

FIELD MECHANICS MANUAL

90 FOOT DIAMOND



LITTLE LEAGUE® BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL
Williamsport, Pennsylvania

Little League Baseball wants to sincerely thank all those Volunteer Umpires who made contributions to this publication.

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And especially the Western Region Umpire staff for making this publication the valuable training aid it will be for all the Volunteer Umpires.

LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL MECHANICS MANUAL

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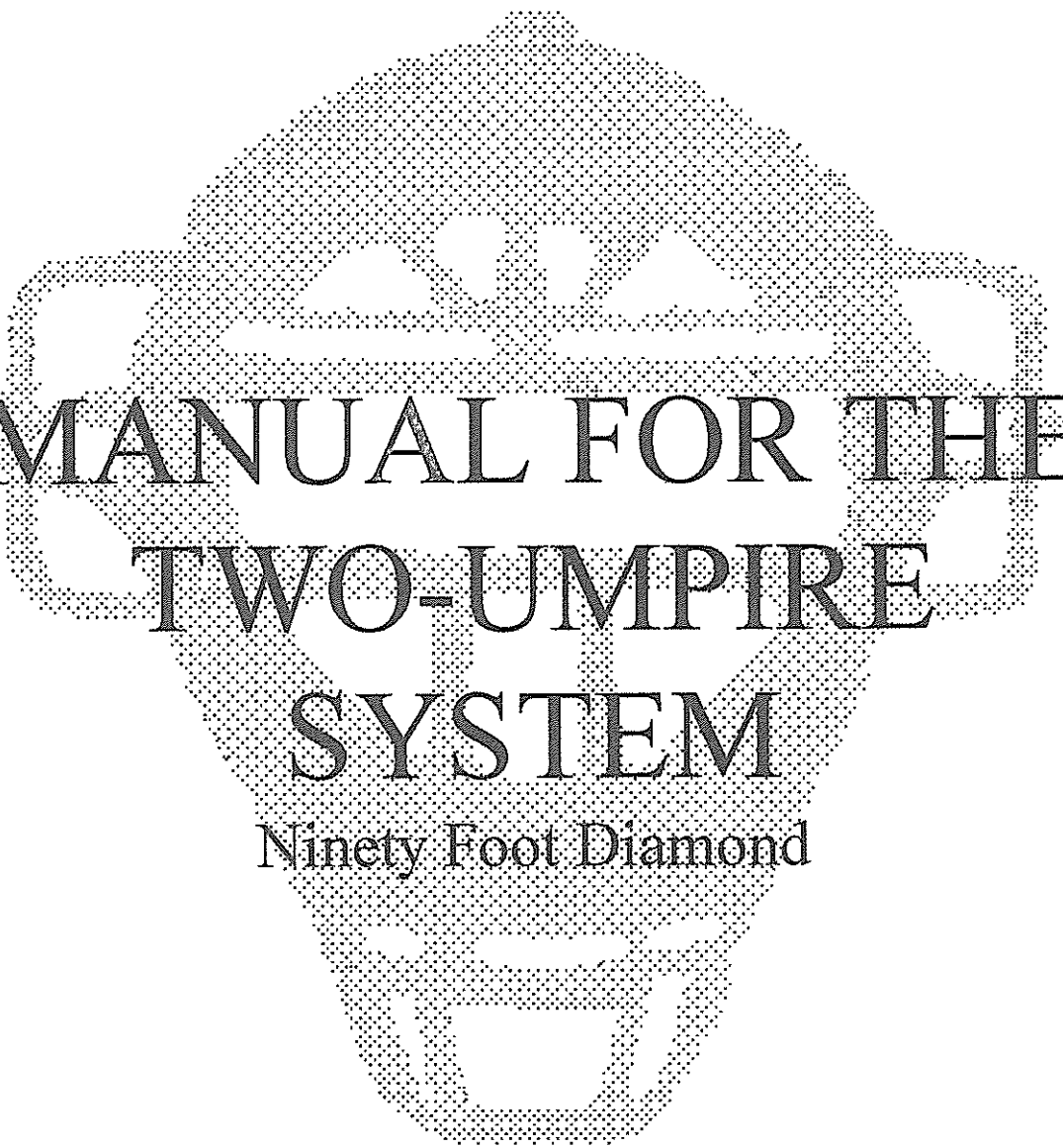
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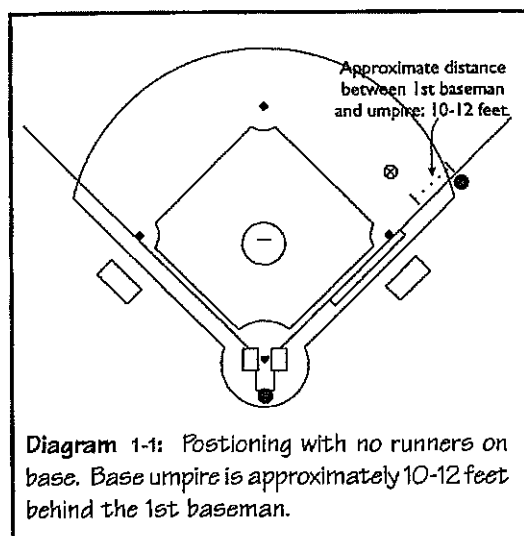
MANUAL FOR THE TWO-UMPIRE SYSTEM

Ninety Foot Diamond

SECTION 1 NO RUNNERS ON BASE

1.1 POSITIONING

With no runners on base, the base umpire shall position himself approximately 10 to 12 feet behind the 1st baseman with both feet in foul territory. The base umpire's right foot should be just off the foul line, and his body should be squared to home plate. Legs should be spread just over shoulder width apart. The base umpire should be in a "ready" position with both hands on his knees as the pitcher is preparing to deliver the ball to the batter.



Should the 1st baseman position himself deeper than normal, the base umpire will similarly back up onto the outfield grass a bit, although the 10- to 12-foot distance may be cut back somewhat so that a proper pivot is still possible on a base hit. Likewise, should the 1st baseman be playing in (shallow), the base umpire will also move up with the 1st baseman, never coming closer than 10 to 15 feet from the 1st base bag. The idea in each of these positions is to have the base umpire in a good position for catch/no catch and fair/foul decisions involving the 1st baseman, while at the same time allowing the fielder adequate room should he dive for a ball in the direction of the umpire. This positioning also gives the base umpire room to

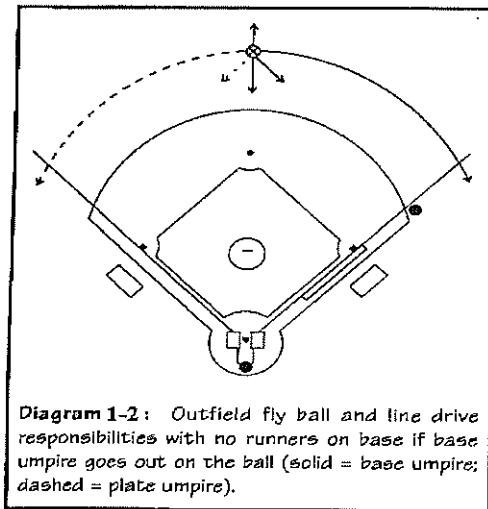
"recover" and get into position for a play at 1st base should the 1st baseman dive towards the umpire while fielding the ball with a play then following at 1st base. The base umpire must be conscious about these positions so that he is never too close nor too far back from the 1st baseman when no one is on base.

When the pitcher is in possession of the ball, the base umpire must keep his eyes on the pitcher. Then, when the pitcher is into his windup and is about ready to deliver the ball, the umpire's head should turn towards the plate, and he should then focus on the plate area, being ready for any check swing possibilities.

1.2 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-RESPONSIBILITIES

With no one on base, fly balls (or line drives) from the center fielder *straight in* (or straight back) all the way to the right field foul line belong to the base **umpire** (if he decides to go out on the ball). Should the base umpire decide not to go out on such a fly ball or line drive, the responsibility of the ball reverts to the **plate umpire**; and the plate umpire must then move into proper position to observe the play if the base umpire does not go out (see Section 1.5).

With no one on base, fly balls (or line drives) from the center fielder moving any distance to his *right* all the way to the left field line always belong to the **plate umpire**.



1.3 THE "PAUSE-READ-REACT" TECHNIQUE: DETERMINING WHEN TO GO OUT.

When a fly ball or line drive is hit to an area of the outfield which belongs to the base umpire, the base umpire must determine whether or not he should go out on the ball. In order to make this decision, the base umpire should use a procedure called the **"pause-read-react" technique**. In this technique, after the ball has been determined to belong to the base umpire, the base umpire will *hesitate* momentarily ("**pause**"), actually take his eye off the ball, and focus his attention on the reactions of the outfielder ("**read**"). The outfielder's reactions will then tell the base umpire whether or not he should go out on the ball ("**react**"). In other words, by the base umpire hesitating momentarily and taking his eye off the ball so as to "key" off the outfielders, he will be able to tell if the play looks like "trouble," indicating that he should go out on the ball. (By "trouble" we mean balls such as fair/foul decisions down the right field line, home runs, balls off the outfield wall, diving catches by the outfielder, catches at the warning track or at the wall, catches made by the outfielder with his back towards the infield, catches made by the outfielder below his waist on a full run, three players converging on a fly ball, etc.) Again, by the base umpire watching for the outfielder's reactions, he will be able to tell if there is a possibility of "trouble" on a particular fly ball or line drive, thereby indicating that he should go out on the ball.

Specifically, the base umpire should be looking for any of the following four reactions from the outfielders, any one of which would indicate that he should go out on the ball:

- (1) The outfielder is running hard in towards the infield as though he is going to make the catch on a dead run (or as though he will dive to make the catch). (In addition to this, the infielders will usually be yelling "In, in, in!" on such a play.) This would be an indication that the base umpire should go out on the ball.
- (2) The outfielder has turned *his back* to the infield and is running towards the outfield wall with his back to the infield. This is another indication that the base umpire should immediately go out on the ball.
- (3) Three fielders (for example, the center fielder, right fielder, and 2nd baseman) are all *converging* on the ball, and it appears that any one of the three might catch the ball. This again is another indication that the base umpire should go out.
- (4) The right fielder is running *towards the right field line* (i.e., towards his left), and it appears that a fair/foul decision may have to be made on the line. (Note that a fair/foul decision should be made any time the ball drops-or is initially touched-within approximately 20 feet of the foul line.) Again, this would be another indication that the base umpire should go out.

By the base umpire hesitating momentarily, taking his eye off the ball, zeroing in on the reactions of the outfielders, and watching for the movements described above, he will gain a very good indication of whether or not he should go out on a ball with no one on.

Should the base umpire observe any one of the four preceding keys which would indicate he should go out on a ball, he would communicate to the plate umpire that he is going out by shouting at his partner, "Going out!" or "I'm going out!" He would then run to the outfield, getting the best possible distance and angle for the play. The base umpire should slow his run down to a virtual stop as he feels the play is about to occur. Moreover, should the ball require a fair/foul decision down the right field line, the base umpire must make sure he is completely stopped and set for this particular call. (The same would be true for a home run decision, particularly if it is a home run call close to the right field foul pole.) In other words, if the decision is a fair/foul decision down the right field line (or a fair/foul home run decision), the base umpire must be *certain* he comes to a *complete stop and set* while straddling the foul line when observing the play.

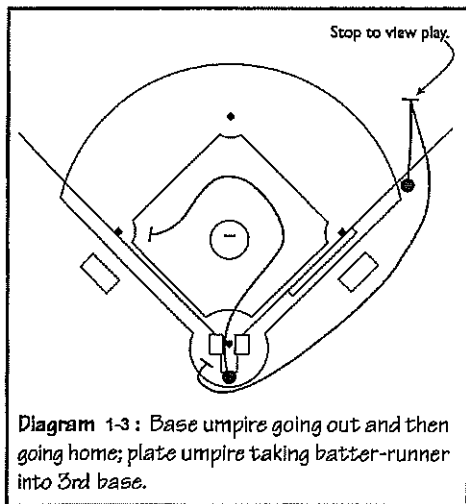
On a fly ball or line drive which will be fielded near the foul line, the base umpire should indicate fair or foul by pointing in the appropriate direction the *moment the ball is touched* by the fielder. Then, *after* the fair/foul indication has been made, the umpire will wait for the catch or no catch to occur and signal that (when needed). Umpires should remember: Fair/foul FIRST, THEN catch/no catch.

1.4 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-BASE UMPIRE GOES OUT

With no one on base, should the base umpire go out on a fly ball or line drive to the outfield (or, for that matter, should the base umpire go out on any ball down the right field line), the plate umpire will immediately come out from behind home plate and pick up the responsibility of the batter-runner all the way around the base paths. This would include plays back into 1st base, plays at 2nd or 3rd base, or-unless the baseman has come back into the infield and assumed a position at home plate-plays at the plate.

If the base umpire goes out on the ball, after he has ruled on the play he must make a decision whether or not he should stay with the ball or come running back towards home plate in foul territory for a possible play at home on the batter-runner. This decision is to be made by considering what might happen to the ball while it is in the outfield. For example, if the batted ball is hooking towards the bullpen, or if the ball is headed towards an out-of-play line, or if there is a possibility of spectator interference, then the base umpire should **not** come home but instead stay with the ball. In that case, the plate umpire would take the batter-runner all the way around, keeping on the *inside* of the diamond all the way-even if it results in a play being made on the batter-runner at home plate.

However, if the outfield area is *completely enclosed* and the base umpire determines that there is no *possibility* of the ball going out of play (as well as no possibility of spectator interference), then after the base umpire has Tendered his decision, he should turn, watching the ball, and hustle home in foul territory. The base umpire should break towards home as soon as he determines that there will be no "problems" with the ball (i.e., the ball will not go out-of-play or approach an out-of-play line; the ball will not go under or through a fence; no spectator interference will be possible; etc.). In going home on this type of play, the base umpire should



move into foul territory as soon as possible, keeping his eye on the ball (in order to see how the play is developing), as well as watching where he is going on his way home. When the base umpire reaches home plate and is actually in position where he can make a call, then, and only then, should he inform his partner that he is home by communicating, "I'm home; I'm home!" or "I've got the plate, Sam; I've got the plate!" Until the plate umpire is called off by the base umpire, the plate umpire should assume that any play at the plate is his responsibility, and he should continue to take the batter-runner around the base paths (in fair territory) all the way to home plate if necessary. If the plate umpire ends

up with the batter-runner when this type of play is over, he should remain with the batter-runner until the base umpire comes back into the infield and assumes this responsibility. Verbal communication would be used at this point (for example: "I've got it, Sam" or "I've got him, Sam")

1.5 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-BASE UMPIRE DOES NOT GO OUT ON THE BALL

If a fly ball or line drive is hit from the center fielder straight in all the way to the right field line and the base umpire — using the "pause-read-react" technique outlined in Section 1.3 — decides NOT to go out, then the responsibility of the ball reverts to the **plate umpire**. If this is the case, the base umpire will take a pivot and pick up the batter-runner, making all decisions at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd on the batter-runner.

If the base umpire does not go out, then as just mentioned, the responsibility of any fly ball or line drive to the outfield belongs to the plate umpire. The plate umpire will come out from behind the plate **in the direction the ball is hit** and will make all catch/no catch and fair/foul decisions on the ball. If the ball is a "routine" fly ball, the plate umpire will come out from behind the plate in the direction the ball is hit and will go **no farther than an imaginary line between 1st and 3rd** to observe the play (see Diagram 1-4 on next page). If the play results in a routine catch, the plate umpire will make no signal but should audibly inform his partner, "That's a catch, Sam," so that his partner is aware the ball has been caught. If the ball is dropped, the plate umpire should call and signal, "No catch! No catch!" The plate umpire should be virtually stopped for these decisions.

On fly balls to the outfield, if the base umpire does not go out and the play results in a *difficult play* (for example: a diving catch, a home run, a ball hit off the wall, a fair/foul decision, a catch at the wall, etc.), then the plate umpire should come out in front of the plate in the direction the ball is hit and go as far as **he can towards** the ball to make his decision. If the play results in a "tough" catch (shoestring catch, diving catch, catch after which the fielder falls down, etc.), the plate umpire should call and signal (and sell), "That's a catch! That's a catch!" (Signaling the catch should be done with the right arm fully extended upward and right hand in a fist.) If this type of play results in a "tough" no catch, the plate umpire again should come out in the direction the ball was hit as far as possible and sell the call, "No catch! No catch!" Again, the plate umpire should

be stopped to make such a call. As soon as he has made the call, the plate umpire should retreat in a straight line back towards home plate for any possible play there (see Diagram 1-5 below).

Summarizing on fly balls (or line drives) hit to the outfield with no one on, 1 if the base umpire does not go out, the decision on the ball belongs to the plate umpire. If it is a "routine" play, the plate umpire should come out no farther than an imaginary line between 1st and 3rd. If it is a "tough" play, then the plate umpire should come out as far as possible in the direction the ball was hit. Also, the plate umpire should be virtually stopped to make all of these decisions.

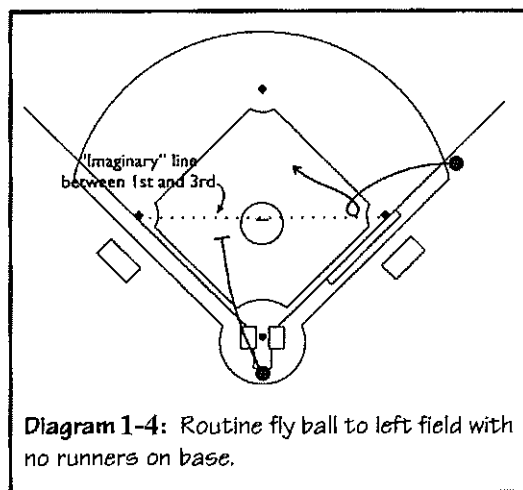


Diagram 1-4: Routine fly ball to left field with no runners on base.

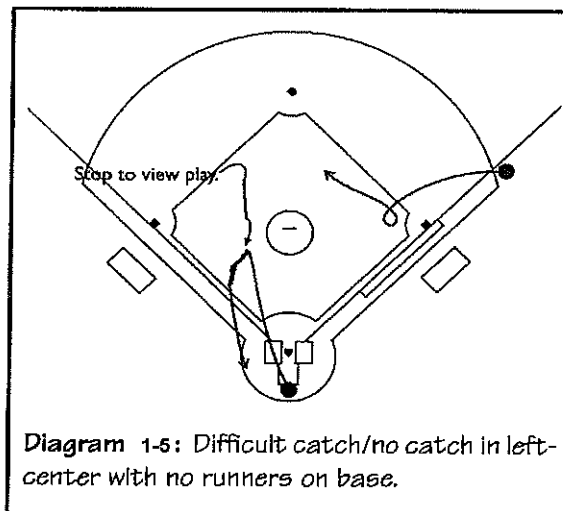


Diagram 1-5: Difficult catch/no catch in left-center with no runners on base.

1.6 BASE HITS TO THE OUTFIELD

With no one on base, on clean hits to the outfield (i.e., hits where there is **no possibility** of a catch/no catch or a fair/foul decision), the base umpire will come in and pivot and take responsibility of the batter-runner at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base. The plate umpire will come out from behind home plate *in the direction the ball is hit* a few feet onto the grass in front of home plate (approximately midway from the home plate cutout to the front edge of the grass of the pitcher's mound). The base umpire has the responsibility for the batter-runner at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base. The responsibility of the plate umpire is simply to come out in front of the plate and observe the play, watching for any possible infractions (for example, obstruction which the base umpire might miss; ball getting past the outfielder and rolling under the outfield fence; ball being overthrown back into the infield; helping out should the batter-runner get trapped in a rundown; etc.). For that reason, it is not necessary for the plate umpire to come out as far onto the infield grass as it would be in the case of a fly ball to the outfield (see Section 1.5). The plate umpire would of course also have responsibility for any play at the plate on the batter-runner.

The base umpire should take his pivot at approximately the cutout area at 1st base, preferably two to three steps to the 2nd base side of the cutout. Ideally, he should time his pivot so that it occurs as the batter-runner is touching 1st base. The base umpire should pivot so as to **stay ahead** of the batter-runner in case he should decide to try for extra bases. For this reason, it is best for the base umpire to pivot two or three steps to the 2nd base side of the cutout.

After the base umpire has pivoted and watched the batter-runner touch 1st base, he will then turn and pick up the ball. Then, after he has taken a couple steps towards 2nd base, he should again **turn back** and *pick up the reactions of the batter-runner*. If the batter-runner rounds 1st base and breaks towards 2nd base, the base umpire will see this and will likewise

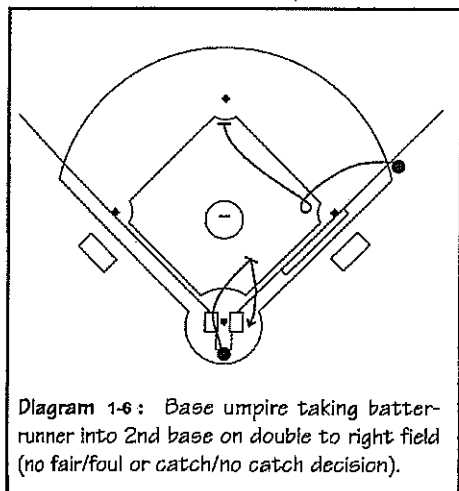


Diagram 1-6: Base umpire taking batter-runner into 2nd base on double to right field (no fair/foul or catch/no catch decision).

accelerate towards the 2nd base cutout for a possible play there. At this point (after the batter-runner has committed), the base umpire will again pick up the ball to determine whether a play is imminent at 2nd or whether the hit will be a possible triple — and react accordingly. For example, if the umpire reads that there will probably be a play at 2nd base, he will rapidly move towards the cutout at 2nd and be set for the play there. On the other hand, should the umpire determine that there will be no play at 2nd base but instead there is the possibility of a triple, he will continue to take the batter-runner around the bases, staying ahead of the runner and not approaching the cutout at 2nd base as he would had he determined a play was imminent at 2nd base. As the

batter-runner reaches 2nd base, the base umpire must take his eye off the ball to *watch the batter-runner touch 2nd*, pick up the ball again as he continues to take a couple more steps, but then *again* take his eye off the ball *and look back* in order to pick up the reactions of the batter-runner as he rounds 2nd base. By doing so, the base umpire will determine whether he should continue on to 3rd base for a possible play there or whether he should retreat back towards 2nd base because that is where the batter-runner will hold up. The base umpire's continual glancing back and forth between the ball and the runner is necessary in this situation for the umpire to react as quickly as possible to the development of this type of play and consequently be in the best possible position for the play.

After the base umpire has pivoted at 1st base on a base hit to the outfield, if he determines that the batter-runner will hold up with a single, he should stop and retreat back in the direction of the cutout at 1st, but *not all the way back to the cutout*. He should retreat in such a way so that he will always be ahead of the runner should the runner decide to try for 2nd base unexpectedly (for example, on a bad throw coming in from the outfield). However, should the outfielder (in many cases the right fielder) throw behind the batter-runner at 1st base, the umpire must then come all the way back to the cutout in order to be in a good position for the play at 1st base. During all of these plays, as mentioned earlier, the plate umpire will simply be in front of home plate a few steps onto the grass in the direction the ball is hit, observing the play in its entirety. Should the plate umpire see that an inside-the-park home run is a possibility, he would retreat at that moment into foul territory and set up for any play at the plate.

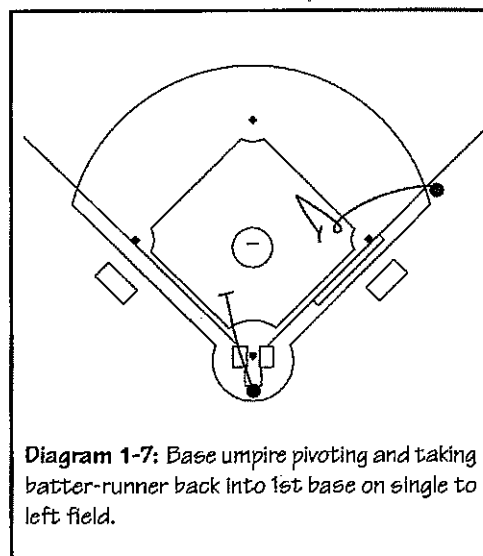


Diagram 1-7: Base umpire pivoting and taking batter-runner back into 1st base on single to left field.

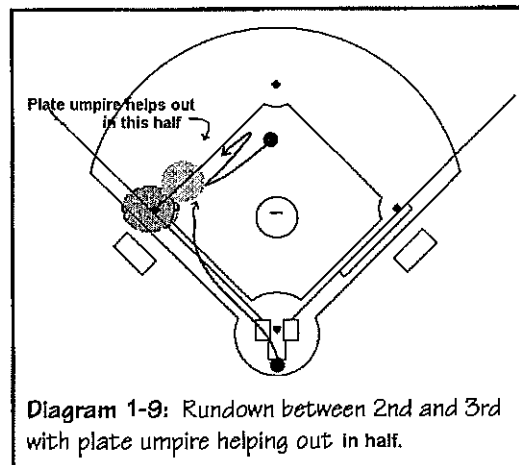
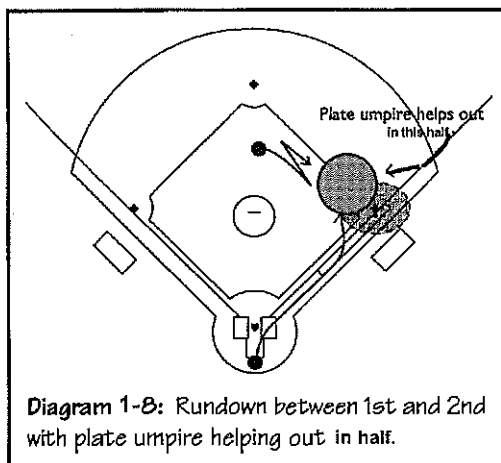
Also, should a rundown develop on the batter-runner, the plate umpire should be ready to move into position to help out with the rundown. (See following section.)

1.7 RUNDOWNS

On a base hit with no one on base, it would be possible for a rundown to develop on the batter-runner between 1st and 2nd or between 2nd and 3rd or conceivably between 3rd and home. If a rundown develops between 3rd and home, the umpires will split the rundown half-and-half, i.e., the plate umpire will take the home plate half of the rundown while the base umpire takes the 3rd base half. Communication between the umpires would be, "I've got this half, Sam! I've got this half!" or "Half and half! Half and half!"

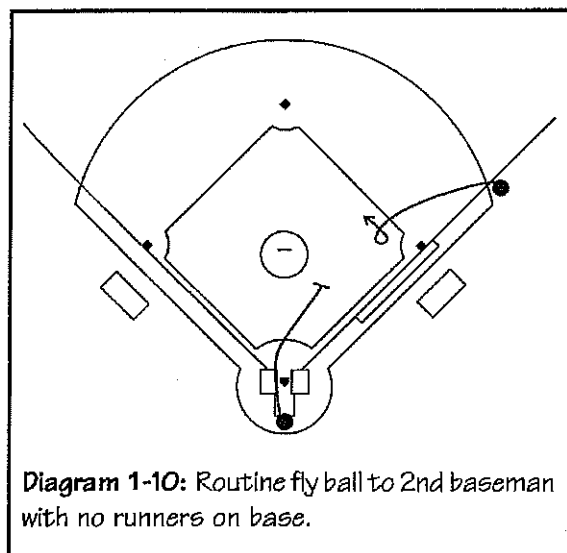
With multiple runners on and a rundown develops between 3rd and home the base umpire has initial responsibility. As soon as possible, the plate umpire should move out from behind the plate and communicate to his partner "I've got it all" The base umpire will then release to cover the other runners.

The rundown between 1st and 2nd or between 2nd and 3rd, is handled in a similar manner. In this case, once the plate umpire sees that a rundown is developing, he will run down the foul line approximately 3/4 the way towards 1st (or 3rd) staying about 3 feet in foul territory. He must be careful not to run his partner off during the rundown, but instead should wait until the batter-runner (runner) is moving away from him. As he moves in and is ready to assume responsibility, he will communicate to his partner, "I've got this half, Sam! I've got this half!" The plate umpire will then be responsible for any play made on the batter-runner (runner) in his half. The base umpire will have the responsibility for the rest of the rundown.



1.8 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE INFIELDF

With no runners on base, the responsibility for *all fair fly balls* hit to all infield positions belongs to the **plate umpire** (with the exception of when the base umpire goes out). On any fair fly ball hit to the infield with no one on base, the plate umpire will come out in front of the plate in the direction the ball is hit, probably no farther than midway to the pitcher's mound (on routine pop-ups), and be responsible for the catch/no catch decision. (The plate umpire would come out farther if the pop — turned out to be a difficult catch for the infielder.) The base umpire will come in and **pivot** on these plays and be responsible for all decisions on the batter-runner should the ball be dropped. In pivoting on pop-ups hit to the left side of the infield, the base umpire must be aware not to position himself between the ball and the batter-runner in case the ball should be dropped with no runner *on* base and a play attempted on the batter-runner after he has rounded 1st base.



If the pop-up is a routine catch, it is not necessary for the plate umpire to make a call (other than possibly to inform his partner that the ball was caught by communicating, "That's a catch, Sam"). However, if the ball is dropped, the plate umpire will signal and call, "No catch, no catch!"

With no runners on base, all *line drives* to the pitcher, 3rd baseman, shortstop, 2nd baseman diving to his right, and 1st baseman diving to his right belong to the **plate umpire**. All line drives to the 1st baseman and 2nd baseman coming *straight in* or to their left belong to the **base umpire**. (As the umpires gain experience, refinement to this coverage is permissible.)

1.9 GROUND BALLS TO THE INFIELDF

With no runners on base, on a ground ball to the infield the base umpire will move from his position on the foul line and set up for the play at 1st base. He should generally move to a position approximately 15 to 20 feet from the base and such that he will be approximately at a *right angle* to the throw from the infielder. Umpires at all levels should strive to take as many of these plays as possible in *fair territory*.

