

MECHANICS FOR THE FOUR-UMPIRE SYSTEM - NYSBUA

9.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

One of the key concepts in understanding four-umpire mechanics concerns the position of the second base umpire and the coverage of fly balls/line drives to the outfield when runners are on base. An umpire goes out only when the play is going to be difficult (for example, a shoestring catch, home run, ball off the outfield wall, three fielders converging on the ball, a catch made at the wall or warning track, a fly ball down the foul line, etc.). If in doubt, go out!

Whenever a runner is on first or second the second base umpire will position himself on the inside of second base. With no runners on base or a runner on third base only, the second base umpire will position himself behind second base. The basic idea here is that whenever a steal, pick off or double play is in order, the second base umpire is to be on the inside at second base.

If the first base umpire is not in a reverse rotation, he will walk the first base line to watch the B/R touch first, and then prepare to drop to the plate if in a normal rotation.

Initial set up for first and third base umpires with no runners on base, typically just a bit on the outfield grass in foul territory. With runners on base, be able to get in position to make a call, including a stolen base or pick off.

Check swings go to the wing umpires, only when asked by the plate umpire.

If you stay at your base, you are responsible for touches and tag ups. If you go out, plate umpire will pick up touches at first and third. In addition the second base umpire should watch touches at bases if another umpire goes out.

Fair/foul calls are made by the plate umpire up to the base. At the base and beyond the base umpire will make the call. See each other so that no double calls are made.

Have good visual contact with your partners so that coverages can be done correctly. Be ready to take another umpires spot if necessary. Talk about blown coverages after they happen, not during action! Be prepared to scramble. Foul pops require umpires to be aware of coverages and to scramble. Communicate!

With no runners on or runner on third only (2nd base umpire outside), if the 2nd or 3rd base umpire goes out, the plate umpire rotates to third on a triple or HR. Rotations occur when the 3rd base umpire goes out in certain situations. They occur on a base hit when runners start on first or first and third; and in a tag up situation with runners on first and second. When the plate umpire rotates to third, the first base umpire rotates to the plate. When the runner commits to third, the first base umpire commits to the plate, mirroring the runner's progress toward third base.

The plate umpire follows the batter/runner to first whenever the first base umpire goes out with no runners on.

After each batter or new situation make a mental check of responsibilities for:

- 1) Rotations
- 2) Fly ball coverage
- 3) Check swing
- 4) Pitcher's stop

9.5 RUNNER ON SECOND BASE ONLY

With a runner on second base only, the second base umpire will position himself on the inside at second base as described in Section 9.3.

Fly ball coverage would be the same as with a runner on first base. If the first or third base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would slide over to cover possible plays depending on which wing umpire went out.

- 1BU out: HPU stays at plate. 2BU slides toward 1st and has calls at 1st and 2nd. 3BU stays outside at 3rd.
- 2BU out: Never
- 3BU out: 1BU pivots inside and takes B/R to 2nd. 2BU slides toward 3rd and calls at 3rd and initial plays at 2nd except for B/R. HPU stays at plate. This is a "reverse rotation."

9.6 RUNNER ON THIRD BASE ONLY

With a runner on third base only, the second base umpire will position himself behind the SS. He will not position himself as deeply in the outfield as with no runners on base since he may be required to cover plays at first or third base should one of the wing umpires go out. Fly ball and line drive coverage would be the same as with no runners on base. If the third base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would slide over for any potential play back into third. The plate umpire takes the tag-up at third base if the third base umpire goes out. If the first base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would slide over to take any play at first or second. These are tough coverages and require quick movements.

- 1BU out: HPU stays at plate. 2BU has calls at 1st and 2nd. 3BU stays outside at 3rd.
- 2BU out: 1BU stays outside. 3BU comes inside for plays at 2B. HPU rotates for plays at 3rd.
- 3BU out: On tag up, 2BU gets inside toward 3rd and has calls at 3rd and 2nd, HPU stays at plate. On base hit, 1BU stay outside, then drop to the plate. 3BU comes inside to 2nd, HPU to third.

9.7 RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

With runners on first and second, the second base umpire would position himself on the inside of second base. Fly balls and line drives to the outfield are covered using the techniques described in Section 9.4.

If the first base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would slide over to cover any plays at first base.

If the third base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would slide over to cover any plays at third and initial plays at second base, except the B/R. The first base umpire would rotate inside to take plays at second base on the B/R or any secondary plays at second base. This is a "reverse rotation."

If the third base umpire goes out, the second base umpire would slide over to cover any initial plays at third and second bases, except the B/R. The first base umpire would pivot inside to take plays at second base on the B/R or any secondary plays at second base. This is a "reverse rotation."

1BU out: HPU stays at plate. 2BU has calls at 1st and 2nd. 3BU stays outside at 3rd.

2BU out: Never

3BU out: 2BU has plays at 3rd and initial plays at 2nd. 1BU has secondary plays at 2nd and B/R at 2nd, HPU stays at plate.

After each batter or new situation make a mental check of responsibilities for:

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|----------------|----------------------|
| 1) Rotations | 2) Fly ball coverage |
| 3) Check swing | 4) Pitcher's stop |

NOTES: