

Baseball

3-Man

Mechanics

Index

Title

- Overview of Basics
- Definitions
- Coaching Points
- Responsibilities
- Nobody On
- Runner @ 1st Only
- Runner @ 1st & 2nd
- Runners @ 1st & 3rd
- Runner @ 2nd or 2nd & 3rd
- Runner @ 3rd Only
- Bases Loaded
- Line Drive & Pop-Up Coverage - Plate
- Line Drive & Pop-Up Coverage - Bases
- Field Diagram

Overview of Basics

3 MAN-MECHANICS

The philosophy of this three-man system is to make it similar to the two-man system. Having a thorough knowledge of 2-man mechanics is essential when learning these basic 3-man mechanics; which is an enhancement of the 2-man system. One more official, a few more mechanics, simply means better coverage.

The following pages include the basic responsibilities of each umpire for 3-man mechanics. Although you should know and understand each position, it may help you to read, just before a game, that particular position you will be working.

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

Definitions

- 1. Umpire abbreviations:** U1 = Plate , U2 = 1st Base, U3 = 3rd Base
- 2. Runner abbreviations:** BR= Batter runner, R1= runner @ 1st, R2= runner @ 2nd & R3= runner @ 3rd.
- 3. Pause, Read and react:** Pause (*hesitate momentarily*), read (*reaction of fielder*), and react (*go out on ball*) if determined to be a 'trouble ball.'
- 4. 'Trouble ball':** Is any batted ball that has a chance to be fair/foul, possible home run, fielders converging, trapped ball, or an over the shoulder or below the waist catch.
- 5. The 'working area':** The working area is defined as the area behind the mound between the B and C position (midway from the back of the mound to the cutout in front of 2nd base).
- 6. The 'V':** The area between F7 and F9 in the outfield.
- 7. Timing:** The definition of timing is prioritizing. If you complete your duties in the proper priority (see play finish, decide what happened, and then announce what happened) your percentage of correct calls will increase and your timing will be great.

Coaching Points

- 1.** Umpires must come to a complete stop and set before making a call. The purpose for this technique is to be certain the head is still and eyes are focused on play.
- 2.** On all pitches, base umpires must be in a set (hands on knees) position. With no runners on, you may use an aggressive standing set if crew agrees. No matter what, both base umpires are to be the same.
- 3.** Angle over distance. It is better to get the right angle to see the whole play than it is to get closer to the play. On plays to the outfield, the umpire should get the best angle to see if ball is trapped or bounces before entering glove. Rimming the infield is moving across back edge of the infield while reading the ball to the outfield, getting a better angle on the play.

Responsibilities

- 1. Fair/Foul coverage:** U1 has fair/foul coverage to the front edge of the base on both lines and entire line that becomes uncovered by a base umpire. An umpire in 'A' or 'D' covers fair/foul from the front edge of their base and beyond. The umpires may use the cutout as a guide for fair/foul responsibility when touched by a fielder before passing the base.
- 2. Line drive and pop-up coverage:** U1 always has the pitcher and catcher on pop-ups and line drives, unless a pop-up is over pitcher's head with an umpire inside. When U2 and U3 are on the lines, U1 has corner fielders (F3 & F5) moving in and toward the middle. If either U2 or U3 are inside, U1 has uncovered line moving in, back and toward the line and the other corner fielder moving in. When U2 and U3 are on the lines, they have corner fielders on their side, (U2-F3) (U3-F5) back and toward them and middle fielder on their side moving in, back and toward them (U2-F4) (U3-F6) and the opposite middle fielder toward the middle (U2-F6) (U3-F4). With an umpire inside he has all fielders moving toward the middle, all plays by respective middle fielder and other middle fielder moving in. With U2 or U3 inside, the other wingman has fielders on their side moving back and toward them. (U2-F3 & F4) (U3-F5 & F6) (See diagrams, pages 18-21.)

Any fly foul ball between home and 1st base or home and 3rd base and U2 or U3 are on the line, that umpire and U1 bracket the ball. The other umpire has all plays on the bases. The umpire the fielder is facing when making the catch is responsible to make the call. With U2 and U3 on the lines and a pop up to F5 (not near line) or F6, U3 moves toward 2nd and makes call if fielder is facing him; U1 makes call otherwise. If a pop up to F3 or F4, U2 moves inside to make the call unless either is in front of him; then U1 makes the call.

- 3. Outfield fly ball coverage:** With umpires in A and D, U2 & U3 split the outfield, and one of them goes out on all **trouble fly balls**. With umpires on the corners, if the fly ball is in the 'gray area' between U2 and U3 coverage, U2 should read the ball and aggressively go out, or move into the infield. U2 has F8 straight in, back and toward 1st base line when U2 and U3 are on the lines. U3 should pause, read U2 and react accordingly. (Pause, Read and React). The umpire in 'B' or 'C' takes fly balls in the 'V'. U1 and the umpire on the line take fly balls down either line. Although he has responsibility for ruling on the catch, the umpire inside (B or C) does not cross the base path to go out on trouble balls. When either wingman is inside and has the 'V', it is acceptable if the umpire on the line reads a trouble ball to center field (F8) and goes out, meaning you revert to 2-man mechanics. Communication is key in this situation so as not to have both base umpires on the ball and nobody watching the plays/touches on the bases or a double call is made.

IF U2 or U3 DOES NOT GO OUT AND FLY BALL IS IN HIS AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY...they are still responsible for catch/no catch. U1 is only responsible for outfield coverage when he has the foul line uncovered (when U2 or U3 are inside).

- 4. Whenever there is a runner on first base, U2 stays in 'A':** Rationale: The umpire is in good position for a potentially close back-end of a double play. U3 in 'C' is also in good position for front end of a double play or interference at 2nd base. U3 does not turn with the throw to 1st but maintains his focus at 2nd. U2 is also in 'A' with none on, R3 only and any time there are **TWO** outs.

5. **Rotation Plays:** With nobody on or R3 only and a ball hit cleanly to the outfield, U2 covers first, U3 moves in and covers second, U1 covers third and U2 rotates to cover home. U1 should start to move toward 3rd and U2 toward home as soon as BR commits to second. Once BR commits to 3rd, each completes their rotation; U1 to 3rd and U2 to home.

With R1 or R1 & R3, U1 covers R1 advancing to third if ball goes to the outfield. U2 has touch at 1st then rotates home as soon as R1 commits to third and U3 takes responsibility for the BR at that point. In the R1 & R3 case, U1 should not move up towards third until he is certain there will not be a play on R3 at home, and glance back to ensure R3 touches home.

With R1 and R2 or bases loaded and a ball hit cleanly into the outfield, U1 will remain at home. U2 and U3 will assume responsibility for all bases. U2 will pivot in and take the BR all the way to second or any play back to first. This is called the **slide play or reverse rotation**.

When U1 rotates to 3rd: When U1 is required to rotate to 3rd and U2 covers home, he should stay in foul territory using the base as a starting point to move with the throw for all plays; the same as taking plays at the plate. Rationale: It is a better view of the play coming at you and the additional responsibilities for overthrows/dead ball since U2 is already at the plate for the next play. If U2 goes out, then the crew reverts to a 2-man system which means that for plays at 3rd U1 would move inside to the cutout.

6. **Overthrow responsibility:** If U2 is in 'A', he has overthrows at 1st once it is certain that BR or R1 has committed to 2nd and the ball is beyond 1st base. If overthrow is between first base and home, U1 takes. U1 should react to overthrow that goes beyond 1st base until U2 takes responsibility. If U1 rotates to 3rd he has overthrows there that go beyond the base and all overthrows if U2 is not at home. If U2 rotates home he has overthrows down first base line and between 3rd base and home.
7. **Signaling:** Signals are imperative as part of the communication between the officials along with any verbal communication. Crews may choose the 'way' they signal.

Signals are the same as 2-man with the rotation signal given two additional times and two new ones: With 'none on' or 'R3 only' the rotation signal is given; U1 may have BR on a triple. With 'R3 only' U2 and U3 point toward the 'working area' as a reminder if either goes out the other has all plays at all bases. The other new signal is the 'reverse rotation' when there is R1 and R2 or bases loaded.