When the base umpire comes in to set up for the play at 1st base, he should come off the foul line while facing the batted ball. As the ball is about to reach the fielder, the umpire should square his body towards 1st base - with proper distance and angle to the base - while continuing to watch the ball by keeping his head turned towards the fielder. Then, as the fielder releases the ball (and the umpire sees that the throw is "true"), he will come to a set position (hands on knees as a basic fundamental), turn his head towards the base, and focus on the bag while he listens for the sound of the ball hitting the glove. In the *early stages of* umpiring, it is *highly recommended*

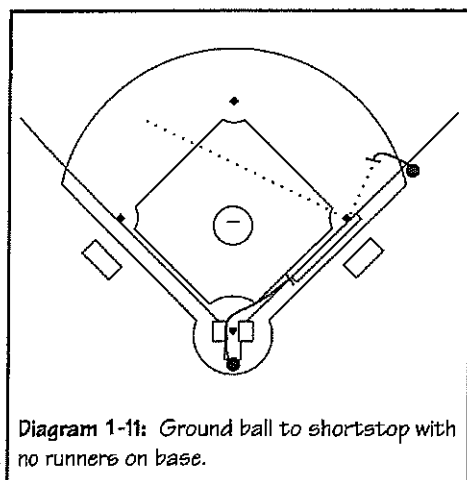
that the base umpire have his hands on his knees for this type of play at 1st base. (Variations are permissible as the umpire gains experience.)

The base umpire should call the play at 1st base using a crisp, clear, visible mechanic. If the play is strictly a routine out, then it is permissible for the umpire not to use voice with the mechanic. If the umpire does choose to use a voice with the routine out mechanic (which is also acceptable), then he should make sure that he is not overly loud on the routine out call so as not to draw unnecessary attention. However, as the play gets closer, the umpire should *vary the intensity of his **signal and voice*** based on the closeness of the play. In other words, the closer the play, the louder the umpire's voice and the stronger his signal, so that he is using his loudest voice and strongest signal on "bangers."

After calling the batter-runner out at 1st base, the umpire will return to his original position on the 1st base foul line. He may either jog back to that position or walk **briskly**; either method is acceptable.

On a ground ball to the infield with no one on base, the plate umpire will come out from behind home plate by coming around the left side and then proceed to jog (not sprint) down the 1st base line (straddling the foul line), going no *farther than the 45-foot line*. He should be virtually stopped when the play occurs at 1st base. There are three reasons for having the plate umpire come up the line with no one on base:

- (1) The plate umpire will be watching for **interference** by the batter-runner while out of the 45-foot lane. Should the plate umpire see such an infraction, he should make the call. This is not to say, however, that the base umpire may never make such a call. For example, if the base umpire observes the batter-runner interfere with the play at 1st base while clearly out of the 45-foot lane, it is of course permissible for the base umpire to make this call also.
- (2) The plate umpire will be ready for any **overthrows** at 1st base. If the plate umpire sees the ball being overthrown at 1st base, he will immediately and rapidly move with the overthrow and take responsibility for the ball going out of play.
- (3) The plate umpire is also in position to help on **swipe tags** on the batter-runner at 1st base. Although this is rarely used, it is permissible for the base umpire to ask for help on a swipe tag on this play — if, for some reason, the base umpire has not had a good look at the play. (Note that the "appeal" should be initiated by the base umpire *immediately and before* a confrontation with a player or manager occurs.) The terminology by the base umpire would be, "Sam, did he tag him?" or "Sam, do you have a tag?" while pointing to the plate umpire. The response by the plate umpire would be a **very emphatic**, "Yes! He's out on the tag!" or "No! He missed him!" (while using a strong visual signal). Again, this technique is rarely used (because, for one thing the base umpire should be in fairly good position for the play to begin with); and when it is used, the plate umpire must **emphatically** sell the call (verbally and with a strong visual signal).

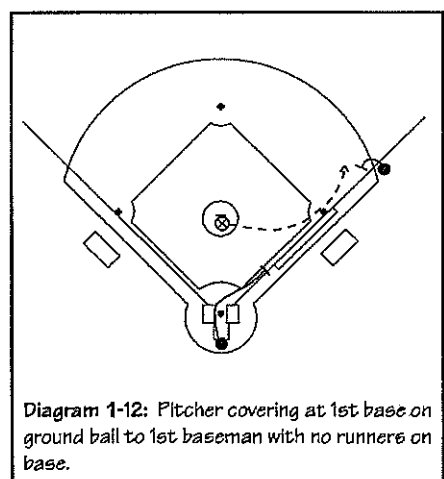


Once again, on ground balls hit to the infield, the base umpire should try to take as many plays as possible in **fair territory**, working for an approximate 90-degree angle to the throw. This would include all ground balls hit to 3rd base, shortstop, back to the pitcher, and to the 2nd baseman's right or directly at the 2nd baseman.

If the ground ball is tapped in front of the plate where the catcher and pitcher are both going for the ball, the base umpire would again come into fair territory and try for the 90-degree angle to the throw (in this case the base umpire would swing several steps into fair territory). If the ground ball is tapped just a few feet down the 1st base line, the base umpire would do the same thing. However, if the ground ball is hit down the

1st base line *in the vicinity of 1st base*, the base umpire must stay on the line until the ball is touched (or passes 1st base) because the base umpire has fair/foul responsibility **after** 1st base, while the plate umpire has this responsibility **until** the ball reaches 1st base. If the base umpire must point the ball fair (as on ball fielded by the 1st baseman behind the bag but near the line), he would first indicate that the ball is fair (by pointing) and then move off the line into fair territory to make the call at 1st base.

If the ground ball is hit to the 2nd baseman's **left**, the base umpire should again try to



move into fair territory to make the call (his angle would be cut back from the 90-degree angle in this case). However, if the base umpire feels **pressure** from the 2nd baseman moving to his left (or from 1st baseman for that matter), it is permissible for the base umpire to move into foul *territory* to take this type of play, keeping in mind the concepts of proper distance and angle to the play. In this situation, should the ball be overthrown at 1st base, the base umpire must be ready to swing around in front of the cutout at 1st base and then get a wide angle so as to be "ahead" of the batter-runner for any play at 2nd base.

On plays where the pitcher will be covering at 1st base, the base umpire should again try to take the play in fair territory. When the pitcher will be covering, the base umpire should move *approximately two steps* off the foul line into fair territory and position himself approximately 20 feet from the 1st base bag. Although this positioning does not provide a 90-degree angle to the throw, the umpire is in very good position to see the pitcher touch the inside edge of the base. Also, this positioning will allow the umpire to be out of the way for both the pitcher covering the bag as well as the batter-runner overrunning 1st base. Again, if the base umpire is pressured by the 1st baseman (or 2nd baseman) on this play, it is permissible to take the play in foul territory; but the suggested and recommended position is in fair territory as just explained.

1.10 SWIPE TAGS AT FIRST BASE WITH NO RUNNERS ON

When the base umpire moves in to take his position for plays at 1st base, he should remember that he is not "cemented" to the ground at that spot. For example, after the base umpire has watched the infielder field the ground ball (with his head turned towards the ball and his body already squared to the base), he will watch the throw released by the infielder. If the umpire sees the throw is not "true"-that is, if he anticipates a high or wide throw at 1st base-then he must be ready for a possible swipe tag at 1st base. To be in position for the swipe tag, the base umpire must step around to his left or right- depending where the throw is-in order to see the swipe tag.

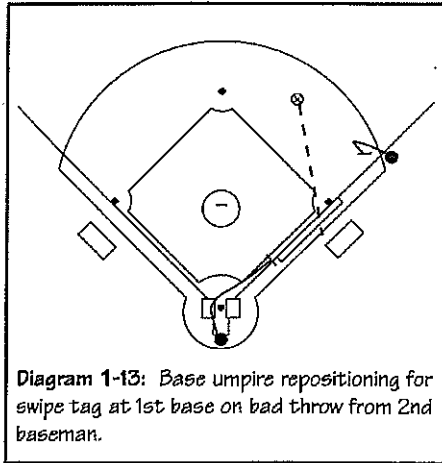


Diagram 1-13: Base umpire repositioning for swipe tag at 1st base on bad throw from 2nd baseman.

If the fielder comes off the bag at 1st base but the fielder tags the batter-runner before he reaches the base, the mechanic by the base umpire would be an emphatic, "On the tag!" (while pointing at the play with his left arm) and then followed by "He's out!" (while giving the out signal). Should the throw pull the fielder off the bag and the swipe tag miss the runner as well, the terminology by the base umpire would be, "Safe! You missed the tag! Safe!" or "Safe! No tag! Safe!" Should the throw pull the 1st baseman off the bag but no tag attempt is made, then the mechanic by the base umpire would be, "Safe!" (giving safe mechanic); followed by "He's off the bag!" (giving a sweeping motion away from the bag with both arms). All of these types of mechanics need to be given *very forcefully and emphatically* by the base umpire.

With no one on base, should the batter hit a ground ball up the 1st base line, the plate umpire will come up the foul line and be responsible for the fair/foul decision (provided the ball becomes fair or foul before reaching 1st base). The plate umpire will also be responsible for the three items listed in Section 1.9 (interference out of the lane, overthrows, and help with swipe tags). If the ball is fielded, for example, by the pitcher up the 1st base line and the pitcher tags or attempts to tag the batter-runner, the responsibility for the tag is based upon the field location of where the batter-runner is tagged. If the tag (or attempted tag) is made *before* the 45-foot line, the responsibility belongs to the **plate umpire**. If the tag is made *past* the 45-foot line, the responsibility belongs to the **base umpire**. This would be one occasion when a swipe-tag appeal could be legitimately used. (For example, the base umpire could ask for help if he doesn't see a swipe tag made just past the 45-foot line.) Otherwise, as mentioned earlier in this manual, the swipe-tag appeal is rarely used.

1.11 FOUL POP-UPS WITH NO RUNNERS ON

With no one on base, if the batter hits a pop-up between 1st and home which is obviously going to be foul and has no *chance* of becoming fair (for example, a pop-up in front of the 1st base dugout or in front of the 1st base stands), if the catcher and 1st baseman **both** attempt to catch the ball, the plate and base umpires will **both** move into position to judge the catch. If the

catch is made facing the base umpire, then it is his call (no matter who catches the ball). If the catch is made facing the plate umpire, it becomes his call (again, no matter who catches the ball).

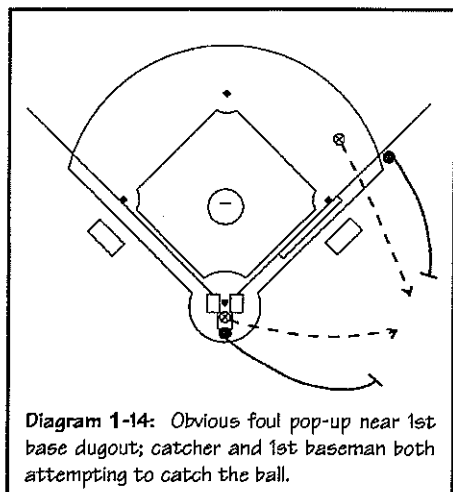


Diagram 1-14: Obvious foul pop-up near 1st base dugout; catcher and 1st baseman both attempting to catch the ball.

If the fielder is facing neither umpire, the catch/no catch belongs to the umpire who is closer. However, if there is *any chance whatever* of such a pop-up becoming fair, the base umpire should pivot, and the plate umpire should take responsibility of fair/foul and catch/no catch.

On such a foul pop-up, if only the 1st baseman goes for the ball (for example, past the 1st base dugout or near the 1st base stands), then only the base umpire should go with the ball. Likewise, should only the catcher be attempting to catch such a foul pop-up, then only the plate umpire will go with the ball. In this case the base umpire will remain at his position provided there is *no chance* of the ball becoming fair (and if there is a chance of the ball becoming fair, he should come in and pivot).

With no one on base, any pop-up in foul territory on the 3rd base side of the infield belongs to the plate umpire. If there is a chance the ball will become fair, the base umpire should come in and pivot; if not, the base umpire would remain at his position. If such a foul pop-up on the 3rd base side is close to the foul line, the plate umpire should straddle the line to make the call, indicating (by pointing) fair or foul *the moment the ball is touched*. The base umpire will of course be pivoting if the pop-up is near the 3rd base foul line.

If the foul pop-up on the 3rd base side of the field has no chance of becoming fair, the plate umpire will take the ball and get as close as he can to the play. He should not come off the line until he is convinced that the ball will be well onto foul territory and will have no chance of coming back near the line. Unless the base umpire is absolutely sure there is no chance the ball could be fair, he should come in and pivot.

If the pop-up is hit in *front of or immediately behind the base umpire* (or in the *general vicinity* of the base umpire) and has a possibility of becoming a fair/foul decision, the base umpire will come in to the cutout area and either pivot or simply turn towards 1st base. The plate umpire

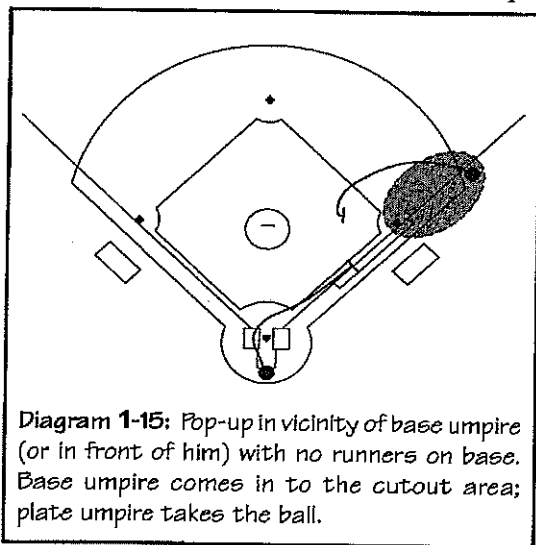


Diagram 1-15: Pop-up in vicinity of base umpire (or in front of him) with no runners on base. Base umpire comes in to the cutout area; plate umpire takes the ball.

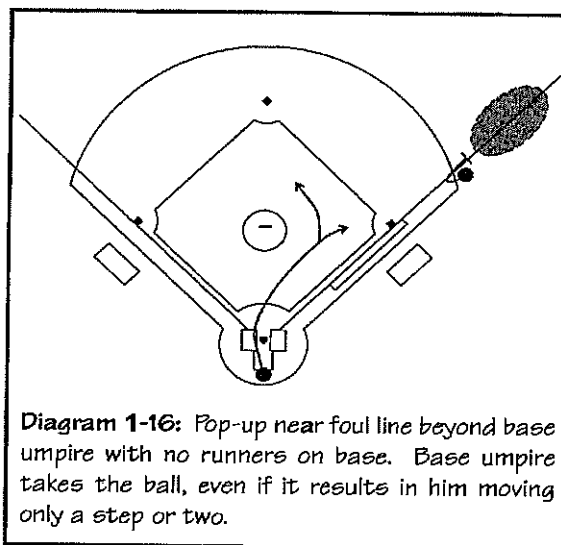


Diagram 1-16: Pop-up near foul line beyond base umpire with no runners on base. Base umpire takes the ball, even if it results in him moving only a step or two.

will take the ball by moving up the 1st base line (as far as necessary to make the call) and straddling the foul line. If the pop-up is **beyond** the base umpire, he should communicate that he is taking the ball ("Going out!" — even though he may merely turn around or only move out a

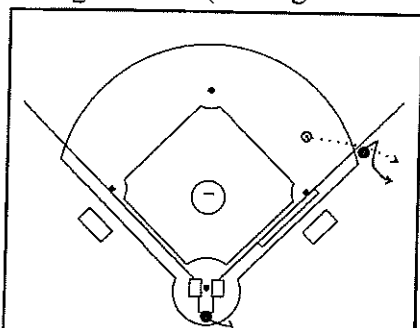


Diagram 1-17: Foul pop-up beyond 1st base (going towards stands) with no runners on base; base umpire letting 1st baseman clear and going with ball (no chance for ball to become fair).

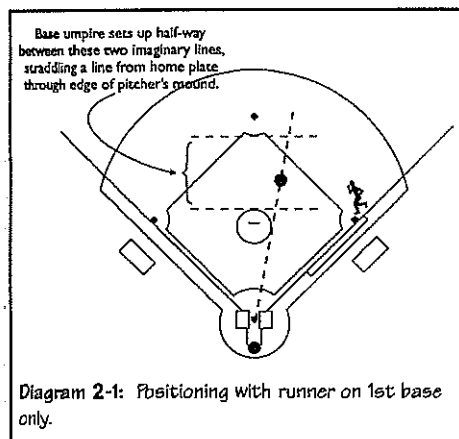
step or two in order to judge the ball), and the plate umpire will come out and take responsibility of the batter-runner at 1st base and beyond if necessary (see Section 1.4).

If the foul pop-up will be fielded by the 1st baseman in foul territory near the 1st base stands (i.e., well onto foul territory *past* 1st base), the base umpire should take the ball. On this play, the base umpire will let the 1st baseman clear in front of him (pivoting out of the way if necessary). The base umpire should then break in front of the 1st baseman and obtain a proper angle to judge the catch/ no catch. The plate umpire would remain at home on this play since only the 1st baseman is attempting to make the catch (i.e., there is no need for the plate umpire to follow the play since the call belongs solely to the base umpire).

SECTION 2 RUNNER ON FIRST BASE ONLY

2.1 POSITIONING

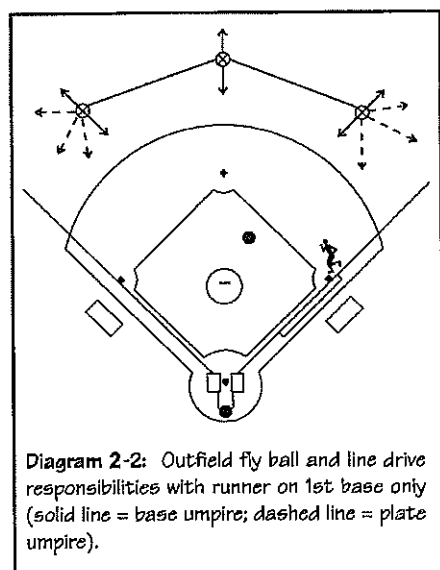
With a runner on 1st base only, the base umpire will position himself midway between the back edge of the grass of the pitcher's mound and the 2nd base cutout, on the 1st base side of the infield.



The umpire should position himself so that if an imaginary line were drawn from home plate through the right edge of the pitcher's mound towards 2nd base, the umpire would be straddling that line. The umpire's body should be squared to the front edge of home plate. (The positioning just described refers to fields where the grass lines are as recommended in the Official Rules and as shown in Diagram 2-1. The umpire will have to adjust accordingly on fields which vary from this standard.) This initial positioning with a runner on 1st base only is very important, and umpires should make sure that they are not

too deep towards 2nd base when they assume this position. If the umpire is positioned midway between the mound and 2nd base as described in the previous paragraph, he will be in a good starting position for pick-offs at 1st base (see Section 2.8) as well as for double plays (see Section 2.6).

2.2 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-RESPONSIBILITIES



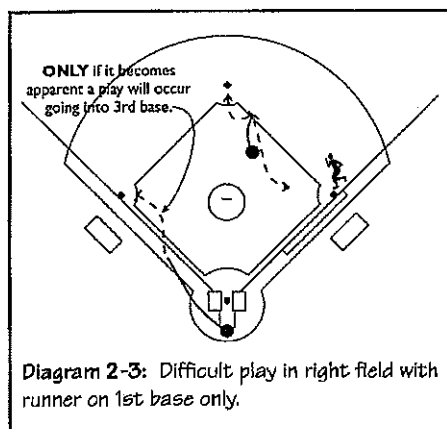
With a runner on 1st base only, fly balls (or line drives) from the left fielder *straight in* all the way to the right fielder *straight in* belong to the **base umpire**. Fly balls (or line drives) where the left fielder moves any distance towards his right belong to the **plate umpire**. Likewise, fly balls (or line drives) where the right fielder moves any distance towards his *left* belong to the **plate umpire**. (See diagram 2-2.)

It is important that the two umpires **communicate** after the ball is hit on fly balls and line drives to the outfield, particularly when balls are hit to the left or right fielder. The reason here is so that each umpire is certain who has responsibility for any given fly ball or line drive to the outfield.

2.3 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-COVERAGE AND MECHANICS

With a runner on 1st base only, if a fly ball or line drive is hit to the outfield, the umpires will need to look at the outfielders in order to determine who has responsibility for the ball. Specifically, as outlined in Section 2.2, if the ball is from the left fielder *straight in*, all the way to the right fielder *straight in*, the ball belongs to the **base umpire**. If either the right or left fielder moves any distance towards the foul line, the ball belongs to the **plate umpire**.

On **difficult plays** in the outfield which belong to the base umpire (for example: home runs; balls hit off the outfield wall; diving catches; catches made by the outfielder below his waist on



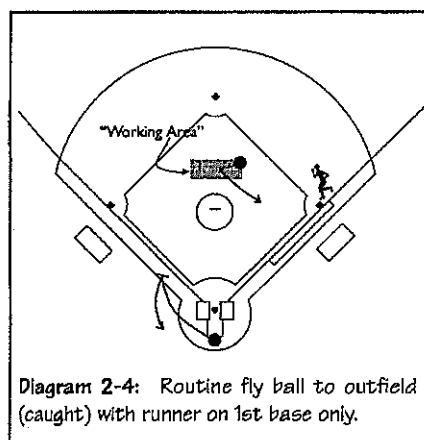
a dead run- catches made with three fielders converging on the ball; catches by the outfielder with his back towards the infield; catches made by the outfielder at the wall or on the warning track; etc.), the base umpire will not go out on the ball as he did with no one on base, but instead he will move to the edge of the infield grass in the direction the ball is hit to make the call. In order to decide if he should move to the edge of the grass to rule on the play, the base umpire will use the "**pause-read-react**" technique outlined in Section 1.3. In using this technique, if the base umpire feels there may be a difficult play on the ball, he will immediately move to the edge of the infield grass in the

direction the ball is hit. If the fly ball or line drive results in a *difficult* play, the base umpire will render the call *emphatically* both verbally and visually ("sell" the call) from this position and then immediately move back quickly ("bounce" back) towards the other runner(s) in order to pick up responsibilities for them.

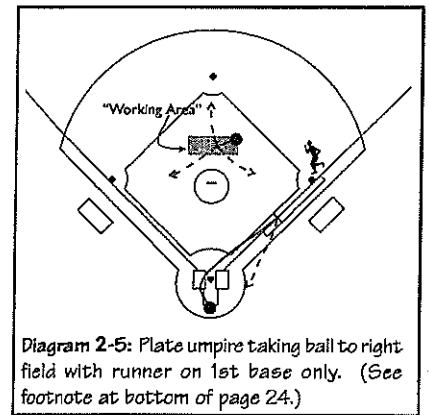
If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the base umpire and he determines that the play will be **routine** (again by using the "pause-read-react" technique), he will *back up* only two or *three steps* towards the mound in order to open up the playing field and observe the catch. [We call this area behind the mound the "**working area**" for the base umpire. From this area he is in good position for observing his responsibilities and for moving into proper position as plays develop.] If the catch is routine, the base umpire need not call or signal anything.

If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the plate umpire (i.e., the fly ball or line drive causes either the left or right fielder to move any distance towards the left or right field foul line) the plate umpire **MUST** communicate with his partner that the plate umpire has responsibility for the ball.

If the fly ball or line drive causes the right fielder to move any distance towards the right field line, the plate umpire will communicate to his partner, "I'm on the line, Sam!" to indicate that he is taking the ball. This *terminology will indicate to the base umpire that the plate umpire will NOT have the normal 1st-to-3rd responsibilities on this play*. In this case, the base umpire will assume responsibilities for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd on both runners. On this play, the plate

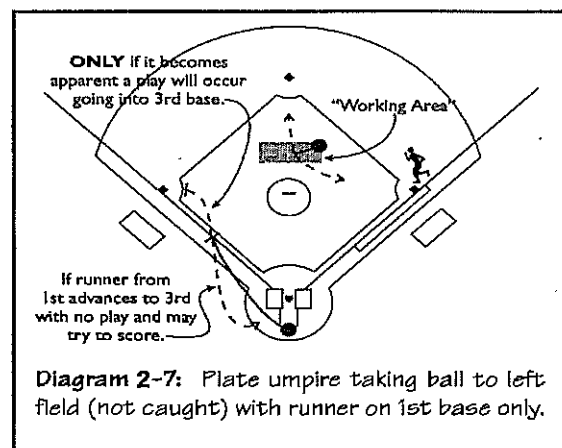
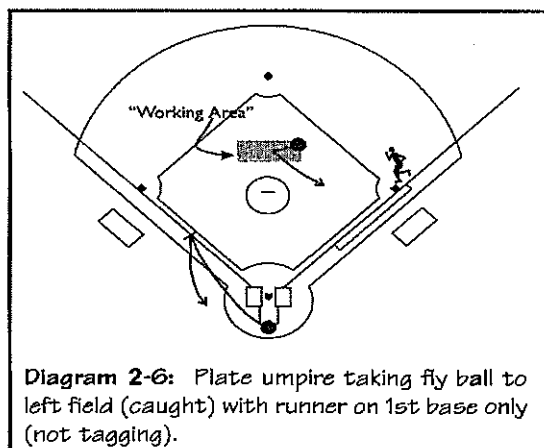


umpire will move up the 1st base line *as far as he deems necessary* to rule on the ball keeping in mind, of course, that he may have to come back to the plate for a possible play there. The plate umpire will come to a stop to see the play and make the call, and will either stay with the ball (if it appears the ball may go out of play); **OR** bounce back home *immediately* after rendering the decision (if it is apparent the ball will not go out of play). In either case, the plate umpire will keep his eye on the ball since the ball is his responsibility in this situation. *The plate umpire must never go so far down the line that he does not have ample time to return to the plate and set up in proper position for any potential play at the plate.*



If the fly ball or line drive causes the left fielder to move any distance towards the left field line, the plate umpire will take the ball and communicate loudly to his partner, "I've got the ball, Sam!" or "That's my ball, Sam!" In this case, the plate umpire will move up the 3rd base line as far as he deems necessary to rule on the play, come to a complete stop, and make the call. Since the plate umpire also has 1st-to-3rd responsibility in this situation (if the ball is not caught), the plate umpire will be prepared to move into the cutout at 3rd *only if the ball is **not caught** and a play at 3rd base is imminent* (see Section 2.4). In other words, after making the call on the fly ball, the plate umpire will react to development of the play. If the ball is **not caught** and he feels that there is a good likelihood of a play going into 3rd base on the runner originally on 1st, he will move into the cutout at 3rd and communicate loudly to his partner "I've got 3rd, Sam! I've got 3rd!" If the ball is caught, the plate umpire will drift back towards home.

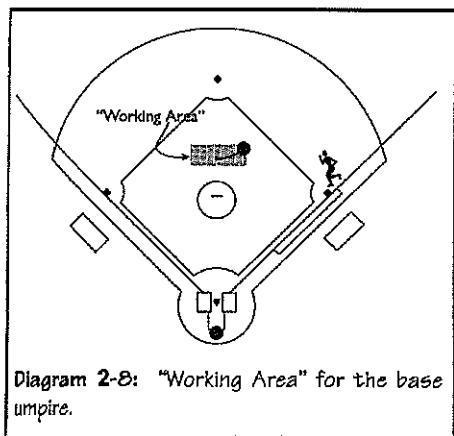
With a runner on 1st base only, the base umpire has responsibility for tag-ups at 1st base as well as for all touches at 1st and 2nd. The base umpire has responsibility for the touch at 3rd base by the batter-runner, and the plate umpire has responsibility for the touch of 3rd by the runner on 1st. All touches of home plate, of course, belong to the plate umpire. With a runner on 1st base only, if the fly ball is caught, the base umpire will have responsibility for any play back into 1st base. In situations where the runner on 1st base starts to advance towards 2nd base on a fly ball and then retreats towards 1st base, should the batter-runner pass this runner in the vicinity of 1st base, the responsibility of this infraction would belong to the plate umpire.



***NOTE:** There are certain situations with a runner on 1st base only when *experienced crews* have an option in the coverage at 1st base after a *catch* in the outfield. Specifically, if the defense attempts to throw out the runner originally on 1st after the catch, under some circumstances it is permissible (for **experienced crews only**) to have the **plate umpire** cover the play at 1st base. For example, if the runner is stealing on the play and the fly ball is down the right field line, it is permissible for the **plate umpire** to take the play back into 1st base after the catch provided the crew has predetermined this and provided there is loud, clear communication between the umpires. There are also other situations with a runner on 1st base only when the plate umpire could similarly cover the play back into 1st base, but again, this mechanic is to be used by **experienced crews only**.

2.4 BASE HITS TO THE OUTFIELD; FIRST-TO-THIRD RESPONSIBILITIES

With a runner on 1st base only, on a clean hit to the outfield the base umpire will step up turn with the ball, and back up only *two or three steps* towards the mound to open up the playing field. [NOTE: We call this area behind the mound the "**working area**" for the base umpire. From this area he is in good position for observing his responsibilities and for moving into proper position as plays develop. When the base umpire has multiple runner responsibilities, if no play develops after the base hit, the base umpire should maintain his basic position in this "working area" and not be drawn unnecessarily towards a base without a potential play developing there. (See "Staying Within the Working Area" on page 44.)]

