

## BASE MECHANICS

### I. BASICS

#### A. Responsibilities of the base umpire

1. Illegal pitches - watch the pitcher's feet for stepping back off the rubber, crow hop, or leaping
2. Check swings by the batter.

#### B. Techniques

1. Be aware of angles and work them - the proper angle will have the ball, the base, the defensive player, and runner in view.
2. Always follow the ball.

#### C. Making the call

1. Kinds of plays
  - a. Routine plays - a visual signal only:
  - b. Easy calls (closer than the routine play) - a visual signal and use medium voice.
  - c. Close calls - a visual signal and use loud voice.

### IL POSITIONS FOR THE FORCE OUT AT FIRST BASE

#### A. Fair ground

1. Start 18 - 21 feet behind first base
2. Take one or two steps forward, ending on your left foot as the ball crosses the plate.
3. Once the ball is hit to the infield, come onto the infield, parallel to the base path, a maximum of an imaginary line from corner to corner of the bag (See diagram 1).
4. Come set facing the bag.
5. Watch the ball until it passes the pitchers mound, then focus on the bag and listen for the ball hitting the glove.
6. Once the runner has passed the bag approximately 10 feet, announce your call. (This will give you the time to replay the call, if needed, otherwise it will establish your timing for when you really need the extra time to properly make the call.)

#### B. Foul ground

1. Use only under extreme situations, ie. base hit to shallow right field and the ball is thrown to first base.
2. The maximum position is an imaginary line from corner-to-corner of the bag. (See diagram 2)

#### C. Errant throw

1. Move back a step or two towards the foul line to get a better look on a swipe tag or pulled foot
  - a. First announce the reason, followed by the call, for example, "On the tag, OUT!" or "Pulled foot, SAFE!"

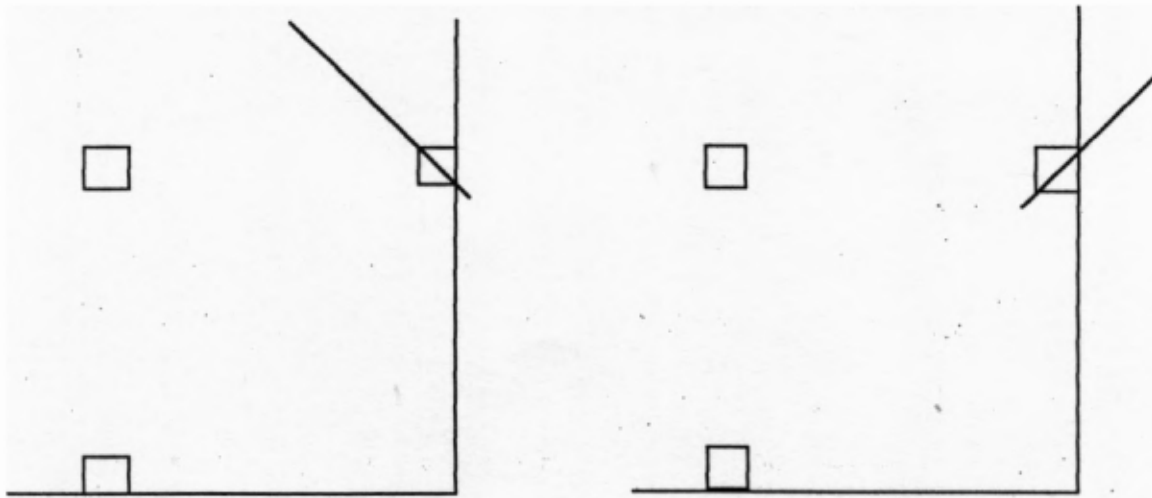


Diagram 1

Diagram 2

### III. POSITIONS FOR RUNNERS ON BASE

#### A. Runner on First base only

1. Position yourself 2 - 3 steps behind and to the left of the second baseman.
2. On the steal attempt of second base
  - a. Move towards the bag parallel to the base path to get the ideal angle, adjust to the throw.
3. Play at first
  - a. Move parallel to the base path to the max. position (See diagram 1). Come set, watch the play, and announce the call after the proper timing.

#### B. Runner on Second base only

1. Position yourself 2 - 3 steps behind and to the left of the shortstop - when playing the normal position, adjust off the right if the shortstop shades up the middle.
2. On the steal attempt of third base
  - a. Move towards the bag parallel to the base path to get the ideal angle, adjust to the throw.
3. Play at first
  - a. Wait for the runner to pass towards third, be aware of a play on this runner, once the play is at first, come set as the ball passes the pitcher's mound, sell the call after the proper timing.
4. Play at third
  - a. Move parallel to the baseline trying to get to the best possible angle, come set, make your call after the proper timing.

