



Rotations & Responsibilities 4-Umpire System

60-Foot Diamond
Baseball & Softball

2025-2026 Edition

*little
league*

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SIGNIFICANT UPDATES & CHANGES IN THIS EDITION

Philosophy	Reworded the five tenets to better emphasize key points.	4
Terms & Definitions	Added several new terms: Initial Starting Position (ISP), Halo, Pinch, Open Glove Theory, Redefined Po1, Po2, and Po3, & Restricted Area (formerly Working Area)	4
Fundamentals	Expanded upon and better emphasized the previous list of fundamentals	5
ISP with NRO	Reworded the ISPs for U1, U2, and U3 with NRO to emphasize shortening up (starting closer) pre-pitch starting position and approved walking the line with NRO.	7
ISP with Runners	Reworded the ISPs for U1, U3, and U3 with runners on base and revised U2's use of the B and C position runners on base.	8
Field Locations	Renamed the "Working Area" the "Restricted Area," updated the location of Po1 and Po3, eliminated the Library, and eliminated 1BLXT and 3BLXT.	9
Fair & Foul	Expanded upon existing guidance by emphasizing guidelines for teamwork on F/F and bracketing foul pop-flies between HP and 1B/3B.	10
AOR for C/NC	Added guidelines for going out to cover C/NC, clarified that the appropriate umpire will be out on every fly-ball to the outfield in their AOR, and updated fly-ball coverage on the infield and outfield.	11
Batted Balls Hit or Fielded in Infield	Updated when PU will trail the batter-runner, emphasized priorities and responsibilities for all umpires (especially PU), and added U1 taking force plays at 1B closer to the line.	12-13
Clean Hits to the Outfield	Eliminated U2 automatically coming inside and updated with U2 moving to Po2, opposite the throw, to achieve better positioning for tag plays using the wedge.	14
Types of Rotations	New Section – identified and outlined the three rotations in the 4-Umpire System for the 60-Foot Diamond: Full Rotation, Fill Rotation, & U2 Fill. Diagrams added for further explanation and understanding.	15-18
Situations	Provided diagrams for situations utilizing rotations when U1, U2, or U3 leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRO – U1 Goes Out (19), U2 Goes Out (20), and U3 Goes Out (21) • R1 Only – U1 Goes Out (22), U2 Goes Out (23), and U3 Goes Out (24) • RiSP – U1 Goes Out (25), U2 Goes Out (26), and U3 Goes Out (27) 	19-27
Key Concepts	New Section – identified three key concepts to remember regarding this 4-Umpire System: Types of Rotations, the expectation that the appropriate umpire will be out on every fly-ball in their AOR, and explanation of U2 as the "quarterback" if two umpires break to leave on the same fly ball (defer to U2).	28
Rotation Matrix	New Section – added a matrix identifying which rotation is used with the position of runners anytime U1, U2, or U3 leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR.	28
Pre-Game Conference Guide	Replaced the old pre-game conference responsibilities table with an updated version for consistency with this edition of the 4-Umpire System Manual.	29
Wedge Theory	New Section – provided an explanation of Wedge Theory on the 60-Foot Diamond and provided video resources available on the Umpire Registry or the Tournament Umpires Video Mechanics Gram Series.	30-31

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

PHILOSOPHY

Our version of the 4-Umpire System for the 60-Foot Diamond is based upon the following philosophies:

1. **Front load umpires** ahead of the runners and plays whenever possible utilizing rotations.
2. Assign responsibilities and rotations to cover the plays with the **highest probabilities in order of priority**.
3. When assigned to **cover multiple bases in rotation**, the umpire must let the ball take them to the play. The umpire must remember **not to overcompensate** their position should they be required to make a call on a subsequent play at another assigned base.
4. **Prioritize freedom of movement** for fielders and runners so that umpires do not hinder any play as a result of their positioning or rotations. When assigned to cover a single base, this may require U1 / U3 to move into foul territory to observe playing action and adjust their position should a “play” (ball and runner coming together) develop.
5. **Umpire Communication** is imperative to ensure proper coverage and rotations. Communication must occur early and continuously throughout the development of the play. Communication should be both audible and visual.

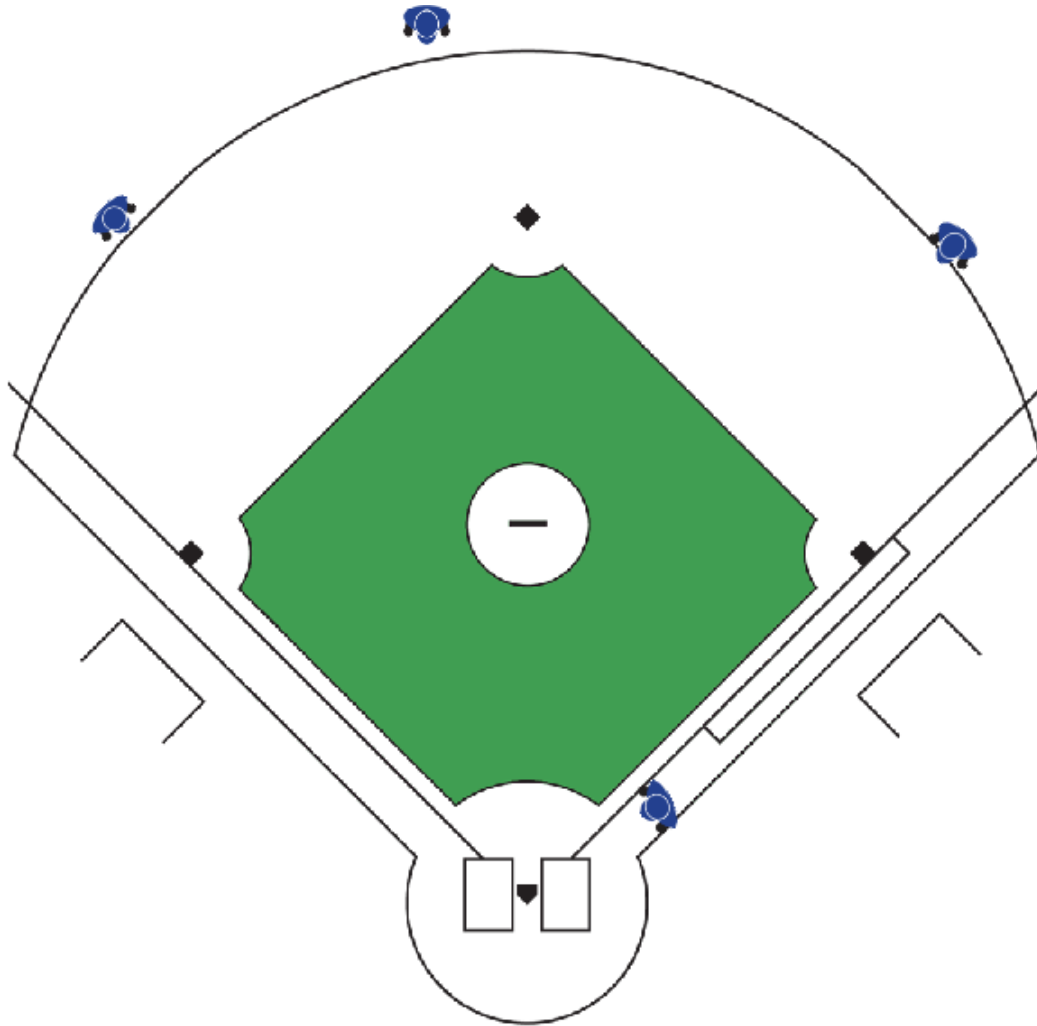
TERMS & DEFINITIONS

- **AOR:** Area of Responsibility
- **BR:** Batter-Runner
- **C/NC:** Catch / No-Catch
- **CtB:** Chest to Ball
- **F/F:** Fair / Foul
- **F1 through F9:** Standard Scorekeeping Notation for Fielders
- **Halo:** 2-3 step range 360 degrees around the fielder to afford freedom of movement of the fielder.
- **HP:** Home Plate **1B:** First Base **2B:** Second Base **3B:** Third Base
- **ISP:** Initial Starting Position
- **NRISP:** No Runners in Scoring Position
- **NRO:** No Runners On
- **Open Glove Theory:** used on infield fly-balls, this theory states that the umpire to whom the fielder’s glove is opening is responsible for C/NC. (Exception: PU is responsible for all fly-balls on the infield grass.)
- **PINCH:** with R3 and a F/F between HP and 3B, R3 may block PU’s sight for F/F and passes F/F to U3.
- **Po1:** Point of First Base on the topside (outfield) corner of the base in foul territory between the foul line and the coach’s box. This position allows U1 to remain CtB, afford freedom of movement, and position for back-picks.
- **Po2:** Point of Second Base opposite the throw from the field.
- **Po3:** Point of Third Base on the topside (outfield) corner of the base in foul territory between the foul line and the coach’s box. This position allows U3 to remain CtB, afford freedom of movement, and position for tag plays at 3B.
- **PoB:** Point of Base
- **PoP:** Point of Plate – 5 to 7 feet from the fielder receiving the throw directly behind the apex of the plate.
- **PU:** Plate Umpire
- **R1, R2, R3:** Base Runners at the Time of Pitch
- **Re-Touch:** Tag-Up Attempt
- **Restricted Area (RA):** Commonly referred to as the “Working Area” in the 2-Umpire and 3-Umpire Systems. In the 4-Umpire System, this is the area located on the 1B/2B side of the pitcher’s mound and extends approximately halfway between the pitcher’s mound and 2B cutout to the area located on the 2B/3B side of the pitcher’s mound.
- **RiSP:** Runners in Scoring Position
- **TBR:** Trail the Batter Runner (NRO Only)
- **U1, U2, U3:** Base Umpire Designations

