

UMPIRE 102

Field Mechanics for a Two-Man Crew on a 60' Diamond

Part Two of a three-part introduction to umpiring Little League baseball

INTRODUCTION TO LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRING

Umpire 102, Field Mechanics for a Two-Man Crew, is Part Two of a three-part introduction to the rules of baseball for Little League umpires.

- **101** – Working the Plate
- **102** – Small-Diamond Mechanics (2 man)
- **103** – The Rules of Baseball



UMPIRE 102 COVERS THE FOLLOWING:

1. **Abbreviations and Nomenclature**
2. **The Basic Assignments for U1 and U2**
3. **The Start Positions for U2**
4. **Getting into Position**
5. **Making Calls**
6. **The Base-Runner Scenarios**
7. **Appeals**
8. **Meetings: Plate Meeting & Umpire's Meeting**
9. **Umpire Signals**
10. **Handling Problems & Getting Help**



ABBREVIATIONS & NOMENCLATURE

○ Umpires

- Home Plate Umpire = **U1**
- Base Umpire = **U2**

○ Bases = **1B, 2B, 3B, Home**

○ Base Runners

- Runner on 1B = **R1**
- Runner on 2B = **R2**
- Runner on 3B = **R3**
- Batter-runner = **BR**

○ Field Position:

F1 = Pitcher
F2 = Catcher
F3 = 1st Baseman
F4 = 2nd Baseman
F5 = 3rd Baseman

F6 = Shortstop
F7 = Left Fielder
F8 = Center Fielder
F9 = Right Fielder



BASIC ASSIGNMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES FOR U1

○ **Plate Umpire (U1)**

- The plate umpire is the crew chief and manages the game; he convenes the **plate meeting** and **umpire meeting** and he handles **signals** with the base umpire.
- The plate umpire calls balls and strikes and makes all safe/out calls at home plate.
- The plate umpire has ***all catch/no-catch calls*** on all fly balls, both in the outfield and the infield. This releases the base umpire to watch base runners.
- The plate umpire has ***all fair/foul calls***, both in the infield and outfield.
- The plate umpire must come out from behind the plate when the ball is hit and get the best possible position to call fair/foul or fly ball outs.



BASIC ASSIGNMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES FOR U2

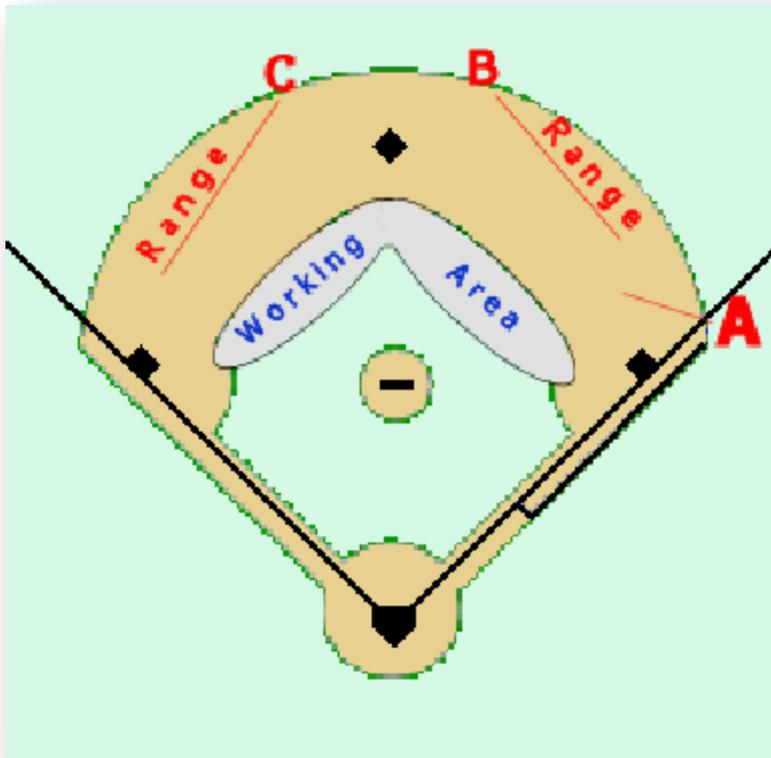
Base Umpire (U2)

- You have the safe/out call on all base runners at all bases except home (with one exception that we'll talk about later).
- You have the base-touch and tag-up on all runners at all bases except home. You also handle all appeal calls at all bases except home.
- You watch for runners leaving early at all bases.
- ***You own all base runners at all times from first base through third base*** (again, with one exception).
- On hits to the outfield, you must come ***inside*** the diamond; on hits to the infield, you must stay ***outside*** the diamond. This is ***the Golden Rule***.



