

SECTION 2 RUNNER ON FIRST BASE ONLY

- 2.1** The first base umpire will position himself/herself 6-8 feet beyond the first base bag with both feet in foul territory for the pick-off play at first base. You should be close enough to make the decision on a pick off without moving into the play.
- 2.2** The third base umpire will move into the center of the infield and assume a position on either side of second base that is most comfortable for him/her to take the steal play at second base. (Normally you will set up on the side of second base opposite the pitching arm. However, it is left up to you as to which side you are most comfortable in taking the steal play.) You will never be on the outfield side of the bag, always on the inside of the infield.
- 2.3** If the runner on first is picked off, the infield umpire will have that part of the rundown going into second base and any subsequent play into third base. The first base umpire should move toward second base as the runner continues on to third base and assume responsibility for the back end of a possible rundown between second and third base. The first base umpire should not commit toward second until after the runner has gained possession of second base since the runner over rounding second and returning is the responsibility of the third base umpire.
- 2.4** With a runner on first base only, if the first base umpire goes out for any reason, the infield umpire should slide over toward first base and assume full responsibility for the runner on first base and also have responsibility should the batter become a runner. The plate umpire should go down to third base and take the play on the runner coming from first base, and if that runner continues on to home plate, the plate umpire will also have that responsibility. In this situation it is also permissible for the plate umpire to move up the first base line to take any play at first base on the runner returning after a fly ball or line drive is caught.
- 2.5** With a runner on first base only, if the first base umpire does not go out to the outfield, then on a base hit, after the batter-runner touches first base, the first base umpire will start to move in the direction of home. The infield umpire, after watching the runner on first touch second and seeing that he/she has **committed** to third, will assume responsibility for the batter-runner going to second or returning to first base. The plate umpire will move in the direction of third base and will go into the cutout if there is any likelihood that the runner from first will advance to third on the batted ball. If it is obvious that the runner will not advance to third, it is not necessary for the plate umpire to go all the way to third. If the plate umpire does move into the cutout, he/she will remain at third base until all action has ceased. After the first base umpire has watched the batter-runner touch first and has seen the runner on first **committed** to third base, he/she will come to the plate for any play on the runner from first coming to the plate. However, if the runner originally on first does not go to third base, the first base umpire cannot over-commit to the plate and will have the responsibility for the batter-runner returning to first base. As the first base umpire, do not commit to home until the runner from first has committed to third.

- 2.6** With a runner on first base only, if the infield umpire goes out for any reason, you will revert back to the two-umpire system.
- 2.7** With a runner on first base only, the responsibility of catch or no catch of fly balls and line drives to the outfield belongs to the infield umpire. If the ball is hit down the right field foul line or if the ball is hit where the right fielder comes straight in, then the catch/no catch responsibility belongs to the first base umpire. If the ball is hit where the left field moves any distance toward the foul line, then the catch/no catch responsibility belongs to the plate umpire.

(Note that some crews prefer to have the first base umpire cover all fly balls and line drives from the center fielder straight in all the way to the right field line. The infield umpire would then take the center fielder moving to his/her right all the way to the left fielder moving straight in. The plate umpire would take the left fielder moving to his/her right. These are also acceptable mechanics for fly ball-line drive coverage with a runner on first base only.)