

# THE GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

*“Serving the Student-Athletes of Our Member Schools”*



## BASEBALL UMPIRES MECHANICS MANUAL 2, 3 & 4 Man Mechanics

(Revised September 2017)

# GHSA

## UMPIRES UNIFORM

**Shirt** - Navy blue or powder blue collared, long or short-sleeve shirt. Game shirts will have the GHSA logo on the left chest, either dye sublimated or embroidered, and a 2" X 3" American flag trimmed in gold on the left sleeve, 2" above the sleeve hem.

**Trousers** - Pleated or non-pleated heather gray trousers  
Plate Pants  
Base Pants  
Combo Pants (Sub-Varsity games only)

**Shoes** - Predominantly black with black laces. White logo or striping is approved. Crew of three or more, base umpires must match. Shoes must be shined.

**Socks** - Black or navy blue

**Belt** - Solid black

**Jacket / Wind shirt** - Black or navy blue

**Cap** - Navy blue, fitted with the letters GHSA embroidered on the front of the crown in white letters with gold trim. No Mesh Caps

**Undershirt** - Navy blue if worn

**Ball Bag** - Navy blue

# PLATE UMPIRE'S EQUIPMENT

**Mask** - Regular or Hockey Style

**Chest Protector**

**Shin Guards**

**Plate Shoes** - Steel toe, with top plate

**Protective Cup**

**Ball Bag** - Navy, One or Two (Two preferred)

**Indicator** (plate and base umpires)

**Lineup card holder with pen** - pen should be a color other than blue or black

**Plate Brush**

## **PLATE UMPIRE - GENERAL MECHANICS**

### **Working Stance and Position**

Position – Slot (Between the plate and the batter. Head must be off the plate!)

Stance – Heal Toe, Scissors or Davis. Chin aligned with the top of the catcher's head or higher. The higher your head the further back you must move. The problem arises when an umpire fails to consistently set up and drifts "behind the catcher." Many umpires elect to work always over the catcher's shoulder, setting up according to where the catcher is positioned. As a result their judgment of the zone can vary wildly.

### **"Locked" into Stance**

The umpire's stance should provide a solid platform from which to work. The best umpires lock in to an unmovable stance, even grabbing body parts to firmly set a foundation.

### **Timing Into Stance**

When does the umpire enter the calling stance. Some umpires are in full lock even as the pitcher is commencing the stretch (too early) while others delay until the ball is on its way to the plate (too late). Generally the umpire should be in lock position as the pitcher commences to deliver the ball (hands break) to the plate.

### **Distance from Plate**

Working a consistent distance from the plate is an important ingredient in being consistent on strike calls.

### **Distance from Catcher**

In a perfect diamond every catcher works tucked down low, glove arm extended, giving you a complete view of the entire plate. In reality you run into catchers who perch up in the air with the glove tucked into their chest taking away any almost chance you have of making a quality call. The distance an umpire works from the catcher should not crowd any potential play. An umpire who sets up tight to the catcher is often required to literally bail out before the ball arrives at the plate. An umpire who consistently sets too far behind the catcher has an obstructed view of the plate. Catchers also move well forward in the box, at times challenging your clear view of the corners.

### **Moves Body with the Pitch**

Should not happen to even the slightest degree.

### **Moves Head with the Pitch**

Again, this is a weakness. It should not happen. The body and head should remain fixed from the first movement all the way to the glove. You must follow the pitch into the catcher's mitt with your eyes.

### **Reaction to Developing Play**

Have you ever seen a plate umpire clearing an indicator while the runner stealing from third slides in for a close call? It happens. An umpire must remain vigilant and mobile able to react with the play, not "to the play." This means the umpire must be in a state of control, of anticipation and awareness.

## **Section Two - Making The Calls**

### **Timing at the Plate**

The umpire should follow the ball all the way to the catcher's glove before even making up their mind on the strike or ball call. Often this is expressed as allowing a gap large enough to make a call before actually making the call, for ex-ample: thud ... thought "strike" ... called "strike." (Pause, process and react.)

### **Use of Voice**

Coaches and players must clearly hear the most important calls ... "Play." The secondary calls, "strike, ball, safe, out" must be made with appropriate and distinguishable verbal emphasis.

## **BASE UMPIRE - GENERAL MECHANICS**

### **Use of Gestures**

An umpire's physical gestures must be clear, consistent and appropriate to the game. They should be delivered with an emphasis that befits the game situation. An umpire who makes a nonchalant pump of the hand on a critical tag play at the plate is not using a gesture equivalent to the game. Similarly, an umpire who screams and pumps the call wildly on a routine 1-3 force play is just as suspect.

