

Illinois High School Association

Level I Baseball Clinic

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for the IHSA

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IHSA Policies

1. Current License
2. Uniform
3. Patches
4. Rules meetings and Clinics
5. Special report forms
6. Part 1 test
7. Promotion
8. State playoff availability



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PROFESSIONALISM

Five Basic Principles

1. **Set Goals** (Varsity, State Tournament, College, Professional)
 - set your expectations high
 - work hard to achieve these goals
 - continue to develop (camp/clinics)
 - improve through taking on new challenges, strive for better contests, work with new/better partners, join an officials association
2. **Physical Fitness/Health**
 - participants are training/developing
 - teams and players deserve the best we can offer
 - if you are injured/ill, don't officiate, you're not doing anyone any favors
3. **Appearance**
 - look the part - pressed & polished
 - shows confidence, coaches/participants/fans begin to have confidence in you
 - judged by first impression
 - wear the proper uniform, accessories and insignias
4. **Rule Knowledge & Application**
 - know & study the rules
 - don't assume you know everything, don't just look at changes
 - quiz yourself and fellow officials with unusual situations
 - develop your own style (personality) of officiating and applying the rules
5. **BE A GOOD PERSON** (You never know who's watching you)
 - be honest with everyone (coaches, participants, assigners)

- don't be pig-headed, admit it when you may have made a mistake (if it happens too often, something needs to change)
- communicate effectively
- be fair—the participants, coaches, & fans deserve it
- be a good role model
- don't be a showboat—you are not more important than the contest or the reason people are sitting in the stands—blend in
- honor your contracts, be PROMPT
- encourage others, recruit
- KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT—if you can't say anything nice
- be realistic about your own talents
- be gracious, accept things the way they are and be grateful for what you are given OR change things through the proper channels
- don't ask for or expect favors (what would we think if a player asked us to set aside a rule one night?)
- so many things are out of our control as people/officials this is an area where we have control...GOOD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE!



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Signals and Communications

The use of signals and the communications between umpires is extremely important in the flow of any game.

The use of signals is a method by which both umpires can communicate with each other to let one another know of a particular play situation that could happen i.e.:

Infield Fly - Right hand to the bill of your cap.

Infield Fly Wipe-off – Brush left arm with right hand.

Two Out Time Play - Two fingers from right hand to top of left wrist.

Movement By Umpires on Hit Ball - Rotating right hand to indicate movement by plate umpire on a hit ball or pointing to the ground at home plate to indicate that he is not leaving the home plate area.

All of these signals from one umpire must be acknowledged by the other umpire.

Even though two veteran umpires may be working together it is still important to use signals.



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Pre-game Checklist

Darkness:

- Plate umpire's call

Rain Delays:

- Plate umpire's call
- Use common sense
- If not a washout, wait at least 15 min.
- If lightning in the area, clear the field immediately.

Line-up card:

- Kept by plate umpire

Time plays:

- Return signal

Fair/foul call:

- Down 1st base line if base umpire on line.

Double play:

- Plate umpire has interference call on front end.

Fly ball coverage:

- Base umpire on the line
- Base umpire in the middle (use the "V")

Low line drives:

- Infield and outfield

Ground ball coverage:

- Bases empty, runners on base

Base hit coverage:

- Singles, extra base hits
- Bases empty, runners on base

Bunt coverage:

- Bases empty, runners on base
- Plate umpire has running lane violation

Tag-ups/Touches:

- Who has what?

Dead ball/live ball:

- After a dead ball, ball becomes live only after pitcher is on the rubber *and* batter is ready in the box.
- **Important:** Plate umpire, put ball in play after every dead ball.

Getting help:

- Rule interpretation
- Check swing: only when called a ball **and** asked for by plate ump. Make an honest call.
- Swipe tag at first, *if asked by partner.*
- Pulled foot at first, *if asked by partner.*
- Ball dropped on blind side, *if asked.*
- Hit batsman, *if asked.*
- Two umpires, opposite calls.
- Dropped foul tip, U2 call immediately.
- Batted ball off of batter in box, U2 call immediately.

Signals:

- Infield fly (bill of cap)
- Infield fly wipe-off (brush arm with hand)
- Time play (point to wrist)
- Lost count (finger roll or show counter)
- Situation communications (U1 rotating or staying home; how many outs)



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2-Man Mechanics

Position A

This position is used when there is no one on base.

The base umpire will stand with both feet in foul territory at, or a few feet inside, the edge of the outfield grass, but always at least a foot or two behind the 1st baseman.

1. Ground ball hit to infield
 - **Base umpire**
 - Left side of field (*see first diagram*)
 - Anywhere within position 1 and position 2 at right angles with throw.
 - Right side of field (or bunt fielded by catcher) (*see first diagram*)
 - Anywhere within position 1 and position 3 at right angles with throw.
 - **Plate umpire**
 - Move out in front of plate down 1st base line.
 - Be ready to make fair/foul call down the line.
 - Be ready to make running lane interference call.
2. Base hit to outfield
 - **Base umpire**
 - Move into position 4, curl (*see first diagram*)
 - Watch runner touch 1st
 - Be ready to take him into 2nd and 3rd if necessary.

- **Plate umpire**
 - Move out in front of plate.
 - Know where ball is at all times.
3. Fly balls to outfield
- **Base umpire**
 - All balls down the right field line (exception: no line)
 - Possible trap plays in right and right center
 - All others, move into Position 4 and take batter-runner all the way around.
 - **Plate umpire**
 - All flies except those designated for base umpire.
 - Take batter-runner all the way around on flies covered by base umpire.

Position B

This position is used with runner at 1st base only, 1st and 3rd, 3rd only, 2nd and 3rd, and bases loaded.

