

Grandville Umpire Training 2013

Part II

Working the Plate and Bases

David Furman

BaseballUmpires@grandvillell.com

560.8714

Registration

To be scheduled for games, you **MUST**:

1. Register as an umpire at grandvillell.com
 - Even if you did last year, you must re-register this year
2. Complete, sign, and return the Independent Contractor Agreement
3. Send me the dates you are available to umpire

If you have questions or problems, call or email me.



Today we will cover

- Qualities of a Good Umpire
- What does the Plate Umpire do?
 - Managing the Game
 - Umpire Signs and Signals
 - Getting into the Slot – Setting Up
 - Strikes, Balls, and Fouls
 - Where do I go at the crack of the bat?
- What does the Base Umpire do?
 - Basic Assignments
 - Start Positions
 - Getting into Position
 - Making Calls
 - Base Runner Scenarios
- Infield Fly
- Appeals
- Problem Calls

Qualities of a Good Umpire

- Show up on time – 20 minutes before game time
- Bring your indicator (clicker) and plate brush
 - \$1 each in the concessions stand
- Get a blank Umpire Compensation Form at the concessions stand
- Look like an umpire
 - Grandville LL Umpire T shirt
 - Cap and sun glasses for base umpire
 - Cleats or tennis shoes (no sandals or flip flops)
 - Dress for the weather!
 - Wear all protective gear (Shin guards, Chest protector, Mask, Cup)
 - All gear is stored in the field sheds or in the West Complex garage
 - Hold the indicator in your left hand
 - Remove mask with left hand

Qualities of a Good Umpire

- Pay attention to the game at all times
 - Includes between half innings
 - Absolutely no texting
- Have good timing – not too hasty
 - Pause, read the play, react
- Be decisive
 - Use your voice and signals to communicate your decision with confidence
- Work and communicate with partner
 - You are a team
- Know where to be and hustle to get there
- Know the rules

What Does the Plate Umpire Do?

- Manage the game's start, finish, and pace
- Call balls and strikes
- Make all fair / foul calls
- Make all catch / no-catch calls
- Make all safe / out calls at home
- Make running lane violation calls
- Help your partner if he asks
- Don't make calls that belong to your partner

Managing the Game – Plate Umpire

- You control signs & signals with your partner
- You control the pace of the game
 - Inning changeovers
 - Keeping batters moving
- Your style is important
 - Use a strong & commanding voice for calling balls, strikes, foul, safe & out
- Your appearance and presentation are key
 - You must look like an umpire
 - Be confident, take charge

The Umpire Pre-Game Meeting

- Meet with your partner 15 minutes before game time
 - Review Division of Responsibilities
 - Discuss Fair / Foul coverage
 - Discuss Catch / No-catch coverage
 - Discuss Safe / Out coverage at third base
 - Review Ground Rules
 - Trees on field 13 are immediate foul, not catchable
 - Place cones on fields 6, 7, and 14 & discuss balls hit past them in the air & on the ground
 - Review Umpire Signals
 - Review Handling Problem Calls / Getting Help

Umpire to Umpire Signals

- Communicating with you partner is important
 - PU gives the signals; Base Umpire flashes back
 - Make eye contact with your partner at every new batter and whenever the situation changes
 - Number of outs, if any – hands out to the side, fingers indicate number of outs
 - Infield Fly situation, if applicable – right fist to chest
 - Check swing – left hand point to partner “DID HE GO”?
 - Lost count – twirl fingers

Bat Inspection - Baseball

- Inspect each team's bats 10 minutes before game time

Division	Max Length	Max Diameter	Barrel Material	Required Marking	Drop
Majors and below	33"	2-1/4"	Wood	None	Any
			Metal/Alloy	BPF 1.15 or lower	Any
			Composite*	BPF 1.15 or lower	Any
Juniors	34"	2-5/8"	Wood	None	Any
			Metal/Alloy	None	Any
			Composite	BBCOR	Any
Seniors	36"	2-5/8"	Wood	None	Minus 3
			Not wood	BBCOR	Minus 3

