

2009 Fast Pitch Mechanics Manual

TWO-UMPIRE SYSTEM

The Plate Umpire should be prepared to take share of the base plays. The lead runner, if there is more than one on the bases, is the Plate Umpire's responsibility. To do the job properly, the Plate Umpire must go to a holding zone in foul territory between home and third base, then immediately pick up the lead runner, and prepare to make the call on the runner, whether it be at third base or the plate. If there are two runners on base and the next batter hits for extra bases, which will score the lead runner without a play, the Plate Umpire pays little attention other than noting that the runner touched third base and the plate. Attention then is directed to the second runner and the play that may be made. The Base Umpire, meanwhile, ascertains that all runners touch second and first bases and takes whatever play is made on the batter-runner. If the batter-runner advances to third on the hit, and a play is made, it is the Base Umpire's call. If this is the third out of the inning, the Base Umpire quickly and vociferously makes the call, so that the Plate Umpire may announce whether a runner scoring on the same play has touched home before the third out is made.

The proper position for the Base Umpire to assume at the start of the game is down the right-field foul line in foul territory about 18-21 feet beyond first base. The Base Umpire is responsible for making the out, safe or trap call when he/she goes out, and the Plate Umpire will pick up all runners-both tagging up and touching bases.

There are six times a Base Umpire will make a call at third base.

1. On the batter-runner on a triple with no runners on base.
2. On trail runners into third base.
3. On a steal to third base.
4. On any return throw from the plate or a cut-off player.
5. A throw-back by the catcher in an attempt to pick off a runner occupying third base immediately following the pitch.
6. On the first play in the infield by an infielder on a batted ball.

Each umpire has equal authority to call leaving a base too soon on the pitch. Be in position to make the call. The Base Umpire should observe the pitcher as they watch the runner. Use common sense and think the game. If more than one runner is on base, which runner is logical to make a steal attempt? Observe that runner closer than the other runner(s). Do not guess a runner out. Be sure she actually left the base too soon.

Fly Ball Tag-Up Responsibilities

The Plate Umpire has tag responsibilities under the following situations:

1. All runners at third base.
2. The runner at second base with runners at first and second base.

The Base Umpire has tag responsibilities under the following situations:

1. All runners at first base.
2. The runner at second base with runners at second and third bases or second base only.
3. Runners at first and second base when the bases are full.

NOTE: These tag-up procedures should be followed at all times, UNLESS there is COMMUNICATION between both umpires. These responsibilities are covered in the duties listed on the following pages.

NOTE: In most instances, the Plate Umpire is responsible for watching the batter runner touch first base.

Positioning and Coverage - General

Initial positioning with runners on bases is described on the following pages. When mechanics dealing with each situation differ, they will be covered individually, however, there are several basic responsibilities that will not be duplicated.

In all situations, the Plate Umpire will call all balls hit fair and/or foul. The Plate Umpire will move out and up the foul line to make these calls, remembering not to make the call too quickly.

The Plate Umpire should always be alert and move to a position to help his/her partner in case of a run down.

If the Base Umpire goes to the outfield for a possible trapped ball, or goes out on a ball hit close to the foul line, once the Base Umpire turns his/her back, the calls will be the Base Umpire's. The Plate Umpire must move into the infield and revert to the one umpire system, covering all bases.

On routine fly balls to the outfield, the Plate Umpire (with no runners on or with a runner at first base) will go to the center of the infield in the direction of the batted ball. With runners in scoring position, the Plate Umpire will stay in foul territory. The Base Umpire will move inside the bases, watching the assigned runner tag-ups listed above. The Base Umpire follows the Inside-Outside Theory on all balls hit. This was described under the Base Umpire section of the manual.

The Base Umpire must be alert for snap throws and a possible pick-off of each base-runner.

Both Umpires must hustle at all times, never take their eyes off the ball and be in the correct position on all calls. The following responsibilities deal with the individual situation.

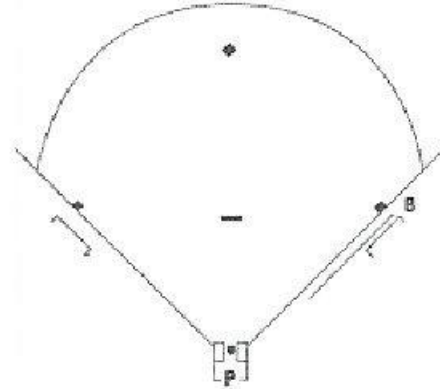
REMEMBER, ANY TIME YOU DEVIATE FROM THESE PROCEDURES, COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR PARTNER.

