

# Players and Coaches Playbook

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## OFFENSIVE ROUTINE

Go through this routine once with your entire team during pre-season training and follow up as needed throughout the season.

**Starting with the bench, tell your players what to look for. Have your entire team sit on the bench when you go over these.**

- Watch the pitcher warm up prior to the game.
- Be alert to all play situations so that you will know what to look for in the way of signs and plays when you step into the batter's box.
- Study the pitcher's every move so that you will be prepared to get the proper jump to advance a base.
- Study the qualifications of all your opponents. Do the outfielders on the other team have good throwing arms?
- Let your players know what to look for during the game while sitting on the bench.

It is important to eliminate confusion in the mind of the player and enable him to focus his attention on the proper thing at the proper time.

**Next, take all your players to the on-deck circle.**

- Know position of the baserunners so you can get the mask and bat out of the way in the event of a close play at the plate. Get on the first base side of the plate so the runner can see your signal to stand up or slide. It is important to be in the runner's line of vision since crowd noise may make it impossible for a word sign to be heard.
- Watch the pitcher to check on type of pitches he is throwing. Always be on the lookout for any movements or mannerism by the catcher, pitcher, shortstop, or second baseman that may tip off signs.
- Be aware of possible play situations and be ready to take signs when you get to the batter's box.
- Know the hitter that follows you.

**Next, take your team to the batter's box**

- How many outs are there? What is the inning? What is the play situation? Is the infield in? Do we have men on first, second, or third bases, or on all bases?
- Am I going to bunt, hit and run, hit the ball to the right side? Will a fly ball score an important run? What type of pitch do I need to execute the play?
- With all of the above points in mind, next look for the sign. Do not stare at the coach and immediately attempt to execute the play. This is a dead give away and permits opponents to steal your signs. Stay focused on the coach until he finishes giving the signs.
- Run hard on every batted ball from home to first. Make sure you touch first even on plays where you are thrown out; the first baseman may drop the ball.
- Run through first base at least five yards past the bag and slow down gradually to prevent muscle injuries.
- On wild throws to first be aware of the catcher and second baseman backing up the play. Listen for the coach to help you, but be aware of the possibility to take second.
- When the ball is hit to the outfield, make the turn as if every ball is a potential extra base hit.
- Do not make wide sweeping turns but develop the ability to cut the base short, hitting with the inside foot if possible. (Do not alter your stride to hit with the inside foot.)
- On balls to the left side of the infield, help yourself with the turn possibility by glancing to see if the ball has gone through the infield.

**Take your team to first base.**

- Find the ball. How many outs are there? Is the pitcher on the rubber? Does he have a good move? Where are the outfielders playing the hitter? Will the ball be on his glove hand side or throwing side?
- Stay on the bag while getting the sign.
- What type of lead should be taken? The situation will dictate the aggressiveness of the runner's lead. Run the situation through your mind.
- Know your ability for specific types of leads. Players' leads will be of different distances depending on individual quickness and agility.

**Take your team to second base.**

- Assess the situation. The game situation may have changed in regard to number of outs and defensive alignment.
- Does this team have any trick pick-off plays? Does the catcher like to throw behind baserunners and does he have a strong arm?
- How important is my run? Am I the tying or potential winning run?
- Get the sign from the coach; he might want you to steal third.
- What am I going to do on a short passed ball? Will I be able to take a chance to get to third?
- If first base is not occupied with less than two outs I have to be careful on trying to advance with the ball hit to the left side.

**Take your team to third base.**

- What is the situation? Is the infield in? Does the coach want me to go on any ground ball or make the ball go through?
- Tag up on all fly balls and line drives to the outfield. What type of fly balls will I have to stay on instead of tagging?
- Make sure I know what to do on the double steal—go or stay. Will the runner breaking for second be holding up? What kind of steal is on—delay or straight?
- With runners on second and third and one out the runners should be advancing on ground balls.

## PITCHING CYCLE

- Station #1    Ground ball to mound---force play at home  
                 Shuffle toss to plate---squeeze play  
                 Cover home on short passed ball
- Station #2    Holding runners---Slide step
- Station #3    Ground balls to first base---Cover first  
                 In between play
- Station #4    Bunts down first---Throw to first  
                 Bunts down third---Throw to third  
                 Ground balls to mound---Throw to first
- Pepper        Between Fields #2 and #3
- Bull Pen      Throwing on side as determined by pitching instructor.

\*\*Rotation for the cycle stations:

Station #1  
Bull Pen  
Pepper  
Station #2  
Station #3  
Station #4

\*Change shirts after throwing in bullpen and before reporting to pepper area.

During the cycle, all catchers will be in the bullpen unless listed above on a specific situation.

All position players will be in the batting cage unless listed above on a specific situation.

## FIELDING DRILLS FOR PITCHER

### COVERING FIRST BASE:

- Hit ball to first baseman with pitcher covering first.
- In between play—Pitcher calls the play “I got it” if he can make the play. “Take it” if he wants the first baseman to handle the play.
- Double play ball to first baseman. Pitcher goes direct to the bag and takes throw from SS. First baseman will let the pitcher know if he can get back to the bag.

### BUNT PLAYS:

- Bunts down first and third with throw to first.
- Bunts back to mound with force at second.
- Bunts down third with force at third.

### GROUND BALLS TO MOUND:

- Ground balls with throw to first base.
- Ground balls with throw to second for force.
- Double play balls with throw to second.

### SPECIAL SITUATION PLAYS:

- Squeeze bunts to mound; shuffle toss to plate.
- Cover home on short passed ball.
- High choppers off plate with throw to first.

### SLIDE STEP SEQUENCES:

- Back off
- Throw over to first
- Slide step
- Pitch out

### PICK OFF MOVES:

- Throw to first
  - Man on first
  - Men on first and second or bases loaded
- Throws to second
  - Second baseman covering
  - Shortstop covering

## PICK OFF PLAYS

- Man on second---Pick off with shortstop. Play initiated by pitcher or shortstop with a sign. Pitcher comes set and looks at second base. Shortstop moves in behind the runner and flashes glove before breaking for the bag. Pitcher turns on flash of glove.
  - The shortstop must shorten the distance before moving on the runner. Also, give the pitcher a chance to zero in on the shortstop before breaking for the bag.
  - Pitcher should come to the set position before looking at the shortstop. Don't swing head to look at shortstop as you are coming to the set.
- Man on second---Pick off with second baseman. Play initiated by pitcher or second baseman with a sign. Pitcher comes to set and looks at second base. Turns head to pick up plate and second baseman breaks for the base on the head turn. When pitcher's head hits home he turns to throw to second.
  - Timing of head turn is the key to execution. Some pitchers have faster head turns than others. Emphasize the head turn should be a deliberate and steady process.
- Runners on first and second or bases loaded---Pick off with first baseman. Play initiated by pitcher or first baseman. Pitcher comes set and checks runner at second base. Pitcher keys off first baseman breaking to bag (RHP). First baseman breaks off LHP's leg pick up.

