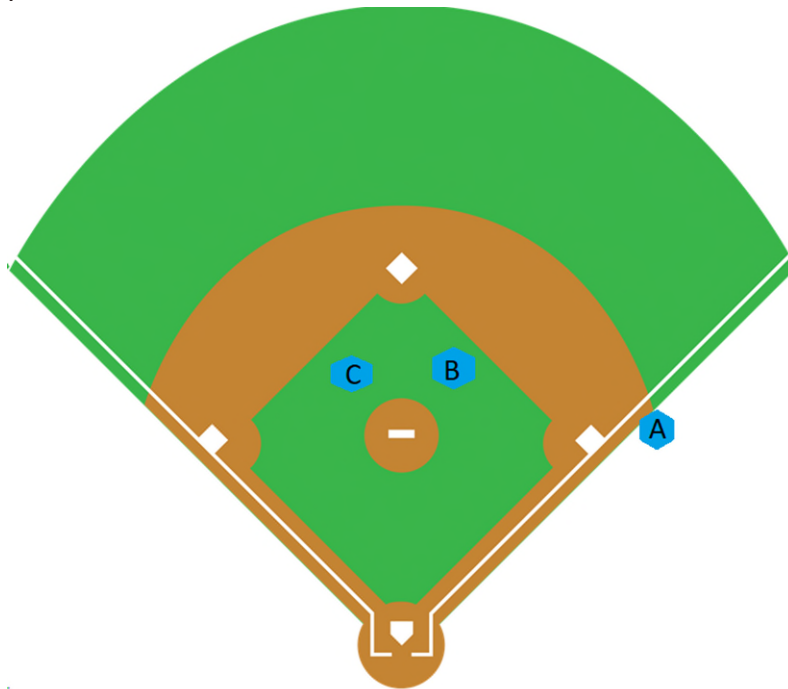


MBUA 2-Man Mechanics Manual

Revision 18-March-2024

Start Positions (Base Umpire)



**Starting
Positions:
A, B, and C**

Start Position Alignments:

Starting Position A:

- Start about 12 to 15 ft. behind first base or 3-5 feet behind the 1st baseman. Both feet in foul territory.

Starting Position B:

- Start at a spot on the infield grass on a tangent line running from home plate through the first base side edge of the pitcher's mound dirt circle to be at a spot about halfway between the mound's pitching plate and second base. Be square to home plate in an "athletic" stance, such as, with hands on your knees or thighs.

Starting Position C:

- Move to the third base side and start at a spot on the infield grass on a tangent line running from home plate through the third base side edge of the pitcher's mound dirt circle to be at a spot slightly closer to the mound than you were when in B position. This closer position will let you start at a better angle to see and call the steal play into third base. Again, be square to home plate in an "athletic" stance.

With no runners on base	U1 starts in A
With a runner on first only	U1 starts in B
With runners on first and third	U1 starts in B
ALL other configurations	U1 starts in C

U1 Reactions to pick off moves and Steals

Pick off move to first base while in the B position

The instant the pitcher makes his move to first base take a step in with your left foot and then towards first base with your right foot to create a better angle to see the play. A better angle is more important than shortening the distance. The plate umpire will be responsible to determine if the pitcher steps directly towards first base with his front free foot and gains ground. You should observe if he steps backward off the pitcher's plate with his back foot, if there is an overthrow that goes out of play, the **PU** (Plate Umpire) might need the **U1's** help to determine whether to award one, or two, bases. An overthrow that goes near the out of bounds line is the **PU's** responsibility. You are responsible for the pitching coming to a complete stop with runners on. In the "B" position, right-handed pitchers can present a problem. If you cannot get a proper angle, do not balk a right-handed pitcher for failing to stop. Allow this to be called by the plate umpire.

Steal of second base while in the B position

Keep your eyes on the ball and plate area. When the catcher starts his throwing action take a slight step forward with your left foot and a drop step back with your right foot to help open your frame to second base. Keep your eyes focused on the ball during the throw and let the ball take you to the play area. Gain ground towards second base but always be aware of the ball flight to avoid being hit with the ball. When there are runners on first and third bases be aware that either the shortstop or the second baseman might have a cutoff play on the grass in front of second base to make a play on the runner on third. Make sure your head is still when you are about to make a call on the runner.