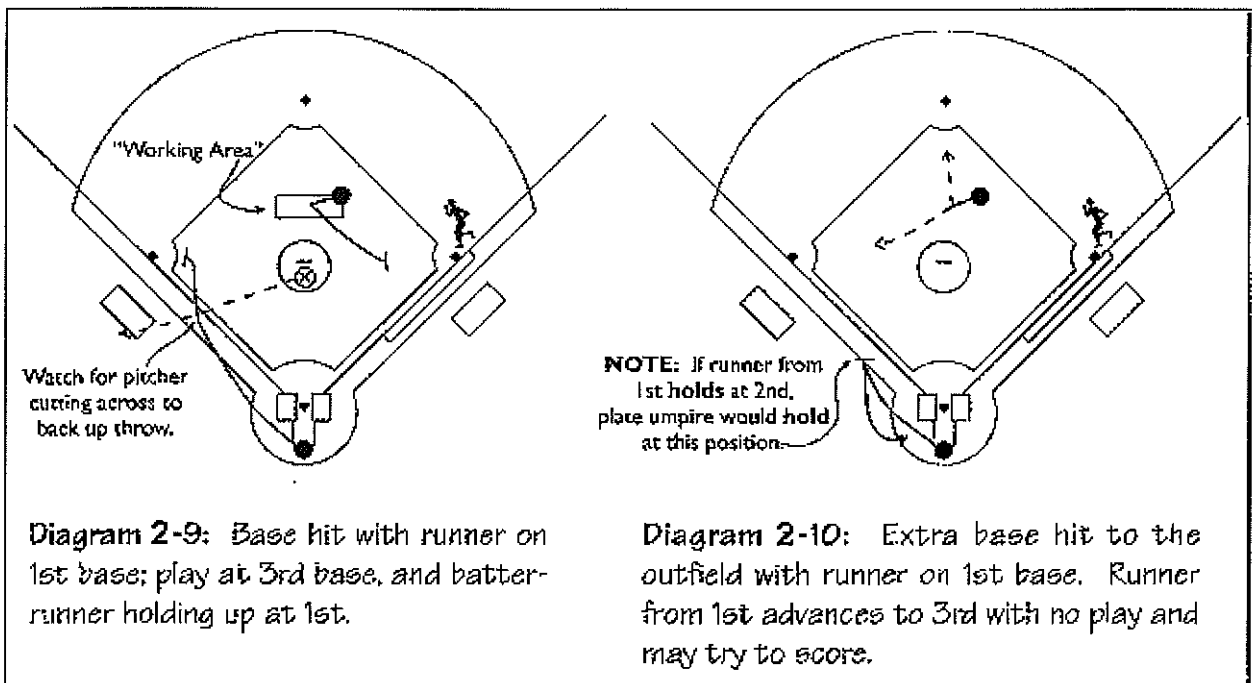


The base umpire has the responsibility of the touch at 2nd base by the runner from 1st as well as the touch of 1st base by the batter-runner. The plate umpire will come out from behind home plate in the direction of 3rd base, keeping approximately *three to six feet into foul territory* as he moves down the 3rd base line. It is suggested that as the plate umpire leaves the cutout area at home plate, if he observes that a possibility exists of a play at 3rd on the runner originally on 1st, that the plate umpire make an initial communication to his partner, "I've got 3rd if he comes!" alerting his partner to the possibility of a 1st-to-3rd play.

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS OF 1ST-TO-3RD MECHANICS

While the ball is in the outfield, the plate umpire will have to make an important decision. He must immediately "read" the play — taking into consideration the location of the ball, the reactions and positioning of the runner rounding 2nd base, and the position and reactions of the outfielder — and so determine the likely-hood of a play at 3rd base on the runner originally at 1st base. If the plate umpire observes that the runner has committed to 3rd and that a play at 3rd base is *likely* (or in fact, *imminent*), he will cut into fair territory somewhere between halfway and three-quarters of the way to 3rd, and break quickly ("bust") towards the cutout at 3rd, and communicate loudly to his partner, "I've got 3rd, Sam! I've got 3rd!" When the base umpire — who at this point has simply backed two or three steps towards the pitcher's mound (into the

"working area") to observe the play and watch the runners touch their bases — beats the plate umpire communicate, "I've got 3rd!" he will then transfer responsibility of the runner originally at 1st to the plate umpire. At that point the base umpire will start to slide over to the 1st base side and pick up the batter-runner, who at this point becomes *his only runner*. If the batter-runner rounds 1st and commits to 2nd, the base umpire will quickly move towards the 2nd base cutout. If the batter-runner rounds 1st and holds up there, the base umpire will slide still closer to the 1st base cutout — but he will not go all the way back to the cutout in case the runner originally on 1st should happen to get into a rundown between 3rd and 2nd. (And should a rundown develop between 2nd and 3rd, the entire rundown would belong to the base umpire until the plate umpire could move into position and help with half.) On the other hand, if the plate umpire sees there will be no possible play going into 3rd on the runner from 1st [indicating that the runner from 1st will either (1) hold up at 2nd, or (2) will easily attain 3rd base with no play on him — and instead the possibility exists of a play at the plate on the runner], the plate umpire will retreat back towards home in foul territory and communicate to his partner, "Going home, Sam! Going home!" at the moment he recognizes no play will occur going into 3rd base. (See Diagrams 2-9 and 2-10 below)



When the plate umpire sees that there is a good possibility for a play at 3rd, as previously mentioned he will communicate to the base umpire as he moves into the cutout at 3rd. At that point he should immediately get into position for the play at 3rd, obtaining proper distance and angle for the play. He should be completely set at the cutout and waiting for the play (ball and runner), NOT timing his arrival so that he is getting set as the play is about to occur. In getting into position for the play, the plate umpire should initially square his body towards 3rd base as he sets for the play and watch the ball by turning his head.

If the runner is declared out at 3rd base, the plate umpire will pivot out of the cutout and head back to home plate in foul territory, keeping the ball in front of him and his eye on the ball. If the runner is *safe* at 3rd, the plate umpire will again keep his eye on the ball, and after the ball is thrown to the pitcher he will pivot out of the cutout, come across the 3rd base foul line into foul territory, and head back to home plate. If the ball is overthrown at 3rd base (so that the runner may get up and start home), the plate umpire will stay in *fair territory* and take responsibility of the runner going home. In this situation, he should pivot out of the cutout at 3rd with his left leg opening up towards home and move in fair territory in the direction of the home plate cutout, staying, of course, off of the foul line so as not to interfere with the runner's progress. Again, he must turn with the ball and keep his eye on the ball. Should a play develop at the plate, the plate umpire will be set in fair territory (usually in front of the plate) with proper distance and angle for the play. In the meantime, the base umpire will be with the batter-runner, his only runner at this time.

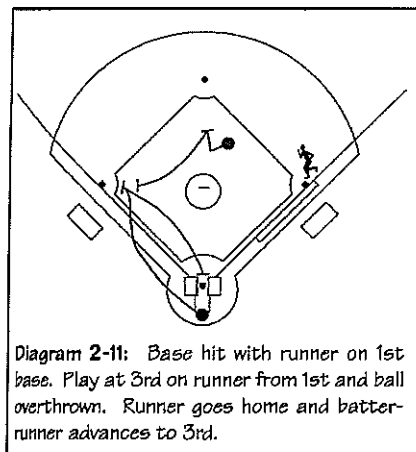


Diagram 2-11: Base hit with runner on 1st base. Play at 3rd on runner from 1st and ball overthrown. Runner goes home and batter-runner advances to 3rd.

2.5 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE INFIELD

With a runner on 1st base only, responsibility for all fly balls and line drives to the pitcher belong to the **plate umpire**. The plate umpire will also take all fly balls fielded by the catcher. All other fly balls and line drives to the infield are the responsibility of the **base umpire** with the *exception* of when the 1st or 3rd baseman is *moving towards the foul line*, in which case the **plate umpire** has the responsibility.

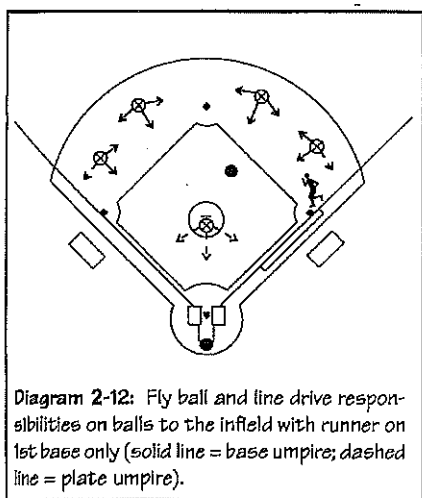
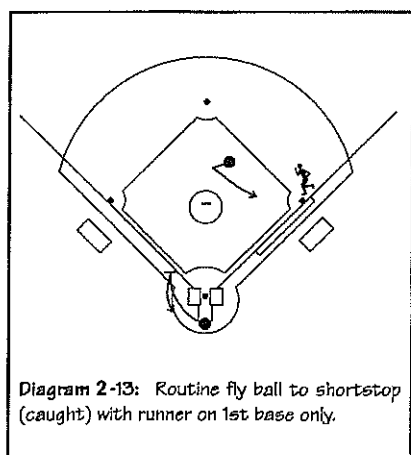


Diagram 2-12: Fly ball and line drive responsibilities on balls to the infield with runner on 1st base only (solid line = base umpire; dashed line = plate umpire).

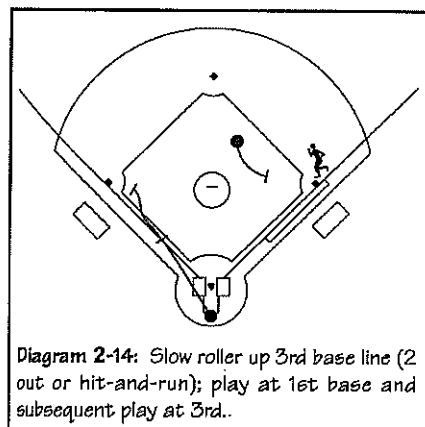
When the fly ball is hit, the plate umpire should swing out from home plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to observe the play (unless the ball is hit near the foul lines). This is because the plate umpire continues to have responsibility for the runner coming from 1st to 3rd if the ball should be dropped. If the fly ball is hit near the 3rd base line, the plate umpire will straddle the line to make the call. If the fly ball is hit up the 1st base line, the plate umpire will again straddle the line, and it would be a good idea for him to communicate to his partner, "I'm on the line!" because, on the rare occasion when the ball would be dropped and the runner from 1st continues on to 3rd, the plate umpire would not have responsibility for that play (for example with two out and runner on the move). If the fly ball is a routine catch, the umpire need not call or signal anything. But if the catch turns out to be a difficult play, the umpire would sell the call as needed. The plate umpire's positioning on line drives to the infield would be the same as just mentioned for fly balls with the exception that it is permissible to move out in front of the plate for line drives back to the pitcher.



On fly balls to the infielders, the base umpire will step up and turn with the ball and face the infielder, glancing back over his shoulder at 1st base to watch the batter-runner touch 1st base. It is permissible for the base umpire to take a couple steps backward towards the mound to open up the field of play in this situation. In fact, if the infielder is moving in to make the play, the base umpire may have to move several steps -including to either side of the mound-in order to give the fielder room to catch the ball. In this situation, the base umpire must guard against taking himself completely out of position in case the ball should be dropped.

2.6 GROUND BALLS TO THE INFELD

With a runner on 1st base only, on a ground ball to the infield (other than those rolling down the foul lines), the plate umpire will swing out from behind the plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base. He will be moving towards 3rd base in case the runner originally on 1st should attempt 3rd on the play, in which case the play at 3rd base would belong to the plate umpire. Should the ground ball develop into a double-play situation, as *soon as the lead runner is declared out at 2nd base*, the plate umpire will stop his movement in the direction of 3rd base and will immediately retreat in one of two ways to take his usual responsibilities with a ground ball with no one on base. The plate umpire, after the out has occurred at 2nd base, may either (1) retreat straight back down the 3rd base foul line towards home plate so that he is looking up the 1st base foul line as the play is being made at 1st base; or (2) he may cut *straight across* the infield grass towards the 1st base foul line so that he again will have a view of the play at 1st base looking up the 1st base foul line. (See Diagram 2-16 on page 21.) Either method is acceptable, and in either method the plate umpire will be responsible for the three items listed earlier in Section 1.9 (see page 15).



If the ground ball is rolling up the *3rd base line*, the plate umpire must come out from behind the plate and be prepared to make a fair/ foul decision on the ball rolling up the line. If the plate umpire points the ball fair and the ball is then thrown to 1st base, he will then continue up the 3rd base line towards 3rd base and assume responsibility of the runner coming from 1st to 3rd. If the same ball is fielded and thrown to 2nd base — forcing out the runner from 1st—the plate umpire would then retreat to either of the two positions described in the previous paragraph.

If the ground ball is rolling up the *1st base line*, the plate umpire will come up the 1st base line for the fair/foul decision as well as for taking responsibility of tag/no tag on the batter-runner

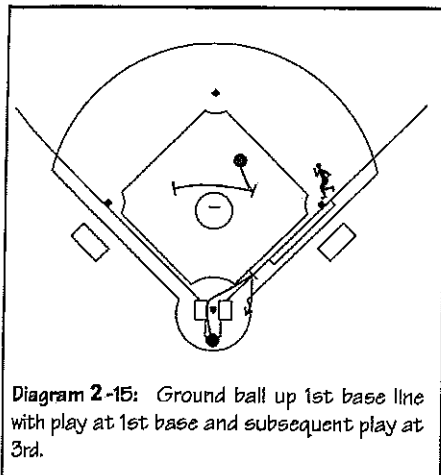


Diagram 2-15: Ground ball up 1st base line with play at 1st base and subsequent play at 3rd.

up to the 45-foot line. In response to this situation, the plate umpire will stay on the line and **WILL NOT** assume responsibility of the runner from 1st to 3rd. (The base umpire in this case assumes that responsibility.) It is a good idea, therefore, for the plate umpire to communicate with his partner on this type of play (i.e., ground ball up the 1st base line) by saying, "I'm on the line, Sam!" although this must be done with some care so that the infielders are not confused by the umpire's communication. In any case, the base umpire should be aware that if the ball is rolling up the 1st base line, the plate umpire will be taking responsibility for the fair/foul and will NOT be able to take the usual 1st to 3rd coverage. This makes it very

difficult for the base umpire on the occasions when the play is made at 1st with a following (and usually very close) play at 3rd. However, these are the recommended mechanics for this type of play using a two-umpire system. Also note that this same mechanic (i.e., plate umpire staying with the ball and remaining on the 1st base line to watch for interference out of the three-foot lane, overthrows, etc.) would also be used on a ground ball fielded in, *the general vicinity of home plate* with a runner on 1st base only in addition to those hit up the 1st base line.

With a runner on 1st base only, on any ground ball to the infield, the base umpire will step up and turn with the ball, facing the fielder as he is fielding the ball. With less than two out the double play is in order, and the base umpire must react with good anticipation as to how the play will develop. If the base umpire reads that a double-play attempt will occur, he would use the double-play mechanic described below:

2nd-to-1st Double-Play Mechanic (Runner on 1st only)

The base umpire will step up, turn with the ball, and will stay in the approximate position

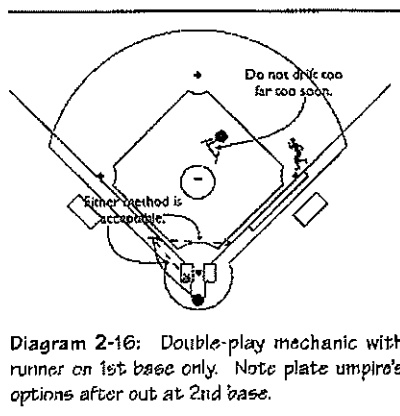


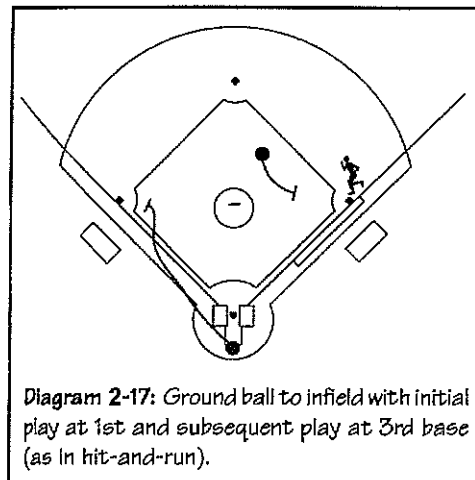
Diagram 2-16: Double-play mechanic with runner on 1st base only. Note plate umpire's options after out at 2nd base.

he started, taking no more than a step or two in any direction. As the ball is being thrown to 2nd base, he will turn with the ball and be set* for the play at 2nd. When the decision is rendered at 2nd base, he will turn and set up an angle for the play at 1st base by taking a step or two or three in the direction of the 45-foot line (individual agility and speed will determine how many steps are possible). The base umpire should be completely stopped and set* for each play. It is also important that the base umpire NOT drift towards 1st base more than a step or two as the ball is originally fielded and thrown to 2nd base so as not to be too far from the play at 2nd base when it occurs. (The reasoning here is to have the base umpire remain

in good position for potential "problems" at 2nd base, including, but not limited to: bobbled balls, dropped balls, close plays, possible interference, etc.)

*The intent of the word "**set**" as it appears here is that the umpire will come to a complete stop, facing the play, and be in a ready position to make the call not necessarily with hands on knees unless so specified in this manual.

As the ball is being originally fielded, the base umpire must recognize that there are several possibilities other than the double play that could occur in this situation. These would include the ball being fielded and thrown directly to 1st base instead of 2nd; the ball being fielded by the 2nd baseman and a possible tag on the runner from 1st; the ball getting past the infielder and going into the outfield, as well as several other possibilities. Therefore, it is again important that the base umpire not drift too far from his original position and that he **let the ball take him to the play**. For example, if the 2nd baseman muffs the ball to begin with and it becomes apparent that his only play is at 1st base, as the base umpire recognizes this he should then move several steps in the direction of the 1st base foul line for his "only" play — 1st base. However, after the initial play at 1st base, the base umpire must be aware of potential plays elsewhere and immediately and rapidly "bounce back" to the other runner after the initial play is completed—always keeping the ball in front of him. The base umpire must also keep in mind that the plate umpire may be covering 3rd base on a potential 1st-to-3rd play (plate umpire would communicate loudly that he has 3rd in this situation). Therefore, the bottom line for the base umpire on ground balls to the infield with a runner on 1st only is to remain in his approximate original position and then to react with the development of the play.



2.7 STEALS AT SECOND BASE

If the runner on 1st base is stealing, the plate umpire will watch carefully for the batter interfering with the catcher's throw to 2nd. If it is *questionable* as to whether or not the batter interfered with the catcher's throw, it is permissible-but not required-for the plate umpire to call and signal, "That's nothing" (arms extended in a safe mechanic), indicating there was no interference on the play. Again, this is an optional mechanic and is not required but is permissible. After the ball is thrown to 2nd base, the plate umpire will simply observe the play, not leaving the plate area other than perhaps swinging out a few feet to his left to watch the play. This is because if the throw gets away at 2nd base and the runner decides to try for 3rd, the play at 3rd base would belong to the *base umpire*. The plate umpire would remain at home.

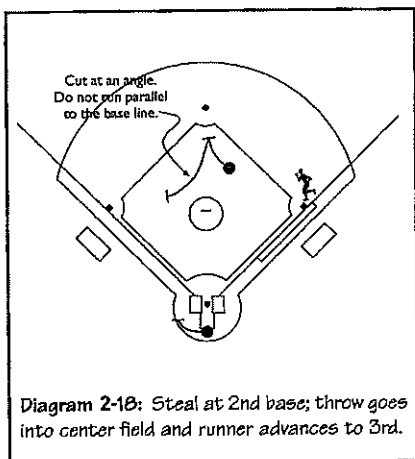
On steals at 2nd base, it is important that the base umpire has established a good original position in the middle of the infield—one that will be advantageous for both steals as well as pick-offs at 1st base (see Section 2.1).

The base umpire should be adept at recognizing that the runner on 1st is stealing through being alert and picking up on certain actions and cues on the field. For example, the base umpire should be able to pick up the initial movements of the runner breaking to 2nd base through his peripheral vision, even though his eyes are still focused on the plate. Also, the base umpire should

react to the defense's exclamation, "Going!" as the runner breaks for 2nd base. Carefully watching the catcher's reactions is also important.

The base umpire should begin his reactions to the steal as the ball is about to be caught by the catcher. The base umpire must be aware of the fact that the ball may be hit or that a check swing is possible, and therefore he must be careful not to take his focus away from the plate area too soon. He must also keep in mind the count on the batter and whether the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball or a strike (for example, on 3-1 or 3-2 counts). The base umpire will begin the steal mechanic by making a "drop-step" towards 2nd base from his original position, keeping his eye on the ball and not turning his back on the ball. Then, as the catcher throws the ball to 2nd base, the umpire should continue to move towards 2nd, again keeping in mind he must not turn his back on the ball. In essence, the ball will turn the umpire into the play as the throw reaches and passes the base umpire (the umpire should more or less be "pivoting" on his right foot as the throw passes him). At this point, the umpire will turn and focus on the play, keeping in mind that by this time he should be in proper position and angle for the play at 2nd (ideally a step or two to the home plate side of the 2nd base cutout). It is *imperative* that the umpire be *completely set* and not moving for this play; and in the early stages of umpiring, it is recommended that the umpire have his hands on his knees for this play.

Should the ball get away at 2nd base and roll towards the outfield, the base umpire must be prepared to move into position for a possible play at 3rd base if the runner decides to go. The



umpire must also keep his eye on the original play at 2nd base, watching for possible obstruction. As the runner is getting up and deciding to try for 3rd, the base umpire should cut towards the 3rd base foul line (similar to moving towards the 45-foot line for pick-offs at 1st base—see Section 2.8), making sure that he stays in front of the runner and that he keeps his eye on the play for any possible obstruction. He must glance at the location of the ball and then glance back at the runner so as to "key" off the reactions of the runner. Should the umpire see the runner commit to 3rd on this play, the umpire should quickly break towards the cutout at 3rd, again moving in the direction of an imaginary 45-foot line along the 3rd base line. It is

imperative on this play that the base umpire **NOT** run *parallel* to the baseline with the runner. This almost certainly results in the runner beating the umpire to 3rd and the umpire looking up the back end of the play at 3rd — a terrible position for the play. Should a play be made on the runner at 3rd base, the base umpire must also come to a stop and be completely set for the play.

2.8 PICK-OFFS AT FIRST BASE, RUNDOWNS

It is very important that the base umpire assume the proper starting position in the middle of the infield with a runner on 1st base (see Section 2.1). This starting position is particularly critical when it comes to pick-offs at 1st base because if the umpire is too "deep" towards 2nd base to start with, he will never be able to get a proper angle for the pick-off at 1st base and will end up looking up the back end of the play at 1st. Assuming that the base umpire is in the correct starting position, he will be focused on the pitcher prior to the pick-off. As he sees the pitcher

begin to throw to 1st base in a pick-off attempt, there are two acceptable methods of covering the play. These two methods differ only in the steps taken by the umpire as he moves into position for the play, and either of the following two procedures is acceptable:

- (1) The umpire will take a quick step forward with his *left* foot, moving *in the direction of the 45-foot line*. After taking this initial step forward, the umpire will turn (pivoting on his left foot), face the play, and set for the call.
- (2) The umpire will take two quick steps forward starting with his *right* foot, moving *in the direction of the 45-foot line*. After taking two steps forward (right followed by left), the umpire will turn (pivoting on his left foot), face the play, and set for the call. The preceding two techniques are very similar, the basic difference being which foot begins the pick-off move. The second alternative allows the umpire to take one extra step towards the 45-foot line before turning (by pivoting on his left foot) and facing the play. As mentioned previously, either of the preceding two techniques is acceptable in covering pick offs at 1st base.

As was the case with steal plays, it is *imperative* that the umpire be *completely stopped and set* for the pick-off play at 1st base. His body should be facing the play, and in the early stages of umpiring, it would be best if the umpire is set with his hands on his knees for this play.

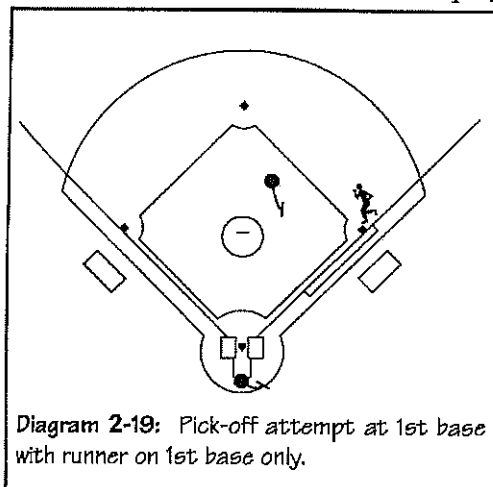


Diagram 2-19: Pick-off attempt at 1st base with runner on 1st base only.

Angle is critical for pick-offs, and, repeating, it is very important that the umpire set up in the proper starting position and that he move, towards the 45-foot line for the pick-off.

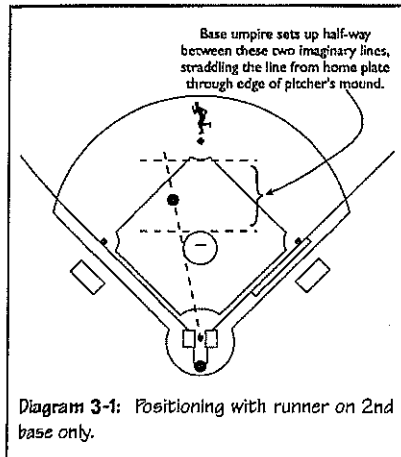
It is possible that the catcher may try to pick off the runner at 1st base with a quick throw following a pitch. If this should happen, the base umpire's movements would be virtually the same as just described for a pick-off move by the pitcher.

Occasionally the runner on 1st base may get into a rundown after a pick-off attempt. If this occurs, it would be handled by the base and plate umpires in the manner previously described in Section 1.7 (see page 7 and Diagram 1-8).

SECTION 3 RUNNER ON SECOND BASE ONLY

3.1 POSITIONING

With a runner on 2nd base only, the base umpire will position himself midway between the back edge of the grass of the pitcher's mound and the 2nd base cutout, on the 3rd base side of the infield. The umpire should position himself so that if an imaginary line were drawn from home plate through the left edge of the pitcher's mound towards 2nd base, the umpire would be straddling that line. The umpire's body should be squared to the front edge of home plate. (The positioning just described refers to fields where the grass lines are as recommended in the Official Rules and as shown in Diagram 3-1. The umpire will have to adjust accordingly on fields which vary from this standard.) This is the same positioning that will be used with a runner on 3rd base only, runners on 1st and 2nd, 2nd and 3rd, or bases loaded.



The umpire's body should be squared to the front edge of home plate. (The positioning just described refers to fields where the grass lines are as recommended in the Official Rules and as shown in Diagram 3-1. The umpire will have to adjust accordingly on fields which vary from this standard.) This is the same positioning that will be used with a runner on 3rd base only, runners on 1st and 2nd, 2nd and 3rd, or bases loaded.

This initial positioning with a runner on 2nd base only is very important, and umpires should make sure that they are **not too deep** towards 2nd base when they assume this position. If the umpire is positioned midway between the mound and 2nd base as described in the previous paragraph, he will be in a good starting position for steals at 3rd base (see Section 3.7) as well as other plays to the infield.

3.2 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-RESPONSIBILITIES

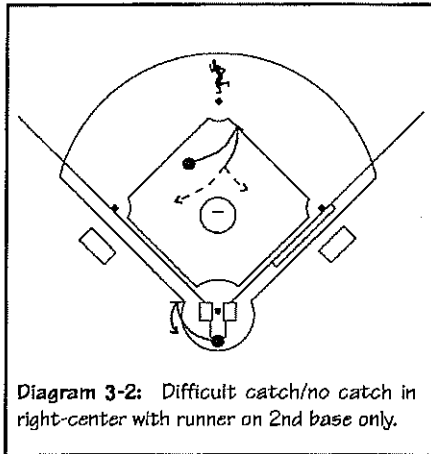
With a runner on 2nd base only, fly ball and line drive responsibilities for balls hit to the outfield are exactly the same as with a runner on 1st base only (see Section 2.2 and Diagram 2-2 on page 14).

Again, as with a runner on 1st base only, it is important that the two umpires communicate after the ball is hit on fly balls and line drives to the outfield, particularly when balls are hit to the left or right fielder. The reason here is so that each umpire is completely clear who has responsibility for any given fly ball or line drive.

3.3 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-COVERAGE AND MECHANICS

With a runner on 2nd base only, on any fly ball or line drive to the outfield, the base umpire is responsible for the runner tagging up at 2nd base as well as for the batter-runner touching 1st base. The base umpire is also responsible for the play at 3rd base should the runner at 2nd tag; or any play on that runner going back into 2nd; or any play at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd should the ball not be caught.

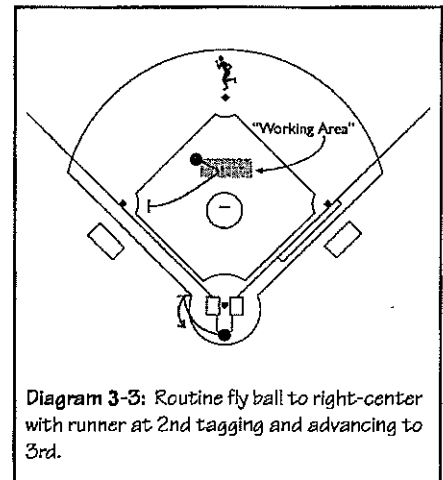
On difficult plays in the outfield which are the responsibility of the base umpire, the base umpire should again **move to the edge of the infield grass in the direction the ball is hit** to



cover the play (he would again use the "pause-read-react" **technique** described in Section 1.3 in deciding whether or not he should move to the edge of the grass). If the fly ball or line drive results in a *difficult* play, the base umpire will sell the call from this position and glance at the runner at 2nd for tag-up purposes (if the ball is caught). As mentioned earlier, the base umpire is also responsible for the touch at 1st base by the batter-runner, and this would be accomplished by the umpire glancing over his shoulder at 1st base. After the base umpire has ruled on the difficult play in the outfield, he must **immediately** bounce back from the edge of the infield grass to pick up responsibility of the base runners.

If the fly ball or line drive is **routine** and belongs to the plate umpire, the base umpire should drift back **two or three steps towards the mound** in order to open up the playing field to observe the catch, watch the runner at 2nd tag-up, and watch the batter-runner touch 1st.

[NOTE: Once again, we call this area behind the mound the "working area" for the base umpire. From this area he is in good position for observing his responsibilities as well as for moving into proper position as plays develop. When the base umpire has *multiple runner responsibilities* if no play develops after the base hit, the base umpire should maintain his basic position in this "working area" and *not* be drawn unnecessarily towards a base without a potential play developing there. If, on the other hand, the base umpire has only a *single runner responsibility* after the fly ball, then after the catch he *should* drift in the direction of this single runner.] If the catch is routine, the base umpire need not call or signal anything. Again, the base umpire is responsible for the catch, the tag-up at 2nd, and the batter-runner touching 1st; and by backing up these few steps towards the mound, the base umpire will have an easier view for watching these responsibilities. This technique also allows the base umpire to move into position easily for any plays at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd.



IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO NOTE HERE THAT IN FLY BALL COVERAGE THE FIRST PRIORITY IS THE BALL. There could be an occasion when the base umpire may miss the batter-runner touching 1st base because he had to keep his eye on the ball. There may also be a time when the base umpire does not have the best look at the tag-up at 2nd base because he had to move to the edge of the grass for a difficult catch in the outfield. This is simply a drawback of the two-umpire system. Again reiterating, the first priority in these situations is **the ball**.