Nobody On

1. POSITIONS:

- U1 is at the plate.
- U2 and U3 are between 6-10 feet behind the first baseman and third baseman respectively. The foot closest to the foul line is within 6 inches of the foul line, feet are parallel and you can use a standing set or hands on knees set.

2. On a Clean Hit:

- U1 rotates to 3rd for possible play on BR, staying in foul territory for any play.
- U2 watches touch at first and plays back in and then rotates home once BR reaches 2nd.
- U3 moves to 2nd for possible play on BR.

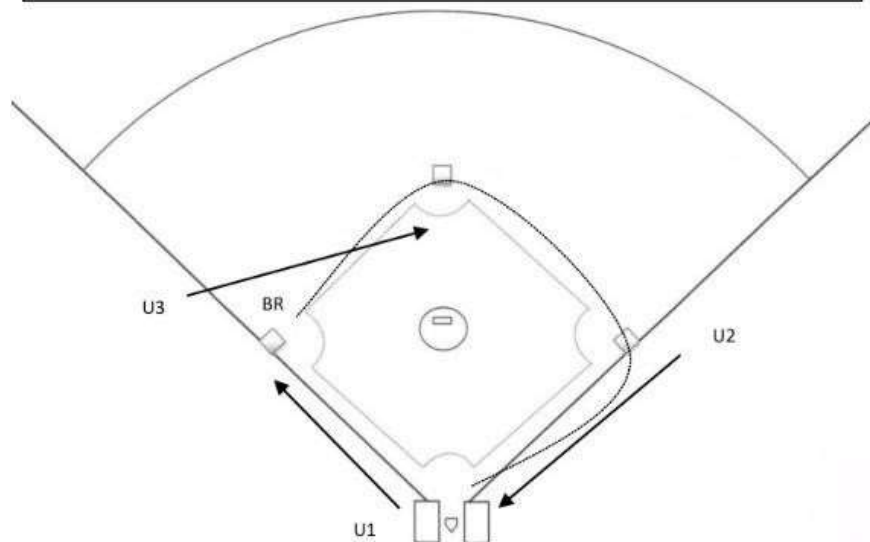
3. Fly Ball U2 goes out:

- U1 responsibilities are to watch touch at first and plays back in and then return home once BR reaches 2nd.
- U2 has fair/foul and catch/ no catch. Stay out once out.
- U3 moves to the infield and has BR at 2nd and 3rd bases.

4. Fly Ball U3 goes out:

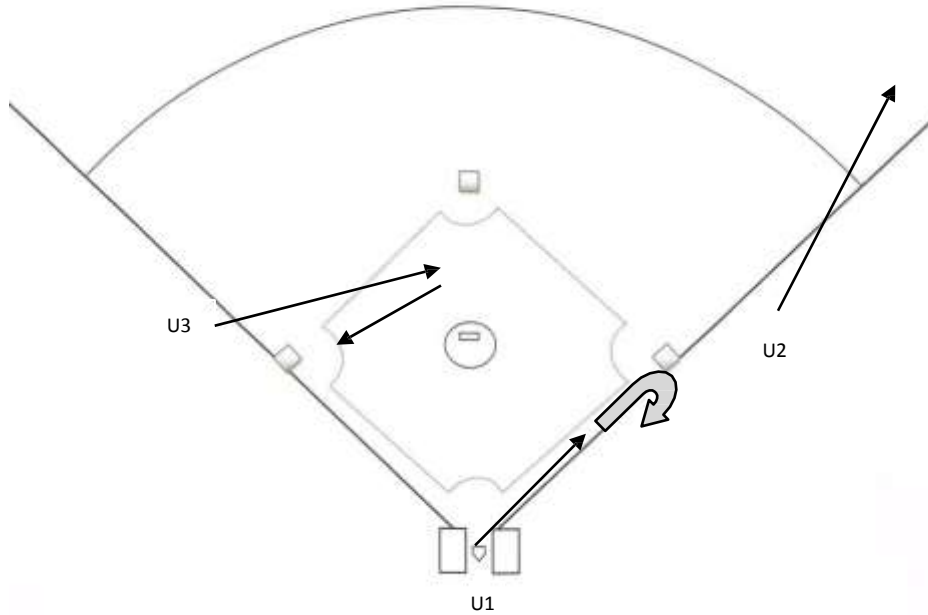
- U1 stays home watching field of play; an extra set of eyes on catch/no catch. He has any play on BR at home.
- U2 pivots in and takes BR to 3rd.
- U3 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Stay out once out.

ROTATION, NONE ON
On clean hit, U1 has B/R into 3rd, U2, staying foul, watches touch, rotates home once B/R reaches 2nd. U3 moves inside, has plays at 2nd. U1 makes call from foul at 3rd. U1 only rotates to third if neither wingman goes out.



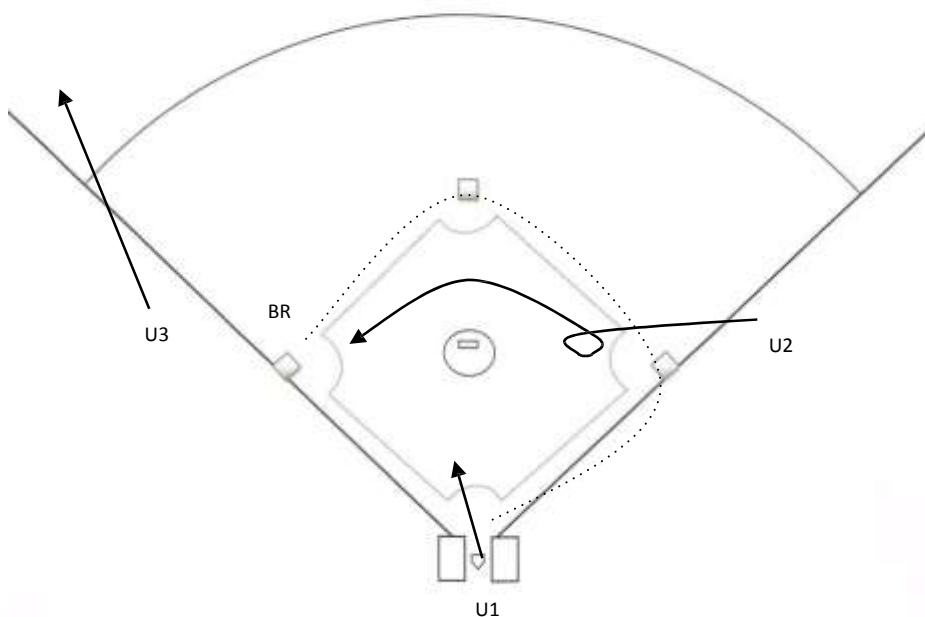
NONE ON, U2 GOES OUT

U1 has touch and any plays at 1st base. Once BR reaches 2nd base, U1 retreats home. U3 has BR at 2nd and 3rd bases. U2 stays out.



NONE ON, U3 GOES OUT

U1 does not rotate to 3rd on a triple. U2 has BR on all bases. U1 stays home watching field of play; an extra set of eyes on catch/no catch. He has any play on BR at home.



Runner @ 1st Only

1. POSITIONS:

- U1 is at the plate.
- U2 is lined up to watch the pick-off about 6-8 feet behind base on an angle so that you can see pitcher and still watch RH batter for check swing.
- U3 is in Deep 'C' position at edge of grass by the cutout with shoulders square to plate.

