SFV Baseball Umpires 2026 Playoff Meeting

Monday, May 4th, 2026

Tonight’s Speakers: Kevin Farr, Zach Kozek

- **Intro - CIF Playoff Bulletins**
  Find these docs on Arbiter, Forms tab

- **Presentation - 3 Umpire Mechanics**
  Philosophy, catch coverage, rotations simplified

PURPOSE OF TODAY

SHARPEN THE 3-MAN SYSTEM



BUILD CONFIDENCE | *Trust your positioning and instincts within the system.*



SIMPLIFY MECHANICS | *Clear responsibilities—especially under pressure.*



CREW AWARENESS | *Know where your partners are at all times.*



ELIMINATE BREAKDOWNS | *No two umpires on one play. No empty bases.*

ONE CREW. ONE SYSTEM. NO CONFUSION.

If something feels chaotic... we didn't communicate.

CBUA
SFVBUA
INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

CORE PHILOSOPHY

U1 = PAUSE, READ, REACT

- PAUSE
- READ
- REACT



U3 = RUN, READ, REACT



- RUN
- READ
- REACT

U1: *Slow down, observe, adjust*

U3: *Anticipate, move, create angles*

BOTH: *Read the play, read your Partner:*

5.2 Basic Starting Positions

"A" – in foul territory behind first base

"B" – within the infield, half the distance between the pitcher's rubber and first base and half the distance between the pitcher's rubber and second base.

"Deep B" – along the grass dirt line on the first-base side of second base.

"C" – within the infield, half the distance between the pitcher's rubber and third base and half the distance between the pitcher's rubber and second base.

"Deep C" – along the grass dirt line on the third-base side of second base.

"D" – in foul territory behind third base.

5.3 General Balk Responsibilities

A. All umpires should intently watch for all actions that could cause a balk.

B. If you see a balk, you should call it immediately regardless of your position on the field.

C. Other umpires should mirror the balk call of their partners to ensure everyone on the field is clear that a balk has been called. (If a coach comes out to argue the call, the umpire that had the balk should walk toward the coach and explain the call.)

D. There are some balks that are more obvious from some positions (see specific crew sections for details).

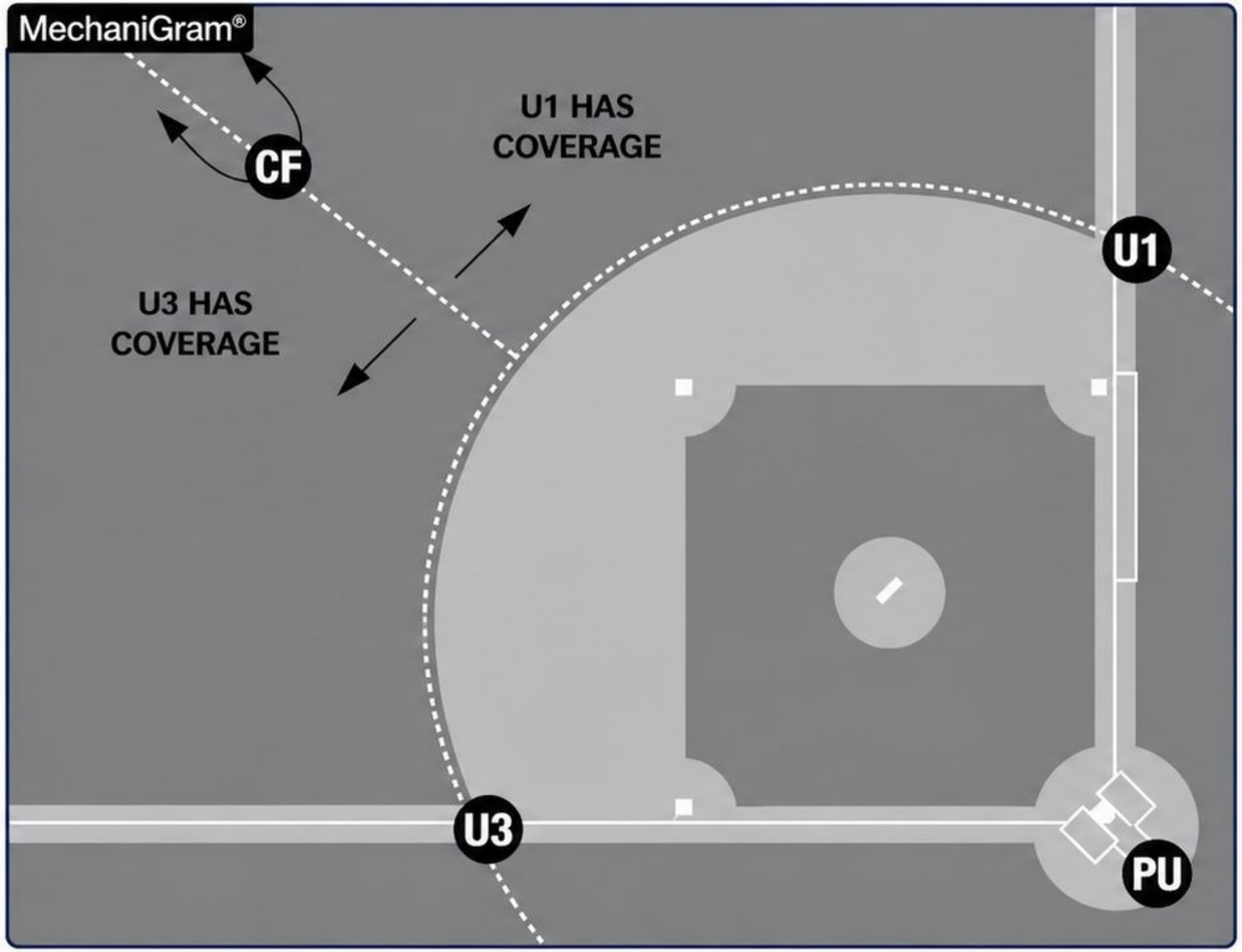
5.4 Rundown Plays

All umpires must work to get good angles on run down plays and not get straight lined on the tag. In general, the umpire that has the clearest view of the tag should take the initiative on making the call.
Good eye contact between partners is essential.

3 UMPIRES

8.6.1 NO RUNNERS ON

Initial Positions and Outfield Coverage



Action on the field: No action

Umpire responsibilities:

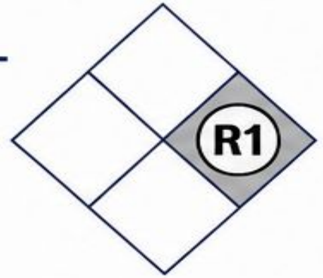
PU Has no outfield responsibility with no runners on base.

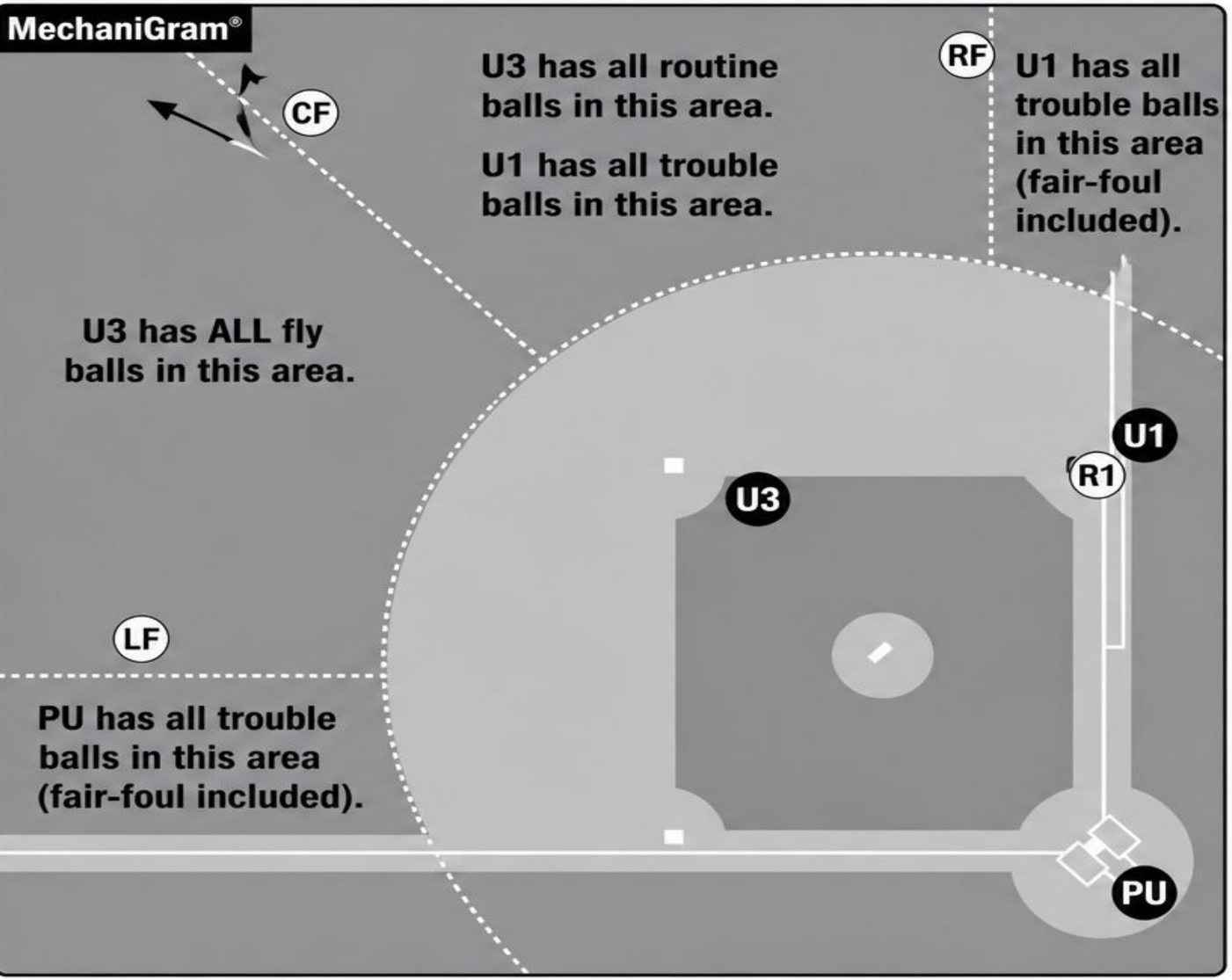
U1: Starts in the "A" position. U1 dictates coverage and has the center fielder straight in, when the center fielder turns to his left and goes straight back and when he moves toward right field. U1 also has all balls to the right fielder.