### **Working of the Strike Zone**

This is not to be confused with judgment of the zone. Judgment is often a combination of mechanical and physical factors. Working the strike zone relates to the appearance of control of the zone and the confidence the umpire demonstrates making the strike call. "He's been calling them there all day" is what you hear from the coach when an umpire demonstrates consistent and appropriate strike calls. An umpire who hesitates or shows weakness in making the call is inviting criticism from every corner of the ball park.

### **Hustle and Mobility**

Yes, you can over hustle! Funny to make this observation after years of trying to get umpires to move out from behind the plate at all. Growing roots while standing in the dish is inexcusable, similarly running all the way down to third base on an infield single is equally poor.

### **Timing in Safe / Out Calls**

The same general principles for strike and ball calls apply here. Pause, process & react.

## **Section Three - On the Field Communication**

### **Verbal Communication with Partners**

Clear concise communication before, during and after the game is an integral part to crew success. A healthy level of discussion is a positive factor in the game. Extensive game delaying discussions, for any reason, are not appropriate.

### **Use of Signals for Partners**

Some umpires are stoic in their lack of communication. Others are delivering more signs and indications than the third base coach. A good umpire balances the need to have the entire crew on the same page with discreet meaningful signals.

### **Time Between Innings**

The plate umpire is in the optimum position to monitor the game and insure that only routine matters are attended to during the inning changeovers.

### **Communication with Others**

Your rapport with the coaches, scorers, announcers, grounds crew, even the catcher or other players should be clean, concise and professional. It should never be demeaning, overly relaxed or socially fraternizing.

## **Section Four - Other Considerations**

### **Appearance**

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Looking credible is the first step to being credible.

### **Rules Knowledge and Application**

Knowing the rules isn't enough. You must know the spirit and the intent of the rules to properly enforce the rules.

## **BASE UMPIRE - GENERAL MECHANICS**

### **Working Stance and Position**

There are two standard positions, the standing set and the hands-on-knees set.

The Standing Set is most commonly used when you are on the baseline. It is a relaxed position, standing erect, feet slightly apart, and hands at your side. The "relaxed" calls are made from this position, routine plays.

The Hands-on-Knees set creates a feeling of being locked into the play. With your legs spread slightly wider than shoulder width and your hands resting on your knees, the umpire has a solid platform with which to make calls. It should be used anytime you are in the infield or have taken a few steps and are about to make a close call.

### **Priorities**

On every pitch, the immediate priorities for a base umpire are:

- Watching for an illegal pitch or balk
- Handling pickoff plays to the bases
- Assisting on the check swing appeal
- Being aware of attempted steals, particularly double steals

If the ball is hit, the base umpire's priorities depend on the game situation

#### *No One on Base*

- Do you have a dead ball situation (ball hits the batter)?
- Assess the ball's flight and position of the ball
- Call fair or foul if the ball is hit down the first base line beyond the bag.
- You have the bases on any ball hit. You have catch / no-catch on any ball hit into the outfield from right-fielder to the right field fence.
- Any other fly ball to the outfield, pivot in and take the batter-runner to 2nd.

#### *With Runners on Base*

- Assess the ball's flight and position of the ball. You have the bases on any ball hit. You have catch / no-catch on any fly ball in the "V" from the left-fielder to the right-fielder.
- Be aware of any options the fielders may have and do not commit yourself to one specific play until the fielders have committed themselves.
- You also have responsibility for both ends of a double play.

### **Making the Call**

- Angle is of primary importance. Strive to attain a 90 degree angle to the play
- Distance is always secondary. 10 to 15 feet from every play would be perfect but often you can be too close to see the entire play.
- Timing must be consistent. Proper timing is not an artificial creation. Proper timing is the result of umpiring the entire play and only signalling after you are sure the play has truly ended.
- Selling the call is a part of umpiring that can prevent many arguments. That little bit of confidence and showmanship can go a long way towards you taking charge of the diamond. Sell the close calls with use of voice and actions.

# Crew of 2 Basic Mechanics

## Base Umpire

1. Before the game begins check the entire field for loose equipment especially the outfield for baseballs left on the field.
2. Between innings position yourself just off the dirt between 1st and 2nd in the right field grass - watch outfielders throw the balls in before the start of the inning. Do not carry on casual conversations with your partner, players or coaches between innings. If there is something you need to discuss do it quickly and professionally. NEVER talk with your partner between innings after a controversial play or call.