Pick off move to second base while in the C position

The instant the pitcher makes his move to second base take a drop step with your left foot to open your frame towards second base, but **Do Not** turn your head away from the pitcher. Keep your focus on the ball in the pitcher's hand until he releases the ball. Remember, the pitcher doesn't have to throw to second, so you will probably see plenty of fakes to second, which is why you want to always keep your eyes on the ball.

Steal & Pick-off at third base while in the C position

Steal at 3B:

Keep your eyes on the ball and plate area. You'll probably hear the SS yell "he's going". When you anticipate the steal, you can take a slight step forward with your right foot and when the catcher starts his throw take another step to get a good angle and to help open your frame to third base. Keep your eyes focused on the ball during the throw and let the ball take you to the play area.

Pick-off:

The instant the pitcher makes his move to third base take a step in with your right foot and then towards third base with your left foot to create a better angle to see the play. Be stationary with your head still at the time you must make the call. This same procedure can be simulated when the catcher makes a pick-off throw to third base after a pitched ball. If you have time, take another step to get the best angle you can to make the call, but again, be stationary with your head still at the time you must make the call.

U1's B & C “Working Area”

The instant a ball is put into play, the working area is your friend. When your start position is **B** or **C**, most of your responsibilities are going to take place in the working area. The following illustration depicts the working area box on the infield, behind the pitcher's mound, and ranging left and right. However, the boundaries in the box shown here are not etched in stone. From a position between the mound and second base, and extending toward the first and third base lines, you slide left and right to get the proper angle on the plays that you're responsible for.