START POSITIONS FOR BASE UMPIRE: A, B, C

The start positions for the Base Umpire are simple:



- No runners on base, Position **A**
- With R1 only, Position **B**
- *In all other situations*, Position **C**



THE GOLDEN RULE FOR BASE UMPIRE:

INSIDE OUT / OUTSIDE IN

- On hits to the **INFIELD**, you remain **OUTSIDE** the diamond and slide in your working range.
- On hits to the **OUTFIELD**, you come **INSIDE** the diamond to the working area, pivot and pick up your base runners.

REMEMBER: Inside-Out, Outside-In



THE SILVER RULE FOR BASE UMPIRE: *ANGLE OVER DISTANCE*

- **Get in the right position** to make the call
 - Ideally, about 10 feet away from the play and at a 90 degree angle to the throw and/or tag
- But there is only one of you out there; you can't be everywhere at once
 - You will have to make calls at first base when you are in C position – **about 75 feet away!**
- **Get the right angle on the play** – that is more important than getting close
 - The right angle is where your view isn't obstructed by any other players, and where you can see the tag
 - Try not to get "straight-lined" by runners



TAG OR NO TAG?

- Determining a **tag or no-tag** is a matter of doing these things:
 - **Moving into position** to take the play (called “**Bust-to-your-Angle**”) and **standing still**. You will follow the throw with your head, not body. Don’t get too close.
 - **Finding the throw** from the fielder
 - Adjusting to the throw in case it is offline, called “lean-and-a-look”
 - **Going to hands-on-knees set** (unless doing a lean-and-a-look) to observe the tag. **DON’T MAKE A CALL WHILE ON THE MOVE.**
 - Seeing the tag by **using the eyes properly** – head still, watch the whole play before you decide
 - Assuring the requirement of “firm and secure possession” has been met – again watch the whole play
 - Finally, **signal the play as using a proper signaling mechanic and a firm voice**



MAKING THE OUT OR SAFE CALL

- **The umpire's eyes must be** focused on the critical aspects of the tag (force play or not) as it develops.
- **If the tag is on a base the umpire's eyes will focus on the bag and the feet of the fielder and runner as he** arrives. The arrival of the ball will be clearly seen in the peripheral vision.
 - So don't be too close; you won't see the ball
- **If the tag is on the runner's body then the umpire's eyes will focus on the glove of the fielder.** The glove will direct your eyes to the runner.
- Now the umpire can complete the first part of the call process ... **YES a tag took place, or NO a tag did** not take place.
 - If the call is **NO then the umpire will signal "SAFE"**.
 - If the call is **YES the umpire must then bring his eyes to the glove and determine if the possession of the ball is "firm and secure."** **Only when he sees this will he signal "OUT"**



EIGHT BASE RUNNER SCENARIOS

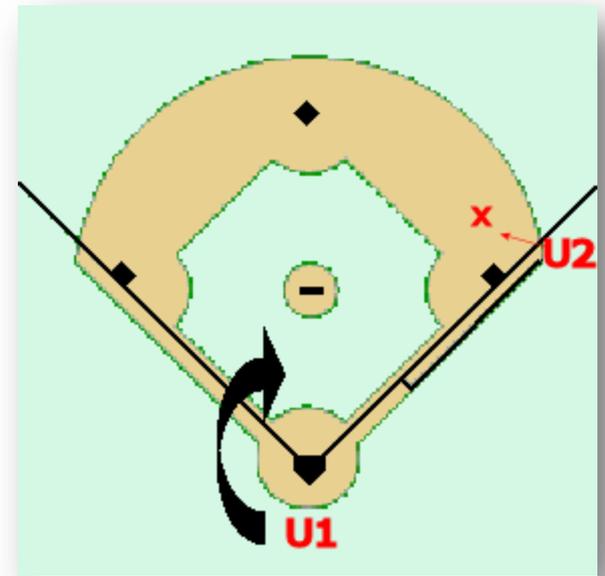
- Now we look at each of the eight base-runner scenarios, one-by-one:
 1. No runners on base
 2. Runner on first (**R1**)
 3. Runner on second (**R2**)
 4. Runner on third (**R3**)
 5. Runners on first and second (**R1, R2**)
 6. Runners on first and third (**R1, R3**)
 7. Runners on second and third (**R2, R3**)
 8. Bases loaded (**R1, R2, R3**)



