

BASIC THREE UMPIRE ROTATION MECHANICS *(Author – unknown)*

PRINCIPLE OF ROTATION

The principle of rotation is to have each base covered to make a call. Regardless of who should have rotated and was responsible for the decision, when a play occurs, one of the umpires, regardless of their position, **MUST** make the call. While the players run bases in an anti-clockwise direction, umpire rotation is clockwise. This enables the umpire to arrive at the base ahead of the runner, with a clear view of the play.

STARTING POSITIONS

- **No runners on base:**
Both base umpires start approximately 6m beyond 1st & 3rd bases and one pace off the line in foul territory.
- **Runner on 1st base:**
First base umpire starts 3 – 4m beyond 1st base and one pace off the line in foul territory.
Third base umpire starts at 2nd base, 2 – 2.5m to the right of and behind the fielder.
- **Runners on 1st. & 2nd: 1st. & 3rd: 2nd: bases loaded:**
First base umpire starts at 2nd base, 2 – 2.5m to the right of and behind the fielder.
Third base umpire starts 2.5 – 3m beyond 3rd base and one pace off the foul line in foul territory.
- **Runner at 3rd base:**
First base umpire starts approximately 6m beyond 1st base and one pace off the line in foul territory.
Third base umpire starts 2 – 2.5m beyond 3rd base and two paces off the line in foul territory.

PARALLEL THEORY

The umpire moves parallel with the LEAD runner in order to have the bases ahead of the LEAD runner covered at all times. The umpire on the opposite side of the diamond to the LEAD runner is the one who rotates. The responsibility of rotation changes to another umpire as the LEAD runner rounds each base.

INSIDE-OUTSIDE THEORY

If the ball remains in the infield the umpires remain on the outfield side of the bases. When the ball goes to the outfield, the umpires move into the infield and gain positions to make calls. The theory, in both instances, is that umpires keep the runners, the fielders, the ball and the bases in front of them, enabling them to make calls with a clear view.

No Runners on Base: Infield Hits Including Bunts

- Third base umpire runs toward 2nd base parallel with the batter-runner.
- First base umpire moves in an arc to a position not more than 30 degrees from the foul line and 4 – 5m from the base.
- The plate umpire removes his mask, with his left hand, and moves away to the left of home plate and trails the batter-runner, no further than the 'tram tracks.'
- Whilst trailing, the plate umpire must not get too close to the batter-runner or get ahead of the ball.

- The plate umpire must be alert to the possibilities of interference, swipe tags and pulled or dragged foot situations.
- Always stay alert and be prepared to adjust positions should errors or overthrows occur.

No Runners on Base: Outfield Hit

- Third base umpire runs to 2nd base and positions himself inside the diamond, so that he can see the ball thrown and make a call on any play at the base should the runner continue to 2nd base.
- First base umpire moves inside the diamond, button-hooks as the batter-runner rounds the base watching to see that the batter-runner touches the base. If the runner advances to 2nd base, this umpire holds his position and prepares to rotate to home plate, should the runner continue to 3rd base.
- The plate umpire removes his mask, with his left hand, and moves away to the left of home plate, trails the batter-runner for a short distance, watches the runner touch 1st base and prepares to rotate to 3rd base should the runner advance to 2nd base.

Runner on First Base: Infield Hit or Steal

- Third base umpire starts in position at 2nd base and is prepared for a force play or a tag play.
- First base umpire starts in position at 1st base and is prepared for pick-off from the catcher, or a force play at the base.
- The plate umpire removes his mask, with his left hand, and moves to the left away from home plate, watches the batter/runner to 1st base looking for interferences or tag plays. He then rotates to 3rd base and prepares to make a call should the lead runner advance to 3rd.

Runner on First: Outfield Hit

- Third base umpire starts in position at 2nd base. On the hit moves quickly inside the diamond at 2nd base and prepares for a possible force play, or a tag play.
- First base umpire starts in position at 1st base. On the hit moves quickly inside the diamond, button-hooks and watches the batter-runner touch the base, then prepares to rotate to home plate should the lead runner advance to 3rd base.
- The plate umpire removes his mask, with his left hand and moves away to the left of home plate, rotates to 3rd base and prepares to make a call should the lead runner advance to 3rd base.
- When moving inside the diamond all umpires should ensure they do not impede the runner's progress, or move into the path of any thrown ball.