Key to Diagrams: P-Plate Umpire; B-Base or Base Umpire; R-Runner or Runners

NO RUNNERS ON BASE

PLATE UMPIRE:

1. On ground balls hit to the infield, come out left of the catcher and move toward first base to aid your partner should he/she need your help.
2. On a ground ball hit near the foul line, stay at home plate and determine fair/foul.
3. On routine fly balls, not down either line, move to the center of the infield in the direction of the batted ball. Help the Base Umpire on runner touching first base.
4. On a fly ball near the foul line, stay close to home or the foul lines determine fair/foul, safe/out.



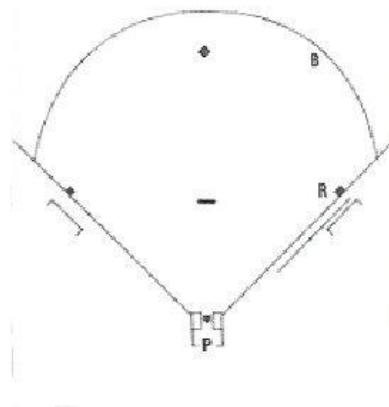
BASE UMPIRE:

1. Position yourself 18 - 21 feet beyond first base in foul territory.
2. On base hits move inside diamond to second base for a possible play there. Responsible for the batter-runner all the way to third base.
3. On fly ball, buttonhook and watch batter/runner touch first base.

RUNNER ON FIRST BASE ONLY

PLATE UMPIRE:

1. On batted balls to the infield, come out left of the catcher. Move up first base line to observe the play in case you are needed to help with the play, then drift towards third base to cover the base runner.
2. On routine fly balls, not down either line, move to the center of the infield in the direction of the batted ball. Be prepared to move to third base if the lead runner advances beyond second base.
3. Should the runner on first base steal second base, pick up the runner if they advance toward third base, and be prepared to take the runner home..



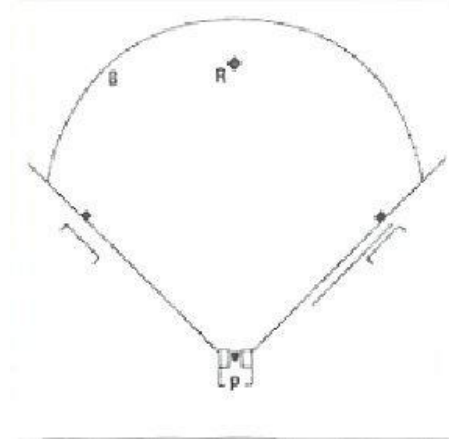
BASE UMPIRE:

1. Take a position about halfway between first and second base and outside the base line. This position will normally place the umpire two or three steps behind and to the left side of the second baseman. Be aware of the possible throw back from the catcher to the first baseman. The Base Umpire has this responsibility.
2. If the runner attempts to steal second, move toward the base staying behind and out of the way of the fielder. Should the throw be wild, move inside the base paths. and be prepared to pick up the possible runner at home. The PLATE UMPIRE has third base coverage.
3. On base hits to the outfield, immediately come inside the diamond, button hook and take the batter-runner all the way to third base.
4. On a double play, take one step toward second base and make the call there. Allow the flight of the ball to turn you and move parallel with the baseline toward first base as the ball takes you into the play.
5. Has tag responsibility for runner at first base.
6. Takes single runner all the way to third base after the catch.

RUNNER ON SECOND BASE ONLY

PLATE UMPIRE:

1. On base hits, move toward third base and ensure the lead runner legally touches third base. Be ready and in position to make a call by going down the left field foul line in foul ground. When about 15 feet from third base, quickly move into the infield for good position for the call.
2. If the first play is at first base, and there is a throw to third, the Plate Umpire has the call at third.
3. On a fly ball, move from behind home plate to the holding area between home and third base. Be prepared to move into the infield or back to home plate depending on how the play develops.



BASE UMPIRE:

1. Take position two or three steps behind and to the left of the shortstop. Be cautious not to interfere with the outfielder's view of the batter or a play by the infielders. This is ONLY intended to be a starting position. The situation may dictate altering the position. It may be acceptable in certain situations to position to the right shoulder.
2. On any ball hit to the infield, wait until the fielder commits, take the call on the first throw unless it is to home plate. If the first throw is to first, second, any subsequent throw to third base is covered by the Plate Umpire. Do not take your eyes off the ball.
3. On all balls hit through the infield or to the outfield that you do not go out on, immediately come inside the diamond, buttonhook and take the batter-runner all the way to third base.
4. On routine fly balls to the outfield move into the infield to a position between the pitching rubber and the base line. You are responsible for the tag-up of the runner, and after the ball is caught, follow the runner into third base.
5. Take the batter-runner to third base, watching that she touches all bases. When the ball is in the outfield, take a position deep enough in the infield to allow movement for a play at either base.
6. On an attempted steal or third, move toward third base and be prepared for a call.