## Position A - No runners on base

1. **Position:** Both feet in foul territory facing home plate; Right foot next to foul line, 15-20 feet behind 1st base or the 1st baseman no further than edge of outfield grass.
2. **Main Responsibilities:** Check swing, Fair-Foul (1st base to foul pole), Out-Safe
3. **Ball hit:** Pause - Read - React (PRR)
4. **Ground balls to infield:** Take as many plays in fair territory as possible

Angle and distance: 4 or 5 steps into fair territory, 15-20 feet from the base, ready position with chest square to first base, head and eyes on the ball, turn your head with the throw, LISTEN for catch watch for BR foot on bag (Drill: Close eyes listen for catch vs. foot)

Pause, stand, then make the call, do not make the call as you stand

Errant throws:

Low/Hi Throws: Be sure F3 has secure possession and is on the bag. Your timing is critical on this play. WAIT! Don't rush the call!

Throw Up the line: Move towards first base line to gain an angle, look for swipe tag. If tag occurs - walk towards play and say "On the tag, He's out!" while signaling out with the right hand. If tag does not occur - "Safe! No tag, safe!" while giving the safe signal and stepping towards the play each time you say "safe."

Throw Down the line: Move to gain an angle, watch first baseman's foot on bag. On a pulled foot "Safe, he's off the bag!"

Throw gets by 1st baseman: Quickly get to the infield grass, keep track of the ball - stay ahead of the runner! (make sure you watch runner to see if he makes a move to go to 2nd base)

5. **Fly balls and pop ups:** Pause - Read - React

Go out on fly balls from the right fielder to the 1st base foul line and trouble balls from centerfield to the 1st base foul line. Rule fair / foul, then catch / no catch. After you have determined that there will be no problems with the ball (i.e. the ball will not go out of play or under a fence and no possibility of fan interference) you will head towards home, moving into foul territory as soon as possible, and take the play at home. But only if you can get there in front of the runner, otherwise stay out! When you are in position to make the call at the plate tell your partner "I'm at home, Bill! I've got the plate!"

Trouble ball — Home runs, ball off the outfield wall, diving catches, more than one player converging to make the catch, catches made by the outfielder with his back towards the infield, catches below his waist on a full run.

Any of the following actions by the outfielder would indicate a trouble ball

- 1) Outfielder is running hard in towards the infield
- 2) Outfielder has turned his back to the infield and is running toward the outfield fence
- 3) Three fielders converging on a ball (ie. F8, F9 & F4)
- 4) The right fielder is turning towards the foul line

All base hits, routine fly balls from right fielder to center fielder & all fly balls from center fielder to 3rd base foul line — come into infield pivot and take the runner to second (if he goes)— watch ball as you enter the infield time your pivot so you are facing first base before the BR arrives so you can watch him touch first then find the ball — rule on legal touch and/or obstruction

(continued on next page...)

## Position A - No runners on base (*continued*)

- c. Pop up – pivot. Quickly come into the infield and pivot on all pop ups to the infield.
- d. Pop up in the vicinity of 1st base
  - in front of base umpire – BU pivot PU takes ball
  - behind BU – step into field and allow 1st baseman to clear, then follow him to the ball keeping a good angle to view the catch

## Position B - Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

1. **Position:** Facing home plate midway between back edge of pitchers mound and 2nd base cutout and on a tangent line between home plate and the right edge of the mound (1st base side)
2. **Rule on:** All balks (specifically hands & shoulders), pick offs, steals, fly balls in the "V", all touches of 1st and 2nd base by runners and 3rd by batter runner.
3. **Pick off:**  
1<sup>st</sup> base- Step forward and pivot towards 1<sup>st</sup> base, facing first base in the ready position – Stand, make the call  
3<sup>rd</sup> base- Pivot on right foot, step with your left towards 3<sup>rd</sup> base in the ready position – Stand, make the call
4. **Steals:** Know the count and number of outs.  
Don't move until ball crosses the plate. Keep your eyes on the catcher and make a drop step towards second. As catcher makes throw continue towards second turning with the ball. Assume the ready position with chest square to second base — Stand, make the call.
5. **Ground balls to infield:** Chest to ball, let throw take you to the play, be set before every call (P-R-R).
6. **Fly balls/Pop ups:** Open up to ball and look at outfielder to determine who has responsibility for ball (P-R-R)

Routine in the "V": Move 2 to 3 steps back towards the pitcher's mound (the working area) to broaden your field of view and get an angle. Rule on catch and tag up at 1st base

Difficult Play in the "V": Move to the edge of infield grass and get an angle. Rule on catch and tag up at 1st base. Never go into the infield dirt.