Umpire will stand on an imaginary line from home plate which intersects the left edge (1st base side) of the pitching circle, approximately 2/3 the way from the pitching rubber to the baseline. Shoulders should be square with the plate, not open toward 1st base.

Runner at 1st base only

1. **Base umpire** be prepared to cover:
 - Pickoff at first
 - Steal of 2nd
2. Ground ball to infield
 - **Base umpire**
 - Be prepared to cover both ends of the double play.
 - **Plate umpire**
 - Move out in front of plate
 - Call the illegal slide at 2nd base on try for double play.
 - Make all fair and foul calls (call foul, point fair).
3. Base hit to outfield
 - **Base umpire**
 - Watch runner tag 2nd.

- Take batter-runner around 1st, and into 2nd and 3rd, if necessary,
 - **Plate umpire**
 - Move out in front of plate.
 - Know where ball is at all times.
 - Be prepared to make a call on runner going into 3rd. Watch runner tag 3rd on possible attempt to score.
4. Outfield Flies
- **Base umpire**
 - Take all fly balls in the “V” from middle of infield.
 - On long fly, make sure runner re-tags 2nd.
 - If you don't have ball, watch runner and batter-runner.
 - **Plate umpire**
 - Take fly balls outside the “V” down the lines.
 - If you don't have ball, take batter-runner around 1st, then pick up lead runner.

Runners at 1st and 3rd (includes 3rd only, 2nd & 3rd, and bases loaded)

1. Base Umpire

- Position yourself as in the previous Position B description
- Be prepared to cover:
- Pickoffs at any occupied base
- Steal of 2nd base (with runners at 1st and 3rd)
- Snap throw by catcher to 1st or 3rd (and 2nd)
- Both ends of the double play.

2. Plate Umpire be prepared to cover:

- The illegal slide at 2nd and 3rd base on the double play attempt.
- Tag-up of runner at 3rd on fly ball to outfield.

3. Advantages for using Position B with runners on 1st and 3rd:

- On 2nd base steal, you are taking throw and runner into 2nd base like you normally would with runner at 1st only.
- On 2nd base steal with a snap throw to 3rd, you are already facing 3rd base. If in Position C, you may very well have your back to the play at 3rd.
- In a better position to cover the intentional run-down play between 1st and 2nd.
- In better position for the pickoff play at 1st.
- On a ground ball to the infield, the vast majority of the plays will be on R2 at 2nd, and/or the BR at 1st, or R1 at the plate, but **not** on R1 at 3rd. You need to be in a location on the field nearest to the play that is most likely to occur—that location is Position B, not Position C.

4. Disadvantages for using Position B (instead of Position C) with runners on 1st and 3rd:

- Further away from 3rd on a pickoff attempt by the pitcher or snap throw by the catcher.

Position C

This position is used for runners on base in all other situations not described for Position B (includes 2nd only, and 1st and 2nd). Use Position C only when 3rd base is in imminent danger of being stolen

Position yourself as in Position B except on the left (3rd base) side of the field.

1. **Base umpire** be prepared to cover:
 - Pickoff at all occupied bases.
 - Any steal of 3rd.
 - Both ends of any double play except for play at the plate. (Plate umpire is responsible for illegal slide at front end of any double play attempt.)
2. Base hit to outfield
 - **Plate umpire**: Watch all runners touch 3rd on the way to the plate.
 - **Base umpire**: Watch runners touch all other bases.
3. Outfield Flies
 - Ball coverage the same as Position B (go with the “V”).
 - Plate umpire has tag-up of runner at 3rd, base umpire has all others.
 - Runner at 2nd only, base umpire takes tag-up and play at 3rd.
 - Runners at 1st and 2nd, base umpire take both tag-ups and the play into 2nd, plate umpire take play into 3rd.