Composite barreled bats in Majors and below must be on the Approved List (the coach must show you the bat on the list)

Bat Inspection - Softball

- Inspect each team's bats 10 minutes before game time

Division	Max Length	Max Diameter	Barrel Material	Required Marking	Drop
Majors and below	33"	2-1/4"	Wood	None	Any
			Non-wood	BPF 1.20 or lower	Any
Juniors & Above	34"	2-1/4"	Wood	None	Any
			Non-wood	BPF 1.20 or lower	Any

No special rules for composite bats in softball

Pre-Game Meeting with Managers

- Plate umpire calls both managers to the plate area 5 minutes before game time while the home team warms up
 - Introduce yourself and partner if you haven't yet
 - Ask managers to confirm their players are properly equipped
 - No jewelry, rope necklaces, rubber bracelets, etc.
 - Review ground rules
 - Clarify method for questioning calls
 - No discussion on judgment calls (balls/strikes, safe/out)
 - After receiving time, go to the umpire that made the call
 - Can ask the umpires confer to review a rule decision

Safety During the Game

- Players do not handle bats off the field
- Players remain in the dugout when not playing
- No on deck hitter allowed on the field (Majors & below)
- All batters and runners wear helmets
- Catcher must have a dangler
- Warm up catchers must wear a mask and helmet

Starting the Game

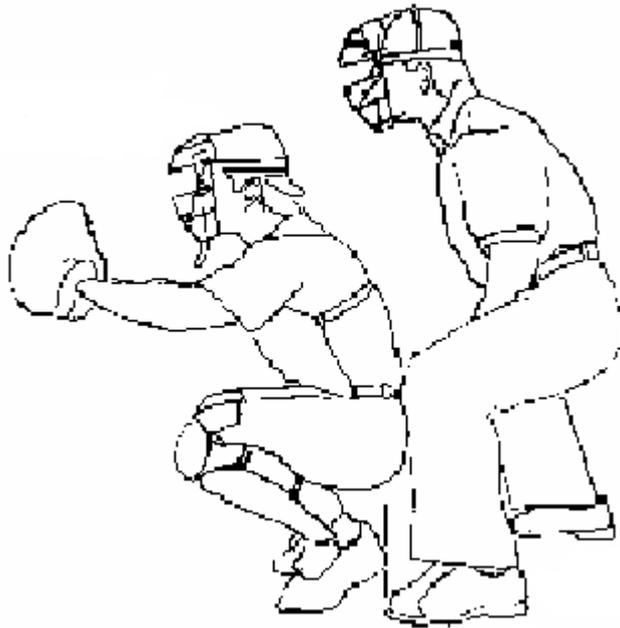
- The game starts when the pitcher holds the ball on the rubber, the batter is in the batter's box and the PU calls "Play".

Setting Up in the Slot

- Work the plate using the Slot position. Umpire's nose:
 - Inside edge of strike zone
 - Over catcher's head
- The strike zone changes with the player, so visualize the zone.
- Legs apart for stable platform
- Slightly forward at waist
- Keep your head still
- Track the ball with eyes
- Pause, decide, then call



Setting Up in the Slot



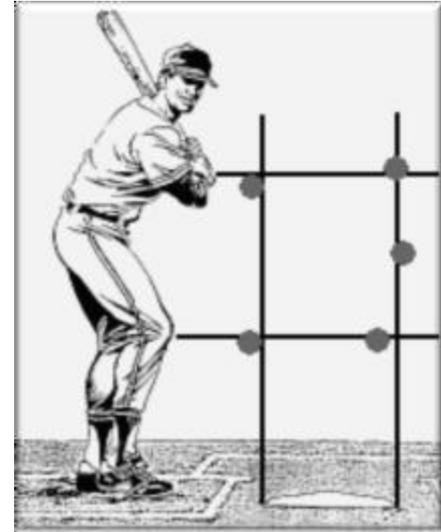
Use reference points to frame the strike zone:

- Visualize the top of the zone – often the batter's hands are at the top of the zone
- Look at the catcher's mitt relative to the batter's knees
- Follow the ball from the pitcher's hand to the catcher's mitt moving only your eyes. Hold your head still.
- Be sure you can see the entire plate so you can see the low and away pitch



The Strike Zone

“That space over home plate which is between the batter’s armpits and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural stance. The umpire shall determine the strike zone according to the batter’s usual stance when that batter swings at a pitch.”