## Position C - Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> only, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> only

1. **Position:** Facing home plate midway between back edge of pitcher's mound and 2nd base cutout and on a tangent line between home plate and the left edge of the mound (3rd base side)
2. **Rule on:** All balks (specifically hands & shoulders), pick offs, steals, pop ups and fly balls in the "V", all touches of 1st & 2nd base by runners and 3rd by batter runner.

### 3. Pick Offs:

At first: Pivot on your left foot towards first in the ready position – Stand, make the call

At second: Drop step with your left foot turn with the throw, ready position – Stand, make the call.

At third: Step forward with your right foot & pivot towards third in the ready position – Stand, make the call

### 4. Steals: Know the count and number of outs

Second: Don't move until ball crosses the plate. Keep your eyes on the catcher and make a drop step towards second. With runners on 1st and 3rd be ready for a fake to second and a throw to third. As catcher makes throw continue towards second turning with the ball. Stand, make the call.

Third: Don't move until ball crosses the plate. Keep your eyes on the catcher and break towards an imaginary 45 ft. line along the 3rd base line. As catcher makes throw turn with the ball and get set. Stand, make the call.

5. **Ground balls to infield:** Chest to ball, let throw take you to the play, set before call. BU has all calls at 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

### 6. Fly balls/Pop ups:

Open up to ball and look at outfielder to determine who has responsibility for ball (P-R-R)  
Routine in the "V": Move 2 to 3 steps back towards the pitcher's mound (the working area) to broaden your field of view and get angle. Rule on catch and tag up

Difficult Play in the "V": Move to the edge of infield grass and get an angle. Rule on catch and tag up.

*(continued on next page...)*



## Plate Umpire

1. **Responsibilities:** Strike / ball, check swing, fair / foul, obstruction / interference, catch / no catch, all touches of 3<sup>rd</sup> by runners and all touches of home plate by runners and batter runner, overthrows at 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, legal slide at 2<sup>nd</sup> on double play, all balks (specifically the feet), putting the ball in play after a dead ball (with runners on) and rotations with a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> and/or 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

All strikes and outs called with the right hand. Hold indicator and remove mask with left hand. Remember do not verbalize swinging strikes.

2. **Strike Zone:** Be consistent. Don't squeeze the zone when the game is on the line. Every pitch is a strike until it proves otherwise.
3. **Start of game:** Step in behind catcher (let him know) and take a few pitches from either side, introduce yourself to the catcher, he's the only player you should call by name (do this with both teams), dust the plate, "Play!"
4. **Between innings:** replenish baseballs, stand 30 - 40 feet from the plate on the foul line of whichever team is entering the field, mask should be under right or left arm, with two warm ups left step to the edge of the dirt area surrounding home plate and notify catcher "2 more", then dust plate.

## No Runners On

1. **Fair or Foul:** Entire 3<sup>rd</sup> base line, and up to the bag on 1<sup>st</sup> base line. All fly balls from the right fielder to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base foul line (unless base umpire goes out on a trouble ball), 45 foot running lane.
2. **Ground balls to the infield:** Clear the catcher on the left side while removing mask (left hand). Keep eyes on ball and hustle (don't sprint) up the 1st base foul line, no further than the 45 ft. line. Follow ball to base. Rule on tag before the 45 ft. line, running lane violation and overthrows

3. **Fly balls/Pop ups:**

From right fielder to 3<sup>rd</sup> base foul line: Clear the catcher on the left and move towards mound gaining an angle on the ball (do not go past mound) get set before catch. Stand, make the call. You do not have to signal an obvious catch - no catch but you should verbally let your partner know whenever there's a catch - "That's a catch, Bill" This way if your partner doesn't hear anything he knows the ball is down.

Down the 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line: Clear the catcher on the left and take the batter runner all the way from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> and home if Base Umpire cannot get back in to cover it, rule on any plays on the runner, base running violations and obstruction.

## Runners on Base

1. PU makes all fair or foul calls down both foul lines, Fly ball and pop ups from the right fielder to the 1st base foul line and the left fielder to the 3rd base foul line, runners touching third and plays at the plate.

2. **Rotations:**

Base hit with runners on 1st or 1st and 3rd – Clear catcher on the left while removing mask and move down the 3rd base line in foul territory (if runner on third, glance over your shoulder and watch him touch home plate). Keep moving, watch play develop and anticipate where play will occur. If play develops at third emphatically tell your partner, "I've got third if he comes, Bill!!!" Let the throw take you into the cutout and again tell your partner "I've got third, Bill." Get set. Stand, and make the call. Do not step into the cutout until the throw is made and you know it's a quality throw. DO NOT tell your partner you've got third unless you are absolutely sure you can get to the cut out before the throw!

