



2008 Manual for the 2-Umpire and 1-Umpire Systems

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TWO-UMPIRE MECHANICS

Starting Positions and Catch/No Catch Responsibilities

Starting Position: No Runners

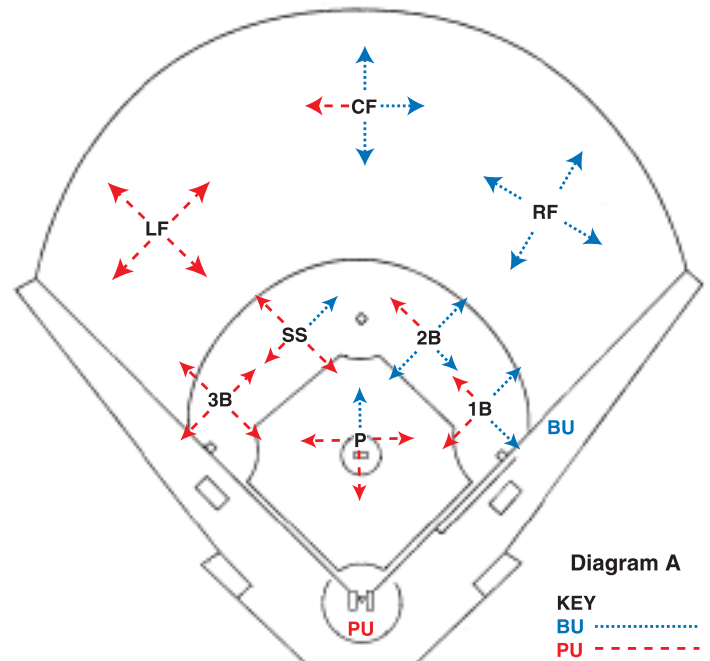
The base umpire will start in foul territory on the first base side, about 10-12' behind the first baseman. If the first baseman is playing back, the distance will be shorter. If he moves in, the base umpire should not be closer than 15' from first base. The plate umpire will always start behind the plate. See Diagram A.

Fly Ball / Line Drive Responsibility: No Runners

Balls hit to the outfield: The base umpire will have responsibility for trouble balls hit on the right side of the outfield. This includes all balls hit to the right fielder and balls hit to the center fielder when his first reaction is straight in, straight back, or toward right field. The base umpire will go out for those trouble balls. The plate umpire has responsibility for anything hit to the left fielder, the center fielder when his initial reaction is toward left field, and any ball when the base umpire decides to pivot. See Diagram A.

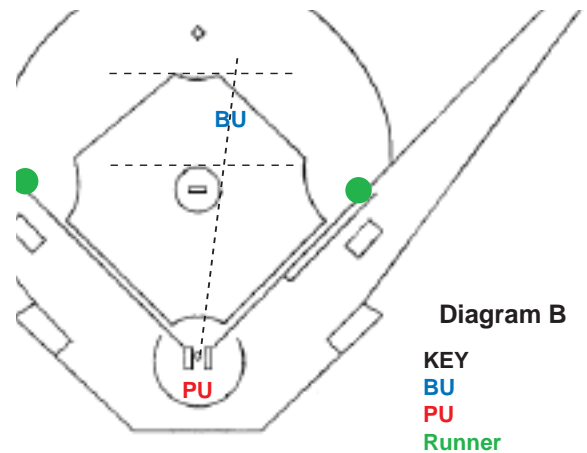
Balls hit to the infield: The base umpire will have responsibility for fair/foul decisions along the first base line with balls that reach or pass first base. The exception is with a slow roller, the plate umpire will have fair/foul responsibility and the base umpire will position himself for the play at first. The plate umpire will always have all fair/foul responsibility along the third base line.

The base umpire will have catch/no catch responsibility on balls when the first baseman goes straight back, or toward the line; when the second baseman goes straight in, straight back, or toward the first base line; when the short stop goes toward right field/second base; and when the pitcher goes straight back. However, if the ball is popped up in the area of first base, the base umpire will pivot and the plate umpire will take catch/no catch and fair/foul responsibility. The plate umpire will have catch/no catch responsibility when the first baseman goes toward second base or straight in; when the second baseman goes toward left field/second base; when the short stop goes straight back, straight in, or toward the third base line; all plays by the third baseman; and when the pitcher goes to either side or straight in. Keep in mind that there is a lot of gray area, and many catch/no catch decisions require eye contact between umpires. See Diagram A.



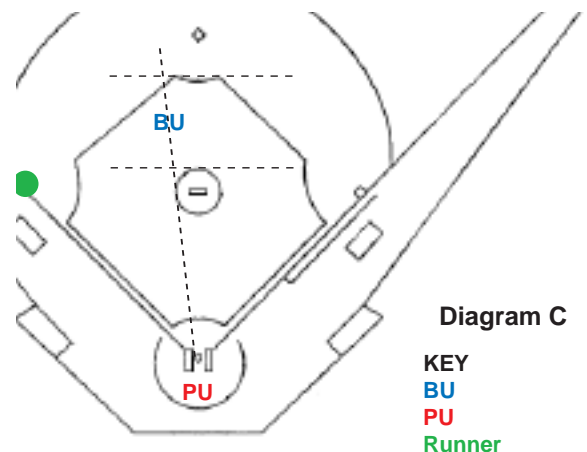
Starting Position: Runner on First Only; First & Third

The base umpire will be half way between the back edge of the mound and the second base cutout, on an imaginary line going from the edge of the plate, extended past the edge of the mound, on the first base side. The plate umpire always starts behind the plate. See Diagram B.