NO RUNNERS ON BASE

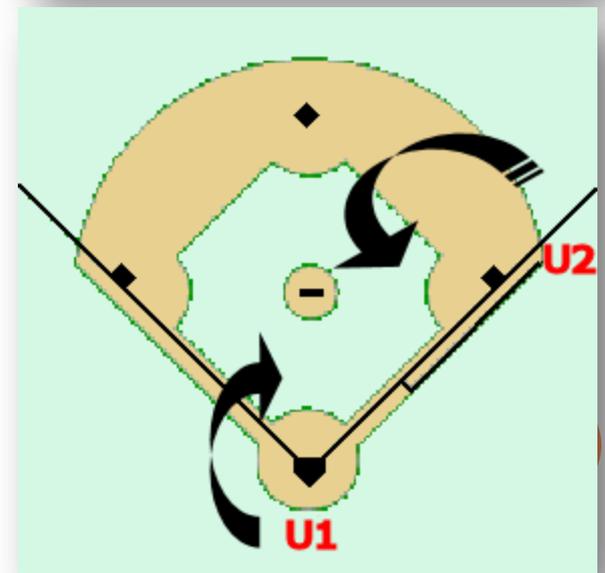
Ball to the Infield

- **U2** starts in **A**. On hit, break to sweet spot for play at 1B
- On overthrows at 1B, watch for ball out of play
- If BR continues beyond 1B, break inside and stay with the BR
- Be sure to ***see all base touches*** –



Ball to the Outfield

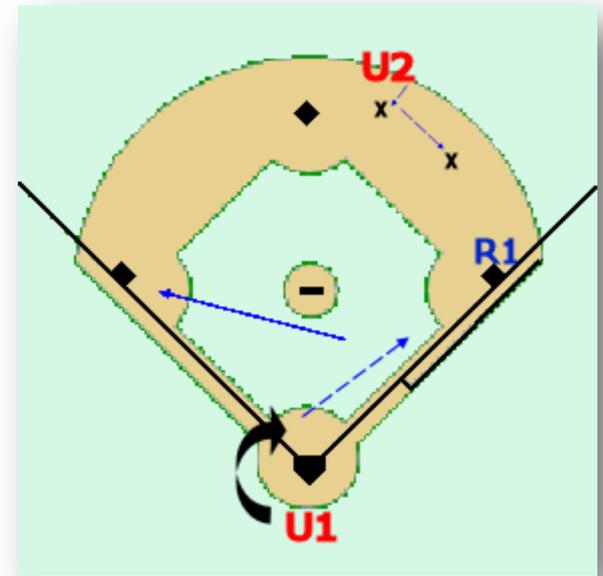
- Break inside and pivot in the working area; pick up the ball but watch 1B for base touch
- You have ALL bases except home; stay with the BR if he advances beyond 1B.
- Your primary responsibility is BR, but from the corner of your eye ***always know where the ball is*** – this lets you *read the play* as it develops
- Take BR all the way to 3B, then release



RUNNER R1 (1ST / 3RD)

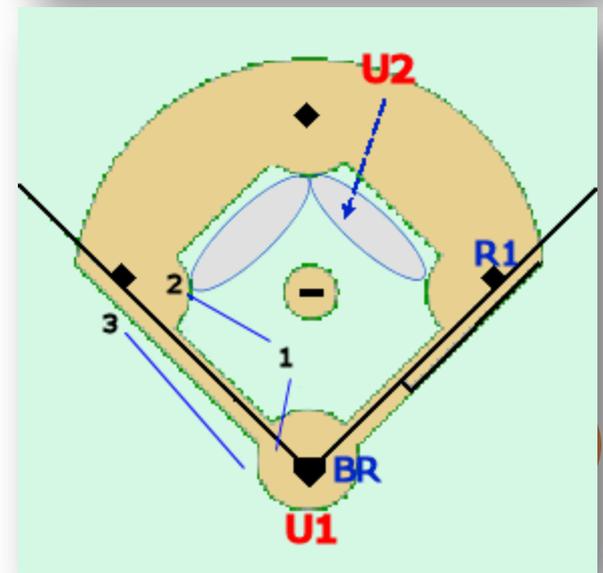
Ball to the Infield

- **U2** starts in **B**. On hit, slide in your range to sweet spot; the play could be at 1B or 2B, so read the play and be in position
- Be alert to the double play
- Be sure to see all base touches
- Watch for obstruction of the BR rounding 1B