2. On a Clean Hit:

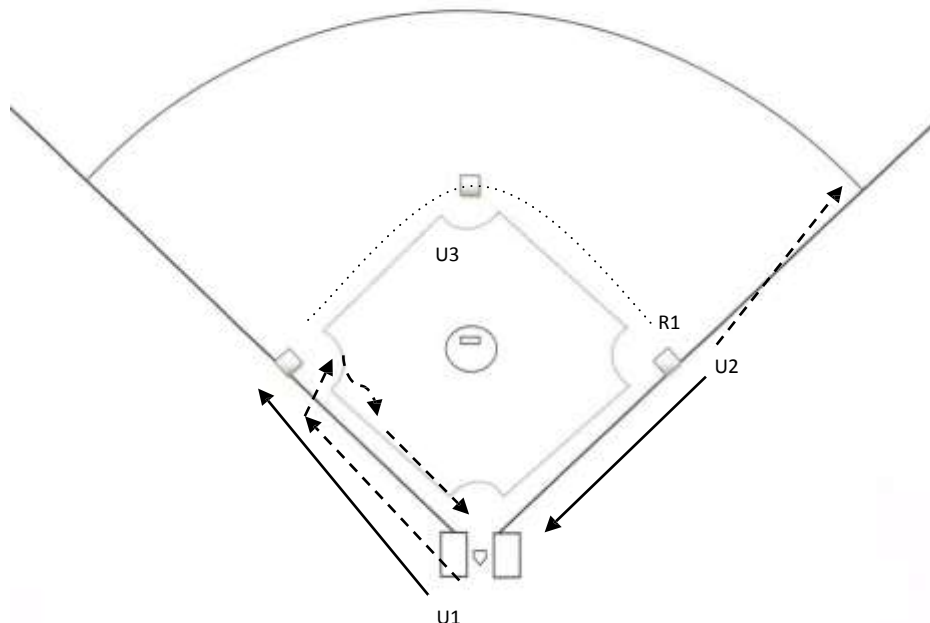
- U1 rotates to 3rd for possible play on R1 staying in foul territory for any play.
- U2 watches touch at first, then rotates home once R1 reaches 2nd and commits to 3rd.
- U3 moves to 'B' and watches touch at 2nd by R1. He has BR once U2 releases and rotates home.

3. Fly Ball U2 goes out:

- U1 rotates to 3rd for possible play on R1, moving inside for any play. If overthrow at 3rd, then return home inside diamond for possible play there.
- U2 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Stay out once out.
- U3 moves to 'B' and watches touch at 2nd by R1 and BR touches and plays at 1st & 2nd.

R1 - ROTATION

U2 lined up for pick off. U3 is in deep 'C'. U1 rotates to 3rd as in 2-man. If U2 goes out, U1 moves into cutout at 3rd. If U2 does not go out, U1 makes call at 3rd from foul territory, U2 rotates home once R1 commits to 3rd.



Runner @ 1st & 2nd

1. POSITIONS:

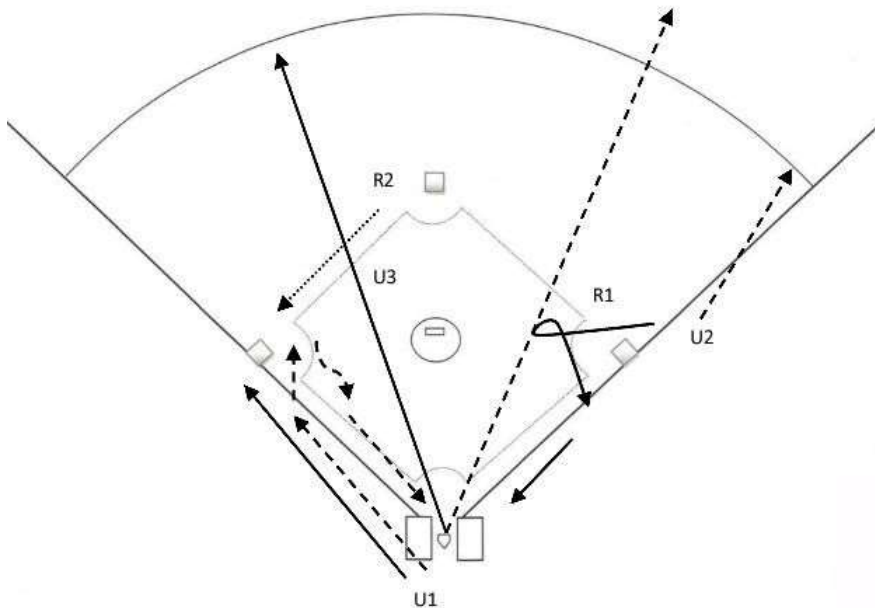
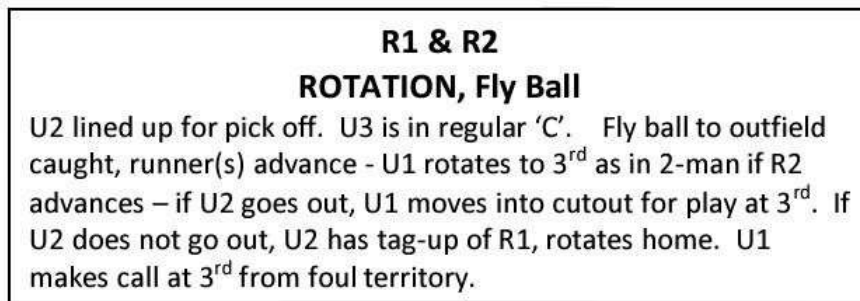
- U1 is at the plate.
- U2 is lined up to watch the pick-off about 6-8 feet behind base (or 1st baseman if playing off) on an angle so that you can see pitcher and still watch RH batter for check swing.
- U3 is in Natural 'C' position with shoulders square to plate.

2. On a Clean Hit:

- U1 stays at plate.
- U2 pivots in and takes BR to 2nd on the reverse rotation.
- U3 has runners on base at 2nd and 3rd and BR at 3rd.

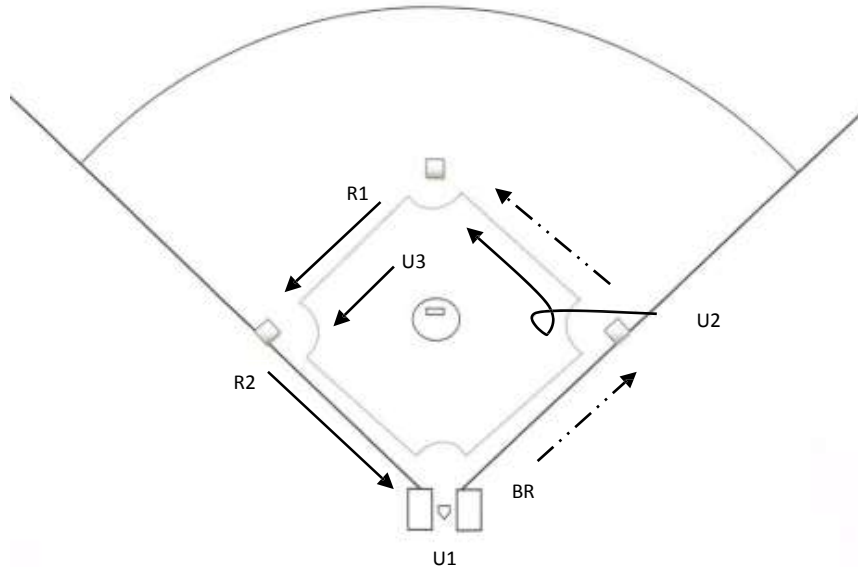
3. Fly Ball U2 goes out:

- U1 rotates to 3rd for possible play on R2, if tagging, moving inside for any play. If overthrow at 3rd, then return home inside diamond for possible play. Otherwise stays at plate.
- U2 has fair/foul and catch/ no catch. Stay out once out.
- U3 has tag-ups and then moves to 'B' and watches touch at 2nd by R1, BR touches at 1st and 2nd and any plays on BR at all bases.