C. Runner on third base only

1. Position yourself between second base and the second baseman.
2. On a pick off attempt at third, come into the diamond perpendicular to the front edge of the bag. If the runner tries a fade away slide or you are screened, if all the elements of an out are present, but you aren't sure of a tag or if the runner got to the bag, first ask the plate ump for help, then make your call according to the response.

#### IV. COMBINATIONS

**A. Inside-Outside Theory**

1. Whenever the ball is inside the diamond, the base umpire is on the outside of the diamond, and whenever the ball is outside the diamond, the base umpire is on the inside of the diamond.
2. Button-Hook
  - a. When the ball is hit through the infield, the base umpire is to come into the diamond, cutting as close to first base as possible, button hooking towards the runner, watching for possible obstruction and the runner touching the bag, keeping an eye on the runner.
    1. If the runner starts towards second then doubles back, follow the runner back to first UNLESS the plate umpire calls you off the play.
    2. If the runner continues to second, continue parallel to the base line ahead of the runner coming set approximately 8 to 10 feet from the bag for a possible play.
    3. If the runner continues to third, continue parallel to the base line ahead of the runner coming set approximately 8 to 10 feet from the bag for a possible play.
  - b. Plate umpire leaves to the left of the catcher, trailing the batter-runner approximately one third down the baseline.

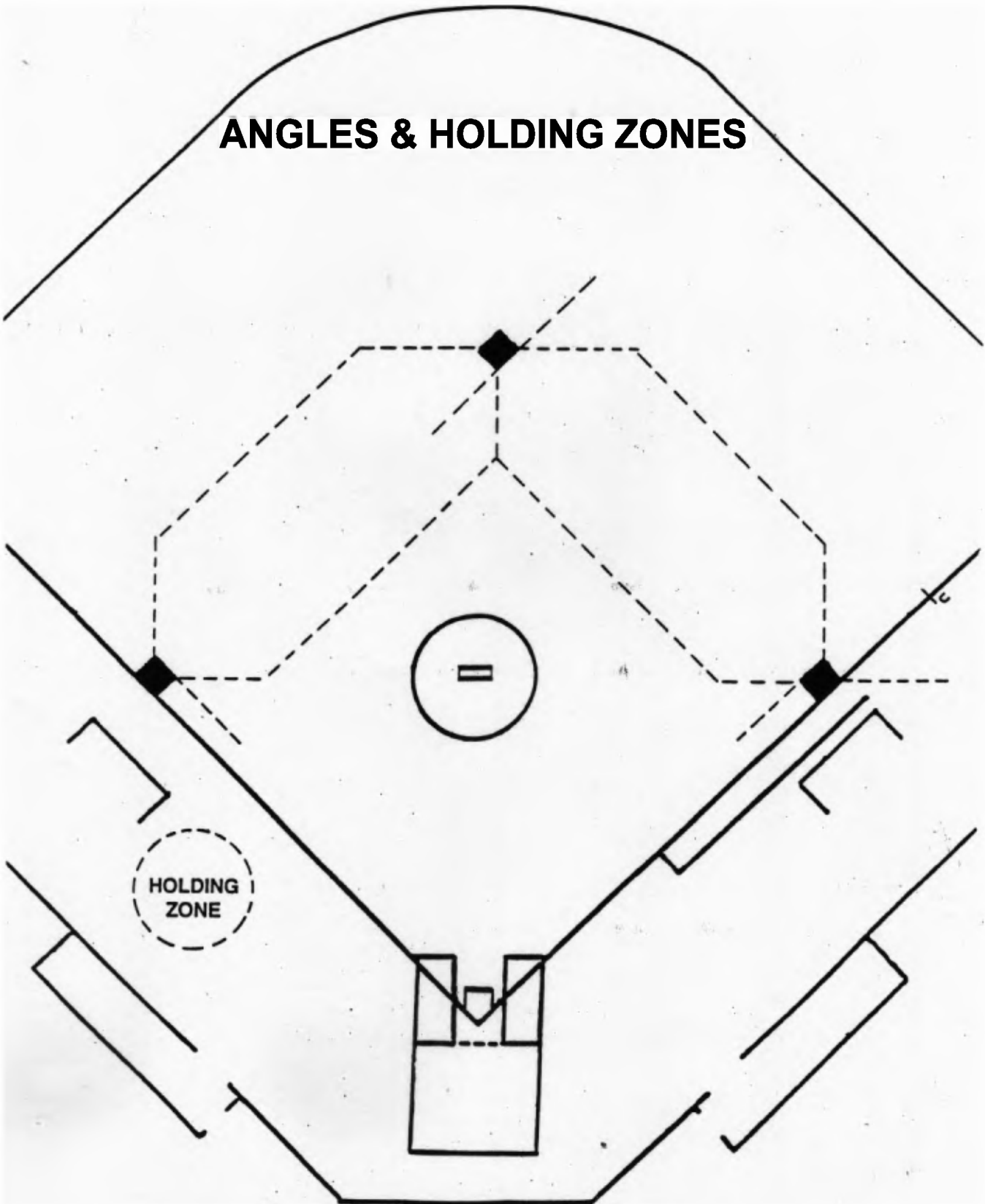
**B. Runner (R2) on First Base Only, Play on Batter-Runner at first and subsequent play at third on R2:**

1. The base umpire **Must** move toward the play at first, stop coming set, then announce the call.
2. The plate umpire fades down the third base line, when R2 rounds second, the plate umpire then moves into fair territory 8 - 10 from third base, stop coming set, then announce the call.