U3: Starts in the "D" position. U3 has the center fielder moving toward left field, when the center fielder turns to his right and goes straight back and all balls to the left fielder.

3 UMPIRES

Initial Positions and Outfield Coverage





Action on the field: No action

Umpire responsibilities:

PU Has catch/no-catch responsibility if the ball is hit where the left fielder moves any distance toward the foul line.

U1 Starts in the "A" position. U1 retains coverage on all trouble balls (See 8.4C) from the center fielder coming straight in or straight back to right-field out of play. If U1 goes out, the crew reverts to the two-umpire system.

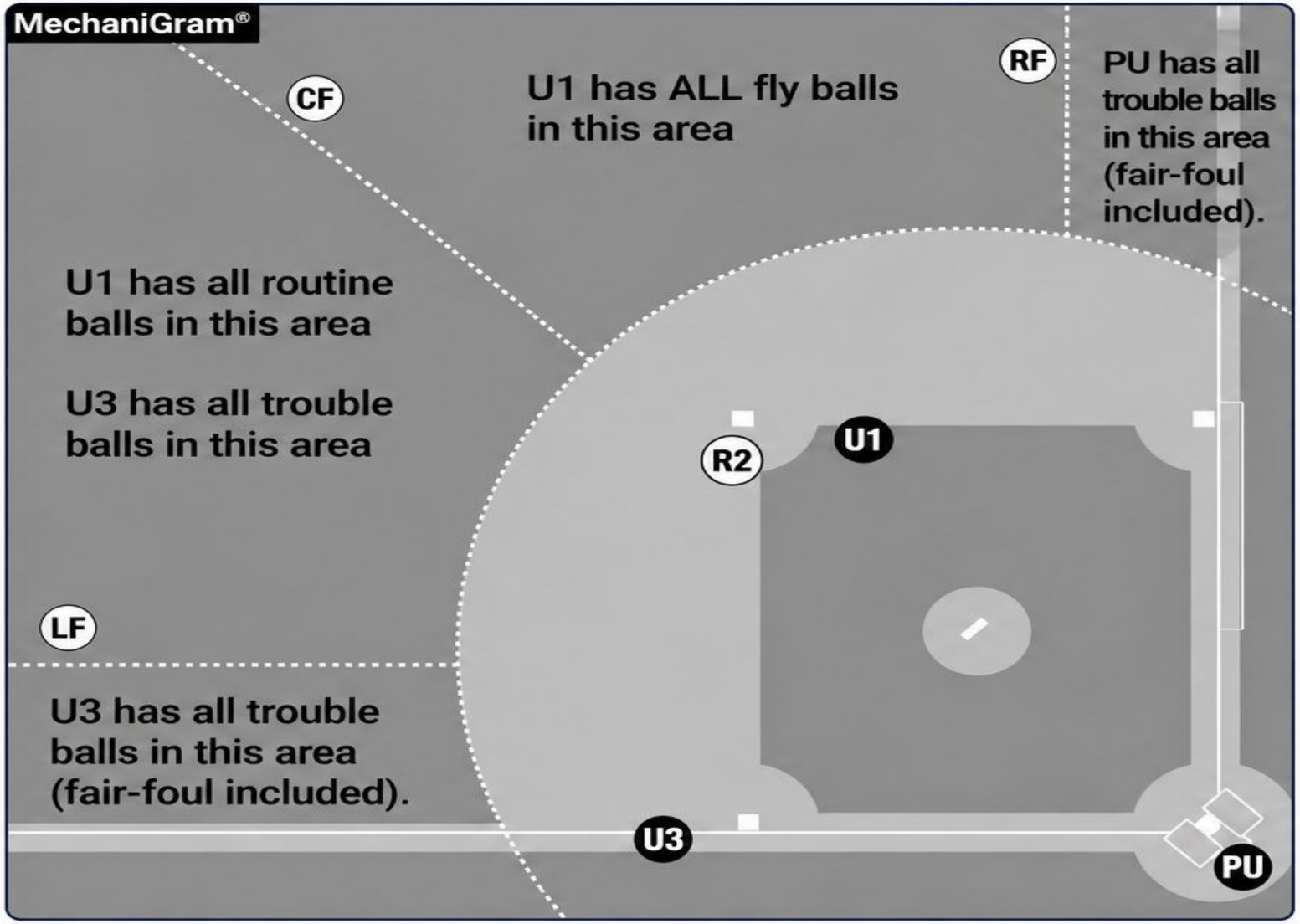
U3 Starts in the "Deep B" position ("Deep C" is optional and permissable). U3 has all responsibility for all routine catches from left field to right field, and all trouble catches in the left-center field wedge.

3 UMPIRES

8.11.1 RUNNER ON SECOND
LESS THAN TWO OUTS

R2

Initial Positions and Outfield Coverage



Action on the field: Less than two outs.

Initial Positions and Outfield Coverage

With less than two outs, U1 is in the "Deep B" position and U3 is in the "D" position. The initial responsibility of all catch or no catch of fly balls and line drives to the outfield belongs to U1. U3 retains coverage on all trouble balls (See 8.4C) from the center fielder coming straight in or straight back to the left-field out of play. If the ball is hit where the right fielder moves any distance toward the foul line, then PU has all catch/no-catch responsibility.

CCA

TROUBLE PLAYS TO GO OUT ON



- **BOUNDARY CALLS AND POTENTIAL HOME RUNS**
- **CONVERGING FIELDERS**
- **A CATCH BELOW THE WAIST (INCLUDING SLIDING OR DIVING)**
- **POTENTIAL FAIR/FOUL DECISIONS**

GO OUT ON THESE PLAYS

KEY REMINDERS

Go out early to get the **best angle.**

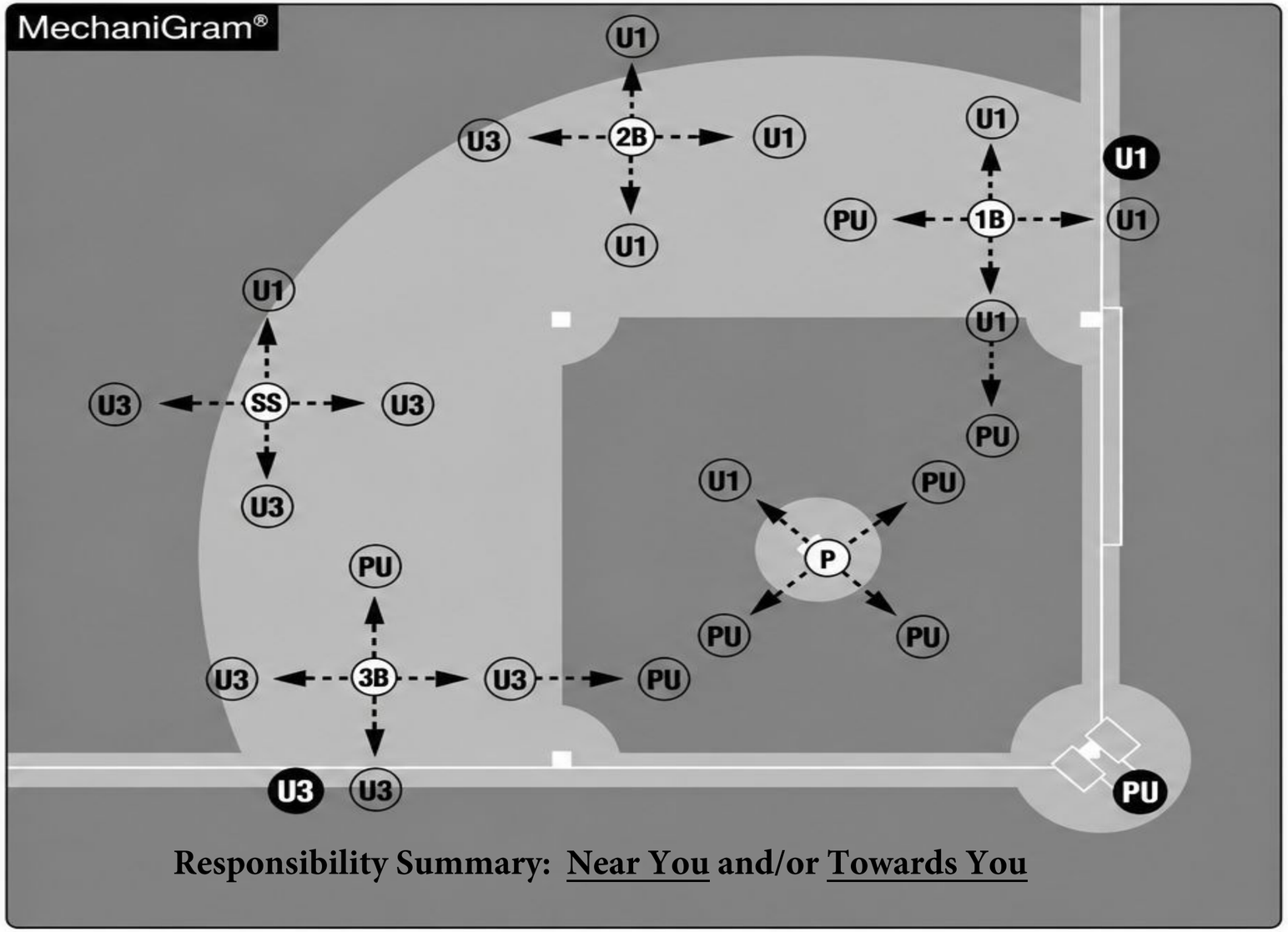
Communicate with your partner using **verbal** and **physical** cues.

