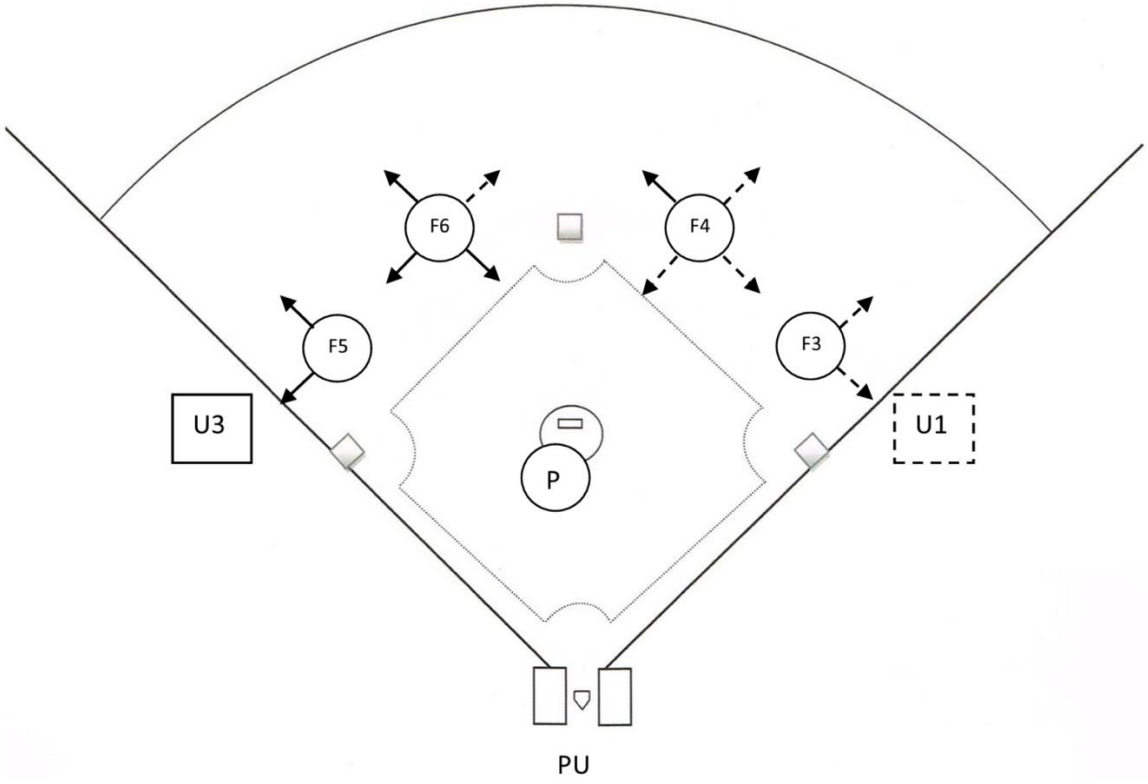
LINE DRIVE AND POP-UP COVERAGE
PLATE UMPIRE
U1 & U3 on the lines



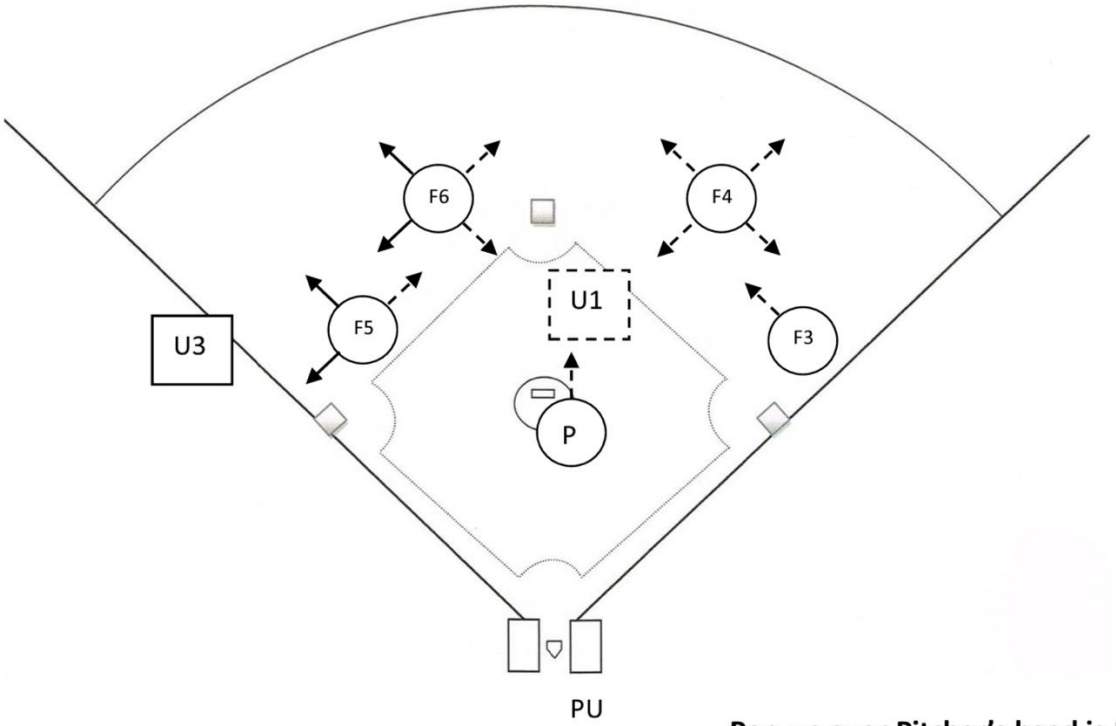
LINE DRIVE AND POP-UP COVERAGE
PLATE UMPIRE
U1 or U3 INSIDE