Ball to the Outfield

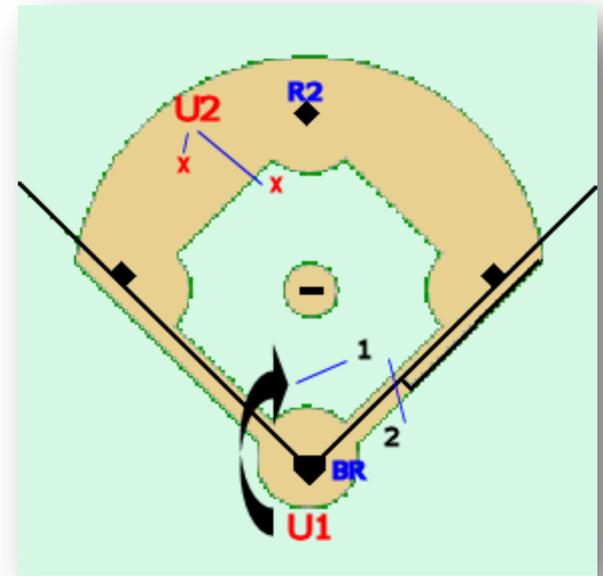
- Break inside to the working area, pivot
- Pick up the ball and stay read the play as the ball returns to the infield. **Follow the ball to the play. Read and react.**
- If the ball is caught, look **immediately** at R1 to see tag-up if the runner advances.
- If R1 advances to 3B, **U1** covers 3B and Home (**U2** stays with BR).



RUNNER R2

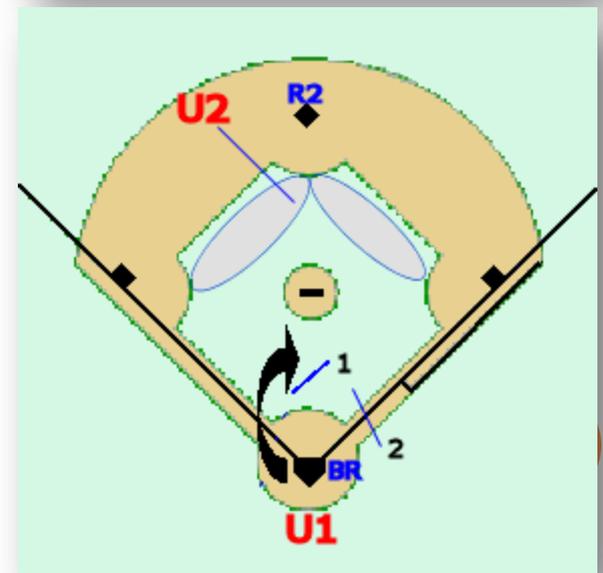
Ball to the Infield

- **U2** starts in **C**. Read and react, follow ball to play
- If at 1B, take a few steps in and set for call
- If play is on R2 (either advancing, or returning to 2B), pick up ball and set for play. Watch for obstruction.
- If a caught line drive, *look immediately at R2* for the pick-off play – **OR**, for tag-up if R2 advances



Ball to the Outfield

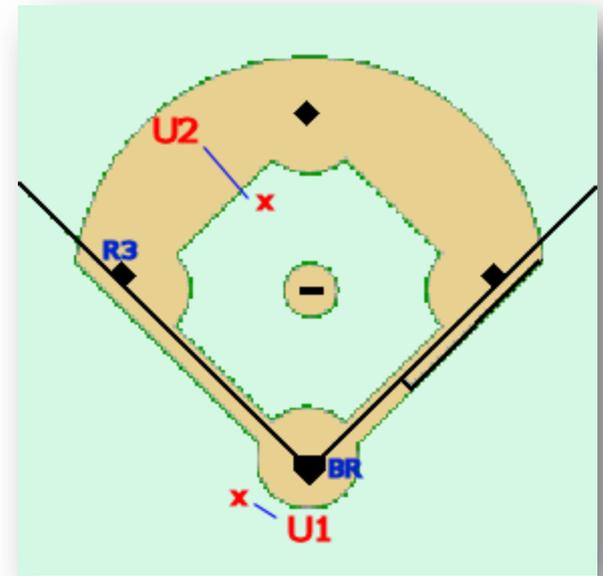
- Break inside, pivot, and pick up the ball
- If caught, look at R2 to ensure he tags up before advancing
- If not caught fly, **read and react**. Slide in your working area and stay with the ball as it returns to the infield.
- After R2 passes 3B, release R2 to U1 and pick up the BR