Routine fly ball with runners on 1st and 2nd: - Clear catcher on the left while removing mask and move down the 3rd base line in foul. Keep moving, watch play develop. Before the ball is caught emphatically tell your partner, "I've got third if he comes, Bill!!!" If the runner on second tags up let the throw take you into the cutout and again tell your partner "I've got third, Bill." Get set. Stand, and make the call. Do not step into the cutout until the throw is made and you know it's a quality throw. DO NOT tell your partner you've got third unless you are absolutely sure you can get to the cut out before the throw!

3. **Batted Balls:** Clear catcher to the left while removing mask and move a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to watch the play develop (think angle). Exception: Any ball near either foul line requires the PU to move down the appropriate foul line, straddle the line and rule fair or foul. Then bounce back behind the plate area.

Ground Ball runner on first: Once ball is fielded bounce back to home plate, keep eye on ball. Rule on illegal slide at 2nd and/or running lane violation/pulled foot at 1st base. If ball is not fielded plate umpire has 3rd.

*(continued on next page...)*

Ground ball left side of infield runner on second only: Clear catcher on the left while removing mask and move down the 3rd base line in foul territory. Keep moving, watch play develop and anticipate where play will occur. If throw goes to first the PU has the 2nd play in the infield, runner on 2nd going to 3rd. Let the throw take you into the cutout and again tell your partner "I've got third, Bill." Get set. Stand, and make the call. If it is an errant throw stay back and be prepared to bust home ahead of the runner. If the runner on second is not going to 3rd bounce back towards home to rule on any running lane violations.

Runners on 1st and 2nd, 2nd and 3rd or bases loaded: Clear catcher on the left while removing mask and move a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to watch the play develop. Exception: Any ball near either foul line requires the PU to move down the appropriate foul line, straddle the line and rule fair or foul. Then bounce back behind the plate area. Rule on plays at the plate, runner{s} touching third and runner{s}/batter runner touching home, running lane infraction.

## **Plate Mechanics**

- 1. Position:** Line up in the slot.
- 2. Stance:** Heal Toe, Balanced or Scissors. Head still with chin no lower than the top of the catcher's head. The farther back the higher you must work. Head should be level and facing the pitcher.  
Track the pitch with your eyes all the way to the mitt. Pause – Process – Make the call  
Call balls down and strikes standing with hand signal.  
Do not verbalize swinging strike or foul tip use appropriate hand signal. Strike three call make sure you have a catch.

# Crew of 3 Basic Mechanics

## CREW OF 3 GENERAL CONCEPTS

**A good pre-game with your partners is essential.** The Crew of 3 allows for better coverage on fly balls to the outfield, double plays, pick-offs, rundowns and plays at the plate. It also gives another pair of eyes for balks with an umpire at a corner; allowing a clear look of the pitcher's entire foot crossing over the back edge of the pitcher's plate, or leaning toward home before a pick-off and the hybrid stance.

**When a base umpire goes out the crew reverts to a Crew of 2 mechanics.** When possible, an umpire should go out on every fly ball and all balls hit down the foul lines. If you go out STAY OUT! When the base umpire in the middle and he has responsibility for a fly ball he DOES NOT go out, STAY IN THE INFIELD!

**Communication is vital!!!** There is an extra umpire on the field and not everyone is completely familiar with Crew of 3 mechanics. Loudly announce your intentions on all plays. If you are going out on a fly ball, announce it loudly so that both of your partners can hear you. If both umpires mistakenly go out on a fly ball the plate umpire has their back and will make all calls on the bases.

When in the middle, DO NOT leave the middle until the umpire that's relieving you comes in and says "I've got the ball."

Be sure to signal # of outs, pre-play rotations or reverse rotations, infield fly, timing plays and ALWAYS, ALWAYS COMMUNICATE DURING THE PLAY!!!

## INITIAL POSITIONING

**No runners on or runner on third only:**

U1 in A position and U3 in D position.

**Runner on first only:**

U1 in A position and U3 in deep C, heels on the edge of the infield grass, body square to the first base line.

SIMPLIFIED – ANY TIME THERE IS A RUNNER ON 1<sup>st</sup>, U1 is at 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Runner on first only, first and second, first and third, or bases loaded:**

U1 in A position and U2 in normal C position, halfway between 2<sup>nd</sup> base and the mound, on a tangent line running from home plate through the edge of the mound, body square to home plate.