If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the **plate umpire** (i.e., if the fly ball or line drive causes either the left or right fielder to move any distance towards the line), the plate umpire **MUST communicate** to his partner that the plate umpire is taking the ball.

If the fly ball or line drive causes the right fielder to move any distance towards the right field line, the plate umpire will communicate to his partner, "I'm on the line, Sam!" The plate

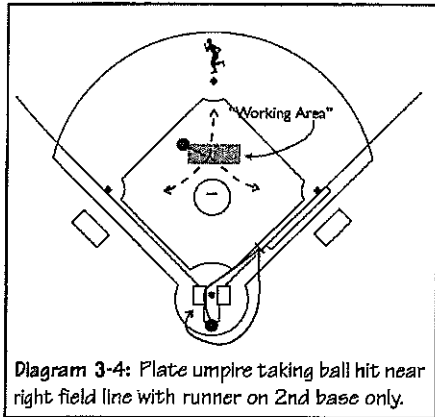


Diagram 3-4: Plate umpire taking ball hit near right field line with runner on 2nd base only.

umpire will move up the 1st base line to observe and rule on the play, BUT only so far that he is certain he will have enough time to get back to home plate for any possible play there. This is an important concept for the plate umpire to learn because his position down the 1st base line will vary based on the location of the ball, the location of the runner from 2nd, the number of outs, etc. The key to remember is that the plate umpire will go only so far as that he *knows* he will have time to get back home. The plate umpire will come to a stop to see the play and make the call, and after he has ruled on the play, the plate umpire will normally bounce back home IMMEDIATELY and be ready for any possible

play there. However, he still has responsibility for the ball going out of play, and so there may be occasions when he may linger on the line, watching the ball; but normally he will break quickly back home, keeping his eye on the ball. In this situation, the plate umpire must never go so far down the line so that he does not have ample time to return to the plate and set up in proper position for any play at the plate.

If the fly ball or line drive causes the left fielder to move any distance to his right, the plate umpire will take the ball and communicate loudly to his partner, "I've got the ball, Sam!" or ...

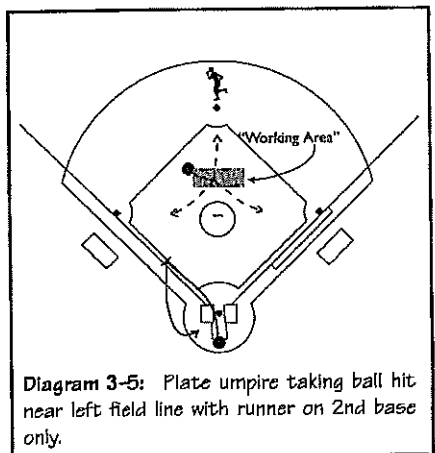


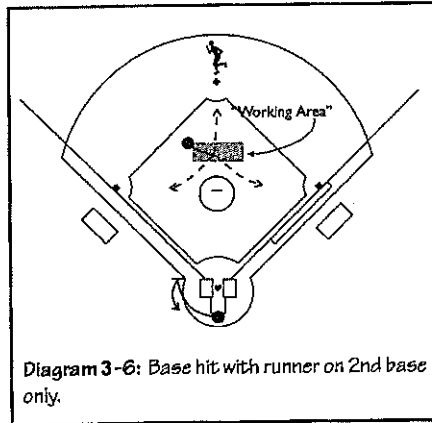
Diagram 3-5: Plate umpire taking ball hit near left field line with runner on 2nd base only.

That's my ball, Sam!" In this case the plate umpire will move up the 3rd base line to observe and rule on the play, BUT again only so far that he is certain that he will have enough time to get back to home plate for any possible play there. The umpire will come to a stop to see the play and make the call and normally will *immediately* bounce back home, keeping his eye on the ball since the ball is his responsibility in this situation. He must never go so far down the line so that he does not have ample time to return to the plate and set up in proper position for any play at the plate.

If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the base umpire, the plate umpire will swing out from the plate a few feet in foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to observe the play. He has the responsibility of watching the runner from 2nd base touch 3rd, but he will also help watch for any infractions which might occur on the play.

3.4 BASE HITS TO THE OUTFIELD

With a runner on 2nd base only, on an obvious *base hit* to the outfield (i.e., no possible fair/foul or catch/no catch on the play), the plate umpire will stay home, and the base umpire will



have responsibility for any plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. As the ball is hit to the outfield, the base umpire will step up, turn with the ball, and backup only two or *three* steps towards the mound (into the "working area") to open up the playing field. He has the responsibility of the touch of 1st by the batter-runner. The plate umpire will swing out from behind home plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to watch the runner from 2nd touch 3rd and to observe the play. The base umpire must be ready to move into position for any play on the bases, and he will *let the ball take him to the play* — keeping in mind the concepts of proper distance and angle to the play as well as being set to

see the play and make the call. (See "Staying Within the Working Area" on page 44.) As the ball is hit to the outfield, it is not a bad idea for the plate umpire communicate to his partner, "Staying home, Sam" as a reminder that the base umpire has all plays on the bases.

3.5 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE INFIEL

With a runner on 2nd base only, responsibility for all fly balls and line drives to the pitcher belong to the plate umpire. The plate umpire will also take all fly balls fielded by the catcher. All other fly balls and line drives to the infield are the responsibility of the base umpire with the *exception* of when the 1st or 3rd baseman is moving towards the foul line, in which case the plate umpire has the responsibility. (See Diagram 2-12 on page 19.)

When the fly ball is hit, the plate umpire should swing out from behind home plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to observe the play (unless the ball is hit near the foul lines). If the fly ball is hit near the 1st or 3rd base line, the plate umpire will straddle the line to make the call.

If the fly ball is a routine catch, the umpire need not call or signal anything. However, if the catch turns out to be a difficult play the umpire would sell the call as needed.

The plate umpire's positioning on line drives to the infield would be exactly the same as just mentioned for fly balls with the exception that it is permissible to move out in front of the plate for line drives back to the pitcher.

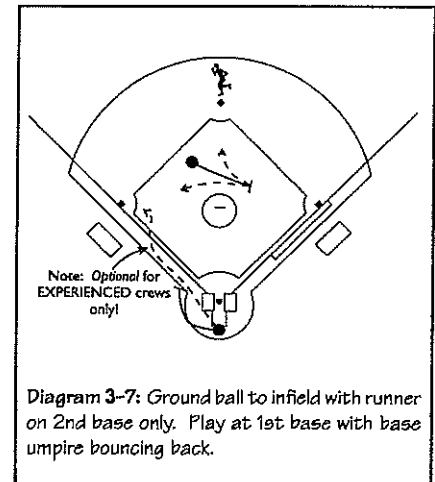
On fly balls to the infielders, the base umpire will step up and turn with the ball and face the infielder, glancing back over his shoulder at 1st base to watch the batter-runner touch 1st base. It is permissible for the base umpire to take a couple steps backwards toward the mound to open up the field of play as the fly ball is hit. In fact, if the infielder is moving in to make the play, the base umpire may have to move several steps including to either side of the mound — in order to give the fielder room to make the play. In this situation, the base umpire must guard against taking himself completely out of position in case the ball should be dropped.

3.6 GROUND BALLS TO THE INFIELD

With a runner on 2nd base only, on a ground ball to the infield the plate umpire will stay home, and the base umpire will cover all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. On a ground ball to the infield (other than those rolling down the foul lines), the plate umpire will swing out from behind home plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to observe the play. He will be responsible for the touch of 3rd base by the runner from 2nd and will stay at home for any possible play there (see footnote on following page). The movements for plate and base umpires on a ground ball to the infield with a runner on 2nd base are shown in Diagram 3-7.

If the ground ball is up the 1st or 3rd base line, the plate umpire must come out from behind the plate and be prepared to make a fair/foul decision on the ball. If the ball is up the 1st base line, he may hesitate briefly on the line to observe the play at 1st base, watching for the three items referred to in Section 1.9. After the play at 1st, the plate umpire would then retreat home immediately, preparing for any possible play at the plate. If the ball is down the 3rd base line, the plate umpire would observe the play and then retreat home (unless the crew is using the mechanic referred to in the footnote at the bottom of this page).

With a runner on 2nd base only, on a ground ball to the infield the base umpire will step up and turn with the ball, facing the fielder as he is fielding the ball. He will initially stay in the approximate position he started and must then react to the development of the play with good anticipation as to how the play may develop. He must *let the ball take him to the play* and be aware of the concepts of proper distance and angle to the play as well as being completely stopped and set for the play. He must recognize that there are several possibilities as to how the play might develop, and he must react accordingly. If the initial play by the infielder is made on the batter-runner at 1st base, the base umpire must be aware that any following play on the runner originally on 2nd base also belongs to the base umpire, and the base umpire must *bounce back* towards that runner after the play at 1st base* (see footnote below).



3.7 STEALS AT THIRD BASE

With a runner on 2nd base only, steals at 3rd base are handled with some similarity to pick-offs at 1st base. That is, the base umpire must move towards an imaginary 45-foot line along the 3rd base line as he is getting into position for the play. It is important that the base umpire **NOT** move directly towards 3rd base on this play because this will result in a very poor angle for the umpire, one that is looking up the rear end of the play. Again, the umpire must be sure **not** to run 3rd base (instead, he should break towards 3rd base at an *angle*.) *parallel* to the baseline in

*With a runner on 2nd base only, some experienced crews prefer to let the plate umpire help out on a play at 3rd base following a play on the batter-runner at 1st base. This is a permissible mechanic but should be used only by experienced crews. Loud, clear communication **MUST** be used if the crew is using this mechanic. This is not recommended for umpires in the early stages of development. (See optional positioning for plate umpire in Diagram 3-7 above.)

moving into position on the play at 3rd base.

As with steals at 2nd base, the plate umpire will watch carefully for the batter interfering with the catcher's throw to 3rd (see Section 3.7). After the ball is thrown to 3rd base, the plate umpire will simply observe the play, not leaving the plate area other than perhaps swinging out a step or two to his left to watch the play.

On steals at 3rd base, it is very important that the base umpire establish a good starting position in the middle of the infield- one that is not too "deep" towards 2nd base, yet not too close to the mound (see Section 3.1).

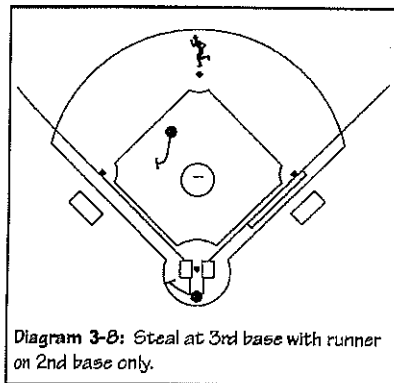


Diagram 3-8: Steal at 3rd base with runner on 2nd base only.

The base umpire should be adept at recognizing that the runner on 2nd is stealing through being alert and picking up certain actions and cries on the field. For example, the base umpire should be able to pick up on the runner breaking towards 3rd base through "feeling" and hearing him taking off as well as reading to the defense's exclamation, "Going!" as the runner breaks towards 3rd base. Also, with a runner on 2nd base, it is an optional mechanic for the base umpire to take a quick glance over his right shoulder the moment the pitcher commits his delivery to the plate. (This would be done

so that the base umpire has an actual view of the runner breaking towards 3rd.) This is an optional mechanic and is not required but is permissible.

The base umpire should begin his reactions to this play when he realizes the runner is attempting to steal 3rd, however, the umpire must be aware of the fact that the ball may be hit or that a check swing is possible, and react accordingly. He should break towards an imaginary 45-foot line along the 3rd base line and move as far as he can in that direction but yet be *completely stopped and set* for the play at 3rd base. He must keep his eye on the ball until the ball is committed to 3rd base, then turn, face the play, and set for the call. Proper angle and being completely stopped for this play are critical.

Reiterating the plate umpire's responsibilities on this play: The plate umpire will watch carefully for the batter interfering with the catcher's throw to 3rd. It is permissible (but not required) for the plate umpire to use the mechanics "That's nothing" in cases of *questionable* interference (see Section 2.7). After the ball is thrown to 3rd, the plate umpire will simply observe the play, not leaving the plate area other than perhaps swinging out a few feet to his left to watch the play.

3.8 PICK-OFFS AT SECOND BASE; RUNDOWNS

With a runner on 2nd base only, pick-offs are covered with some similarity to steals of 2nd base. As the base umpire sees the pitcher begin the pick-off move towards 2nd, he will "drop-step" towards 2nd base with his left foot, keeping his eye on the ball and not turning his back on the ball. Then, as the pitcher releases the ball, the umpire would continue to move towards 2nd base. As with steals at 2nd base (Section 3.7), essence the ball will turn the umpire into the play as the throw reaches the base umpire (the umpire should more or less be "pivoting" on his left foot as the throw reaches him). At this point, the umpire will turn and focus on the play, keeping in mind that by this time he should be in proper position and angle for the play at 2nd (ideally a few steps to the home plate side of the 2nd base cutout). Again, it is imperative that the umpire

be *completely set and* not moving for this play; and in the early stages of umpiring, it is recommended that the umpire have his hands on his knees for this play.

Should the ball get away at 2nd base and roll towards the outfield, the base umpire must be prepared to move into position for a possible play at 3rd base if the runner decides to go. The umpire must also keep his eye on the original play at 2nd base, watching for possible obstruction. This type of play would be handled exactly as described in the last paragraph of Section 3.7 (see Diagram 2-18 on page 23).

Should the runner on 2nd base get in a rundown between 2nd and 3rd, this would be handled in the manner described in Section 1.7 (see Diagram 1-9 on page 17).

3.9 TIME PLAYS

With a runner on 2nd base and 2 out, the time play is in order. The two umpires would alert each other to this situation with a prearranged inconspicuous signal before each batter comes to bat when there is a runner on 2nd base and 2 out. (A commonly used signal is to indicate 2 out and then to point down to home plate. Both umpires would signal this.)

With a runner on 2nd base and 2 out, on virtually any ball hit to the outfield the plate umpire will stay home (an exception would be if the plate umpire must go up the 1st or 3rd base

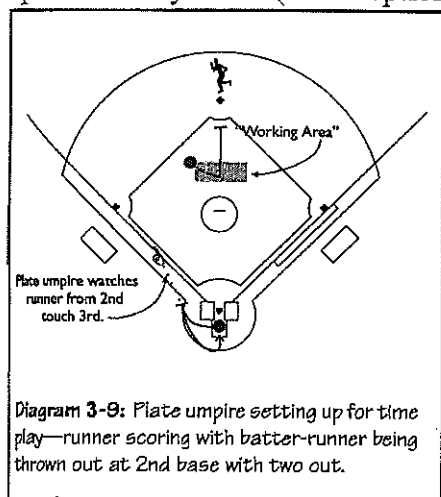


Diagram 3-9: Plate umpire setting up for time play—runner scoring with batter-runner being thrown out at 2nd base with two out.

line to rule on a play in the outfield—and even then he would *immediately* break quickly ("bust") home for the time play after ruling on the play). The plate umpire should communicate his location to the base umpire on any obvious hit to the outfield by shouting, "Staying home, Sam!" or "I'm home, Sam!" This not only reminds the base umpire that he has responsibility for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, but also reminds the plate umpire of the potential for the time play to occur and the necessity for him to stay home and in proper position for that reason.

As it becomes apparent that a time play is developing, the plate umpire will take a position behind home plate, approximately 6 to 8 feet behind the plate, in such a manner that he will be in a *straight line* between the

runner touching home and the 3rd out occurring on the bases. From this position the plate umpire will watch carefully to judge whether the runner crosses the plate before or after the third out is made on the bases. After the plate umpire has judged whether or not the run scored before the 3rd out, he will communicate this information to the official scorer by turning towards the press box and using the following mechanics:

- ⇒ **If the run scores:** "That run scores! That run scores!" (while facing the plate and pointing twice at home plate emphatically with his right arm); and then turning around and pointing up to the press box while exclaiming, "Score that run!" (Alternative terminologies include: "The run scores! The run scores! Score the run!" or "Score that run! Score that run! That run scores!") (Note

that if more than one run scored on the play, the plate umpire would additionally indicate both visually and verbally to the official scorer the total number of runs that scored on the play *after* displaying the time play mechanic.)

- ⇒ **If the run does not score:** "No run scores! No run scores!" (or "No run! No run!" while facing the press box and waving his arms in a cross-wise fashion in front of his upper body above head level.

SECTION 4

RUNNER ON THIRD BASE ONLY

4.1 POSITIONING

With a runner on 3rd base only, the base umpire will position himself in exactly the same manner as with a runner on 2nd base only (see Section 3.1).

4.2 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-RESPONSIBILITIES

With a runner on 3rd base only, fly ball and line drive responsibilities for balls hit to the outfield are exactly the same as with a runner on 1st base only (see Section 2.2 and Diagram 2-2 on page 14).

As is the case anytime runners are on base, it is important that the two umpires communicate after the ball is hit on fly balls and line drives to the outfield, particularly when balls are hit to the left or right fielder. The reason here is so that each umpire is *certain* who has responsibility for any given fly ball or line drive.

4.3 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-COVERAGE AND MECHANICS

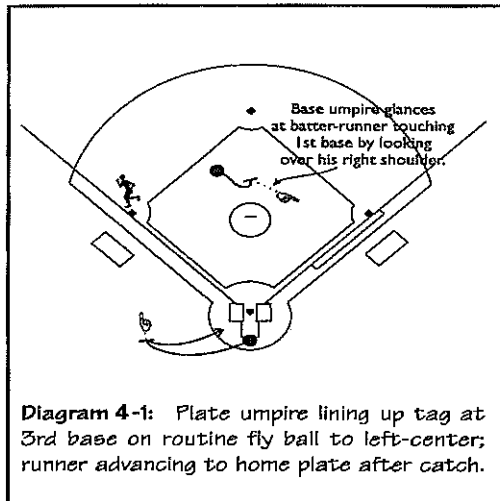
With a runner on 3rd base only, on any fly ball or line drive to the outfield the plate umpire is responsible for the runner tagging up at 3rd base. The base umpire is responsible for the batter-runner touching 1st base. The base umpire is also responsible for any play on the runner on 3rd going back into 3rd base as well as any play at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd should the ball not be caught.

On *difficult plays* in the outfield which belong to the base umpire, the base umpire should again move to the **edge of the infield grass in the direction the ball is hit** in order to cover the play [he would again use the "**pause, read, and react**" technique described in Section 1.3 to decide whether or not he should move to the edge of the grass (see pages 2-3)]. The base umpire will sell the call from this position and immediately bounce back to pick up responsibilities of the base runner(s). As mentioned earlier, the base umpire is also responsible for the touch of 1st base by the batter-runner, and this would be accomplished by the umpire glancing over his shoulder at 1st base.

If the fly ball or line drive to the outfield is routine and belongs to the base umpire, the base umpire should drift back **two or three steps towards the mound** (into the "working area") in order to open up the playing field to observe the catch and watch the batter-runner touch 1st. If the catch is routine, the base umpire need not call or signal anything. Again, the base umpire is responsible for the catch, the touch at 1st base by the batter-runner, and any following plays on the bases, and by backing up these few steps towards the mound, it will be easier for the base umpire to cover these responsibilities.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO NOTE AGAIN THAT IN FLY BALL COVERAGE, THE FIRST PRIORITY IS **THE BALL**. There could be an occasion when the base umpire may miss the batter-runner touching 1st base because he had to keep his eye on the ball. This again is a drawback of the two-umpire system. Reiterating, the first priority in these situations is **the ball**.

As mentioned earlier, with a runner on 3rd base only the tag-up at 3rd base belongs to the plate umpire. If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the base umpire, the plate umpire will **Swing**

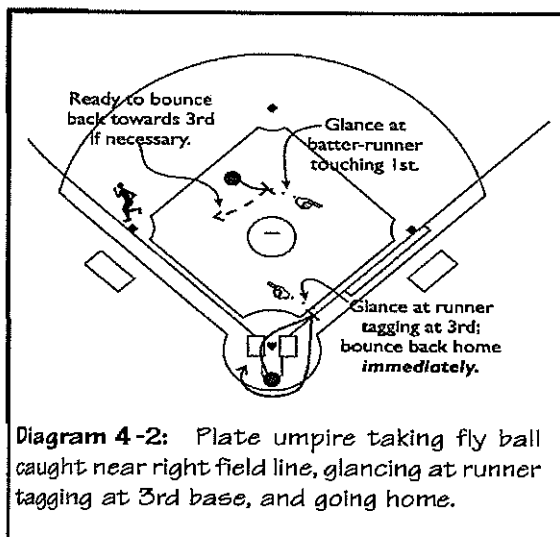


Out from the plate *several steps* into foul territory to his left (usually in the general direction of the 3rd base dugout) in order to line up the tag at 3rd base. After the tag-up, he will immediately break quickly ("bust") back home, setting up for any possible play at the plate on the runner from 3rd. The actual distance and direction the plate umpire swings out to his left will vary depending on the direction the fly ball is hit, and in most cases it will not be possible for the plate umpire to have an exact line on the tag-up; however, this swinging out to the left will help decrease the angle on lining up the tag at 3rd base. Again, the plate umpire will usually swing out in the general direction of the 3rd base dugout in order to attain this

positioning. (See Diagram 4-1.)

If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the **plate umpire** (i.e., if the fly ball or line drive causes either the left or right fielder to move any distance towards the line), the plate umpire must **communicate** to his partner that the plate umpire has responsibility for the ball.

If the fly ball or line drive causes the right fielder to move any distance towards the right field line, the plate umpire will communicate to his partner, "I'm on the line, Sam!" The plate umpire will move up the 1st base line to observe and rule on the play, *BUT only so far that he is CERTAIN that he will have ample time to get back to home plate* for any possible play there on the runner coming from 3rd base. Since the runner will be tagging in many of these situations, it

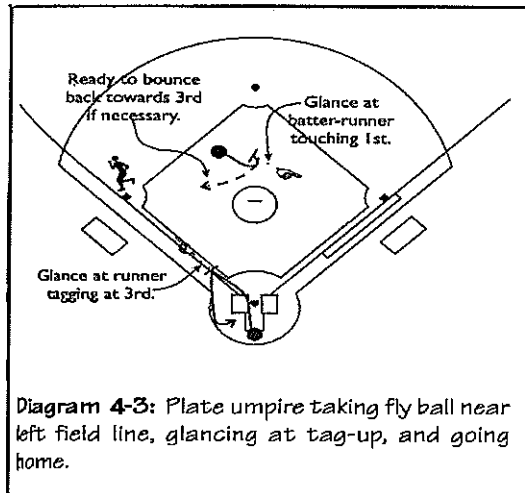


will generally not be possible for the plate umpire to move very far up the 1st base line to rule on the ball because of the potential play at the plate. Also, since the plate umpire has responsibility for the tag-up at 3rd base, he must take a quick glance over his left shoulder at 3rd base after the ball is touched to judge the tag-up. This is a difficult mechanic for the plate umpire, but as mentioned earlier, the first priority in these situations is *the ball*, and for that reason the plate umpire must be in a good position for any possible fair/foul or catch/no catch down the right field line. Reiterating once again, the plate umpire's positioning down the 1st base line on these plays will vary based on the location of the ball, the location of the

fielders, and whether or not the runner on 3rd base is tagging. The key to remember is that the plate umpire will go only so far as that he knows he will have ample time to get back home and set up for the play. The plate umpire will come to a stop to see the play, make the call, and glance at the tag-up; and after he has ruled on the play (and watched for the tag-up), he will normally

bounce back home **IMMEDIATELY** and be ready for any play there. However, he still has responsibility, for the ball going out of play, and so there may be occasions when he may linger on the line, watching the ball; but normally he will bust back home. Again, in this situation the plate umpire must never go so far down the line so that he does not have ample time to return to the plate and setup in proper position for any play at the plate. Consequently, in tag-up situations, the plate umpire will normally not go very far down the 1st base line.

If the fly ball or line drive causes the left fielder to move any distance to his right, the plate



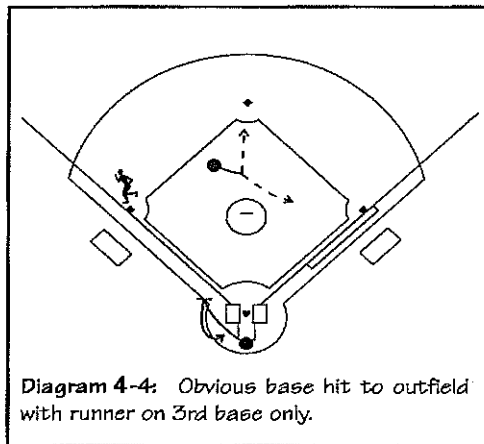
umpire will take the ball and communicate loudly to his partner, "I've got the ball, Sam!" or "That's my ball, Sam!" In this case the plate umpire will move up the 3rd base line to rule on the play, again remembering that he will go up the line only *so far that he is certain he will have ample time to get back to home plate for any possible play there*. Therefore, as with balls hit down the right field line, the plate umpire's position will vary, depending on the location of the ball, the speed of the runner, whether or not the runner is tagging, the number of outs, etc. And since the plate umpire also has responsibility for the tag-up at 3rd base, he must glance at the runner as the ball is touched. Again,

this is a difficult mechanics and the umpire must remember that the first priority is **the ball**. The plate umpire will come to a stop to see the play, make the call, and watch the tag up; and normally he will then immediately bust back home. The plate umpire will still have responsibility for the ball going out of play in this situation, and so he will need to keep his eye on the ball. Again reiterating, the plate umpire must never go so far down the line so that he does not have ample time to return to the plate and set up in proper position for any play on the runner coming from 3rd base.

4.4 BASE HITS TO THE OUTFIELD

With a runner on 3rd base only, on an obvious base hit to the outfield (i.e., no possible fair/foul or catch/no catch on the play), the plate umpire will stay home, and the base umpire will have responsibility for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. The plate umpire will have responsibility for all touches of home plate, and the base umpire is responsible for all touches at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

As the ball is hit to the outfield, the base umpire will step up, turn with the ball, and back up only *two or three steps* towards the mound (into the "working area") to open up the playing field. He has the responsibility of the touch of 1st by the batter-runner. The plate umpire will swing out from behind home plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to observe the play. He will watch the runner from 3rd touch home plate. The base umpire must be ready to move into position for any play on the bases, and he will let the ball take him to the play-keeping in mind the concepts of proper distance and angle to the play as well as being set to see the play and make the call.



After a clean base hit where the runner from 3rd base has scored, the base umpire should realize that he now has responsibility for only *one runner* (the batter-runner). For this reason, the base umpire may drift in the direction of the batter-runner (leaving the "working area") after the runner from 3rd has scored — not over-committing, of course — and when the play is over, he should be "shaded" more towards the vicinity of the batter-runner even if no play is imminent. If a play on the batter-runner is imminent, then of course the base umpire should let the ball take him to the play, and he should get as close as possible to the play (see "An Important

Footnote" at bottom of this page).*

The mechanics for both plate and base umpires on an obvious base hit to the outfield with a runner on 3rd only are shown in Diagram 4-4.

4.5 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE INFIELD

With a runner on 3rd base only, responsibility for all fly balls and line drives to the pitcher belong to the plate umpire. The plate umpire will also take all fly balls fielded by the catcher. All other fly balls and line drives to the infield are the responsibility of the base umpire with the *exception* of when the 1st or 3rd baseman is moving towards the foul line, in which case the plate umpire has that responsibility.

When a fly ball is hit to the infield, the plate umpire will swing out from behind home plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to observe the play *unless* the ball is hit near the foul lines. If the fly ball is fielded in the vicinity of the 1st base line, the plate umpire normally will take this play from behind home plate, straddling the 1st base line extended. If the fly ball is fielded in the vicinity of the 3rd base line, the plate umpire should straddle the line *a step or two up the line* to make the call unless two are out, in which case he should take the play from behind the plate, straddling the 3rd base line extended. (See Diagrams 4-5 and 4-6 regarding mechanics for fly balls fielded near the 1st and 3rd base lines.)

If the fly ball is a routine catch, the umpire need not call or signal anything. However, if the catch turns out to be a difficult play, the umpire would sell the call as needed.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE ➔

*The concept of "shading" or sliding closer to the umpire's **sole runner** holds in **all** situations, not just with a runner on 3rd base. That is, whenever a play develops so that the base umpire is left with **only one runner**, the umpire should slide, ("shade") *closer to that runner* since that is his only responsibility. **THIS IS AN IMPORTANT CONCEPT AND MECHANIC.**

The plate umpire's positioning on line drives to the infield would be the same as just mentioned for fly balls to the infield.

On fly balls to the infielders, the base umpire will step up and turn with the ball and face

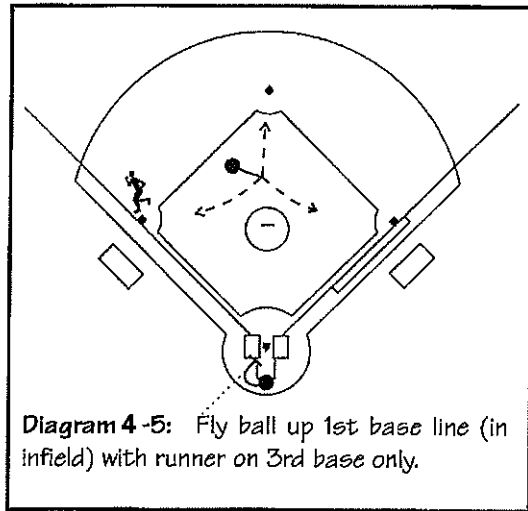


Diagram 4-5: Fly ball up 1st base line (in infield) with runner on 3rd base only.