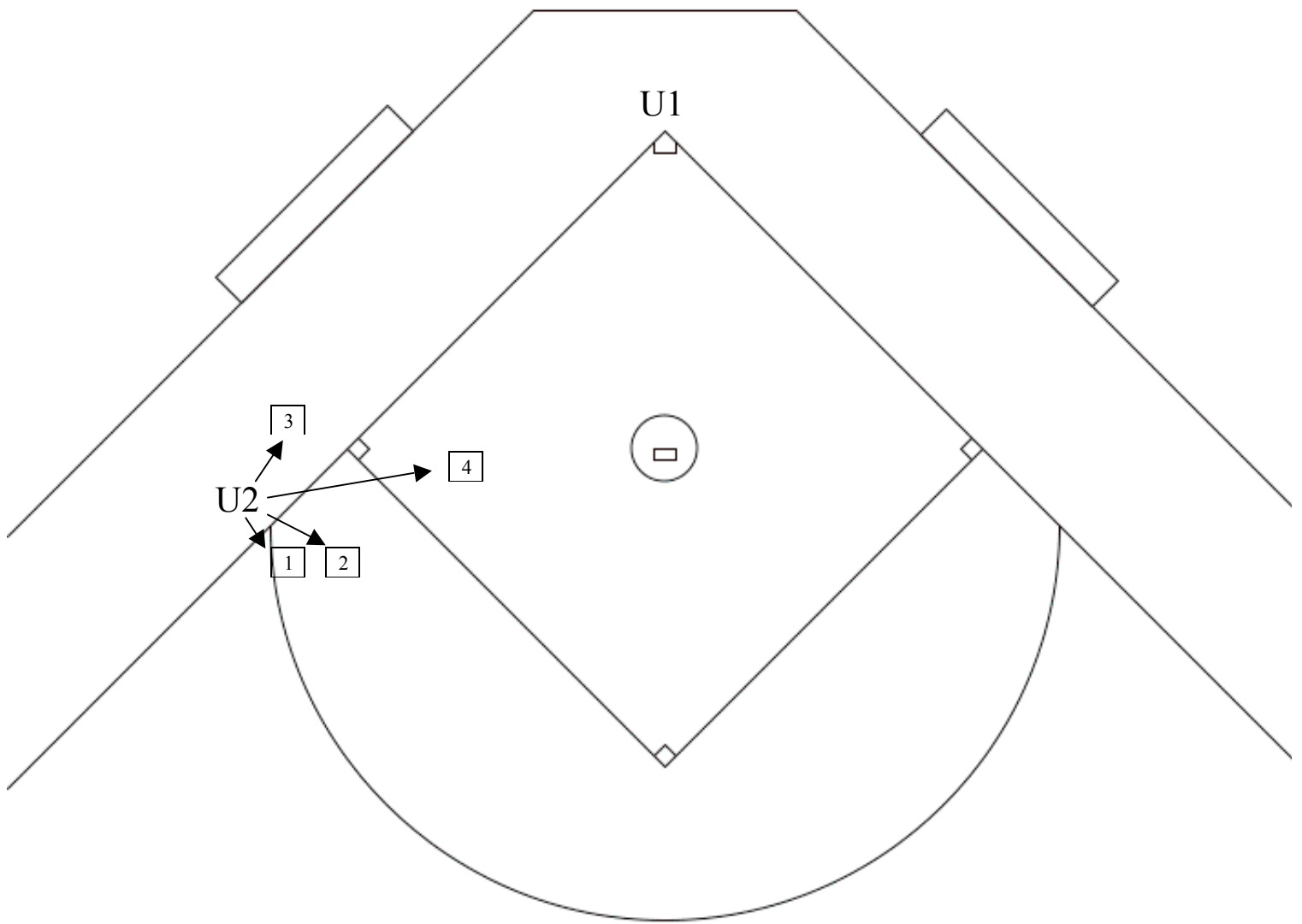
Miscellaneous Coverages

1. Rundowns
 - Let the play dictate the coverage. However the plate umpire needs to get out and help cover unless a play at the plate is imminent.
2. Foul popups
 - **Plate umpire**: don't be a spectator. Get back or down the line to make the call.
 - When in Position A on fouls down the 1st base side, **base umpire** can and should help.

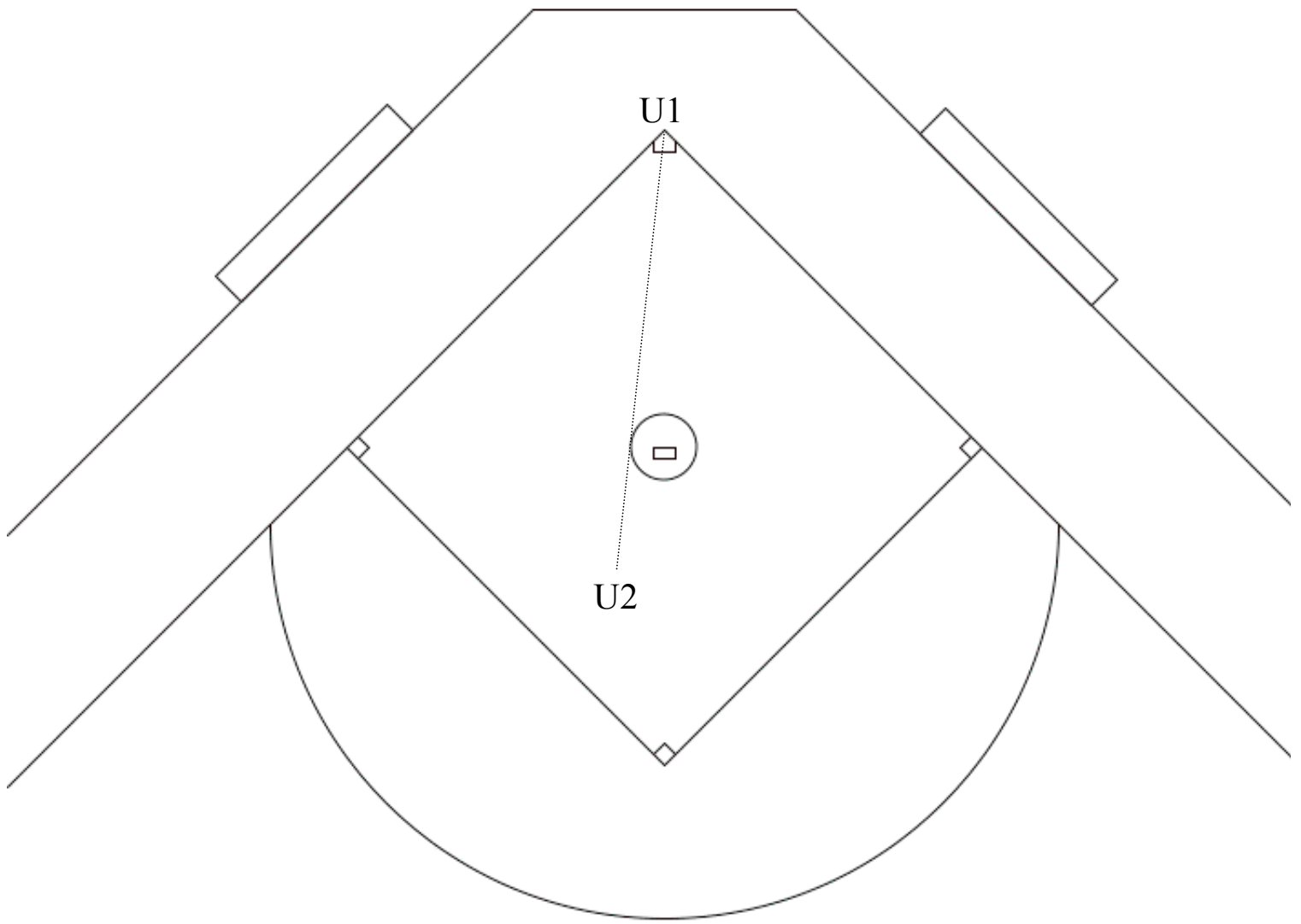
3. Calling Fair or Foul
 - Always call foul; always point fair.
 - Plate and base umpire responsibilities.
4. Calling safe and out
 - Let the closeness of the play dictate how you make the call.
5. Obstruction and Interference