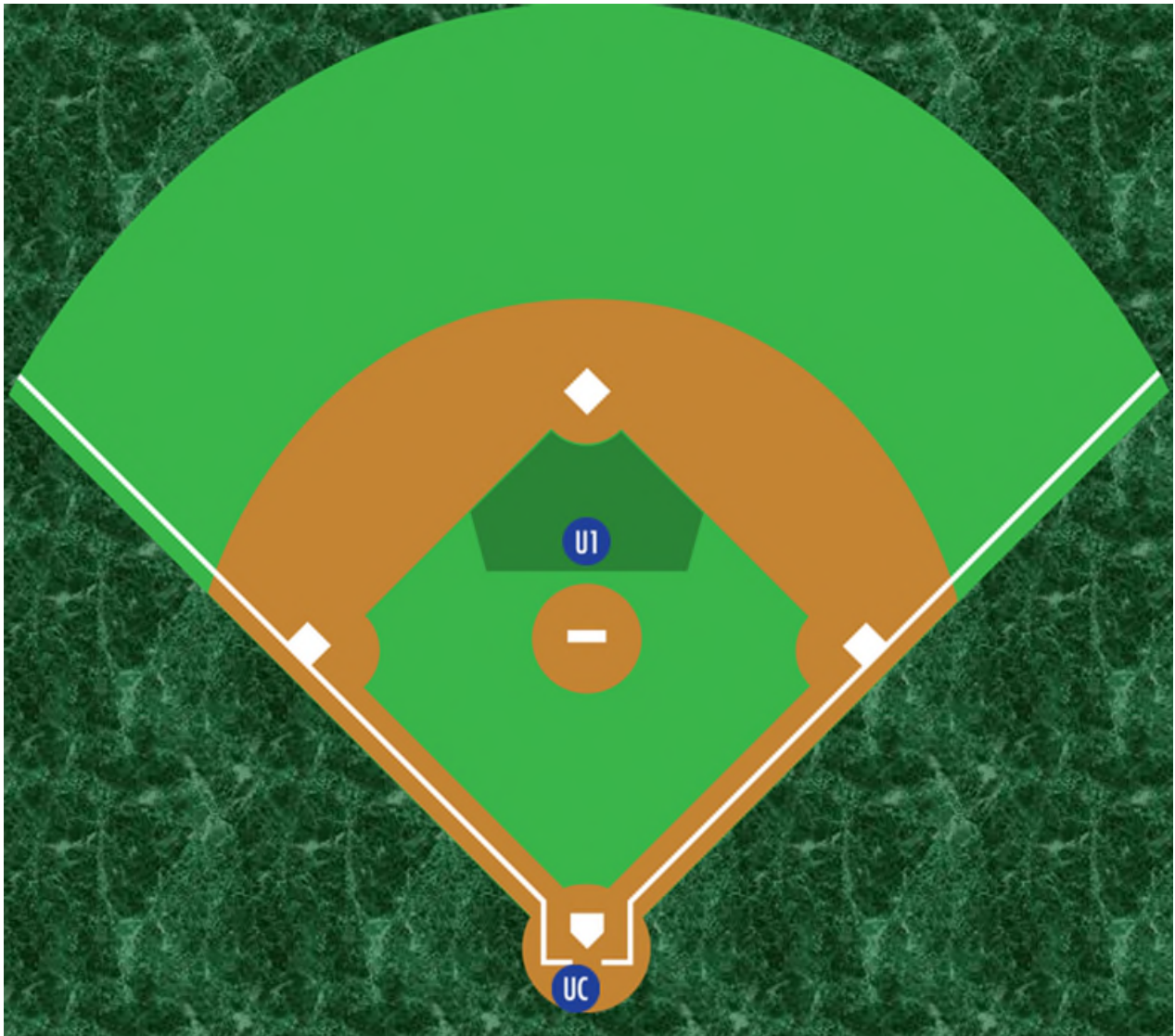


Plate Umpire (PU) Position for Plays at the Plate

The “Wedge” position

The Wedge is all about movement and putting umpires in a position to see the window between the catcher’s attempted tag and the runner’s attempt to avoid it. Here are the basic mechanics for working the Wedge.

- Start at the point of the plate and locate the ball.
- Position yourself about 3-6 feet behind the catcher, lining up on his plate-side hip.
- Move in-step with the catcher as if attached with a string
- As the catcher receives the ball and turns to make a tag, move to stay on what will result to be his plate-side hip.
- Make a final “Quiet Read Step” to see in the window between the catcher’s glove and the runner to see the tag applied. The window can be thought of as the point of the Wedge. This should be a purposeful step and body lean as the ball arrives to see in the window point of the Wedge to see the tag. When using the Wedge umpires often wind up in fair territory in front of the plate, or even up the third base line

Rotations from the Start Positions

The instant a ball is put into play, each umpire on the field goes into motion. The direction in which the umpire goes is determined by that nature of the batted ball – specifically, whether it is a batted ball to the infield, a line drive to the outfield, a fly ball to the outfield, a shot down the foul line, and so forth. Both umpires go into motion, and their movements are coordinated. The coordinated action of the umpires in response to the batted ball is called their **rotation**.

The Basic Rotations (two-man)

In the section **Start Positions (two-man)**, we pointed out the correct start positions for the field umpire (**U1**) for each of the base-runner configuration – **A**, **B**, or **C**. This represents the position of **U1** at the time of the pitch. The instant that a batted ball is put in play, however, the umpire goes into motion. That is, they initiate the appropriate rotation.

In the two-umpire system, there are three start positions (**A**, **B**, and **C**); then, from each start position, there are two basic rotations: one for a batted ball to the infield, and a second for a batted ball to the outfield. In sum, then, there are just six basic rotations in the two-umpire system.

Of course, there is a bit more to it. There are subtle variations on the basic rotations, but for now, let’s just grasp the fundamentals.

Here are the six rotations:

1. **U1 in A. Ball to the infield** (no runners on)
2. **U1 in A. Ball to the outfield**
3. **U1 in B. Ball to the infield** (R1, or R1 and R3)
4. **U1 in B. Ball to the outfield**
5. **U1 in C. Ball to the infield** (all other base-runner configurations)
6. **U1 in C. Ball to the outfield**

1. U1 in A (No runners on) Batted Ball to the Infield

With no runners on base, **U1** is starting in **A**. On a batted ball to the infield (presuming a play at first base), the umpires rotate as follows:

Base Umpire (U1)

- Step into fair territory about 5 ft. from the foul line and establish a good view of first base, in a position to see any potential swipe tag or pulled foot. Be sure to look at the fielder playing on the ball and be sure to see the fielder's release. Do not follow the flight of the ball. Instead focus on first base. See the runner's foot hit the bag and hear the ball hit the glove. Timing of your call is very important. Quickly shift your eyes off the bag and foot and look for the ball in the first baseman's glove to confirm a secure catch. Then, make your call.
- If there is an error or an overthrow and the runner advances toward second base, you must stay with the runner. If possible, work your way inside the basepath, being careful, of course, not to interfere with the runner or fielders. You want to get yourself inside to get the angle and in the event the runner continues toward third.
- If a batted ball down the first base line bounces past the front edge of first base, you then own the fair/foul call. Straddle the foul line. Make fair/foul call before you position yourself for safe/out.