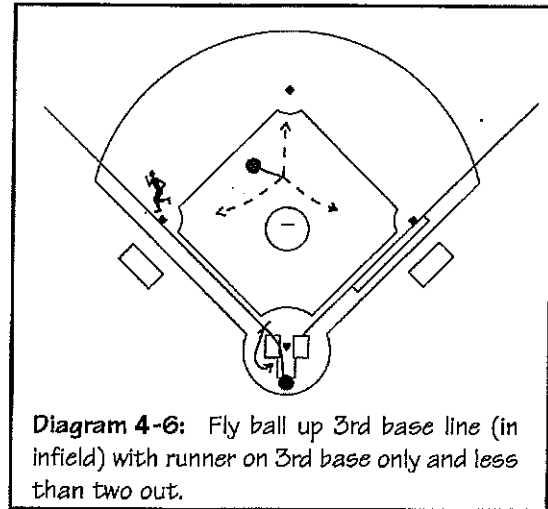


Diagram 4-6: Fly ball up 3rd base line (in infield) with runner on 3rd base only and less than two out.

the infielder, glancing back over his shoulder at 1st base as necessary to watch the batter-runner touch 1st base. It is permissible for the base umpire to take a couple steps backward towards the mound to open up the field of play as the fly ball is hit. In fact, if the infielder is moving in to make the play, the base umpire may have to move several steps-including to either side of the mound-in order to give the fielder room to make the play. On fly balls to the infield, the base umpire must guard against taking himself completely out of position in case the ball should be dropped. If the ball is caught, the base umpire has responsibility for any play at 3rd base on the runner originally on 3rd. If the ball is dropped, the base umpire has responsibility for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

4.6 GROUND BALLS TO THE INFIELDF

With a runner on 3rd base only, on a ground ball to the infield the plate umpire will stay home, and the base umpire will cover all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. On a ground ball to the infield (other than those rolling down the foul lines), the plate umpire will swing out from behind home plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to observe the play. He must be prepared to move into position for the play at home plate on the runner from 3rd base.

If the ground ball is up the *1st base line*, the plate umpire will take the fair/foul from **behind the plate**, straddling the 1st base line extended. If the ground ball is up the *3rd base line*, the plate umpire will usually take the fair/foul from *a step or two* up the 3rd base line, being prepared to bounce back into position immediately for any play at the plate. There may be plays, however, when the ball is rolling down the 3rd base line in such a way that the plate umpire will not be able to move down the 3rd base line at all; and in these cases the plate umpire must take the fair/foul from **behind the plate**, straddling the 3rd base line extended (for example, a suicide squeeze play or any other play where it is apparent that the runner from 3rd will attempt to score on the ground ball). In all cases with a runner on 3rd base only and a ground ball up the 1st or 3rd base line, if the ball is thrown to 1st base for a play on the batter-runner, the plate umpire will have responsibility for the three items referred to in Section 2.9 (overthrows at 1st, interference

out of the three-foot lane, "help" on swipe tags). The plate umpire must also be prepared on such ground balls for an initial play at the plate as well as being ready for situations when a subsequent play is made at home plate after an initial play elsewhere. (See Diagrams 4-7 and 4-8.)

With a runner on 3rd base only, on a ground ball to the infield the base umpire will step up and turn with the ball, and normally he will drift a few steps in the direction of the 45-foot line, anticipating a play at 1st base. However, he must be aware of situations where the play might be made at 3rd

base instead, and consequently he must react with *good anticipation* as to how the play may develop. If the play goes to 1st base, the base umpire will take a few more steps towards the 45-foot line, set, and make the call at 1st base. Immediately *after* the play at 1st the base umpire must quickly bounce back towards the other runner at 3rd, always anticipating a subsequent throw to that base. Because of the lead runner at 3rd, the base umpire will not be able to get exceptionally close to the play at 1st base, although with two out he should get a bit *closer* to the play than he would with less than two out.

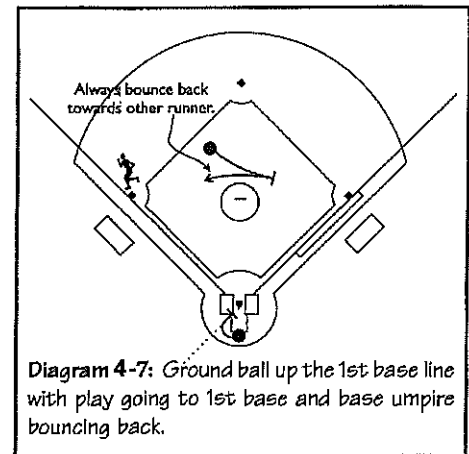


Diagram 4-7: Ground ball up the 1st base line with play going to 1st base and base umpire bouncing back.

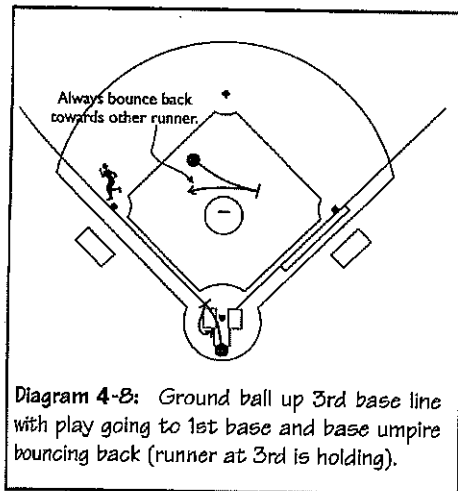


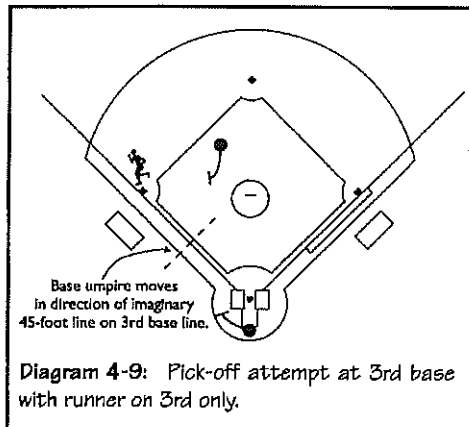
Diagram 4-8: Ground ball up 3rd base line with play going to 1st base and base umpire bouncing back (runner at 3rd is holding).

4.7 PICK-OFFS AT THIRD BASE; RUNDOWNS

If the pitcher makes a pick-off attempt at 3rd base, the base umpire will use a technique very similar to the pick-off mechanic at 1st base (see Section 2.8). He must be in proper starting position in the middle of the infield (not too deep towards 2nd base, not too close to the mound). Then, as the pitcher begins his throw to 3rd base, the base umpire may use either of the following two procedures:

- (1) The umpire will take a quick step forward with his *right* foot, moving in the direction on an imaginary 45-foot line along the 3rd base line. After taking this initial step forward, the umpire will turn (pivoting on his right foot), face the play, and set for the call.
- (2) The umpire will take two quick steps forward starting with his *left* foot, moving in the direction of an imaginary 45-foot line along the 3rd base line. After taking two steps forward (left followed by right), the umpire will turn (pivoting on his right foot), face the play, and set for the call.

The preceding two techniques are very similar, the basic difference being which foot begins the pick-off move and how many steps are taken. As mentioned previously, either of the preceding two techniques is acceptable in covering pick-offs at 3rd base.

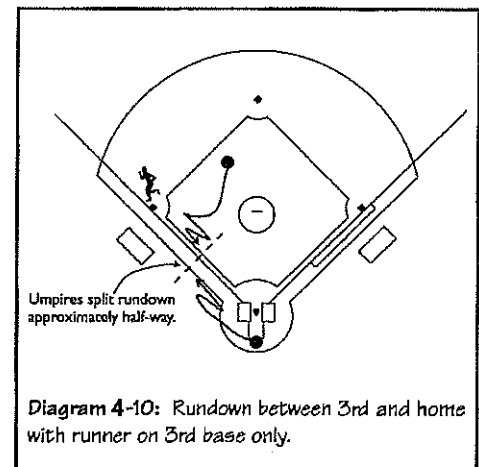


On pick-offs at 3rd base, it is *imperative* that the base umpire be **completely stopped and set** for the pick-off. His body should be facing the play, and in the early stages of umpiring, it would be best if the umpire is set with his hands on his knees for this play. Angle is critical for pick-offs, and it is very important that the umpire set up in the proper starting position, that he move towards an imaginary 45-foot line along the 3rd base line for the

pick-off, and that he be completely stopped and set for the play.

It is possible that the catcher may try to pick off the runner at 3rd base with a quick throw following a pitch. If this should happen, the base umpire's movements would be virtually the same as just described for a pick-off move by the pitcher.

Should the runner get in a rundown between 3rd and home, this would be handled by the plate and base umpires in the manner described in Section 1.7. (Note Diagram 4-10 showing movements of plate and base umpires for a rundown between 3rd and with runner on 3rd base only. The umpires will split this rundown half and half)



SECTION 5 RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

5.1 POSITIONING

With runners on 1st and 2nd, the base umpire will position himself in exactly the same manner as with a runner on 2nd base only (see Section 3.1).

5.2 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-RESPONSIBILITIES

With runners on 1st and 2nd, fly ball and line drive responsibilities for balls hit to the outfield are exactly the same as with a runner on 1st base only (see Section 2.2 and Diagram 2-2 on page 14). Again, as is the case any time runners are on base, it is important that the two umpires communicate after the ball is hit on fly balls and line drives to the outfield, particularly when balls are hit to the left or right fielder. The reason here is so that each umpire is *certain* who has responsibility for any given fly ball or line drive.

5.3 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-COVERAGE AND MECHANICS

With runners on 1st and 2nd, on any fly ball or line drive to the outfield the base umpire is responsible for the tag-ups at both 2nd and 1st. Should the ball be caught, the base umpire is responsible for plays back into 2nd or 1st. Should the ball not be caught, the base umpire is responsible for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd as well as all touches at 1st and 2nd, and the touch at 3rd by the batter-runner.

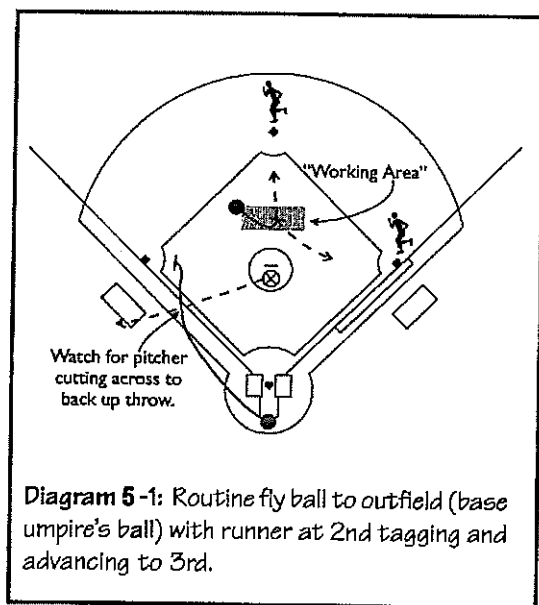
The plate umpire is responsible for the play at 3rd base if the runner at 2nd tags up and advances. Should the ball not be caught, the plate umpire is responsible for all plays at the plate as well as for all touches of 3rd (except for the batter-runner touching 3rd) and all touches of home.

On difficult plays in the outfield which belong to the base umpire, the base umpire should again move to the *edge of the infield grass in the direction the ball is hit* to cover and rule on the play (he would again use the "pause, read, and react" technique described in Section 2.3 in deciding whether or not he should move to the edge of the grass). The umpire will sell the call from this position and glance at the runners at 2nd and 1st for tag-up purposes (if the ball is caught). As mentioned earlier, the base umpire is also responsible for the touch at 1st base by the batter-runner, and this would be accomplished by the umpire glancing over his shoulder at 1st base. After the base umpire has ruled on the difficult play in the outfield, he must immediately bounce back to pick up responsibility of the base runners.

If the fly ball or line drive is **routine** and is the responsibility of the base umpire, the base umpire should drift back two or three steps towards the mound (into the "working area") in order to open up the playing field to observe the catch, watch the runner(s) tag up, and watch the batter-runner touch 1st. If the catch is routine, the base umpire need not call or signal anything. Again, the base umpire is responsible for the catch, the tag-ups at 1st and 2nd, and the batter-runner touching 1st; and by backing up these few steps towards the mound it will be easier for the

base umpire to cover these responsibilities. This technique also allows the base umpire to move into position easily for any following plays at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO NOTE AGAIN THAT IN FLY BALL COVERAGE, THE FIRST PRIORITY IS **THE BALL**. There could be an occasion when the base umpire may miss the batter-runner touching 1st base because he had to keep his eye on the ball. There may



also be a time when the base umpire does not have the best look at the tag-up at 2nd or 1st because he had to move to the edge of the grass for a difficult catch in the outfield. This is simply a drawback of the two-umpire system. Again reiterating, the first priority in these situations is *the ball*.

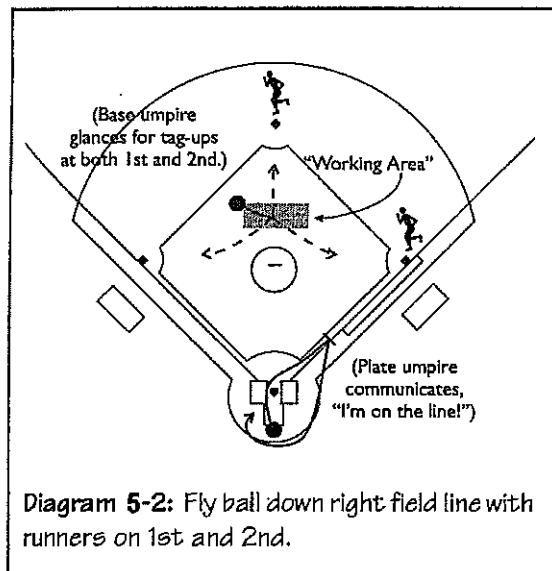
With runners at 1st and 2nd and less than two out, the plate umpire will have the play at 3rd base *if the runner at 2nd tags up* (provided the ball is not hit down the right field line). As the fly ball is hit to the outfield, the plate umpire will look towards the runner at 2nd. If he observes the runner going back to tag up, as the plate umpire leaves the plate area he will communicate to his partner, "I've got 3rd if he tags!" If in fact the runner does tag and commits to 3rd base, the plate umpire will communicate to his partner a second time by

exclaiming as he moves into the cutout at 3rd base to assume positioning for the play, "I've got 3rd, Sam! I've got 3rd!" This will alert the base umpire that the responsibility of play at 3rd has transferred to the plate umpire, and the base umpire may now shift (drift) over and pick up responsibility of the runner originally on 1st (however, he must not over-commit towards 1st base since the possibility exists of the runner originally on 2nd getting in a rundown between 2nd and 3rd).

If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the base umpire and the plate umpire sees that the runner at 2nd base is not tagging up, the plate umpire will communicate, "Staying home, Sam! Staying home!" as he drifts back towards the plate. However, the plate umpire must not be premature with this communication as there are times when the runner at 2nd base initially does not tag up, but as the play proceeds he does tag up.

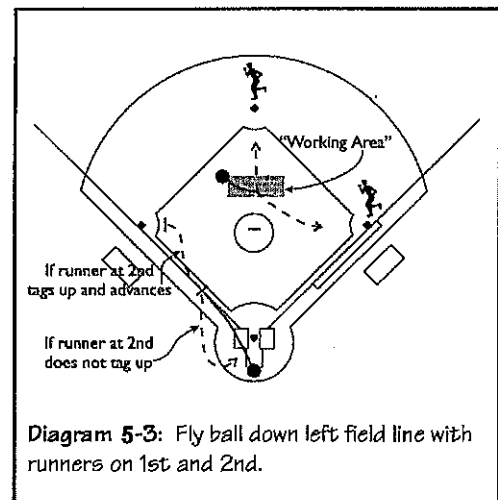
If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the plate umpire (i.e., if the fly ball or line drive causes either the left or right fielder to move any distance towards the line), the plate umpire **MUST communicate** to his partner that the plate umpire has responsibility for the ball.

If the fly ball or line drive causes the right fielder to move any distance towards the right field line, the plate umpire will communicate loudly to his partner, "I'm on the line, Sam!" to indicate that he is taking the ball. **This terminology will indicate to the base umpire that the plate umpire WILL NOT have the normal responsibility of the tag-up play at 3rd base in this situation.** In this case, the base umpire will take responsibility for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd on all runners. On this play, the plate umpire will move down the 1st base line to observe and will rule on the play *BUT only so far that he is certain he will have enough time to get back to home plate for any possible play there.* This is an important concept for the plate umpire to learn



because his position down the 1st base line will *vary* based on the location of the ball, the location of the runner at 2nd, the number of outs, etc. The key to remember is that the plate umpire will go only so far that he knows he will have ample time to get back home for any potential play there. The plate umpire will come to a stop to see the play and make the call, and after he has ruled on the play, the plate umpire will normally bounce back home **IMMEDIATELY** and be ready for any possible play there. The plate umpire has responsibility for the ball going out of play in this situation, yet he must never go so far down the line that he does not have ample time to return to the plate and set up in proper position for any potential play at the plate.

If the fly ball or line drive causes the left fielder to move any distance to his right, the plate umpire will take the ball and communicate loudly to his partner, "I've got the ball, Sam!" or "That's my ball, Sam!" In this situation the plate umpire will also have responsibility for the play at 3rd base if the runner on 2nd tags up and advances. The plate umpire would communicate this information to his partner with the terminology specified earlier in this section. If the runner at 2nd base is not tagging up, the plate umpire will move up the 3rd base line to observe and rule on the play, *BUT again only so far that he is certain that he will have enough time to get back to home plate for any possible play there.* The plate umpire will come to a stop to see the play and make the call on the fly ball or line drive. If the runner at 2nd does not tag up, the plate umpire will normally bounce back home *immediately*, keeping his eye on the ball since the ball remains his responsibility in this situation. As the plate umpire heads back home, he will communicate to his partner, "Going home, Sam! Going home!" (this will alert the base umpire that he has responsibility for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd). The plate umpire must never go so far down the line that he does not have ample time to return to the plate and set up in proper position for any play at the plate.



Summary of Fly Ball Coverage With Runners on 1st and 2nd

If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the **base umpire**, the plate umpire will always begin the play by swinging out from behind home plate a few feet in foul territory in the direction of 3rd base. If he observes the runner at 2nd base tagging up, he will communicate to his partner, "I've got third if he tags!" Then, as the plate umpire moves into the cutout at 3rd to take the tag-up play, he will communicate a second time, "I've got 3rd, Sam! I've got 3rd!" If the ball belongs to the base umpire and the runner at 2nd does not tag up, then the plate umpire will not cover 3rd base in this situation. Instead he will start to drift back home and communicate, "Staying home, Sam! Staying home!"

If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the **plate umpire**, he will communicate either "I'm on the line, Sam!" (ball hit to the right side) or "I've got the ball, Sam!" (ball hit to the left side). The plate umpire will not take the tag-up play at 3rd if he communicates "I'm on the line, Sam!" (ball hit to the right side), but he **will** take the tag-up at 3rd if he communicates "I've got the ball, Sam!" (ball hit to the left side). If the plate umpire has the ball on the left side but the runner at 2nd does not tag up, the plate umpire should communicate to his partner, "Going home, Sam! Going home!" as he drifts back towards home plate.

5.4 BASE HITS TO THE OUTFIELD

With runners on 1st and 2nd, on an obvious base hit to the outfield (i.e., no possible fair/foul or catch/no catch), the plate umpire will *stay* home, and the base umpire will have responsibility for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. As the ball is hit to the outfield, the base umpire will step up, turn with the ball, and back up only *two or three steps* towards the mound (into the "working area") to open up the playing field. He has responsibility of all touches of 1st and 2nd as well as the touch of 3rd by the batter-runner.

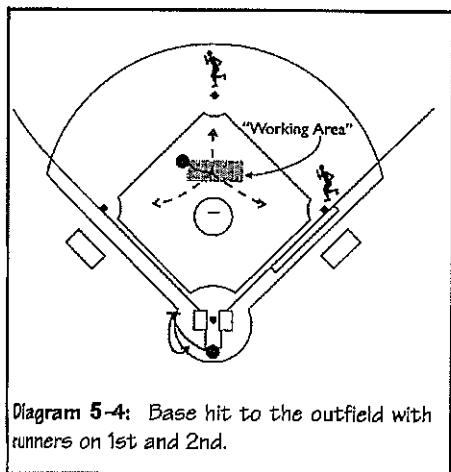


Diagram 5-4: Base hit to the outfield with runners on 1st and 2nd.

The plate umpire will swing out from behind home plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to observe the play and watch all runners touch 3rd (except for batter runner) as well as watching all runners touch home plate. The base umpire must be ready to move into position for any play on the bases, and he will *let the ball take him to the play* keeping in mind the concepts of proper distance and angle to the play as well as being set to see the play and make the call. As the ball is hit to the outfield in this situation, it is a good idea for the plate umpire to communicate to his partner, "Staying home, Sam!" as a reminder that the base umpire has all plays on the bases.

Staying Within the “Working Area”

As the ball is being thrown to the infield with **multiple runners** on base, the base umpire should not drift (or commit) *unnecessarily* towards a base. Instead, he should let the ball take him to the play, but if no play develops (or is anticipated) on the bases, he would basically *maintain* his position within the “working area.” In other words, if the runners simply advance and no play develops or is anticipated anywhere on the bases, the base umpire will basically stay within the “working area.” Only when the umpire anticipates the potential for a play should he move out of the “working area” and into a position for his play. *This is an important concept and mechanic and applies to all situations when more than one runner is on base — not just with runners on 1st and 2nd.* (See footnote at bottom of page 36 contrasting this mechanic with situations when the base umpire has only **ONE runner**.)

5.5 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE INFIELDF

With runners at 1st and 2nd, responsibilities and mechanics for fly balls and line drives to the infield are exactly the same as with a runner on 2nd base only (see Section 3.5 and Diagram 2-12 on page 19).

5.6 INFIELDF FLY SITUATIONS

With runners on 1st and 2nd and less than 2 out, the infield fly rule is in effect. The umpires will alert each other to this situation with a prearranged signal before each batter whenever the infield fly is in effect. (The usual signal is to give the number of outs followed by an open hand with thumb tip across the middle of the chest. Both umpires would signal this to each other.)

There is no restriction on which umpire should initiate the infield fly call other than the plate umpire should be the one to initiate the call if the fly ball is hit near either foul line. When one umpire makes the infield fly declaration, the other umpire should follow up with the verbal and visual call also. Proper terminology for calling an infield fly is: “Infield Fly! Batter is out!” exclaimed **loudly and clearly** while fully extending the right arm into the air with a fist and index finger pointing straight up. If the fly ball is near the foul line, the plate umpire will initiate the call by exclaiming loudly and clearly, “Infield fly if fair!” (Using the same visual signal). The base umpire would then follow with the same call. Reiterating, after an infield fly is declared by one umpire, the other umpire will join in loudly with the same call and signal.

Positioning when calling the infield fly would be the same as on any fly ball with the exception that it is permissible for the plate umpire to move out a few feet in front of the plate when actually making the call (unless the ball is hit near the foul lines, in which case the plate umpire would be straddling the line).

The proper moment for the umpire to declare an infield fly is when the umpire sees that the infielder is positioned under the ball (i.e., he has virtually stopped moving). In most cases this will occur when the infielder is facing the infield and after the flight of the ball has reached its apex. These conditions will indicate that “ordinary effort” has occurred.

5.7 GROUND BALLS TO THE INFIELD

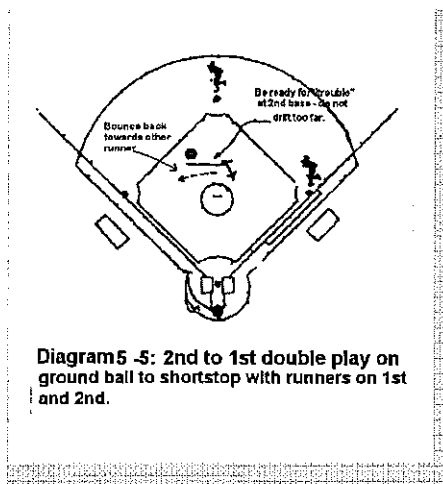
With runners on 1st and 2nd, on a ground ball to the infield (other than those rolling down the foul lines), the plate umpire will swing out from behind home plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base. He will, however, stay home. He is responsible for watching the runner from 2nd touch 3rd as well as taking all plays at the plate.

If the ground ball is rolling down either foul line, the plate umpire will straddle the line to make the call and then bounce back home quickly in order to be prepared for any potential play at the plate. In this situation, the plate umpire would also still have responsibility for the three items discussed in Section 1.9 (see page 9).

With runners on 1st and 2nd, on any ground ball to the infield, the base umpire will step up and turn with the ball, facing the infielder as he is fielding the ball. With less than two out the double play is in order, and the base umpire must react with good anticipation as to how the play will develop. If the base umpire reads that a 2nd-to-1st double play attempt will occur, he would use the double-play mechanic described below:

2nd-to-1st Double-Play Mechanic (Runners on 1st and 2nd)

The base umpire will step up, turn with the ball, and begin drifting towards the position



the base umpire would normally assume with a runner on 1st base only (see Section 2-1). The base umpire will keep his eye on the ball and be careful not to drift too far away from 2nd base so as not to take himself completely out of the play at 2nd. As the ball is released towards 2nd base he will face the play, come to a complete stop, and be in a ready position for the call. When the decision is rendered at 2nd base, he will turn and set up an angle for the play at 1st base by taking two or three steps in the direction of the 45-foot line (individual agility and speed will dictate how many steps are possible). *The base umpire should be completely stopped and set** for each play.

If the ball is hit back to the pitcher, the base umpire must take some care not to cross in front of the throw. If he has time, he may get to the other side before the throw; if not he must wait for the throw to go by.

On a ground ball to the infield with runners on 1st and 2nd, the base umpire must recognize that there are several possibilities other than the 2nd-to-1st double play that could occur. These would include a 3rd-to-1st double play; a play at 1st base followed by a subsequent play at 2nd or 3rd; a 3rd-to-2nd double play; a play at 1st base only; the ball getting past the infielder and going into the outfield; a play at 3rd base only; a ball fielded by the catcher and thrown to 3rd base (i.e., sacrifice bunt attempt); as well as several other possibilities. Therefore, it is extremely important in these situations that the base umpire does not over-commit prematurely, that he shows good reactions to the development of the play, that he lets the ball take him to the play, and that he bounces back towards the other runners(s) after the initial play.

*See note at top of page 22.

5.8 STEALS WITH RUNNERS AT FIRST AND SECOND

In steal situations with runners at 1st and 2nd, there are two possibilities: the double steal and the steal of 3rd only. In most cases the catcher's throw will go to 3rd; but there are occasions on a double steal when the catcher will throw the ball to 2nd. The base umpire must be alert to these possibilities and react accordingly, not over-committing until he is sure how the play will develop.

If the steal results in a play at 3rd base, the umpire would take the play as described in Section 3.7. If the steal results in a play at 2nd base, the base umpire would take the play basically as discussed in Section 2.7 (with also some similarities to Section 3.8). In either case, the umpire must bounce back to the other runner after the steal attempt.

5.9 PICK-OFFS AND RUNDOWNS

With runners on 1st and 2nd, if a pick-off occurs at 2nd base, it would be handled in the manner described in Section 3.8. If the 1st baseman comes in behind the runner at 1st base and a pick-off occurs there, it would be handled in a similar manner as described in Section 2.8.

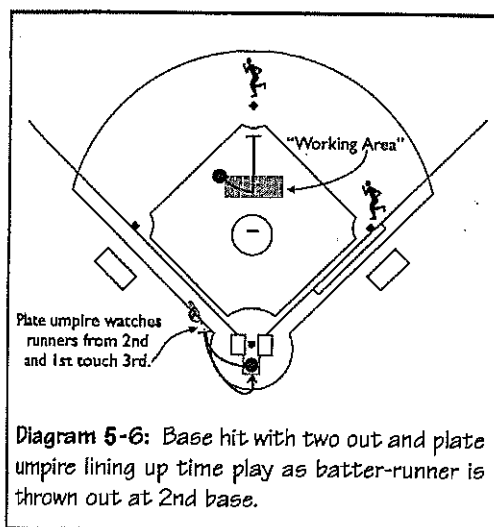
If the runner on 2nd base gets into a rundown between 2nd and 3rd, this would be handled as described in Section 1.7 (plate umpire will help out at the cutout — see Diagram 1-9 on page 7). The base umpire must also keep in mind that during the rundown between 2nd and 3rd it is possible that the runner from 1st will attempt to advance to 2nd base, thereby creating another potential play to be covered by the base umpire.

Although not likely, it is possible for the runner on 1st to get into a rundown between 1st and 2nd. This would be handled by the base umpire alone. However, the base umpire must keep in mind that should this type of rundown develop, it is probable that the runner on 2nd will take off for 3rd, resulting in a potential play there which would also be covered by the base umpire.

5.10 TIME PLAYS

With runners on 1st and 2nd and 2 out, the time play is in order. The two umpires would alert each other to this situation with a prearranged inconspicuous signal prior to each batter whenever this situation is in effect. (A commonly used signal is to indicate 2 out and then to point down to home plate. Both umpires would signal this.)

Therefore, with runners on 1st and 2nd and 2 out, on virtually any ball hit to the outfield, the plate umpire will stay at home (an exception would be if the plate umpire must go up the 1st or 3rd base line to rule on a play in the outfield—and even then he would **IMMEDIATELY** hustle home for the time play after ruling on the ball). It is a good idea for the plate umpire to communicate his location, to the base umpire on any obvious hit to the outfield by exclaiming, "Staying home, Sam! Staying home!" This not only reminds the base umpire that he has



responsibility for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, but also reminds the plate umpire of the potential for a time play to occur and the necessity for him to stay home for that reason.

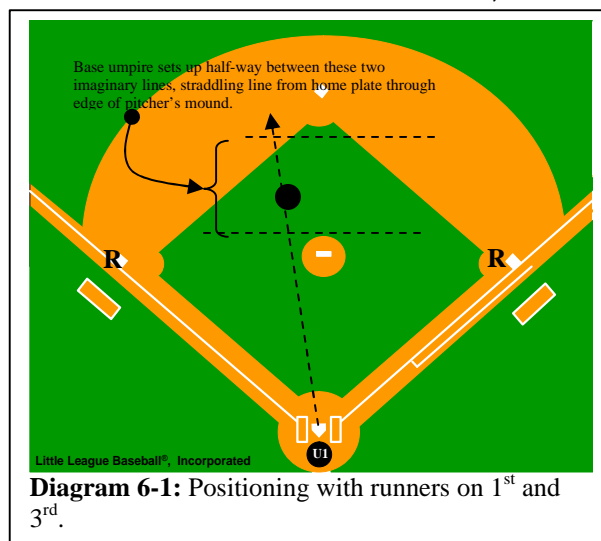
Proper signals and terminology for handling a time play are found on pages 31-32.