When in doubt,
GO OUT. *(Wing Umpires Only)*

TEAMWORK & COMMUNICATION ARE CRITICAL
Read your partner. Trust your training. Take charge.

8.6.2 NO RUNNERS ON

Infield Catch Coverage



Responsibility Summary: Near You and/or Towards You

Action on the field:

No action

Umpire responsibilities:

PU
- By the pitcher moving in, left or right.
- By the first and third baseman moving toward the plate or toward the middle of the infield.

U1
- By the second baseman moving in, out or toward first base.
- By the shortstop moving toward second base.
- By the first baseman on line drives directly at or directly in front, moving back or toward the line.
- By the pitcher moving back.

U3
- By the shortstop moving in, back or toward third base.
- By the second baseman moving toward second base.
- By the third baseman on line drives directly at or directly in front, moving back or toward the line.

BOTH: Simplify Mechanics. Read the play, read your Partner.

REGULAR ROTATION

3 SITUATIONS

1

NO RUNNERS

BALL TO OUTFIELD

- Extra Bases

2

R1 ONLY

BASE HIT

- Runner on 1st

3

R1 + R2

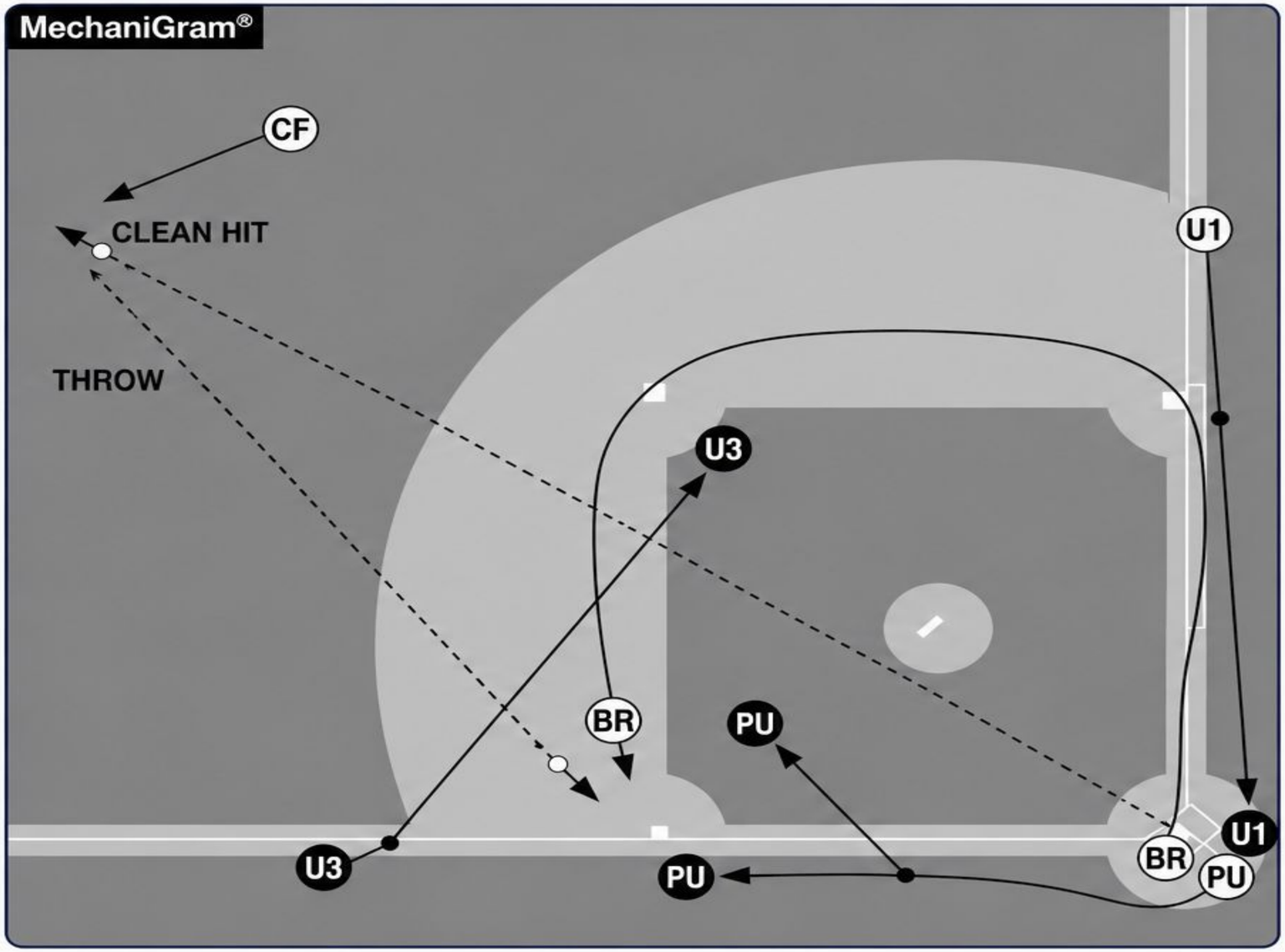
TAG & ADVANCE TO 3RD

- Runners on 1st and 2nd

KNOW THE SITUATION. MAKE THE ADJUSTMENT.

Be ready. Be aware. Be in position.

Clean Hit to the Outfield



Action on the field: A deep clean hit to the outfield with the batter-runner advancing toward third base, drawing a throw there.

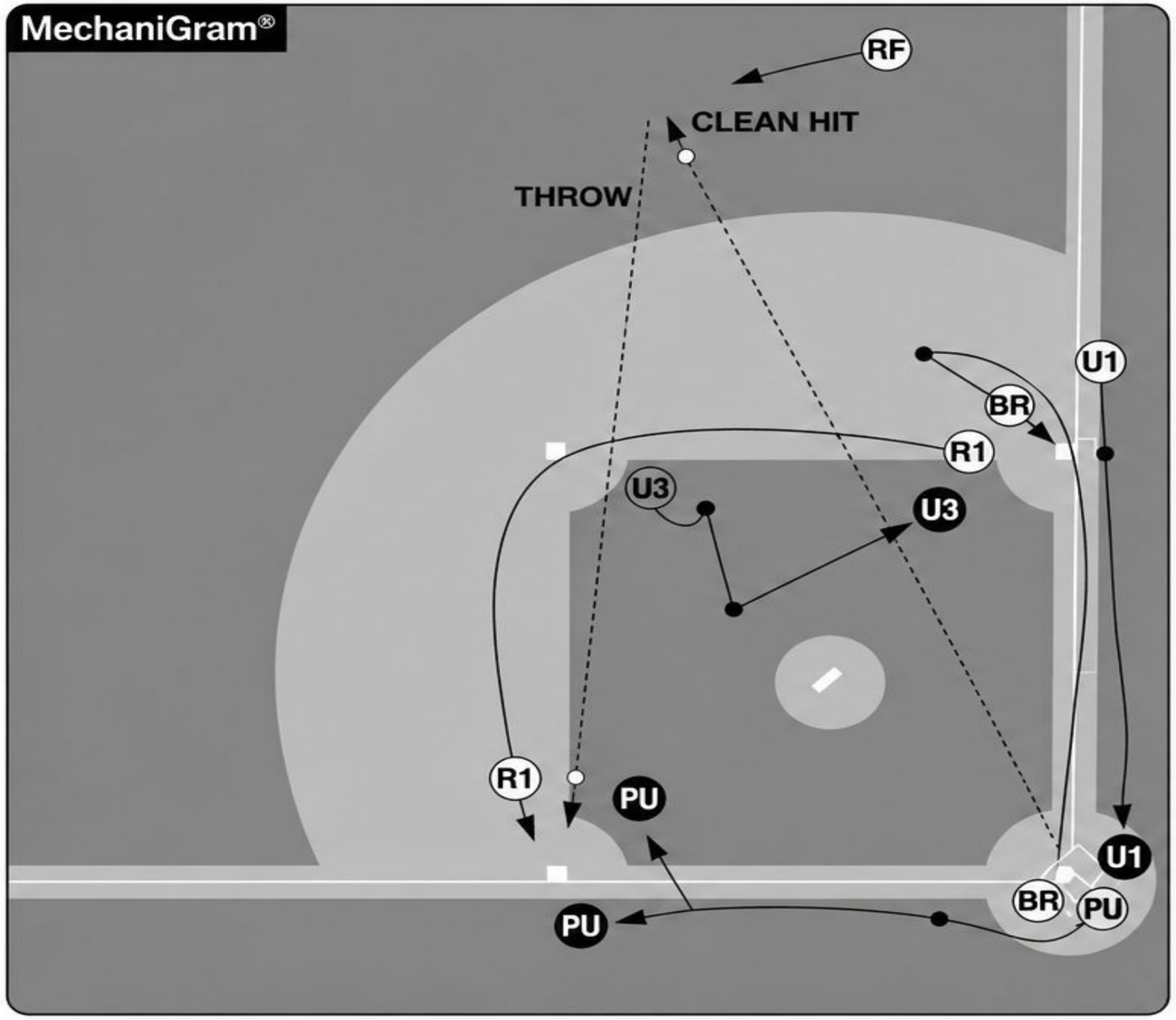
Umpire responsibilities:

PU Reads the ball and has any play on the batter-runner at third base.

