**MROS Plate & Base Umpire Mechanics**

**Mechanics Implementation Summary**

The MROS Mechanics Committee has implemented the following umpire mechanics for both plate and base umpires using a 2 Umpire System. Any deviations from our mechanics MUST be communicated in our pregame discussion. Our mechanics are considered standard across the country, documented in the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Softball Umpires Manual, the training class will have a basis in which to umpire with MROS.

**General Mechanics for fastpitch softball:**

* The plate umpire initiates all signals ie. Infield fly, the count, outs, timing plays.
* The plate umpire shall take a position in the slot between the batter and catcher.

 

* The base umpire shall start on the foul line 18 – 21 feet behind first base in foul territory. They can either walk the line or be in the ready position at the time of the pitch.
	+ Walking the line by taking one or two steps toward home plate, pushing off with your foot furthest from the foul line to move into fair territory when the ball is batted. Umpires should stay upright throughout the entire process to allow for quicker movement, smooth transition and maximize your field of view.
* An umpire shall never move to their next position while looking at their indicator.
	+ Move to your next spot with your eyes on ball, pitcher, or runner depending on your position.
	+ Verify your indicator accuracy once you get to your next spot after verifying all other action.
* Once the ball is back in the pitcher’s possession within the circle and after making eye contact with each other, the base umpire shall rotate.
	+ The plate umpire will watch all subsequent action in the infield until the base umpire reaches their next position.
	+ Once the base umpire has reached their next position, they shall make eye contact with the plate umpire so they can rotate back behind the plate.
	+ This mechanic ensures there is at least one set of eyes on the infield during umpire rotation.
* Time shall be called by raising both hands above the shoulder with palms facing outward.
	+ If the plate umpire is delaying the pitcher from pitching, one hand will be used. Righted handed batter, use the right hand while holing up the pitcher. Left handed batter, use the left hand. This allows the pitcher to clearly see the plate umpire with the batter being in the way.
* The final calling distance should be 10’ to 12’ from the play.

**2 Umpire Mechanics**

* Plate umpire shall rule on all fail/foul balls.
	+ Exception is when the base umpire is in A position and a ball is hit between the right fielder and the foul line. Once the base umpire turns their back to the infield, the fair/foul call is theirs.
	+ The plate umpire will have responsibility for any plays at 2nd, 3rd, or home.
	+ Once the ball is returned to the infield, the base umpire shall turn back and view the remaining action. They can have an opinion on any call, but the final call stays with the plate umpire.
* Base Umpire shall have all "first plays" from the infield at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd base.
	+ With no base runners, batter hits a triple, base umpire has the call at 3rd.
* Plate Umpire has any subsequent (2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.) plays from the infield at 3rd base and all plays from the outfield at 3rd base on all base runners (except the batter-runner), as well as the plate on all runners.
* Base Umpire is responsible for all calls on the batter-runner at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd base, as well as all other base runners at 1st and 2nd unless the umpire has chased a fly ball to the outfield.
* On any overthrows at first base, the base umpire has responsibility for the runner. The plate umpire will have responsibility for the ball.
* Any deviations of these mechanics MUST be discussed in our pregame discussion.

**Scenario: Routine Infield Play to 1st base**

 **(Ref Page 41 of NFHS Softball Umpires Manual)**

*From A Position (No Runners On):*

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* Plate umpire - Trail the batter-runner no more than 1/3 of the way to 1B in fair territory and read the play. Responsible for any play at the plate.
* Base umpire - Step into the fair territory, at an angle 90 degrees to the path of the throw, no more than a 45 degree angle from the foul line and let the ball take you to the play. Responsible for any play at 1B, 2B or 3B.
* On overthrows at 1st base, the Base Umpire will be responsible for the batter-runner and make all calls (including obstruction) at 1st base, 2nd base, and 3rd base on the batter-runner.
* Responsibility for the overthrown ball will primarily lie with the Plate Umpire, but the Base Umpire will be able to take an initial look as well since most overthrows into dead ball territory happen immediately after the ball passes over the 1st baseman. If the overthrown ball is not immediately dead and the runner takes off for 2nd base, the Base Umpire will retain responsibility for the runner and mirror their advancement to 2nd base and 3rd base.
* Once the overthrown ball is clear of any possible blocked ball or dead ball possibility, the Plate Umpire should move to their holding zone to assist on any possible calls at 3rd base or, if a play at home is imminent, move to a calling position at the plate.
* This mechanic allows uniformity amongst all overthrow scenarios, regardless of where the Base Umpire's starting position is (A, B, or C Position… we would never expect a Base Umpire in C Position to “stay with the ball” on an overthrown ball at 1st base and have the Plate Umpire take the batter-runner to 2nd base). If we trust the umpires’ ability to make the “dead ball” call when the Base Umpire is in C Position and is not “staying with the ball,” we can also trust them when the Base Umpire is in A Position and taking the runner to 2nd. Remember: both umpires should always know ball status (location, loose ball/in a fielder’s possession, and live/dead ball) by taking quick looks at the ball to ensure they are avoiding throwing lanes. By knowing ball status, neither umpire should miss a dead ball on an overthrow.

This mechanic now aligns MROS with the NFHS Softball Umpires Manual.

**2 Umpire System Mechanic Scenario: Routine play base hit to the outfield (Ref Page 39 & 41 of NFHS Softball Umpires Manual)**

 **From A Position (No Runners On):**

* Plate umpire will trail the batter approximately 1/3 of the way up the first base line.
* The base umpire will have to read the play to determine if they are going to run the rim or button hook inside the baseline. Either mechanic is acceptable.
	+ If running the rim, the base umpire should move parallel with the runner, mirroring their movement to 2nd base or back to 1st base. Do NOT immediately run toward 2nd base or run ahead of the runner. Run parallel with the runner’s movement.
	+ If the decision to button hook is made, the base umpire must come inside the diamond prior to the batter/runner rounding 1st base. This will us to keep all elements in front of us and be in position to make the call at 2nd base.
* When mirroring the batter-runner's movement to 2nd base, cut inside the diamond behind the batter-runner to get an inside path on the batter-runner going to 3rd base, or to make a call on the batter-runner rounding and retreating back to 2nd base, or to make a call on the runner sliding into 2nd base if the throw is coming from right field to keep both the ball and runner in view and stay out of the throwing lane.
* Base Umpire shall be responsible for the batter-runner from 1st base (including obstruction, throwbacks to 1st, etc.) all the way around to 3rd base.
* Plate Umpire will only be responsible for plays on the batter-runner at the plate.
* Plate Umpire can assist the Base Umpire at 3rd base and make the call if the Base Umpire gets trapped or can't get into position in time.
	+ This shall be discussed in the pregame.
	+ When the plate umpire takes responsibility for the call at 3rd base, they shall verbalize “I have 3rd” so their partner can hear them.

This mechanic now aligns MROS with the NFHS Softball Umpires Manual. From B or C Position (Runners on Base):

**Scenario: No one on, hard base hit between the 1st base and 2nd base to the right fielder**

* Plate umpire - Trail the batter-runner no more than 1/3 of the way to 1B in fair territory and read the play.
* Base umpire – Will take several steps to their left into foul territory (towards the first base coaches’ box). This allows them to keep all elements of the play in front. They will get a 45 degree angle on the throw from the right fielder and be able to track the ball during the throw.
* Plate umpire – Once they read the base umpire is moving in foul territory for the play at 1st, they shall be prepared to make the call at any plays at 2nd or 3rd base.
* If there is a play at 3rd base, it will be the plate umpire’s responsibility.
* Once the base umpire reads the plate umpire going to 3rd base for the play, they should verbalize they have the any subsequent plays at the plate.
	+ This needs to be discussed in pregame.
	+ Any call at home will be the plate umpire’s responsibility unless they hear and see the base umpire at home.

**Scenario: Foul/Fair Ball Calls Down the Right Field Line**

 **(Ref Page 40 & 41 of NFHS Softball Umpires Manual)**

 *From A Position (No Runners On):*

* Plate Umpire has general responsibility for making foul/fair calls down the foul lines.
* As always, if the Base Umpire turns their back and begins chasing the ball to the outfield, they are responsible for making the call. Plate umpire will then assume responsibility for all subsequent calls at all bases.
* The “Point-and-Go” mechanic can be utilized by the Base Umpire only in A Position in the event that a ball is hit sharply down the right field line. The Base Umpire will turn and straddle the line, make the fair/foul call and, if fair, will point fair and continue with base responsibilities taking the batter-runner from 1st base to 3rd base. This is designed for hard-hit line drives down the right field line that land well in advance of the batter-runner reaching 1st base, where the Base Umpire has plenty of time to make the fair/foul call and get in position to take the runner around the bases. This allows us to keep 2 umpires on the bases to make calls on the batter runner, which is always preferable. Note: not all hits down the foul line will allow the use of Point-and-Go. The Base Umpire must use good judgment in determining if the ball is sharply hit enough and will allow them time to use this mechanic.

**Scenario: Fly Ball Tag-Up Responsibilities**

 **(Ref Page 40 Table of NFHS Softball Umpires Manual)**

 *Runner on 1st Base Only:*

* Plate Umpire has catch responsibility on the fly ball.
* Base Umpire has tag-up responsibility at 1st base.

*Runner on 2nd Base Only:*

* Plate Umpire has catch responsibility on the fly ball.
* Base Umpire has tag-up responsibility at 2nd base.

 *Runner on 3rd Base Only:*

* Plate Umpire has tag-up responsibility at 3rd base.
* Base Umpire has responsibility for the batter-runner.

 *Runners on 1st and 2nd Bases:*

* Plate Umpire has tag-up responsibility at 2nd base.
* Base Umpire has tag-up responsibility at 1st base.

*Runners on 1st & 3rd Bases:*

* Plate Umpire has tag-up responsibility at 3rd base.
* Base Umpire has tag-up responsibility at 1st base.

*Runners on 2nd & 3rd Bases:*

* Plate Umpire has tag-up responsibility at 3rd base.
* Base Umpire has tag-up responsibility at 2nd base.

*Bases Loaded:*

* Plate Umpire has tag-up responsibility at 3rd base.
* Base Umpire has tag-up responsibilities at 1st and 2nd base.

**Scenario: Use of the Wedge Concept for Tag Plays at the Plate and on the Bases**

• Use of the “Wedge” concept will provide umpires with the ability to obtain the best position and view of any potential tag play.

• Plate Umpire should move to the position that will create a view where the umpire can see the space between the runner and the fielder, keying off the fielder’s movement.

• The runner’s base line extended is often the optimal angle for the “Wedge,” but it is flexible depending on where both the fielder and the runner are positioned during the play.

• Recommended to stay behind and just off the left hip of the fielder, rotating as she does. • Follow the fielder around keying on the movement of her left hip. This enables the umpire to continually see the “Wedge” between the sliding runner and the fielder making the tag.

 **• Wedge Video Link: www.mros-va.org/training-videos**