**R1 & R2
REVERSE ROTATION**

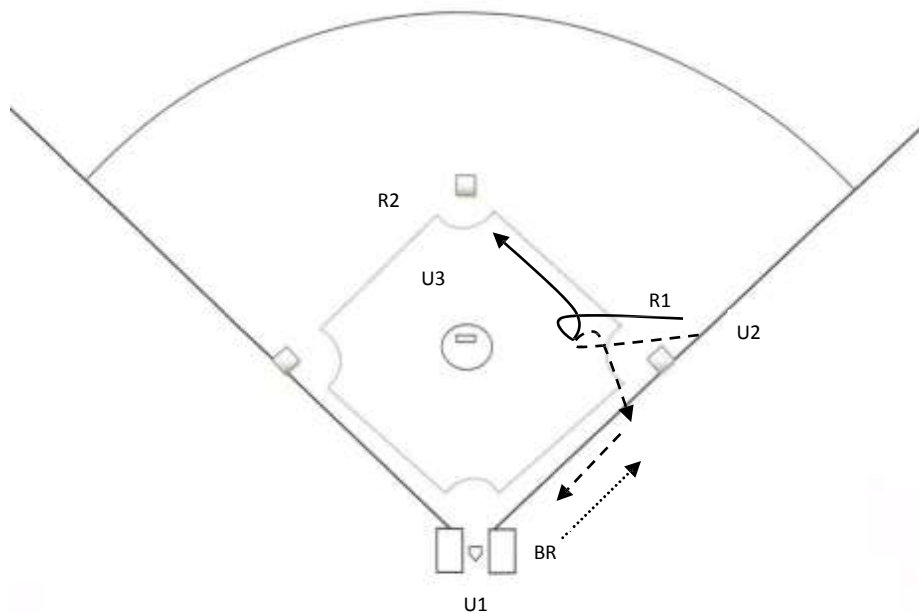
U2 lined up for pick off. U3 is in regular 'C'. Clean hit, U2 pivots inside – has R1 at 1st and BR at 1st and 2nd. U3 has R1 & R2 at 2nd and 3rd and BR at 3rd. U1 stays home.



**R1 & R2 – U2
OUTFIELD FLY BALL – ROTATE HOME OR REVERSE**

U2 pivots inside. If ball is caught, he moves into foul territory and rotates home if U1 rotates to 3rd. ----->

If ball is dropped, reverse rotation; U2 has BR into 2nd base. ----->



Runners @ 1st and 3rd

1. POSITIONS:

- U1 is at the plate.
- U2 is lined up for pick-off about 6-8 feet behind base (or 1st baseman if playing off) on an angle so that pitcher can be seen and still watch RH batter for check swing.
- U3 is in Natural 'C' position with shoulders square to plate.

2. On a Clean Hit:

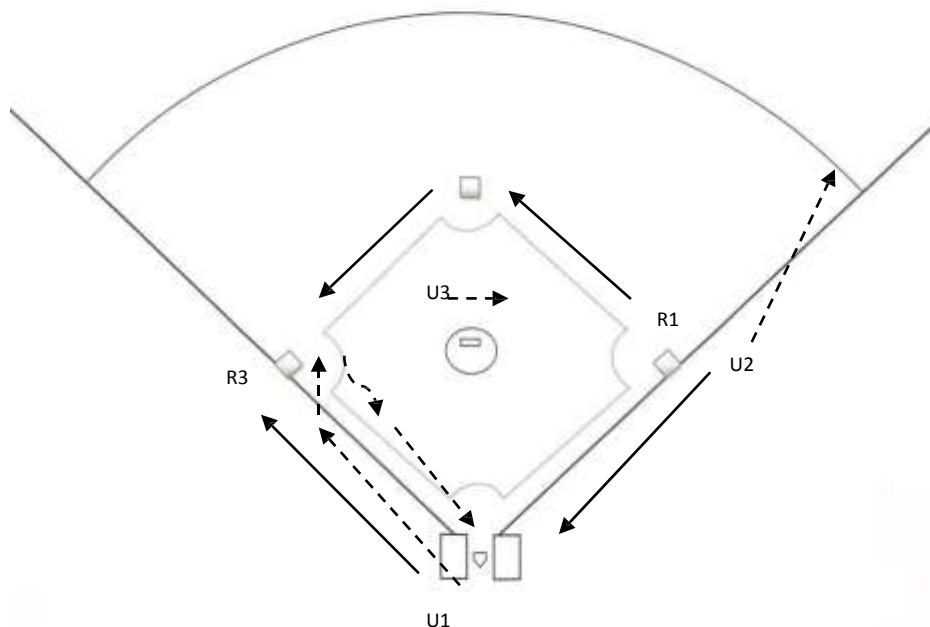
- U1 rotates to 3rd for possible play on BR, staying in foul territory for any play.
- U2 watches touch at first, then rotates home once R1 reaches 2nd and commits to 3rd.
- U3 moves to 'B' and picks up BR once U2 releases him.

3. Fly Ball U2 goes out:

- U1 rotates to 3rd for possible play on BR, moving inside for any play. If overthrow @ 3rd, then return home inside diamond for possible play. Has tag-up by R3 if caught.
- U2 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Stay out once out.
- U3 moves to 'B' and watches touch at 2nd by R1, BR touches at 1st & 2nd and any plays on BR at all bases.

R1 & R3

U2 lined up for pick off. U3 is in regular 'C'. Clean hit. U1 rotates to 3rd as in 2-man watching R3 touch home – if U2 goes out, U1 moves into cutout for play at 3rd, U3 moves toward 'B' to pick up BR. If U2 does not go out, U1 makes call at 3rd from foul territory, U2 rotates home once R1 commits to 3rd.



Runner @ 2nd or 2nd and 3rd

1. POSITIONS:

- a. U1 is at the plate.
- b. U2 is in Deep 'B' position at edge of grass by the cutout with shoulders square to plate.
- c. U3 is in 'D' position, 6-10 feet behind the third baseman. The foot closest to the foul line is within 6 inches of the foul line, feet are parallel using hands on knees set.

2. On a Clean Hit:

- a. U1 stays home.
- b. U2 has all touches and plays at 1st and 2nd.
- c. U3 from foul territory uses base like plate to move with throw, to rule on all possible plays, including tag-up by R3.

3. Fly Ball U3 goes out:

- a. U1 has tag-up by R3 and stays home.
- b. U2 has all plays at all bases.
- c. U3 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Stay out once out.

4. POSITION with 2 out:

- a. U1 is at the plate.
- b. U2 is lined up about 6-8 feet behind 1st baseman.
- c. U3 is in Natural 'C' position with shoulders square to plate.

5. On a Clean hit:

- a. U1 stays at plate.
- b. U2 has touch and any play on BR at 1st.
- c. U3 has touch at 2nd all plays at 2nd and 3rd.

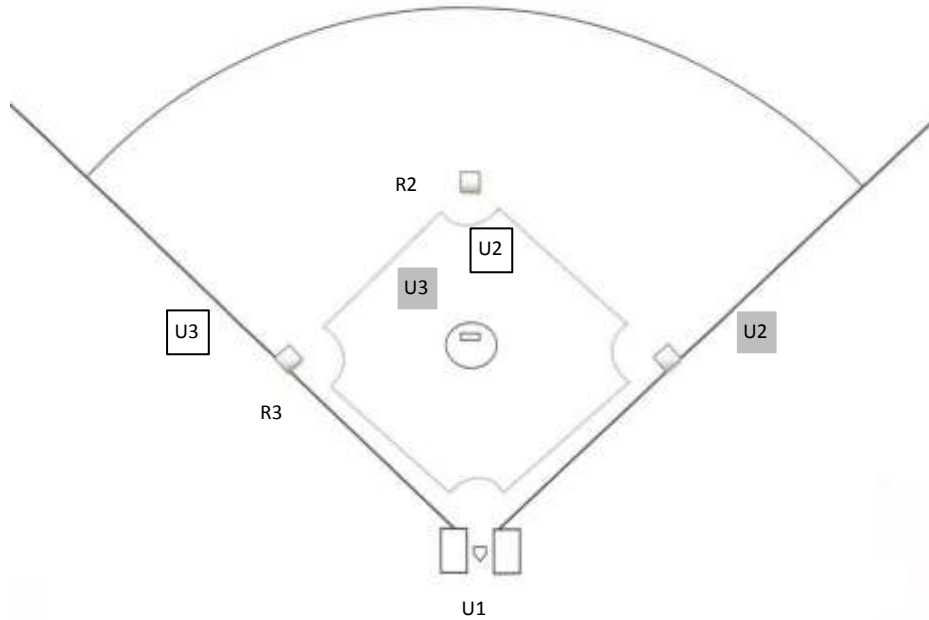
6. Fly Ball U2 goes out:

- a. U1 has touches at 3rd and home.
- b. U2 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Stay out once out.
- c. U3 has touches at 1st and 2nd and plays at all bases.