SECTION 6

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

6.1 POSITIONING

With runners on 1st and 3rd, the base umpire will position himself/herself in exactly the same manner as with a runner on 2nd base only (see Section 3.1).



6.2 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD—RESPONSIBILITIES

With runners on 1st and 3rd, fly ball and line drive responsibilities for balls hit to the outfield are exactly the same as with a runner on 2nd base only (see Section 2.2 and Diagram 2-2 on page 14).

It is important that the two umpires communicate after the ball is hit on fly balls and

line drives to the outfield, particularly when balls are hit to the left or right fielder. The reason is so that each umpire is certain who has responsibility for any given fly ball or line drive to the outfield.

6.3 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD—COVERAGE AND MECHANICS

With runners on 1st and 3rd, on any fly ball or line drive to the outfield, the plate umpire is responsible for the tag-up at 3rd base as well as any play at the plate on the runner advancing from 3rd base. Should the ball not be caught, the plate umpire would also be responsible for the play at 3rd base on the runner originally on 1st **unless** the plate umpire has gone up the 1st base line for fly ball coverage. The base umpire is responsible for the tag-up at 1st base if that runner tags, and is also responsible for the touch of 1st base by the batter-runner. The base umpire is also responsible for any play on the runner on 3rd going back into 3rd base as well as any play at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd should the ball not be caught (except when the plate umpire has 1st-to-3rd coverage). If the ball were not caught, the base umpire would also be responsible for all touches of 1st and 2nd and the touch of 3rd by the batter-runner.

On **difficult** plays in the outfield which belong to the base umpire, the base umpire should again move to the *edge of the infield grass in the direction the ball is hit* in order to cover the play (he/she would use the **“pause, read, and react” technique** described in Section 1.3 to decide whether or not he/she should move to the edge of the grass (see pages 2-3). The base umpire will sell the call from this position and immediately bounce back to pick up responsibilities of the base runner. As mentioned earlier, the base umpire is also responsible

for the touch of 1st base by the batter-runner as well as the tag-up at 1st if the runner there tags, and these responsibilities would be accomplished by the umpire glancing over his/her shoulder at 1st base.

If the fly ball or line drive to the outfield is **routine** and belongs to the base umpire, the base umpire should drift back *two or three steps towards the mound* (into the “working area”) in order to open up the playing field to observe the catch, watch the runner tag-up at 1st, and watch the batter-runner touch 1st. If the catch is routine, the base umpire need not call or signal anything. Again, the base umpire is responsible for the catch, the tag-up at 1st base if the runner tags, the touch of 1st base by the batter-runner, and all subsequent plays on the bases (other than 1st-to-3rd plays) if the ball is not caught; and by backing up these few steps towards the mound, it will be easier for the base umpire to cover these responsibilities.

As mentioned earlier, with runners on 1st and 3rd, the tag-up at 3rd base belongs to the plate umpire. If the fly ball belongs to the base umpire, the plate umpire will swing out several steps to his/her left (usually in the general direction of the 3rd base dugout) in order to line up the tag at 3rd base. After the tag-up, he/she will **immediately** bounce back home, setting up for any possible play at the plate on the runner from 3rd. The actual distance and direction the plate umpire swings out to his/her left will vary depending on the direction the fly ball is hit, and in most cases it will not be possible for the plate umpire to have an exact line on the tag-up; however, this swinging out to the left will help decrease the angle on lining up the tag at 3rd base.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO NOTE AGAIN THAT IN FLY BALL COVERAGE, THE FIRST PRIORITY IS **ALWAYS THE BALL**. There may be

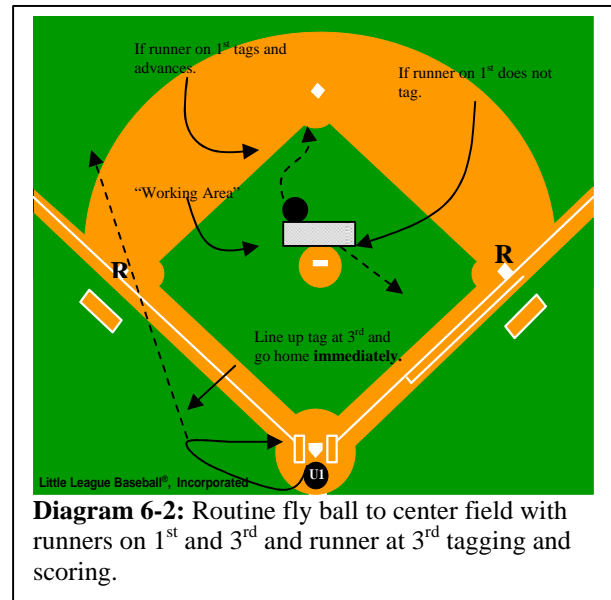


Diagram 6-2: Routine fly ball to center field with runners on 1st and 3rd and runner at 3rd tagging and scoring.

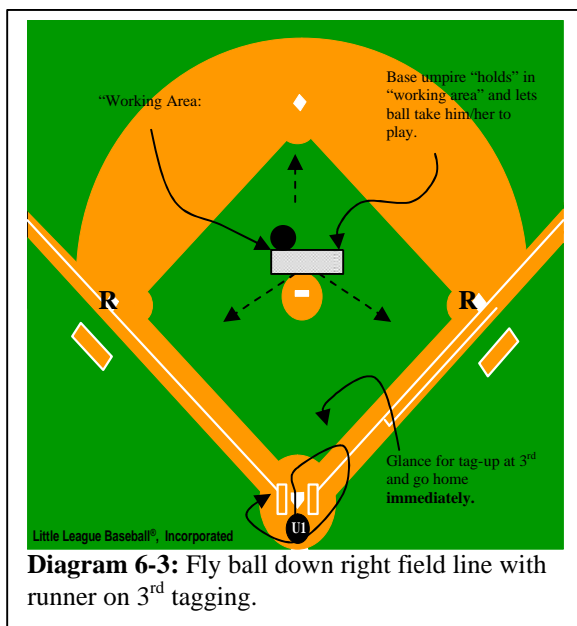


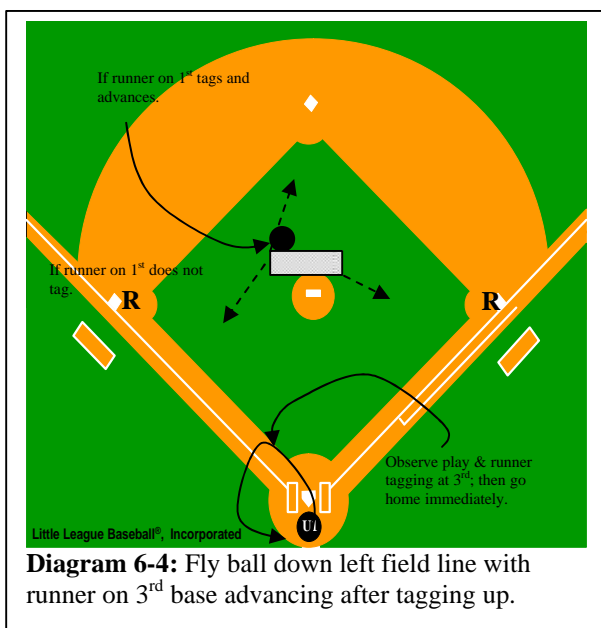
Diagram 6-3: Fly ball down right field line with runner on 3rd tagging.

an occasion when the base umpire may miss the batter runner touching 1st base because he/she had to keep his/her eye on the ball. There may also be a time when the base umpire does not have the best look at the tag-up at 1st because he/she had to move to the edge of the grass for a difficult catch in the outfield. This is simply a drawback of the two umpire system. Again reiterating, the first priority in these situations is **the ball**. If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the **plate umpire** (i.e., if the fly ball or line drive causes either the left or right fielder to move any distance towards the line), the plate umpire **MUST communicate** to his/her partner that the plate umpire has responsibility for the ball.

If the fly ball or line drive causes the right

fielder to move any distance towards the right field line, the plate umpire will communicate to his/her partner, "I'm on the line, Mike!" to indicate that he/she is taking the ball. **This terminology will indicate to the base umpire that the plate umpire will NOT have the normal 1st-to-3rd responsibility on this play if the ball is not caught.** In this situation the

plate umpire will move down the 1st base line to observe and rule on the play, BUT only so far that he/she is *CERTAIN* he/she will have ample time to get back to home plate for any possible play there on the runner coming from 3rd base. Since the runner will be tagging in many of these situations, it will generally not be possible for the plate umpire to move very far down the 1st base line to rule on the ball because of the potential play at the plate. Also, since the plate has responsibility for the tag-up at 3rd base, he must take a quick glance over his/her left shoulder at 3rd base after the ball is touched to judge the tag-up. This is a difficult mechanic for the plate umpire, but as mentioned earlier, the first priority in these situations is **the ball**, and for that reason the plate umpire must be in a good position for any possible fair/foul or catch/no catch decision



down the right field line. Reiterating once again, the plate umpire's positioning down the 1st base line on these plays will vary, based on the location of the ball, the location of the fielders, the number of outs, and whether or not the runner on 3rd base is tagging. The key to remember is that the plate umpire will go only so far that he/she knows he/she will have ample time to get back home and set up for the play. The plate umpire will come to a stop to see the play, make the call, and watch the tag-up; and after he/she has ruled on the play (and watched the tag-up), he/she will normally hustle back home **IMMEDIATELY** and be ready for any play there. However, he/she still has responsibility for the ball going out of play, and so there may be occasions when he/she may linger on the line, watching the ball; but normally he/she will immediately bounce back home. Again, in this situation the plate umpire must never go so far down the line that he/she does not have ample time to return to the plate and set up in the proper position for any play at the plate. Consequently, in these situations, the plate umpire will normally not go very far down the 1st base line.

If the fly ball or line drive causes the left fielder to move any distance to his/her right, the plate umpire will take the ball and communicate loudly to his/her partner, "I've got the ball, Mike!" or "That's my ball, Mike!" In this case the plate umpire will move up the 3rd base line to rule on the play, again remembering that he/she will go up the line *only so far that he/she is*

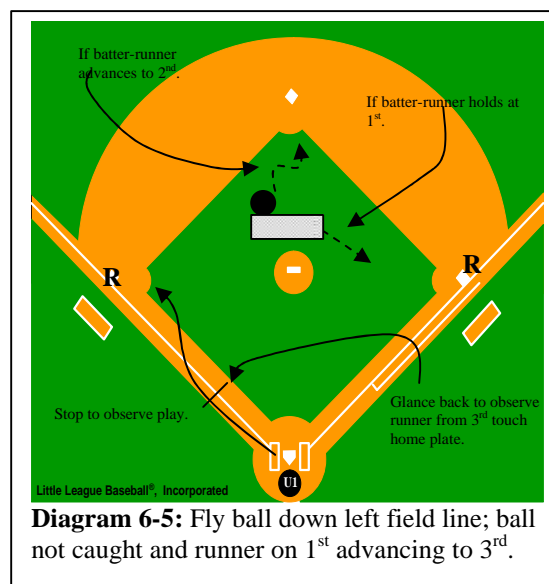


Diagram 6-5: Fly ball down left field line; ball not caught and runner on 1st advancing to 3rd.

certain he/she will have ample time to get back to home plate for any possible play there. Therefore, as with balls hit down the right field line, the plate umpire's position will vary, depending on the location of the ball, the speed of the runner, whether or not the runner is tagging, the number of outs, etc. Since the plate umpire also has responsibility for the tag-up at 3rd base, he/she must glance at the runner as the ball is touched. Again, this is a difficult mechanic, and the umpire must remember that the first priority is **the ball**. The plate umpire will come to a stop to see the play, make the call, and watch the tag-up; and normally he/she will then **immediately** hustle quickly back home, communicating to his/her partner, and "Going home, Mike! Going home!" The plate umpire will still have responsibility for the ball going out of play in this situation, and so he/she will need to keep his/her eye on the ball. Again reiterating, the plate umpire must never go so far down the line that he/she does not have ample time to return to the plate and set up in the proper position for any play on the runner coming from 3rd base. Furthermore, **should the ball not be caught**, the plate umpire has 1st-to-3rd responsibility for the runner originally on 1st base. Therefore, should the ball not be caught, the plate umpire would continue on up the 3rd base line, **glancing over his/her right shoulder at the runner from 3rd touching home plate**, and prepare to move into the cutout for a potential play at 3rd (see Section 2.4, pages 17-18). He/she would communicate to his/her partner, "I've got 3rd, Mike! I've got 3rd!" as he moves into the cutout. This would release the base umpire to slide over and pick up the batter-runner.

6.4 BASE HITS TO THE OUTFIELD

With runners on 1st and 3rd, on an obvious hit to the outfield (i.e., no possible fair/foul or catch/no catch), the plate umpire has responsibility for the play going into 3rd base on the runner originally on 1st base. The plate umpire is also responsible for all plays at the plate as well as all touches of 3rd (except for the batter-runner) and all touches of home plate. The base umpire is responsible for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd (except when the plate umpire has 1st-to-3rd coverage). The base umpire also has responsibility for all touches of 1st and 2nd and the touch at 3rd by the batter-runner.

With runners at 1st and 3rd, as the ball is hit to the outfield, the base umpire will step, turn with the ball, and back up only *two or three steps* towards the mound (into the "working area") to open up the playing field. He/she will observe the runner from 1st touch 2nd base and the batter-runner touch 1st base. He/she will watch the development of the play (see page 44).

The plate umpire will come out from behind the plate in the direction of 3rd base, keeping approximately three to six feet into foul territory as he/she moves down the 3rd base line. He/she will watch the runner from 3rd touch home plate by glancing back over his/her right shoulder as he/she moves down the line. It is suggested

that as the plate umpire leaves the cutout area at home plate, if he/she observes that a possibility exists of a play at 3rd on the runner originally on 1st, he/she should make an initial

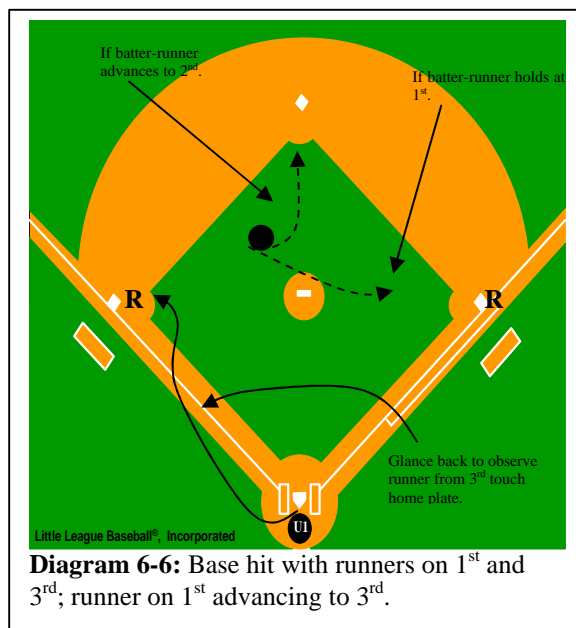


Diagram 6-6: Base hit with runners on 1st and 3rd; runner on 1st advancing to 3rd.

communication to his/her partner, "I've got 3rd if he/she comes," alerting his/her partner to the possibility of a 1st-to-3rd play. As a play at 3rd begins to appear likely or imminent, the plate umpire will move into the cutout at 3rd and communicate loudly to his/her partner, "I've got 3rd, Mike! I've got 3rd!" This would release the base umpire to pick up the batter-runner. (See Section 2.4 for further details on 1st-to-3rd coverage-in particular; see **"Important Concepts of 1st-to-3rd Mechanics"** on pages 17-18).

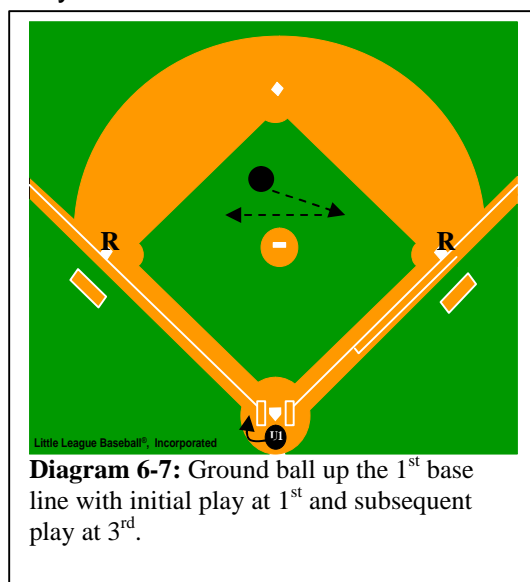
6.5 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE INFIELT

With runners on 1st and 3rd, fly ball and line drive responsibilities for balls hit to the infield are exactly the same as with a runner on 3rd base only (see Section 5.5) *except* that with two out, the plate umpire will assume the normal 1st-to-3rd coverage. Therefore, he/she will need to be moving towards 3rd base (glancing back at the runner from 3rd touching home plate) in case the ball should be dropped.

6.6 GROUND BALLS TO THE INFIELT

With runners on 1st and 3rd, on a ground ball to the infield the base umpire will be responsible for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, except that the plate umpire will generally be responsible for a subsequent play at 3rd base on the runner advancing from 1st. The plate umpire will, of course, be responsible for all plays at the plate.

With runners on 1st and 3rd, on a ground ball to the infield (other than those rolling down the foul lines), the plate umpire will swing out from behind the plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base. He/she must be aware of the potential play at the plate



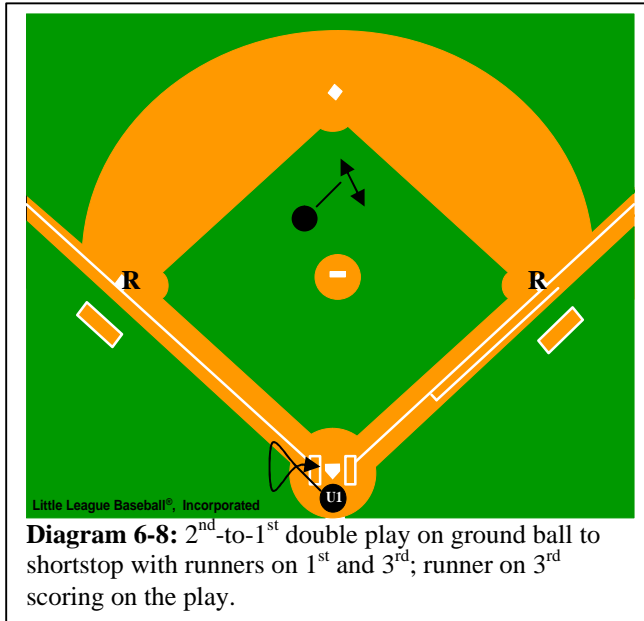
on the runner coming from 3rd base. However, if the runner from 3rd is *scoring without* a play, the plate umpire will have responsibility for the play at 3rd base on the runner originally on 1st. If the runner from 3rd is clearly *scoring with no play being made on him/her*, the plate umpire will continue moving up the 3rd base line, preparing for any potential play at 3rd on the runner from 1st (he/she would glance over his/her right shoulder to watch the runner from 3rd touch home plate). If the ground ball results in the runner from 1st being put out at 2nd base, then the plate umpire would retreat towards home plate and remain there.

If the ground ball is *up the 1st base line*, the plate umpire will take the fair/foul decision from *behind the plate*, straddling the 1st base line

extended. In this situation he/she will NOT take the 1st-to-3rd coverage. If the ground ball is up the 3rd base line, the plate umpire will normally take the fair/foul decision from only a *step or two* up the 3rd base line, being prepared to bounce back into position for any play at the plate. There may be occasions, however, when the ball is rolling down the 3rd base line in such a way that the plate umpire will not be able to move down the 3rd base line at all; and in those cases the plate umpire must take the fair/foul decision from behind the plate, straddling

the 3rd base line extended (for example, if the runner from 3rd is attempting to score on the ground ball).

With runners on 1st and 3rd, on any ground ball to the infield the base umpire will step up and turn with the ball, facing the fielder as he/she is fielding the ball. The base umpire



must recognize that there are several possibilities which may occur on the ground ball. If a 2nd-to-1st double play occurs, the base umpire would cover this as described in Section 5.7 (see page 45). There are, of course, many other ways the play could develop such as, but not limited to: a play directly to 3rd base; a play at 3rd base followed by a rundown; a play only at 2nd base; a play only at 1st base; a play at 1st base followed by a play at 3rd base on the runner from 1st (plate umpire would normally have the play at 3rd); the ball getting by the infielder and going into the outfield; as well as several other possibilities. It is therefore extremely important in these situations that the base umpire does not over-commit prematurely,

that he/she shows good reactions to the development of the play, that he/she lets the ball take him/her to the play, and that he/she bounces back towards the other runner(s) after the initial play.

6.7 STEALS WITH RUNNERS AT FIRST AND THIRD

In steal situations with runners at 1st and 3rd, the base umpire must react carefully to the development of the play. For example, if the runner on 1st is stealing, it is possible for the catcher to throw the ball to the shortstop (or 2nd baseman), who comes in to cut off the throw, attempting to catch the runner at 3rd off guard. It is also possible that the catcher may fake a throw towards 2nd base, followed by a snap throw directly to 3rd. These plays require excellent reactions on the part of the base umpire. If the play is actually made at 2nd base, then the base umpire must immediately bounce back towards the runner on 3rd. Also, should the ball get loose at 2nd base and roll into outfield, the base umpire should be prepared to react to the development of this play as well.

6.8 PICK-OFFS AND RUNDOWNS

With runners on 1st and 3rd, it is possible for a pick-off to occur at either 1st or 3rd base. If the pick-off occurs at 1st base, it would be handled as discussed in Section 2.8. If the pick-off occurs at 3rd base, it would be handled basically as described in Section 4.7.

With runners on 1st and 3rd, it is possible for a rundown to develop between 1st and 2nd or between 3rd and home. If the rundown occurs between 3rd and home, the base umpire will cover the initial throw and subsequent throws at the 3rd base end of the rundown **only until**

the plate umpire is able to get into **position** to assume responsibility for the **entire rundown**. As soon as the plate umpire is able to get into position, he/she will assume responsibility for the entire rundown, and he/she would communicate to his/her partner, "I've got it all, Mike! I've got it all!" At that point the base umpire would drift back in the direction of the runner originally on 1st base, assuming responsibility of that runner. Only in the unlikely event that the runner from 1st advances all the way to 3rd base during the rundown would the base umpire then help out with the original rundown between 3rd and home, then communicating with his/her partner, "I've got this half, Mike! I've got this half!" If a rundown develops between 1st and 2nd, the base umpire would handle this responsibility alone. The plate umpire would remain at home, being alert for any play to develop on the runner from 3rd base attempting to score. The base umpire must be alert to the possibility that the rundown between 1st and 2nd may end abruptly with a following play on the runner on 3rd base (in the vicinity of 3rd). This play is also the base umpire's responsibility, and he/she must therefore show excellent reactions, anticipation, and agility in his/her positioning and mechanics should this situation arise.

SECTION 7 RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD

7.1 POSITIONING

With runners on 2nd and 3rd, the base umpire will position himself in exactly the same as with a runner on 2nd base only (see Section 3. 1).

7.2 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-RESPONSIBILITIES

With runners on 2nd and 3rd, fly ball and line drive responsibilities for balls hit to the outfield are exactly the same as with a runner on 1st base only (see Section 2.2 and Diagram 2-2 on page 14).

It is important that the two umpires communicate after the ball is hit on fly balls and line drives to the outfield, particularly when balls are hit to the left or right fielder. The reason here is so that each umpire is certain who has responsibility for any given fly ball or line drive to the outfield.

7.3 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-COVERAGE AND MECHANICS

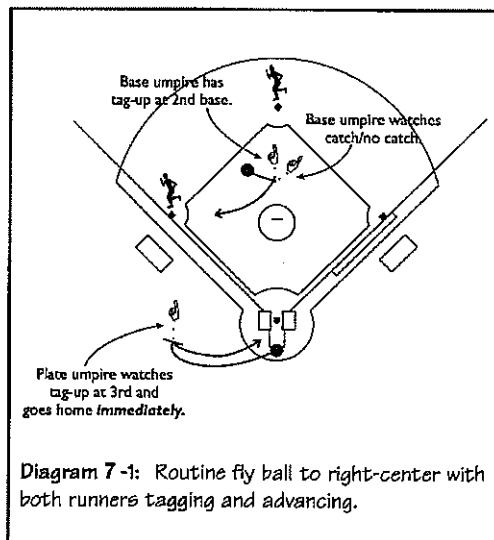
With runners on 2nd and 3rd, on any fly ball or line drive to the outfield the plate umpire is responsible for the tag-up at 3rd base as well as any play at the plate on the runner advancing from 3rd base. The base umpire is responsible for the tag-up at 2nd base, for the play at 3rd base if the runner at 2nd advances, and for the touch of 1st base by the batter runner. The base umpire is also responsible for plays on either runner going back into 2nd or 3rd if the ball is caught; as well as all plays at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd should the ball not be caught.

Difficult plays in the outfield which belong to the base umpire are handled in the same manner as with a runner on 2nd base only (see Section 3.3 and Diagram 3-2 on page 26).

Routine fly balls in the outfield which belong to the base umpire are handled in the same manner as with a runner on 2nd base only (see Section 3.3 and Diagram 3-3 on page 26).

If the fly ball belongs to the **base umpire**, the plate umpire will swing out several steps to his left (in

the general direction of the 3rd base dugout) in order to line up the tag at 3rd base. After the tag-up he will *immediately* bounce back home, setting up for a possible play at the plate on the runner from 3rd. The actual distance and direction the plate umpire swings out to his left will vary depending on the direction the fly ball is hit, and in most cases it will not be possible for the plate

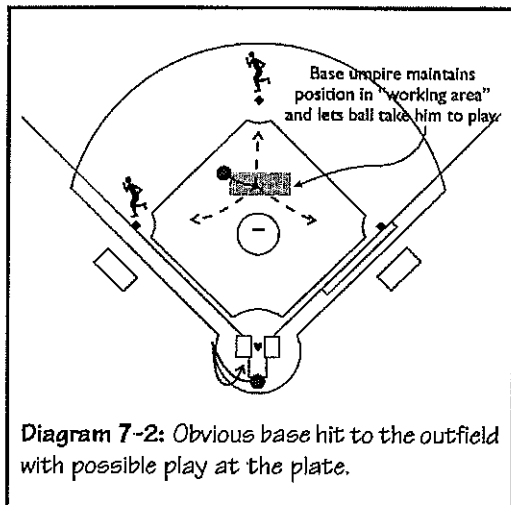


umpire to have an exact line on the tag-up; however, this swinging out to the left will help decrease the angle for lining up the tag at 3rd base.

If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the plate umpire (i.e., if the fly ball or line drive causes either the left or right fielder to move any distance towards either foul line), the plate umpire must communicate to his partner that the plate umpire has responsibility for the ball. The actual mechanics for fly balls hit to left or right field which are the responsibility of the plate umpire are given in the last three paragraphs of Section 4.3 (see pages 34-35).

7.4 BASE HITS TO THE OUTFIELD

With runners on 2nd and 3rd, on an obvious base hit to the outfield (i.e., no possible fair/foul or catch/no catch on the play), the plate umpire will stay home, and the base umpire will



have responsibility for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. The plate umpire is responsible for all touches of home plate and for all touches of 3rd except for the batter-runner. The base umpire is responsible for all touches of 1st and 2nd and for the touch of 3rd by the batter-runner.

As the ball is hit to the outfield, the base umpire will step up, turn with the ball, and back up only *two or three steps* towards the mound (into the "working area") to open up the playing field. He will have responsibility for all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd as well as the touch of 1st by the batter-runner. The plate umpire will swing out from behind home plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to watch the runner from 2nd touch 3rd, watch the

runner from 3rd touch home plate, and to observe the play. The base umpire must be ready to move into position for any play on the bases, and he will let the ball take him to the play-keeping in mind the concepts of proper distance and angle to the play as well as being set to see the play and make the call. As the ball is hit to the outfield, it is a good idea for the plate umpire to communicate to his partner, "Staying home, Sam!" as a reminder that the base umpire has all plays on the bases and that the plate umpire will remain at home. (See Diagram 7-2. Also see *"Staying Within the Working Area"* in Section 5.4 on page 44 regarding the base umpire maintaining his position in the "working area" as opposed to moving towards one of the bases as play progresses in this situation. Also see footnote at bottom of page 36 for situations when only one runner remains on base after the base hit.)

7.5 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE INFIEL

With runners on 2nd and 3rd, fly balls and line drives to the infield will be handled in exactly the same manner as with a runner on 3rd base only as discussed in Section 4.5, pages 36-37.

7.6 GROUND BALLS TO THE INFIELD

With runners on 2nd and 3rd, ground balls to the infield will be handled in exactly the same manner as with a runner on 3rd base only as discussed in Section 4.6, pages 37-38.

7.7 PICK-OFFS AND RUNDOWNS

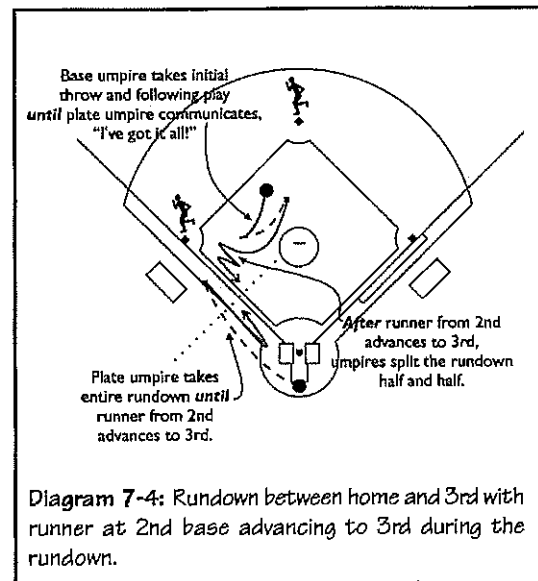
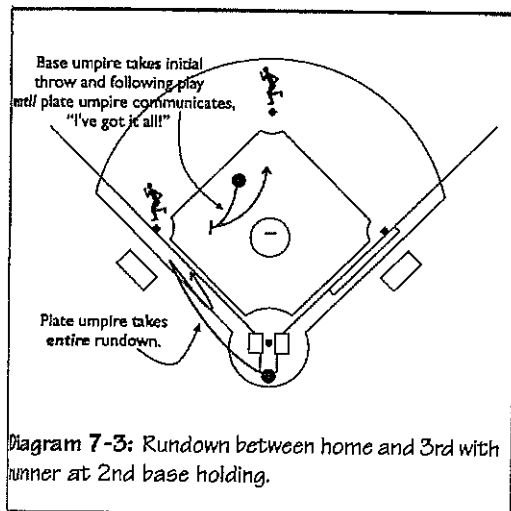
With runners on 2nd and 3rd, it is possible for a pick-off to occur at either 2nd or 3rd base.