- Any part of the ball:
 - Over the plate
 - Armpits
 - Knees
- Natural stance when swinging

What is a Strike

A strike is a legal pitch which is – 2.0

1. Struck at by the batter and missed (swinging strike)
2. Not struck at, if any part of the ball passes through any part of the strike zone (called strike)
3. Fouled by the batter when there are fewer than two strikes
4. Bunted foul (batter is out and ball is dead if batter bunts foul on third strike)
5. Touches the batter as he swings at it (dead ball)
6. Touches the batter in flight in the strike zone
7. Becomes a foul tip (ball is live and in play)

The Strike Call



You decide it is a
strike



Stand straight up,
Right hand raised



Clinch fist, call “STRIKE” if no
swing or checked swing, say
nothing for swinging strikes

A Foul Tip is Not a Foul Ball

A foul tip is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught.

It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike, and the ball is in play. It is not a catch if it is a rebound, unless the ball has first touched the catcher's glove or hand — 2.0.

1. Sharp and direct from bat to catcher's mitt
2. Must be caught
3. Always a strike; if strike 3, batter is out.
4. Always a live ball (runners may attempt to advance)
5. A foul tip that is not caught is just a foul ball (runners return)

The Foul Tip Call



You decide it is a
foul tip



Stand up, right
hand on left
forearm



Slide your right
hand up and out



Clinch fist, no
vocalization
(swinging strike)

What's a Ball

A ball is a pitch which does not enter the strike zone in flight and is not struck at by the batter

- If a pitch touches the batter in flight and is not in the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base
- If the batter swings at such a pitch and misses, it is a strike
- If the pitch touches the ground and bounces through the strike zone it is a ball
- If the pitch touches the ground and bounces and then touches the batter, the batter is awarded first base

The Ball Call



You decide it is a
ball



You stay down and
call "BALL"

What's a Uncaught Third Strike

Third strike not caught in flight – 6.05, 6.09

- Batter is not out and becomes a runner if:
 - There are 2 outs, or
 - With less than 2 outs, no runner on first base
 - If first base is occupied, the batter is out even if the runner on first is stealing
- The batter can attempt to reach first until he enters the dugout
- If the batter attempts to reach first when there are less than 2 outs and first base is occupied, let the play proceed but call “BATTER’S OUT”.
- This rule applies to – Supplementary rules
 - Softball Majors and higher – full season
 - Softball AAA – after May 14
 - Baseball Majors and higher – full season
 - Baseball AAA – does not apply

The Uncaught Third Strike Call



You decide it is a
strike



Clinch fist, call
“STRIKE”



If the pitch was not caught and
first base is open or there are
two outs, say “No Catch”

What's a Foul Ball

- Judge the position of the ball, not the fielder
- On the infield –
 - Where the ball is first touched, or
 - Where the ball settles (stops)
- Bounding to the outfield –
 - Where the ball is when passing first or third
- In the outfield –
 - Where the ball is first touched, or
 - Where the ball first lands
- A fly ball caught in foul territory is live

The Foul Call



Raise both arms,
palms out, and call
“FOUL”

The Fair Non-Call



Point into fair territory,
NEVER CALL “FAIR”

Where do I go on the Crack of the Bat?

- Be aware of the situation. Know where the runners are before the pitch.
- If the hit is close to a base line, stay on the line to make the fair / foul call
- If the hit is a fly ball with no runners on, move toward the ball to see the catch / no catch clearly
- If the hit is a fly ball with runners on:
 - Move toward the ball to see the catch / no catch clearly and announce the decision in a clear & strong voice
 - Watch for obstruction
 - Be ready for a play at home plate

Where do I go on the Crack of the Bat?