U1 Observes batter-runner's base touch at first base and begins to move toward the plate if the batter-runner commits to third base.

U3 Enters the infield and has all plays on the batter-runner at second base.

Clean Hit to the Outfield



Action on the field:

Clean hit to right field, no catch; **R1** advances toward third base, drawing a throw there; batter-runner rounds first and returns there.

Umpire responsibilities:

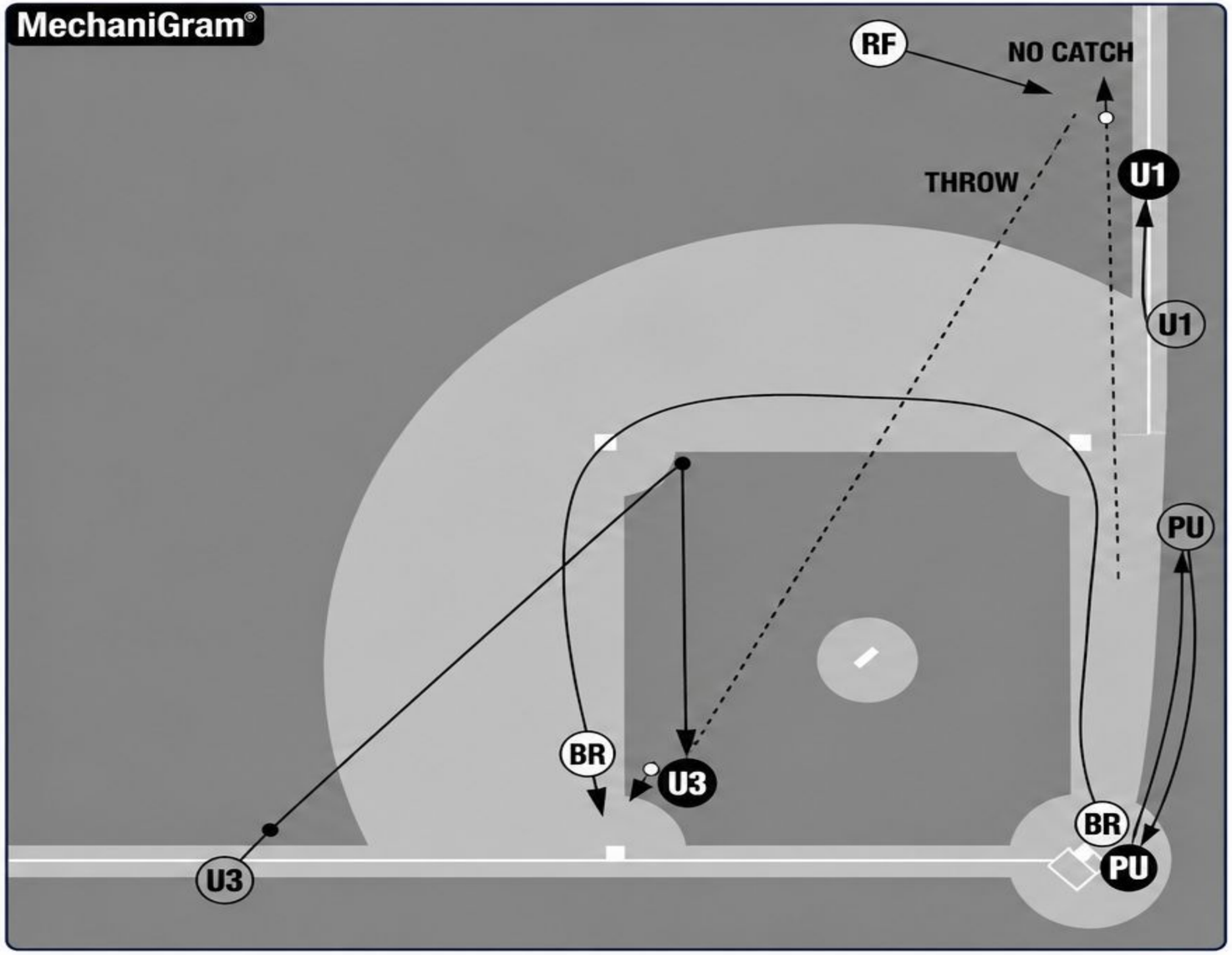
PU: Reads R1 and the ball and moves into a position for any plays at third base on R1. If a play develops at third base, PU can take the play in either fair or foul territory.

U1: Observes batter-runner's base touch at first base and begins to move toward the plate when R1 touches second base and commits to third base.

U3: Observes the base touch at second base and begins to move toward first base if R1 commits to third base and has all plays on the batter-runner at first and second base.

By conference approval, any time a runner is positioned at first base only with two outs and the batter with a full count, the base umpires may reverse rotate on a base hit.

Fly Ball Down the Right-Field Line: No Catch, U1 Goes Out



Action on the field: Fly ball to right field, no catch; the batter-runner advances toward third base, drawing a throw there.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU Moves to first base for any play on the batter-runner. Once the batter-runner reaches second base, PU returns to the plate for any play there.

U1 Goes out on the fly ball to rule on fair/foul and then the catch/no-catch.

U3 Has all plays at second and third base.

REVERSE ROTATIONS

WHEN TO REVERSE (SLIDE):

When the PU stays home, and neither Base Umpire has gone out, the base umpires rotate to their **RIGHT** (*counter-clockwise*).

PRE-PITCH SIGNALS:

- **PU** points to the **plate**
- **U3** points towards **3rd**
- **U1** points towards **2nd**

SIMPLIFIED – In Reverse Rotation situations where neither BU has gone out, **U3** will generally be responsible for all plays at 2nd or 3rd on the lead runners, and **U1** will be responsible for all plays at 1st as well as the Batter-Runner into 2nd base.

REVERSE ROTATIONS APPLY WHEN:

BASES LOADED



R1, **R2**, and **R3** are on base.

R1 & R2



Runners on **1st** and **2nd**.

R1 & R3



Runners on **1st** and **3rd**.

R2 & R3 AND 2 OUTS



Runners on **2nd** and **3rd** with **2** outs.

R2 ONLY AND 2 OUTS



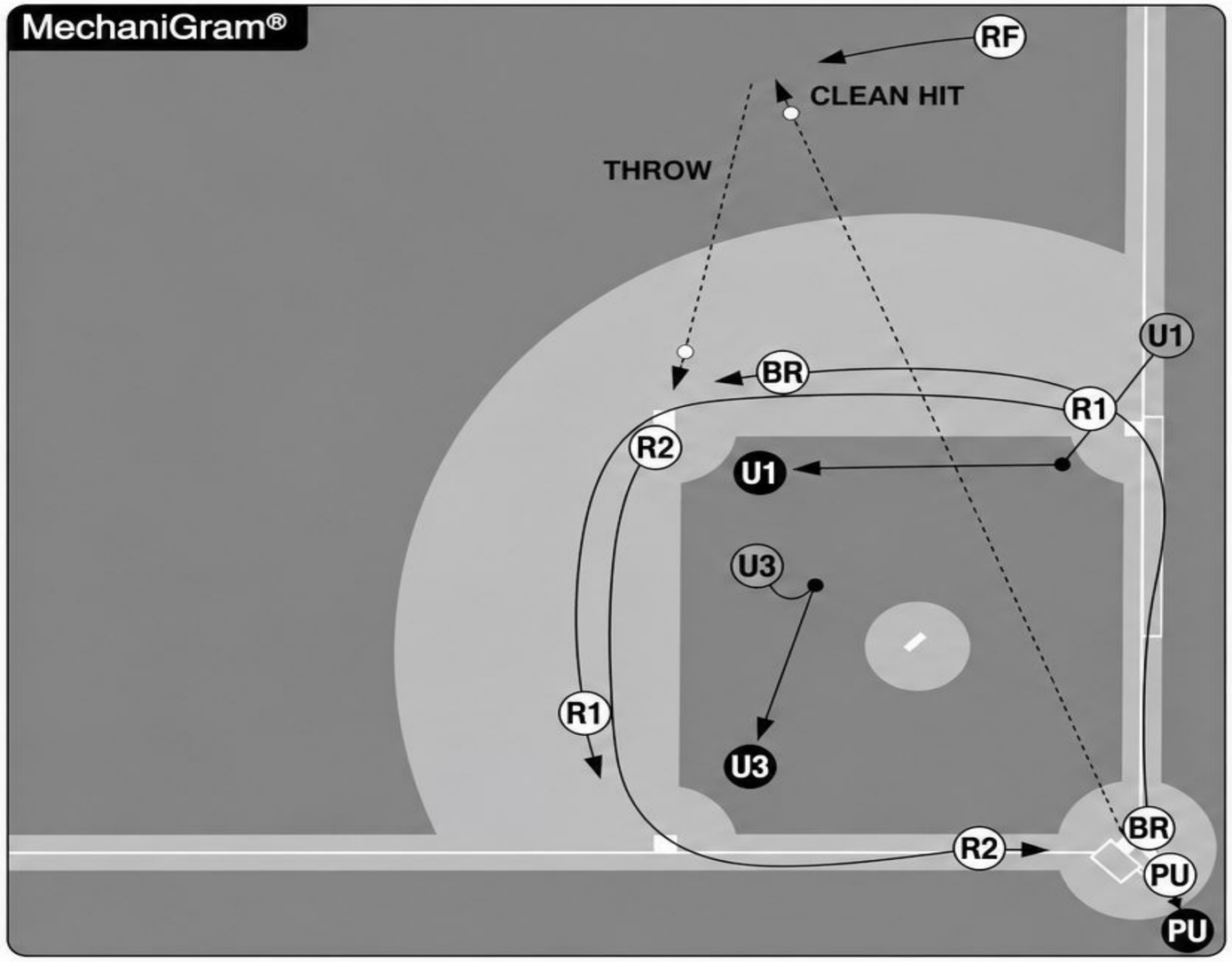
Runner on **2nd** with **2** outs.