If the pick-off occurs at 2nd base, it will be handled as discussed in Section 3.8. If the pick-off occurs at 3rd base, it will be handled as described in Section 4.7.

With runners on 2nd and 3rd, it is possible for a rundown to develop between 3rd and home or between 2nd and 3rd. If the rundown occurs between 3rd and home, the base umpire will cover the initial throw and subsequent throws at the 3rd base end of the rundown **only until** the plate umpire is able to get into position to assume responsibility for the entire rundown. As soon as the plate umpire is able to get into position, he will assume responsibility for the **entire rundown**, and he would communicate to his partner, "I've got it all, Sam! I've got it all!" At that

point the base umpire would drift back in the direction of the runner on 2nd base, assuming responsibility for that runner. Only if the runner from 2nd advances all the way to 3rd base would the base umpire then help out with the original rundown between 3rd and home, then communicating with his partner, "I've got this half, Sam! I've got this half!" (See Section 1.7. Also see Diagram 4-10 on page 39.

If a rundown develops between 2nd and 3rd, the base umpire would handle this responsibility alone. The plate umpire would remain at home, being alert for any play to develop on the runner attempting to score from 3rd base. In this situation, the base umpire must be prepared to bounce back to the other runner after an initial play on one of the runners. The base umpire must also be alert for the rundown between 2nd and 3rd to end abruptly with a snap throw to catch the runner on 3rd base. He must therefore stay alert and be able to react quickly to this possibility.



7.8 TIME PLAYS

With runners on 2nd and 3rd and 2 out, the time play is in order. The two umpires would alert each other to this situation with a prearranged inconspicuous signal before every batter when runners are on 2nd and 3rd with 2 out. (A commonly used signal is to indicate 2 out and then to point down to home plate. Both umpires would signal this.)

Proper signals and terminologies that are to be used for time plays are found in Section 3.9, page 31.

SECTION 8 BASES LOADED

8.1 POSITIONING

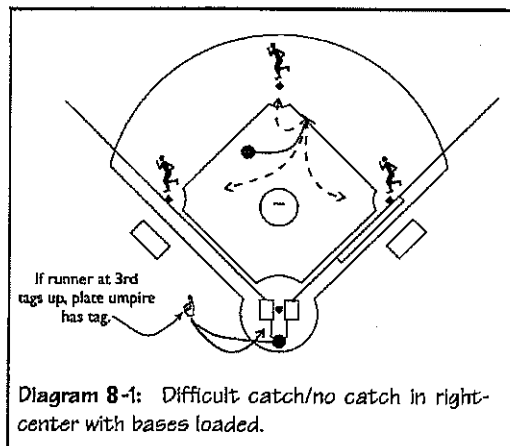
With bases loaded, the base umpire will position himself in exactly the same manner as with a runner on 2nd base only (see Section 3.1).

8.2 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-RESPONSIBILITIES

With bases loaded, fly ball and line drive responsibilities for balls hit to the outfield are exactly the same as with a runner on 1st base only (see Section 3.2 and Diagram 2-2 on page 14). It is important that the two umpires **communicate** after the ball is hit on fly balls and line drives to the outfield, particularly when balls are hit to the left or right fielder. The reason here is so that each umpire is certain who has responsibility for any given fly ball or line drive to the outfield.

8.3 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE OUTFIELD-COVERAGE AND MECHANICS

With bases loaded, on any fly ball or line drive to the outfield the plate umpire is



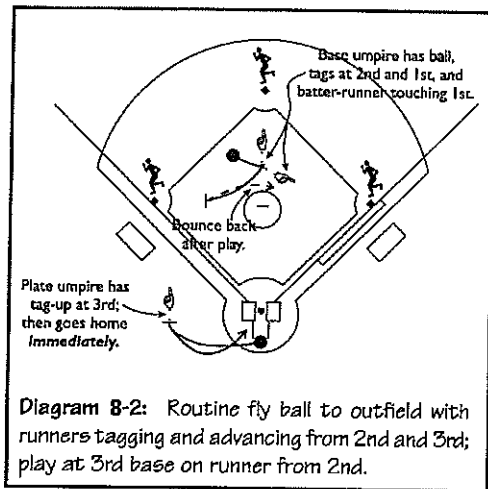
responsible for the tag-up at 3rd base as well as any play at the plate on the runner advancing from 3rd base. The base umpire is responsible for tag-ups at 1st and 2nd as well as all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. The base umpire is also responsible for plays on any runner going back into 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base after the catch; as well as all plays at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd should the ball not be caught. The base umpire also has responsibility of the touch at 1st base by the batter-runner.

Difficult plays in the outfield which belong to the base umpire will be handled in the same manner as with runners on 1st and 2nd [see Section 5.3 (pages

40-42) and Diagram 8-1].

Routine fly balls in the outfield which belong to the base umpire will be handled in the same manner as with runners on 1st and 2nd (see Section 5.3, page 42).

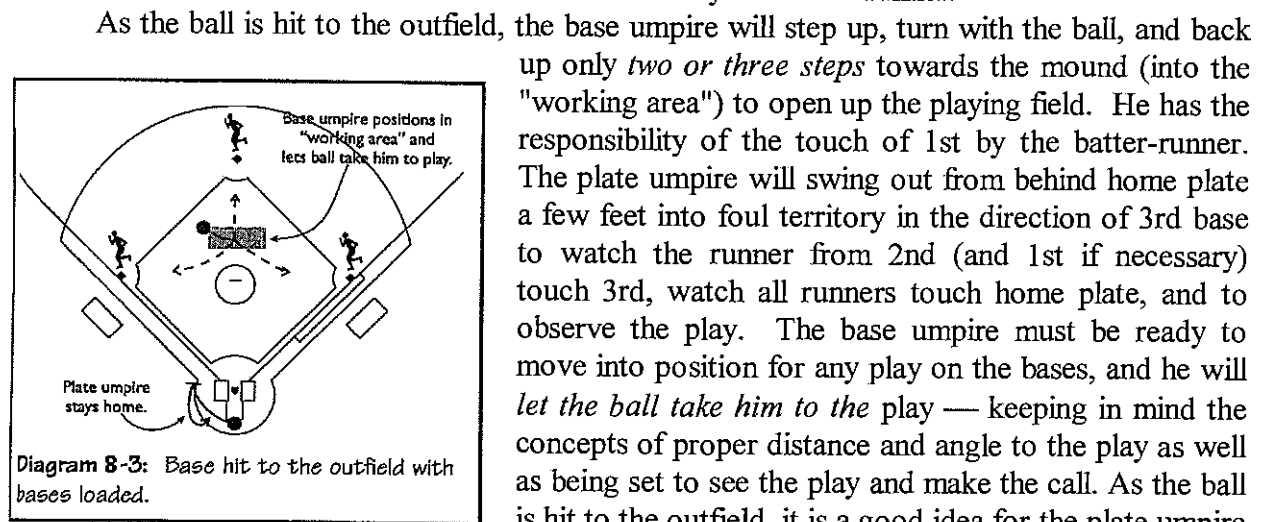
If the fly ball belongs to the **base umpire**, the plate umpire will swing out several steps to his left (in the general direction of the 3rd base dugout) in order to line up the tag at 3rd base. After the tag-up he will immediately bounce back home, setting up for any play at the plate on the runner from 3rd. The actual distance and direction the plate umpire swings out to his left will vary, depending on the direction the fly ball is hit, and in most cases it will not be possible for the plate umpire to have an exact line on the tag-up; however, this swinging out to the left will help decrease the angle for lining up the tag at 3rd base.



If the fly ball or line drive belongs to the **plate umpire** (i.e., if the fly ball or line drive causes either the left or right fielder to move any distance towards either foul line), the plate umpire must communicate to his partner that the plate umpire has responsibility for the ball. The actual mechanics and terminology's for fly balls hit to left or right field which are the responsibility of the plate umpire are given in the last three paragraphs of Section 4.3, pages 34-35.

8.4 BASE HITS TO THE OUTFIELD

With bases loaded, on an obvious base hit to the outfield (i.e., no possible fair/foul or catch/no catch on the play), the plate umpire will *stay home*, and the base umpire will have responsibility for *all* plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. The plate umpire is responsible for all touches of home plate and for all touches of 3rd except for the batter-runner. The base umpire is responsible for all touches of 1st and 2nd and for the touch of 3rd by the batter-runner.



As the ball is hit to the outfield, the base umpire will step up, turn with the ball, and back up only *two or three steps* towards the mound (into the "working area") to open up the playing field. He has the responsibility of the touch of 1st by the batter-runner. The plate umpire will swing out from behind home plate a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to watch the runner from 2nd (and 1st if necessary) touch 3rd, watch all runners touch home plate, and to observe the play. The base umpire must be ready to move into position for any play on the bases, and he will *let the ball take him to the play* — keeping in mind the concepts of proper distance and angle to the play as well as being set to see the play and make the call. As the ball is hit to the outfield, it is a good idea for the plate umpire to communicate to his partner, "Staying home, Sam!" as

a reminder that the base umpire has all plays on the bases and that the plate umpire will remain at home. (See "Staying Within the Working Area" on page 44 regarding the base umpire maintaining his position within the "working area" as opposed to moving in towards one of the bases as play progresses in this situation.)

8.5 FLY BALLS AND LINE DRIVES TO THE INFIEL

With bases loaded, fly balls and line drives to the infield will be handled in exactly the same manner as with a runner on 3rd base only as discussed in Section 4.5, pages 36-37.

8.6 INFIELD FLY SITUATIONS

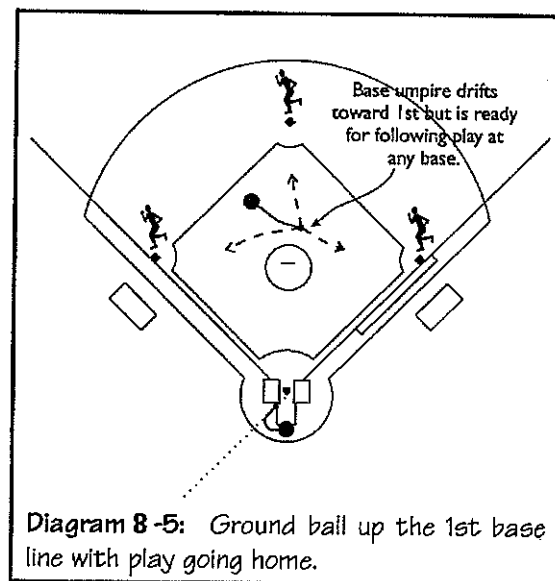
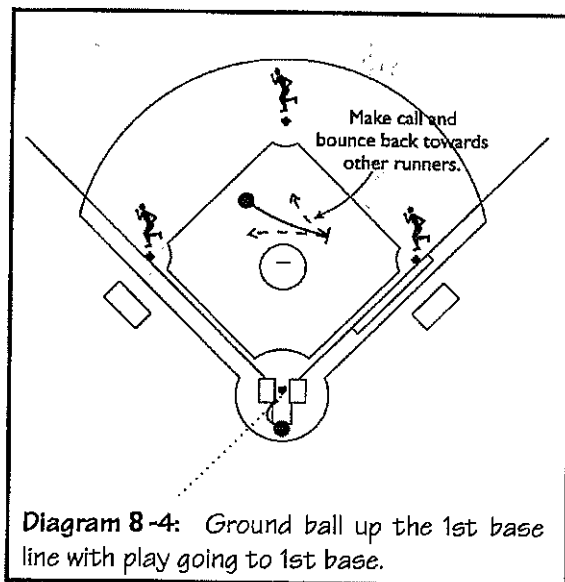
With bases loaded and less than two out, the infield fly rule is in effect. The umpires will alert each other to this situation with a prearranged signal before each batter whenever the infield fly is in effect. (The usual signal is to give the number of outs followed by an open hand with thumb up across the middle of the chest. Both umpires would signal this to each other.)

The mechanics and terminology's for an infield fly are given in Section 5.6, page 44.

8.7 GROUND BALLS TO THE INFIELDF

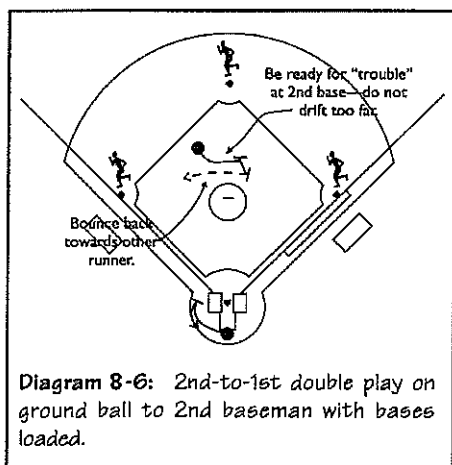
With bases loaded, on a ground ball to the infield the plate umpire will stay home, and the base umpire will cover all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. On a ground ball to the infield (other than those rolling down the foul lines), the plate umpire will swing out from behind home plate only a few feet into foul territory in the direction of 3rd base to observe the play. He must be prepared to move quickly into position for a play at home plate on the runner from 3rd base (potential force or tag play).

If the ground ball is up the 1st base line, the plate umpire will take the fair/foul from *behind the plate*, straddling the 1st base line extended (see Diagrams 8-4 and 8-5). If the ground ball is up the 3rd base line, the plate umpire will take the fair/foul from *behind the plate*,



straddling the 3rd base line extended. In either case, the plate umpire must be prepared for a play at the plate. Also, with bases loaded and a ground ball up the 1st or 3rd base line, if the ball is thrown to 1st base for a play on the batter-runner, the plate umpire will have responsibility for the three items referred to in Section 1.9 (overthrows at 1st, interference out of the three foot line, help on swipe tags).

With bases loaded, on any ground ball to the infield, the base umpire will step up and turn with the ball, facing the fielder as he is fielding the ball. With less than two out the double play is in order, and if the base umpire anticipates that a 2nd-to-1st double play will develop, he will



cover the play according to the double-play mechanics referred to in section 5.7 (page 45) i.e, the same as with runners on 1st and 2nd (see Diagram 8-6).

On a ground ball to the infield with bases loaded, the base umpire must recognize that there are several possibilities other than the 2nd-to-1st double play that could occur. These would include a 3rd-to-1st double play; a home to-1st double play; a 3rd-to-1st double play; a play at 1st base followed by a subsequent play at 2nd; a play at 1st base only; the ball getting past the infielder and going into the outfield; a play at 3rd followed by a play at the plate; as well as several other possibilities. Therefore, it is extremely important in these situations that the base umpire does not over-commit

prematurely, that he shows good reactions to the development of the play, that he lets the ball take him to the play, and that he bounces back towards the other runners after any initial play on the bases.

**Reverse
Force
Note →**

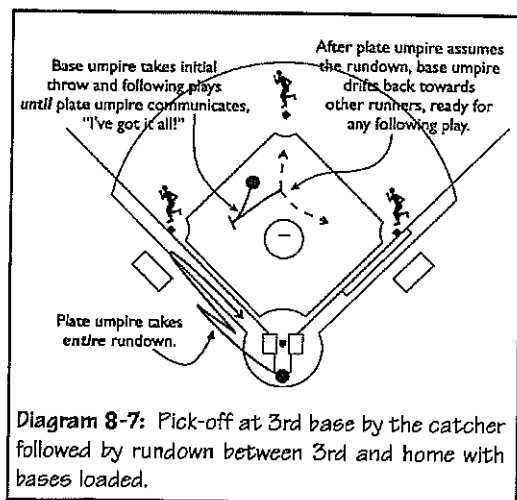
It is strongly suggested that the base umpire develop the habit of calling the front end of any reverse-force double play loudly and clearly (even if it is a "routine" call) so that everyone is alerted of the initial force play (which in turn removes the force on preceding runners, making a tag necessary on those runners).

8.8 PICK-OFFS AND RUNDOWNS

With bases loaded, it is possible for a pick-off to occur at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, although it is unlikely for a pick-off at 2nd base. If a pick-off occurs at 3rd base, it will be handled as discussed in Section 4.7, pages 38-39 (see Diagram 4-9). If a pick-off occurs at 1st base, it will be handled basically as described in Section 2.8, page 23. Should the unlikely possibility of a pick-off at 2nd occur in this situation, it would be handled as described in Section 3.8,.

With bases loaded, it is possible for a rundown to develop between 3rd and home, between 1st and 2nd, or --- again unlikely --- 2nd and 3rd. If the rundown develops between 3rd and home the base umpire will cover the initial throw and subsequent throws at the 3rd base end of the rundown only until the plate umpire is able to get into position to assume responsibility for the entire rundown. As soon as the plate umpire is able to get into position, he will assume responsibility for the entire rundown and communicate to his partner, "I've got it all, Sam! I've got it all!" At that point the base umpire would drift back in the direction of the other runners, assuming responsibility for those runners. (See Diagram 8-7.)

With bases loaded, if a rundown should develop between 1st and 2nd or between 2nd and 3rd, the base umpire will handle these rundowns alone. The plate umpire will remain at home, being alert for any play to develop on the runner attempting to score from 3rd base. This mechanic requires the base umpire to bounce back towards the other runners after an initial play



on one of the runners. The base umpire must also be alert for situations such as an initial pick-off at 1st base which ends abruptly and is followed by an attempt on the runner originally on 3rd base. The base umpire must show excellent reactions and movements in this situation, as he must cover both ends of such a play

8.9 TIME PLAYS

With bases loaded and two out, the time play is in order. The two umpires will alert each other to this situation with a prearranged inconspicuous signal before each batter with bases loaded and two out. (A signal is to two out and then to point to plate. Both umpires would signal this.)

The mechanics and terminology's that are to be used for time plays are given in Section 3.9, page 31.

SIGNALING



PLATE UMPIRE



Signalling “OUT”

- Mask always in left hand
- Right arm creates right angle

Signalling “SAFE”

- Mask always in left hand
- Arms outstretched and parallel to ground
- Fingers together

Giving Count

- Always use fingers to indicate count. Do Not use closed fists to indicate full count.





“Strike One”

STRIKE / BALL

- Always call “strikes” by the number.
- “Strikes” are called while coming out of your plate set position or standing upright.
- “Balls” are also called by the number.
- There is no visual signal for “balls.”
- “Balls” are called vocally while remaining down in the plate set position.
- Use an appropriate voice with your visual signal. “Strike 3” should be more emphatic than “Strike 2.”
- Regardless of your strike mechanic, keep your eyes on the ball as you call the pitch.



“Ball Two”

TAKING OFF MASK

- Always use LEFT HAND to remove mask.
- Grasp mask in lower left padded area.
- Pull bottom of mask STRAIGHT OUT and Push STRAIGHT UP clearing the brim of the hat.



Step#1



Step #2



Step #3



“Wrong Way”

- Poor technique can obstruct your vision and cause you to lose sight of the ball momentarily.

FAIR / FOUL



...Indicates Fair Ball
Down First Base Line...
(NO VOICE)
Pump "Fair" As Necessary



...Indicates Fair Ball
Down Third Base Line...
(NO VOICE)
Pump "Fair" As Necessary



"FOUL!"

If practical, you shall remove your mask
for fair/foul decisions.

Sometimes you will not have time to remove your mask
(eg. screaming line drive down the line
or bunt near the line that catcher pounces on).

**The closer the ball is to
being fair or foul, the
more emphatic the call.
SELL THE CALL!**

GETTING HELP ON HALF-SWING



“Did he go?”

“Yes, he did!”
(Same as Out signal)



“No, he didn’t!”
(Same as Safe signal)

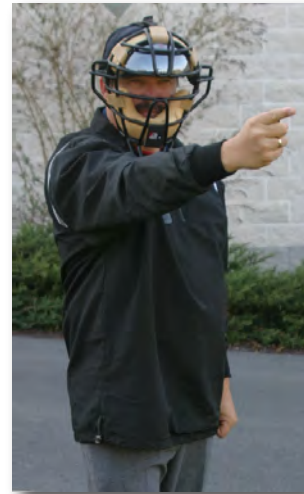
To avoid a serious communication problem, always ask for help with your left hand. Many problems can arise by using the right hand (the *strike* hand). Your partner may misunderstand your strike mechanic as a request for help and indicate that the batter “did not go” thus leading to a humiliating double call.

SIGNALING “PLAY”



Step #1

“PLAY!”



Step #2

After time has been suspended or to start the game, it is advisable for the umpire to signal “Play!”. The plate umpire should not call “Play!” until the pitcher has the ball in his possession, is on the rubber, and the batter is reasonably set in the batter’s box.



“TIME!”

This signal may be used to allow a hitter to get set. It cannot be seen as clearly as both arms raised and should not be routinely substituted for the better signal. Make sure your partner, the pitcher, and everyone else is aware that Time Is Out! This signal has the same impact as both arms high in the air.

OR



It is very important that everyone on the field knows when you have called “Time.” The clearest signal for you to use is both arms raised high into the air. This signal should be repeated by your partner whenever you stop play.

THE SET POSITION



RIGHT



WRONG

The Set Position Shall:

Be assumed by the Base Umpire *before every pitch*.

Be assumed by all umpires *before calling most plays*. (Note: There will be situations that dictate a Standing Set.)

Assuming the Set Position:

Lower your seat; do not bend over from the waist.

Place hands on knees or thighs; not inside legs.

Keep your head up; do not drop the chin.

Align elbows with arms.

Relax your shoulders; dissipate the physical tension.

Keep your weight forward in your stance. This enhances agility.

THE “SAFE” MECHANIC



Making the “Safe” call
“Safe!”

It is imperative that the umpire is set to see each play. Whenever possible, it is advisable to assume the hands-on-knees set position. After the play is completed, the umpire initiates his safe call and returns to his set position.



THE “OUT” MECHANIC



Making the “Out” call
“He’s OUT!”

The hands-on-knees set position is advisable on all force plays in which the umpire has time to set up with no subsequent play possibility. The “out” signal should be accompanied by appropriate voice... louder and more emphatic on close plays and quieter, less demonstrative on routine plays.



CATCH



On questionable plays in the outfield *or* infield, the umpire should always indicate whether or not the ball was caught. This is the only way runners and coaches are made aware of the status of the ball.

“That’s a catch! He’s Out!”

NO CATCH



The *No Catch* signal is an emphatic safe call accompanied by the proper voice...”No catch! No catch!”

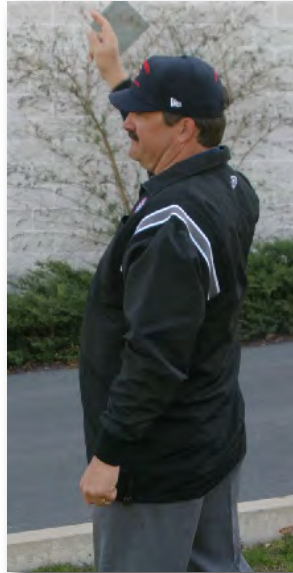


“No catch! No catch!”

TIME PLAYS



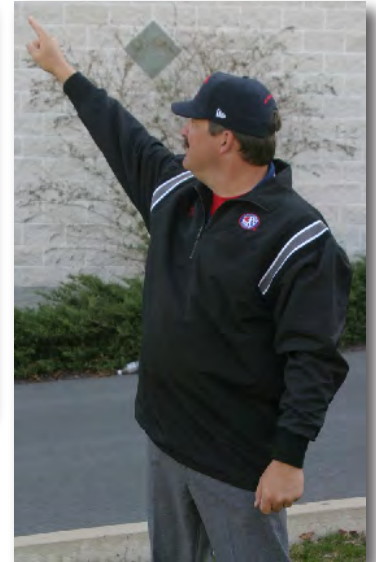
Getting the attention of the official scorer



“Score that run...”



Score that run...
(pointing to plate)



...One run scores!”
(pointing to press box)

If more than one run scored on the play, signal the number of runs scored to the press box.

OR

After getting attention of the official scorer



“No run scores!
No run scores!”
(Repeat as necessary)

“Time plays” are plays which occur when a runner crosses home plate immediately before, during, or after another runner is declared out for the third out of the inning. It is important that the umpire anticipate the possibility of this happening and line up the runner approaching the plate with the potential play on the bases. If the play on the runner is not a force play, then it becomes umpire’s judgement as to whether or not the runner crossed the plate before the third out was made. The umpire should use the proper mechanics and signals to indicate to the official scorer whether or not the run scores.

BALK



Set Position



“That’s a balk!”



“Time!”

(Do not call time until play resulting
from the pitch has ended)

The base umpire shall call the balk from his set position if the pitcher has assumed his position on the rubber. He shall point laterally and emphatically state, “That’s a balk!” If the pitcher is in the act of delivering the pitch or throwing to a base, the base umpire resumes his set position and prepares for the play. If the pitcher is not able to deliver the ball to a base or the batter, the base umpire shall call “Time!” and kill the play. Otherwise, the ball is still alive. Either umpire may call any Balk. Once the balk has been called, the other umpire should echo the call.

The plate umpire uses no visual signal. From his set position he declares, “That’s a Balk!” and remains in his set position. After the play has ended, he calls time and enforces the balk penalty.

In placing runners, always place the lead runner first.



“Time...”



...That’s two bases!”

GROUND RULE DOUBLE

On the ground rule double the umpire should first kill the ball by indicating “Time!” He then raises two fingers to indicate a two base award.

HOME RUN



“Home Run!”

This signal indicates the four base award for the home run. Unlike the ground rule double, it is not necessary to indicate that the ball is dead.

INFIELD FLY SIGNAL TO PARTNER



No Voice

This is a signal that is flashed between umpires as a reminder of the infield fly rule. If a fly ball is hit that an infielder can handle with ordinary effort, the umpires shall invoke the infield fly rule.

FOUL BALL



Signal “Time”
then point foul
as you declare,
“FOUL!”



A “foul” ball is first indicated by raising both arms and signalling “Time.” This kills all play and alerts the runners and coaches. The umpire then points toward foul territory. The arm and hand signals are accompanied by emphatic voice...”Foul!”

FAIR BALL

No voice is ever used to indicate that a ball is fair. By pointing into fair territory the umpire indicates fair ball.

Point fair
(no voice)



OBSTRUCTION / NO PLAY ON OBSTRUCTED RUNNER



...that's OBSTRUCTION!"
(Point to obstruction at time
of occurrence.)



"TIME..."

NOW...You Either:



"You, stay right there!"

OR

"You, third base (or whatever
base you deem appropriate)"



Unless a play is being made on the obstructed runner or the B-R is obstructed before reaching first base, the ball remains alive and in play.

OBSTRUCTION

(Play Being Made On Obstructed Runner)

AWARDING BASES



“TIME...”



...that’s OBSTRUCTION!”
(Point to violation)



“...You...”
(Pointing to obstructed runner)



...Third base!”
(or whatever base you deem appropriate)”

“Time” is called immediately when a play is being made on a runner who has been obstructed. When a B-R is obstructed after hitting a fly ball, the ball shall not be immediately killed. If the catch is made, it shall count and the obstruction disregarded. If the B-R is obstructed after hitting a ground ball, the ball shall be killed immediately and the obstruction penalty enforced.

RUNNER INTERFERENCE (Runner Touched by Fair Ball)



“TIME!”
(kill the play at the moment
of interference)



“That’s Interference”
(Point to violation)



“He’s Out!”
(call the runner out)

...at this time, the umpire signals all runners to return to their original bases.

BATTER-RUNNER INTERFERENCE



“Time!...”



“...That’s Interference...”



...The Batter’s Out!”

Unlike batter interference on a steal or pick-off attempt, interference by the batter-runner is cause for calling “Time” immediately and enforcing the penalty.

BATTER INTERFERENCE ON STEAL ATTEMPT



“Time!”
(Called as soon as runner
is declared safe...)

“That’s Interference...”
(If runner on whom play is being made is
declared out no further signal is necessary. The
interference is disregarded. If the runner is safe,
the following is required...)



“That’s Interference...”
(Pointing to Batter)

...the Batter’s Out!”
(After calling the
batter out, you signal
the runner back to his
original base at the
time of the pitch.)



Remember that the ball is not automatically “dead” at the time of the interference. If an out results on the catcher’s first throw, then the interference penalty is not enforced and the play stands.

SPECTATOR INTERFERENCE



"Time!"



Signal indicates
spectator interference.
(No voice)
Plate Umpire Places
the Runners.

The moment a fan touches a batted or thrown ball or interferes in any way with a player fielding a ball the umpire shall (1) call time, (2) signal spectator interference, and (3) the plate umpire will make the proper award of bases.

In the event that the plate umpire calls the interference behind the plate, the base umpire makes the appropriate award, if any.

DECLARING BATTED BALL AN INFIELD FLY



"That's an infield fly..."



...The batter's out!"

Ordinarily, either umpire may initiate the call of "Infield Fly!" However, on balls hit near the foul lines, the plate umpire is responsible for the initial call. When the signal is given by one umpire, his partner shall "echo" the call. The call should be given loudly and clearly so there is no confusion for the runners.

GAME TERMINATED



Signal to press box that game has been called.

Once the plate umpire is given the home team line-up card, he assumes complete jurisdiction in suspending, resuming, or terminating play. If it becomes necessary to call a game, the umpire should use this signal to notify the official scorer. The official scorer will subsequently notify the fans.