Plate Umpire (PU)

- Clear the catcher by stepping out around him to the left side and trail the runner about one third to halfway to first base. You're watching for three things, primarily: **(1)** Pulled foot by the first baseman; **(2)** swipe tag; and **(3)** running lane violation.
- If the batted ball is down the third base line, straddle the line and get the fair/foul call; then turn your attention to the batter-runner. If the batted ball is down the first base line, you own the fair/foul call up to the bag (**U1** in **A** has fair/foul from the bag and beyond). You are also watching for interference on the batter-runner being touched by his batted ball, batter-runner interference with the defender fielding the ball, or obstruction on the batter-runner by a non-fielding defender, and any tag attempt within the first 45 ft. PU has the call up to 45 ft, and U1 has the call after 45 ft.
- If there is an overthrow at first base, watch for the ball going out of play. That call belongs to you.
- Keep an eye on the ball as it's fielded and (this is important) see the release of the ball on the throw. Was he inbounds for the catch? Was he inbounds when he released his throw? Once the ball is released, switch your attention immediately to the runner and then let the ball take you to the play.

With play complete, **PU** will return to his position behind the plate and **U1** moves to the **B** position.

Important: While moving to your new positions, do not turn your back on potential plays. Stay with the ball, but stay aware of the runner and the direction of the play

2. U1 in A (No Runners On) Batted Ball to the Outfield

U1 starts in **A** when there are no runners on base and stays with the runner all the way to third, should he go that far. On a batted ball to the outfield – whether on the fly, line drive, or grounder through the infield – **U1** should rotate as follows:

Base Umpire (U1)

- From **A**, break inside the base path and pivot or turn such that you observe the runner's touch of first base before pivoting or turning towards second base. Be ready to stay with the runner if he advances to second.
- If the runner advances toward second, you stay with the runner from your position inside the base path. Be sure to stop and come set before any play on the runner at second, should that occur.
- If the runner is stretching for a triple, you have the runner into third. Again, if there is a play on the runner, be sure to stop and come set for the call.

- When advancing with the runner, don't get too close to the base path. For one thing, this shortens the distance you need to travel to stay with the runner (who is no doubt much faster than you are); second, you can typically get a better angle on a play at second or third if you are well inside the base path. Remember the axiom: "Angle over distance."

Plate Umpire (PU)

- When **U1** comes inside to cover the runner, the **PU** has catch/no-catch. Clear the catcher and move to a position in the infield that gives you the best view for the catch/no-catch call.
- After the catch/no-catch call, continue to watch the action of the ball in the outfield. Watch for balls lodged in the fence, outfielders raising their hands to signal out of play, or spectator interference. Then, return to the point of plate in the event the runner comes home. When moving back to point of plate, however, do not turn your back on the play. Instead, cross-step your way to your new position.

Caveat: If the fly ball to the outfield is in right field and the right fielder is moving toward the foul line, or a "trouble catch" below the knees is anticipated, then **U1** does **not** come inside to take the runners. Instead, he "goes out" – that is, he gives the PU a verbal and physical sign that he is "going out", turns and takes the fair/foul and catch/no-catch on the batted ball. The **PU** must key off **U1** and, if he goes out, the **PU** must take the runner all the way into third. **U1**, after going out and making a no catch ruling, will circle back to home plate and be in position to make a call on the batter-runner at home plate.

With play complete, **U1** moves to either the **B** or **C** position, depending on where the batter-runner ended. Stay with the ball but remain aware of the runner. Always be vigilant.

3. U1 in B (R1 / R1&R3) – Ball to the Infield

We have a potential double-play situation. Unless the fielder errs, the first throw from the infield is probably going to second for the front end of the double play. **U1** has both runners; however, **PU** has the illegal slide or interference by R1 at second base (because **U1** has already turned for the play at first). If there is an overthrow and runners continue to advance, **U1** has all runners at all bases while **PU** retreats to point of plate.