*INSIST THAT PITCHERS AND INFELDERS PUT ON PICK OFF PLAYS.  
LET'S GIVE THE CATCHERS A BETTER CHANCE AT THROWING OUT BASE  
STEALERS BY HOLDING OPPOSING RUNNERS CLOSE.*

## DEFENSE AGAINST THE DOUBLE STEAL

- Three situations to work on: Runners on first and third.
  - Throw through to second, shortstop and/or second baseman takes the throw and reads the runner at third.
  - Throw back to the pitcher. Pitcher cuts ball off and checks runner at third. React as play develops.
  - Throw directly to third. Can be done by directly going to third or faking to second and throwing to third. Throw the ball—do not hold it!

## RUNDOWN PLAY

- Make the runner commit himself. Most baseball coaches through the years tell players to run an offensive player back to the base he came from. This is not always possible and many times leads to unnecessary throws. Execute rundowns with the least number of throws possible.
  - The chase man runs the runner hard and tags him if he can.
  - The receiver moves forward and calls for the ball when he determines the runner cannot stop and get away from him.
  - Both chaser and receiver should line up on the same side of the runner.
  - The key to execution is timing; chaser makes the runner commit and the receiver cuts down the distance.
  - Player chasing runner should hold the ball at shoulder level of throwing arm. Once he releases the ball make sure to get out of the runner's way so as not to cause an obstruction.

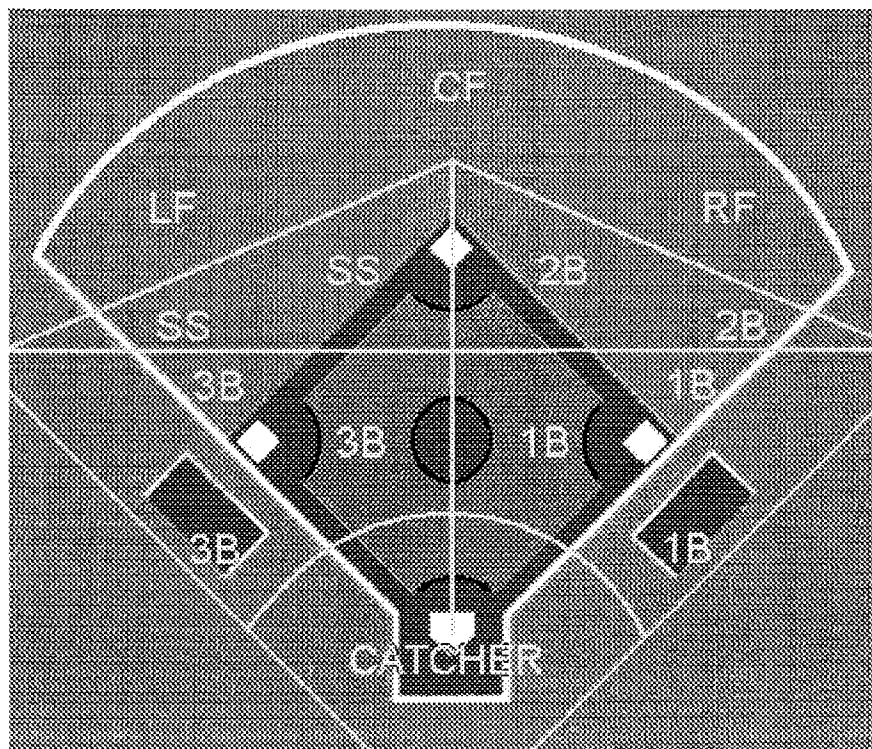
### RUNDOWN SITUATIONS TO WORK ON:

- Pitcher picks off man at first base. Pitcher follows throw to cover first until catcher gets into the play. Catcher must stay home if other bases are occupied. Shortstop should be the receiver from the first baseman in most instances.
- Ground ball to pitcher---Trap man off second. Pitcher cuts runner off from third if possible. Give ball to third baseman if necessary and back up third.
- Man on third---Ground ball to drawn in infield. When runner holds up before reaching home the third baseman must come down the line to shorten the distance. He needs to take the return throw from the catcher quickly to keep the batter-runner from reaching second.

*A GOOD OFFENSIVE RUNNER WHO IS TRAPPED BETWEEN BASES WILL TRY AND GAIN TIME FOR HIMSELF AND/OR OTHER RUNNERS BY GETTING IN "NO MAN'S LAND" AND JOCKEYING FOR POSITION. DEFENSIVELY, DO NOT LET HIM DO THIS!*



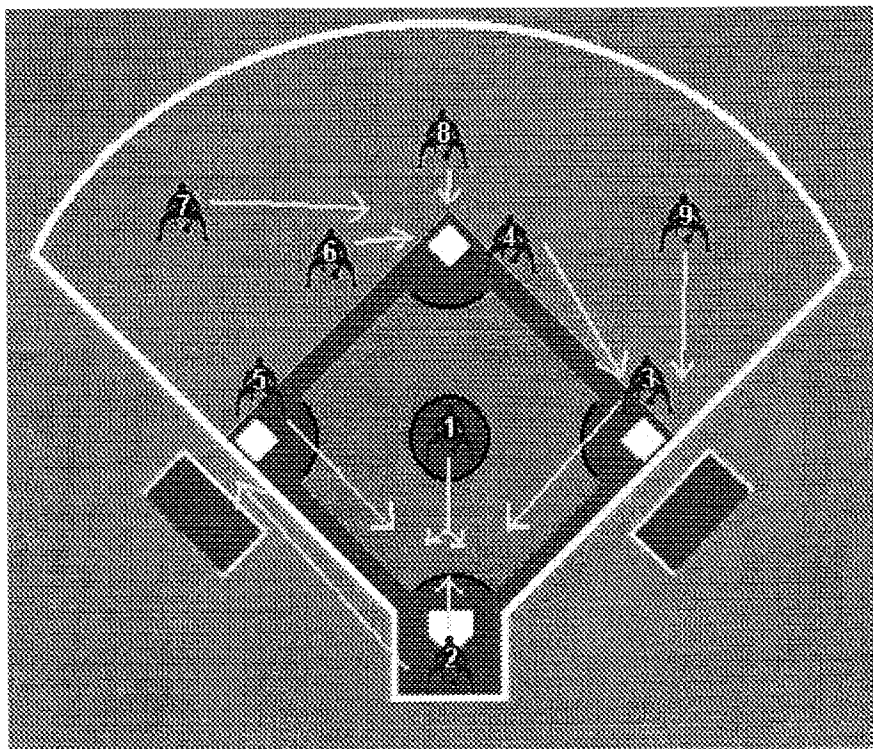
## POP FLY PRIORITY



- All outfielders have priority over infielders.
- Shortstop has priority over 3B, 2B, and 1B.
- Second baseman has priority over first baseman.
- Third baseman has priority over the catcher.
- First baseman has priority over the catcher.
- Pitcher should only catch any short pop fly that no other infielder can get to.

