



# Florida High School Three-Umpire Mechanics for Softball

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# The 3-Ump System

A great system for the game of softball, once the crew has worked enough to be familiar with the mechanics.

Nothing beats time on the field when it comes to readiness and comfort in the system.



# Four Rules

- Rotations are *ALWAYS* clockwise (Plate to 3B, U<sub>3</sub> to 1B/2B, U<sub>1</sub> to the plate.)
- If we start counter-rotated (U<sub>1</sub> in B), there will be *NO* rotation.
- We chase every fly ball that has potential to touch leather.
- If U<sub>1</sub> or U<sub>3</sub> chases, the remaining umpires revert to two-umpire mechanics.

# Plate Umpire

- The most similar to a two-umpire game.
- *Rotations:* If U1 starts on the line we have potential for rotation. Plate has the lead runner at 3B. Use strong verbals to push U3 / pull U1.
- *Stay Home:* If U1 starts counter-rotated and no one chases, Plate has no responsibility at 3B. Read the play from the point-of-the-plate and use the WEDGE.
- *No runners, U1 chases.* Plate covers 1B. Has everything at 1B and at home.

# Plate Ump 1B Line Extended...No!



# Between Inning Mechanics



**POSITION MECHANICS & SIGNALS**

**BETWEEN INNING MECHANICS**

**BETWEEN INNING MECHANICS**

# First Base Umpire (U1)

## Starting positions:

- Always start square to the plate.
- No runners or single runner on 3B — 18-21', walk-the-line.
- Single runner on 1B — 12' behind the base, 12" off the line.
- Runners on 1B and 3B — Counter-rotated in B. Shade the runner on 1B.
- Any time there is a runner on 2B — Counter-rotated in B. Shade the runner on 2B.

# First Base Umpire (U1)

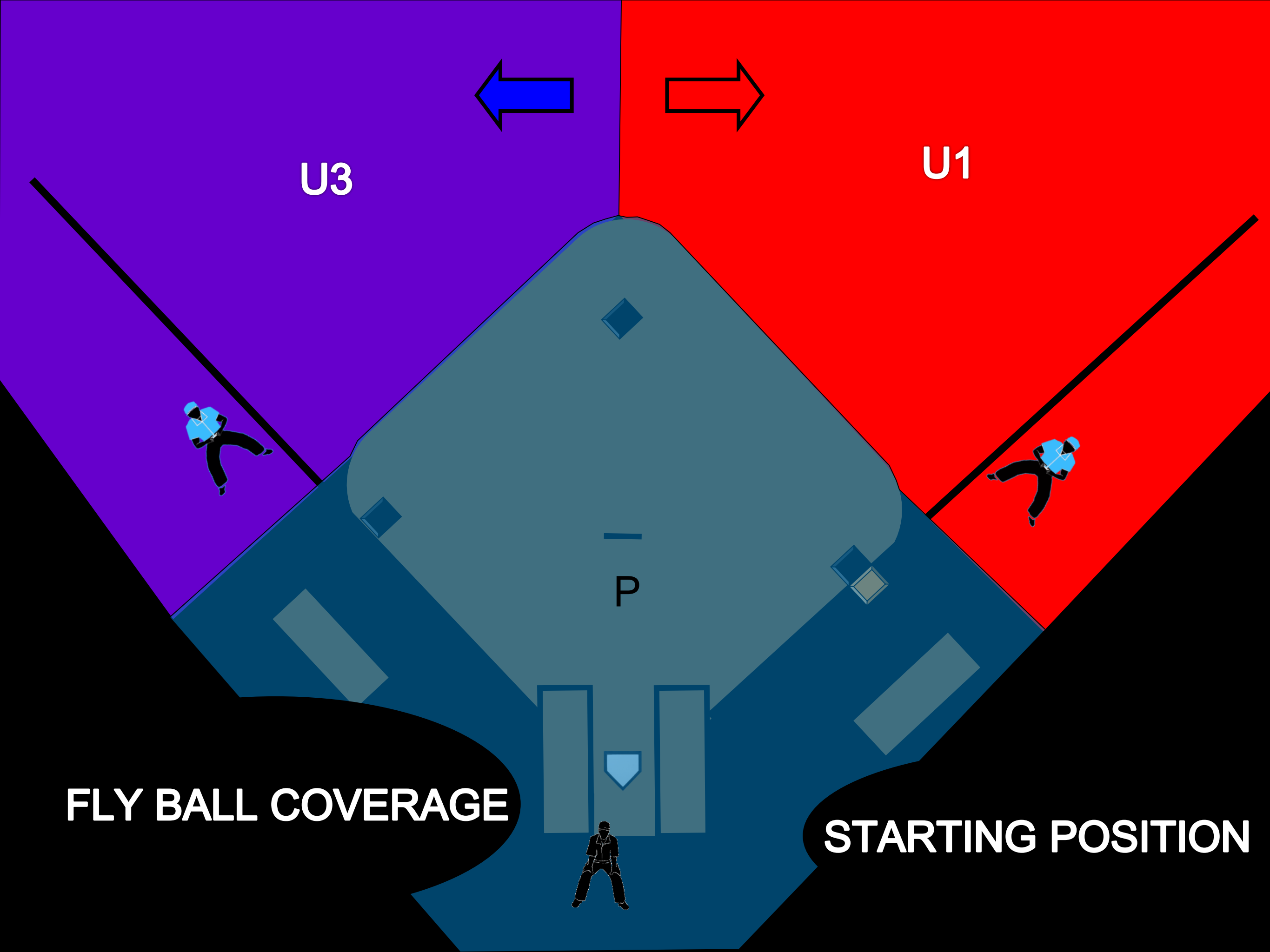
- *Rotations.* If you start on the line and no one chases, you have a potential rotation. When lead runner rounds 2B, run parallel with her as she goes to 3B. Finish your rotation at the point-of-the-plate. Use strong verbal to push (Plate) / pull (U3).
- *Buttonhooks.* If U3 does not chase, you have help ahead. Keep buttonhook close to the 1B line (10-12')
- *Left Shoulder ... Let it Go.* When counter-rotated, do not chase if F9 is moving toward the line. Get inside and take all calls at 1B and 2B.