R2 or R2 & R3

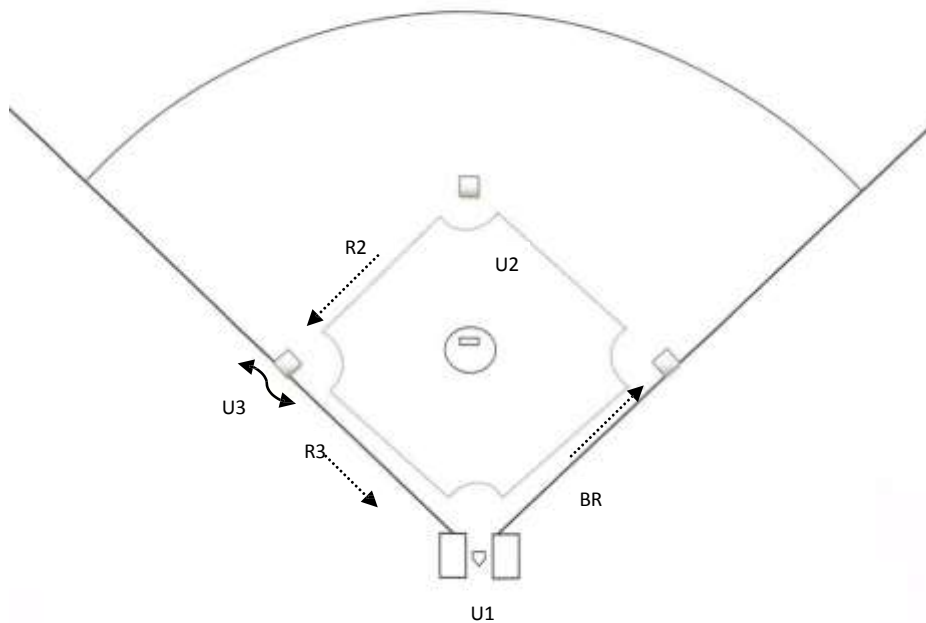
With 2 outs, U2 is in regular 'A', U3 in regular 'C'.

Less than 2 outs, U3 in 'D', U2 in deep 'B'. U1 stays home.



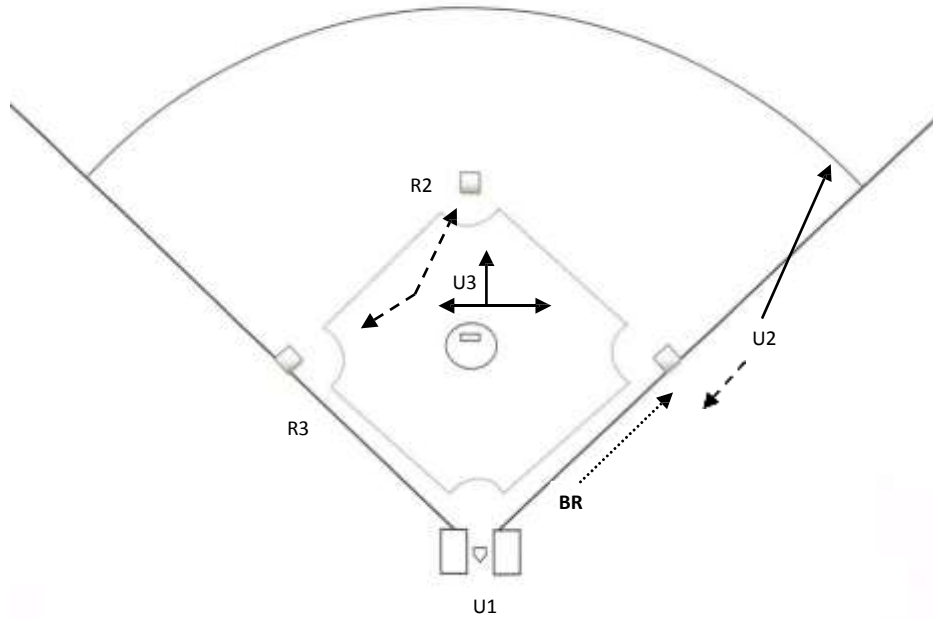
R2 or R2 & R3 (less than 2 outs)

U3 has touch/tag-up at 3rd unless U3 goes out; then U1 has and U2 has all plays at all bases. If U3 does not go out, he uses 3rd base as 'point reference' for plays at 3rd, staying foul and moves depending on where play takes him.



R2 or R2 & R3 (2 outs)

U1 has touches at 3rd. U3 has all plays at 2nd and 3rd if U2 does not go out and U2 has touch/play at 1st. If U2 goes out, U3 has touches at 1st & 2nd and plays at all bases.



Runner @ 3rd

1. POSITIONS:

- U1 is at the plate, but moves to back of clay circle on ball in play.
- U2 and U3 are between 6-10 feet behind the first baseman and third baseman respectively. The foot closest to the foul line is within 6 inches of the foul line, feet are parallel and you can use a standing set or hands on knees set.

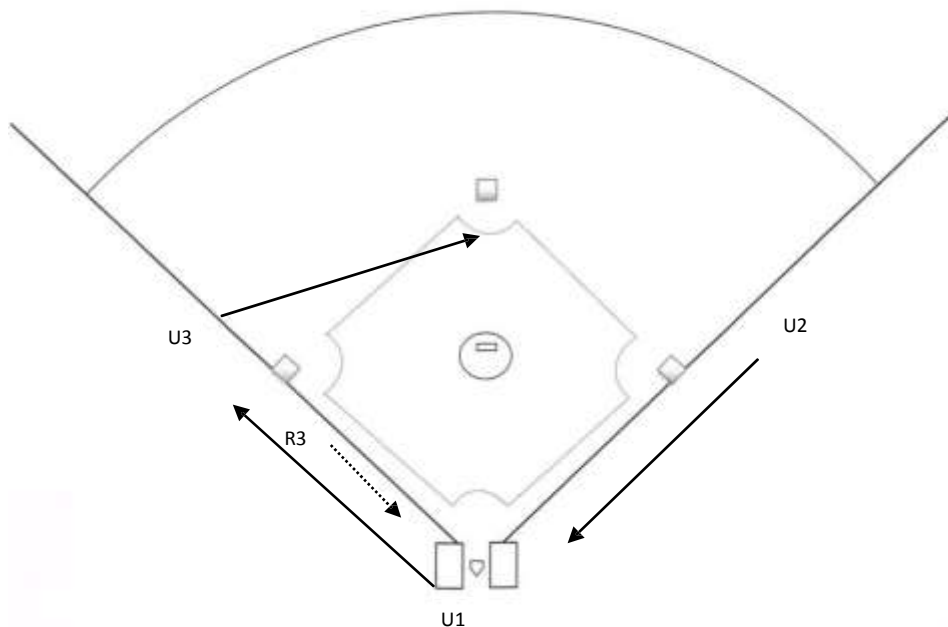
2. On a Clean Hit:

- U1 rotates to 3rd for possible play on BR, while looking at touch by R3.
- U2 watches touch at first and plays back in, then rotates home once BR reaches 2nd.
- U3 moves to 2nd for possible play on BR.