Base Umpire (U1)

- Stay chest-to-ball. Let the ball turn you, first to the infielder fielding the ball, and then to the play on the runner (probably at second). **Don't anticipate the throw**; rather, let the ball take you to the play.
- In the event of an attempted double play, after calling the out (presumably) at second, take a couple of steps toward first as the ball takes you there. But be set (no longer moving) for the play at first.
- Watch for an illegal slide at second if you can, but if the ball beats the runner, stay with the ball going to first and let the PU watch for the illegal slide.
- In the event of errors or overthrows at 1st base, stay with the batter-runner, but remember you still have primary responsibility for all the bases on an infield hit, infield error, or bunt. The **PU** can help with R1 to 3rd base, but this is where verbal communication between PU and U1 are critical.

Plate Umpire (PU)

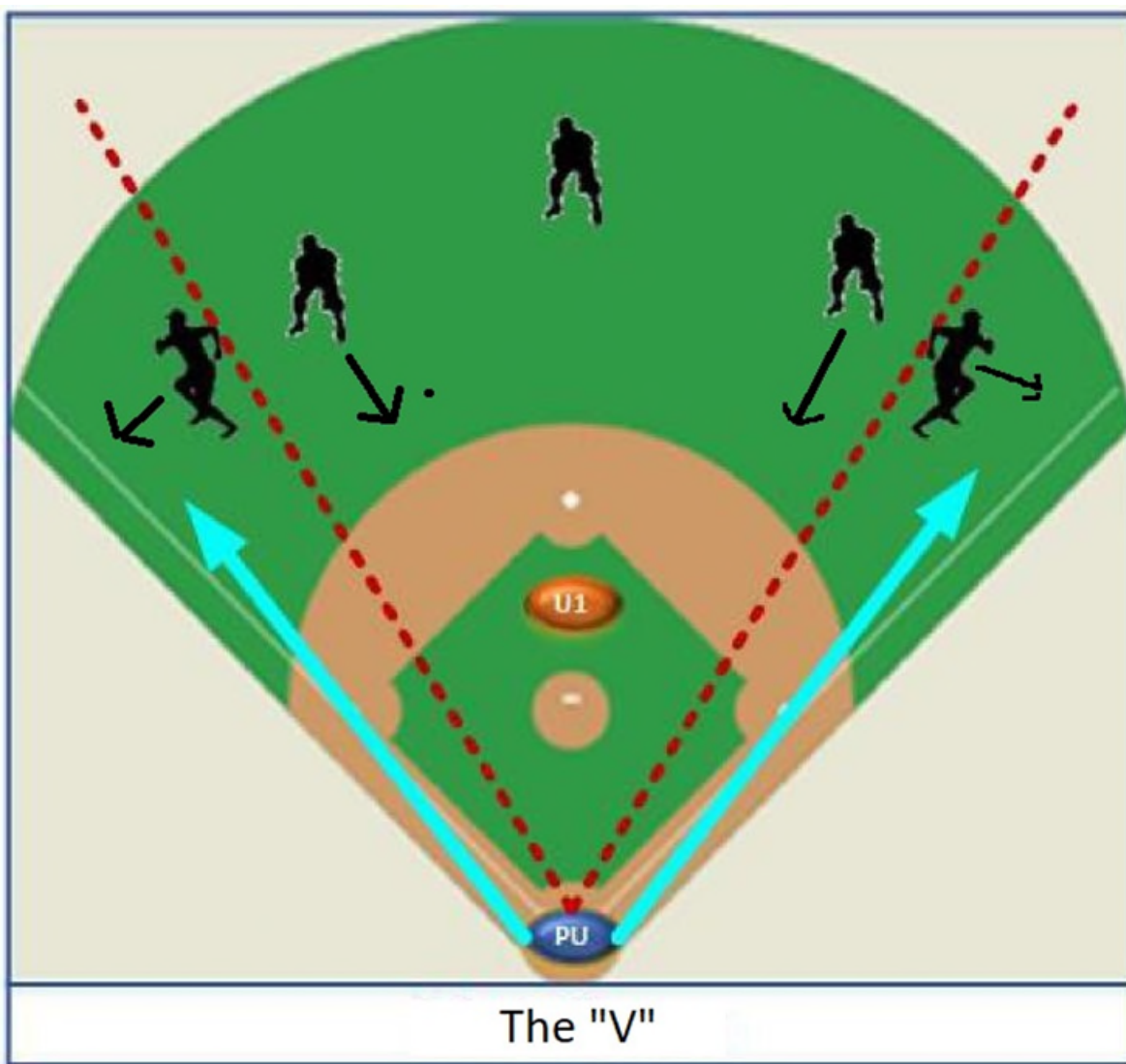
- Clear the catcher and move to a good vantage point to watch R1 for an illegal slide, obstruction or interference at second base. You'll usually want to be on the first base side infield grass, which will put you in a better position to see a pulled foot, or swipe tag at first base.
- If errors in the field cause R1 to advance toward third, hustle back to home plate to get the play on R1 if he continues home. **U1** will have the call on the play of R1 going to third. If your partner (**U1**) verbally communicates with you, you might be able to help him cover R1 into 3rd base. Mutual communication in this situation is critical.
- If R1 does not advance to third, return to the point of plate.