# Third Base Umpire (U3)

## Starting positions:

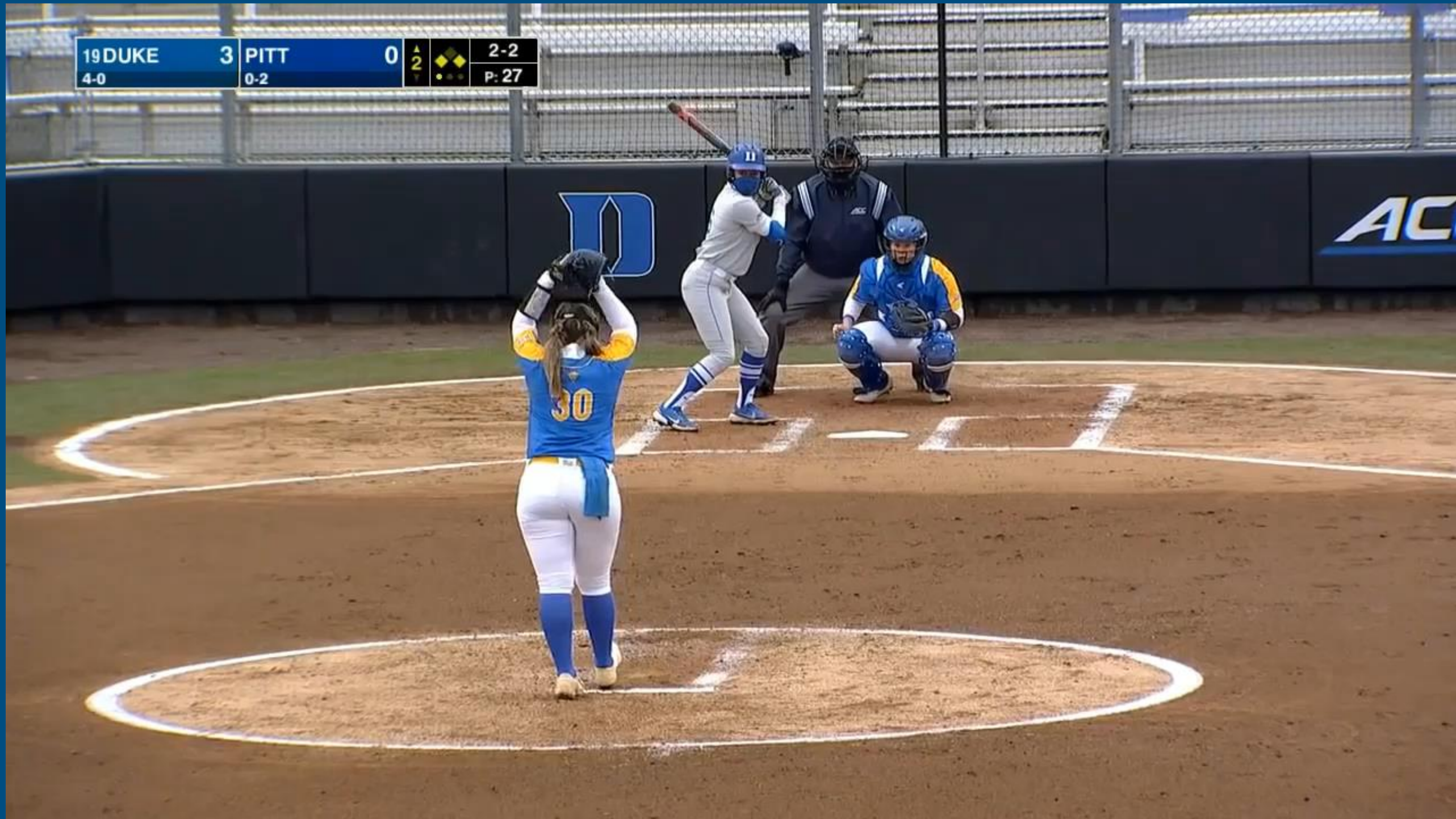
- Always start square to the plate.
- No runners — 18-21', walk-the-line.
- Single runner on 1B — Rotated. On a line from the inside edge of 3B through the inside edge of 2B, and 12' behind the base line.
- Lead runner on 2B — 12' behind the base, on the line in foul.
- Lead runner on 3B — 12' behind the base, a full stride off the line.