FUNDAMENTALS

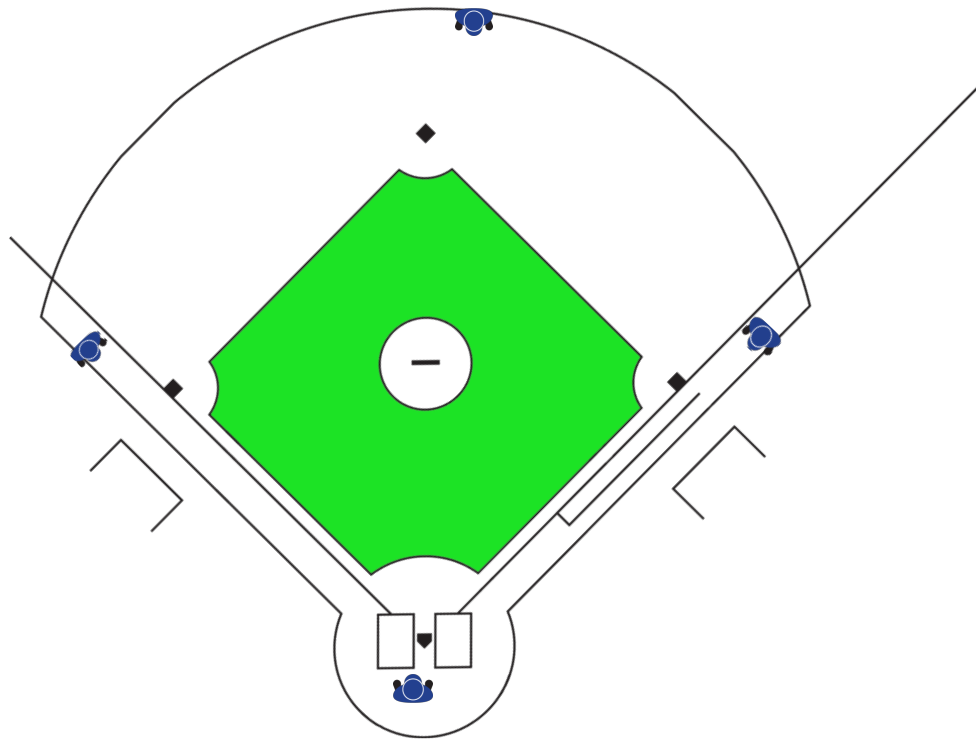
1. Umpires must know and execute the **4 Primary Priorities**: (1) Priorities / Order of Operations: Fair/Foul, then C/NC, then everything else. (2) Proper Use of Eyes (PUEs); (3) Remain Chest to Ball; and (4) Play Positioning.
2. Umpires are instructed to **shorten up their Initial Pre-Pitch Starting Position**:
 - a. Never closer than 10-12 feet from the base in front of you.
 - b. Never positioned parallel with the fielder in front of you nor in front of that fielder.
 - c. Position slightly outside of the fielder's "**halo**," the 2-3 step range 360 degrees around the fielder.
 - d. Position must allow you to **see the shoe tops** of the fielder in front of you for C/NC on a sinking line.
3. **When not in rotation**, the umpire is responsible for all calls at their assigned base and will move to Point of Base (PoB) and remain Chest to Ball (CtB) to position for such plays.
4. Umpires should use caution when using the **Restricted Area**:
 - a. When responsibilities are **multiple**, the umpire should use the Restricted Area and remain CtB.
 - b. When responsibilities are **singular**, the umpire should use PoB and remain CtB.
5. The appropriate umpire should be **out to cover every fly-ball** to the outfield. The remaining umpires will rotate appropriately to cover the open base using the **Full** or **Fill** rotation as dictated by the position of the runners.
6. On Fly-Balls Hit to the Outfield, **U2's AOR** extends from F7 to F9, straight in and back or towards CF. U1/U3 will cover F9/F7 respectively when moving toward the foul line.
7. If 2 umpires initially take the same fly-ball, the crew will **defer to U2**. The other umpire will recover and rotate accordingly. **U2 is the "Quarterback"** on all fly-balls hit to the outfield.
8. When **in rotation**, **retouches** (tag-up attempts) will advance to the umpire positioned at the base ahead of the runner (Exception: R1 Only in Full Rotation = U1 Takes R1's retouch).
9. On Fly-Balls Hit in the Infield:
 - a. **PU** will take all C/NC fielded above the waist of the fielder or anytime C/NC occurs on the infield grass.
 - b. **Open Glove Theory** will apply on fly-balls or line-drives hit below the fielder's waist. The **Open Glove Theory** means the umpire to whom the fielder's glove is opening will be responsible for ruling C/NC.
10. To execute the 4-Umpire System effectively, umpires must **Think, Read, and Respond**:
 - a. **Think**:
 - i. **Think ahead pre-pitch** – know what to "DOO:"
 1. Move **D**own to PoB, or
 2. Move **O**ut to cover C/NC in their AOR, or
 3. Move **O**ver to cover another base(s) in rotation.
 - ii. **Pre-Pitch Communication** – signal to your partners by pointing to your responsibility given the situation. Signals should be initiated by the Plate Umpire but must be done by all umpires.
 - iii. **Check Fielders** – knowing the positioning of fielders to help define each umpire's AOR.
 - b. **Read**: With the ball in the air, read the fielders and your partner(s):
 - i. **Read the fielder, not the ball**. Remember that AOR is determined by the movement of the fielders. Do not look up at the ball and be sure to check the position of fielders each pitch.
 - ii. **Read your partners and communicate**. We defer to U2 and can use a non-verbal "stop hand" to communicate with one another.
 - c. **Respond**: We should have the appropriate umpire out for C/NC **on every-fly ball to the outfield**:
 - i. Commit aggressively on every fly-ball to the outfield in your AOR. **"Leave no doubt that you are out."**
 - ii. Run parallel to the fielder attempting to catch the ball to avoid being straight-lined.
 - iii. Get as far as the play allows you and **get set before** the fielder attempts to make the catch.
 - iv. Timing & Proper Use of Eyes to confirm firm and secure possession **and** voluntary and intentional release **BEFORE** making a signal.
 - v. Go out and stay out (unless returning to assist in a rundown, waiting for the play to go away from you to call yourself into the rundown).

NEUTRAL POSITIONS BETWEEN INNINGS Between Innings



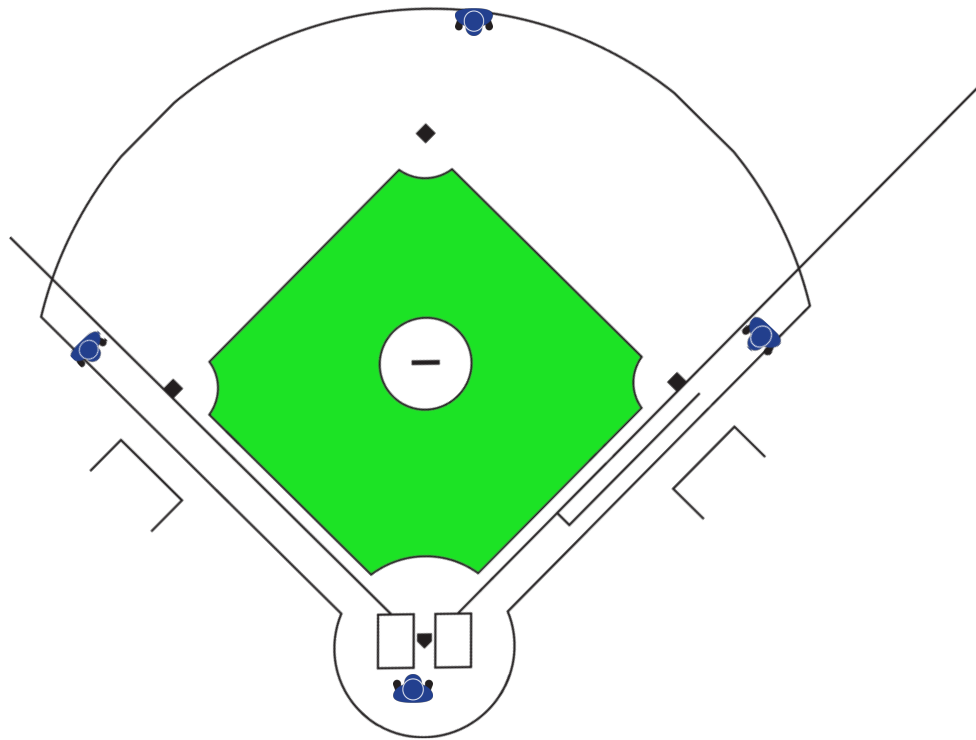
Neutral Positions between Innings			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defensive side of the field in foul territory near the foul line. • Keep an eye on the offensive team for the on-deck batter and his/her placement in the on-deck circle. • Count Pitches / View the TOC ("Red Hat"). • Alert the pitcher, catcher, and lead-off hitter in the on-deck circle when 2-pitches remain. • Warm-up pitches not to exceed 1-Minute. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shallow Right Field. • Avoid players warming up. • When ball is thrown down to 2B move to starting position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shallow Center Field. • Avoid players warming up. • When ball is thrown down to 2B move to starting position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shallow Left Field. • Avoid players warming up. • When ball is thrown down to 2B move to starting position.

INITIAL STARTING POSITION & DEPTH (ISP)	No Runners
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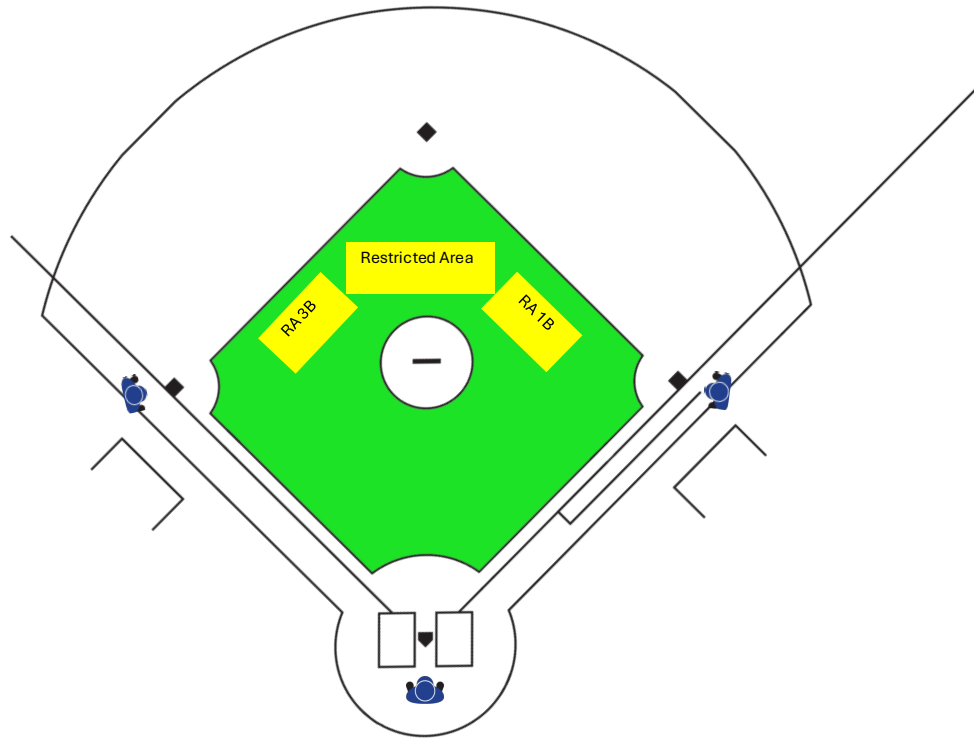
NO RUNNERS ON – INITIAL STARTING POSITIONS & DEPTH		
U1 <u>“A” Position</u>	U2 <u>“B/C” Position</u>	U3 <u>“D” Position</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up square to the plate, in foul territory, with the right foot adjacent to but not touching the foul line. Never closer than 10-12 ft. from 1B Never parallel with or in front of F3. Slightly outside of F3’s “halo,” or 2-3 feet radius around F3. Always able to see F3’s shoe-tops for C/NC on a sinking line-drive. With NRO, umpires may choose to walk the line into a wide receiver set position pre-pitch, provided all base umpires do so as determined in the pre-game conference. Otherwise, hands-on-knees set shall be used by each umpire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not the same as in the 2-Umpire System: No further toward 1B/3B than an imaginary line from the point of HP through the outer edge of the pitcher’s mound cutout or dirt circle in softball. On the outside of the diamond and out of the batter’s line of sight. Not too deep: slightly outside the halo and see shoe-tops of F4 & F6. Square to the plate. U2 may choose to use B or C based upon preference/comfort. With NRO, umpire may choose to use a wide receiver set position pre-pitch, provided all umpires do so. Otherwise, hands-on-knees set shall be used by each umpire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up square to the plate, in foul territory, with the left foot adjacent to but not touching the foul line. Never closer than 10-12 ft. from 3B Never parallel with or in front of F5. Slightly outside of F5s “halo,” or 2-3 feet radius around F5. Always able to see F5’s shoe-tops for C/NC on a sinking line-drive. With NRO, umpires may choose to walk the line into a wide receiver set position pre-pitch, provided all base umpires do so as determined in the pre-game conference. Otherwise, hands-on-knees set shall be used by each umpire.

INITIAL STARTING POSITION & DEPTH (ISP) **Runner(s) on Any Base**



NO RUNNERS ON – Anytime Runners(s) on Any Base		
U1 "A" Position	U2 "B/C" Position	U3 "D" Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up square to the plate, in foul territory, with the right foot adjacent to but not touching the foul line. • Never closer than 10-12 ft. from 1B • Never parallel with or in front of F3. • Slightly outside of F3's "halo," or 2-3 feet radius around F3. • Always able to see F3's shoe-tops for C/NC on a sinking line-drive. • Any time with a runner(s) on any base, the hands-on-knees set shall be used by each umpire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not the same as in the 2-Umpire System: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ R1 or R1+R3 = C ○ Anytime with R2 = B ○ R3 Only = Umpire Preference • No further toward 1B/3B than an imaginary line from the point of HP through the outer edge of the pitcher's mound cutout or dirt circle in softball. • On the outside of the diamond and out of the batter's line of sight. • Not too deep: slightly outside the halo and see shoe-tops of F4 & F6. • Square to the plate. • Anytime with a runner(s) on any base, umpires shall use the hands-on-knees set position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up square to the plate, in foul territory, with the left foot adjacent to but not touching the foul line. • Never closer than 10-12 ft. from 3B • Never parallel with or in front of F5. • Slightly outside of F5s "halo," or 2-3 feet radius around F5. • Always able to see F5's shoe-tops for C/NC on a sinking line-drive. • Any time with a runner(s) on any base, the hands-on-knees set shall be used by each umpire.