## DEFENSE AGAINST BUNT

Runner on first base  
Bunt in order



Pitcher:  
Cover third base line.  
React to the ball.

Catcher:  
Cover area immediately in front of home plate. Move to cover third base when third baseman fields ball and cannot get back to third base.

First Baseman:  
First base line and ball past Pitcher (first base side).

Second baseman:  
Cover first base.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third base line.

Shortstop:  
Cover second base.

Leftfielder:  
Back up second base area.

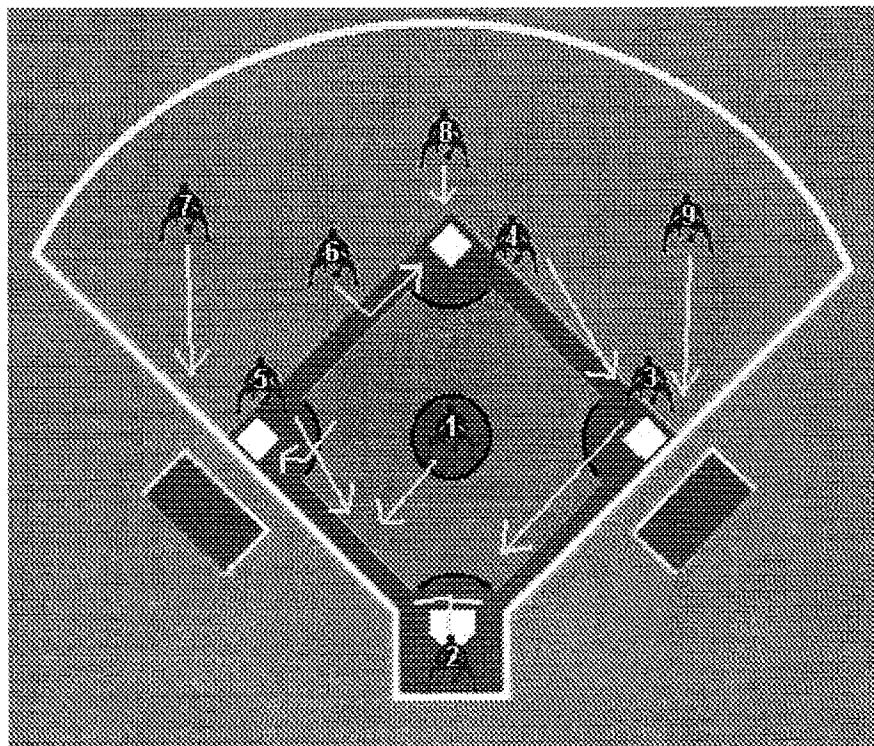
Centerfielder:  
Back up second base.

Rightfielder:  
Back up first base.

## DEFENSE AGAINST BUNT

Runners on first and  
Second

Play #1  
(Regular)



Pitcher:  
Cover third base line.

Catcher:  
Cover immediate area in front of home. Call play as it develops.

First Baseman:  
Cover first base line.

Second Baseman:  
Cover first base.

Shortstop:  
Keep runner close at second Base, then cover second base.

Third Baseman:  
Hold position and cover third base. If pitcher can field bunt. Call pitcher off ball if situation warrants.

Leftfielder:  
Back up third base.

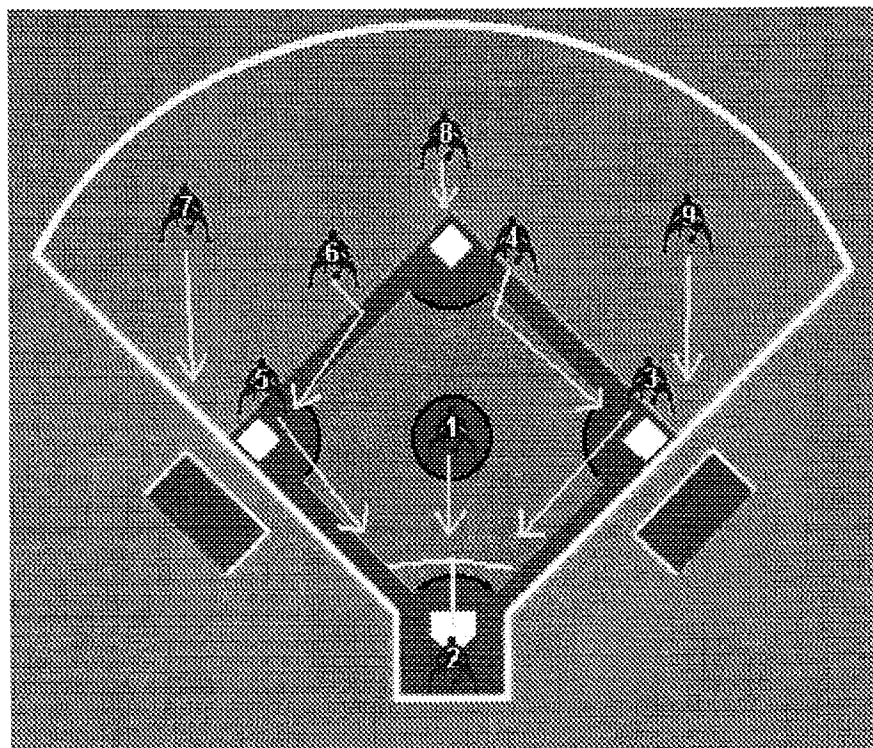
Centerfielder:  
Back up second base.

Rightfielder:  
Back up first base.

# DEFENSE AGAINST BUNT

Runners on first and  
Second

Play #2  
(Trap at 3B)



Pitcher:

Covers straight in toward home plate. Pitcher delivers when shortstop breaks to third base.

Catcher:

Covers immediate area in front of home plate. Call play as it develops.

First Baseman:

Cover first base line.

Second Baseman:

Cover first base.

Shortstop:

Move in behind runner; break to cover third base.

Third Baseman:

Charges hard and covers third base line. Break for home as shortstop breaks for third.

Leftfielder:

Back up third base.

Centerfielder:

Back up second base.