**FLY BALL COVERAGE**

**STARTING POSITION**

# 3B Ump Doesn't Chase Late



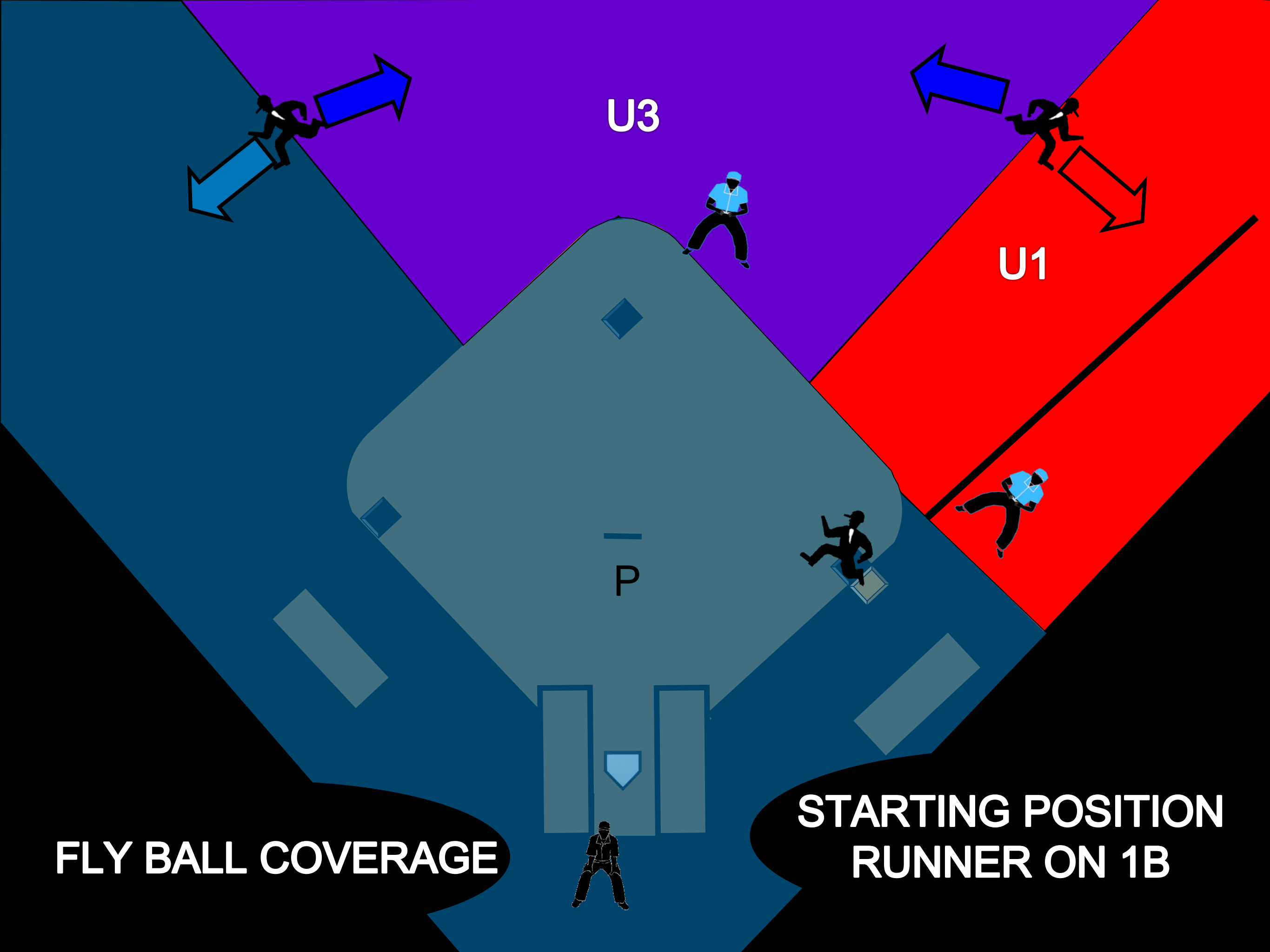
# Third Base Umpire (U3)