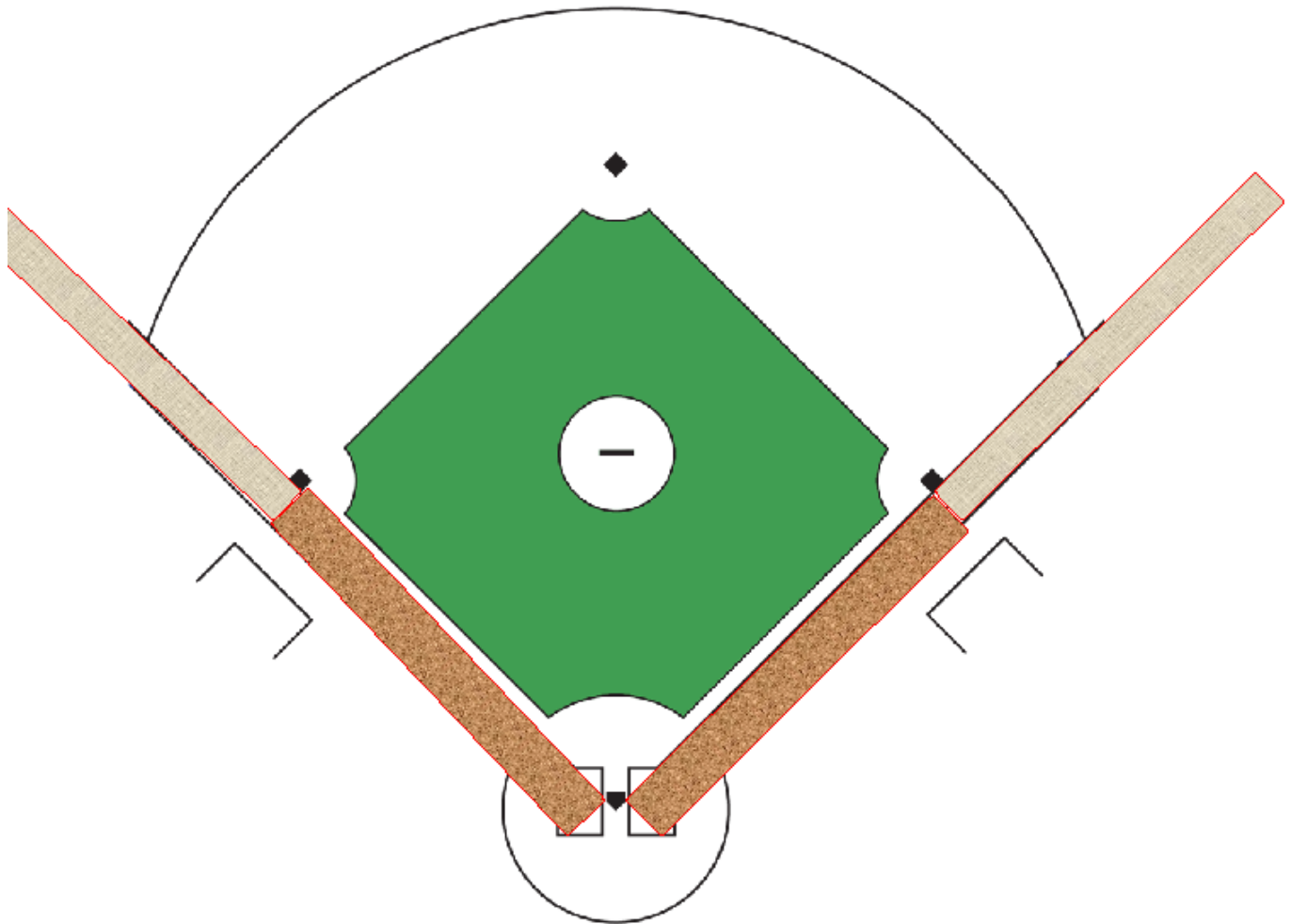
FIELD LOCATIONS 4-Umpire System for the 60-Foot Diamond



FIELD LOCATIONS		
PoP	Po1	Po3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly behind the physical point of HP. • Allows the umpire to remain CtB and observe all playing action in order of priority. • Allows the umpire to read playing action and adjust position accordingly for plays at HP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the topside (outfield) corner of 1B. • In foul territory. • Between the foul line and the coach's box. • Prevents U1 from hindering runners or fielders at 1B. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the topside (outfield) corner of 3B. • In foul territory. • Between the foul line and the coach's box. • Prevents U3 from hindering runners or fielders at 1B.

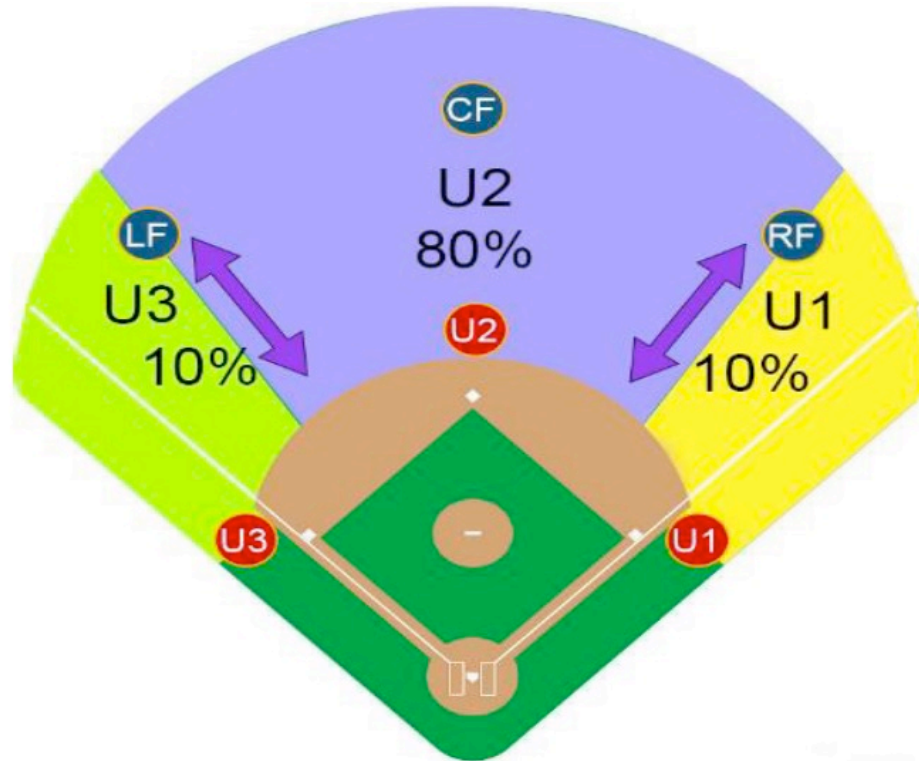
RESTRICTED AREA	RESTRICTED AREA 1B	RESTRICTED AREA 3B	NOTES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area approximately halfway between the pitcher's mound/circle and 2B cutout. • Allows umpire to stay CtB and observe playing action. • Only used when an umpire is responsible for multiple bases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That area located on the 1B/2B side of the pitcher's mound/circle • Allows umpire to stay CtB and observe playing action. • Positions umpire to read & adjust for plays at 1B and/or 2B. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That area located on the 2B/3B side of the pitcher's mound/circle • Allows umpire to stay CtB and observe playing action. • Positions umpire to read & adjust for plays at 2B and/or 3B. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Umpires must get depth (towards the mound/circle) when using the RA. • This opens up the viewing angles on multiple runners at multiple bases. • Avoid over-compensating or slipping outside until responsibilities are or become singular.

FAIR & FOUL RESPONSIBILITIES 4-Umpire System for the 60-Foot Diamond



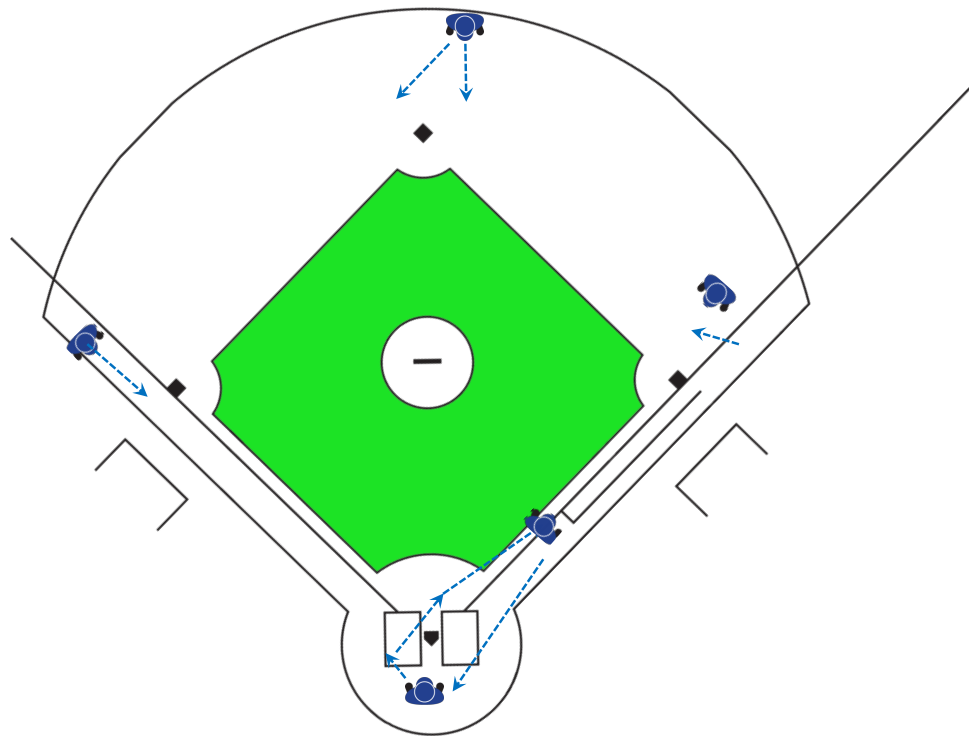
FAIR & FOUL RESPONSIBILITIES		
PU	U1	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PU has the call on both lines up to but not including the front edge of the base. • This includes any batted ball that stops short of or fielded in front of either 1B or 3B. • PU will assume the entire foul line when U1 or U3 abandon the line. • PU shall "hold the line" at PoP when not in rotation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U1 has the call from the front edge of first base and beyond. • This includes any batted ball that is bounding in the air, or on the ground, or is fielded even with the front edge or beyond first base. • If U1 abandons the line, U1 will never come back to make a F/F decision. • U1 will either be on the line to call F/F or move to Po1 if abandoning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U3 has the call from the front edge of third base and beyond. • This includes any batted ball that is bounding in the air, or on the ground, or is fielded even with the front edge or beyond third base. • If U3 abandons the line, U3 will never come back to make a F/F decision. • U3 will either be on the line to call F/F or move to Po3 if abandoning.
<p>When to Name Fair / Foul: A batted ball that becomes FAIR or FOUL between the coach's box and the cutout in the area of the infield or becomes FAIR or FOUL within 20 feet of the foul line in the outfield.</p>		
<p>When NOT to Name Fair / Foul:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before the ball is touched or settles prior to reaching first or third base. • Before a fly ball hit to the outfield is touched by a fielder or touches the ground. • Any obvious foul ball (banging off the backstop, is hit out of play, is farther into foul territory than 20 feet of the foul line. 		
<p>All Base Umpires: If you are 100% certain you saw a batted ball touch the batter and PU does not call "FOUL" or "TIME," then stop all action by aggressively calling, "TIME!" Remember to give PU a chance to make the call first. Once time has been called, you can decide if the ball touched the batter in the box (foul) or out of the box on or over fair territory (Batter-Runner = out).</p>		
<p>Bracketing Fly Balls: On pop-flies between HP and 1B/3B, PU and U1/U3 will "bracket" the fielder. PU will hold the line for F/F and U1/U3 will shade towards the fence. The principles of C/NC on the Infield and Open Glove Theory determines C/NC.</p>		

CATCH / NO-CATCH – Area of Responsibility (AOR) 4-Umpire System for the 60-Foot Diamond