LINE DRIVE AND POP-UP COVERAGE
U1 & U3 (on the lines)



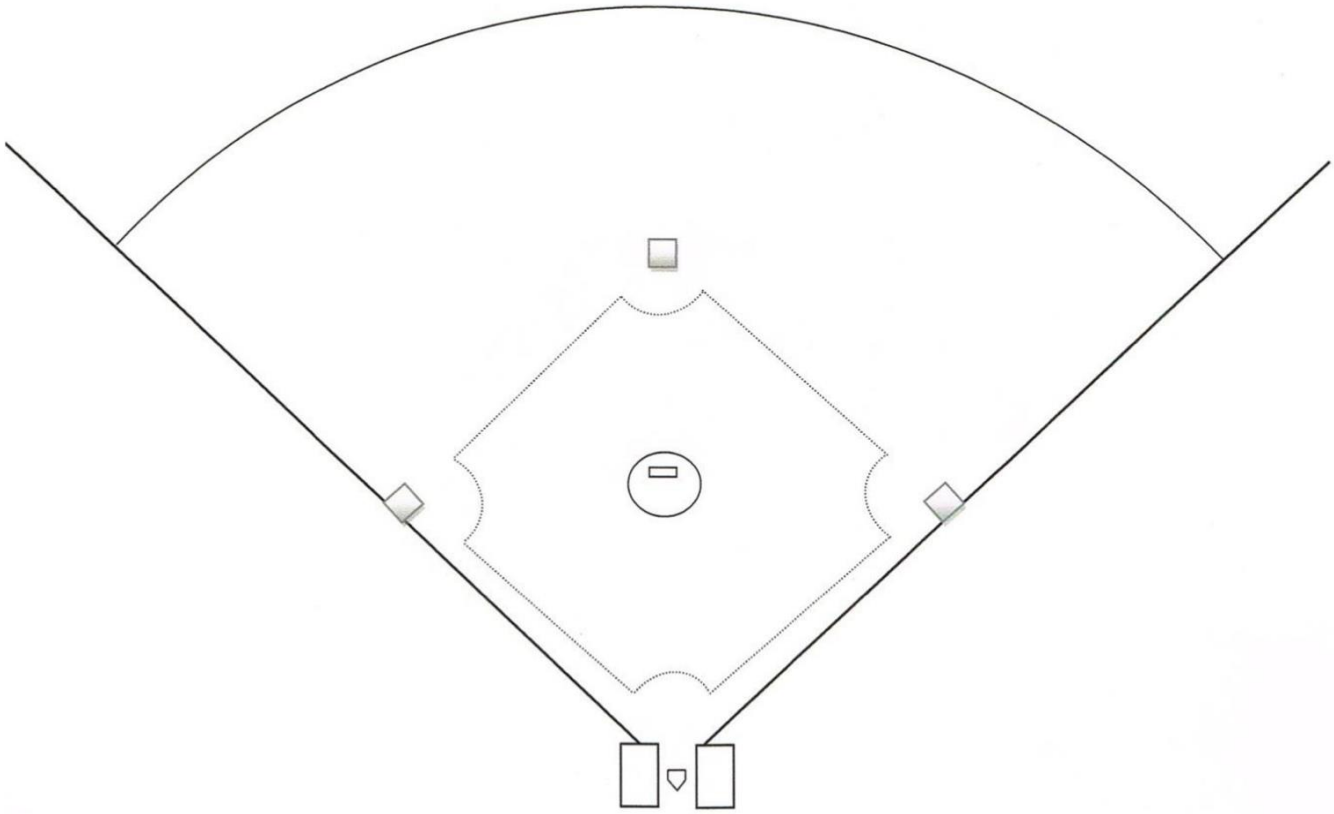
LINE DRIVE AND POP-UP COVERAGE
U1 or U3 inside



Pop-up over Pitcher's head is U1's.

NOTES

Use copies of this diagram for pre-game and post-game discussion.



PU

Please visit the FHSAA Central Hub to access the hyperlink to the baseball 3-person mechanics training video. This video shows the movements (animated arrows) of the umpires described in this manual.

OR

Simply tap the link below or copy and paste the link into your browser to access the FHSAA Baseball 3-person umpire mechanics YouTube video:

https://youtu.be/epvKtx_SHHY

Have a great season!