3. Fly Ball U2 or U3 goes out:

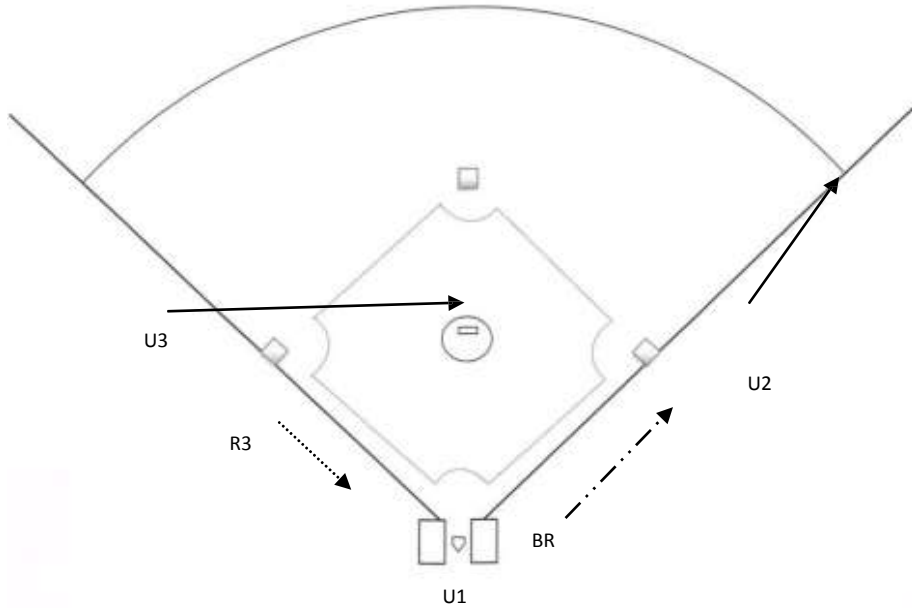
- U1 responsibilities are to watch tag and touch by R3.
- The other wingman MUST get to the working area because he assumes all responsibility for plays on R3 and BR at all bases.

R3
U3 - 'D'. U2 - 'A'. On clean hit, U1 rotates to 3rd staying foul and watching touch of R3 at home, U2 rotates to home once BR reaches 2nd.



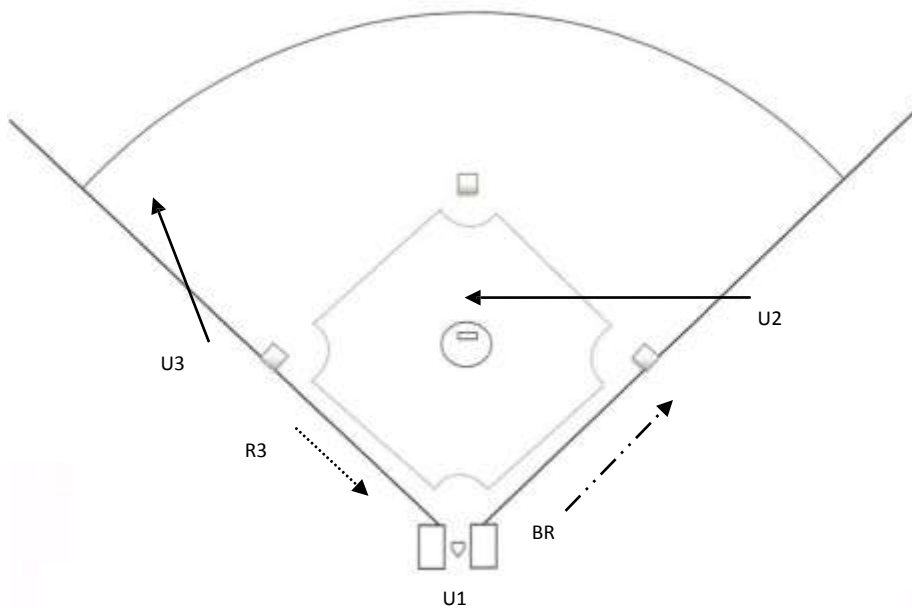
R3-U2 goes out.

U1 stays home. If U2 goes out, U3 has responsibility of R3 at 3rd and BR at all bases therefore he must get to the working area. U1 has tag up of R3.



R3-U3 goes out.

U1 stays home. If U3 goes out, U2 has responsibility of R3 at 3rd and BR at all bases therefore he must get to the working area. U1 has tag up of R3.



Bases Loaded

1. POSITIONS:

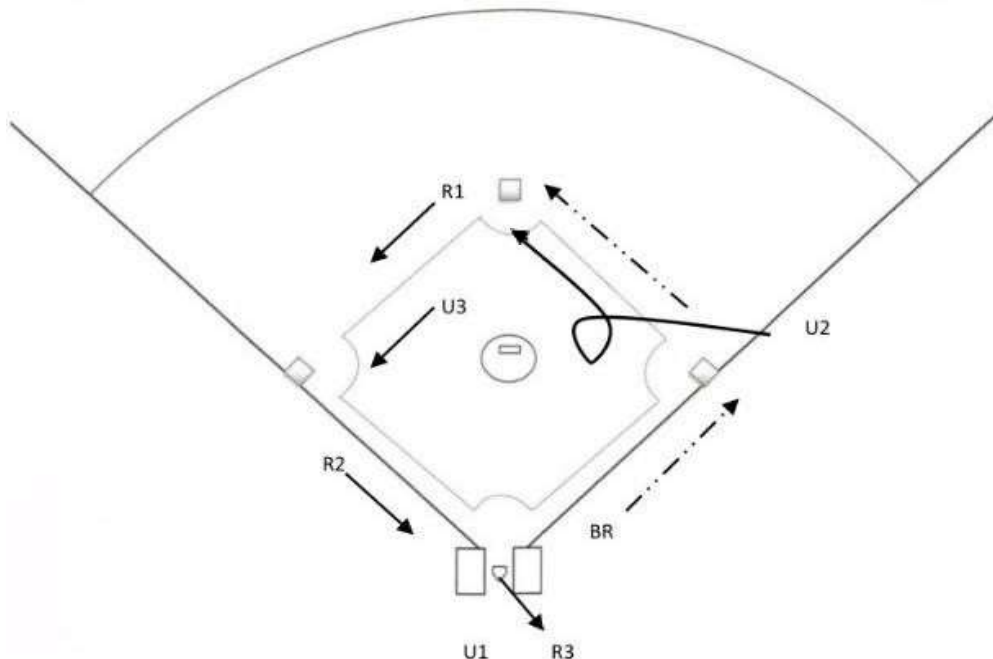
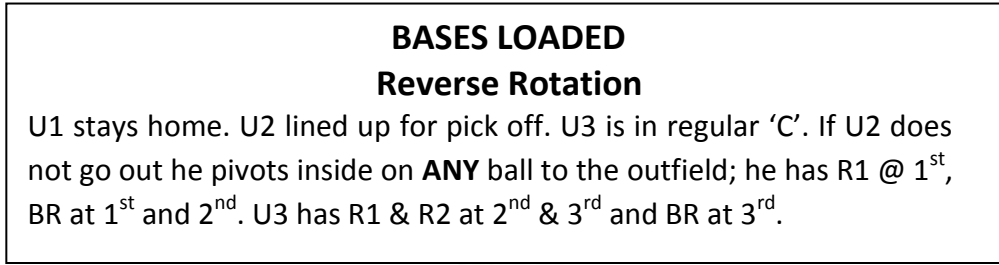
- U1 is at the plate.
- U2 is lined up for pick-off about 6-8 feet behind base (or 1st baseman if playing off) on an angle so that pitcher can be seen and still watch RH batter for check swing.
- U3 is in Natural 'C' position with shoulders square to plate.