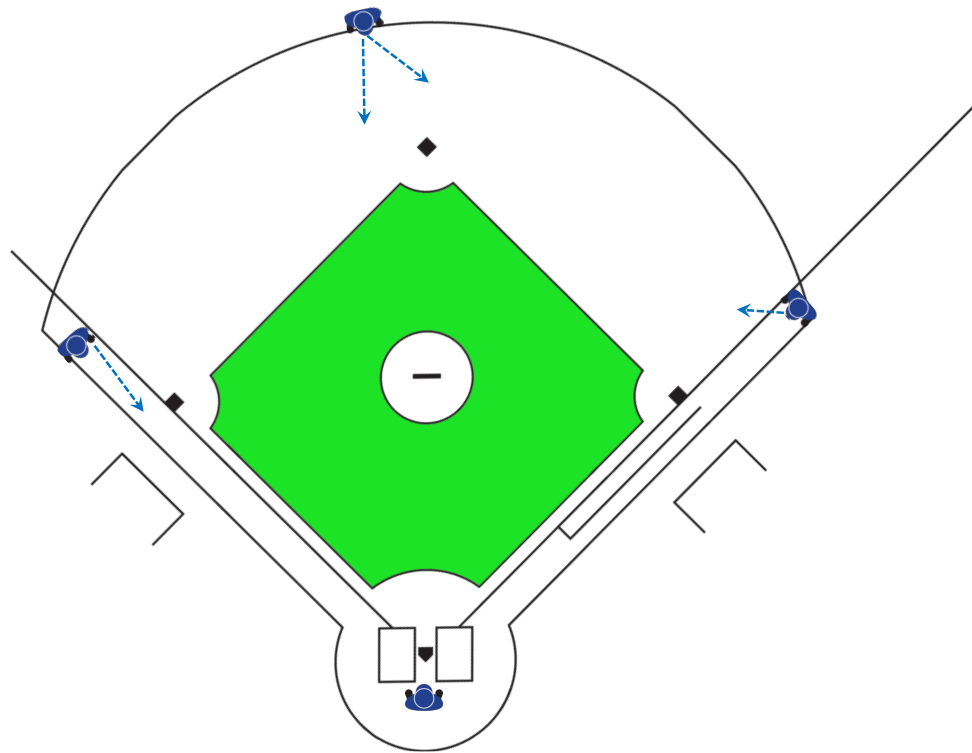
AOR – Area of Responsibility for Catch / No-Catch			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All C/NC on the infield grass. All C/NC on the infield on fly-balls fielded above the infielder's waist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appropriate umpire will be out on every fly-ball to the outfield in their AOR. <i>If 2 umpires go out on the same fly-ball, U1 will defer to U2, unless the ball is on the line.</i> U1's AOR: F9 moving toward the RF line. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appropriate umpire will be out on every fly-ball to the outfield in their AOR. <i>If 2 umpires go out on the same fly-ball, the crew will defer to U2, unless the ball is on the line.</i> U2's AOR: F7 & F9 moving in/back or toward CF plus F8 moving in/back or toward LF/RF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appropriate umpire will be out on every fly-ball to the outfield in their AOR. <i>If 2 umpires go out on the same fly-ball, U3 will defer to U2, unless the ball is on the line.</i> U3's AOR: F7 moving toward the LL line.
<p>General Guidelines for Going Out on Fly-Balls for Catch / No-Catch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once an umpire goes out, he/she stays out. The umpire should run parallel to the fielder attempting to catch the ball and get stopped and set prior to the attempted catch. The umpire should run as far as the play allows him/her until needing to get stopped and set for the catch. The appropriate umpire will go out on every flyball to the outfield within their AOR, especially the "3 Fs:" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair / Foul – any batted ball in flight that threatens the foul line. Fence – any batted ball that threatens the boundary (Homerun or Ground Rule Double). Fielders Converging – any batted ball requiring fielders to converge to make a catch. 			
<p>Fly-Balls in the Infield</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PU will take all C/NC <u>fielded above the waist</u> of the fielder or on any fly-ball fielded on the infield grass. Open Glove Theory will apply on fly-balls or line-drives hit <u>below the fielder's waist</u>. Open Glove Theory means the umpire to whom the fielder's glove is opening is responsible for C/NC. Bracketing Fly-Balls: On pop-flies between HP and 1B/3B, PU and U1/U3 will "bracket" the fielder. PU will hold the line for F/F and U1/U3 will shade towards the fence. Who signals C/NC is determined by the above. 			

BATTED BALLS HIT OR FIELDED IN THE INFIELD NRO



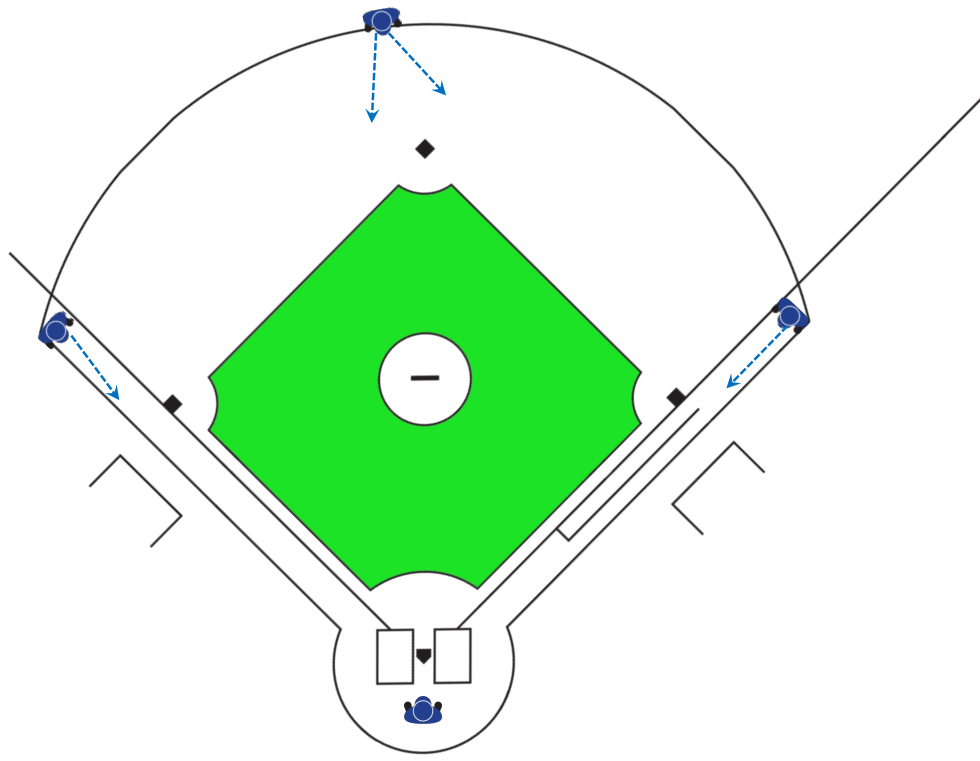
NO RUNNERS ON: Balls Hit or Fielded in the Infield			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PU will Trail BR to 1B. • Responsible for the call on a tag attempt on the BR prior to the Runner's Lane. • Provides information to U1, if requested. • Returns to PoP while remaining CtB for potential play(s) at HP. <p>Responsible For: F/F, C/NC on IF, all Touches & Plays at HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads the ball and moves to establish angle for potential plays at 1B. • Force Play "Set" position can be either 90 degrees from the origin of the throw or closer to the line. • U1 will adjust with F3 if the play evolves into a tag-play. <p>Responsible For: F/F, C/NC in AOR, all Touches & Plays at 1B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads the ball and moves to remain CtB on the outside of the diamond. • U2 will use wedge theory to position for tag plays at 2B. <p>Responsible For: C/NC in AOR, all Touches & Plays at 2B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads the ball and moves to Po3. • U3 must "own the real estate" on the topside of the base between the foul line and the coach's box. • U3 will use wedge theory to position for tag-plays at 3B. <p>Responsible For: F/F, C/NC in AOR, all Touches & Plays at 3B.</p>
<p>TBR: To observe for potential Runner's Lane Violation, out of play on an over-throw, and to assist with pulled foot or swipe tag on the BR at 1B. PU will always be responsible for a tag-attempt on the BR before Runner's Lane.</p>			

BATTED BALLS HIT OR FIELDER IN THE INFIELD Any Time Runner(s) on Base



RUNNER(S) ON: R1 Only, R2 Only, R3 Only, R1+R2, R1+R3, R2+R3, & Bases Full			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PU will handle all responsibilities in order of priority from PoP. With R3, PU may be blocked for F/F between HP and 3B. This is a “pinch” situation, and F/F can be passed to U3. Responsible for the call on a tag attempt on the BR prior to the Runner’s Lane. Provides information to U1, if requested. Remains PoP to use as starting position for potential play(s) at HP. <p>Responsible For: F/F, C/NC on IF, all Touches & Plays at HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reads the ball and moves to establish angle for potential plays at 1B. Force Play “Set” position can be either 90 degrees from the origin of the throw or closer to the line. U1 will adjust with F3 if the play evolves into a tag-play. <p>Responsible For: F/F, C/NC in AOR, all Touches & Plays at 1B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reads the ball and moves to remain CtB on the outside of the diamond. On a force play at 2B, U2 must move into position to see all elements of the play and drift for to observe subsequent infractions U2 will use wedge theory to position for tag plays at 2B. <p>Responsible For: C/NC in AOR, all Touches & Plays at 2B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reads the ball and moves to Po3. U3 must “own the real estate” on the topside of the base between the foul line and the coach’s box. U3 will use wedge theory to position for tag-plays at 3B. <p>Responsible For: F/F, C/NC in AOR, all Touches & Plays at 3B.</p>
<p>PU from PoP: To observe for potential Runner’s Lane Violation, out of play, and assist with pulled foot or swipe tag on the BR at 1B. PU will always be responsible for a tag attempt on the BR before the Runner’s Lane.</p>			

CLEAN BASE HITS TO THE OUTFIELD All Situations



CLEAN BASE HITS TO THE OUTFIELD – Regardless of the Pre-Pitch Position of the Runners			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PU will handle all responsibilities in order of priority from PoP, • Remains at PoP and adjusts from there for potential plays at HP. <p>Responsible For: F/F, C/NC on IF, all Touches & Plays at HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads the ball and moves to Po1, CtB. • U1 must “own the real estate” on the topside of the base between the foul line and the coach’s box. • U1 will use wedge theory to position for tag-plays at 1B. <p>Responsible For: F/F, C/NC in AOR, all Touches & Plays at 1B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads the ball as a clean base hit to the outfield and moves to Po2 opposite the throw. • Reads the runners, fielders, and play to position for runner sliding at U2. <p>Responsible For: C/NC in AOR, all Touches & Plays at 2B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads the ball and moves to Po3, CtB. • U3 must “own the real estate” on the topside of the base between the foul line and the coach’s box. • U3 will use wedge theory to position for tag-plays at 3B. <p>Responsible For: F/F, C/NC in AOR, all Touches & Plays at 3B.</p>

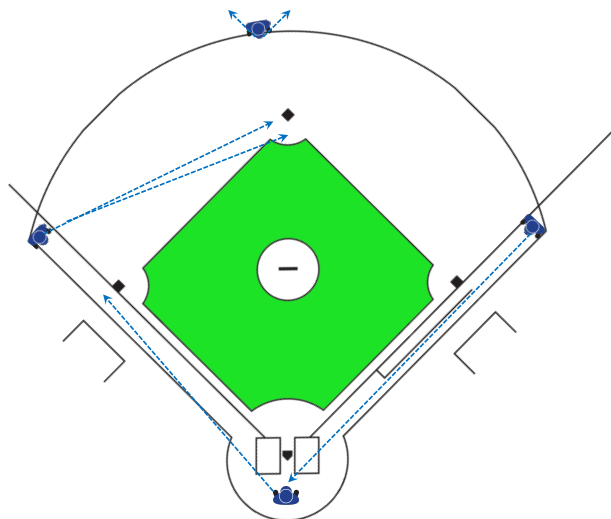
TYPES OF ROTATIONS

In our 4-Umpire System for the 60-Foot Diamond, the following is a list of the three types of rotations that will be utilized in this system:

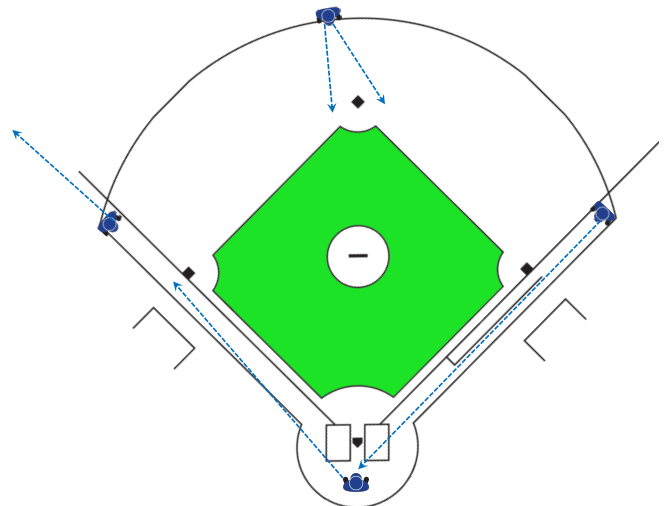
- **FULL ROTATION** – used with NRiSP (NRO or R1 Only) when U2 or U3 leaves to cover C/NC.
 - Called the “Full Rotation” because everyone moves.
- **FILL ROTATION** – used with RiSP when U2 or U3 leaves to cover C/NC.
 - Called the “Fill Rotation” because either U2 or U3 fills the vacancy when U2/U3 leaves for C/NC.
- **U2 FILL** – used anytime U1 leaves to cover C/NC.
 - Called the “U2 Fill” because U2 will fill the RA whenever U1 leaves to cover C/NC.

