

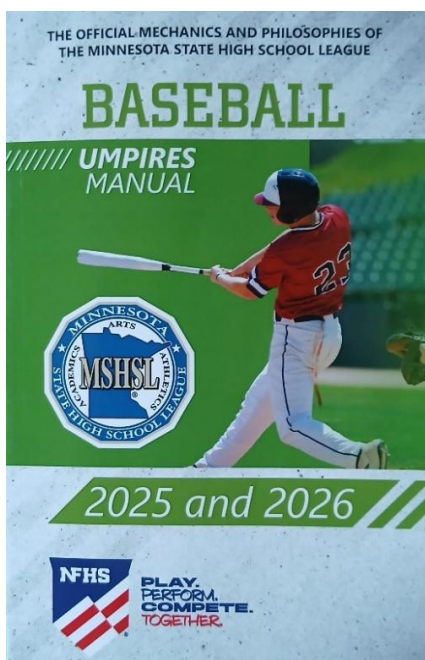
## 3-MAN MECHANICS - Baseball Pre-Game Preparation

Author: Mike Cantone, MSHSL Observer



## INTRODUCTION

- This **Quick Reference Guide** is meant to act as a Pre-Game summary and refresher for 3-Man Mechanics as represented in the *MSHSL Baseball Umpire's Manual (2025 and 2026)*.
- Utilize this Guide (in combination with the *Manual* noted above) in the **weeks** leading up to any 3-Man assignment (Regular or Post-Season)
- Crews should **assign their individual positions** (P, U1, U3) a minimum of *3 full calendar days* prior to any 3-Man assignment
- Each crew member should **study & prepare in-depth** for their specific role accordingly, at minimum beginning *3 full calendar days* prior to the assignment, including **Pages 110 to 178** of the *Manual*
- The pre-Game umpire's meeting (on the day of the game) should cover items in this Guide as well as **any other crew questions** that arose from *self-study* noted above
- Questions on positioning (or other crew-specific decisions) should be **directed to the Crew Chief** assigned for any given assignment
- Crew Chiefs that have questions related to this Guide or other 3-Man Mechanics should refer to their **MSHSL Coordinator** (Regional or State), or area **MSHSL Observer**
- **Reminder** – umpires should take advantage of the five “main” Benefits to utilizing a 3<sup>rd</sup> umpire:
  - 1) Better outfield Catch-No Catch and Fair-Foul coverage (an additional umpire to potentially **Go Out**)
  - 2) Single-base coverage for **Double Plays** (including *Force Play Slide Rule* infractions; U3 does not turn head to 1B)
  - 3) Another set of eyes for **Balks**
  - 4) Better view of all **Check Swing appeals**
  - 5) Improved **Pickoff** view for U1



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## U3

### Initial Positioning\* (See bottom for Definitions)

- ☐ **No Runners On**
  - ✓ **"Deep D"**
- ☐ **R1 only**
  - ✓ **"Deep C"** (mandatory with Left-Handed Batter) or **"Deep B"**
    - In general, "Deep C" permits a clearer view of R1 during the pitch
- ☐ **R1&2, R1&3 or Bases Loaded**
  - ✓ **"Regular C"** (same C position as 2-Man)
- ☐ **R2 or R2&3**
  - ✓ Less than 2 Outs: **"Near D"** (unless 3B playing Deep, then **"Deep D"**)
  - ✓ 2 Outs: **"Regular C"**
- ☐ **Force Play Slide Rule**
  - ✓ Reminder: do **not** turn head on Force Plays at 2B – stay locked in at 2B for the Force Play Slide Rule

### Reverse Rotations from "C"

- **"Reverse Rotation"** = when U1 enters the infield (pivot & turn) to take BR beyond 1B or back into 1B
- **"Clean Hit"** refers to a batted ball that continues to the Outfield