SIMPLIFIED – ANY TIME THERE IS A RUNNER ON 1<sup>st</sup>, U1 is at 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Runner on second only or second and third:**

U1 in deep B position, heels on the edge of the infield grass, body square to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line and U3 in D position. SIMPLIFIED – With 2<sup>nd</sup> base occupied & no runners on 1<sup>st</sup> base - U1 is in Deep B position

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND COVERAGES

**Tag-up & Touch Responsibilities.**

If you do not have the ball, then be sure to be watching for touches at your base! In general, if you are rotating to a base, then you have the touch responsibility at that base!

**Tag-ups depend on who has the catch.** The umpire in the middle has all tag-ups at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. U1 has all tag-ups at 1<sup>st</sup> unless he goes out. If he goes out U3 has the tag-up at 1<sup>st</sup>. When U3 is in the middle PU has tag-ups at 3<sup>rd</sup>.

3<sup>rd</sup> BU in the middle: 3<sup>rd</sup> BU has all tag-ups at 2<sup>nd</sup> base, 1<sup>st</sup> BU has tag-ups at 1<sup>st</sup> base and the UIC has tag-ups at 3<sup>rd</sup> base! 1<sup>st</sup> BU in the middle: 1<sup>st</sup> BU has tag-ups at 2<sup>nd</sup> & 1<sup>st</sup> base (in that order), 3<sup>rd</sup> BU has tag-ups at 3<sup>rd</sup> and the UIC has touches at home! If either base umpire goes out, revert back to a Crew of 2 responsibilities.

**Outfield Coverage:**

**No runners on base or runner on third only:**

(Positions A & D respectively) Go Out on all fly balls. The first base umpire has all fly balls hit from the center fielder to the right fielder and any ball hit from the right fielder to the 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line. The third base umpire has all fly balls from the center fielder to the left fielder, as well as any ball hit from the left fielder to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base foul line and any ball that causes the centerfielder to run straight in to make the catch. When the centerfielder runs straight back the umpire to which he opens up will go out. On all balls hit to centerfield, the 3<sup>rd</sup> base umpire reads the 1<sup>st</sup> base umpire (running the edge is permitted). If you go out, STAY OUT!

### **Runners on base (other than runner on third only):**

The umpire in the infield (either B or C position) is responsible for all fly balls hit into the "Skinny V". In B that would be from F8 to F9, in C it would be from F7 to F8. The remaining base umpire has all fly balls from the center fielder to his foul line. When the 1st base umpire is in the middle the plate umpire has all balls hit from F9 to the 1st base foul line. When the 3rd base umpire is in the middle the plate umpire has all balls hit from F7 to the 3rd base foul line.

**OUTFIELD COVERAGE is critical! Communicate!!** When on the infield – DO NOT CROSS THE DIRT to go out on a catch – get an angle and make the call!!!

### **Infield Coverage:**

Base Umpires on the wings (A & D): UIC takes all pop-ups and line-drives where the defensive player is moving in and/or towards the middle. Do not rule too quickly on this. When a base umpire is in B or C he has all pop-ups and line-drives where the defensive player is moving towards the middle. UIC has all pop-ups and line-drives to the pitcher and in front of 1st and 3rd base.

## **ROTATIONS**

There are five situations in which the plate umpire will rotate to third base and the first base umpire will rotate to home plate, provided neither base umpire goes into the outfield to rule on a catch/no-catch (if either base umpire goes into the outfield, revert back to a Crew of 2 mechanics).

### **Normal Rotations:**

1. No runners on and the batter hits a ball into the outfield for an extra-base hit.
2. Runner on 3rd only and the batter hits a ball into the outfield for a hit.\*
3. Runner on 1st only and the batter hits a ball into the outfield for an extra-base hit.
4. Runners on first and third and the batter hits an extra-base hit into the outfield.
5. Runners on 1st & 2nd and with less than 2 outs the batter hits a routine fly ball to the outfield and the runners tag up.

Situation 1-4: The timing of this rotation is critical. The plate umpire should start to move toward third once the ball leaves the infield and step into the area near the 3rd base cutout before the throw. The first base umpire should position himself in or near the first base coach's box in order to watch the batter-runner touch first, and rule on possible obstruction. Then, when the runner from first base or (with no runner on first) the batter runner commits to third, the first base umpire must release to cover home plate while loudly stating to the 3rd base umpire, "I'm going home, Bill!". The 3rd base umpire will then slide over to the first base side of the working area and take responsibility of the BR and making all calls at 1st and 2nd.