RUNNER R3

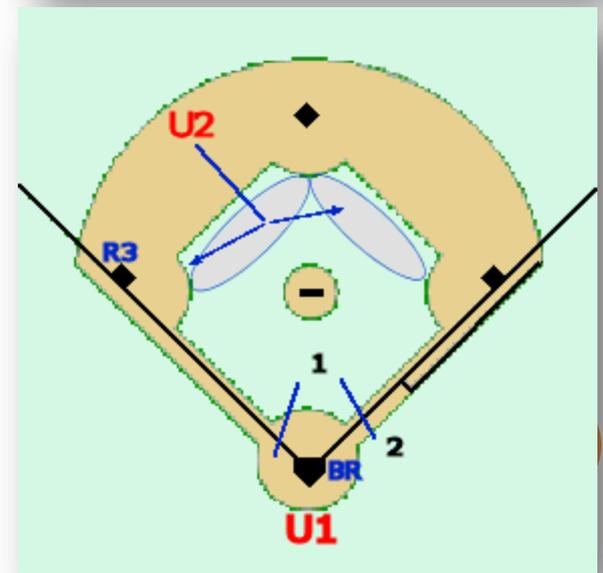
Ball to the Infield

- **U2** starts in **C**. Take steps toward 1B and set for call, AND, sneak a look at R3 to see if he is going
- Follow ball to the play. If caught line drive, look *immediately* at R3 for tag up or pick off.
- If BR breaks for 2B trying to draw the throw, allowing R3 to steal home, stay with the ball and know where your runners are. Stay with BR and let U1 handle R3.



Ball to the Outfield

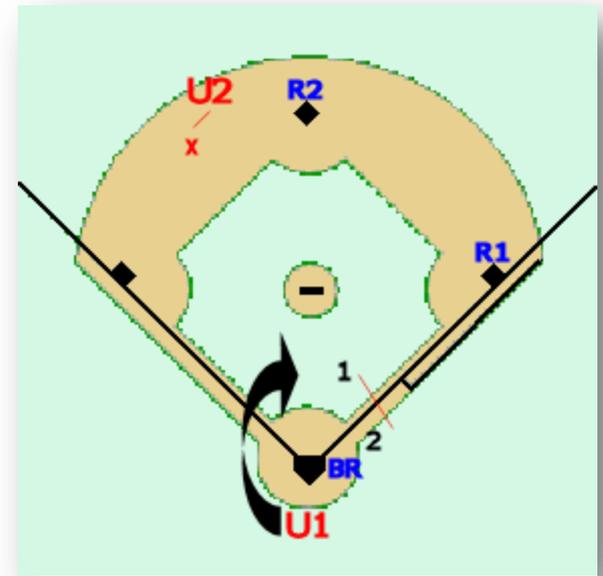
- Break inside, pick up the ball; keep the ball in the corner of your eye, but focus on the runners
- **See all base touches** and watch for obstruction
- On caught fly ball, look *immediately* at R3 to see the tag up
- If not caught, release R3 and focus on the BR. You have the BR all the way to 3B



RUNNERS R1, R2

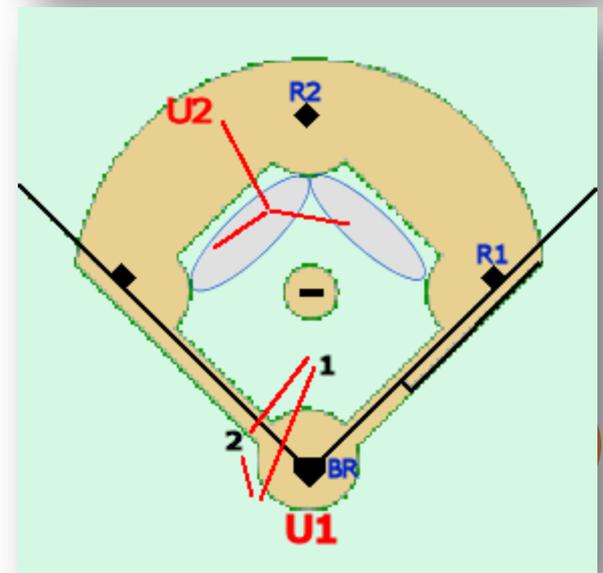
Ball to the Infield

- **U2** starts in **C**. You have forces at all bases, so read and react – and follow the ball to the play.
- Be alert for double play
- On a caught line drive, look *immediately* at runners for tag-up and pick-off plays
- Remember that with fewer than two outs, R1, R2 is an ***infield fly situation***. If pop-up to infield, point and call “Infield fly ... batter out.”