Plate Mechanics

1. In the field
 - See above
2. Using your equipment
 - Indicator
 - Mask
3. Know your catcher
 - Warm up pitches in 1st inning, take a look
4. Calling Balls and Strikes
 - Positions
 - Scissors
 - Crouch
 - Put your eye at the top of the strike zone
 - Always work the slot
 - Problems
 - Call *every* pitch!
 - Exception: do not call a swinging strike—signal only
 - Foul tip
 - Give count periodically.
 - On 1-2 or 2-1 pitch
 - The first time there are 3 balls
 - The first time the count is full (no closed fists)
 - Any time there is a delay in the action
 - Check swings
 - Appeal only on a check swing that is called a ball
 - Never appeal a check swing you call a strike
 - Although the rulebook doesn't require it, out of courtesy, always ask your partner on an *appealed* check swing. Partner should always give an honest answer.

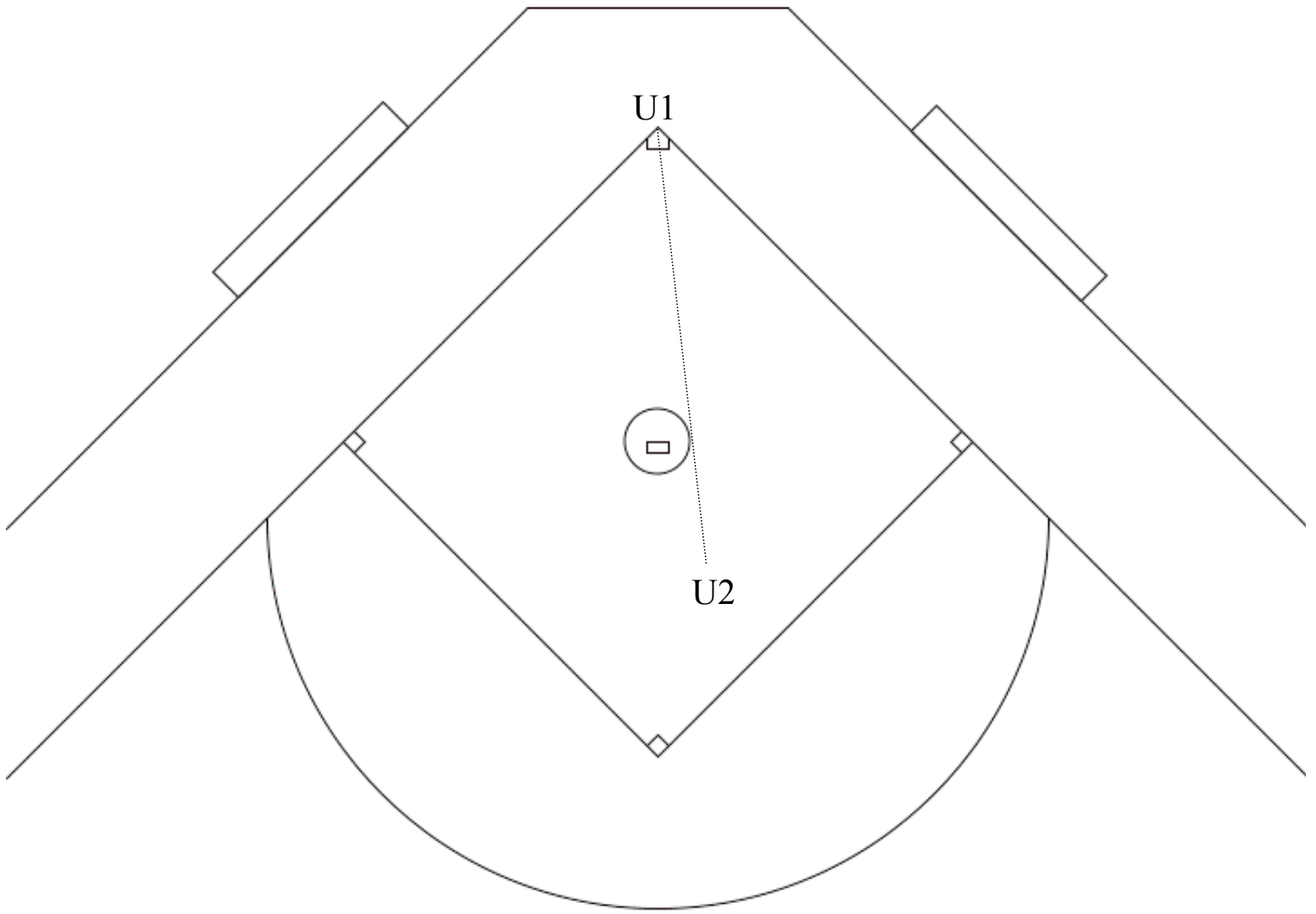


Position A
No runners on base



Position B

Runners on 1st only; 1st & 3rd, 3rd only, 2nd & 3rd,
and bases loaded



Position C

Runners on 2nd only, and 1st & 2nd.