SIMPLIFIED – If either Base Umpire goes out on a fly ball, the BU who stays inside has all plays on all runners at the bases, just like **2-MAN MECHANICS**.

ADVANCED OPTION – With 2 outs and R2 only or R2+R3, **U3** may take an initial play on the BR at 2nd base by simply holding his position.
PRE-GAME THIS if you plan to incorporate it.

8.8.3 RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

Clean Hit to Outfield



Action on the field:

Clean hit to right field, no catch; R2 advances toward the plate; R1 advances toward third base; batter-runner advances toward second base and draws a throw there.

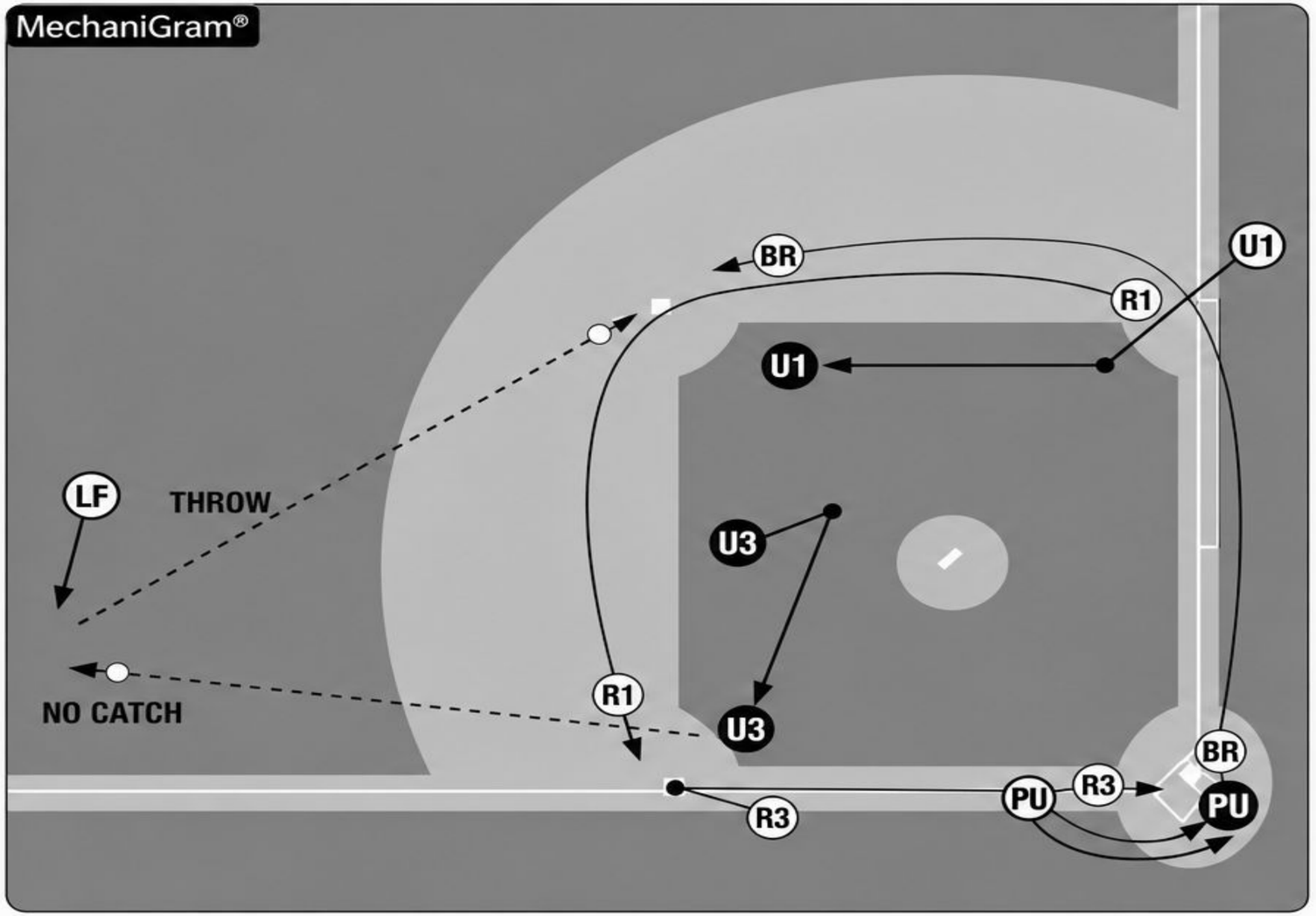
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Stays home, observes R2 touching third base and observes the plate touch of all runners. PU moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

U1: Moves into the infield and observes the batter-runner's base touch at first and has all plays on the batter-runner at first and second base.

U3: Observes the base touches of R1 at second and third base and has all plays on R1 at second and third, plus R2 and the batter-runner at third base.

Fly Ball Down Left-Field Line: No Catch



Action on the field:

Fly ball to left field, no catch; R3 advances toward the plate; R1 advances toward third base; the batter-runner advances toward second base, drawing a throw there.

Umpire responsibilities:

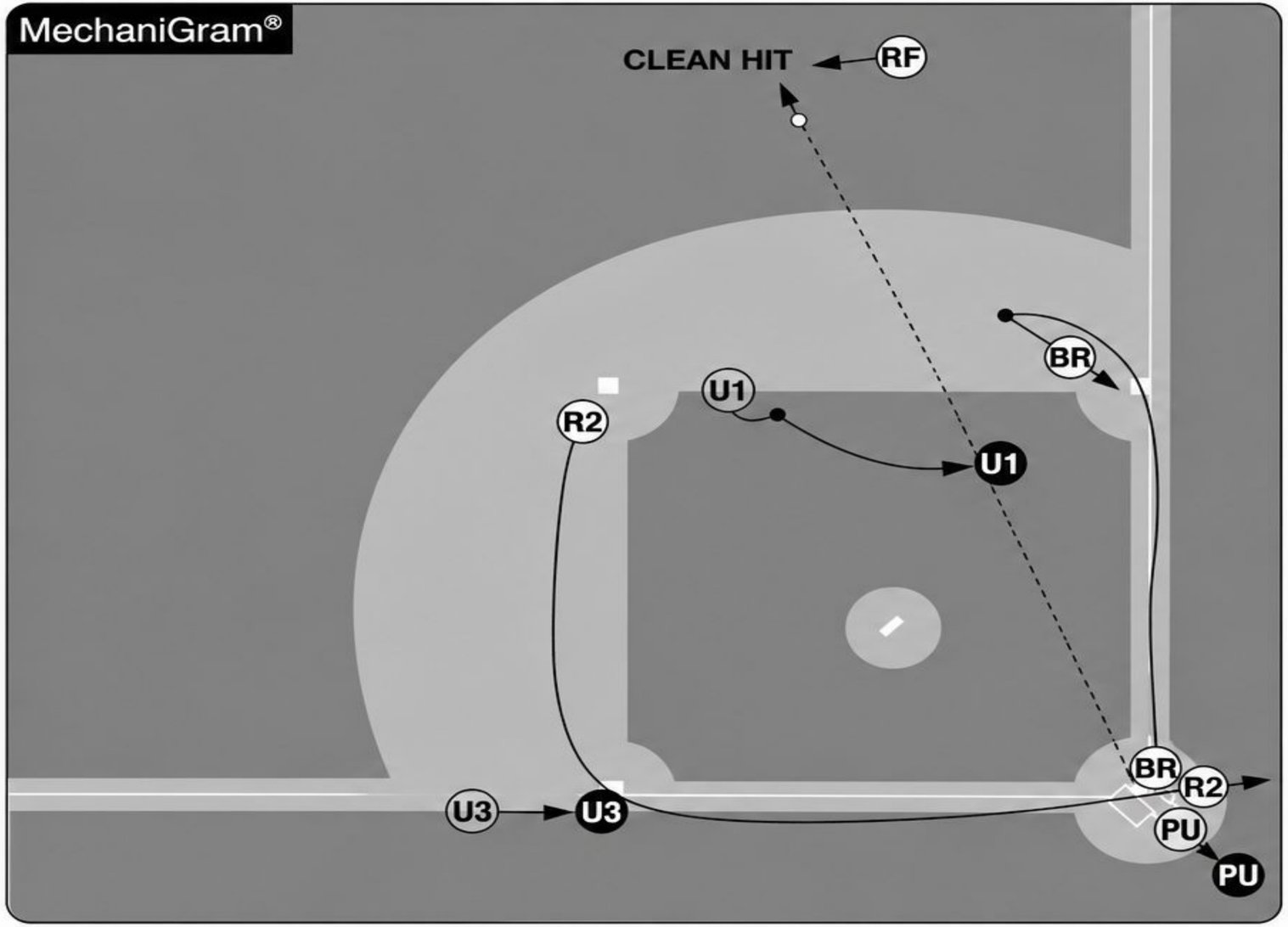
PU: Moves to the best position possible to view the fair/foul and catch/no catch. Returns home, observes the plate touch of all runners. PU moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

U1: Moves into the infield and observes the batter-runner's base touch at first and has all plays on the batter-runner at first and second base.

U3: Observes the base touches of R1 at second and third base and has all plays on R1 at second and third, plus the batter-runner at third base.

8.11.5 RUNNER ON SECOND
LESS THAN TWO OUTS

Clean Hit to Outfield



Action on the field:

Clean hit to right field; R2 advances toward the plate; the batter-runner rounds first base.