ROTATION	SITUATION	BASIC MOVEMENTS
FULL Rotation	NRO or R1 Only	<p>Movements: Everyone Moves in Clockwise Rotation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PU: Moves to Cover 3B in foul territory and remains in foul territory to apply wedge positioning for tag plays at 3B. • U1: Observes the Batter-Runner’s Touch and then releases to cover HP at PoP with U2 or U3 picking up the BR back into 1B. • U2: Leaves to cover C/NC in AOR OR moves to Po2 opposite the throw to position for tag plays at 2B (U2 will pick-up the BR back into 1B after U1 releases to HP) with U3 out. • U3: Leaves to cover C/NC in AOR OR moves to Po2, opposite the throw, while remaining CtB to cover all plays at 2B (U3 will pick-up the BR back into 1B after U1 releases to HP) with U2 out.
FILL Rotation	RiSP	<p>Movements: One Umpire (U2/U3) <u>FILLS</u> the Vacancy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PU: Stays at HP and uses PoP. • U1: Moves to Po1 and is the “crew saver” to use Proper Use of Eyes (PUEs) to observe all action. • U2: Leaves to cover C/NC OR moves to RA to cover plays at 2B and 3B with U3 out. U2 will slip to the outside once responsibilities become singular. • U3: Leaves to cover C/NC in AOR OR moves to RA to cover plays at 2B and 3B with U2 out. U3 will slip to the outside once responsibilities become singular.
U2 FILL	All Situations	<p>Movements: Results when U1 leaves to cover C/NC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PU: Stays at HP and uses PoP. • U1: Leaves to cover C/NC. • U2: fills to the right side of the infield in the RA and is responsible for all plays at 1B and 2B. U2 will slip to the outside once responsibilities become singular. • U3: Moves to Po3 to position for tag plays at 3B.

TYPES OF ROTATIONS	Full Rotation Diagram & Explanation
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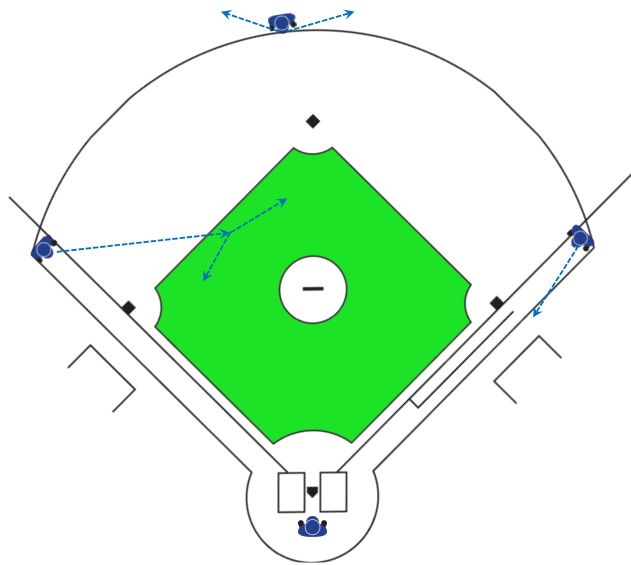
FULL ROTATION – U2 OUT



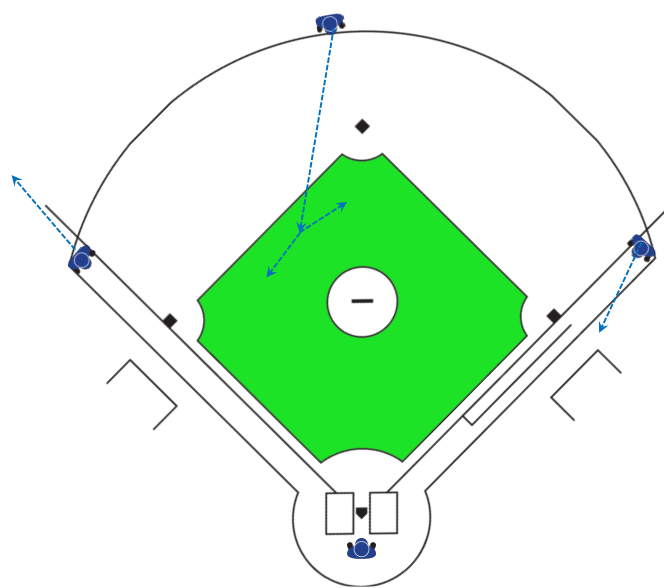
FULL ROTATION – U3 OUT

FULL ROTATION – Used with NRO or R1 Only when U2 or U3 leaves to cover C/NC in their respective AOR.			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to cover 3B in foul territory and will remain in foul territory. Moves all the way up to Po3 on the topside (outfield corner) of 3B to remain CtB, afford freedom of movement, and position for all tag plays at 3B. PU must arrive at 3B 60-feet ahead of runner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observes the BR's touch and then releases to cover HP at PoP. U1 will mirror the movement of the lead runner so as to arrive at PoP 60-feet ahead of the lead runner. U2/U3 will pick-up the BR back into 1B once U1 releases to HP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. If U2 does not leave to cover C/NC in their AOR, U2 will move to Po2, opposite the throw, to position for tag plays at 2B. If U2 does not leave, they are responsible for plays at 1B using the RA once U1 releases to cover HP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. If U2 leaves, U3 will move to Po2, opposite the throw, to position for tag plays at 2B. When covering 2B in rotation, U3 is responsible for plays at 1B using the RA once U1 releases to HP.

TYPES OF ROTATIONS	Fill Rotation Diagram & Explanation
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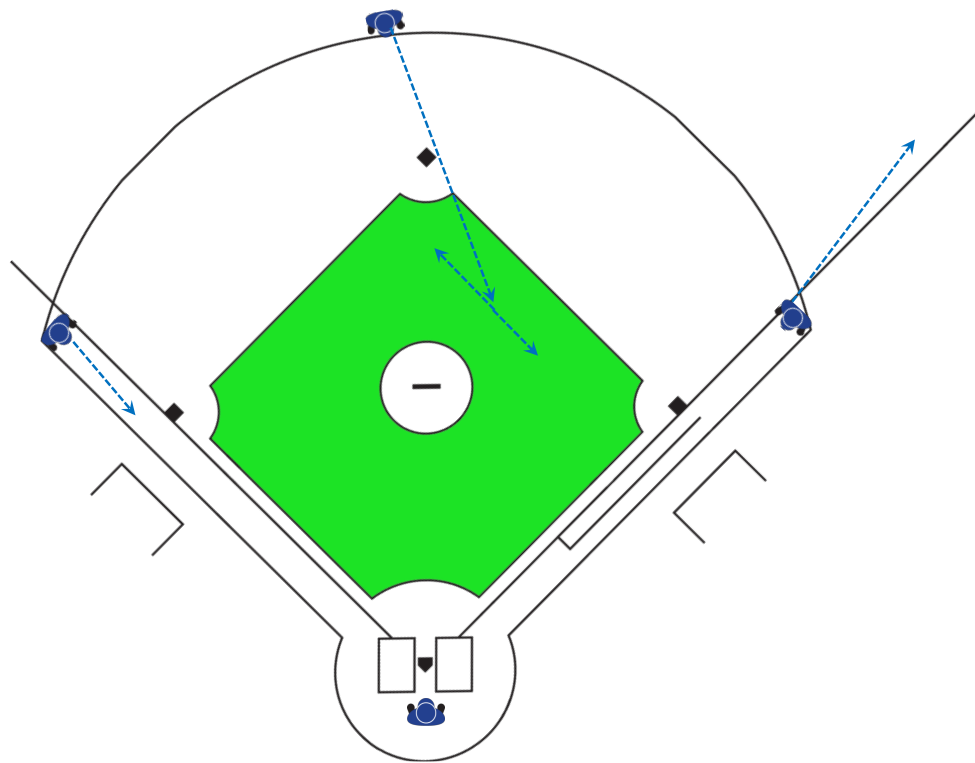
FILL ROTATION – U2 OUT



FILL ROTATION – U3 OUT

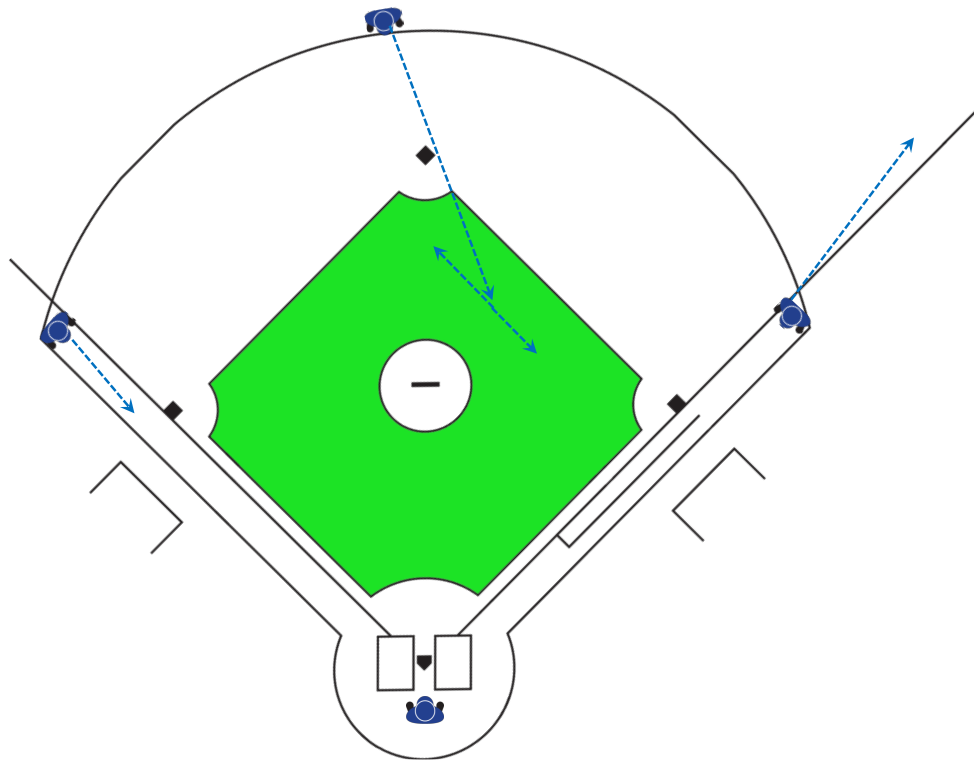
FILL ROTATION – Anytime with RiSP (R2 only, R3 Only, R1+R2, R1+R3, R2+R3, & Bases Full) with U2/U3 Out.			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clears the catcher and handles responsibilities in order of priority from PoP. In situations with R3, PU will line-up R3's retouch at the dirt circle and then return aggressively to PoP. Remains at PoP for the duration of the play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to Po1 on the topside (outfield corner) of 1B to remain CtB, afford freedom of movement, and position for all plays and touches at 1B. U1 will be the "crew saver" and use PUEs to observe all action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. If U2 does not leave to cover C/NC in their AOR, U2 will move to into the RA and is responsible for plays at 2B and 3B. U2 must get depth in the RA and avoid overcompensating so they may cover plays at 2B and 3B. Once U2's responsibilities become singular, U2 slips to the outside. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. If U3 does not leave to cover C/NC in their AOR, U3 will move to into the RA and is responsible for plays at 2B and 3B. Gets depth in the RA to avoid overcompensating for plays at 2B and 3B. Once U3's responsibilities become singular, U3 slips to the outside.