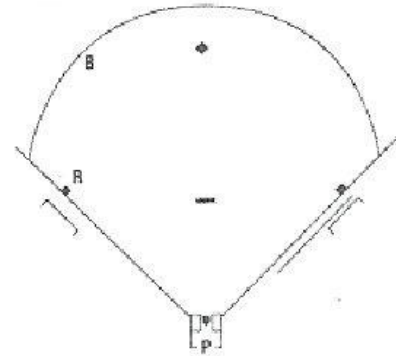
RUNNER ON THIRD BASE ONLY

PLATE UMPIRE:

1. If a fly ball is hit, get out from behind home plate and line up the runner on third base and watch the tag-up.
2. On base hits, move toward third base watching the runner. If the runner goes home, drift back toward home plate and watch the runner touch home plate.

BASE UMPIRE:

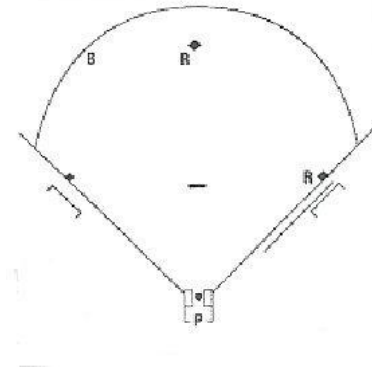
1. Take a position two or three steps behind and to the to the right of shortstop (not down the third base line). Be cautious so as not to interfere with the outfielders view of the batter or a play by the infielders.
2. If a ball is hit to the infield wait until the fielder commits herself, then move quickly toward the base where the play is being made. Don't take your eyes off the ball.
3. Call all plays made on the first throw of the ball unless it is to home plate.
4. Take the batter-runner into third base and see that all bases are touched.
5. has throw back responsibilities at third.



RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND BASE

PLATE UMPIRE:

1. On a fly ball, you are responsible for the tag at second base. Move from behind home plate and line up the lead runner watching for the tag-up.
2. On base hits, you are responsible for the lead runner at third base and at home. Move toward third base in foul ground. If the lead runner comes home and there is no play made on her, drift toward third base but watch the runner touch home plate.
3. On steals if the runner from first advances past second base you are responsible for the runner coming to third base.
4. Be ready and in position to make a call at third base by going down the left field line in foul ground. When you are about 15 feet from third base quickly move into the infield for good position on the tag play.
5. Be ready and in position to make a call at third base by going down the left field foul line in foul ground. When you are about 15 feet from third base quickly move into the infield for good position on the tag play.



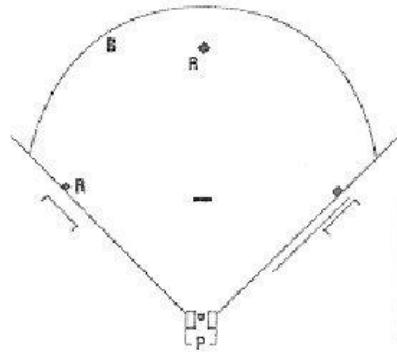
BASE UMPIRE:

1. Take position two or three steps behind and to the left of the shortstop. Be cautious so as not to interfere with the outfielder's view of the batter or a play by the infielders.
2. On any ball hit to the infield, wait until the fielder commits himself then take the first throw unless it is to home plate. If the first throw is to first or second base, the Plate Umpire covers any subsequent throw to third base. Do not take your eyes off the ball.
3. If the runner attempts to steal third, move parallel with the runner toward the base to make the call.
4. On routine fly balls to the outfield, you are responsible for the tag-up of the runner on first, Move into the infield to a position between pitching rubber and the baseline.
5. See that the runner and batter touch second and first base. When the ball is in the outfield, take a position deep enough in the infield to allow you to move in for a play at either base.

RUNNERS ON SECOND AND THIRD BASE

PLATE UMPIRE:

1. If a fly ball is hit, position yourself in line with the runner on third base and the fielder making the play and watch the tag-up.
2. On base hits move toward third base. If the lead runner comes home and there is no play on her drift toward third but watch the runner touch home plate. If there is a play at home, move back to a position in the rear and left side of the right-handed batter's box.
3. If the play is at first base, watch the lead runner touch home plate, then go to third for a possible play on the second runner.