Umpire responsibilities:

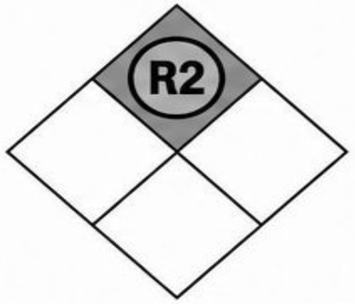
PU: Observes the plate touch of all runners and moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

U1: Observes the batter-runner's base touch at first and has all plays at first and second base.

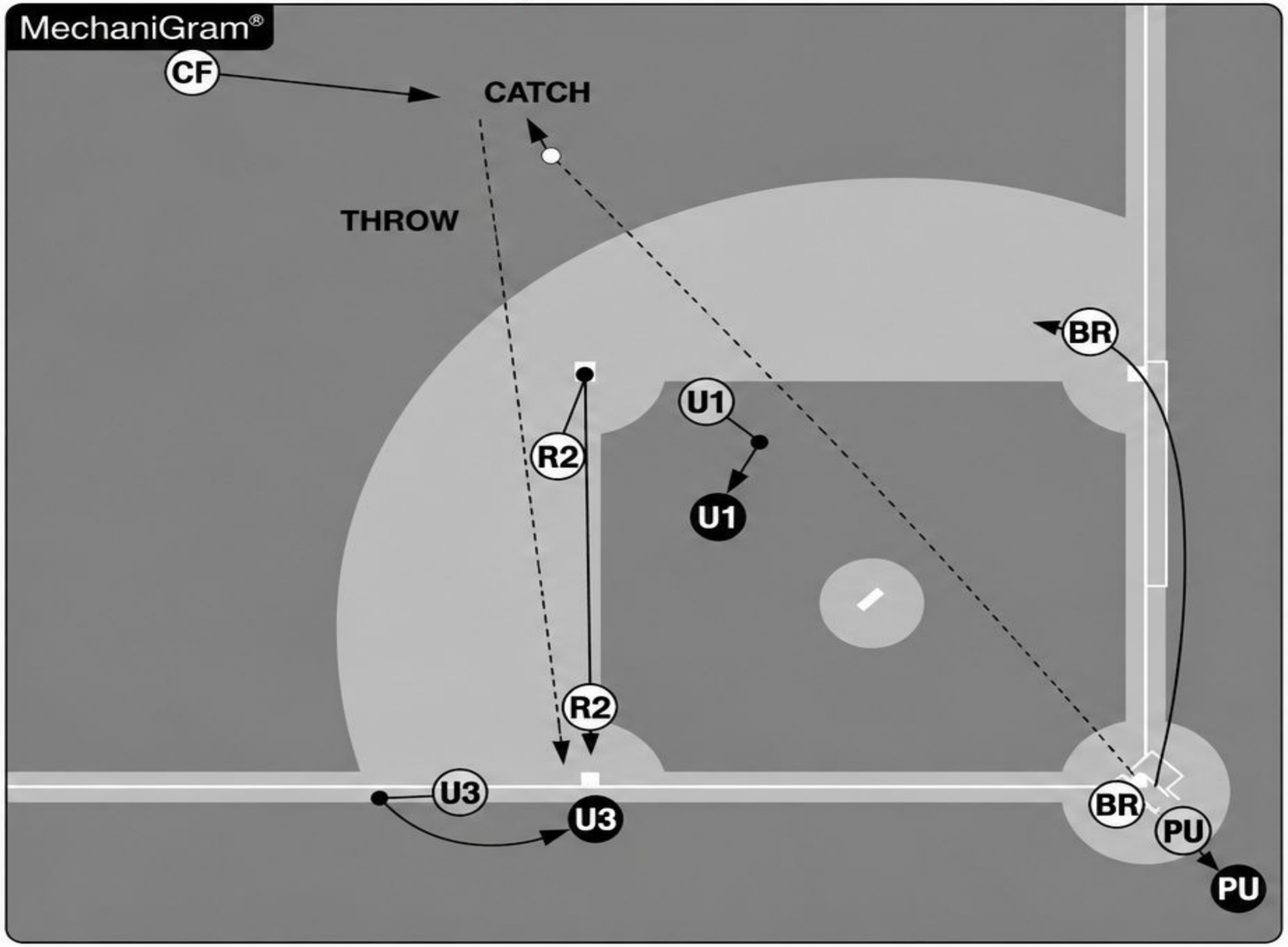
U3: Observes the base touches and has all plays at third base.

3 UMPIRES

8.11.6 RUNNER ON SECOND
LESS THAN TWO OUTS



Fly Ball to Center Field: Catch



Action on the field:

Fly ball to center field caught by the center fielder; R2 tags up and advances toward third base, drawing a throw there.

Umpire responsibilities:

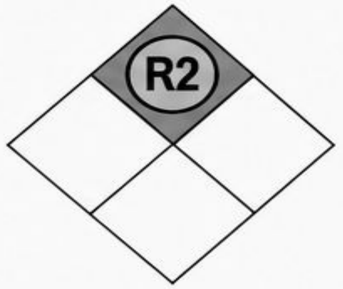
PU: Observes the touch of first base and has all plays at home.

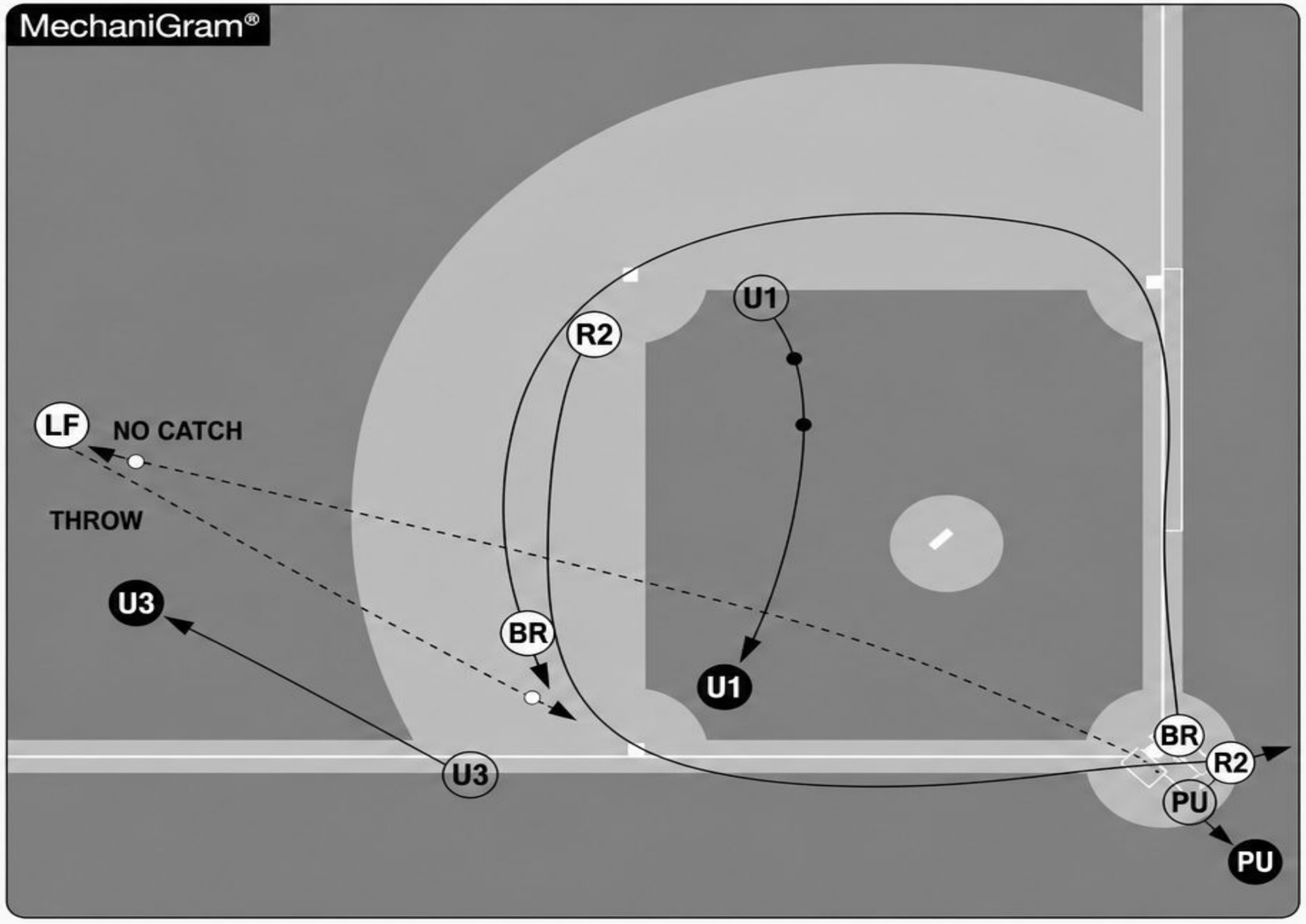
U1: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch. If the ball is not caught, U1 observes base touches at first and second and has all plays at those bases.

U3: Moves into position for the tag up of R2 at second and any play at third base. If the ball is not caught, U3 observes base touches at third base and moves into position for all plays at third base.

8.11.7 RUNNER ON SECOND LESS THAN TWO OUTS

Fly Ball to Left Field: No Catch, U3 Goes Out





Action on the field:

Fly ball to left field, no catch; U3 goes out; R2 advances toward the plate; the batter-runner advances toward third base and draws a throw there.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Remains at the plate for all plays there and has the base touch of R2 at third and all base touches at the plate.