Starting Position: Second Only; Third Only; First & Second; Second & Third; Bases Loaded

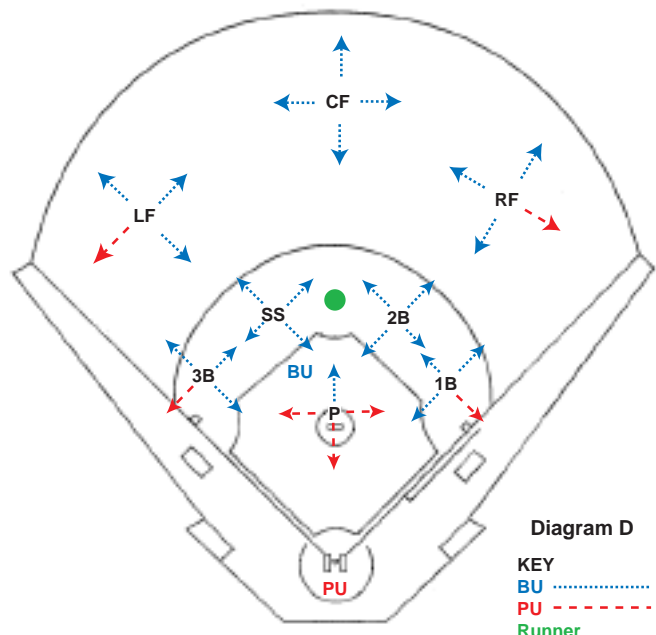
The base umpire will still be half way between the back of the mound and the second base cutout. But he will be on the third base side, a mirror image from R1 and R1 + R3. See Diagram C.



Catch/No Catch Responsibilities With Runners On

Outfield: This stays the same any time a runner is on base. The base umpire will have any catch/no catch responsibility when the ball is hit between the left fielder and the right fielder, or when either of them is going straight in or straight back. The plate umpire will have responsibility when the outfielders are going toward their respective foul lines. See Diagram D. If a trouble ball belongs to the base umpire, he will go to the grass/dirt line and set for the play. Once he sees the catch/no catch, he will go back and split the difference between the runners.

Infield: The base umpire will have all catch/no catch responsibilities with infielders, except when the first baseman is going toward the first base line or when the third baseman is going toward the third base line. The base umpire will have the catch/no catch with the pitcher going back. The plate umpire will have the catch/no catch with the pitcher going straight in, or toward first or third base.



The Working Area

The working area is the area behind the mound where the base umpire should try and stay when splitting the difference between runners. It is the area shaded in gray. See Diagram E.

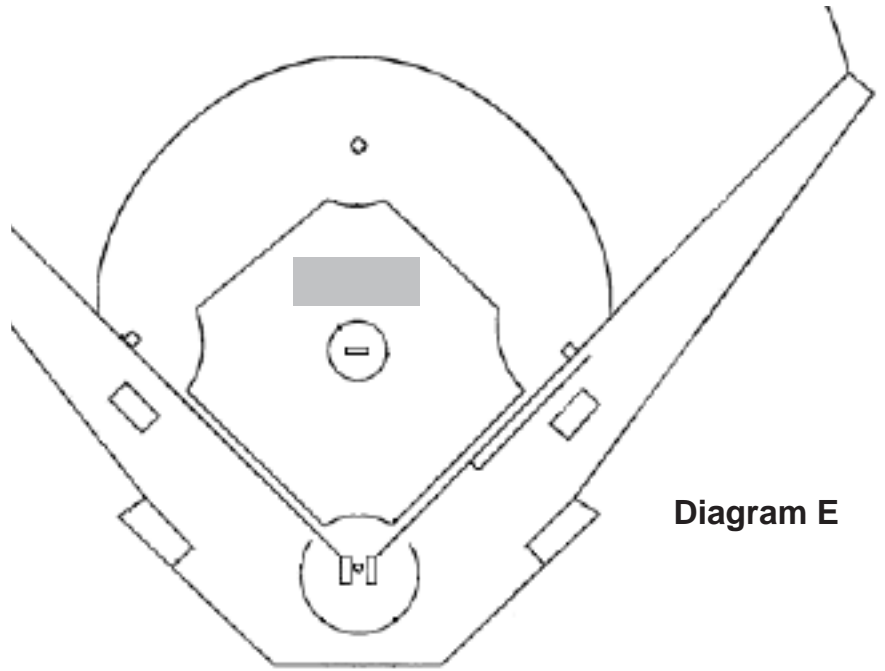
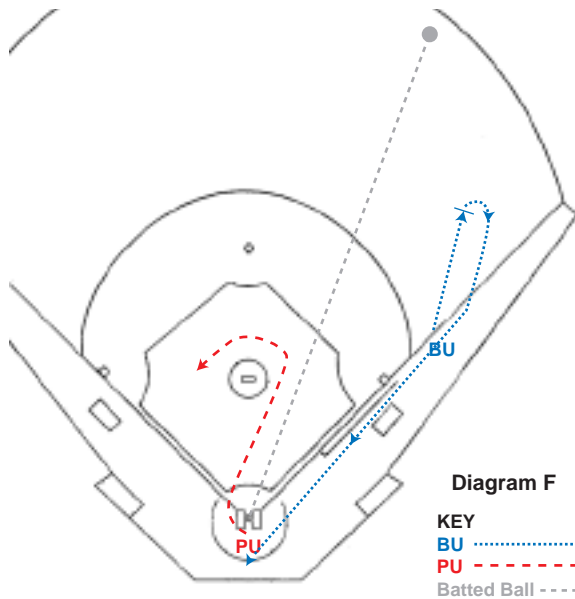