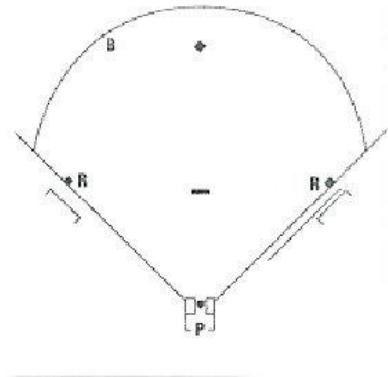
BASE UMPIRE:

1. Position yourself two or three steps behind and to the right of the shortstop. Position yourself as to not interfere with the view of the outfielder.
2. On any ball hit to the infield, you are responsible for the first throw unless it is to home plate. If the first throw is to first or second, the Plate Umpire covers any subsequent throw to third.
3. On fly balls, get inside the infield quickly, button hook and line up the runner on second base and take the runner to third base after the catch.
4. On fly balls, get inside the infield quickly and button hook. Position yourself in line with the runner on second and the fielder making the play. Take the runner to third base after the catch.
5. On all balls hit through the infield or to the outfield that you do not go out on, immediately come inside the diamond, button hook and take the batter-runner all the way to third base.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD BASE

PLATE UMPIRE:

1. If a fly ball is hit, move from behind home plate and line up the runner on third base and watch the tag-up.
2. On base hits move toward third base. If the lead runner comes home and there is no play made on her, drift toward third but watch the runner touch home plate. If there is a play at home, move back to a position in the rear and left side of the right-handed batter's box.
3. If the play is at first base, watch the lead runner touch home plate, then go to third for a possible play on the second runner.



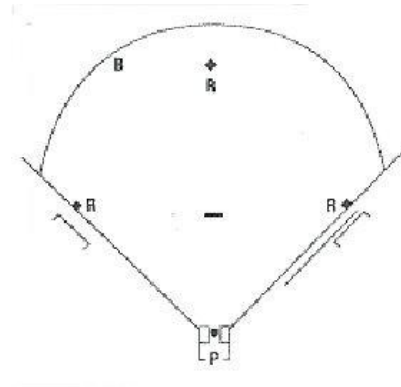
BASE UMPIRE:

1. Take a position two or three steps behind and to the right of the shortstop. Be careful not to interfere with the outfielder's view of the batter or a play by the infielders.
2. On any ball hit to the infield, take the first throw unless it is to home plate. If the first throw is to first or second base, the Plate Umpire covers any subsequent throw to third base.
3. If a ball is hit to the infield wait until the fielder commits herself, then move quickly toward that base. Don't take your eyes off the ball.
4. On a base hit get inside the infield quickly and watch the runner on first touch second base. Be alert for a play at that base. Take the batter-runner as far as third base. Watch her touch each base.
5. On fly balls, get inside the infield quickly, button hook and line up the runner on first base. After checking the runner tag up at first base, be prepared to take her into second and/or third base.

BASES LOADED

PLATE UMPIRE:

1. If a fly ball is hit, get out from behind home plate, line up the runner on third base and watch the tag-up.
2. On base hits move toward third base in foul territory. If the lead runner comes home and there is no play made on her, drift toward third but watch the runner touch home plate. If there is a play at home plate, move back to a position at the rear and left side of the right handed batter's box.
3. If the play is at first base, watch the lead runner touch home plate, then go to third for a possible play on the second runner.



BASE UMPIRE:

1. Take a position two or three steps behind and to the right of the shortstop. Be careful not to interfere with the outfielder's view of the batter or a play by the infielders.
2. On any ball hit to the infield, take the first throw unless it is to home plate. If the first throw is to first or second base, the Plate Umpire covers any subsequent throw to third base.
3. If a ball is hit to the infield wait until the fielder commits herself, then move quickly toward that base. Don't take your eyes off the ball.
4. On any ball hit to the outfield get inside the diamond quickly, button book and be prepared to make a call at first, second, or third base.
5. On fly balls, you have tag responsibility at first and second base. Move inside the diamond quickly, line up runner at first and second base to take tag ups. Be prepared for any play into second base.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND REGULATIONS FOR UMPIRES

1. The Umpire should not be connected in anyway with either team.
2. The Umpire should be sure of the date, time and location of game.
3. The Umpire should arrive at the field at least 30 minutes before the game time.
4. The Official Umpire Uniform Standard for sanctioned play includes approved and licensed products.

All umpires must be dressed in the official USSSA Umpire's Uniform.

- A. USSSA Licensed mesh pullover shirt. The favored shirt color shall be red. If a shirt is to be worn under the Umpire shirt, it shall be plain, short or long sleeve, and white, black or match the pullover shirt in color. Any exposed shelves shall match the color of the pullover shirt.
 - B. USSSA Licensed Fast Pitch Umpire cap. This will include the USSSA embroidery on the cap and the official licensed label inside.
 - C. Long heather gray slacks with black socks. Shin guards may not be exposed.
 - D. Gray or black ball bag. Only the Plate Umpire shall wear a ball bag.
 - E. Black belt.
 - F. Black polished shoes and black shoelaces.
 - G. Licensed windbreaker jacket, v-neck pullover may be worn as outside apparel.
- Note:** If more than one Umpire is used per game, they must be dressed alike.
- H. The Umpire behind the plate must wear a mask.