3-Man Mechanics

Generalities

1. If you go out, **stay out**. Then revert to two man mechanics.
2. If you are on the line, in general always go out to cover “your” outfield fly.
3. If you are in the middle (**B** or **C** positions), *never* go out to cover “your” outfield fly.
4. Anytime there is a runner on first, the first base umpire will always be at first (**A** position).

Outfield fly coverage

1. No runners on
 - From the center fielder to the right field line
 - U2 goes out
 - U1 watches batter runner touch 1st
 - U3 takes runner into 2nd and 3rd
 - From the center fielder to the left field line
 - U3 goes out
 - U2 comes inside, makes the pivot, watches the runner tag first and be prepared to take him into 2nd **and** 3rd.
2. Runner on first.
 - U3 has everything in the short “V” (between LF and CF)
 - U2 watches tag-up, and batter runner touch 1st
 - U2 has balls from CF to right field line
 - U3 watches tag-up
 - U1 watches batter runner tag first
 - U1 has balls down left field line (between LF and LF line)
 - U2 watches tag-up at first and batter runner tag first
3. Runners on first and second
 - Same fly ball coverage as #2 above
 - U1 takes runner into third on tag-up

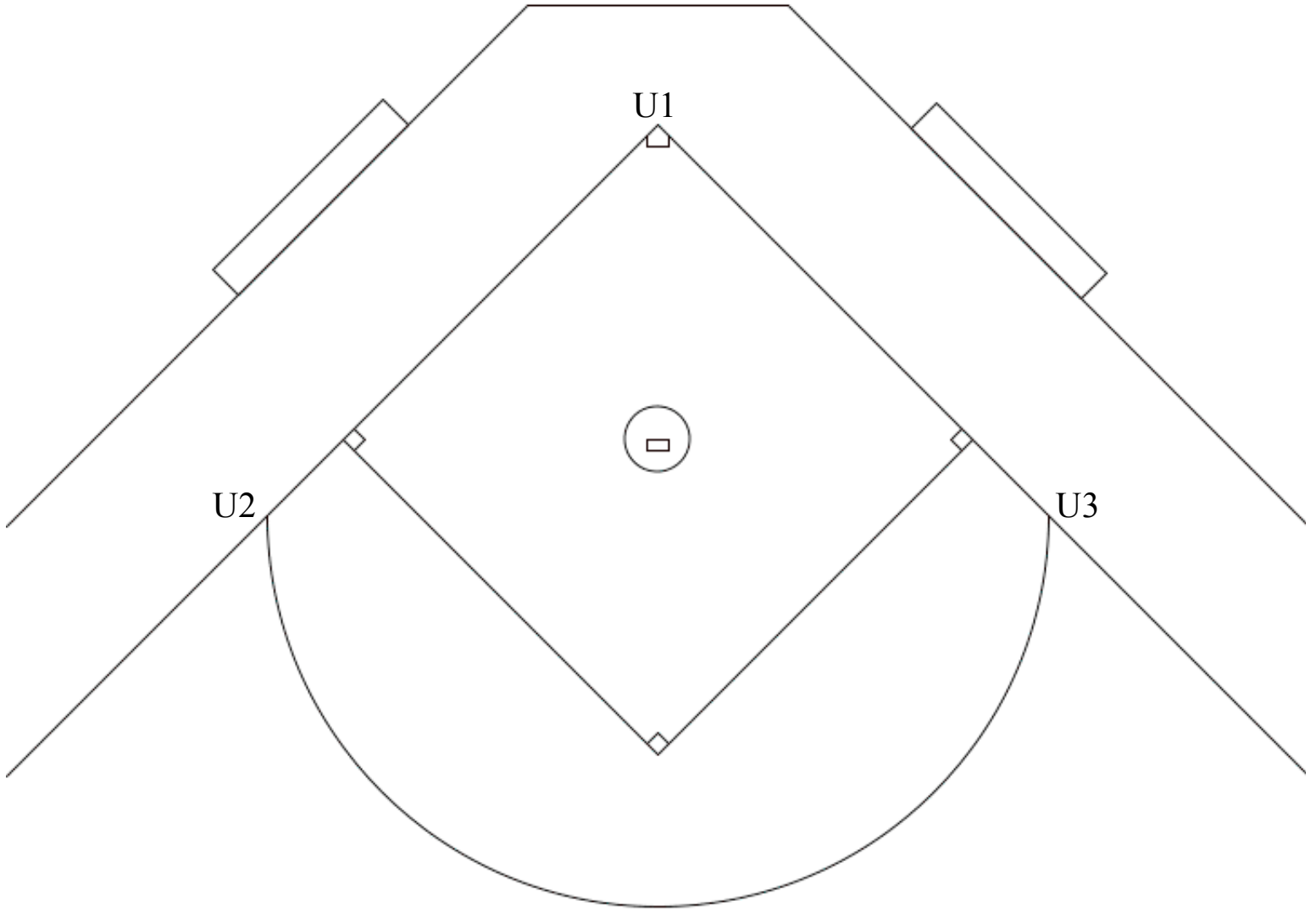
- U3 stays at second
 - U2 prepares to cover the plate unless he goes out
4. Runners on first and third
- Same fly ball coverage as #2 above
 - U1 takes tag-up at third
5. Bases loaded
- Same fly ball coverage as #2 above
 - If U2 goes out, cover as a two man crew
 - U1 has tag-up at third
 - U3 has everything else
 - If U2 does not go out
 - U1 has tag-up at third
 - U3 has tag-up at 2nd and runner into third
 - U2 has all other tag-ups and runners
6. Runner on second
- U2 has everything in the short “V” (between CF and RF)
 - U3 has tag-up and runner into third
 - U1 watches batter runner tag first
 - U1 has balls down right field line
 - U3 has tag-up and runner into third
 - U2 watches batter runner tag first
 - U3 has everything from CF to left field line
 - U2 has tag-up and runner into third
 - U1 watches batter runner tag first
7. Runners on second and third
- Same fly ball coverage as #6 above
 - If U3 goes out, cover as a two man crew
 - U1 has tag-up at third
 - U2 has everything else
 - If U3 is not out
 - U3 has tag-up at third and runner into third
 - U2 has tag-up at 2nd
 - U1 watches batter runner tag first
8. Runner on third only
- Same fly ball coverage as nobody on base
 - U1 takes tag-up at third
 - If U2 goes out, U3 watches batter runner touch first and take play into second
 - If U3 goes out, U2 watches batter runner touch first and take play into second