Ball to the Outfield

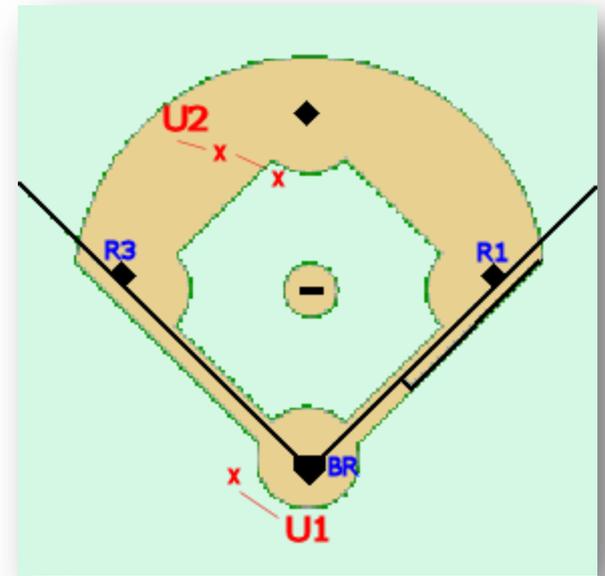
- Break inside, pivot, and pick up the ball so you can see runners and still know where the ball is
- If caught fly ball, look *immediately* to see that runners tag up before advancing
- If not caught, track the ball – read and react. ***You have all runners at all bases.***



RUNNERS R1, R3

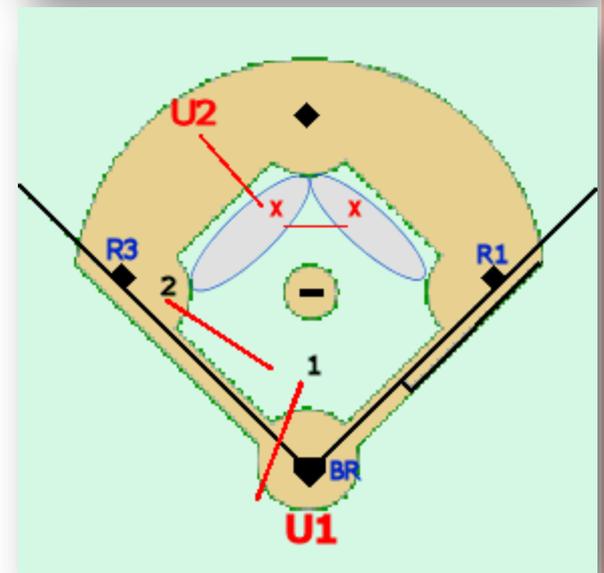
Ball to the Infield

- **U2** starts in **C**. Be flexible. Take a couple of steps and get set for the play at 1B. However, the play could just as easily go to 2B (on R1)
- Stay with the ball, then read and react and follow the ball from the first to the next play
- If it's a caught line drive, immediately look at both runners to see a tag up or pick-off play. If you have agreed with your partner that U1 has the tag-up at 3B, then focus on R1



Ball to the Outfield

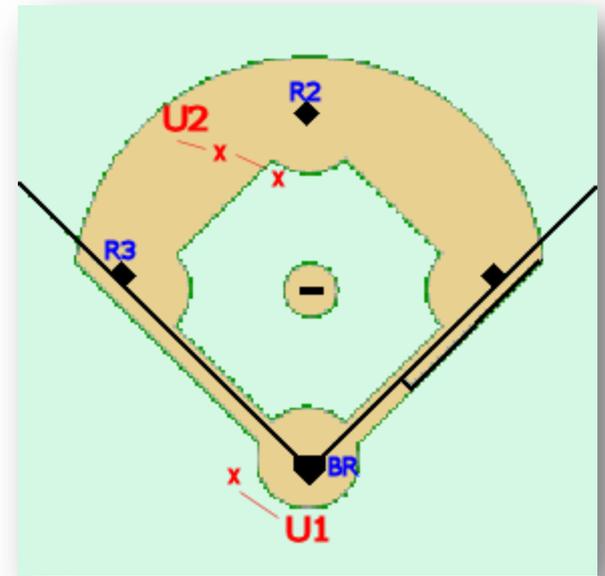
- Break inside, pivot, pick up the ball; read and react.
- If a caught fly ball, look immediately at R1 to ensure he tags up before trying to advance to 2B. U1 has the tag-up on R3.
- If the ball to the outfield is not a caught fly ball, forget about R3. Pick up the ball, watch all runners (R1 and BR) touch bases, then read and react to the ball coming back to the infield