Situation 5: The timing of this rotation is critical. The plate umpire should start to move toward third as soon as he reads the play while telling the 3BU that he has third and then step into the area near the 3rd base cutout before the throw. The first base umpire should position himself in foul territory lining up the catch with the runner on first, in order to ensure the runner from first has properly tagged up. Then, when the runner from 2nd base commits to third, the first base umpire must release to cover home plate while loudly stating to the 3BU, "I'm going home, Bill!". The 3rd base umpire will then slide over to the B side of the working area and take responsibility of the BR and making all calls at 1st and 2nd base.

*\*Situation 2: With a runner on 3rd only and the first base umpire goes out, the 3rd base umpire must bust into the middle gaining as much ground towards 1st base in case there is a throw back at 1st base. The plate umpire would have the tag up at 3rd.*

### **Reverse Rotations:**

1. If there are no runners on base and the first base umpire goes out to cover a catch/no-catch situation in right field, then the plate umpire must rotate to first base to cover any plays on the batter-runner.
2. When the plate umpire has to stay home with runners on 1st & 2nd or Bases Loaded, then the base umpires will rotate to the RIGHT – the first base umpire will take the batter-runner into second base, unless the first base umpire goes out to cover a catch/no-catch situation in right field. The signal for this is called a "slide" and it is a hand behind your back towards your infield partner or point towards your infield partner and back to your self several times in a casting motion. The 1st base umpire will say "I'm in" when he pivots into the infield and "Slide, slide or coming to you!" when he is taking the batter runner into 2nd so the 3rd base umpire will know to slide down to the 3rd base cutout.

## **Most common mistakes/problems.**

Runners on 1st & 2nd or bases loaded - U1 forgets to come in and pivot and the reverse rotation is missed.

Runner on 2nd or 2nd & 3rd- Fly ball left field - U3 goes out on a fly ball while R2 is tagging-up and U1 forgets to take R2 into 3rd base.

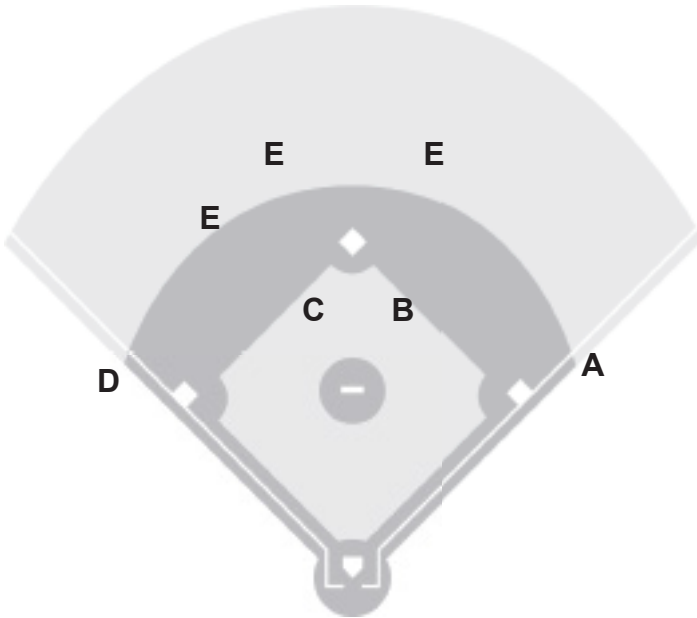
Runner on 1st - Fly ball right field and U1 goes out. U3 stands in C forgetting to move towards 1st base for the throw back into 1st base.

Runner on 3rd - Fly ball right field. U1 goes out, U3 must bust straight across the infield to make any calls on a throw back to 1st base on the BR. UIC must watch tag-up by R3 at 3rd base and cover home.

## **Cliff Notes** (Crew of 3)

- Communication is your most important tool!!! Signal and TALK!
- Base umpires on the wings go out on all fly balls and any balls hit down the lines.
- Flyball Coverage: Outfield – Half-n-Half or Quarter-Quarter-Half; Infield – Open glove concept.
- If you go out stay out. Remaining umpires revert to Crew of 2 mechanics.
- 3rd base umpire reads the 1st base umpire on all balls hit to center field.
- Anytime there is a runner on 1st the 3rd base umpire is in the middle.
- Anytime there is a runner on 2nd and first base is unoccupied the 1st base umpire is in the middle.
- DO NOT LEAVE the middle until the umpire that's relieving you says "I've got the ball."
- When 1st base umpire is in the middle there are no rotations. Everyone stays put.
- Standard Rotations: (UIC to 3rd, U1 to home and U3 at 1st & 2nd.)
  1. Extra base hit with no runners, runner on first, runner on 1st and 3rd or a runner on 3rd only.
  2. Fly ball, less than 2 outs with runners on 1st and 2nd and runners are tagging up.
- Reverse Rotations:
  1. 1st base umpire goes out with no runners on base— The UIC will come to the vicinity of the 1st base cutout and make all calls at 1st base.
  2. Base hit with runners on 1st and 2nd or bases loaded — The 1st base umpire comes in and pivots, must stay ahead of the batter runner. Take BR into 2nd if he goes.