- ☐ Situations:
  - **Start the Process with whether U1 or U3 Goes Out**
    - If either umpire Goes Out, the "other umpire" who is not Going Out must enter the Infield (if not already there)
    - **When one umpire Goes Out, mechanics revert to standard 2-Man**
  - **If neither umpire Goes Out, "Reverse Rotations":**
    - ✓ **R1&2:** 1.) Clean Hit; or 2.) FB "No Catch"
    - ✓ **Bases Loaded:** All situations when batted ball goes into OF
    - ✓ **R1&3:** 1.) Clean Hit; or, 2.) FB "No Catch"; and, 3.) 2 Outs Routine FB RF
    - ✓ **R2, 2 outs only (optional):** Clean Hit (**Crew should pre-Game this situation to decide whether to Reverse Rotate.**)
    - ✓ **R3:** all FB (**not** on a Clean Hit)
    - Note: No Runners, R1, and R2&3 – **Never** (when neither wing umpire Goes Out)

### Going Out

- ☐ All Situations
  - ✓ **When Going Out, Stay Out**
    - Note: U3 never has infield responsibilities of any kind when Going Out
    - Mechanic: MUST raise Right Arm briefly and exclaim "Going Out!" for all situations when deciding to Go Out

### Check Swing Coverage

- ☐ **Always for Left-Handed Batters (LHB)**
  - There are *No Exceptions*
    - Note: if the Plate umpire incorrectly comes to U3 for a RHB, U3 should defer to U1 for the decision

### (\*) Definitions (Initial Positioning)

- "Deep D" means behind 3B for a full-field view; with no imminent play at 3B, close proximity to 3B is not critical
- "Near D" means in close proximity to 3B as a play on R3 or R2 is possible
- "Deep C" means with your heels on the dirt/grass line, with Left heel at the edge of the 2B grass cutout
- "Regular C" means the same position as in 2-man C (halfway between 2B and the pitcher's circle, and a line from HP thru your legs)

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## U1

### Initial Positioning\* (See bottom for Definitions)

- ☐ Always **"A"** (except R2 and R2&3 exceptions noted below)
  - ✓ With No Runners On, **"Deep A"**
    - "Deep A" is the standard "A" position, On the Line (foul ground) 6 to 8 feet behind 1B (as in 2-Man)
  - ✓ With R1, **"Near A"**
    - "Near A" is required when 1B is "in close proximity to R1"
    - If 1B is playing deep, such as with Bases Loaded, revert to "Deep A" (but be prepared for a pickoff from pitcher or catcher)
    - In "Near A," U1 shall have Right Foot on/near 1B Line (to maintain view of pitcher, plus Fair-Foul and Check Swing appeals)
- ☐ **R2 or R2&3**
  - ✓ Less than 2 Outs: **"Deep B"**
  - ✓ 2 outs: move back to **"Deep A"**

### Rotating Home from "A"

- ☐ **Situations:**
  - ✓ **No Runners On:** 1.) Clean Hit (when BR commits to 3B); or, 2.) Fly Ball when neither U1/U3 Goes Out
  - ✓ **R1:** 1.) Clean Hit (when R1 commits to 3B); or, 2.) FB when U1 does Not Go Out
  - ✓ **R1&2:** 1.) Fly Ball Catch/Tag Up when U1 does Not Go Out
  - **In all three circumstances noted above, once the P/U Rotates to 3B, he stays at 3B (U1 covers HP)**
  - Note: Bases Loaded, R1&3, R2, R2&3, R3 – **Never**

### Reverse Rotations from "A"

- **"Reverse Rotation"** = when U1 enters the infield (pivot & turn) to take BR beyond 1B or back into 1B
- **"Clean Hit"** refers to a batted ball that continues to the Outfield