## Rotations:

- Whenever U1 starts on the line, you have the potential for a rotation.
- On a hit to the outfield, if neither base umpire chases, U3 hustles to calling position (10 to 12') at 2B.
- When the lead runner rounds 2B, you have all subsequent calls at 1B and 2B.
- Use strong verbal to push (U1) / pull (Plate).

# Third Base Umpire (U3)

- *Steal of 2B:* When rotated, you are in ideal holding position to read the play. Move to keep all four elements in view.
- *Force Plays at 2B:* When rotated, you are only a couple of steps away from ideal calling position for force plays at 2B. If the throw is coming from inside the base lines, move back and to your **left** to 18'. If the throw is coming from outside the base lines, move back and to your **right** to 18'. These directional steps give you the closest to a 90° angle to the throw.
- *Backside 90:* When you start rotated and the throw goes to 1B (SAC bunt, for example), move around the outfield side as R1 rounds 2B. That puts you in position for a possible tag play on a runner diving back to 2B.



U3

U1

P

FLY BALL COVERAGE

STARTING POSITION  
RUNNER ON 1B

# Starting Positions

No Runners

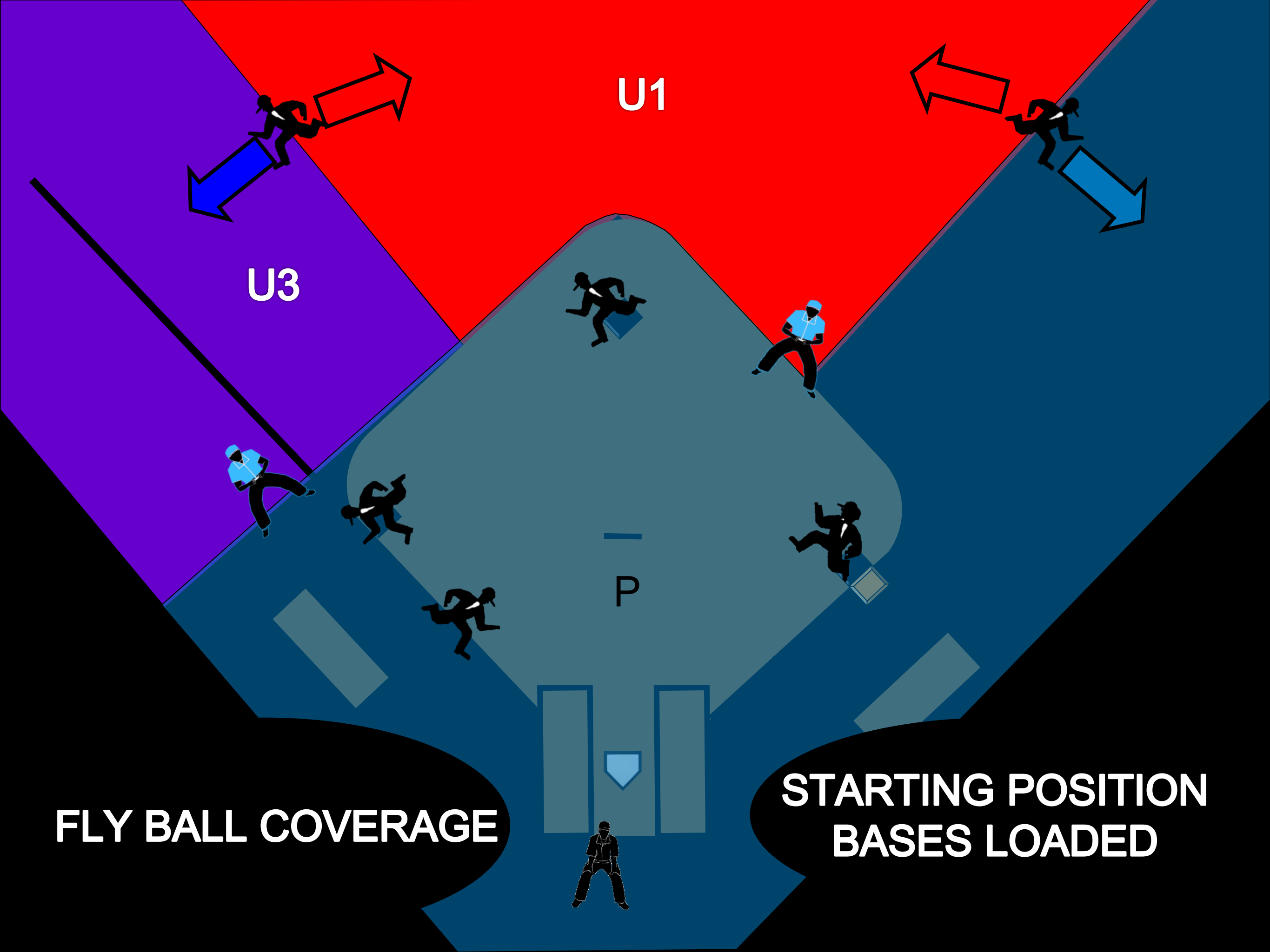


Runner on 1B only



Runner on 2B only

Runner on 3B only





# Starting Positions



Runners on  
1B and 2B



Runners on  
1B and 3B

# Starting Positions



Runners on  
2B and 3B



Bases Loaded

# Ground Ball to Infield & Base Hit to Outfield



Runner on  
2B only



Runners on  
2B only

Pickoff Attempt  
at 1B



Runner on  