Diagram E

No Runners

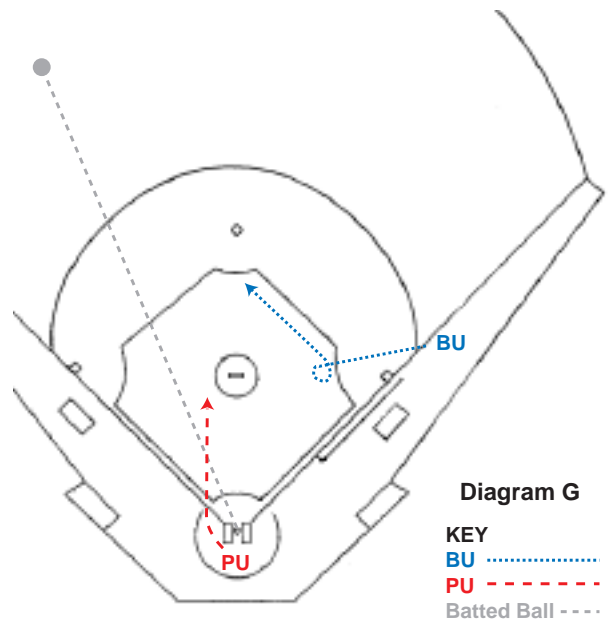


Trouble Balls Hit To The Outfield

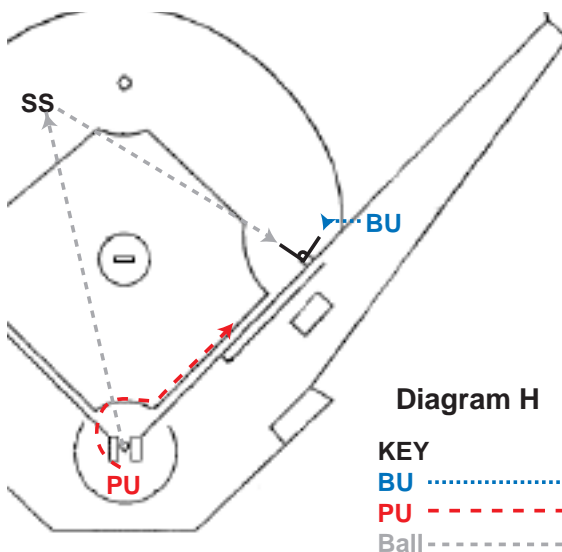
When a trouble ball is the base umpire's responsibility, he will take a read step, go out to the outfield, get a good angle, and set for the play. He will head back to the infield through foul territory when the ball is on its way back, and the base umpire will have a possible play at the plate. The plate umpire will have all calls and touches of the bases, and will cover the plate if the base umpire cannot get there. See Diagram F.

Base Hits or Fly Balls (not trouble) To The Outfield

The base umpire will take a read step, then go into the infield and pivot, watching the ball and glancing at the runner. He will be responsible for all plays on the bases. The plate umpire will clear the catcher and go into the infield toward the ball. See Diagram G. He will have overthrows and plays at the plate.

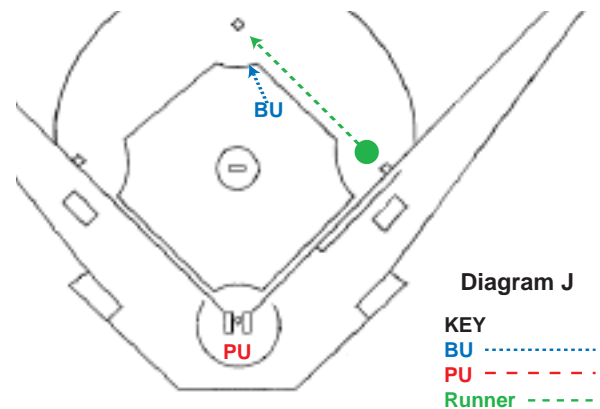
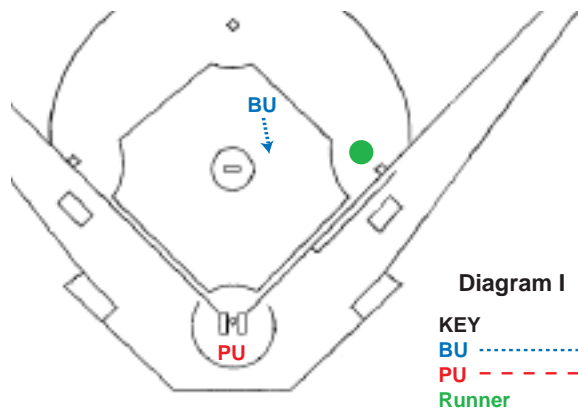


Balls Hit To The Infield



The base umpire will first take a read step (optional when the ball is on the left side of the field). On balls to the left side of the infield, he will try to get a 90-degree angle on the throw. On balls hit to the right side of the infield, he will take one or two steps off the line. If the ball stays in the general area of home plate, the base umpire will go into the cutout and get a 90-degree angle to the foul line. In any case, he will set 15-18' from first base before the play. The base umpire will only take the play in foul territory when he has pressure. This is rare and can usually be avoided. If he takes the play in foul territory, the plate umpire will take any following play at second or third. The plate umpire will go up the first base line on ground balls to the infield and watch for interference. See Diagram H.

Runner on First Only



Pick-Offs

The base umpire will take one or two steps toward the 45' line to get a good angle and set for the play. The plate umpire will stay put. See Diagram I.

Steals

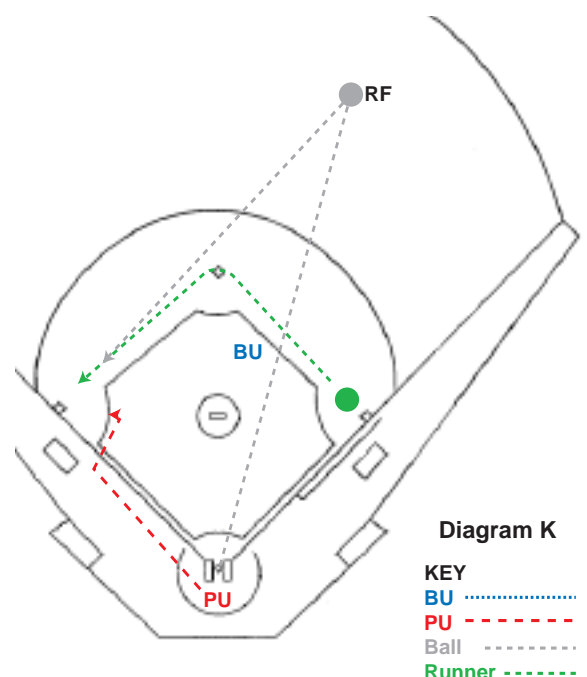
The base umpire will drop step with his right foot toward second, then cross step toward second. He will let the ball turn him and set for the play. The plate umpire will watch for interference at the plate. See Diagram J.