TYPES OF ROTATIONS U2 Fill Rotation Diagram & Explanation



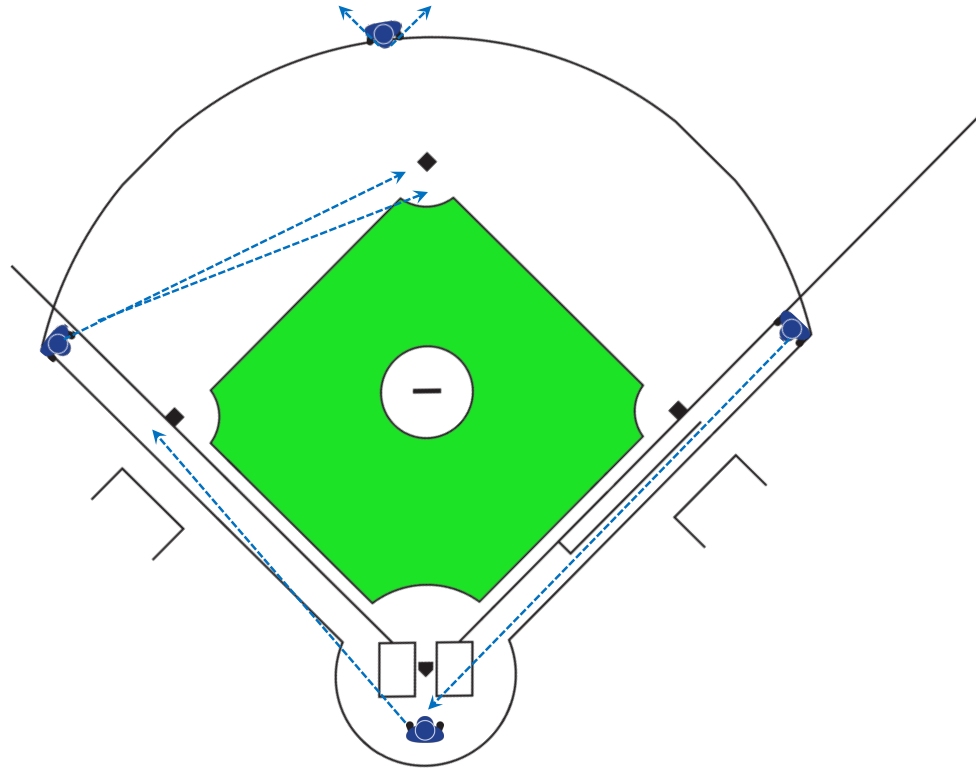
U2 FILL – ANYTIME U1 leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR, U2 will use the RA to cover 1B and 2B.			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clears the catcher and handles responsibilities in order of priority from PoP. • With NRO or R1 Only, PU should TBR to assist U2 if needed at 1B on a swipe, etc. • Remains at PoP for the duration of the play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moves into the RA and is responsible for plays at 1B and 2B. • U2 must get depth in the RA and avoid overcompensating so they may cover plays at 1B and 2B. • Once U2's responsibilities become singular, U2 should slip to the outside. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U3 will move to Po3, opposite the throw, to position for plays at 3B.

SITUATION: No Runners, U1 Goes Out **TYPE OF ROTATION:** U2 Fill



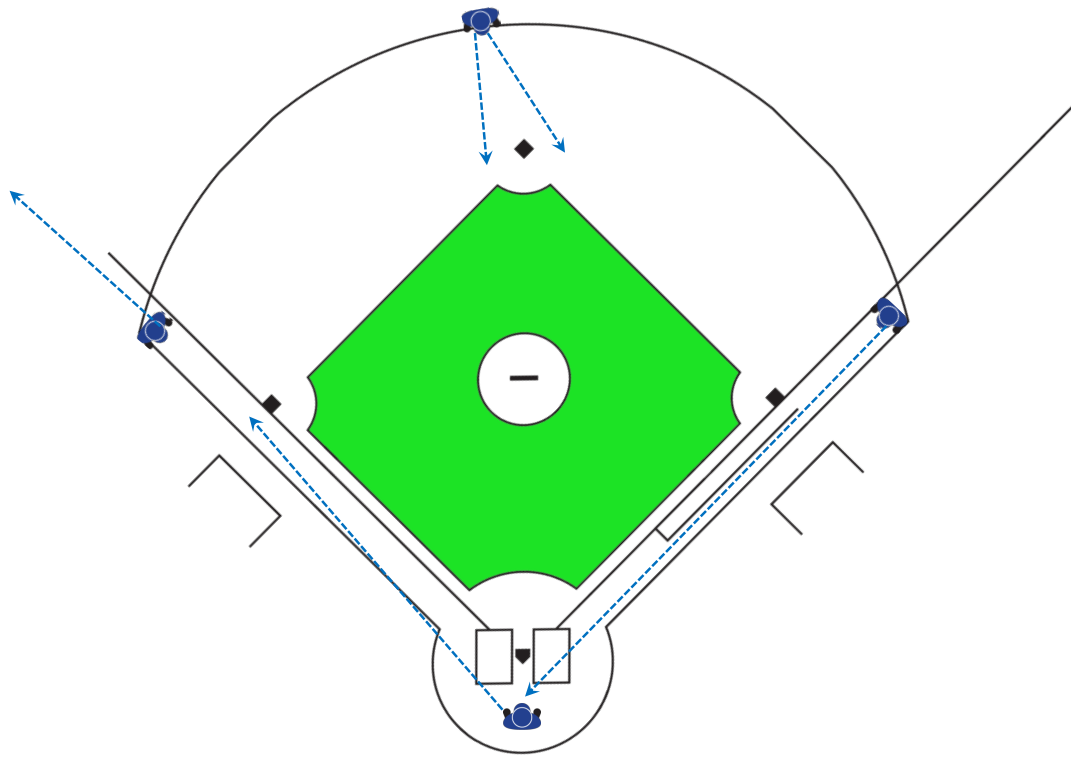
NRO: U1 Leaves			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clears the catcher and handles responsibilities in order of priority from PoP. • With NRO or R1 Only, PU should TBR to assist U2 if needed at 1B on a swipe, etc. • Returns to PoP for the duration of the play. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. • Goes out and stays out unless returning to assist with a rundown between 1B and 2B. <p>Responsible for: F/F, C/NC in AOR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moves into the RA and is responsible for plays at 1B and 2B. • Must get depth in the RA and avoid overcompensating so they may cover plays at 1B and 2B. • Once responsibilities become singular, U2 slips to the outside. <p>Responsible for: all touches/plays at 1B & 2B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U3 will move to Po3, opposite the throw, to position for plays at 3B. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at 3B.</p>

SITUATION: No Runners, U2 Goes Out **TYPE OF ROTATION:** Full Rotation



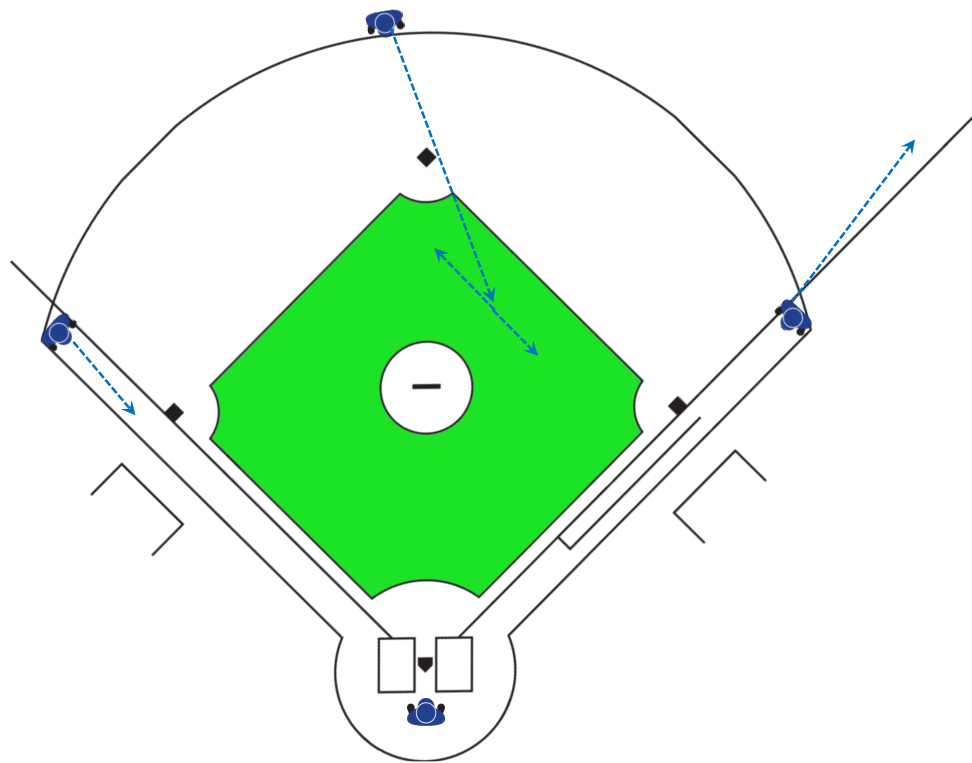
NRO: U2 Leaves for C/NC			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to cover 3B in foul territory and will remain in foul territory. Moves all the way up to Po3 on the topside (outfield corner) for all tag plays at 3B. PU must arrive at 3B 60-feet ahead of BR. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at 3B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observes the BR's touch then releases to cover HP at PoP. Mirrors the movement of the BR to arrive at PoP 60-feet ahead of the BR. U3 will pick-up the BR back into 1B once U1 releases to HP. <p>Responsible for: touches and plays at 1B and HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. Goes out and stays out for the duration of the play unless returning to assist with a rundown. <p>Responsible for: C/NC in AOR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to Po2, opposite the throw, for plays at 2B. Responsible for plays at 1B once U1 releases to HP. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at 2B and plays at 1B once U1 releases to cover HP.</p>

SITUATION: No Runners, U3 Goes Out **TYPE OF ROTATION:** Full Rotation



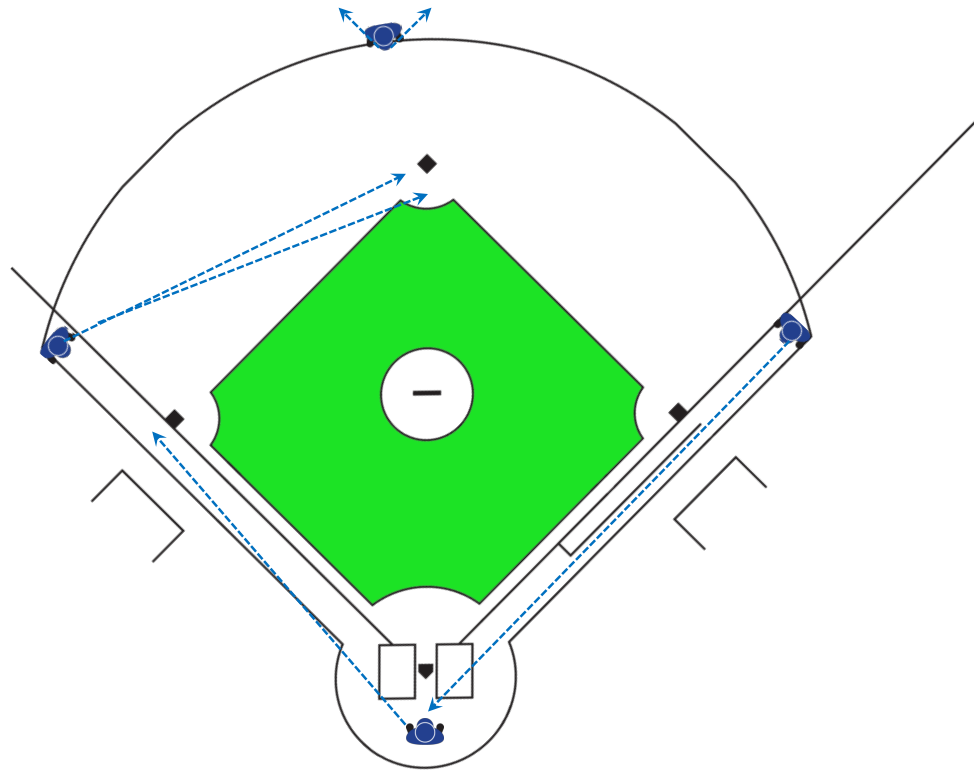
NRO: U3 Leaves for C/NC			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to cover 3B in foul territory and will remain in foul territory. Moves all the way up to Po3 on the topside (outfield corner) for all tag plays at 3B. PU must arrive at 3B 60-feet ahead of BR. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at 3B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observes the BR's touch then releases to cover HP at PoP. Mirrors the movement of the BR to arrive at PoP 60-feet ahead of the BR. U3 will pick-up the BR back into 1B once U1 releases to HP. <p>Responsible for: touches and plays at 1B and HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to Po2, opposite the throw, for plays at 2B. Responsible for plays at 1B once U1 releases to HP. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at 2B and plays at 1B once U1 releases to cover HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. Goes out and stays out for the duration of the play unless returning to assist with a rundown. <p>Responsible for: F/F & C/NC in AOR.</p>