- ☐ **Situations:**
  - **Start the Process with whether U1 or U3 Goes Out**
    - If either umpire Goes Out, the "other umpire" who is not Going Out must enter the Infield (if not already there)
    - **When one umpire Goes Out, mechanics revert to standard 2-Man**
  - **If neither umpire Goes Out, below are the "Reverse Rotations":**
    - ✓ **R1&2:** 1.) Clean Hit; or 2.) FB "No Catch"
    - ✓ **Bases Loaded:** All situations when batted ball goes into OF
    - ✓ **R1&3:** 1.) Clean Hit; or, 2.) FB "No Catch"; and, 3.) 2 Outs Routine FB RF
    - ✓ **R2, 2 outs only (optional):** Clean Hit (**Crew should pre-Game this situation to decide whether to Reverse Rotate.**)
    - ✓ **R3:** all FB (**not** on a Clean Hit)
    - Note: No Runners, R1, and R2&3 – **Never** (when neither wing umpire Goes Out)

### Going Out

- ☐ All Situations
  - ✓ **When Going Out, Stay Out**
    - This is a **significant difference from 2-Man**, there is no returning to the Infield or Home Plate after Going Out in 3-Man
    - Mechanic: **MUST** raise Left Arm briefly and exclaim "Going Out!" for all situations when deciding to Go Out

### Check Swing Coverage

- ☐ **Always for Right-Handed Batters (RHB)**
  - There are *No Exceptions*
    - Note: if the Plate umpire incorrectly comes to U1 for a LHB, U1 should defer to U3 for the decision

### (\*) Definitions (Initial Positioning)

- "Deep A" means behind 1B for a full-field view
- "Near A" means in close proximity to 1B to monitor R1 (pickoffs, snap-throws from catcher, etc.)
- "Deep B" means with your heels on the dirt/grass line, with Right heel at the edge of the 2B grass cutout
- "Regular B" is never used in 3-Man mechanics

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## PLATE (P/U)

### Initial Positioning\* (See below for Definitions)

- ☐ Always **"Behind the Catcher"**

### Rotating to 3B

- ☐ Situations:
  - ✓ **No Runners On:** 1.) Clean Hit; or, 2.) FB when neither U1/U3 Goes Out
  - ✓ **R1:** 1.) Clean Hit; 2.) U1 Goes Out; 3.) FB "No Catch" when U1 did *not* Go Out; or, 4.) 2 Outs Routine FB RF
  - ✓ **R1&2:** FB with Tag Up (R2 into 3B)
  - **In all three circumstances noted above, once Rotating to 3B, stay at 3B (U1 is covering HP)**
  - Note: Bases Loaded, R1&3, R2, R2&3, R3 – **Never**
    - **R1&3 – "No Rotation" is a major Difference from 2-Man**

### Rotating to 1B

- ☐ Situations:
  - ✓ **No Runners On:** when U1 Goes Out
  - **In this circumstance, P/U must return to HP if BR advances there**
  - Note: this is the **only situation** that the P/U takes the initial touch of 1B by the BR, and any subsequent return of BR back into 1B
  - Reminder: Ground Balls with No Runners On Base, P/U proceeds up the 1B Line for pulled foot, interference or obstruction assistance

### Force Play Slide Rule

- ☐ Reminder: U3 has primary for ruling on Force Plays at 2B – P/U role is secondary (**different from 2-Man**)

### Going Out

- ☐ All Situations
  - ✓ **When U1 or U3 Goes Out, they will Stay Out**
    - **When one umpire Goes Out, mechanics revert to standard 2-Man**
    - This is a **significant difference from 2-Man**, there is no returning to the Infield or Home Plate after Going Out in 3-Man
    - Mechanic: Base umpire **MUST** raise Arm briefly and exclaim "Going Out!" for all situations when they decide to Go Out

### Check Swing Coverage

- ☐ **Right-Handed Batter (RHB)**
  - ✓ Always appeal to **U1**
- ☐ **Left-Handed Batter (LHB)**
  - ✓ Always appeal to **U3**
  - Notes: *No Exceptions*; if P/U inadvertently ask the wrong umpire, the incorrect umpire should re-direct to the correct umpire
  - Mechanic: utilize the **LEFT** arm for all check-swing appeals to the correct Base partner

### (\*) Definitions (Initial Positioning) *Plate Stance reminders*

- In the Slot
- Head Height: chin at the top of the catcher's mask
- Remain Still throughout
- Utilize proper Timing