Runners on 1st & 2nd: 1st & 3rd: 2nd: 2nd & 3rd: Bases loaded: Infield Hit

- Umpires do not rotate because their starting positions have the lead runner covered.
- First base umpire starts in a position between 1st and 2nd bases and has the responsibility for the calls at both bases.
- Third base umpire starts at 3rd base. On the hit, this umpire assumes a position on the outfield side of the diamond and prepares for a force play or a tag play.
- The plate umpire, on the hit remains at the plate, prepares for a play and also watches the batter-runner to 1st base looking for possible interference or whether the fielder and batter-runner touch the base.

Runners on 1st & 2nd: 1st & 3rd: 2nd: 2nd & 3rd: Bases loaded: Outfield Hit

- Umpires do not rotate, because their starting positions have the lead runner covered. On the hit the first base umpire, who has started between 1st and 2nd bases, moves quickly inside the diamond and has the calls at 1st and 2nd bases.
- Third base umpire starts at 3rd base. On the hit this umpire assumes a position inside the diamond, or on the outfield side of the base, in order to give him a good view of the play.
- The plate umpire removes his mask, with his left hand, and moves away to the left of home plate and assumes a position at an angle of 45 degrees and 3 – 3.5m from the plate. If there is a play at the plate he moves in with the play to give himself a good view.
- When moving inside the diamond all umpires should ensure they do not impede the runners progress, or move into the path of any thrown ball.

Runner on Third: Infield Hit or Bunt

- Third base umpire starts at 3rd base and stays with the runner whilst the runner remains at 3rd base. Should the runner advance to home, the umpire rotates to 2nd base.
- First base umpire moves in an arc to a position not more than 45 degrees inside the foul line and 3 – 3.5m from the base. If the runner advances to 2nd base, and the 3rd base umpire remains at 3rd with the runner, the 1st base umpire must take the call at 2nd base.
- The plate umpire removes his mask, with his left hand, and moves away to the left off home plate to a position at an angle of 45 degrees and 3 – 3.5m from the plate and prepares for the call should the runner proceed home.

Runner on Third: Outfield Hit

- Third base umpire starts at 3rd base. Once the runner advances home, the umpire rotates immediately to 2nd base, parallel with the batter-runner.
- First base umpire buttonhooks inside the diamond and watches the batter-runner touch the base. If the runner advance to 2nd base, this umpire holds and prepares to rotate home should the runner continue to 3rd base.
- The plate umpire removes his mask, with the left hand, and moves away to the left of the plate, watches the runner from 3rd cross home plate, then prepares to rotate to 3rd base, should the batter-runner advance to 2nd base.
- If the runner does not advance to home on the hit, the third base umpire must stay at the base and the plate umpire stays at home plate. The first base umpire moves inside the diamond, button-hooks and watches the batter-runner touch the base, should the batter-runner advance to 2nd base, this umpire must follow and make the call if necessary.

No Runners on Base: Short Hit to Right Field

- Third base umpire runs toward 2nd base parallel with the batter-runner.
- First base umpire moves one pace inside the foul line and gains a position to call a force, or a tag play. He should stay out of the line of the throw from the fielder to the base. On the hit he may choose to stay in foul territory to make the call, watching the throw and allowing the ball to turn his head. If using this position, be very aware of the running path of the batter-runner in order to avoid a collision.
- The plate umpire removes his mask, with his left hand, and moves away to the left of home plate and trails the batter-runner no further than the tram tracks. The plate umpire should also move into the diamond than usual on this play, due to the First base umpire remaining in foul territory.

- Both the plate umpire and the first base umpire look for interference, swipe tags and pulled or dragged foot situations.

Points for Umpires

- Rotation puts umpires in a general area around the bases to make a call. Be prepared to adjust positions depending on the direction of the throw.
- Be alert for subsequent plays, aggressive base running, errors or overthrows. Again, adjust position as necessary.
- In all cases, watch the throw, don't anticipate, it may not go where YOU expect.

WATCH THE THROW,

LET THE BALL TURN YOUR HEAD,

SEE THE PLAY,

MAKE YOUR DECISION.