EJECTION



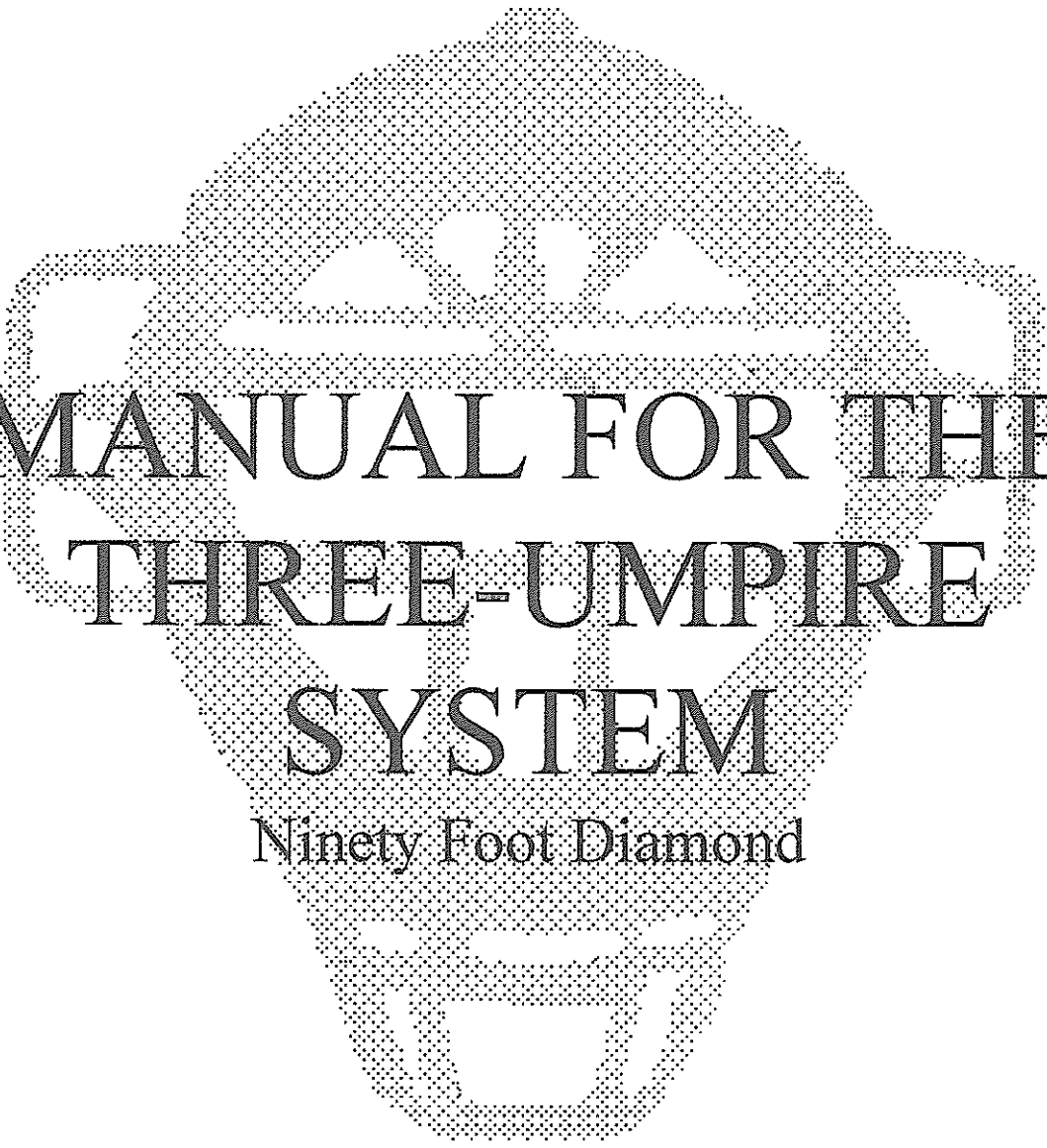
“You’re Gone!”



Make sure you do not contact anyone or come exceptionally close to anyone with your gesture. Be positive, strong, and aggressive but do not “showboat.”

Keep your words simple, nothing cute like, “Hit the road! To the showers!” or “See ya later!”

Maintain your composure and professionalism. REMEMBER, the most vicious and damaging arguments often occur after the ejection.



MANUAL FOR THE THREE-UMPIRE SYSTEM

Ninety Foot Diamond

SECTION 1

NO RUNNERS ON BASE

- 1.1 The first base umpire should be about 10-12 feet behind the first baseman with both feet in foul territory. The third base umpire should be in the same approximate position behind the third baseman.
- 1.2 If the third base umpire is required to go out to the outfield to render a decision, you will revert back to the two-umpire system. Anytime you go out, **don't try to get back into the play**; wait until all action has ceased before returning to your position.
- 1.3 If the first base umpire goes out, the third base umpire will come straight into the center of the infield and take any play at second or third base on the batter-runner. The plate umpire will come down to first base and be responsible for the batter-runner touching first base and will take any play on the batter-runner returning to first base. The plate umpire will not release the responsibility of batter-runner until the first base umpire has assumed his position after returning from the outfield. Should the batter-runner continue past first, second, and third, the play at the plate, if any, will be the responsibility of the plate umpire.
- 1.4 With no runners on base, the third base umpire will come straight across to second base on all ground balls and fly balls to the infield and take all plays at second base and third base. The first base umpire will come in and set up in a position needed to render a decision at first base.
- 1.5 With no runners on base, the third base umpire will come straight across the infield toward second base on all fly balls, line drives, and base hits to the outfield and render all decisions on the batter-runner going into second base unless, of course, he has found it necessary to go out to the outfield. The first base umpire will come into the infield on all fly balls and line drives to the left side of the outfield (from the center fielder straight in and to the center fielder's right) whether or not the third base umpire goes out. If the ball is not hit in the air to the left side of the outfield, the first base umpire will drift toward the direction of first base so as to be in proper position for any play on the batter-runner returning to first base. (See item 1.7 below.)
- 1.6 With no runners on base, if the batter hits a base hit to the outfield which goes beyond or through the outfielder, the third base umpire will start toward second base, and the first base umpire will come in and pivot watching the batter-runner touch first and will continue to take the batter-runner into second. The third base umpire, seeing the ball has gone through the outfielder, will then hold up and be ready to take the batter-runner into third base. However, if the ball stays in front of the outfielder and is bobbled or is a slow hit ball and the batter-runner tries to stretch it into a double, the third base umpire-who has started across the infield-will be responsible for the play at second base. The first base umpire who has come in and pivoted-will watch the batter-

runner touch first and release the batter-runner to the third base umpire for the play at second base. Both **verbal and hand** signals should be used to communicate with each other during this situation. Remember that if there is a **play** on the batter-runner at second base in this situation, it belongs to the third base umpire. If there is **no play** at second base (i.e., the batter hits a stand-up double), the first base umpire should take the batter-runner into second. Also, in situations where the ball gets loose *after the play at second* and the batter-runner attempts to reach third base, the plate umpire will be responsible for the play at third, and the first base umpire will cover home if necessary.

- 1.7 On all fly balls where neither umpire goes out, if the fly ball is to left field, left center, or where the center fielder is coming straight in as the third base umpire is coming straight across the infield toward second base, the responsibility of the catch or no catch decision will belong to the third base umpire. The responsibility of the play at second also belongs to the third base umpire. *(The third base umpire should not 'rim' along the edge of the outfield grass in order to cover these responsibilities.)* On fly balls hit to right center or right field where neither umpire has gone out, the responsibility of the catch or no catch and the touching of first base belongs to the first base umpire.

SECTION 2

RUNNER ON FIRST BASE ONLY

- 2.1 The first base umpire will position himself 6-8 feet beyond the first base bag with both feet in foul territory for the pick-off play at first base. You should be close enough to make the decision on a pick off without moving into the play.
- 2.2 The third base umpire will move into the center of the infield and assume a position on either side of second base that is most comfortable for him to take the steal play at second base. (Normally you will set up on the side of second base opposite the pitching arm. However, it is left up to you as to which side you are most comfortable in taking the steal play.) You will never be on the outfield side of the bag-always on the inside of the infield.
- 2.3 If the runner on first is picked off, the infield umpire will have that part of the rundown going into second base and any subsequent play into third base. The first base umpire should move toward second base as the runner continues on to third base and assume responsibility for the back end of a possible rundown between second and third base. The first base umpire should not commit toward second until after the runner has gained possession of second base since the runner over rounding second and returning is the responsibility of the third base umpire.
- 2.4 With a runner on first base only, if the first base umpire goes out for any reason, the infield umpire should slide over toward first base and assume full responsibility for the runner on first base and also have responsibility should the batter become a runner. The plate umpire should go down to third base and take the play on the runner coming from first base, and if that runner continues on to home plate, the plate umpire will also have that responsibility. *In this situation it is also permissible for the plate umpire to move up the first base line to take any play at first base on the runner returning after a fly ball or line drive is caught.*
- 2.5 With a runner on first base only, if the first base umpire does not go out to the outfield, then on a base hit, after the batter-runner touches first base, the first base umpire will start to move in the direction of home. The infield umpire, after watching the runner on first touch second and seeing that he has **committed** to third, will assume responsibility for the batter-runner going to second or returning to first base. The plate umpire will move in the direction of third base and will go into the cutout if there is any likelihood that the runner from first will advance to third on the batted ball. If it is obvious that the runner will not advance to third, it is not necessary for the plate umpire to go all the way to third. If the plate umpire does move into the cutout, he will remain at third base until all action has ceased. After the first base umpire has watched the batter-runner touch first and has seen the runner on first **committed** to third base, he will come to the plate for any play on the runner from first base coming to the plate. However, if the runner originally on first does not go to third base, the first base umpire cannot over-commit to

the plate and will have the responsibility for the batter-runner returning to first base. As the first base umpire, do not commit to home until the runner from first has committed to third.

- 2.6 With a runner on first base only, if the infield umpire goes out for any reason, you will revert back to the two-umpire system.
- 2.7 With a runner on first base only, the responsibility of catch or no catch of fly balls and line drives to the outfield belongs to the infield umpire. If the ball is hit down the right field foul line or if the ball is hit where the right fielder comes straight in, then the catch/no catch responsibility belongs to the first base umpire. If the ball is hit where the left fielder moves any distance toward the foul line, then the catch/no catch responsibility belongs to the plate umpire.

(Note that some crews prefer to have the first base umpire cover all fly balls and line drives from the center fielder straight in all the way to the right field line. The infield umpire would then take the center fielder moving to his right all the way to the left fielder moving straight in. The plate umpire would take the left fielder moving to his right. These are also acceptable mechanics for fly ball-line drive coverage with a runner on first base only.)

SECTION 3

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND; LESS THAN TWO OUT

- 3.1 The first base umpire will position himself 6-8 feet behind the first baseman with both feet in foul territory.
- 3.2 The third base umpire will position himself halfway between the pitcher's mound and second base on the third base side of the mound in a position ready for plays at second or third.
- 3.3 With runners on first and second base, fly ball and line drive responsibility remains the same as with a runner on first base only. The plate umpire will remain home. The tag up at second base and the possible play at third belongs to the infield umpire. The tag up at first belongs to the first base umpire, but the play at second base belongs to the infield umpire. Again, let the ball take you to your play.

An optional method of covering the tag up with runners on first and second is for the plate umpire to take the play at third on the runner tagging up at second. In this case, the third base umpire will slide over and take responsibility of the runner on first base, and the first base umpire will move home to cover a possible play at the plate. This would be a crew mechanic and should be clearly understood by each member of the crew.

- 3.4 With runners on first and second base, on any base hit the plate umpire will remain at **home**, and the first and third base umpires will assume responsibility for all plays on the bases. On a base hit, the first base umpire will pivot and take the batter-runner into second; he is responsible for any play made on the batter-runner at second base or back into first base.
- 3.5 With runners on first and second base, if the infield umpire goes out on a fly ball, the plate umpire will move up toward third base and the first base umpire will come into the center of the infield. If both runners are tagging up to advance, both tag-up responsibilities belong to the first base umpire, and the play at third base on the runner from second base belongs to the plate umpire. The play at second base on the runner from first base and the responsibility of the runner from first belong to the first base umpire.
- 3.6 With runners on first and second base, if the first base umpire goes out, you will revert back to the two-umpire system.
- 3.7 With runners on first and second base and an obvious bunting situation, the third base umpire will stay behind third, and the first base umpire will move into the center of the infield setting up on the first base side of the infield. This is optional; however, it is much easier to cover the force play at third should the defense decide to throw there.

SECTION 4

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND; TWO OUT

- 4.1 The third base umpire will position himself 6-8 feet behind the third baseman.
- 4.2 The first base umpire will position himself halfway between the pitcher's mound and second base on the first base side of the mound.
- 4.3 With runners on first and second with two out, fly ball and line drive responsibilities remain the same as with runners on second and third. The plate umpire will remain at home.
- 4.4 With runners on first and second with two out, on any ball hit, the third base umpire is responsible for the touching of third base and possible plays at third base. The infield umpire is responsible for the touching of first and second and possible plays at first and second base, including plays on the batter-runner.
- 4.5 Note that some crews prefer to leave the first base umpire at first base with runners on first and second with two out. This is permissible, and in that case the mechanics for fly balls and base hits would be the same as in Section 3 of this manual.

SECTION 5

BASES LOADED; LESS THAN TWO OUT

- 5.1 The first base umpire will position himself 6-8 feet behind the first baseman with both feet in foul territory.
- 5.2 The third base umpire will position himself halfway between the pitcher's mound and second base on the third base side of the mound in a position ready for plays at second or third.
- 5.3 On balls hit to the infield, the infield umpire will render all decisions at second and third base. The first base umpire will render all decisions at first base. The plate umpire will remain at the plate.
- 5.4 On fly balls and line drives to the outfield where neither umpire goes out, the infield umpire will be responsible for the catch/no catch on all balls hit directly at the left fielder and between the left fielder and the right fielder moving toward center field. The first base umpire will be responsible for fly balls directly at the right fielder. *(See Section 2, Item 7 for alternate catch/no catch responsibilities.)*
- 5.5 If the infield umpire goes out for any reason, the first base umpire will come into the center of the infield, and you will revert back to the two-umpire system. If the first base umpire goes out for any reason, you will again revert back to the two-umpire system for all coverages.
- 5.6 The tagging up by the runner on third base belongs to the home plate umpire. The tagging up by the runner on second base going to third belongs to the infield umpire. The tagging up by the runner on first base going to second belongs to the first base umpire. Remember to let the ball take you to your play.
- 5.7 With bases loaded and less than two out, on any base hit the plate umpire will remain at **home**, and the first and third base umpires will assume responsibility for all plays on the bases. On a base hit, the first base umpire will pivot and take the batter-runner into second; he is responsible for any play made on the batter-runner at second base or back into first base.

SECTION 6

BASES LOADED; TWO OUT

- 6.1 The third base umpire will position himself 6-8 feet behind the third baseman.
- 6.2 The first base umpire will position himself halfway between the pitcher's mound and second base on the first base side of the pitcher's mound.
- 6.3 With bases loaded and two out, fly ball and line drive responsibilities remain the same as with runners on second and third. The plate umpire will remain home.
- 6.4 With bases loaded and two out, on any ball hit, the third base umpire is responsible for the touching of third base and possible plays at third base. The infield umpire is responsible for the touching of first and second base and possible plays at first and second base, including plays on the batter-runner.
- 6.5 Note that some crews prefer to leave the first base umpire at first base with bases loaded and two out. This is permissible, and in that case the mechanics for fly balls and base hits would be the same as in Section 5 of this manual.

SECTION 7

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD; LESS THAN TWO OUT

- 7.1 The third base umpire will position himself halfway between the pitcher's mound and second base on the third base side of the mound in a position ready for plays at second or third.
- 7.2 The first base umpire will position himself 6-8 feet beyond the first base bag with both feet in foul territory.
- 7.3 Fly ball responsibility remains the same as with runners on first and second or with a runner on first base only. The plate umpire is responsible for the runner on third tagging up and advancing to home plate.
- 7.4 With runners on first and third base and less than two out, on a base hit the plate umpire will come up to third base and assume the responsibility of the runner going to third base from first base. The infield umpire, after watching the runner from first base touch second base and seeing that he is in fact going to advance to third base, will slide over to the first base side of the mound and assume responsibility for the batter-runner advancing to second base or returning to first base. After the first base umpire has watched the batter-runner touch first and has seen the runner on first **committed** to third base, he will come to the plate for any possible play there.
- 7.5 With runners on first and third base and less than two out, on a fly ball where the runner on third is tagging up, the responsibility for the tag up and the play at the plate belongs to the plate umpire. The first base umpire will come in and pivot, lining up the tag from first base and assuming responsibility of the runner on first. The infield umpire has the responsibility for the play at second base. Should the runner tagging up at third base hold up and return to third base, the infield umpire also has responsibility for the play back into third. In that situation (play back into third), if the runner on first base tags up and goes into second base, the responsibility for him belongs to the first base umpire.

SECTION 8

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD; TWO OUT

- 8.1 The third base umpire will position himself 6-8 feet behind the third baseman with both feet in foul territory.
- 8.2 The first base umpire will position himself halfway between the pitcher's mound and second base on the first base side of the mound.
- 8.3 With runners on first and third base with two out, on any ball hit, the plate umpire shall remain at home plate for possible plays. The third base umpire remains at third base for the touching of third and possible plays at that base. The infield umpire is responsible for plays at first and second, including plays on the batter-runner.
- 8.4 With runners on first and third with two out, fly ball and line drive responsibilities remain the same as with runners on second and third. The plate umpire will remain at home.
- 8.5 Note that some crews prefer to leave the first base umpire at first base with runners on first and third and two out. This is permissible, and in that case the mechanics for fly balls and base hits would be the same as in Section 7 of this manual.

SECTION 9

RUNNER ON SECOND BASE ONLY

- 9.1 With a runner on second base only, the third base umpire will position himself 6-8 feet behind the third baseman with both feet in foul territory.
- 9.2 The first base umpire will position himself in the infield setting up on the first base side of the infield on the edge of infield grass, approximately 10-12 feet from second base.
- 9.3 On any ball hit to an infielder, the third base umpire will be responsible for all plays at third base. The infield umpire will be responsible for all plays at second and first.
- 9.4 On fly balls and line drives to the outfield, the responsibility for the catch or no catch belongs to the infield umpire **unless** the ball is hit down the third base line or to the left fielder coming straight in or going to the foul line. In that case, the responsibility will belong to the third base umpire, who is on the foul line. With an umpire on the third base line and one in the center of the infield, on any ball hit where the right fielder moves any distance toward the foul line, the responsibility for fair/foul and catch/no catch belongs to the home plate umpire.

(Note that with a runner on second base only, some crews prefer to have the third base umpire take responsibility for coverage from the centerfielder straight in all the way to the left field line. In this situation the first base umpire would take the center fielder moving to his left all the way to the right fielder coming straight in. The plate umpire would then take the right fielder moving toward his left. These are also acceptable mechanics.)

- 9.5 With a runner on second base only, if the infield umpire goes out, the third base umpire will come into the center of the infield, and you will revert back to the two-umpire system.
- 9.6 If the third base umpire goes out for any reason, you will again revert back to the two-umpire system.

Section 10

RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD

- 10.1 With runners on second and third base, the third base umpire will position himself 6-8 feet behind the third baseman with both feet in foul territory.
- 10.2 The first base umpire will position himself in the infield setting up on the first base side of the infield on the edge of the infield grass, approximately 10-12 feet from second base.
- 10.3 On any ball hit to an infielder, the third base umpire will be responsible for all plays at third base. The infield umpire will be responsible for all plays at first and second.
- 10.4 On fly balls and line drives to the outfield, the responsibility for the catch or no catch **belongs** to the infield umpire unless the ball is hit down the third base line or to the left fielder coming straight in or going to the foul line. In those cases, the responsibility will belong to the third base umpire, who is on the foul line. With an umpire on the third base line and one in the center of the infield, on any ball hit where the right fielder moves any distance toward the foul line, the responsibility for fair/foul and catch/no catch belongs to the home plate umpire. *(See Section 8.9, Item 4 for optional method of covering fly balls and line drives to the outfield with runners on second and third.)*
- 10.5 With runners on second and third base, if the infield umpire goes out, the third base umpire will come into the center of the infield, and you will revert back to the two-umpire system.
- 10.6 With runners on second and third base, if the third base umpire goes out for any reason, you will again revert back to the two-umpire system.

SECTION 11


RUNNER ON THIRD BASE ONLY

- 11.1 With a runner on third base only, the third base umpire will position himself 6-8 feet behind the third baseman with both feet in foul territory.
- 11.2 The first base umpire will position himself 10-12 feet behind the first baseman with both feet in foul territory.
- 11.3 On balls hit to the infield, the third base umpire will remain at third base for a possible play there. The first base umpire will come in and set up for a possible play at first base. Should the ball be overthrown, then the first base umpire will continue on into the infield, pivot, and take the batter-runner into second base or back into first base.
- 11.4 On a fly ball where the runner from third base may be tagging up to advance, the third base umpire will position himself in such a position as to line up the tag. The first base umpire will come in and pivot, assuming full responsibility for the batter-runner going into second base or returning to first base should the ball be dropped.
- 11.5 On a clean base hit, the third base umpire will come into the infield and take responsibility for the batter-runner going into second base **except** that the responsibility for the batter-runner on a stand-up double will be the same as outlined in paragraph 6 of Section 1, "No Runners on Base." The first base umpire will come in, pivot, and take the batter-runner into second base or back into first base, again as outlined in paragraph 6 of Section 8.1 of this manual.
- 11.6 With a runner on third base only, if the third base umpire goes out, the first base umpire will come in, pivot, and take responsibility for the batter-runner. You will then revert back to the two-umpire system.
- 11.7 With a runner on third base only, if the first base umpire goes out, the third base umpire will come into the center of the infield and take responsibility for the batter-runner going into second base or returning to first base. The home plate umpire will drop back into foul territory and take responsibility for the runner on third tagging up. In this situation, the third base umpire is responsible for the batter-runner touching first base.
- 11.8 With a runner on third base only, on a fly ball or line drive from left field to center field where neither umpire goes out, the third base umpire will have responsibility of the tag up at third base and will also have the responsibility of the catch/no catch decisions. The first base umpire will come in, pivot, and take responsibility of the batter-runner going into second base or returning to first base.

SECTION 12

CHECKED SWINGS

When the batter checks his swing and the plate umpire requests help from his partner, the plate umpire shall, in all cases, ask the first base umpire with a right-handed batter at bat or the third base umpire with a left-handed batter at bat.



MANUAL FOR THE FOUR-UMPIRE SYSTEM

Ninety Foot Diamond

Four-Man Umpire System

1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

One of the key concepts in understanding four-umpire mechanics concerns the position of the second base umpire and the coverage of fly balls/line drives to the outfield when runners are on base. An umpire goes out only when the play is going to be difficult (for example, a shoestring catch, home run, ball off the outfield wall, three fielders converging on the ball, a catch made at the wall or warning track, etc.).

Whenever runners are on first only, second only, first and second, first and third, second and third, or bases loaded the second base umpire will position himself on the inside of second base (with the exceptions covered in Sections 5 and 9). With no runners on base or a runner on third base only, the second base umpire will position himself behind second base. The basic idea here is that whenever a steal or double play is in order, the second base umpire is to be on the inside at second base (again, with the exceptions permissible in Sections 5 and 9).

Another important concept to remember is that *whenever one umpire goes out, the crew will revert to a three-umpire system.* (Refer to Three-Umpire section for basic mechanics of the three-umpire system.)

2 NO RUNNERS ON BASE

With no runners on base the second base umpire will position himself behind second base, several feet onto the outfield grass. He may position himself shaded toward the first base or third base side behind second base, although normally he will position himself on the "pull" side of the hitter.

The second base umpire has responsibility for all fly balls and line drives to the outfield *except* those hit down the foul lines requiring a fair/foul ruling. (Note: With no runners on base, some less experienced crews may prefer to have the second base umpire cover fly balls and line drives from the left fielder *straight in* (or straight back) all the way to the right fielder *straight in* (or straight back). Using this method, the first base umpire would then be responsible for all balls to the outfield where the right fielder

3 RUNNER ON FIRST BASE ONLY

With a runner on first base only, the second base umpire will position himself on the inside at second base. He may position himself on either the shortstop or first base side of the bag--whichever side he is more comfortable working. A general rule of thumb is for the umpire to position himself on the opposite side of the pitcher's throwing arm (i.e., on the shortstop side for left-handed pitchers and on the second base side for right-handed pitchers). However, this is not a requirement, and the umpire may position himself on whichever side he prefers. He should set up with his feet on the edge of the infield grass a few feet down from the edge of the cutout at second base. He may set up with his feet parallel to grass line OR he may square himself with home plate. Either method is acceptable.

See Section 4 regarding coverage of balls hit to the outfield in this situation.

If the first base umpire goes out with a runner on first base only with less than two out, the plate umpire will cover at first base. If the third base umpire goes out, the crew will rotate

(although with two out some crews prefer not to rotate and instead let the second base umpire slide over to third). If the second base umpire goes out, the crew would revert to a three-umpire system (i.e., depending on the play the crew would either rotate or the first base umpire would come into the middle of the infield).

4 COVERING BALLS TO THE OUTFIELD WHEN SECOND BASE UMPIRE IS POSITIONED INSIDE

As mentioned in Section 1, an umpire goes out only when the play appears to be difficult. (*i.e. TROUBLE BALL*)

There are two other options as to coverage when the second base umpire is positioned *inside* the infield. Specifically, either one of the following methods of covering fly balls to the outfield is acceptable when the second base umpire is inside:

1. The *wing umpires* (i.e., the first and third base umpires) take *all* balls to the outfield. If a crew chooses to use this method, the third base umpire takes from the center fielder *straight in* (or straight back) all the way to the left field line. The first base umpire would then take everything from the center fielder moving any distance to his *left* all the way to the right field line; OR
2. The second base umpire *goes out from the inside*. In using this alternative, the second base umpire would take everything from the left fielder moving any distance to his left all the way to the right fielder moving any distance to his right. The first and third base umpires would then take any balls from the right and left fielders *straight in* (or straight back) respectively all the way to the foul lines.

Either of the above two methods is acceptable. Each has its strong points and drawbacks, and neither one is preferred over the other.

5 RUNNER ON SECOND BASE ONLY

With a runner on second base only, the second base umpire will position himself on the *inside* at second base as described in Section 9.3. However, there is an "exception" to this positioning--namely, with a runner on second base only, it is also permissible for the second base umpire to position himself behind the second base bag (on the dirt of the infield on the third base side only).

If the second base umpire positions himself on the **outside** of the bag, fly ball coverage would be the same as with no runners on base. (NOTE: With less than two out, some crews prefer to modify this coverage slightly (having the first base umpire take from the center fielder to the foul line) in order to keep the second base umpire at second for the tag-up.) If the second base umpire goes out, the first base umpire must hustle in quickly to cover any plays at second base (as well as watch the tag-up at second). The first base umpire is also responsible for all plays at first base.

If the second base umpire stays on the inside, fly ball coverage would be the same as with a runner on first base (i.e., optional whether the second base umpire or the wing umpires go out). If the second base umpire goes out, the first base umpire must hustle into the middle to

take any play at second base (as well as watch the tag-up at second). The first base umpire is also responsible for all plays at first base.

If the second base umpire stays in the inside, fly ball coverage would be the same as with a runner on first (i.e., optional whether the second base umpire or the wing umpires go out). If the second base umpire goes out, the first base umpire must hustle into the infield to take any play at second

6 RUNNER ON THIRD BASE ONLY

With a runner on third base only, the second base umpire will position himself behind second base. He will not position himself as deeply in the outfield as with no runners on base since he may be required to slide over to cover plays at first or third base should one of the wing umpires go out. Fly ball and line drive coverage would be the same as with no runners on base. If the third base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would either slide over for any potential play back into third OR the crew would *rotate*, whichever they have predetermined. The plate umpire takes the tag-up at third base if the third base umpire goes out. If the first base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would slide over to take any play at first or second.

7 RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

With runners on first and second, the second base umpire would position himself on the inside of second base. Either side of second is permissible, although the general rule of thumb is to position on the opposite side of the throwing hand of the pitcher. However, the umpire may position himself on either side--whichever he is more comfortable working. Fly balls and line drives to the outfield are covered using the techniques described in Section 4 (i.e., either the second base umpire goes out from the middle OR the wing umpires go out--and the crew must predetermine which method they are using).

If the second base umpire goes out, the first base umpire must hustle in to the middle of the infield to take any play at second base (as well as watch the tag-up at second). The first base umpire is also responsible for all plays at first base.

If either the first or third base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would slide over to cover any plays at those bases, OR the crew would rotate, whichever way the crew predetermines they will use.

8 RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

With runners on first and second, the second base umpire would position himself on the inside of second base. Either side of second is permissible, although the general rule of thumb is to position on the opposite side of the throwing hand of the pitcher. However, the umpire may position himself on either side--whichever he is more comfortable working.

Fly ball and line drive coverage would be the same as described in Section 9.4 (i.e., either the second base umpire goes out from the middle OR the wing umpires go out). If the first base umpire goes out, the second base umpire must slide over to take any plays at first or second. If the third base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would either slide over and cover at third base OR the crew would rotate, whichever the crew has predetermined.

9 RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD

With a runners on second and third, the second base umpire will position himself on the *inside* at second base as described in Section 3. However, there is an "exception" to this positioning--namely, with runners on second and third, it is also permissible for the second base umpire to position himself behind the second base bag (on the dirt of the infield on the third base side only).

If the second base umpire positions himself on the **outside** of the bag, fly ball coverage would be the same as with no runners on base. If the second base umpire goes out, the first base umpire must hustle in quickly to cover any plays at second base (as well as watch the tag-up at second). The first base umpire is also responsible for all plays at first base.

If the second base umpire stays on the **inside**, fly ball coverage would be the same as with a runner on first base (i.e., optional whether the second base umpire or the wing umpires go out). If the second base umpire goes out, the first base umpire must hustle into the middle to take any play at second (or at first); he would also have the tag-up at second base.

If the first or third base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would either slide over to cover possible plays depending on which wing umpire went out; OR the crew would *rotate*. Which method is used here depends on which way the crew has predetermined they will cover the situation. Either method is acceptable.

10 BASES LOADED

With bases loaded, the second base umpire would position himself on the inside of second base. Either side of second is permissible, although the general rule of thumb is to position on the opposite side of the throwing hand of the pitcher. However, the umpire may position himself on either side--whichever he is more comfortable working. Fly balls and line drives to the outfield are covered using the techniques described in Section 4 (i.e., either the second base umpire goes out from the middle OR the wing umpires go out-the crew must predetermine which method they are using).

If the second base umpire goes out, the first base umpire must hustle in to the middle of the infield to take any play at second base (as well as watch the tag-up at second). The first base umpire is also responsible for all plays at first base.

If either the first or third base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would slide over to cover any plays at those bases, OR the crew would rotate-whichever method the crew predetermines they will use.