- If the hit is a grounder, with no runners on
 - Clear the catcher to the left
 - Trail the batter-runner 1 / 3 of the way to first
 - Watch for the first baseman to pull his foot or running lane violation
 - Follow the ball on overthrows
- If the hit is a grounder with runners on
 - Watch runners not being played on. The base umpire watches the runner being played on.
 - Pay attention to where the ball is. Be aware of overthrows that may go out of play.
 - Prepare for a play at the plate.

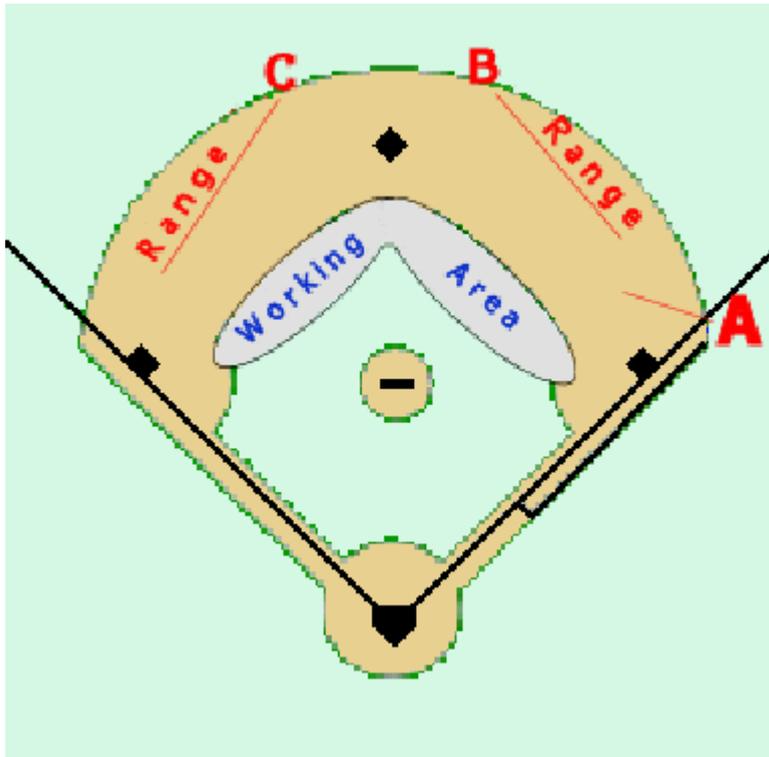
Avoiding the Catcher

- On a pop up near or behind the plate
 - Take your eyes off the ball and watch the catcher.
 - If she goes right, swing your right leg back (“opening the gate”) and let her by
 - If she goes left, swing your left leg back
 - Let her take you to the ball

What Does the Base Umpire Do?

- Makes all safe / out calls at first, second, and **third**
- Watches all base touches and tag ups
- Watches for runners leaving early at all bases
- On hits to the outfield, the umpire moves into the infield.
- On hits that stay in the infield, the umpire stays in the outfield.
- Helps with strike call on checked swings if asked
- Shares responsibility for calling infield fly, interference, and obstruction

Starting Positions: A, B, C



- No runners, start at A
- Runner at first only, start at B
- All other situations, start at C

Angle over Distance

When the ball is hit:

- Read the situation
- When you have determined where the play will be, move to make the call
 - No closer than 10 feet from the play and at a 90 degree angle to the throw or tag
 - But there's only one of you. You will need to make calls at first from position C

Getting the right angle is more important than being close.

Getting into Position

- Move to where you will make the call, chest to the ball
- Find the throw from the fielder
- Pivot to where the throw is going
- Go to hands-on-knees set position
 - Don't make a call while moving
- Watch the whole play
 - Find the ball, Is it held firmly?
- Announce your decision
 - Use the proper signal and a firm voice

Making the Safe / Out Call

- If the tag is on a base, focus your eyes on the base, the feet of the fielder and runner. See the ball arrive in your peripheral vision.
- If the tag is on a runner, focus on the fielder's hand that holds the ball.