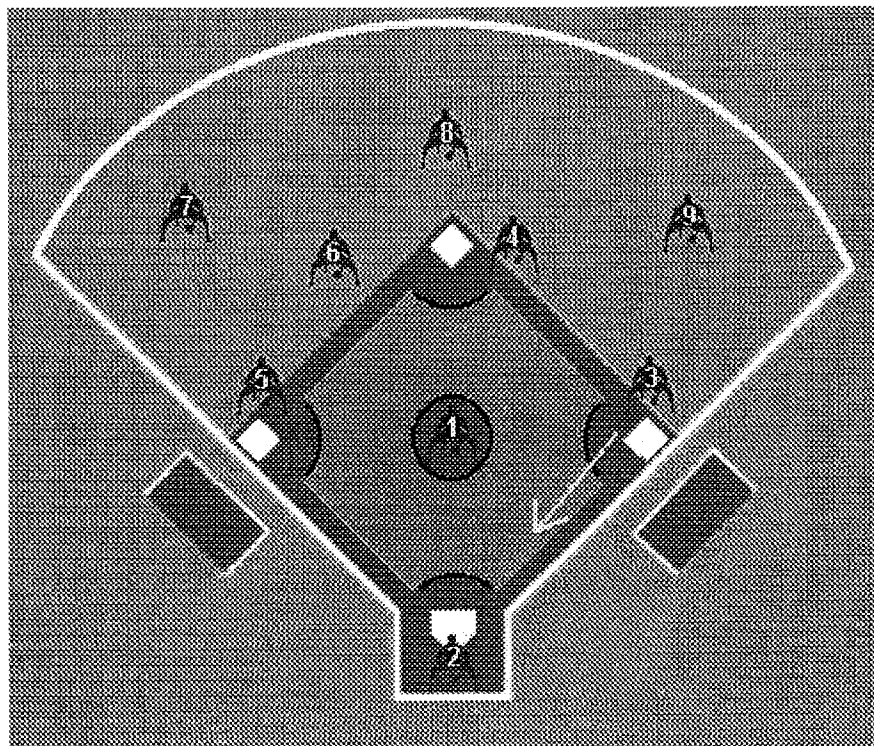
Rightfielder:

Back up first base.

# DEFENSE AGAINST BUNT

Runners on first and  
Second

Play #1  
(Regular)



Pitcher:

Keys off shortstop's fake  
Break to third base.  
Pick off throw to second  
base.

Shortstop:

Fake runner and break  
toward third base.

Third Baseman:

Fake break to home plate  
off shortstop's break.

First Baseman:

Charge toward home.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base on pick off.  
Key off shortstop's fake break  
to third base.

Leftfielder:

Back up second base.

Centerfielder:

Back up second base.

Rightfielder:

Move in toward second base area.

## SLIDING

It will be satisfactory if every player on the team can slide properly on his or her "strong side". Emphasize to the players to keep their hands and arms up when sliding to avoid jammed hands and elbows.

In sliding drills, be safety conscious. Use wet or damp areas on the grass whenever possible. Players should be in good shape and spikes removed when practicing. The real work in this area is for those who are timid or can't slide at all. Another problem is the player who has had broken bones from sliding. Players with any problems concerning sliding should be worked with on a "one to one" basis.

Those who are skilled in baserunning, especially those who are base stealers, should be challenged with all types of slides.

Sliding should be taught with pride and enthusiasm, just as all fundamentals are taught. Stress aggressive sliding and good contact in breaking up double plays. A good general rule in breaking up the double play is to slide to the side of second that the ball is hit; usually the pivot man will cross the bag when throwing to first! Sliding is much like hitting—if you can remove the element of fear, it's fun and players will want to slide. Eliminate the negative with good instruction and demonstration. Encourage each player to develop a sincere desire to slide.

Get all of the players into the habit of sliding to break up double plays and sliding on force outs at second. Do not allow them to pull up short or run out into the outfield, as this oversight will pave the way for other bad habits. With the proper lead and break, if the man runs hard the play at second will almost always be close enough to slide.

# CATCHING INSTRUCTION

## THROWING

### ● THROWING MECHANICS

- All throws to second should be made overhand.
- Strive to get seams every time.
- When catching the ball, keep throwing hand to mitt.  
Upon catching the ball, both hands move to right shoulder until the ball is gripped across the seams, then stop the mitt and take throwing hand to throwing position.
- Left shoulder should be pointed toward target.
- Make sure not to long arm the ball.

### ● FOOTWORK

- Weight must be started forward when the ball is caught.
- First step made with right foot and step should be as short as possible for quickness.
- Stride foot must be straight in front of right foot or slightly open to keep from throwing across the body.
- Try to have the same footwork on every pitch.

### ● KEYS TO THROWING RUNNERS OUT

- Quickness and accuracy.
- Developing rhythm in footwork and throwing.
- Anticipate the runner may steal or you won't throw good runners out.

- If the runner gets a real good jump, don't try to be too quick or you will make a lot of wild throws.
  - Start at a short distance but lengthen to 200-225 feet to make sure the arm is stretched out. Do this especially in pre-season practice. Good to do before practicing throwing to second.
  - Practice getting seams by fingering the ball a lot while sitting on the bench, riding the bus or any idle time. Getting seams is more important than most people realize. Really stress seams. If the catcher doesn't get seams, make sure he really pulls the ball down for a true throw.
  - Catchers should practice footwork whenever playing catch. Develop a rhythm.

## RECEIVING PITCH

- To catch the ball properly, the catcher's hand and wrist must be relaxed.
- The ball should be caught as far in front of the catcher as possible without the elbow being locked (give umpire good look). Give a little.
- All fastballs in the strike zone should be caught with fingers up unless the pitcher has a real good sinker. (If Umpire sees the face of glove, he thinks the pitch is a ball.)
- Only pitches caught with fingers down are curve balls at knees and any tough pitch low out of the strike zone.
- The toughest pitches to catch correctly are pitches on corners. Be sure to keep the pitch in the strike zone.
- Low strikes can't be pushed down out of the strike zone or the umpire will call a ball.
- Keep strikes in the strike zone but don't try to pull balls into the strike zone.
- With hinged mitt, must catch one-handed but learn to keep throwing hand close with men on bases.
- Must concentrate to catch ball properly.



## DRILLS TO HELP IMPROVE

- Work on receiving the ball in the bullpen and don't get lazy (best practice).
- Concentrate on catching the ball properly during batting practice. Try not to catch more than ½ hour of batting practice without getting relief. Batting practice is a good place to develop bad habits.
- Have catcher catch pitching machine with no one hitting (especially beginners.)

MANAGERS AND COACHES MUST STAY ON CATCHERS TO NOT ONLY CATCH THE BALL PROPERLY BUT TO CATCH EVERY PITCH. IF CATCHER CONSTANTLY DROPS OR MISSES PITCHES, IT IS ONE OF THREE THINGS:

- 1) HE IS LAZY.
- 2) LACK OF CONCENTRATION.
- 3) HANDS AND WRISTS NOT RELAXED.

Third reason happens to a lot of young catchers.