1B only



Runner on 1B  
and 3B only

Pickoff Attempt  
at 2B / 3B

Runners on 1B and 2B



Runners on 1B and 3B



Bases Loaded



**THREE-UMPIRE MECHANICS**

**RUNNER ON 1B AND 3B**

**STEAL ATTEMPT OF 2B**



**THREE-UMPIRE MECHANICS**

**RUNNER ON 1B ONLY**

**STEAL ATTEMPT OF 2B**



**THREE-UMPIRE MECHANICS**

**RUNNER ON 2B ONLY**

**ATTEMPTED STEAL OF 3B**



**THREE-UMPIRE MECHANICS**

**RUNNERS ON 1B AND 2B**

**STEAL ATTEMPT OF 3B AND 2B**

**Steal Attempts**

# Chases (Outfield Coverage)

- Know your chase area.
- Cover everything that has potential to touch leather.
- U1 has the “right of first refusal” on a ball between U1 and U3’s areas. U3 will read U1 and adjust.
- Give a verbal (“TWO MAN”) and/or visual signal to your partners when you chase.
- Chase parallel to the flight of the ball, NOT at the play.
- Stop and be set to see fair/foul, catch/no catch.
- Make your signal facing the play.
- If you go out, stay out. Turn back toward the infield and observe the rest of the play.

# Outfield Coverage



Runner on  
2B Only



Runner on  
2B Only



# Authorized Modifications

***ALL THREE-UMPIRE  
CREW MEMBERS should  
review the FHSAA  
MECHANIC  
MODIFICATIONS  
document (available on the  
Central Hub)***



**Foul Ground:** When U1 and U3 start on the line, the use of foul ground can effectively get umpires into the best position while avoiding throwing lanes and players.



**Working Outside the Diamond:** In some situations, base umpires may stay outside the diamond rather than coming inside and button-hooking.