- If the play started with runners on first and third (R1 & R3) then you must watch R3's touch of home plate.

4. U1 in B (R1 / R1, R3) – Ball to the Outfield

Now we have runners on base and a batted ball to the outfield. So, in addition to covering the base runners, we now must also cover the catch/no-catch in the outfield. Since the catch/no-catch comes first, let's talk briefly about handling the catch/no-catch call.

In the two-man system, **U1** has all catch/no-catch calls in *the "V"*. See the diagram here



The “V” is defined by straight lines that run from home plate to the positions taken by the left and right fielders. This creates a big slice of pizza that U1 owns. Any fly ball *inside the V*, where outfielders are **moving forward, backward, or away from the foul lines, belongs to U1**. Any fly ball to the outfield that has either the right fielder or left fielder moving toward their respective foul lines, belongs to the PU. On a ball going to the lines, the PU must call off U1 by verbalizing "I've got the ball !" (on the third base line) or "I've got the line !" (on the first base line).

First-to-Third Situation: With a runner on first (R1) or runners on first and third (R1, R3), a ball to the outfield puts you in a first-to-third rotation. That is, if R1 goes all the way to third, then the PU has the play on R1 at third base. U1 stays with the batter-runner while PU picks up R1 at third base, then stays with the runner if he goes home.

With a batted ball to the outfield, the rotation with U1 in B changes significantly. Because we're in the first-to-third situation, the PU must cover R1 at third base. That's not much of a problem if you have only R1, but if you have both R1 and R3 it's a bit trickier because the PU not only has R3 touching home but must then hustle to third in case R1 comes that far.

Now, with R1, R3 and a clean hit to the outfield, R3 is going to score. That's a given. Nevertheless, *it is imperative that the PU see R3 touch home*. To do this, first move a few steps toward third base, then pause to see R3 touch home, then bust ass up the line in foul territory to be ready at third in case R1 comes. If there is a play on R1 into third, then move into fair territory in the dirt cutout area to make the call. If there is a throwing error and R1 continues towards home, then PU must hustle back to home plate running inside the infield fair territory grass to make the call at home plate. Of course, if you don't have a runner on third (R1 only), then you can move directly toward third on the hit.

Caveat: We said in our section on The “V” above, that when the PU takes the catch/no-catch/fair-foul call on a fly ball down the line, he shouts out "I've got the ball!" (on the third base line) or "I've got the line!" (on the first base line). You may have asked yourself, why two different verbalizations? Because in a first-to-third situation on the third base side, the PU can straddle the foul line, make the call, and continue to third if needed. However, if the fly ball is on the first base line, then the PU is up the first base line and cannot get to third base for a play. So his call on the first base side, "I've got the line!," is his way of telling his partner that he's away from being able to cover third. The question, then, is who has the tag-up at third when the PU goes to the 1st base line for a call in right field?

This is important: With a runner on 3rd and a batted ball down the 1st base line such that the PU has a fair/foul call out in right field, who has the tag-up on R3? The PU still has the tag-up on R3, so he must see the call in the outfield, then swivel quickly to get the tag-up at third.

The upshot: You must pre-game this with your partner in advance of the game so you're both on the same page.

Base Umpire (U1)

- Catch/no-catch in The “V”. Slide towards the baseline while trying to gain an angle if you have a trouble catch, otherwise slide into the Working Area.
- You have the batter-runner all the way to third base. You have R1 into second (PU has R1 into third).
- You have all base touches on first and second, and on batter-runner into third if he goes that far.