## BLOCKING BALL

- Most important thing is to anticipate ball in dirt, men on base.
- Go down to ground with both knees at same time.
- Body should be slightly bent forward from waist.
- Chin tucked in to protect throat.
- Mitt should be on ground protecting hole between legs.
- Let ball hit chest protector instead of trying to catch.
- Must have body relaxed so ball doesn't bounce too far away after hitting protector.
- Balls to side, catcher must work up some.
- Curve balls in dirt – skip back in opposite direction from break.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR

- Make sure anticipating ball in dirt. \*\*\*MOST IMPORTANT\*\*\*
- If ball hitting arms, often not bent from waist.
- Balls hitting protector and going to side, catcher not keeping shoulders square or flinching just before ball hitting him.
- Some want catcher to block ball when no one on base but often impossible because catching stance is different when no one on base.

# OUTFIELD PLAY INSTRUCTION

## STANCE

- Feet squared toward plate.
- Weight on balls of feet.
- Hands off knees as ball nears strike zone.
- Knees bent and ready to go in any direction.
- Concentrate on strike zone and watch ball off bat to get a "jump on ball."

## WARMING UP ARM

- Grip the ball across the seams.
- Throw overhand.
- Use a target when playing catch.
- Stretch out distance of throw as you start to get loose.
- Outfielders should try to stretch the arm out and get the ball to carry.
- It is important to prepare the arm for throwing long distances.

## THROWING FUNDAMENTALS

- Grip ball across the seams.
- Reach back and throw overhand.
- HIT THE CUT-OFF MAN. Many big innings are the result of missing the cut-off man.
- On cut-offs and relays, it is important to hit infielder on his glove side about shoulder high so he can turn and throw more easily.
  - In a relay situation, it is better to throw too high than too low to the relay man because we have a trailer to back him up.
  - In a cut-off situation, it is better to throw too low than too high so the throw can be cut if necessary.
- The farther distance an outfielder has to throw, the more momentum he needs. He can gain this momentum by using a crow-hop. The longer the throw is, the bigger the crow-hop. The crow-hop should be more forward toward the target rather than high in the air.

## ROUTINE GROUND BALL (with no one on base)

- Break hard on contact to charge ball and break down with short steps to get under control.
- Round the ball moving toward second base.
- Line up ball in center of body.
- Stay off the knee.
- Bend knees, use two hands and anticipate the ball to stay low.
- If ball is bobbled, pick it up with bare hand.

## ROUTINE FLY BALL

- Get to the ball as soon as possible and avoid "drifting" or "timing" the ball.
- Round the ball moving toward the infield.
- Get into position to catch ball on throwing side, shoulder high, moving in as making catch with two hands.

## GOING BACK ON FLY BALL

- Two methods
  - Drop step straight back, turn and go for ball.
  - Cross over and round ball as going back.
- Most important thing on this play is to get a good jump on ball using method that is the most natural.
- Keep your eye on the ball as much as possible.

## POINTS FOR OUTFIELDERS

- Round the ball whenever possible.
- Get to the ball as soon as possible and avoid "drifting" under fly balls.
- Shade toward alleys because there are more balls hit in gaps than down lines.
- Be aware of where other outfielders are playing as well as infielders.
- Anticipate that every pitch will be hit to you.
- Back up the bases.
- Back up infielders on ground balls WHEN THE BALL IS HIT, not after it is missed. Anticipate infielders missing ground ball.
- On throws to bases, always KEEP THE BALL LOW. HIT THE CUTOFF MAN!
- Centerfielder has priority on fly balls.

- Call infielders off fly balls that you can get to under control.
- Be aware of the condition of field you are on.
- Check wind and sun regularly.

*GET AS MANY FLY BALLS AS POSSIBLE OFF THE BAT IN BATTING PRACTICE.*

## POSITION PLAY

- Play deeper with two outs, no one on base. Keep the hitter from scoring position.
- Be aware of tying and winning runs at plate.
- Play deeper with runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base, two outs. Keep ball from going over your head for RBI.
- Play deep with big lead to avoid big innings.
- Know the stuff of your pitcher on a particular day and shade the hitter accordingly.
- Remember that most left-handed hitters DO NOT PULL left-handed pitchers.
- Overplay elements such as sun and wind.
- With runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base, bottom of 9<sup>th</sup> inning, less than two outs  
**PLAY CLOSE ENOUGH TO THROW RUNNER OUT ON FLY BALL.**
  - Anything hit over your head will end the game anyway.

## FIELDING MECHANICS (to throw runner out)

- Break hard and fast to get to the ball quickly.
- Round the ball moving toward base.
- Left foot (for right-handed thrower) in front when fielding ball.
- Field ball with one hand slightly in front of body and inside of left foot. (For RH thrower)
- Bend left leg and watch ball into glove (anticipate ball to stay low).
- Push off with left foot after fielding ball and crow-hop to right foot to build momentum.
  - At the same time, take ball out of glove and get into throwing position.
  - Momentum is more forward toward target than up in the air. (Try to eliminate high crow-hop on this play.)
- Outfielders can get rid of ball with two steps and save valuable time.

# DRILLS

## TWO MAN DRILL

- Place two outfielders approximately 60-75 feet apart (designate one as centerfielder).
- Hit fly ball between them.
- Centerfielder has priority.

**PURPOSE:** Pre-season drill to give players practice at calling for fly balls and also practicing at catching ball in throwing position.

## FENCE DRILL (Fly Balls)

- Hit outfielder high fly balls by fence.

**PURPOSE:** Gives player practice at playing fence.  
● Has got to get to fence as soon as possible

## FLY BALL DRILL

SAME AS DURING INFIELD. Have outfielders in centerfield And have fungo down foul line between foul pole and 1<sup>st</sup> base.

- Have one outfielder in position and others to the side.
- Give player practice on balls hit in every direction.
- Give player practice on rounding ball and getting into throwing position.
- Helps when playing at an unfamiliar ballpark. Gets player more familiar with surface.
- Try to hit line drives directly at outfielders and give them practice on balls in every direction.
- Outfielders have a tendency to get too deep in this situation. Remind them to move in so they are not too deep.

## BALL ON WARNING TRACK (use as drill)

HIT OR THROW BALL AGAINST OUTFIELD FENCE.

- Run hard to get to ball quickly.
- Round the ball to get body in position as approaching ball.
- Break down with short steps to get under control to pick up ball.
- Center body over ball whenever possible.
  - On ball close to or against fence, plant the right foot (for right-handed thrower) 3-4 inches from ball to pick it up.
- Use two hands and watch BALL into glove as picking it up.
- Crow-hop while finding relay man and hit him on glove side shoulder-high.

## BASERUNNING INSTRUCTION

Baserunning is a combination of many factors: knowledge, anticipation, aggressiveness, speed, and practice. However, a common misconception is that a player must be a fast runner to be a good baserunner. A runner with average speed can become an excellent baserunner with hard work.