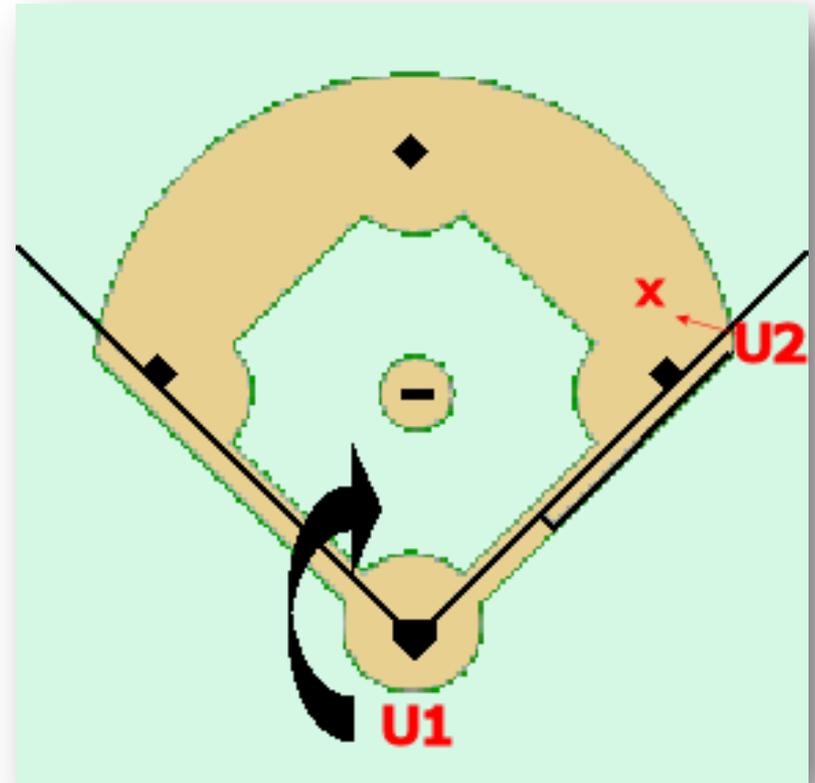
Base Runner Scenarios

- The following slides present some typical base running scenarios:
 - No runners on base, hit to the infield
 - No runners on base, hit to the outfield
 - Runner at first, hit to the infield
 - Runner at first, hit to the outfield
 - All other runner situations, hit to the infield
 - All other runner situations, hit to the outfield

No Runners on Base

Hit to the infield

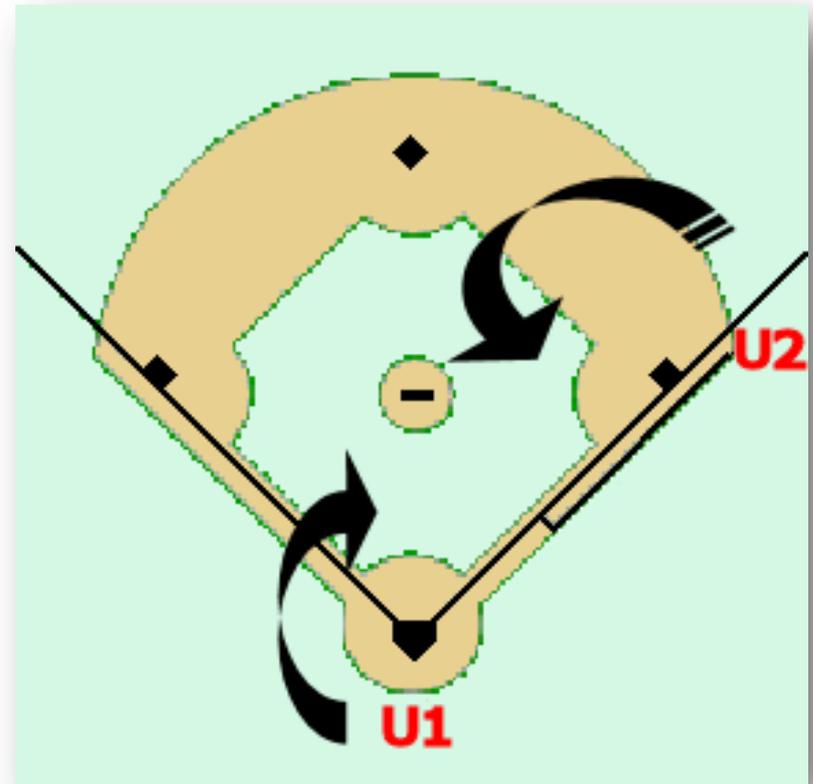
- BU starts in A. On hit, move into position for play at first
- On overthrows, watch for ball out of play
- If runner overruns/overslides first, watch for move toward second
- If runner continues toward second, move into position for play at second but stay with the runner
- See all base touches



