

Three Umpire Mechanics

It's easier than they tell you!

Nomenclature in this document.

PU is plate umpire.

BU is base umpire.

U1 is the 1st base umpire.

U3 is the 3rd base umpire.

Overview of Three-Umpire Mechanics

- A. Three-umpire mechanics provides advantages over the two-umpire system.
- B. This is especially true at third base, where the umpire may need to take only a few steps to get the best position.
- C. When rotating it is always clockwise.
- D. An umpire is always ahead of the lead runner
 - 1. When nobody is on, U1 is in front of the batter.
 - 2. With a runner on first base, U1 is in A and in front of the batter. U3 is in extended B, discussed later, and in front of the runner.
 - 3. With runners on second base, first and second base, or first and third base, U1 is in B and in front of the runner on first base and the batter. U3 is at third base and in front of the runner on second base. The plate umpire is at home in front of any runner on third base.

General Mechanics

- A. U1 is in A position with nobody on base, a runner on first or third base. U1 is in B position with a runner on second base, first and second base, or first and third base.
- B. U3 starts in either D position, outside the 3rd base line, if nobody is on base or a runner on third base. U3 starts in extended B position, see last page, if there is a runner on 1st base. There is no C position next to the shortstop in three umpire mechanics.
- C. To break three-umpire mechanics to its simplest, remember this.
 - 1. If U1 starts in A position, there is a clockwise rotation; U3 to second base, plate to third base, U1 eventually to home after the runner passes first base.
 - 2. If U1 is in B position, U1 covers first and second base. U3 is in D position and covers third base. PU covers home. There is no rotation when U1 starts in B.
- D. If one of the base umpires turns and goes to the outfield, the remaining BU and the PU revert to standard, two-umpire mechanics.
 - 1. The PU should yell two man or two umpire so the coverages are known.
 - 2. BU that does not go out takes the batter to third base if nobody is on base.
 - 3. With a runner on 1st base, BU that does not go out takes the lead runner to second base and the PU watches the batter-runner to first base. BU releases the runner at second base and follows the trailing runner.
 - 4. PU takes the runner from second to third base and home.

Details of Three-Umpire Mechanics

Plate Umpire

If the U1 starts in the A position, the PU, after confirming no pulled foot at 1st base, if appropriate, moves up the 3rd base line and covers 3rd base.

If the U1 starts in the B position, the PU covers home still checking for a pulled foot at 1st base if appropriate.

1st Base Umpire (U1)

In A position

- A. U1 is in A position in three circumstances.
 - 1. Nobody on base. Walk the line as normal and cover plays at 1st base.
 - 2. A runner on 1st base. Here, U1 is at a 45-degree angle on the corner of first base watching the pitcher and if the runner leaves early.
 - 3. A runner on 3rd base. Start in the A position and walk the line as normal.
- B. Once the runner passes 1st base, U1 goes down the foul line toward home, staying in a safe position to get back to 1st base if there is a pickle. If not, then U1 moves to home and covers any play there.
- C. If there is a possible play at home, U1 should move to home immediately and return to 1st base for a pickle if it does not impact the call at home.
- D. At times, with a runner on first base and U1 outside the foul line on a 45-degree angle with the base corner, the coach will be in your line of view, because U1 is not normally there with a runner on first base. Politely remind the coach to step back so you can see the batter.

In B Position

- A. With a runner on 2nd base, U1 starts in the standard B position. U1 is responsible for calls at first and 2nd base.
- B. With runners on 1st and 3rd base, U1 starts in the standard B position. U1 is responsible for calls at 1st and 2nd base.
- C. U1 does not cover home when U1 starts in standard B position.

3rd Base Umpire

There are only two positions for U3. U3 is either outside 3rd base in foul territory, D position, or in the outfield off 2nd base on a line with 2nd and 3rd base, extended B. U3 is never in C position next to the shortstop.

In the D Position

- A. U3 is in the D position, outside the foul line at 3rd base in three circumstances.
 - 1. When nobody is on base.
 - 2. When there is a runner on 2nd base. U1 is responsible for first and second base in this situation. U3 is responsible for 3rd base.
 - 3. When there is a runner on 3rd base.
- B. For 1. and 2. U3 starts 15-18 feet behind the base and walks the line. In 1. U3 the call at second. In 2. and 3. U3 has the call at third

- C. With nobody on base, if the ball is hit, U3 runs from the D position to 2nd base in case it's a base hit and then returns to the D position on a foul ball. If the next pitch is hit but foul, U3 runs to 2nd base again and returns. You can see that U3 is running back and forth many times which is why the position is called the rabbit.
- D. When U3 is in the D position, U1 does not go out, and there is a base hit, U3 runs and covers 2nd base. Do not follow the runner to 3rd base. It is the PU's job to make the call at 3rd base. U1 will cover home.
- E. If there is a runner on 1st base, U3 stays in the Extended B position, and makes all calls at 2nd base. U3 does not move from 2nd base unless U1 goes out.
- F. If there is a runner on 2nd base, U3 starts in the D position, comes inside the diamond, and has the call at 3rd base. Other than to get in position for a call at 3rd base, U3 does not move when there is a runner on 2nd base. If U1 goes out, then U3 moves in the diamond and has any call at 1st, 2nd, 3rd base if that is the initial call in the infield.
- G. When a runner is on 3rd base, U3 does not have to walk the third-base foul line. Rather, U3 is on a 45-degree angle at 3rd base in a straight line watching the pitcher and base runner for leaving early. As with 1st base, the coach may be in your line of view, which you need to see check swings on left-handed batters. Just remind the coach to step back so you can see the batter. I often joke with them that they are not used to me being there with a runner on 3rd base.

Extended B Position

- A. U3 is in the extended B position when there is a runner on 1st base.
- B. The extended B position is a straight line, 3rd base, 2nd base, U3 just on the outfield grass.
- C. If U1 does not go out and U3 in extended B, U3 has responsibility for only 2nd base. The plate umpire will move to cover 3rd base and U1 will drop to home after making any call on the batter runner at 1st base.
- D. If U1 goes out and U3 is in extended B, U3 has responsibility for the play at 1st base and taking the runner from 1st base to 2nd base. The PU has responsibility for 3rd base and home plate.