U1: Observes the batter-runner touch first base and moves into position for all plays on R2 and the batter-runner on the bases.
If the ball is caught, U1 observes R2's potential tag up and has all plays at second and third base.

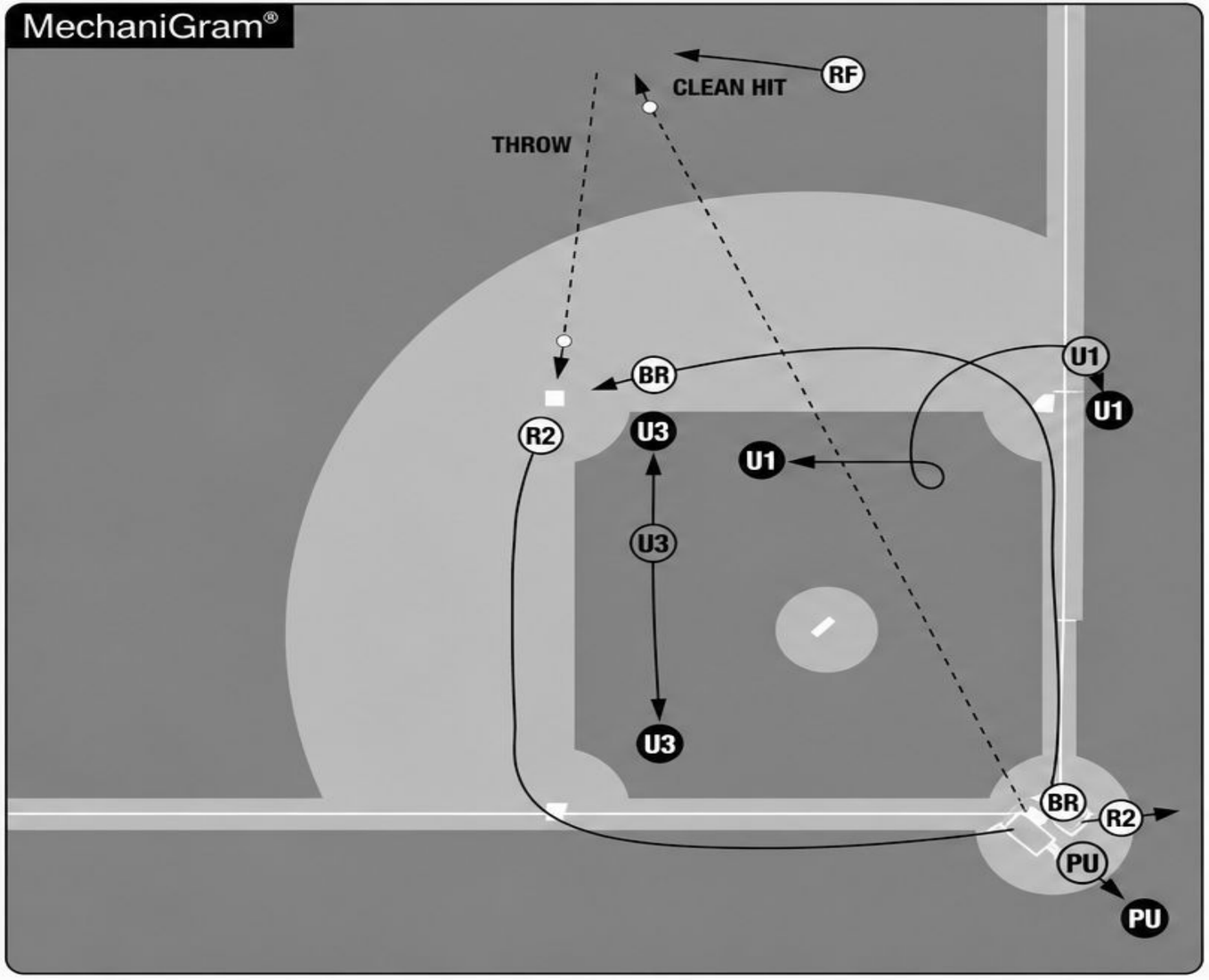
U3: Moves to the best position possible to view the catch/no catch.



ADVANCED SITUATIONS

8.11.11 RUNNER ON SECOND
TWO OUTS ONLY

Clean Hit to the Outfield



Action on the field:

With two outs, a clean hit to right field. R2 advances toward home. BR advances toward second base.

Umpire responsibilities®

PU: Stays home, observes the plate touch of all runners. PU moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

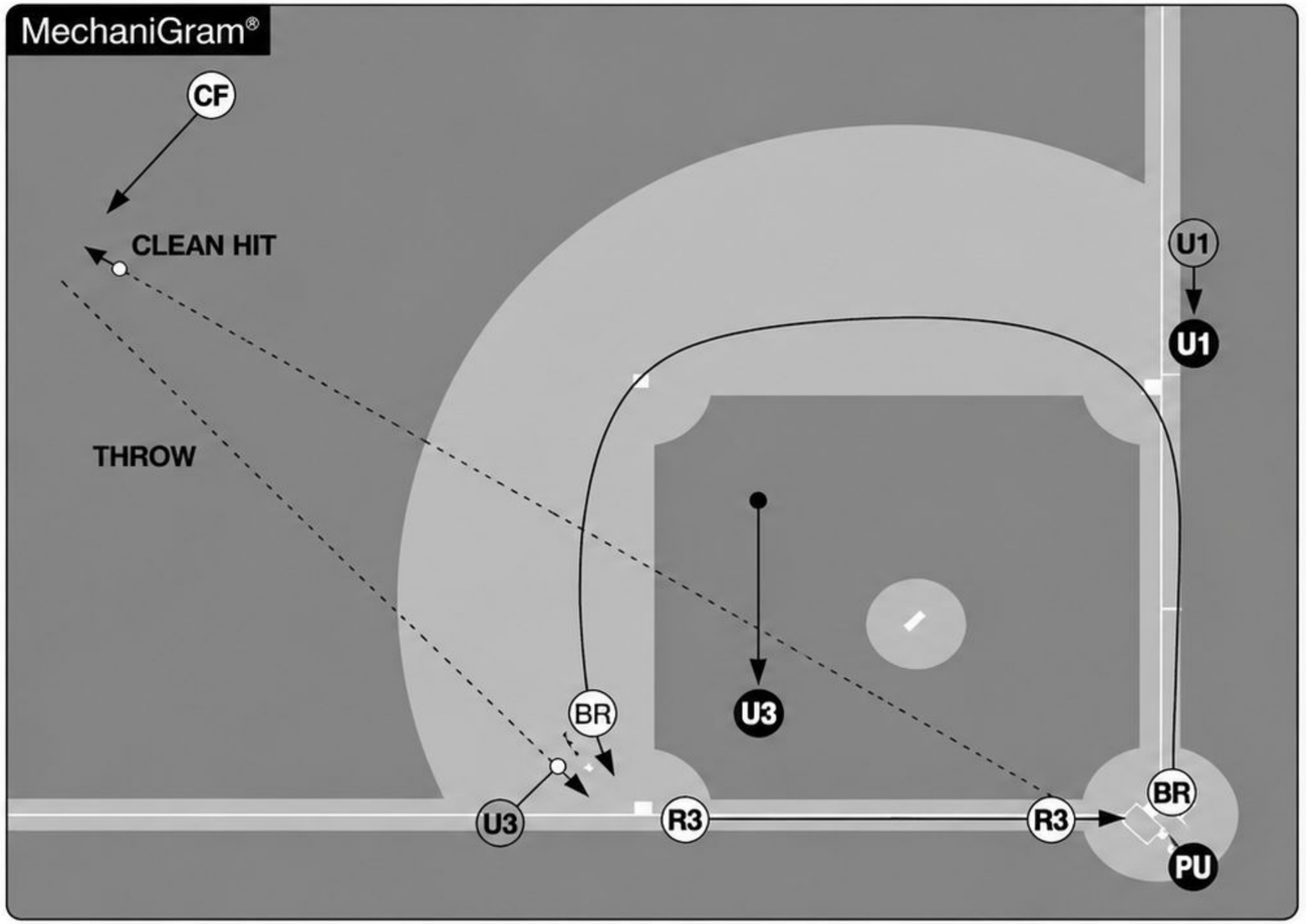
U1: Observes BR touching first base. There is no rotation on this play. By conference adoption, move in the direction of the coaches box down the first base line for plays on the batter runner back into first.

U3: Responsible for plays at second or third base which will be dictated by the movements of U1 on this play.

Note: By conference adoption, U1 has the option of either dropping down into foul territory in the direction of the first base coaches box or move into the diamond in the direction of second base. This decision should be made based on the likelihood of R2 scoring and the possible position of the BR at the end of the play either staying at first or advancing to second base. It is imperative that U1 communicate with U3 pre-pitch the two coverage options, and after the ball is put in play, which of the two coverage options U1 has decided on.

8.13.1 RUNNER ON THIRD

Clean Hit to Outfield



Action on the field:

Clean hit deep to left-center field, no catch; R3 advances toward the plate; the batter-runner advances toward third base, drawing a throw there.