There are three important phases of baserunning, which we want to emphasize in our teaching procedure. Running on a batted ball from the batter's box, after a player becomes a base runner and stealing bases.

Baserunning is a big part of our total offense. Give the runners the ways and means to improve that part of their game. Lecture is important but it is the least effective means of teaching. Demonstration and practice are more important than achieved in the actual game under pressure. Encourage the players to use the methods and techniques in the game situation. Point out mental and physical mistakes and compliment heads up and aggressive baserunning.

The following material has been compiled from many sources. It represents an overall view of what is a sound and progressive baserunning program.

- In the dugout – Baserunning starts here. Players should get in the habit of watching the defensive players' arms during infield practice. They should know all strengths and weaknesses of the opponent. During the game, have them watch the pitcher closely, from both the wind-up and stretch positions. Talk about his moves on the bench. If one man picks up something, pass it on. Observation of all phases is vital; encourage it.
- On-deck circle – After the player gets loose, get him to think about the opponent's strengths and weaknesses again. Study defensive positions. Know where left and right-handed throwers are in the outfield. (Run accordingly) Stress being prepared to assist the runner coming into home plate by telling him to slide or stay up. (Use hand and arm signals well in advance.) If there is any doubt, always slide. Also remove any equipment scattered around home plate, thus preventing possible injury to teammates. The on-deck circle is the perfect place to get mentally prepared for when the player gets to the plate. Have him anticipate the situation so all he will have to do is execute and run hard.
- Insist that all of the players run out every ball hard no matter what kind of contact they make. 100% effort is a must. Stress proper running form and encourage runners to work at getting out of the batter's box. Run through first base hitting the front part of the bag. Emphasize getting past the bag before slowing down. Avoid jumping at the bag in the last stride; this common baserunning mistake causes injury and slows down the runner's time to first. Only slide into the bag to avoid a tag. This is an instinctive play and is very difficult to teach.

- Turns at all the bases should be made as sharp as possible. Body agility and quickness will determine the runners turn. However, improvements can be made for all runners with proper instruction and practice.
  - Hit the inside corner of the bag with the left foot; however, do not alter stride if runner is going to hit with his right foot. Touch part of the bag and part of the dirt. Avoid stepping on top of the base as this acts as a springboard to carry the runner out into the infield area.
  - Prior to reaching a base, make a gradual swing to give the runner a better angle. Do not make a big loop or run in toward the center of the diamond before veering out.
  - Always run with the extra base in mind until the defensive man stops you; i.e. turn a single into a double or a double into a triple.  
\*Situation will dictate the aggressiveness of the runner.
- In teaching leads and breaks, stress situations and how they influence our leads and breaks. How many outs are there? What is the score? Where is the ball? Where are the defensive men stationed? Should I be aggressive or should I be cautious? How important is my run?
- In taking all leads, it is vital for the player to know exactly how far he is from the bag at all times. Then he can obtain the proper lead for the proper situation.

## TYPES OF LEADS

### FIRST BASE

- One way lead – Weight leaning toward first base. Used to check pitchers move for quickness.
- Two way lead (dive back or stealing lead) – This lead should be the runners lead on each pitch except in situations which call for safety.
- Safe lead – Primary or step back lead. Should be inside defensive man when situation calls for not getting doubled off. Runner must not over-commit on secondary lead.



## SECOND BASE

- Two way lead – This is not a stealing lead. It is a dive back lead if the pitcher attempts to pick you off. If pitcher delivers to the plate, the runner moves into his secondary lead. Do not let infielders bluff the runner back.
- Moving lead – stealing lead.
- Two-out lead – Maximum dive back limit with aggressive secondary lead.
- Safe lead – Taken inside SS and 2B defensive positions. Controlled secondary.

## THIRD BASE

- Walking Lead
- Safe lead – Taken inside third baseman.

## BASERUNNING ROUTINE FOR BATTING PRACTICE

- On last swing, batter runs hard to first and rounds the base, then returns to the bag.
- With pitcher throwing from the stretch, hit and run on the first pitch. Take a two way lead and make sure pitcher delivers the ball to the plate. Pick up the ball off the bat by glancing immediately to home.
- On the next pitch the bunt is on. Take a two way lead at second and when pitcher delivers, a controlled secondary lead. Read the ball off the bat and continue to third if the ball is on the ground.
- At third base practice the walking lead for the entire time the next hitter is swinging.

## STEALING – LEADS AND BREAKS

**First Base** Find the ball and pick up the third base coach before moving off the bag.

- Move to your primary lead before the pitcher gets his sign. This is a step back or 10 foot lead.
- Next move to your dive back or two-way stealing lead by moving right foot first with stagger step to 13 plus feet. Make sure lead is taken from back edge of the base with weight on the balls of your feet. Heels should be resting on the ground and toes of right foot even with or slightly in back of toes on the left foot.

- Bend knees and maintain good body balance. First step should be short cross over; body thrust should be low, driving across with left shoulder. Development of first step quickness is all-important.
- Read the pitcher to obtain jump in breaking for second base. Some things to look for:
  - Heel movement
  - Open left shoulder
  - High leg kick
  - Wasted hand and arm motion
  - Slow delivery time
- The technique for diving back to first on the pitcher's attempted pick-off should be practiced as follows:

Take your two-way lead beyond maximum limits (15 plus feet). Right foot crossover, left hand down and dive back to the bag with right hand. Keep body low on dive back to avoid upper body injury. Practicing the dive back technique at 15 plus feet will allow you to increase confidence at the regular two-way distance. The only reason a runner cannot have a lead beyond 15 feet is because the pitcher will out-quick him to first – not because he cannot reach first with the dive back method.
- A good lead and a good jump equals success in stealing bases. If you do not have both ingredients, do not go but wait for another pitch.

### **SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER FOR STEALING SECOND**

- Second base is usually stolen on the pitcher.
- Pitchers generally fall into four categories:
  - Slow to first and quick to home
  - Quick to first and slow to home
  - Quick to both first and home
  - Slow to both first and home

The last of these is very easy to steal on. Number three is very difficult if not impossible to steal on. However, most pitchers fall into the first two groups and thus the baserunner with adequate study can alter his lead to take advantage of this situation.

- The combination of pitcher's time to the plate, catcher's time to second, and tag time is what the runner must work to beat. Therefore, it is important to know the time you are working against and the time you are capable of achieving from first to second on an attempted steal.

**Second Base**

You must develop a moving lead to be effective at stealing third base.

- The initial lead should be 15-17 feet depending on the runner's quickness and agility. Each runner should know exactly where his starting point is.
- From the primary lead there are two methods that can be used to get the jump on the pitch:
  - Walking lead
  - Secondary shuffle or hop

In either case, the break for third must be initiated prior to the pitcher breaking his hands to deliver to the plate. If you are early or late in your break, hold up and wait for another pitch.