Plate Umpire (PU)

- If the batted ball is toward the first or third base lines, you have the fair/foul call and the catch/no-catch call. Position yourself on the appropriate line for the call.
- Then move toward third base in the event R1 advances to third. You have the play on R1 at third. If R1 continues home, you have the call on R1 at home.

- If there are runners on both first and third, you must see the base runner touch at home while moving to third. You also have the tag-up on R3.

5. U1 in C – Ball to the Infield

All you have to learn is setting up in **A** for no runners on and setting up in **B** with **R1** or **R1, R3**. For every other configuration you're in **C**. **NEW-2024** The base umpire may move to B with 2 outs, unless 3rd base is open and there could be a possible steal from R2.

Important: There is one very important thing that all these configurations have in common: They all show a runner in scoring position. Because of this, the **PU** will stay home. That is, his sole responsibility is at home plate, and he will not rotate. **U1 in C has all runners at all bases.**

Because **PU** is staying home and **U1** stays in the working area, the rotation appears rather simple. While the appearance is true, don't be deceived. There is a lot going on, particularly if there are multiple runners, and **U1**, particularly, has a lot on his hands. U1 needs to keep focus on the ball. The ball will take you to the play.

Base Umpire (U1)

- Slide into the working area as necessary.
- You have all runners at all bases. That includes tags and touches.

Plate Umpire (PU)

- Remain point of plate, then move, as necessary, to follow the plate-side hip of the catcher to take you into The Wedge position for plays at the plate.
- You have all plays at the plate
- You have all touches and tags at third base.
- You have fair/foul on both base lines; if necessary, position yourself on the appropriate foul line for the fair/foul call.

6. U1 in C – Ball to Outfield

U1 is in **C** in all other base-running configurations – that is, with the following:

- Runner on 2nd (R2)
- Runner on 3rd (R3) (may go to B with 2 outs)
- Runners on 1st and 2nd (R1, R2)
- Runners on 2nd and 3rd (R2, R3) (may go to B with 2 outs)
- Bases loaded (may go to B with 2 outs)

Base Umpire (U1)

- Slide in the working area as necessary.
- You have all plays at all bases.
- You have runners touching 1st and 2nd. You have the batter-runner touching 3rd.
- You have tag-ups at 1st and 2nd.
- You have catch/no-catch in the “**V**”.

Plate Umpire (PU)

- Remain at point of plate, then move, as necessary, to follow the plate-side hip of the catcher to take you into The Wedge position for plays at the plate.
- You have all plays at the plate
- You have all touches and tag-ups at third base.
- You have fair/foul on both base lines; if necessary, position yourself on the appropriate foul line for the fair/foul call.
- You have catch/no-catch on fly balls that are moving the left or right fielder toward their respective foul lines.

Special Coverage – Runners on 1st & 2nd (R1, R2) with less than two outs

Base Umpire (U1) in C position

- You have all catches in the “V”.
- You have the tag-ups & appeals for both 1st and 2nd bases (R1 & R2).
- You have the call on R1 into 2nd base or back to 1st base.

Plate Umpire (PU)

- You have catch/no catch and fair/foul calls for left fielder & right fielder going towards their foul lines.
- You can help U1 (if asked by U1 after the play) on tag-up/appeal of R1 if the ball is hit/caught in right field. I say “help” because U1 still has primary responsibility for R1 calls.
- You have the play into third base of R2’s tag-up.
- If the fly ball is to right and you must focus for fair/foul and/or trouble ball, let your partner know they will have R2 going into 3rd.
- If there is an overthrow at 3rd, you have R2’s touch of 3rd and R2’s continued play at the plate.

Plate Umpire with fly ball on RF line

- You have catch/no catch and fair/foul calls for the right fielder going hard to the line
- Because you have you have to focus on both fair/foul and catch/no-catch, you will communicate with your base partner “I’ve got the line”.
- U1 will have the play into third base of R2’s tag-up.
- If the fly ball is to right and you must focus for fair/foul and/or trouble ball, let your partner know they will have R2 going into 3rd.
- If there is an overthrow at 3rd, PU will still have R2’s touch of 3rd and R2’s continued play at the plate.