No Runners on Base

Hit to the outfield

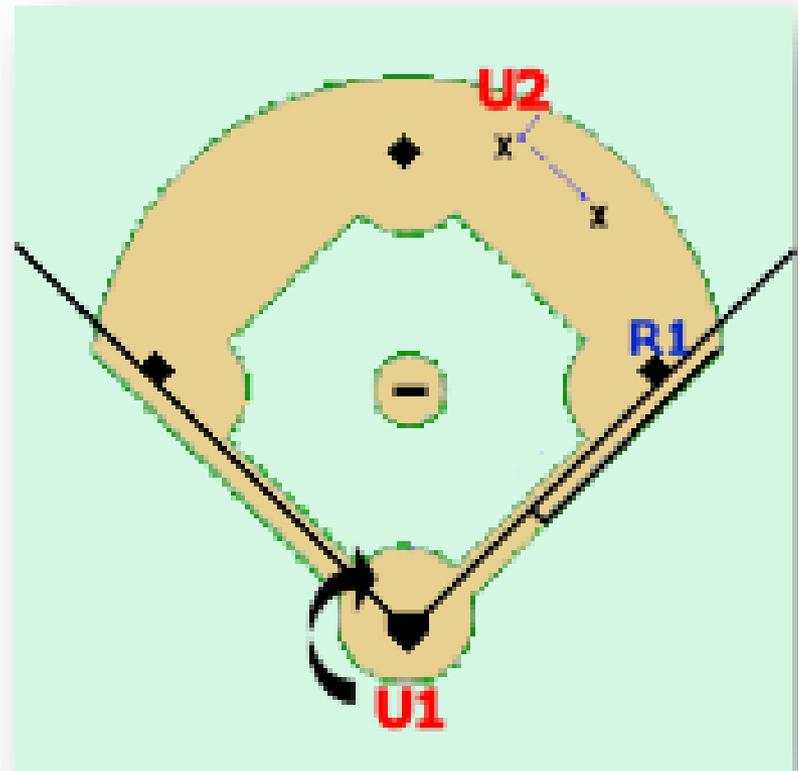
- Break inside and pivot in the infield, find the ball, watch for touch of first and possible obstruction
- Stay with the runner if he advances toward second or third
- Continue to know where the ball is and watch the runner