RUNNERS R2, R3

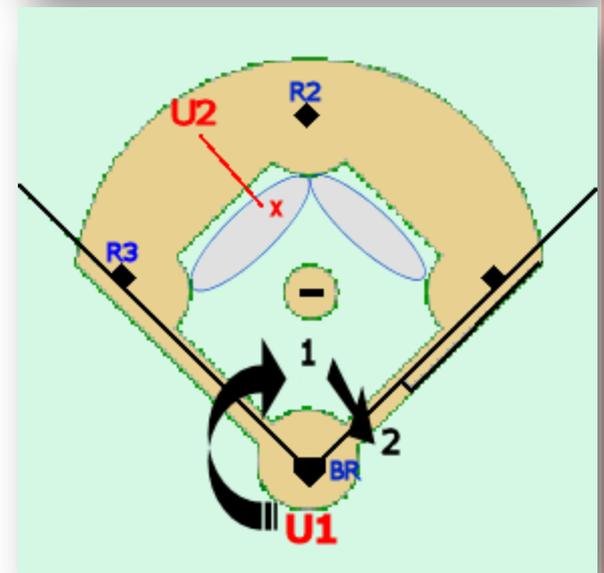
Ball to the Infield

- **U2** starts in **C**. No force, so your first move should be toward 1B. However, watch for snap throws on R2 and R3 if they have moved off their bases.
- If play does go to 1B, expect R2 and R3 to advance, so follow the ball to the next play.
- If a caught line drive, look at R2 to see a tag up. With R2/R3, you have the tag up on R2 while U1 has the tag up on R3.



Ball to the Outfield

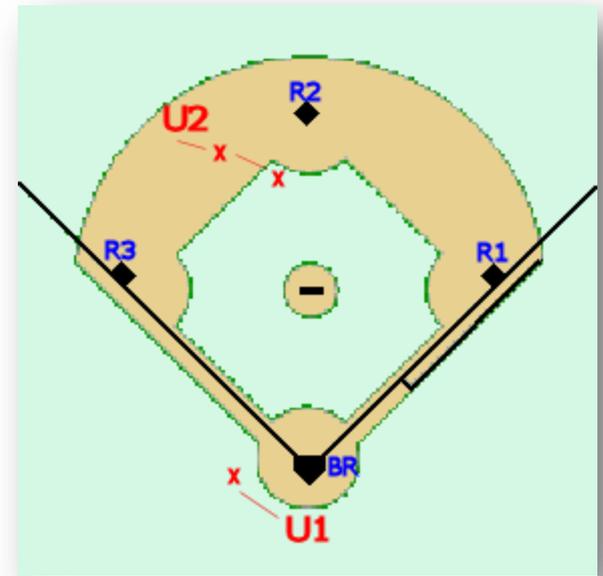
- Break inside and pivot. Pick up the ball and read the play as you follow the ball back to the infield
- If ball is caught, look at R2 for the tag-up. U1 has the tag-up at 3B.
- If ball is not caught, release R3 to U1 and concentrate on R2 and BR. Be sure to see all base touches.



RUNNERS R1, R2, R3 - INFIELD HIT

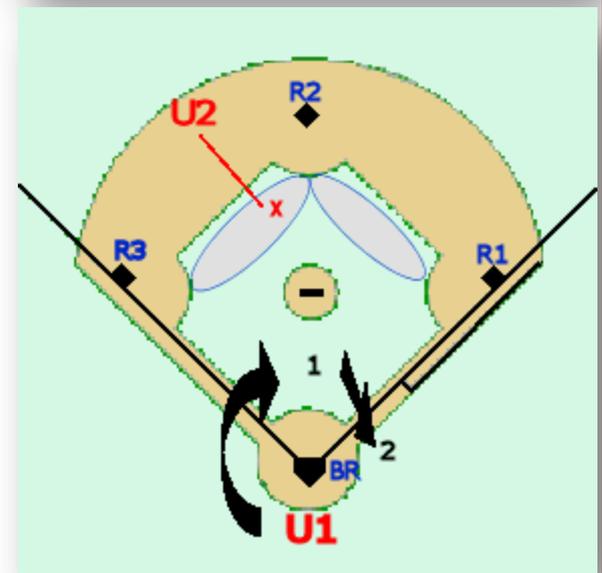
Ball to the Infield

- **U2** starts in **C**. Pick up the ball immediately and follow it to the play. We have forces at all bases, so the ball could go anywhere
- Be alert for double play. Stay with the ball and stay out of the way
- If a caught line drive, look immediately for the snap throw on R1 or R2
- If ball is mishandled and gets through the infield, come inside and pivot



Ball to the Outfield

- Break inside and pivot. Pick up the ball and move to a spot to you see R1 and R2 for tag-ups if the fly ball is caught.
- If no catch, pick up the ball coming back to the infield. **Stay with the ball, and stay out of the way.**
- See all base-touches. This is **very** important. With bases loaded, everyone is forced.