# Crew of 4 Cliff Notes



- A:** U1 - There are two depths - A shallow depth when the defense is holding a runner on 1st and a standard depth for all other instances.
- B:** U2 - Anytime a runner is on 2nd - U2 should be deep facing left field foul line with feet just inside the edge of the infield grass.
- C:** U2 - Anytime runners are on except when a runner is on 2nd (See B) or a runner is on 3rd base only (See E) - U2 should be deep facing right field foul line with feet just inside the edge of the infield grass.
- D:** U3 - There are two depths - A shallow depth with a runner on 2nd or 3rd and standard depth for all other instances.
- E:** U2 - With no runners on - On same tangent line as B or C position about 10 feet into the outfield grass. key off F8's positioning or the handedness of the batter. With a runner on 3rd only U3 should be closer to the edge of the grass and the shortstop - "in the shortstop's hip pocket."

## Fair or Foul Responsibility

Plate umpire has all balls that are touched or come to rest before the bag (1st and 3rd). U1 and U3 have from the front of the bag to the foul pole. This means all bounding balls that go past the bag are the base umpires call.

## Fly Ball Responsibility

### Outfield:

No runners or R3 only - U2 has the "V"; U1 has from F9 to the right field foul line; U3 has from F7 to the left field foul line.

Runners on base (except R3 only) - U2 has no outfield responsibility; U1 has any fly ball from F8 straight in or straight back all the way to the right field foul line; U3 has any fly ball that causes F8 to move any distance to his right all the way to the left field foul line.

### Infield:

Pop-Up and line drives - General rule of thumb is for the umpire to whom the glove is opening to take the call. Communication (e.g., eye contact) is critical.

## Tag Ups and Touches

You are responsible for your base unless you go out. If another umpire goes out you have your base and the vacated base if you are the covering umpire.

## **General Concepts & Problem Situations**

Communication is your most important tool – both signals and verbal!!!!!!

No one goes out- call your base.

One umpire will go out on all fly balls and/or trouble balls to the outfield or balls down the line. Do not go out on obvious base hits. U2 DOES NOT go out when he is in B or C. If you go out stay out. P-R-R!!!

**Vacate and Cover-** Whenever an umpire vacates his designated base, another umpire must cover that base. (e.g., goes out on flyable to Outfield, foul ball near stands/dugout w/R1 or R3)

Whenever there is a runner on 2nd (R2), U2 will be in B. All other times when runners are on (except R3 only) U2 will be in C. With R3 only, U2 is in E in shortstop's hip pocket.

If U2 does not go out he comes in to the infield on all batted balls.

Base hit to the outfield - Whenever possible, when U2 comes in from E, he should try to enter opposite the play. When in doubt enter on 3rd base side of second.

### **Anytime the Plate Umpire is staying home:**

If U3 goes out - U2 covers runners at 2nd and 3rd. U1 comes in and takes BR into 2nd or back to first (Slide). If U1 goes out - U2 covers 2nd and 1st. If U2 goes out (R3 only) - U1 comes in in front of the BR and covers 1st and 2nd. U3 covers 3rd (Normally U3 would cover 2nd but not when he has a runner a runner at 3rd).

With no runners on or runner on 1st only, the plate umpire will rotate to 3rd or 1st when a base umpire goes out.

R3 only - U2 should be on the edge of the outfield grass in hip pocket of F6 so he can cover throw backs on R3 at third base if U3 goes out or cover throw backs on batter runner at first if U1 goes out.

1st and 2nd U3 goes out on a trouble ball. R1 and R2 go halfway - U1 must come in and stay ahead of the BR. Communicate!!!!!!

1st and 2nd U3 goes out on a Fly ball. R1 and R2 are tagging up - Plate umpire covers 3rd. U1 covers home if R1 commits to 3rd. Signal partners before the play and Communicate!!!!!!

1st and 3rd U3 goes out. R3 tagging up. Plate Umpire has tag up of R3 and play at the plate let U1 know he has to come in and slide! Communicate!!!!

Runner on 1st - U1 and PU go into foul territory to cover fly ball. U2 slides over to cover throw back at first after catch.

Runner on 2nd and 3rd - U3 and PU go into foul territory to cover fly ball. U2 moves into working area to cover throw backs at second and/or third after catch. U1 comes down to cover home.