Base Hits To The Outfield

Any time the ball is hit with runners on, the base umpire will step up, turn, and face the ball. He will split the difference between any runners he has responsibility for. The base umpire has all plays at first and second bases, and the batter runner into third base. The plate umpire has responsibility for R1 into third base. He will run up the third base line 3-6' foul and tell the base umpire, "I've got third if he comes!" He will wait three quarters of the way to third base in foul territory, known as the library. If a play goes to third base (ball and runner) he will go into the cutout, set for the play, and tell the base umpire, "I've got third, I've got third!" If R1 goes home, the plate umpire will go toward the point of the plate and tell his partner "I'm going home!" If the plate umpire is in the cutout when R1 goes home, he will stay in fair territory and go to the cutout of the plate. The base umpire will stay with the batter-runner when R1 has reached third, and R1 is no longer the base umpire's responsibility. See Diagram K.

If the batted ball is the plate umpire's responsibility on the third base side, he will tell the base umpire "I've got the ball!" He will set for the play, then continue with his first to third responsibility. See Diagram K.

If the batted ball is the plate umpire's responsibility on the first base side, he will tell the base umpire "I'm on the line!" and move up the first base line. This means the plate umpire is not going to third base, and any play at third base becomes the base umpire's responsibility.

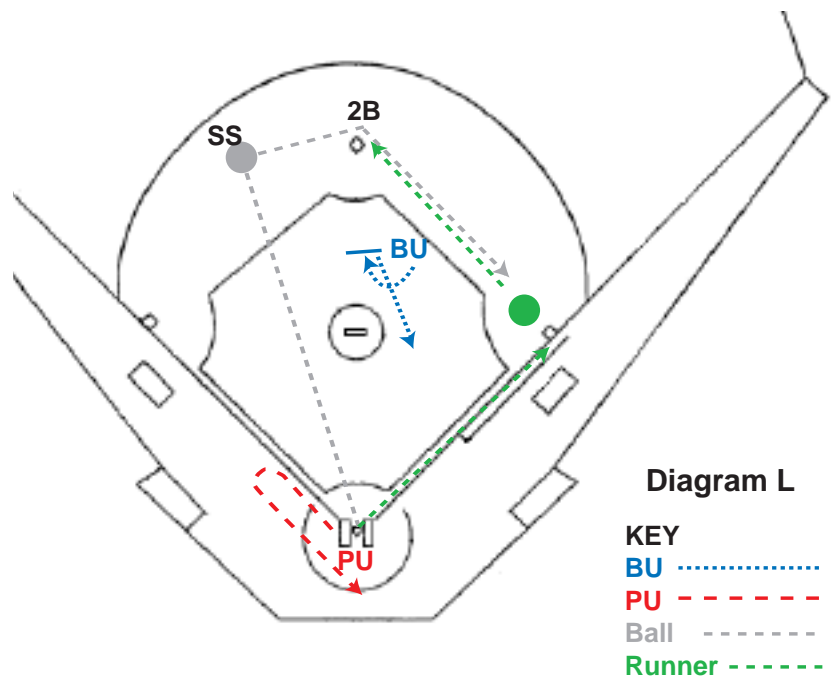


Balls Hit To The Infield

The plate umpire will not rotate to third when the ball stays in the infield, nor if the ball touches a fielder on its way to the outfield. The base umpire will step up, turn, and face the ball. If the play goes to first base, he will go toward the 45' line for an angle and set for the play. The plate umpire will initially go toward the library for a play at third base. When the ball touches an infielder, the plate umpire no longer has first-to-third responsibility. The plate umpire will then go back to the first base line extended.

Double Plays

The base umpire will again step up, turn, and face the ball. He will square himself to second base and set for the play. When the fielder starts to throw the ball to first, the base umpire will let the ball turn him, drop step with his right foot, and on his way toward the 45' line he will make his signal for the play at second. He will set for the play at first and make that signal. If the play at second required more explanation (i.e. off the bag, dropped the ball, etc.) he will go back toward second and sell the call after the play at first. The mechanics of the plate umpire are the same as with any other ball hit to the infield, unless he has a fair/foul decision. See Diagram L.



Runners on First & Third

Pick-Offs/Steals

A pick-off at first base will be treated the same as with R1 only (see Page 7). With a pick-off attempt at third, the base umpire should get a step or two toward third base and set for the play.

Hits To The Outfield

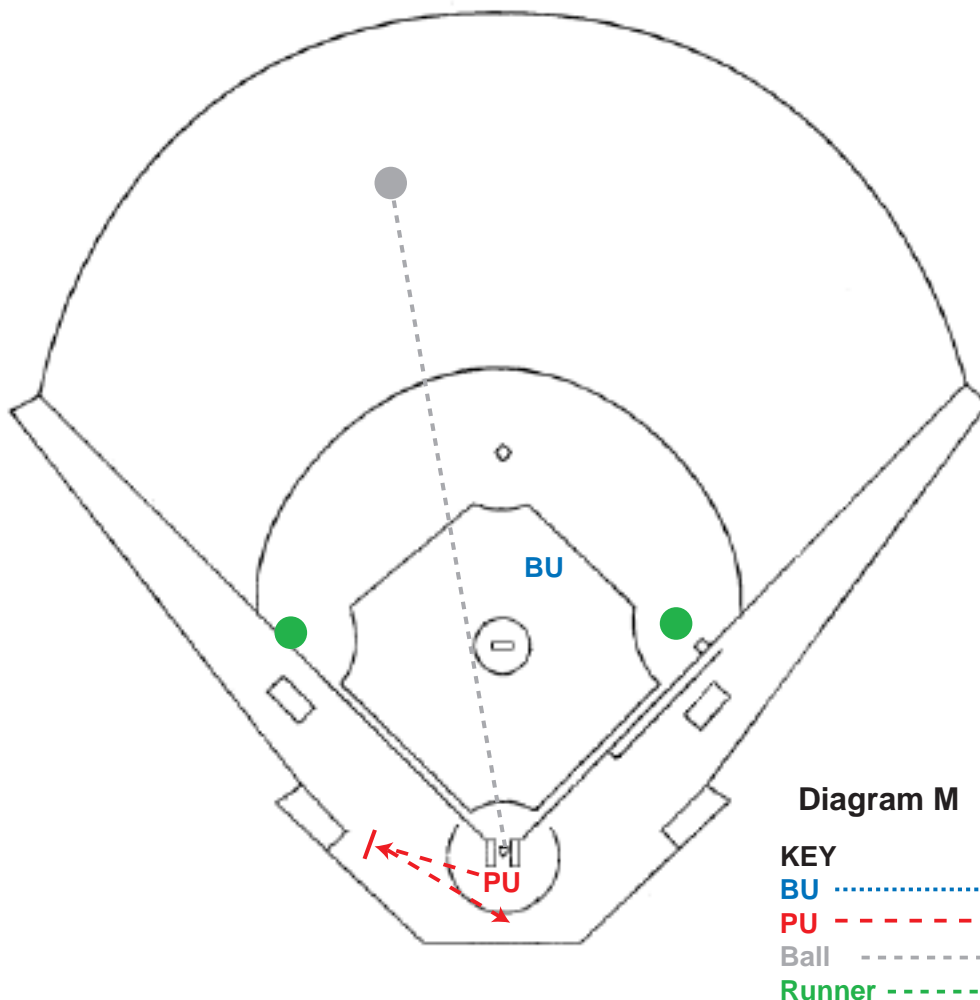
This is the same as with R1 only (see Page 7). The plate umpire will glance over his shoulder on his way to third base and watch for R3 touching the plate.