- Encourage runners to study the pitchers in their delivery from the set position as the success of stealing third depends upon timing.
- Be aggressive: If there is an out made on the play, it is better to be picked off second than thrown out at third.

**Third Base** The walking lead.

- The primary lead against the pitcher who is working from the wind-up position is close to third, two or three feet from the bag. You will have plenty of time to move down the line as the pitcher winds to throw.
- Move to a point down the line where you can safely get back to third if the catcher makes a pick-off attempt after receiving the ball.
- As the ball reaches the plane of the plate, the left foot should be going down; maintain your momentum until the ball is secured in the catcher's mitt. The right foot continues you toward home or stops your forward movement.
- The key to maintaining momentum is a controlled movement down the line. A common mistake with many runners is that they move too fast and consequently, reach their safety limit too soon causing them to stop their movement. This defeats the whole purpose of the walking lead and prevents scoring on some passed balls and on certain grounders.
- The primary lead against the pitcher who is working from the set position is farther from the bag; 6-10 feet depending upon the position of the third baseman.
- Remember that you are more susceptible to a pick-off attempt by the pitcher in this situation.

- Move down the line to your safety point; always maintaining your momentum.
- The third base coach should always tell the runner whether he is going or staying on a ground ball. This eliminates confusion in the mind of the runner and makes the walking lead more effective.

## POINTS TO EMPHASIZE AT EACH BASE

### FIRST

- Don't get doubled on line drive – make ball go by the pitcher and infielder with less than two outs.
- Don't let the second baseman tag you on ground ball, especially with third base occupied.
- Break up double play by sliding to the side of second to which the ball is hit.
- Watch infielders after the pitch; if they drop their heads, they are susceptible to the delayed steal.
- Fake a break sometimes on a pitch—you might draw an infielder out of position. You also can determine who is covering and let the hitter know where the hole will be to hit and run.
- Be aware of runner ahead of you. Don't overrun him on single when he stops at third.
- Think about the situation as the count changes. Determine when a pitch out is in order or when a breaking pitch is likely.
- Be aware of the defensive catcher's ability to throw on pick-off attempts. Does he try often?

### SECOND

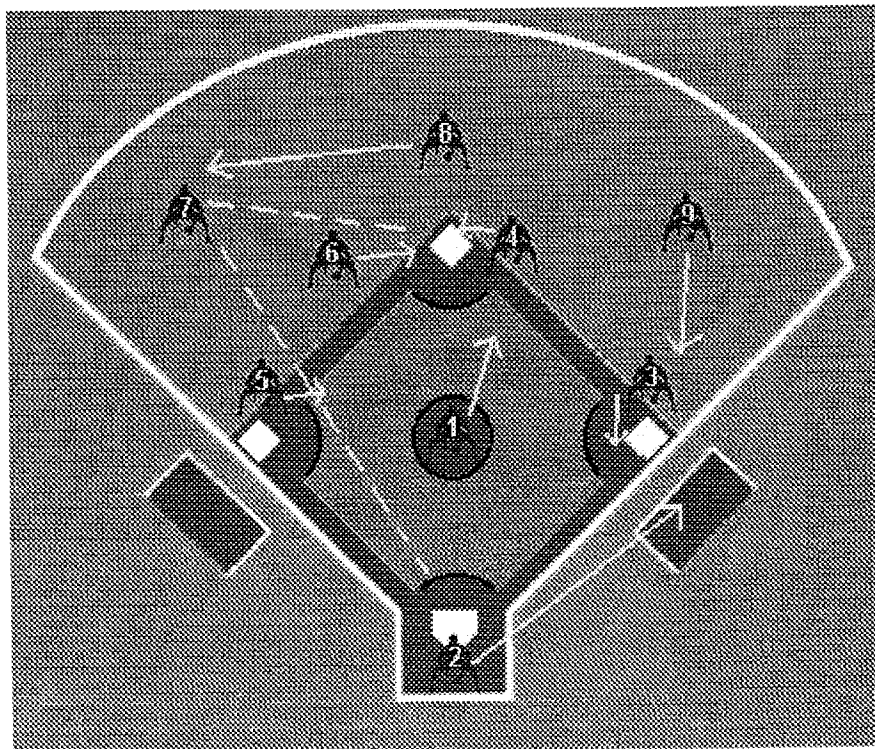
- Know the situation so you can determine the proper lead. Safe lead, two out lead, moving lead, etc.
- Run hard through home on base hit. If third out is made before you cross the plate, the run does not count.
- Be ready to take third if catcher throws to first on a pick-off attempt.
- Make sure you can take third on ground ball with first unoccupied. You must know where the shortstop and third baseman are playing to move up on certain balls to the left side.
- Know when to tag and take third. Number of outs and depth of fly ball are critical.
- You cannot use the moving lead on every pitch; time the pitcher and pick a pitch to steal on.

### THIRD

- Do not make first or third out at third base.
- Take lead off in foul territory and return to bag in fair territory after the pitch.
- Think about the depth of a fly ball needed to tag and score on. Which fly will I need to move down the line on?
- Will the catcher throw at me if I am using the walking lead?
- Where is my safety point on this catcher?
- Anticipate the ground ball or passed ball if the coach has you going on the grounder.

## SITUATION #1

Single to left field  
No one on base



Pitcher:

Move to a position half way between mound and second.

Catcher:

Follow runner to first.

First Baseman:

Make sure runner tags first, then cover first base.

Shortstop:

Cover 2<sup>nd</sup> to take throw from left fielder when possible.

Second Baseman:

Back up left fielder's throw to shortstop.

Third Baseman:

Protect 3<sup>rd</sup> base area.