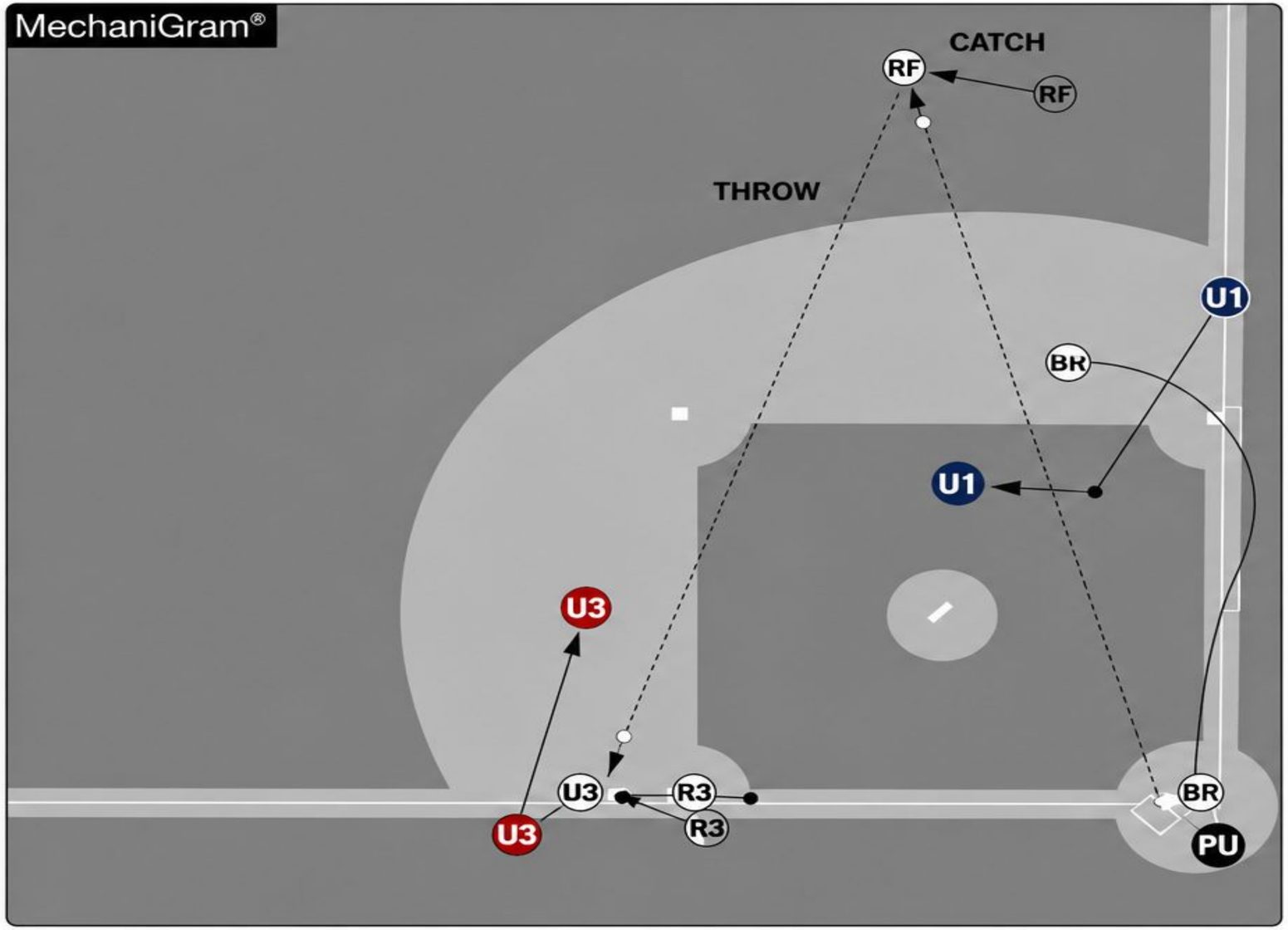
Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Stays home, observes the plate touch of all runners. PU moves to a position to rule on all plays at the plate.

U1: Observes base touch at first base.

U3: Enters the infield and has all plays on the batter-runner at second and third base.

Fly Ball to Right-Center Field: U1 Does Not Go Out



Action on the field:

Fly ball to right field, caught by the right fielder; U1 does not go out; R3 tags up, advances a few steps toward the plate, then returns to third base, drawing a throw there.

Umpire responsibilities:

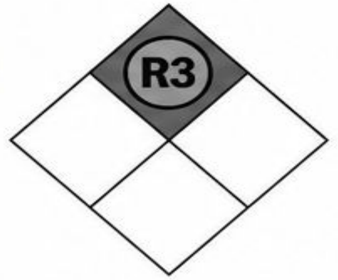
PU: Moves into a position to observe R3's tag up at third base.
PU returns to the plate for any play there.

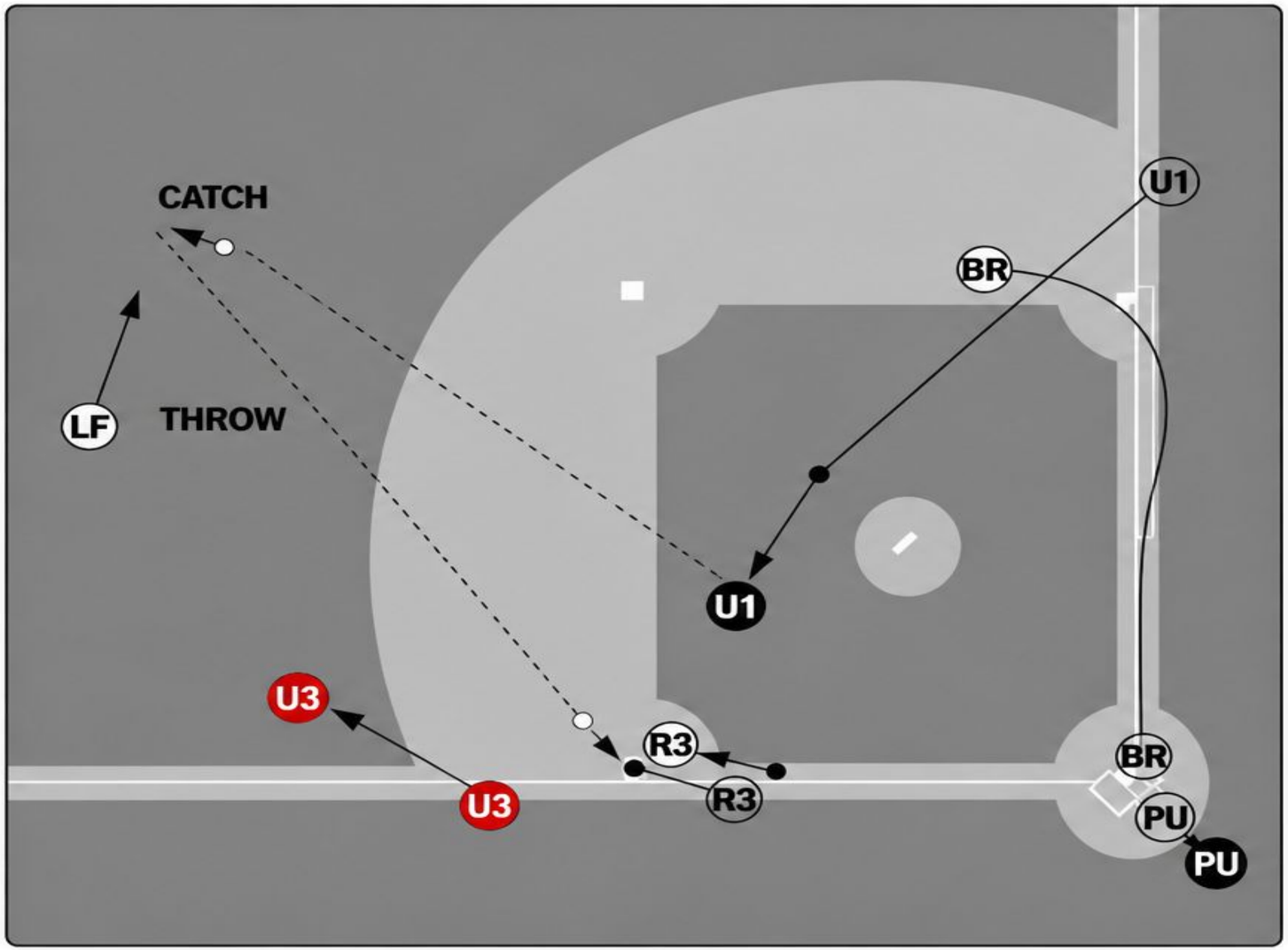
U1: Makes a quick decision on going out or coming into the infield.
U1 moves into the middle of the diamond and takes all plays on the batter-runner at first or second should the ball get dropped. U1 may stay outside of first base on a non-trouble fly ball to right field to be in a better position for plays back into first base on batter-runner.

U3: Immediately moves into the infield to guard against U1 going out on trouble. Responsible for any play back into third involving R3, plays on the batter-runner at third, and at all bases including a play back into first.

BOTH: Read the play, read your partner.

Fly Ball to Left-Center Field: U3 Goes Out





Action on the field:

Fly ball to left-center field caught by the left fielder; U3 goes out; R3 tags up, advances a few steps toward the plate, then returns to third base, drawing a throw there.

Umpire responsibilities:

PU: Moves into a position to observe R3's tag up at third base. PU returns to the plate for any play there.

U1: Moves into position directly behind the pitcher's mound. U1 moves into position for all plays and touches on the bases, including any play at third base on R3.

U3: Goes out and rules on the catch/no catch. U3 is responsible for the catch whether he goes out or stays in and lines up the tag.

BOTH: Read the play, read your partner.

UNIFORM SHIRT REQUIREMENTS

- **“Required” standard:**
  - MLB black with gray side panels
- **“Acceptable” alt’s (Rd 1 & 2 only):**
  - MLB blue w/ black sides
  - New MLB black/blue shirt (allowed through 1st & 2nd playoff rounds only)
  - Black/Blue single stripe still acceptable.

    But NOT for playoffs.

➢ **CIF Patches no longer required**



USEFUL LINKS

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NFHS Digital
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RULE BOOKS & PRE SEASON GUIDE

https://store.referee.com/baseball-digital-versions

NFHS WEBSITE

https://nfhs.org/sports/baseball

UMP ATTIRE

https://www.ump-attire.com/index.html