Fly Balls To The Outfield

The plate umpire has responsibility for the tag up at third base. Unless he has fair/foul responsibility, he will go toward the third base dugout to line up the catch and tag at third, set for the play, then go back to the point of the plate. For a fair/foul decision, he will go up the line as far as he can, while still being able to go back to home for a play on R3. Once he sees the play in the outfield completely, he can glance to see if R3 tagged up and go back to the point of the plate. See Diagram M.

Balls Hit To The Infield

These are treated the same as with R1 only (see Page 8). Stay in the working area.



Runner on Second Only

Anytime a runner is on second with third open, the base umpire will glance over his shoulder, after the pitch, to see if R2 is stealing.

Pick-offs

On a pick-off attempt, the base umpire will drop step with his left foot, let the ball turn him, and get any distance that he can, then be set for the play. This is very similar to a steal to second with R1 on Page 7.

Steals

The base umpire should see that R2 is stealing when he glances over his shoulder. He can also hear footsteps and hear fielders yelling. Immediately step with your right foot, and continue toward the imaginary 45' line on the third base side, then set for the play.

Fly Balls To The Outfield

With a fly ball to the outfield, the base umpire will have responsibility of seeing R2 tag and the play into third base. If possible, he should line up the catch in the outfield with the tag at second as good as possible. If the ball is caught and a play goes to third base, the base umpire should move toward the imaginary 45' line on the third base side, then set for the play. See Diagram N. If the ball is dropped, it should be treated the same as with any base hit to the outfield.

Time Plays

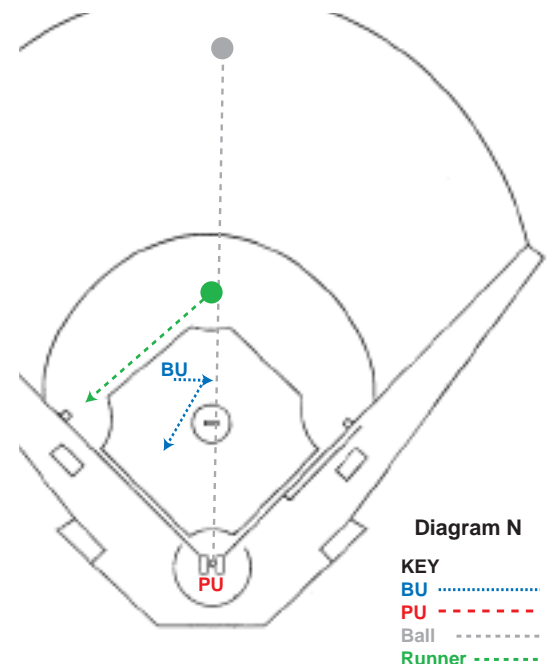
With two outs, the umpires will signal a possible time play by indicating two outs, then pointing at the plate. If a play is possible at a base for the third out (excluding force plays) while a runner is attempting to score, the plate umpire will line up the play with the touch at home plate. With a play at third, the will be on the third base line extended. With a play at second, he will be at the point of the plate. With a play at first, he will be on the first base line extended.

Base Hits To The Outfield

After the base umpire steps up, turns, and faces the ball, he should split the difference between runners and stay in the working area. If a play happens on the bases, do not get sucked into the play because there could be a play on the other runner immediately following. If a runner is put out, bounce back to the other runner. The base umpire will have all touches of bases except for R2 touching third, which is the plate umpire's responsibility.

Balls Hit In The Infield

The base umpire will step up, turn, and face the ball. He should get appropriate angle and distance on any play, while not pulling himself too far out of the working area. If a runner is put out, bounce back toward the other runner. The plate umpire will go to the first base line extended and will have the R2 touch at third and a possible play at the plate.



Runners on First & Second

With less than two outs both umpires will signal a possible infield fly situation.

Pick-offs

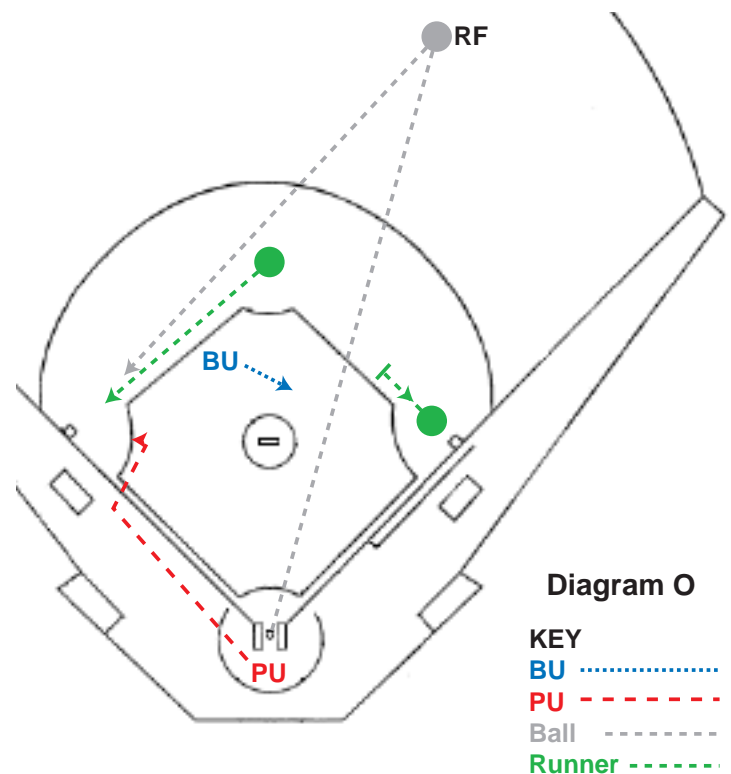
They will be handled the same as with a runner on R1 only, or R2 only on Pages 7 and 10.