2. On a Clean Hit:

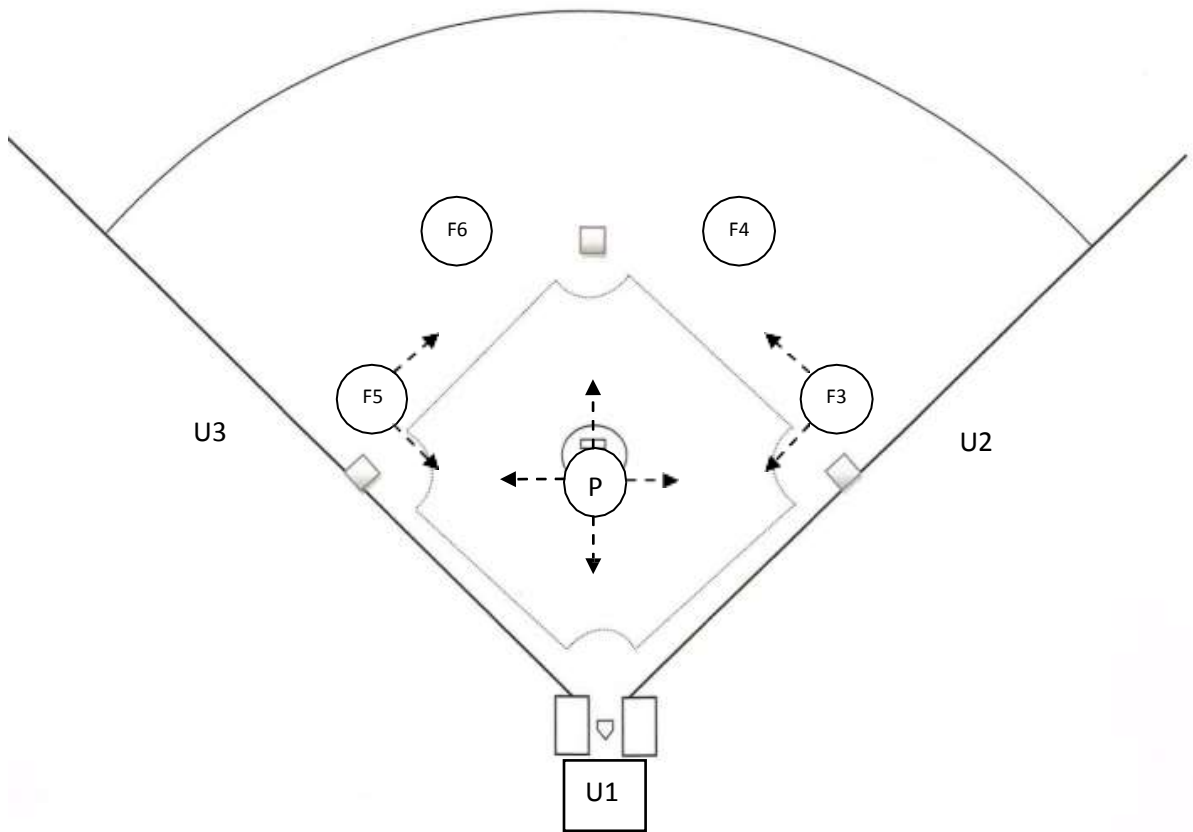
- U1 stays at plate.
- U2 pivots in and takes BR to 2nd on the reverse rotation.
- U3 has runners on base at 2nd and 3rd and BR at 3rd.

3. Fly Ball U2 goes out:

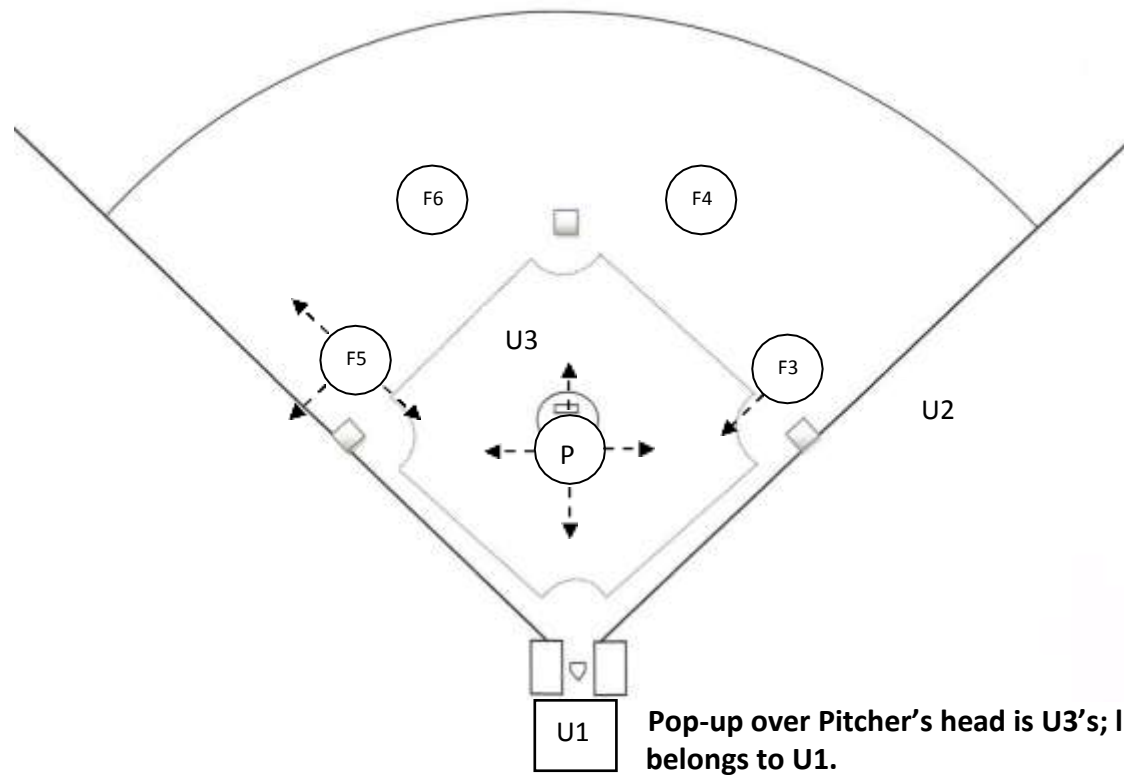
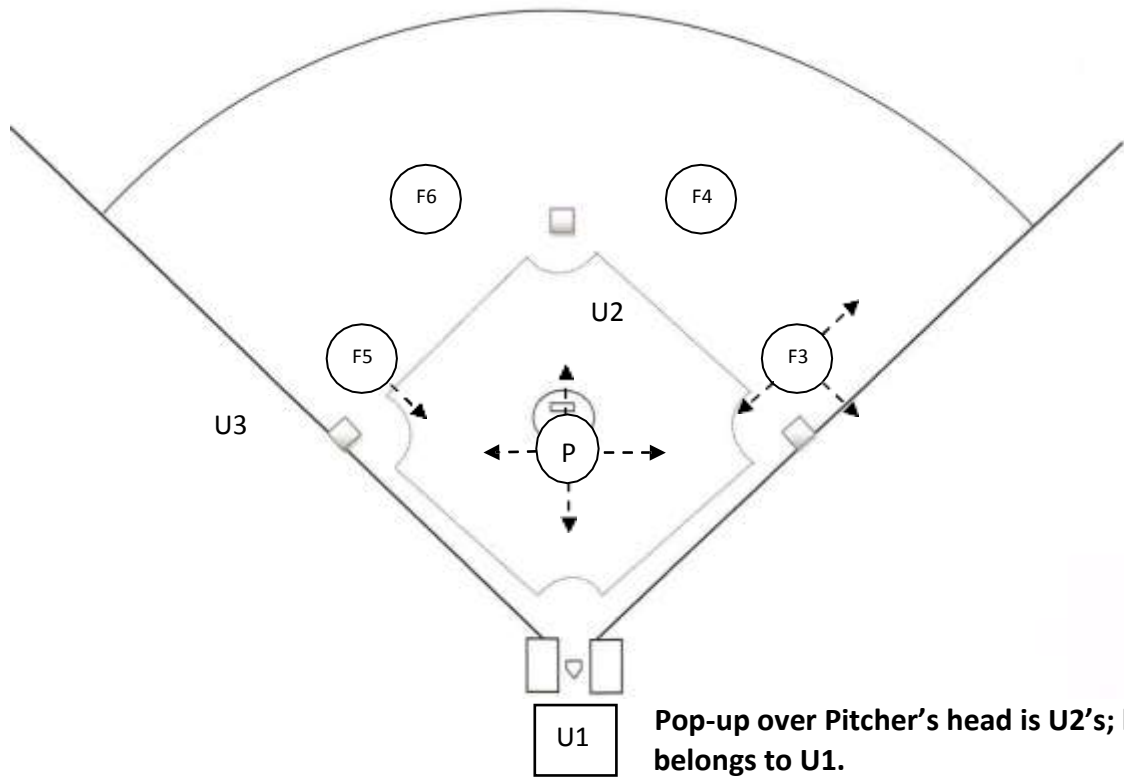
- U1 watch tag by R3 and stay home
- U2 has fair/foul and catch/no catch. Stay out once out.
- U3, moving to the working area, has tag ups and/or touches at 1st and 2nd and all plays at all bases.



