

PU – Umpire responsible for calling balls and strikes.

BU – Umpire not calling balls and strikes.

Safety is a key behind these mechanics.

PU to align behind the pitcher so they can see the COMPLETE track of the pitch. (see additional specifics below in “Calling Balls and Strikes”.) PU is responsible for fair/foul on left field line, plays at 2B and 3B and all outfield catches except where noted below. It is important to be aware of how close you are to possible line drives from the batter. Do not get too close.

BU is responsible for all fair/foul on right field line (from home plate to right field foul pole).

Communication between umpires during play action is critical to ensure best coverage possible!

NO runners on:

BU in usual “A” position. Responsible for fair/foul from home to right field foul pole. Has plays on BR at 1st including touches and plays at plate on BR.

If BU goes out on a trouble ball, BU still has fair/foul. PU will now take BR and all plays at 1B, 2B and 3B. If field dictates that BU stays with batted ball because it may go out of play, PU will have BR at all bases. If there is no possibility of the batted ball going out of play, BU should return and head to home for possible play there. Communicate!

Runner on First only:

BU should position in the window so they can fully see the pitcher between the runner and 1st baseman holding the runner with your right foot about 5 inches off the foul line. BU has plays at first on BR and R1 and any plays at home.

PU will have force play slide rule violation at 2nd and will stay with the possible violation even after the throw.

Runner in scoring position (runner on second or third)

BU is going to position in foul line extended behind batter. Should be 15-20 feet behind the batter. If it is a short backstop area, you will have to adjust. See diagrams below:



BU should adjust their position based on where the batter is located in the box so they can have a view (window) towards seeing traps/catches by the catcher on foul tips and third strikes. Once the ball is put into play, the BU should be alert for running lane violations and should move to a closer position for any plays at the plate (third base line extended).

PU has all plays on the bases.

BU has all plays at the plate. BU has all fair/foul on both lines. BU has R3 tag-up and all touches of 3rd base. BU should move to handle any running lane violations. BU will take slide rule violation on bases when the

fielder releases the ball. If the ball is not released the PU should make the call. If the original BU position is behind the right-handed batter, the BU should move to 3rd base line extended to make calls on slides and to the point of the plate extended for force plays at home.

Calling Balls and Strikes.

This is a difficult position; the guidance is to call strike “when in doubt”. The PU should position themselves on the same side of the mound as the pitcher’s throwing arm. Umpires should develop a locking mechanism. This should allow umpires to clearly track the ball. Timing is should be like working behind the plate. Watch the entire pitch. Follow the normal protocol for check swings. Both umpires should call out foul balls in the box, the BU should be particularly alert for this when they are behind the batter. Also, when the BU is behind the batter, they should call out hit by pitch immediately. On dropped/caught third strikes they should initiate the call with the appropriate signal (safe for no catch and out for a catch) as the home plate umpire would normally do.

Fair/Foul calls.

This system has a large compromise concerning fair/foul calls. When the BU is at first base, the third base/left field foul line is going to be hard. In football, they have a set of guidance for “when in doubt” situations. So, for this situation, when in doubt, call the ball fair. You can possibly reverse the call (not recommended), at least with a fair ball call, you let the play go. When you call foul, the ball is dead, and everyone stops and no chance to reverse.

Even when the BU is behind the batter, they are going to only have one line they can be certain on. The other foul line will have some level of compromise.

Overthrows – balls going out of play.

When the BU is at first base, the PU will be responsible for out of play for the third base side from the backstop while the BU will be responsible for the first base side from the backstop.

When the BU is behind home plate, they will be responsible for all balls going out of play.

Line drives in the infield.

PU is going to have most calls.

BU in “A”, BU will have 2nd baseman going to their left as well as 1st baseman in and towards line. BU will have pitcher in and towards 1st.

BU in behind plate, 1st and 3rd basemen going to the line and pitcher all directions.

Equipment.

Both umpires should bring their plate brushes.

PU brings a clicker. BU might find having an indicator beneficial for when they are behind batter.

Due to COVID-19, line-up cards will not be used.

Both umpires will need to bring paper and pencil/pen to track mound visits and any warnings/ejections.

Umpires will not handle baseballs. Each defensive team should manage their own. Try to have a designated person managing this.

Umpires will need to wear a face covering at all times. At this time, the MIAA is not going to allow gaiters, a mask will be required.

Arguments – on field arguments will not be allowed.

Coaches may request an umpire to get help on appropriate judgement type calls (see list below) or rules improperly applied.

Specifically: An umpire is urged to seek help when his view is blocked, or positioning prevents him from seeing crucial elements of a play. An umpire is also encouraged to seek help in instances when he has doubt and a partner has additional information that could lead to the proper ruling.

- 1) Deciding if a home run is fair or foul
- 2) Deciding whether a batted ball left the playing field for a home run or ground-rule double
- 3) Cases in which a foul tip is dropped or trapped by the catcher
- 4) Cases in which a foul fly ball is caught or not caught
- 5) Cases when an umpire errs because he did not see a ball dropped or juggled after making a tag or force or the angle prevents the umpire seeing a foot is pulled
- 6) Balks called by an umpire who clearly did not realize the pitcher's foot was off the rubber

Umpires will ask coaches to enforce all face covering wearing responsibilities for their own teams. **We are not the social distancing police.**

A good pregame meeting with your partner is even more important with these mechanics in place. With the goal to get umpires in the best position to make the right calls knowing who is doing what and where they should be is essential. Knowing this is a fluid situation and in game adjustments might be needed. We need to be flexible and constantly evaluating each situation on the field.

Discussions regarding overthrows and who is responsible for killing the play and awarding bases is also an important discussion point.

PLEASE NOTE: These mechanics are relatively new and somewhat untested. They are not "BLACK AND WHITE" or "BE ALL, END ALL". They are a significant starting point to help umpires effectively umpire games that because of COVID-19 require modification to our standard mechanics. We recommend following these instructions, but with careful thought and reasoning, adjustments can and should be allowed.