Base hit coverage

1. No runners on or runner at third only
 - U2 watches batter runner tag first
 - U3 covers second base
 - If U3 goes out, U2 takes batter runner all the way to third if necessary
2. Runner on first or runners on first and third
 - U1 takes runner at first into third
 - U2 watch batter runner tag first
 - U3 stays at second
 - On an obvious gapper, U2 be prepared to cover the plate
3. Runners on first and second, or bases loaded
 - U1 stay home; watch runner on second tag third
 - U3 stay at second, watch runner at first tag second, and take him into third
 - U2 watch batter runner tag first, and take him into second
4. Runner on second or second and third
 - U1 stay home
 - U3 watch runner at second tag third
 - U2 watch batter runner tag first, and take him into second

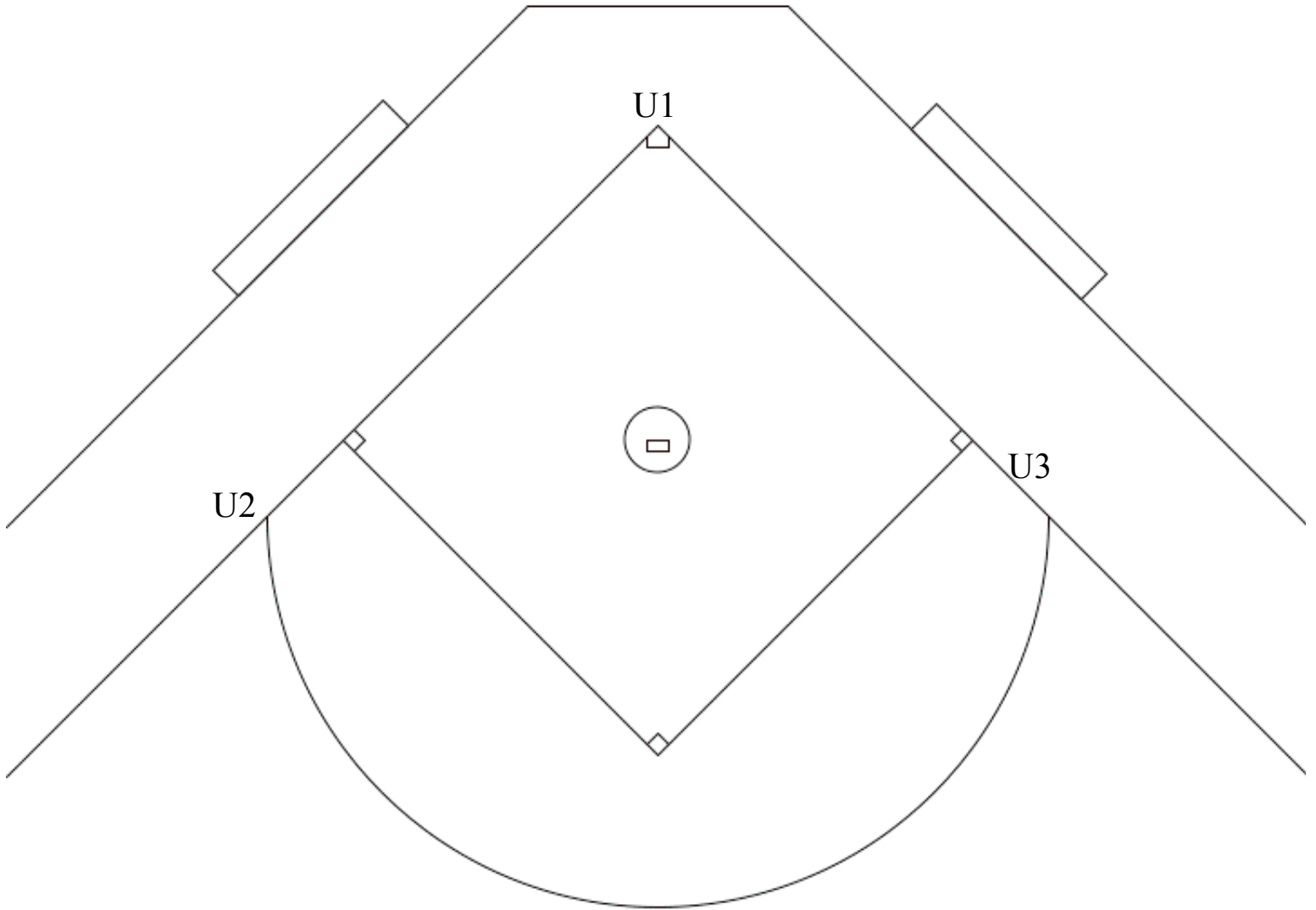
Miscellaneous coverages

1. Rundowns
 - U2 and U3 should always cover each end of a rundown
Exception: rundown between 3rd and the plate
 - Unless there is a runner on third, U1 should cover third on a rundown between 1st and 2nd
2. Foul pop-up - cover the same as in 2-man
3. Appeals on check swing
 - Go to the man on the “outside” of the batter, even if the “outside” man is in the middle.
19. U3 will always rule on the legality of slide into 2nd on the front end of the 4 to 3 double play.