Runner at First Base Only

Hit to the infield

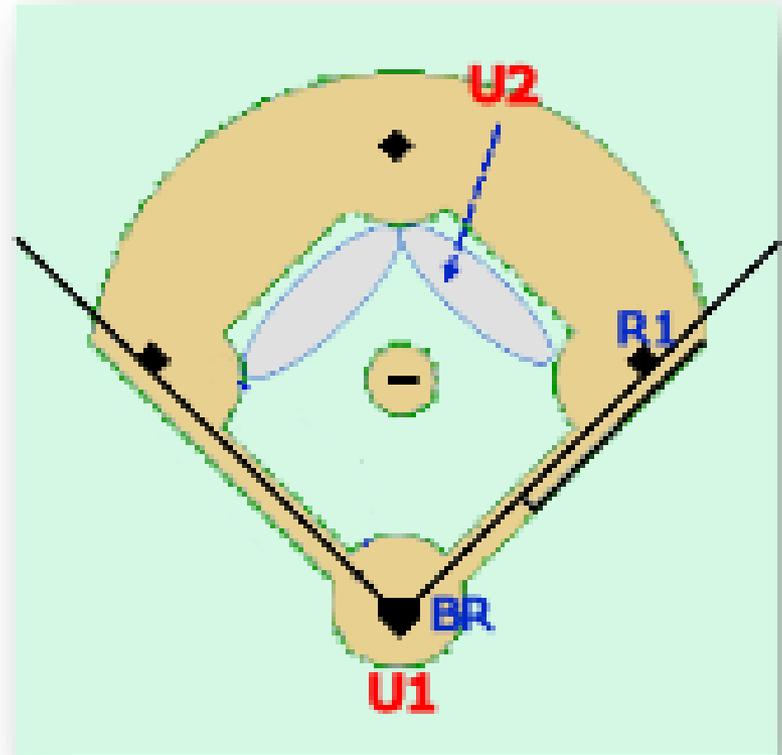
- BU starts in B. On hit, move into position for play at first or second
- Be ready for double play attempt
- If runner overruns/overslides first, watch for move toward second but your priority is R1
- See all base touches
- Watch for possible obstruction



Runner at First Base Only

Hit to the outfield

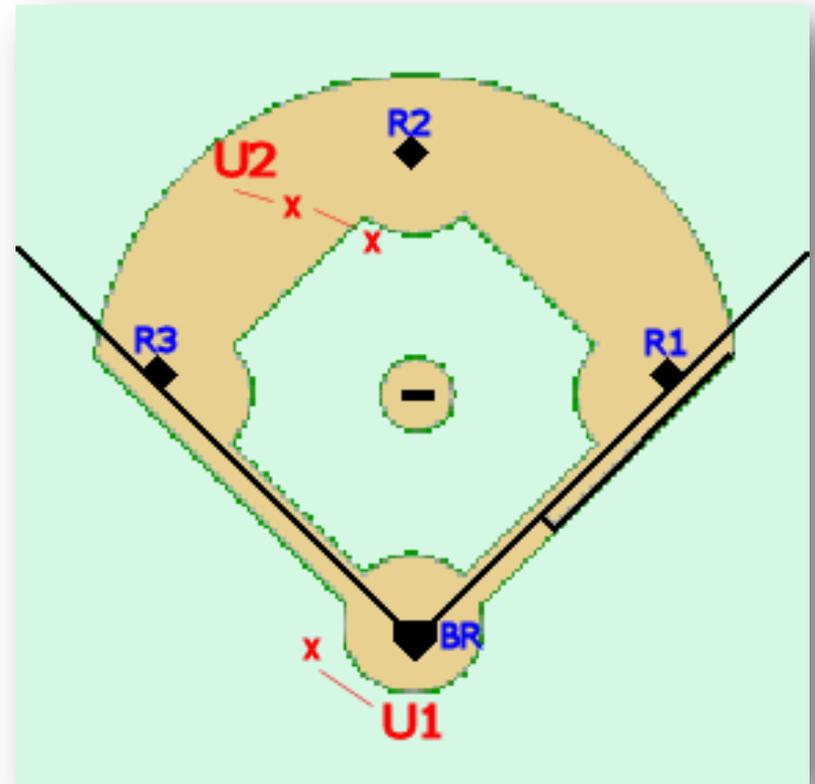
- Break inside and pivot in the infield, find the ball, watching for touch of all bases
- If the hit is a fly ball that is caught (the PU will call Catch / No Catch), immediately look at runner on first to see tag up.
- Pick up the ball as it returns to the infield. Follow the ball to the play.