**Timing Play Signals:** Crews should communicate using the two-out (and one-out) timing play signal.

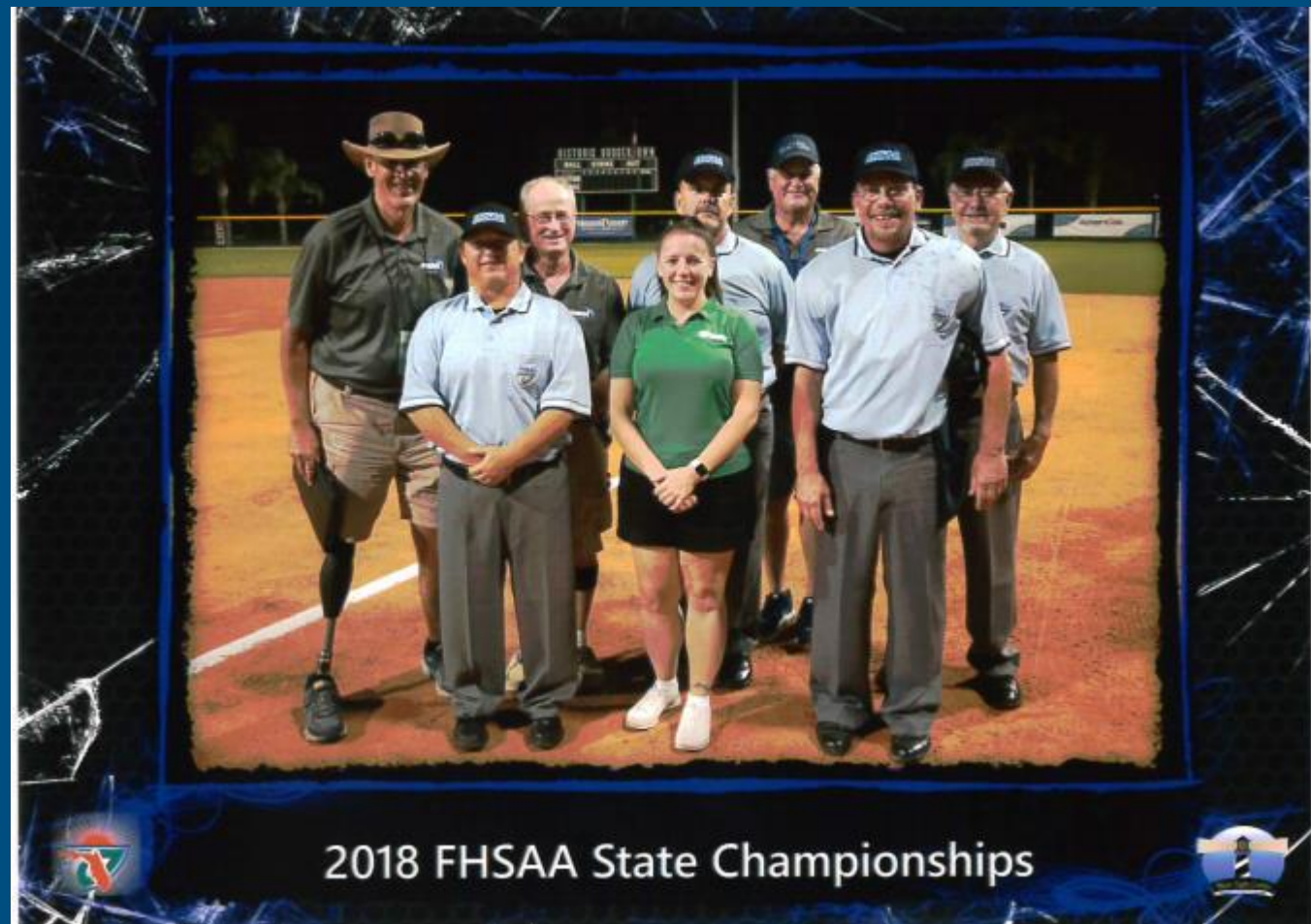
# Avoid the Blooper Reel

- Slot – Alignment – Head Height
- Trails
- Wedge
- Poor Chase Decisions/Mechanics
- Starting Positions (believe it or not)
- U1 Movement to Calling Position From B
- U3 Movement on Base on Balls
- U3 Movement When U1 Chases
- Watch and Read Your Partner
- **SELL** calls
- “Walking Through” calls
- 1B Ump, Don’t Forget to Rotate Home when Plate Ump Goes to 3B





# Questions / Discussion



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