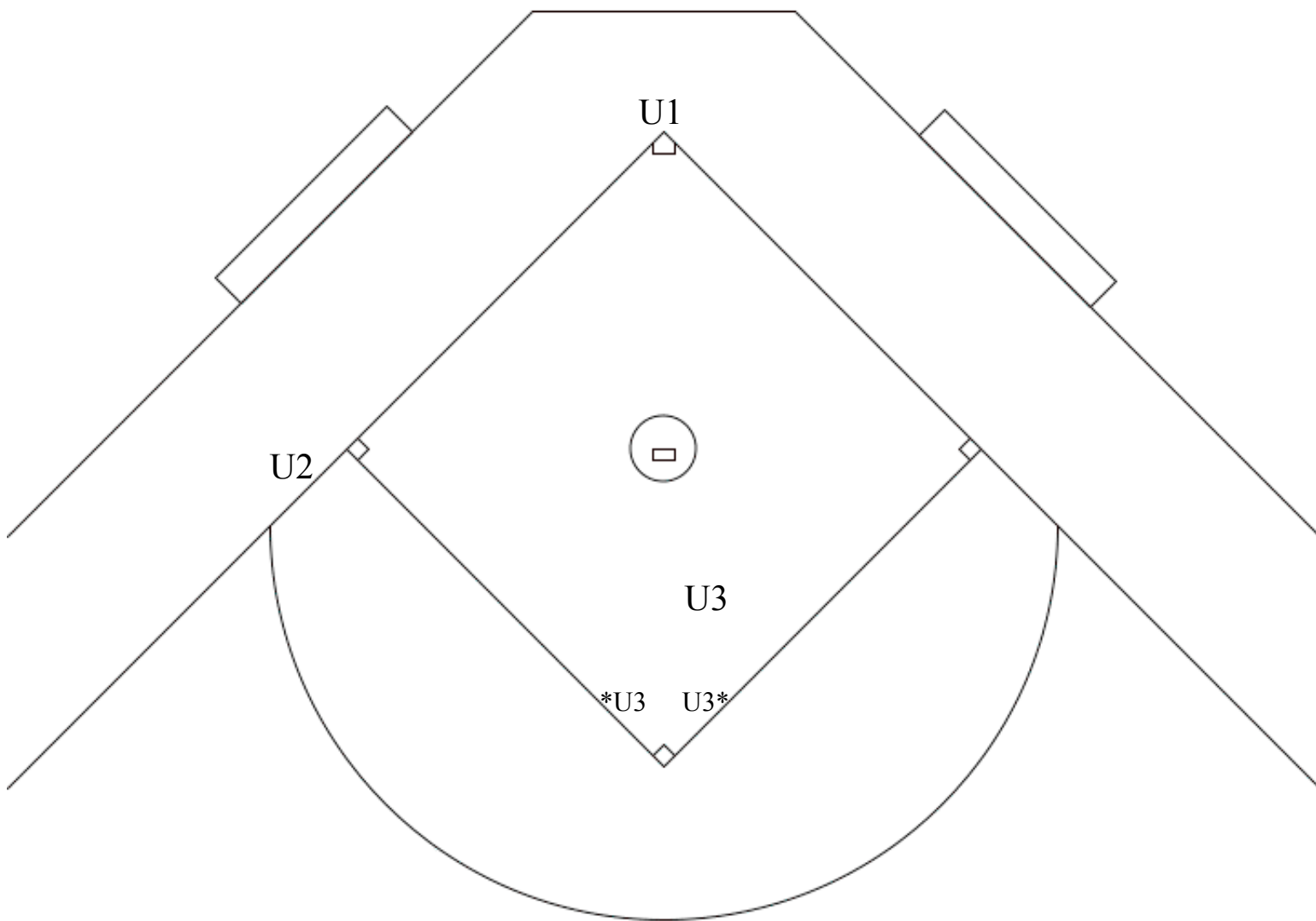
3-Man Positions A & D

No runners on base



3-Man Positions A & D

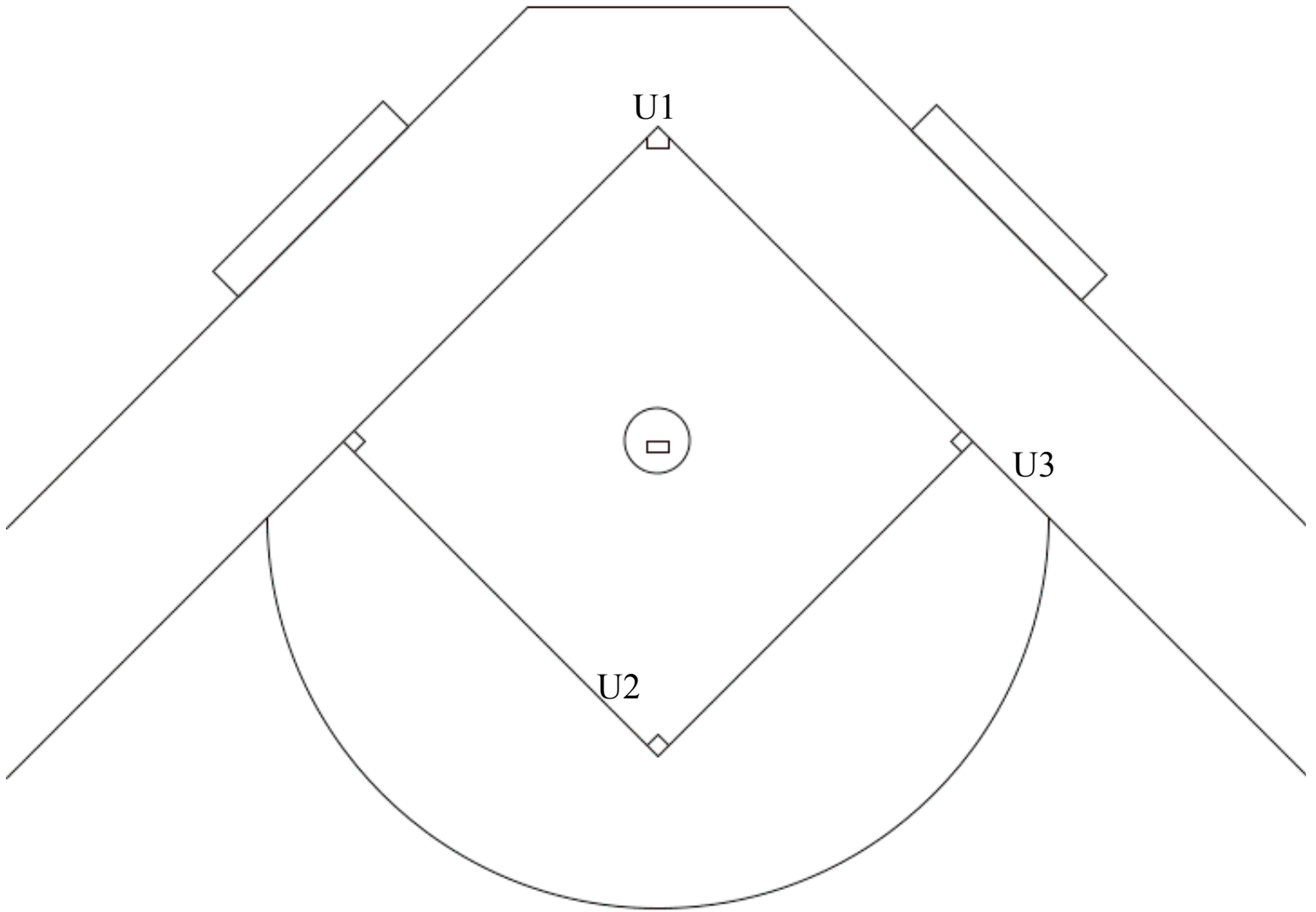
Runner on 3rd only (Modified D Position)



3-Man Positions A & C

Anytime there is a runner on 1st, 2nd & 3rd, 2nd only with 2 outs

*Consider a **modified** B or C position with a runner at 1st only.



3-Man Positions B & C

Runner on 2nd, **with less than 2** outs only



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What makes a good Umpire?

You may want to think about these as you go about your task of officiating.

Have your head on right
Get into the flow of the game
Show confidence
Answer all reasonable questions
Stay cool
Dress properly
Be honest

Don't be a tough guy/gal
Don't bark
Forget the fans
Choose your words wisely
Be impartial
Listen
Use common sense

Other tips

Sportsmanship
Fair and firm in all decisions
Censure those whose behavior is unbecoming
Consistency
Keep a balanced outlook
Have the courage to make the call that you see
Put forth maximum effort before, during, and after the game

Treat all with respect
Self-control from start to finish
Help other umpires
Have strong working knowledge of the rules
Practice critical self-evaluation
Admit your own mistakes and correct them
Consider it a privilege, not an obligation to officiate

The dividing line between player, coach and umpire is how differently each looks at the fairness of competition: a player wants a fair start and knowledgeable umpires. A coach wants to project outcomes and doesn't want an umpire to determine the outcome. An umpire doesn't care who wins; he/she just cares that the game is played fairly and within the rules.



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Baseball Thoughts

1. Head out to home plate and the mound with head up and with determination.
2. If a catcher asks for help on a check swing, NEVER refuse.
3. When a relief pitcher comes in and is warming up, and you are the base umpire, walk behind first base to see where that free leg and foot are in relation to the plane of the rubber. It won't change when you're in the middle of the infield and you'll know when he does something differently.