Steals

They will be handled the same as with a runner on R1 only, or R2 only, but make sure not to get sucked into the play. If a runner is put out, bounce back toward the other runner.

Fly Balls To The Outfield

With a fly ball to the outfield, a tag up at second, and a possible play into third base, the plate umpire will go to third for the play. However, if the ball is the plate umpire's responsibility on the right field side, he will stay on the line for the fair/foul, catch/no catch. The terminology will be the same as with a first to third play: "I'm on the line!" If the ball is hit to the left field side, the plate umpire will say, "I've got the ball!" set for the play, signal his decision, and continue to the library. If the catch/no catch is the base umpire's responsibility, the plate umpire will tell his partner, "I've got third if he tags!" and go to the library, just like a first-to-third play. See Diagram O. If the ball is dropped the plate umpire will go home and treat it like a base hit to the outfield, and the base umpire will take R2 into third base.



The base umpire will have responsibility for the tag ups at first and second, and all plays at first and second. It is important not to drift over to the third base side because he has no responsibilities on that side of the field, except if the ball is dropped or with a play on the batter-runner.

Base Hits To The Outfield

The base umpire will step up, turn, and face the ball. He will have all touches of bases, except R1 and R2 at third. He should stay in the working area and split the difference between runners and not get sucked into plays. After a play, he should bounce back and split the difference.

Infield Flies (less than two outs)

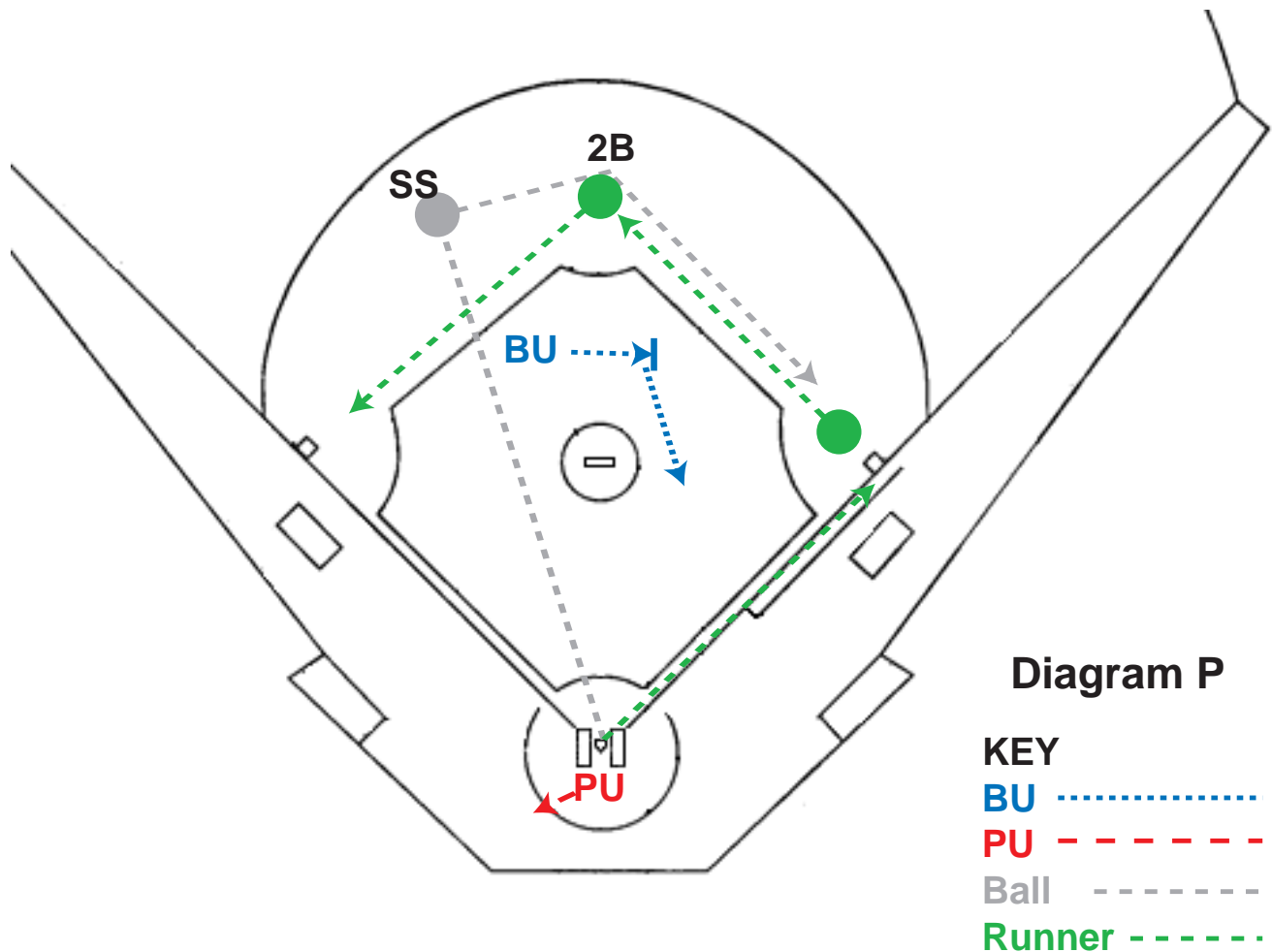
Whoever has the catch/no catch responsibility will make the initial decision to call an infield fly or not. The other umpire will echo. If it is near a foul line, the terminology will be, "Infield fly if fair!" Otherwise, it will be, "Infield fly, the batter's out!"