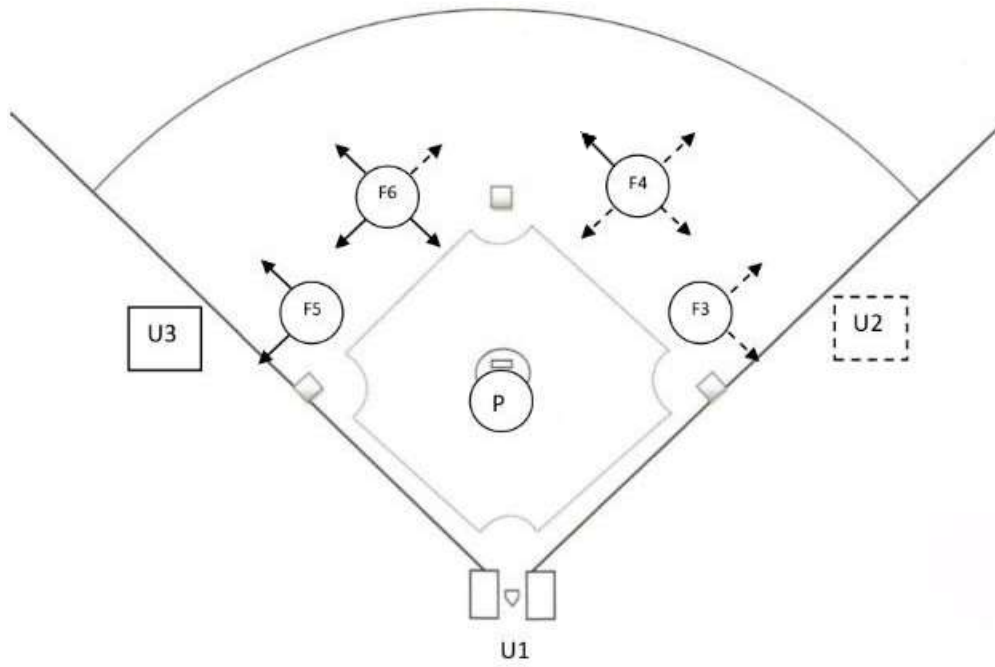
LINE DRIVE AND POP-UP COVERAGE
PLATE UMPIRE
U2 & U3 on the lines



LINE DRIVE AND POP-UP COVERAGE PLATE UMPIRE U2 or U3 inside

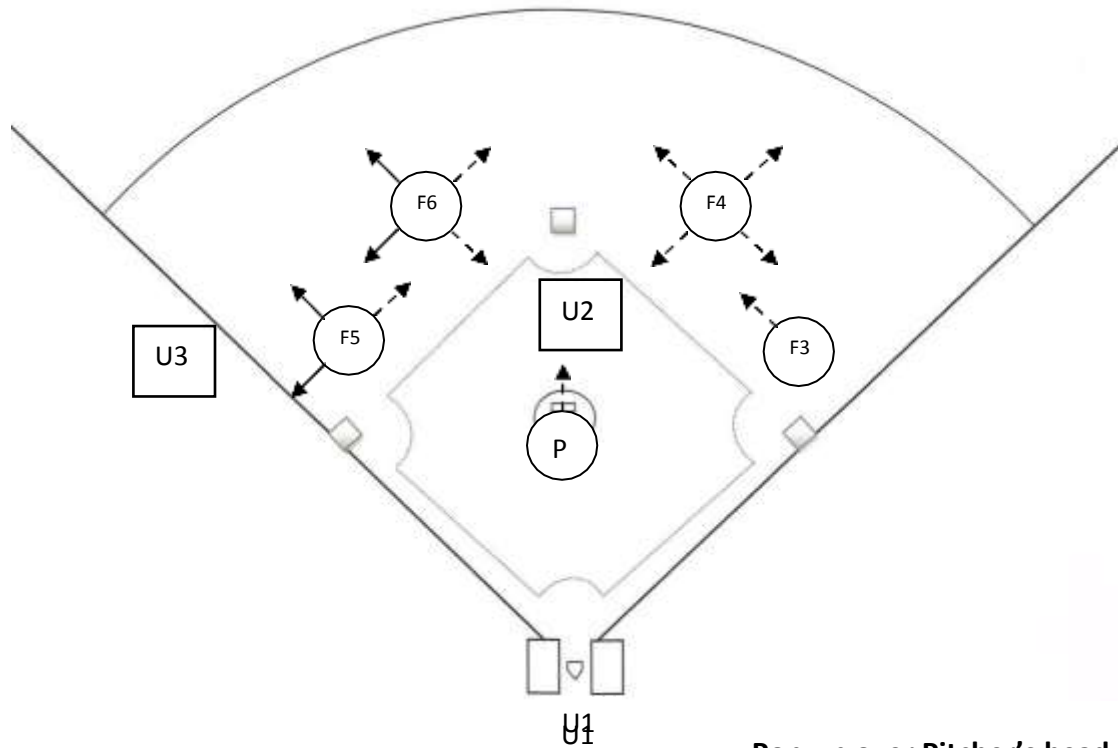


LINE DRIVE AND POP-UP COVERAGE U2 & U3 (on the lines)

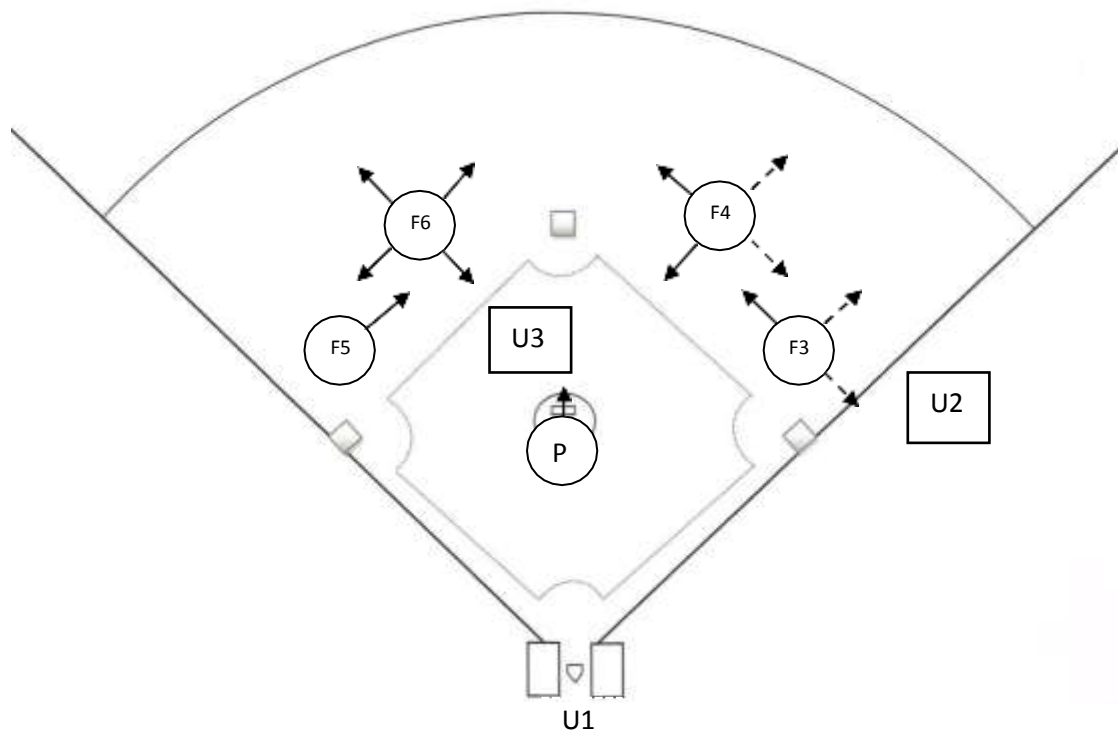


LINE DRIVE AND POP-UP COVERAGE

U2 & U3 (with wingman inside)



Pop-up over Pitcher's head is U2's.



Pop-up over Pitcher's head is U3's.

Use copies of this diagram to help do your pre-game situations.