4. If the team in the first base dugout is giving you static after a play, stand on the third base line between innings for a while.
5. If you are the base umpire, don't talk much to any players or coaches, even when a relief pitcher is warming up, unless you have something to say relative to the game.
6. Record all changes on your lineup card, even in a blowout.
7. Count warm-up pitches and don't allow excess ones unless the situation merits it.
8. Notice which foot a pitcher steps off the rubber with when nobody is on base—chances are he'll do it with the same foot when runners are on.
9. Clean your shoes.
10. Get clean matching ball bags and pants that fit.
11. Buy a new fitted hat at least every two years.
12. Make frequent eye contact with your partner, especially when runners are on base, and acknowledge hand signs.
13. Someone else keep an indicator and use it with runners on base.
14. As the plate umpire, flash the count regularly with runners on base.
15. Ask other umpires why they do the things they do, and ask for critique of your own work from umpires you respect.
16. Discuss odd plays every chance you get, and dig for the answers in as many sources as you can—don't quit looking for an answer just because you find one.
17. Never stop learning how to umpire. Don't be satisfied with your performance.
18. Take a lawn chair and a carpet square in your trunk.
19. Take the appropriate rulebook to the game sight, but leave it in the car or locker room.
20. Always volunteer to do the plate when you work with someone for the first time—you have more control there.



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Useful Websites and Email Addresses

IHSA: <http://www.ihsa.org/>

IHSA Education Page: <http://www.ihsa.org/education/>

IHSA Officials Page: <http://go.ihsa.org/officials/>

National Federation: <http://www.nfhs.org/>

IESA: <http://www.iesa.org/>

Dave Gannaway: dgannaway@ihsa.org