Balls Hit to the Infield

The base umpire will step up, turn, and face the ball, and get the proper angle and distance for any plays, then bounce back and split the difference between other runners. The plate umpire will go to the first base line extended and watch for touches at third and plays at the plate.

Double Plays

Once the base umpire realizes a double play is possible, he will drift toward the starting position for R1 only, straight across the infield. He will set for the play, then make the signal while on the run toward the 45' line, just like with R1 only (see Page 8), and set for that play. After the play, he will bounce back toward any runners left on base. See Diagram P.



Time Plays

They will be handles the same as with R2 only (see Page 10).

Runner on Third Only

Pick-Offs

The base umpire will take a step or two toward third and set for the play.

Steals

The plate umpire will have all plays at the plate. The base umpire will remain near third for a possible rundown.

Fly balls To The Outfield

The plate umpire will line up the possible tag the same as he would with R1 and R3 (see Page 9), then go back to the plate for a play there. If the ball is hit to either side, he will go up the line for the fair/foul and catch/no catch, but not so far that he cannot come back for a play on R3 at the plate. He will also still have the tag at third. The base umpire will stay near third until the play is over, for a possible rundown.

Base Hits To The Outfield

The base umpire will split the difference as long as he still has two runners. If R3 scores or a runner is put out, he will bounce back toward the other runner. The plate umpire will stay home, at the first base line extended.

Balls Hit To The Infield

The base umpire will step up, turn, and face the ball, get proper angle and distance for plays, then bounce back if he has other runners after the play is over. The plate umpire will stay at home, at the first base line extended.

Runners on Second & Third

Pick-Offs

These will be the same as with R2 only or R3 only, (see Pages 7 and 13).

Steals

These will be the same as with R2 only or R3 only, (see Pages 7 and 13).

Fly Balls To The Outfield

The plate umpire will have the tag up at third, and the base umpire will have the tag up at second. When possible, line it up with the catch as covered earlier on Page 9.

Base Hits To The Outfield

The plate umpire will stay home, at the first base line extended, and have touches at third except for the batter runner. The base umpire will split the difference between runners and have all touches at first and second.

Balls Hit To The Infield

The base umpire will split the difference and bounce back after plays are over. The plate umpire will stay home, at the first base line extended.

Time Plays

These will be handled the same as with R2 only, (see Page 10).

Bases Loaded

Pick-offs

These will be handled the same as with only one runner on base, (see Pages 7, 10 and 13).

Steals

These will be handled the same as any other runner situation.

Fly Balls To The Outfield

The base umpire will have tag ups on first and second, and the plate umpire will have them at third. When possible, line up the catch with the tag.

Base Hits To The Outfield

The plate umpire will stay home, at the first base line extended, and have touches at third except for the batter runner. The base umpire will split the difference between runners and have all touches at first and second.

Balls Hit To The Infield

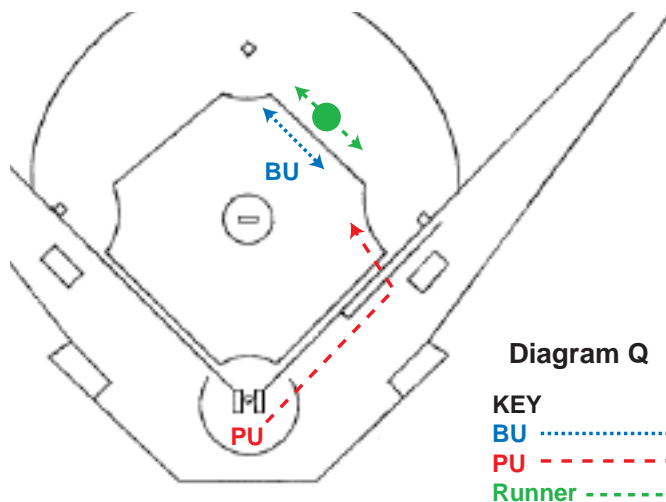
The base umpire will split the difference and the plate umpire will stay home at the first base line extended. Touches of bases will be the same as base hits to the outfield, (see Page 12). Double plays will be the same as R1 and R2, (see Page 12). Infield flies will also be the same as with R1 and R2, (see Page 11).

Rundowns

Generally, it is best to have two umpires on a rundown, one at each end. With only one runner on base, this can always happen if the rundown lasts long enough.

One Runner

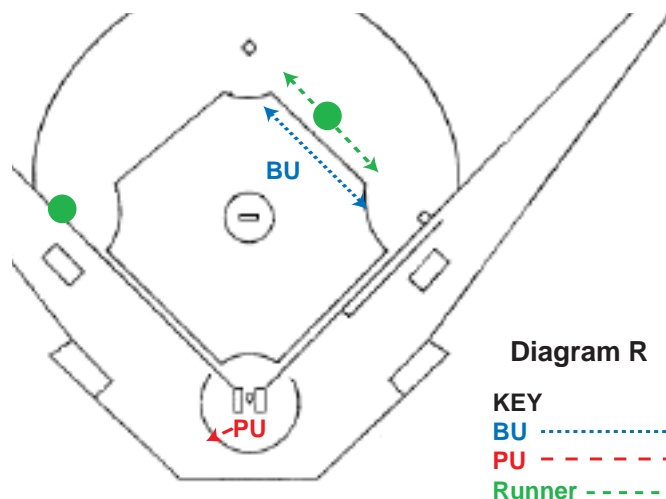
If the rundown starts between first and second or between second and third, the base umpire will handle it alone until the plate umpire can get there. When the play is going away from the plate umpire, he will move into the cutout area and tell the base umpire “I’ve got this half!” See Diagram Q. The umpires will split responsibility at the halfway point. When a tag may be possible in the gray area, the umpires will use eye contact, and one umpire will take the call if a tag happens.



