

WSLL Modified 3-Man Umpiring System

I. Introduction.

- A. Where umpires are positioned, and their responsibilities depend upon where base runners are located at the time of the pitch. Because the field is small, and true 3-man offers multiple possibilities for uncovered baseball when rotations are used, this system involves almost no rotations and, therefore, minimal overlap in responsibilities. But, it still has the advantage of having umpires closest to the base where a play is likely to occur.
- B. The umpires are designated as follows: U1 (plate); U2 (primary responsibility is right side of field); U3 (primary responsibility is left side of field). The positions are A (about 10 feet beyond 1B), B (behind 2B in OF), C (behind SS in OF), D (about 10 feet beyond 3B).

II. Overview of responsibilities.

- A. Plate umpire stays at the plate, makes all catch calls in the OF and his traditional IF catch and fair/foul calls, and has OF fair/foul (F/F) responsibility only for the foul line at which a field umpire is not stationed (for example, when U3 is in C).
- B. U2 takes F/F beyond the bag on his foul line, usually is in A, always has responsibility for plays at 1B (unless he goes out), takes responsibility for play at 2B when no runner is on 1B at the time of the pitch. May go out for reasons given below. Makes traditional IF calls.
- C. U3 takes F/F beyond the bag on his line, usually is in D, always has responsibility for plays at 3B (unless he goes out), takes responsibility for play at 2B when, at the time of the pitch, a runner is on 1B (thus, U2 is in A) or when no runner is on (U2 also is in A). May go out for reasons given below. Makes traditional IF calls.

III. General Advice for Field Umpires

- A. Field umpires take F/F responsibility, only when they are stationed on the line (A or D), and the ball gets beyond the base.
- B. Going Out.
 - 1. When a field umpire goes out, he stays out and the plate and remaining field umpire revert to 2-man mechanics.
 - 2. Field umpires go out in 4 circumstances:

- a. When the ball is hit on their side of the field near the foul line and the F/F call will be close.
- b. When a possible home run ball is hit to the OF on their side of the field and it is likely to be a close call (can go out from the middle).
- c. When they anticipate a below the waist catch (can go out from the middle).
- d. When Outfielders are converging (can go out from the middle).

C. Rotating

- 1. There is only one rotation in this system, i.e., only one time where either of 2 umpires might have responsibility for the same thing, and that is a play at 2B. Rotations occur only when a ball is hit to the OF and, therefore, runners might be moving up more than one base. Who covers 2B and when is described below, but to ensure that two umpires do not attempt to make the same call, they should signal to each other, before the pitch is thrown, when a rotation is possible – at least until they are comfortable with this system. For example, with no one on, U3 will rotate from D to the cutout at 2B on a ball hit to the OF. So, U3 would look at U1, put his hands on his chest and point to 2B, indicating that U3 will be going to 2B, if there is a play there. U1 would put his hand on his chest and point down, indicating he is staying at 1B. With an experienced crew, with the bases loaded, U3 signals he is going to the cutout at 3B on an outfield hit. U1 signals he is going to the cutout at 2B on an outfield hit, although he will have to ensure the batter runner touches 1B.

IV. Plate Specifics

- A. F/F - call all F/F up to bag. If ball hits bag or goes beyond (even if it turns foul before bag), it is field umpire's call.
- B. Call all plays at plate.
- C. Call all OF catches, unless field umpire goes out. Be careful with runner on 3B who might be coming home, but remember a field umpire has the touch and tag, when he is in D.
- D. Call all IF catches on fly balls, unless IF is moving right toward FU in A or D or back (because field umpire will have better angle).
- E. May ask for checked swing help from field umpire on plate's open side (side

where batter is not standing).

- F. Observe touches and tags at corners in case there is a question and field umpire wants help.

V. U-2 Specifics

A. Positioning

1. Generally, behind the trail runner, but never beyond B.
2. With no runners or any runner on 1B = A.
3. With the trail runner on 2B = B.
4. Never to C or D, unless in 2-man system.

B. Responsibilities

1. Call F/F for balls on your side of the field beyond 1B.
2. Watch touches and tags at 1B (home plate umpire can agree to watch these when you are in B).
3. Call pick offs and all plays at 1B.
4. Call pick offs and all plays at 2B when you are in B.
5. Call IF catches when IF goes back or comes directly towards you.
6. Watch touches and tags at 2B when you are in B.
7. Experienced crew only (reverse rotation): U2 and U3 can agree that **U2** will rotate to the cutout at 2B ahead of the BR (watching the BR touch at 1B) when, at the time of the pitch, the bases are loaded, or runners are at **1B and 2B. In that case, U3** will go to the cutout at 3B. Otherwise, U3 just takes the plays at 2B and/or 3B.

VI. U-3 Specifics

A. Positioning

1. Generally, with or ahead of the lead runner, but never in A or B.
2. With no runners on or a runner on 3B **only** = D.
3. With a runner at 1B, **regardless of where other runners are = C.**
4. Never to A or B.

B. Responsibilities

1. Call F/F for balls on your side of the field beyond 3B.
2. Call IF catches when IF goes back or comes directly towards you.
3. Watch touches and tags at 3B, when you are in D. Home plate umpire calls these when you are in C.

4. Call pick offs and all plays at 3B.
5. Call pick offs and all plays at 2B when you are in C.
6. Watches touches and tags at 2B when you are in C.
7. Rotate to the cut out at 2B to make the call on the BR when he hits the ball to the OF and tries to take 2B when, at the time of the pitch, you were in D (i.e., no runners were on or the only runner was on 3B).

WSLL Modified 4-Man Umpiring System

VII. Introduction.

- A. This is very similar to the 3-Man System, except that it adds a “rabbit,” who starts in CF.
- B. When the batter is hit to the outfield, the rabbit comes to 2B to take any play at that base. The rabbit makes all calls at 2B if he is not chasing an OF fly ball.
- C. When a runner is on 2B, the rabbit can cheat in to take pick off plays at 2B.
- D. If the rabbit senses a troubled catch, he moves to the ball, and makes that call. When he does so, he stays out and the plate and remaining field umpires revert to 3-man mechanics.
- E. There are no rotations in this system, unless the rabbit stays out, in which case it becomes a 3-man system.