APPEALS

- An **appeal** is when a fielder claims a violation of the rules by the offensive team. There are some violations that an umpire ignores unless a defensive player appeals. These are the most common:
 - Failing to tag up when required
 - Failing to touch a base; failing to touch home plate
 - Batting out of order (Manager's appeal)
- ***Appeals must be made while the ball is in play (live ball).***
- Fielder must either **tag the offending runner** with the ball, or **touch the base** where the violation occurred with ball in hand
- The appeal must be obvious; no "accidental appeals". This is especially important at 1B, where runner is *presumed* to have touched the base.
- Defense loses the right to appeal after a pitch, any play, or once the defense leaves the field of play.



THE UMPIRE PRE-GAME MEETING

- Twenty minutes to game time, the umpires meet. This is extremely important
 - Go over the division of responsibility to ensure you're both on the same page. Cover fair/foul and catch/no-catch. Discuss U1 coverage of 3B on the 1st-to-3rd, and situations where U1 has the tag-up on R3.
 - Discuss handling overthrows out of play at 1B and 3B
 - Go over the ground rules
 - Go over your umpire signals and prompt to remember eye contact and signals on every new batter.
 - Discuss handling of problem calls and getting help



THE PRE-GAME MEETING WITH MANAGERS

- Five minutes before the game time, umpires proceed to home plate and call the team managers to home plate for the pre-game meeting (2 minutes)
 - Ask coaches to confirm that all players are properly equipped, and that all equipment is regulation
 - Go over ground rules; especially important is establishing out-of-play.
 - Clarify special league or local rules.
 - Ask for questions.



UMPIRE SIGNS & SIGNALS

- Communicating with you partner is critically important; learn and use the following guidelines:
 - U1 gives the signals; U2 flashes back
 - Make eye contact with your partner at every new batter, and whenever the situation changes (e.g., a steal)
 - ***Learn and use the following signals:***
 - Number of outs, if any
 - Infield Fly situation, if applicable
 - U1 is staying home
 - U1 has the tag-up on R3
 - U1 has 3B on the 1st-to-3rd (runners R1, or R1/R3)
 - I need help / I have information for you



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, then learn from it and move on.
- If for any reason you are less than 100% sure about a call you've made, get help. This is up to you.
- If you see something that your partner might have missed, offer help. This is up to him.
- **Do NOT** let managers or coaches argue judgment calls; **do NOT** allow managers to charge the field
- However, managers can legitimately question and appeal an error in the application of a rule.
- Do NOT allow arguing, rudeness, or unsportsmanlike conduct. You have the authority to eject players or coaches. Use that power sparingly, but use it if you must.



A TEASER FOR NEXT CLINIC – RULE MYTHS PART I

- The hands are considered part of the bat.
- The batter-runner must turn to his right after over-running first base.
- If the batter breaks his wrists when swinging, it's a strike.
- If a batted ball hits the plate first it's a foul ball.
- The ball is dead on a foul-tip.
- The batter who batted out of order is the person declared out.
- The batter may not overrun first base when he gets a base-on-balls.
- If the batter does not pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, it's an automatic strike.
- The batter-runner is always out if he runs outside the running lane after a bunted ball.
- A runner is out if he slaps hands or high-fives other players, after a homerun is hit over the fence.
- Tie goes to the runner.
- The runner gets the base he's going to, plus one on a ball thrown out-of-play.
- Anytime a coach touches a runner, the runner is out.
- The runner must always slide when the play is close.
- The runner is always safe when hit by a batted ball while touching a base.
- A runner may not steal on a foul-tip.



A TEASER FOR NEXT CLINIC – RULE MYTHS PART II

- It is a force out when a runner is called out for not tagging up on a fly ball.
- An appeal on a runner who missed a base cannot be a force out.
- A runner is out if he runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball.
- Runners may not advance when an infield fly is called.
- No run can score when a runner is called out for the third out for not tagging up.
- A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit.
- The batter does not get first base if hit by a pitch after it bounces.
- If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds it's a catch.
- You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal.
- If a player's feet are in fair territory when the ball is touched, it is a fair ball.
- The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before an appeal can be made.
- With no runners on base, it is a ball if the pitcher starts his windup and then stops.
- If a fielder catches a fly ball and then falls over the fence it is a homerun.
- The ball is dead anytime an umpire is hit by the ball.
- The home plate umpire can overrule the other umps at anytime.



QUESTIONS