All Other Situations

Hit to the infield

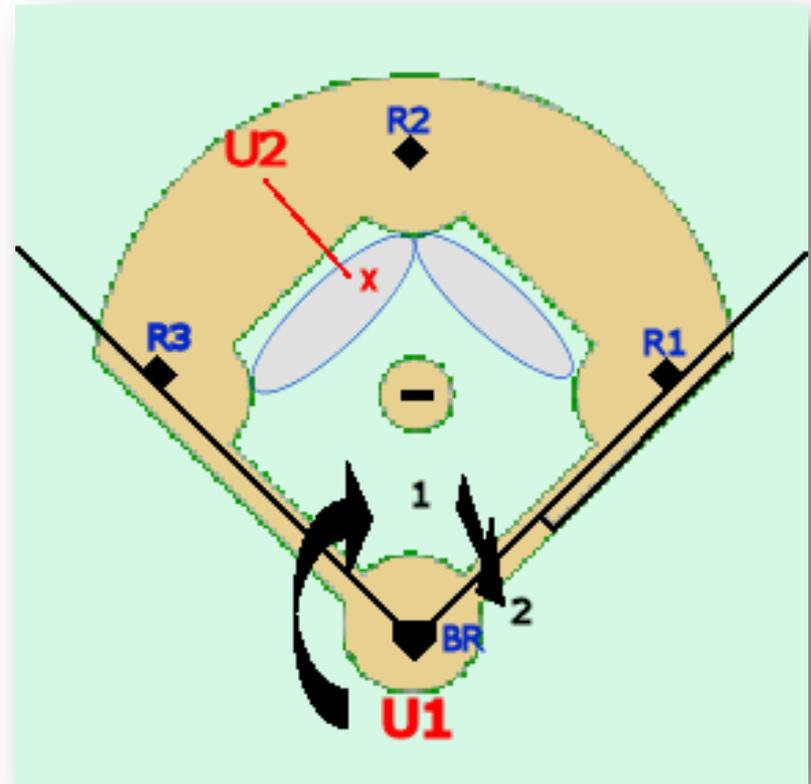
- BU starts in C. On hit, follow the ball to the play
- Be ready for double play attempt
- If batter-runner overruns/overslides first, watch for move toward second
- See all base touches
- Watch for possible obstruction



All Other Situations

Hit to the outfield

- Break inside and pivot in the infield, find the ball, watching for touch of all bases
- If the hit is a fly ball that is caught (the PU will call Catch / No Catch), immediately look at runners to see tag up.
- Pick up the ball as it returns to the infield. Follow the ball to the play.



Single Umpire Games

If you are the only umpire (Division AA)

- You cannot watch everything, so concentrate on responsibilities:
 - Strike / Ball
 - Fair / Foul
 - Catch / No Catch
 - Safe / Out
- Hustle out from behind the plate
- Angle over Distance
- Strong & commanding voice
- You may ask the home coach to provide a parent to be the base umpire

Infield Fly

... a fair fly ball (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, before two are out.

- Be aware of the situation before the pitch. Signal to your partner and watch for her to return the signal.
- If a fly ball is hit, wait for it to reach its peak, then, if you decide it can be caught **with ordinary effort** by an infielder, point up and call “Infield Fly, Batter’s Out” or “Infield Fly, If Fair” if the ball is near a base line
- This is a shared call by either the PU or the BU
- If you forget to call the IF and the defense gets a double play and the offensive coach complains, then return all runners and call the batter out.

Appeals

- The ball must be alive and in play
 - If already live, the ball does not need to be returned to the pitcher
- The defense must point out and specify the infraction while tagging the appropriate base or player
- Appeals must be made before the next play or pitch (not counting “continuous action” that includes the appealable infraction)
- If the defense throws the ball out of play or attempts to make a play on another runner, they lose the right to appeal

Problem Calls / Getting Help

- Our main goal is to get the call right. If you make a mistake, don't worry.
 - If you can correct it, do so.
 - If you can't, learn from it and move on.
- If you are not sure about a call, you can decide to talk to your partner.
- If you see something your partner may have missed, offer help if he asks you.

Most Important Points

- Discuss responsibilities with your partner
- Use a Strong & Commanding Voice for all calls
- Know the situation before the pitch
- Angle over Distance
- Hustle to position
- Pause, read, react
- Control the game pace between innings