**C. Run downs**

1. Only one base runner
  - a. The base umpire and the plate umpire should box in the play with one umpire on each end of the rundown. The umpire closest to the play or the umpire facing the tag will make the out call.
2. More than one base runner
  - a. Plate umpire must stay near the plate in case of a scoring attempt, while base umpire handles the rundown alone.

# ANGLES & HOLDING ZONES



## DRILLS

1. No runners - Base umpire  
A. Fairground
2. No runners - Base umpire  
A. Foul Ground
3. No runners - Base umpire  
A. Errant throw to first base
4. Runner on 1st & 3rd and/or runner on 3rd only
5. No runners - Base umpire  
A. Button Hook into diamond
6. One runner caught in a run down
7. Proper Angles  
A. Throws from outfield - Base umpire reading throw and finding the proper angle for play at a base.

## New Angle at First Base for College Games Adopted

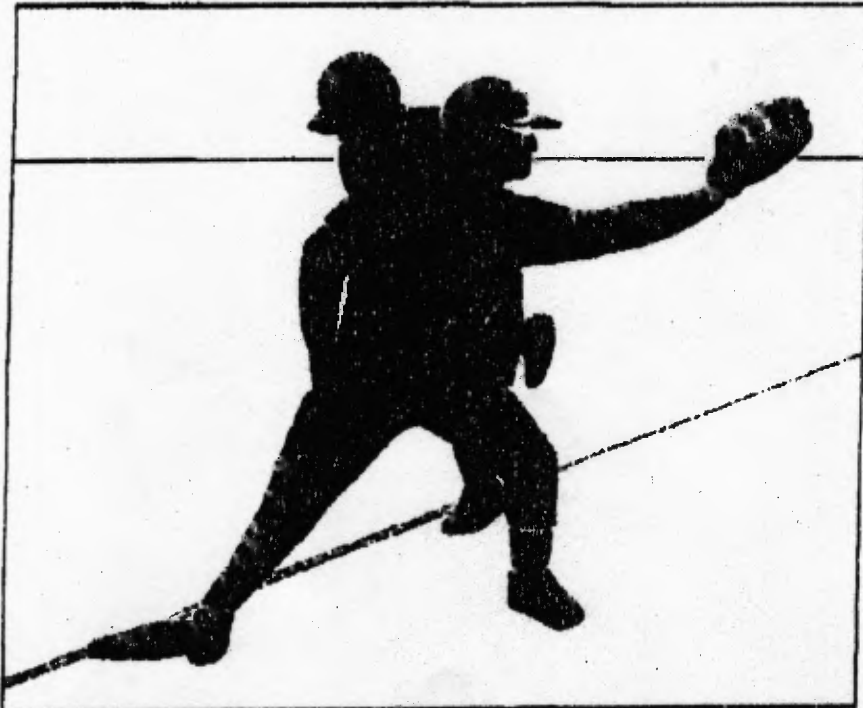


Diagram A



Diagram B

It's routine baseball play. No runners, ground ball in the infield, throw to first. First-base umpires hear the reminders every year: Move toward the batted ball; 90-degree angle to the throw; watch the throw halfway across the infield; focus on the base, listen for the glove, wait ... then make the call. The technique is simple, understandable and easy to teach. But is it also flawed?

Diagram A is an over-the-shoulder view similar to the umpire's. We've established a position which places our line of sight at a 90-degree angle to the path of the infielder's throw to first. But when the runner and the ball arrive for a close play, it's hard to see the runner. He tends to flash across our field of view at the last moment and the play explodes before our very eyes.

A newly adopted NCAA mechanic says that instead of a 90-degree angle, take only one or two full steps into fair territory. The change is an effort to get umpires to stop moving and get set for the play; there was too much movement by umpires while trying to obtain the 90-degree angle.

As diagram B illustrates, being closer to the foul line lets you see the approaching runner's final three or four steps toward first. You still have a good view of the first baseman's catch; you might have a better look at his foot on the base; on a wide throw, you have a much better look a swipe tag. Most importantly, you'll be able to feel the rhythm of the play as the runner and the ball approach. Close plays will no longer explode. You might feel like you're watching a slow-motion replay - which will help your timing. □