SITUATION: R1 Only, U1 Goes Out **TYPE OF ROTATION:** U2 Fill



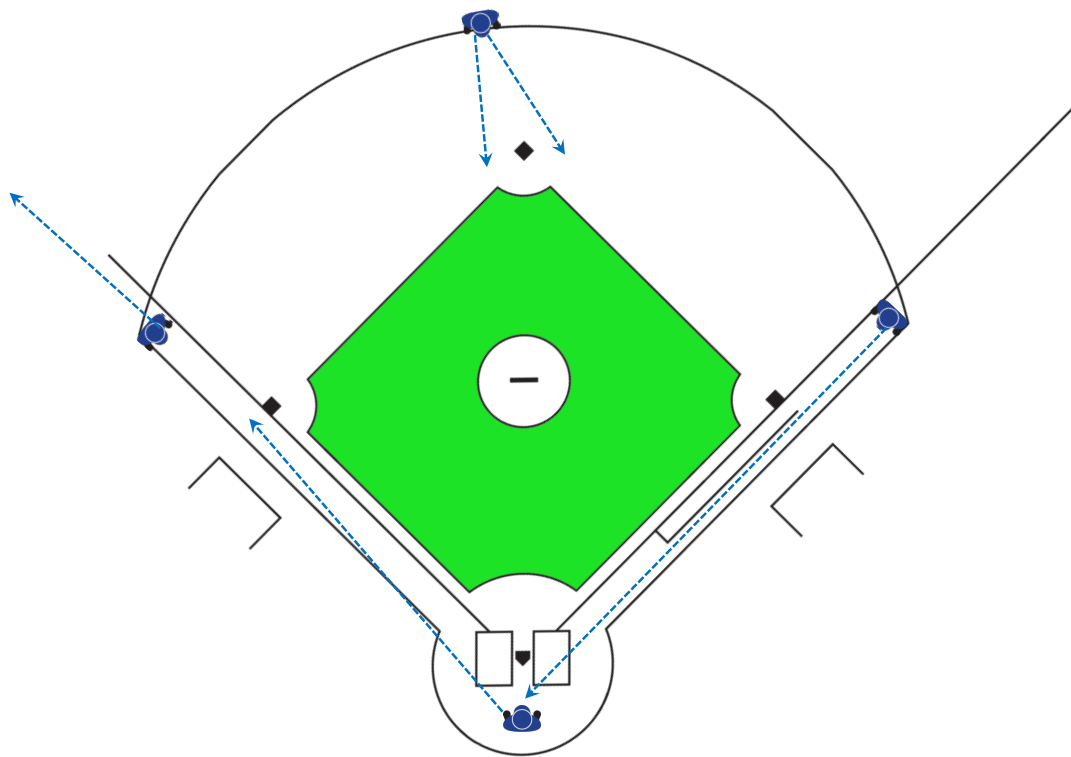
R1 ONLY: U1 Leaves			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clears the catcher and handles responsibilities in order of priority from PoP. • Remains at PoP for the duration of the play. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. • Goes out and stays out unless returning to assist with a rundown between 1B and 2B. <p>Responsible for: F/F, C/NC in AOR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moves into the RA and is responsible for plays at 1B and 2B. • Must get depth in the RA and avoid overcompensating so they may cover plays at 1B and 2B. • Once responsibilities become singular, U2 slips to the outside. <p>Responsible for: R1's retouch and all touches and plays at 1B & 2B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U3 will move to Po3, opposite the throw, to position for plays at 3B. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at 3B.</p>

SITUATION: R1 Only, U2 Goes Out **TYPE OF ROTATION:** Full Rotation



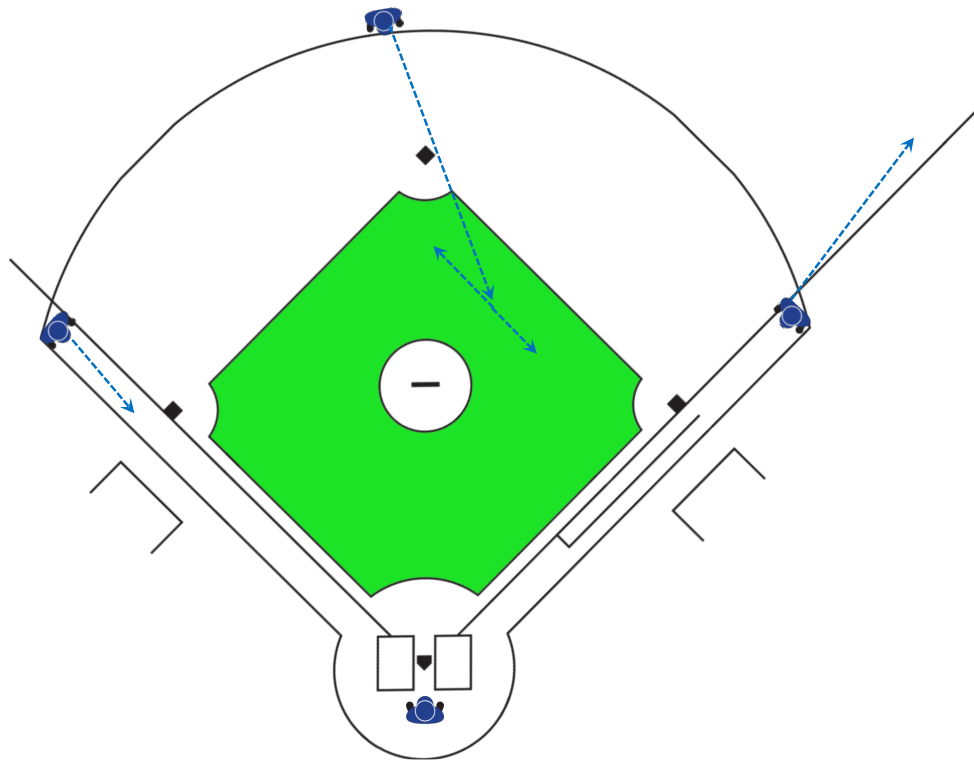
R1 Only: U2 Leaves for C/NC			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to cover 3B in foul territory and will remain in foul territory. Moves all the way up to Po3 on the topside (outfield corner) for all tag plays at 3B. PU must arrive at 3B 60-feet ahead of R1. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at 3B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observes the BR's touch then releases to cover HP at PoP. Mirrors the movement of the R1 to arrive at PoP 60-feet ahead of the R1. U3 will pick-up the R1 and BR back into 1B as U1 releases to HP. <p>Responsible for: touches and plays at 1B and HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. Goes out and stays out for the duration of the play unless returning to assist with a rundown. <p>Responsible for: C/NC in AOR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to Po2, opposite the throw, for plays at 2B. Responsible for plays at 1B once U1 releases to HP. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at 2B and plays at 1B once U1 releases to cover HP.</p>

SITUATION: R1 Only, U3 Goes Out **TYPE OF ROTATION:** Full Rotation



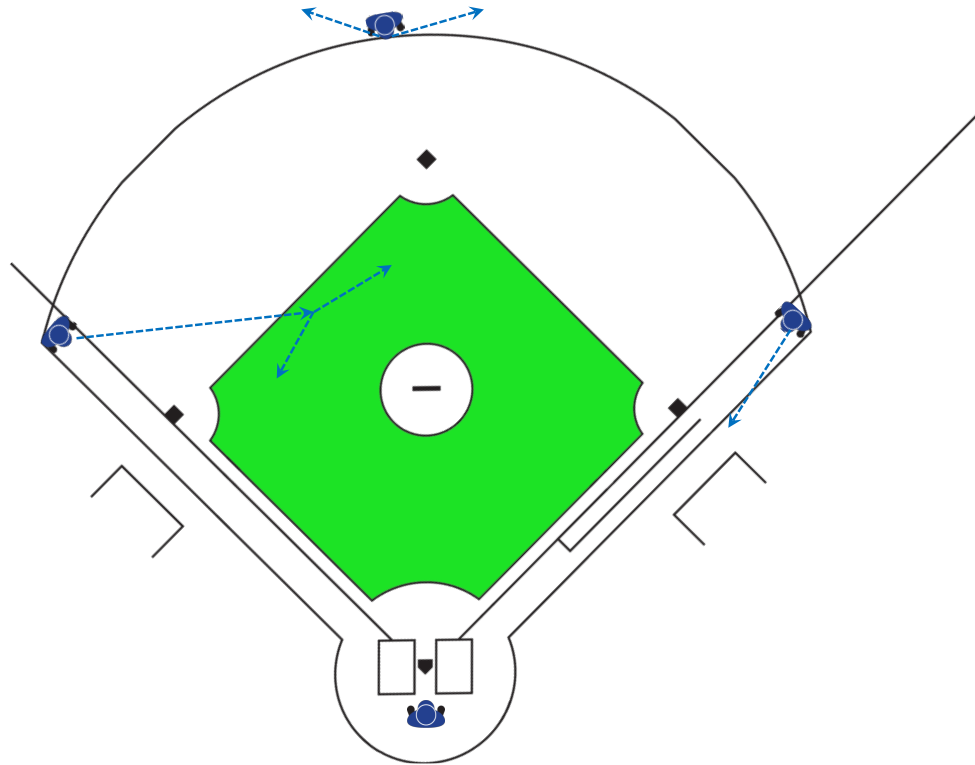
R1 Only: U3 Leaves for C/NC			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to cover 3B in foul territory and will remain in foul territory. Moves all the way up to Po3 on the topside (outfield corner) for all tag plays at 3B. PU must arrive at 3B 60-feet ahead of R1. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at 3B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observes the BR's touch then releases to cover HP at PoP. Mirrors the movement of the R1 to arrive at PoP 60-feet ahead of the R1. U2 will pick-up the R1 and BR back into 1B as U1 releases to HP. <p>Responsible for: touches and plays at 1B and HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to Po2, opposite the throw, for plays at 2B. Responsible for plays at 1B once U1 releases to HP. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at 2B and plays at 1B once U1 releases to cover HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. Goes out and stays out for the duration of the play unless returning to assist with a rundown. <p>Responsible for: F/F & C/NC in AOR.</p>

SITUATION: RiSP, U1 Goes Out **TYPE OF ROTATION:** U2 Fill



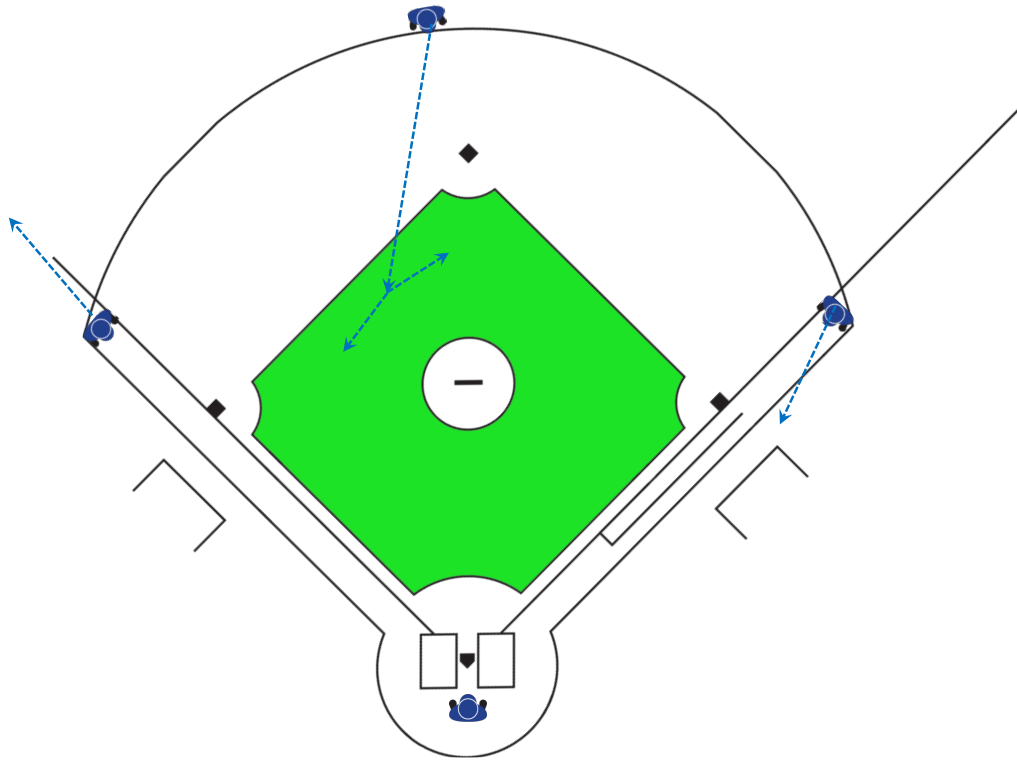
RiSP: U1 Leaves			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clears the catcher and handles responsibilities in order of priority from PoP. • Remains at PoP for the duration of the play. <p>Responsible for: all touches and plays at HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. • Goes out and stays out unless returning to assist with a rundown between 1B and 2B. <p>Responsible for: F/F, C/NC in AOR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moves into the RA and is responsible for plays at 1B and 2B. • Must get depth in the RA and avoid overcompensating so they may cover plays at 1B and 2B. • Once responsibilities become singular, U2 slips to the outside. <p>Responsible for: R1 & R2 retouch and all touches and plays at 1B & 2B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U3 will move to Po3, opposite the throw, to position for plays at 3B. <p>Responsible for: R3's retouch and all touches and plays at 3B.</p>