With only one runner and a rundown between third and home, both umpires should already be there, so it is simple.

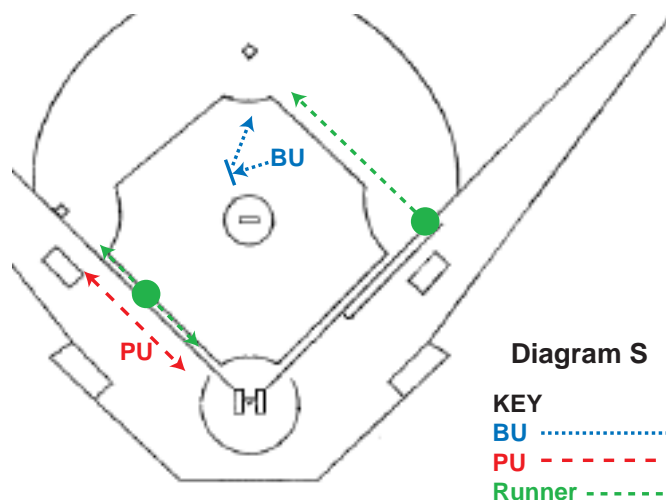
Rundown on a Following Runner

Anytime there is a rundown involving a runner who is not the lead runner, the plate umpire will stay out of it. There may be a throw during the rundown to try and retire the lead runner, or a runner may try and score. The plate umpire needs to be ahead of this play. See Diagram R.



Rundown on the Lead Runner

If a rundown develops between third and home and there are other runners, both umpires will initially be there. The plate umpire should tell the base umpire “I’ve got it all!” and the base umpire will leave, splitting the difference with other runners. If everyone had advanced to at least third base, then the base umpire can tell his partner “I’ve got this half!” See Diagram S.



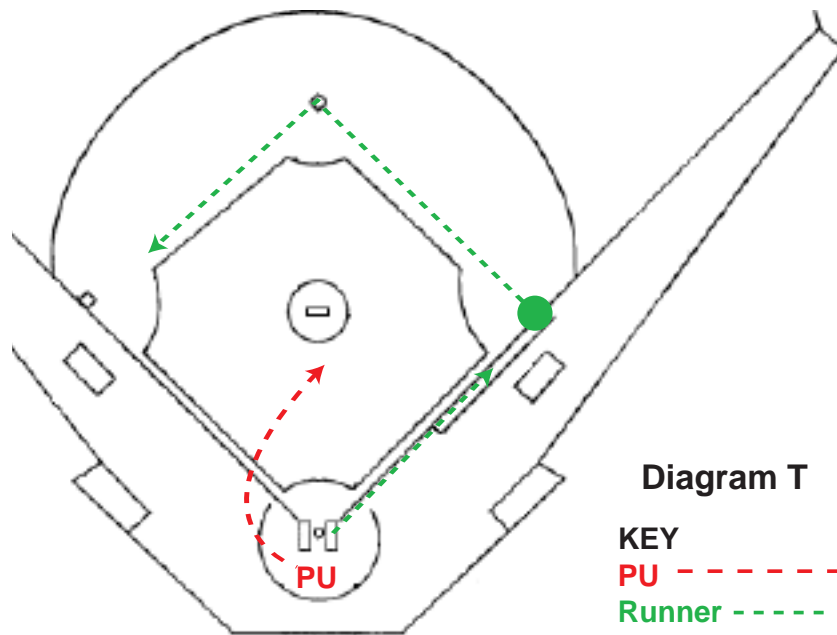
Staying ahead of the runner is important, and do not get sucked into the play. As with any other play, make sure you are set for any possible tag.

ONE-UMPIRE MECHANICS

General Guidelines

In order to get the best possible position for a play, the ideal position is to be in the middle of the infield near the pitcher's mound. This will help split the difference between multiple runners. With no runners, the umpire can just follow the single runner. See Diagram T.

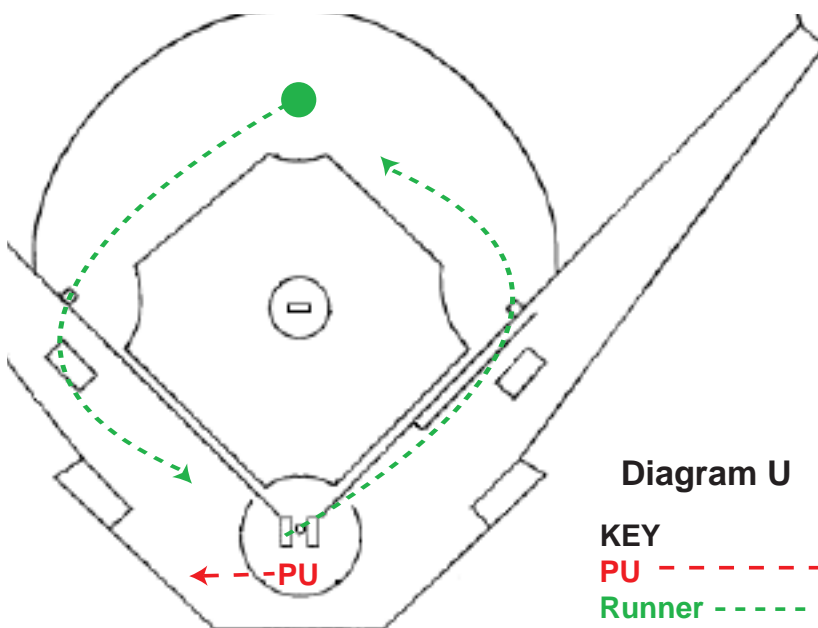
In some cases, the umpire will have to stay near the plate area.



Plays at Home

If a play at the plate is possible for the first play, the umpire must stay in foul territory, near the plate. If a play at the plate is possible during they play, the umpire will have to decide whether to move slightly into fair territory to split the difference between other runners or stay in foul territory for the optimal angle on a play at the plate. See Diagram U.

Time Plays



Anytime a time play is possible, the umpire will have to stay near the plate in foul territory. Line up the runner crossing the plate with the play for the third out. See Diagram U.