SITUATION: RiSP, U2 Goes Out **TYPE OF ROTATION:** Fill



RiSP – U2 leaves for C/NC in their AOR.			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handles responsibilities in order of priority from PoP. In situations with R3, PU will line-up R3's retouch at the dirt circle and then return aggressively to PoP. Remains at PoP for the duration of play. <p>Responsible for: R3's retouch and all touches and plays at HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to Po1 on the topside (outfield corner) of 1B to remain CtB, afford freedom of movement, and position for all plays and touches at 1B. U1 will be the "crew saver" and use PUEs to observe all action. <p>Responsible for: R1's retouch and all touches and plays at 1B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. Goes out and stays out unless returning to assist with a rundown. <p>Responsible for: C/NC in their AOR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves into the RA and is responsible for plays at 2B and 3B. Gets depth in the RA to avoid overcompensating for plays at 2B & 3B. Once U3's responsibilities become singular, U3 slips to the outside. <p>Responsible for: R2's Retouch & all touches & plays at 2B and 3B.</p>

SITUATION: RiSP, U3 Goes Out **TYPE OF ROTATION:** Fill



RiSP – U3 leaves for C/NC in their AOR.			
PU	U1	U2	U3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handles responsibilities in order of priority from PoP. In situations with R3, PU will line-up R3's retouch at the dirt circle and then return aggressively to PoP. Remains at PoP for the duration of play. <p>Responsible for: R3's retouch and all touches and plays at HP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves to Po1 on the topside (outfield corner) of 1B to remain CtB, afford freedom of movement, and position for all plays and touches at 1B. U1 will be the "crew saver" and use PUEs to observe all action. <p>Responsible for: R1's retouch and all touches and plays at 1B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves into the RA and is responsible for plays at 2B and 3B. Gets depth in the RA to avoid overcompensating for plays at 2B & 3B. Once U3's responsibilities become singular, U3 slips to the outside. <p>Responsible for: R2's Retouch & all touches & plays at 2B and 3B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR. Goes out and stays out unless returning to assist with a rundown. <p>Responsible for: F/F & C/NC in their AOR.</p>

KEY CONCEPTS TO REMEMBER

1. There are **3 types of rotations** in this 4-Umpire System:
 - a. Full Rotation:
 - i. Used anytime with NRiSP when U2 or U3 leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR.
 - ii. Called the “Full Rotation” because **everyone** moves in a clockwise direction:
 1. PU up to 3B.
 2. U3 over to 2B (or out for C/NC in their AOR).
 3. U2 to 2B (or out for C/NC in their AOR).
 4. U1 to HP after handling primary responsibilities at 1B and communicating their release to HP.
 - b. Fill Rotation:
 - i. Used with anytime RiSP when U2 or U3 leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR.
 - ii. Called the “Fill Rotation” because only **ONE UMPIRE** uses the Restricted Area to fill the vacancy created when U2 or U3 leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR with RiSP.
 - c. U2 Fill:
 - i. Used anytime U1 leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR, regardless of the position of the runners.
 - ii. Called the “U2 Fill” because U2 will use the Restricted Area to fill the vacancy created when U1 leaves to cover C/NC in their AOR.
2. We will have the appropriate umpire out on **every fly-ball to the outfield** in their AOR.
 - a. U1’s AOR: F9 to the RF Line
 - b. U2’s AOR: F7 to F9 if the fielder is going in, back, or toward CF
 - c. U3’s AOR: F7 to the LF Line.
3. **U2 is the “quarterback:”** if two umpires break on the same fly ball, the crew will defer to U2, and the other umpire (U1 or U3) will recover and rotate accordingly.

ROTATION IDENTIFICATION MATRIX:

SITUATION	MOVEMENT	TYPE OF ROTATION
NRO	U1 Leaves U2 Leaves U3 Leaves	U2 Fill Full Full
R1 Only	U1 Leaves U2 Leaves U3 Leaves	U2 Fill Full Full
R2 Only	U1 Leaves U2 Leaves U3 Leaves	U2 Fill Fill Fill
R3 Only	U1 Leaves U2 Leaves U3 Leaves	U2 Fill Fill Fill
R1+R2	U1 Leaves U2 Leaves U3 Leaves	U2 Fill Fill Fill
R1+R3	U1 Leaves U2 Leaves U3 Leaves	U2 Fill Fill Fill
R2+R3	U1 Leaves U2 Leaves U3 Leaves	U2 Fill Fill Fill
Bases Full	U1 Leaves U2 Leaves U3 Leaves	U2 Fill Fill Fill

PRE-GAME CONFERENCE GUIDE

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES	
Fair / Foul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PU: (bracket all foul pop-ups between the base and HP with U1/U3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Responsible for all fair/foul up to but not including the front edge of 1B and 3B ○ Assumes entire foul line when U1 or U3 abandon the Line ● U1/U3: (bracket all foul pop-ups between the base and HP with PU) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Responsible for all fair/foul from the front edge of the base and beyond ○ If U1/U3 abandons the line, NEVER come back to the line to make a F/F decision ● “PINCH” – anytime with R3, PU’s view of F/F between HP and 3B may be blocked. If PU is “pinched,” PU will pass F/F to U3. ● If the batter is hit with a batted ball in the batter’s box, all umpires should afford time for PU to make the call because PU will have greater knowledge on the status of the batter’s feet.
AOR for C/NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PU - All C/NC on the infield except where the open-glove theory applies. ● U1 - Any batted ball in the air requiring F9 to move toward the RF Line ● U2 - Any batted ball in the air requiring F7 or F9 moving in/back or toward CF PLUS F8 moving in/back or toward RF/LF. Defer to U2 if two umpires give chase to the same fly-ball. ● U3 - Any batted ball in the air requiring F7 to move toward the LF Line ● <u>Expectation:</u> We will have the appropriate umpire out on every fly-ball to the outfield.
Touches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Routine Plays - each umpire is responsible for touches at his/her base ● Touches In Rotation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FULL Rotation - PU=3B, U2/U3 = 2B, U1=1B and HP ○ FILL Rotation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ U1 Out - PU=HP, U2=1B and 2B, U3=3B ■ U2/U3 Out - PU=HP, U1=1B, U2/U3=2B and 3B
Retouches (Tag-Ups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When an umpire must leave to cover C/NC or leave his/her base to rotate, responsibility for observing the retouch (tag-up) at his/her base will advance to the umpire ahead of the runner. ● U1 Goes Out (NRiSP or RiSP) - U2=Retouches at 1B and 2B ● U2 Goes Out (RiSP) - U1=Retouch at 1B, U3=Retouch at 2B, PU=Retouch at 3B ● U3 Goes Out (RiSP) - U1=Retouch at 1B, U2=Retouch at 2B, PU=Retouch at 3B

ROTATIONS				
	U1 OUT	U2 OUT	U3 OUT	OTHER
NRiSP	<u>U2 Fill Rotation</u> PU=HP U2=1B & 2B U3=3B	<u>Full Rotation</u> PU=3B U1=1B+HP U3=2B	<u>Full Rotation</u> PU=3B U1=1B+HP U2=2B	-Uncaught 3rd -Checked Swings -Substitutions & Pitching CHG -Handling Situations (1on1) -Between Innings Protocol -Crew Consult vs. Replay -Signals (Full, Fill, IFF, Pinch, Timing)
RiSP	<u>U2 Fill Rotation</u> PU=HP U2=1B & 2B U3=3B	<u>Fill Rotation</u> PU=HP U1=1B U3=2B+3B	<u>Fill Rotation</u> PU=HP U1=1B U2=2B+3B	

ATTACK EACH PITCH / COMMUNICATE / PRIORITIES / PROPER USE OF EYES / CHEST TO BALL

WEDGE THEORY IN THE 4-UMPIRE SYSTEM

When not in rotation, umpires in the 4-Umpire System are expected to apply the wedge theory to observe all plays at each base. Previous instruction has used the “point of bag” philosophy to help identify acceptable starting positions when finding the wedge. Additionally, the distance range of 5-8 feet from the base has also been used for guidance relative to starting positions. As the wedge concept continues to evolve, guiding philosophies also change as a result of more experience and film analysis to support evolving theories.

Update – Mechanics of the Wedge Theory

Umpires are now instructed to position 5-7 feet *behind the fielder* receiving the throw as the starting position when finding the wedge for tag plays. This evolving mechanic affords for greater vision, quicker and more relative adjustments with the fielder, and fewer steps when maintaining the wedge. Umpires should still follow the basic three fundamental mechanics in finding the wedge on tag plays:

1. **Start Closer! Initial Starting Position:** 5-7 feet behind the fielder receiving the throw, but not so as to impede the fielder’s lateral movement (right or left) to receive or adjust with the throw. Umpires will thereby be on a parallel track with the fielder and replicate the fielder’s movements as the throw arrives. In assuming this starting position, umpires must stay clear of both the fielder’s lateral track to receive the throw as well as refraining from crossing the runner’s track into the base.
2. **Move with the Fielder:** Understand that the fielder will take us to the developing play and therefore, if we stay with the fielder, our angles into the play will continue to open as the play develops. Constantly adjusting with the fielder is our only chance to avoid becoming straight-lined on any tag attempt. While staying parallel to the fielder and not impeding his lateral movement, the umpire will move in the exact same direction as the fielder (right, left, forwards, or backwards) while avoiding crossing or standing on the runner’s track into the base.
3. **Stay in the Window - Quiet Steps:** Quiet steps are the final 1-3 steps an umpire will take to close in on a play. Ideally, these steps will provide an umpire with a target distance of 2-3 feet from the play, requiring the umpire to move closer to the play more so than to close in laterally. As the fielder reaches to make his/her tag attempt, the umpire should continue to step into the play to achieve the 2-3 feet target distance from the play, keeping the umpire’s head and eyes between the tag and the base-side hip of the fielder. In some cases, this will require the umpire to literally “circle” the play to maintain this positioning as the fielder reaches and attempts to tag the runner, who is trying to avoid the tag by the fielder. Remember that our target distance in our quiet steps is now 2-3 feet, allowing us a greater viewing angle with a one-step adjustment.

The central tenet of wedge theory is that the fielders take us to the out rather than the base or the runner. Therefore, umpires shall move more closely to and along with the fielders, allowing the fielder to take us to the out. The following aims to outline and explain the guiding principles and philosophies of wedge theory in application of the 4-Umpire System:

Defining “The Wedge” in the Wedge Theory

The wedge is the area between the fielder’s base-side hip and the base-side hip of the incoming runner. To find this area, umpires are required to position closer to the play (5-7 feet) and move with and alongside the fielder as he receives the ball to a target distance of 2-3 feet as the fielder attempts to tag the runner. As the fielder receives the ball and seeks the runner to create a tag attempt to put out the runner, the umpire must move to get his eyes in “the wedge” – between the tag and the runner as both the fielder and the runner come together.

Important to note in using this mechanic is that the base will not take us to the out. The base merely provides umpires with a point of reference; and while the runner is attempting to get to the base safely, we must be more focused on the ball and fielder, for the ball and the fielder will take us to the best position to view the play.

Rationale of the Wedge Theory

One rationale as to why we use the wedge theory is to see all that is required in the play to give us an out or safe declaration – the ball, a fielder, and a runner. Note that our definition of a “play” does not include a mentioning of the base; the base will not take us to the play. Only the ball, fielder, and runner will be able to take the umpire to

the play. Therefore, wedge theory dictates umpires move with each of those three variables so that when the three come together, we are in the best possible position to achieve the angle and get the call right.

A second rationale is that using wedge theory is a strategy that aims to reduce the probability of being straight-lined when observing a tag attempt by a fielder on an incoming runner. That is, heading to a pre-determined “spot” (or the base) does not allow for readjustment as the variables involved in the play (ball, fielder, and runner) will change directions as the play develops. And while the play will frequently “end” at the base, moving with the variables (ball, fielder, and runner) in the play and adjusting our viewing angle based upon the movements of these three factors is necessary to avoid an obstructed view of the developing play.

Third, swipe-tags as put-out attempts are increasing in frequency due to the focus on collision rules, concussion prevention, and injury prevention of players in tag-plays. Therefore, to observe the swipe tag, without being potentially obstructed, umpires must readjust and constantly reposition for the developing play to achieve the best possible, least obstructed angle to rule on the play.

Video Examples:

For a visual, video reference, please navigate to the Umpire Registry, login, and then use the links below regarding wedge theory and their evolution and application in Little League Baseball and Softball.

- Wedge Theory for Plays at the Plate: <https://www.littleleagueumpire.org/Videos/Watch/20>
- Wedge Theory for Plays on the Bases: <https://www.littleleagueumpire.org/Videos/Watch/25>