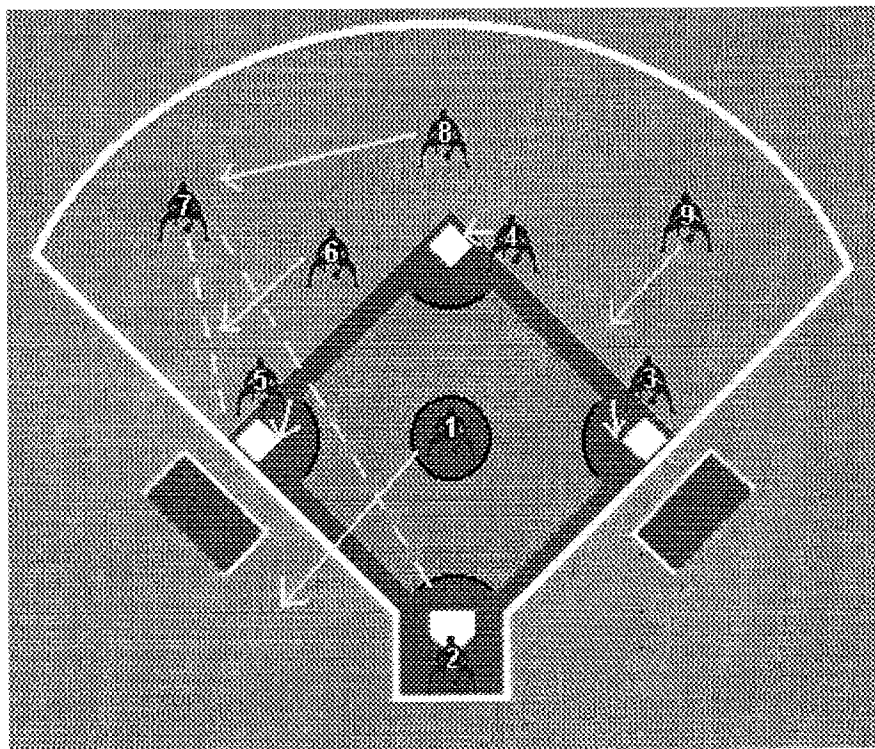
Outfielders:

CF – Back up left fielder.

RF – Move in toward first base.

## SITUATION #2

Single to left field  
Man on first



Pitcher:  
Back up third base.

Catcher:  
Protect home plate area.

First Baseman:  
Cover first base.

Second Baseman:  
Cover second base.

Shortstop:  
Move to cut-off position on the throw to third base.

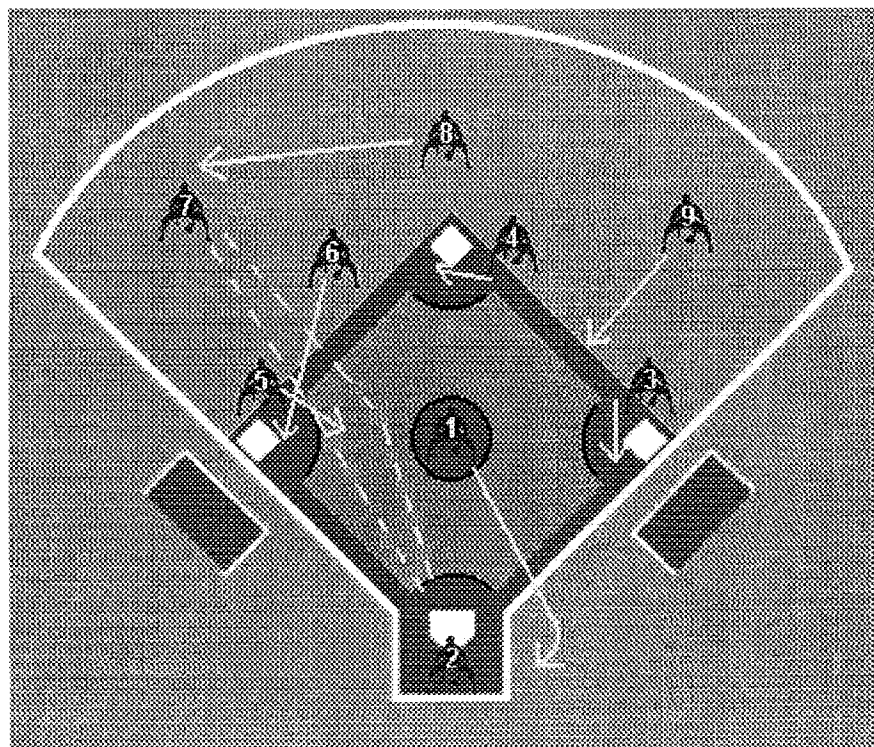
Third Baseman:  
Cover third base.

Centerfielder:  
Back up left fielder.

Rightfielder:  
Move in toward infield area.

### SITUATION #3

Single to left field  
Man on second base



Pitcher:  
Back up home.

Catcher:  
Cover home.

First baseman:  
Cover first base.

Second baseman:  
Cover second base.

Shortstop:  
Cover third base.

Third Baseman:  
Cut-off position to home.

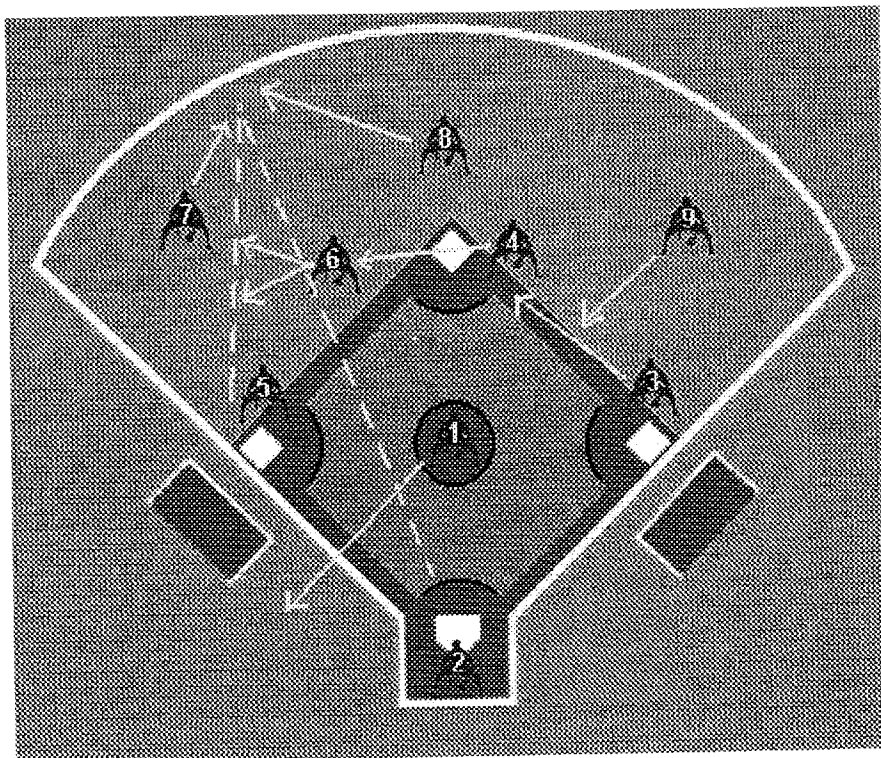
Centerfielder:  
Back up leftfielder.

Rightfielder:  
Move in toward second base area.



## SITUATION #4

Double, possible  
triple to left-center field  
no one on base

Pitcher:

Back up third base in line with throw.

Catcher:

Protect home plate area.

First Baseman:

Trail runner to second base after watching him touch first.

Second Baseman:

Trail 30-35 feet behind shortstop. Stop in line with throw. Call play for shortstop.

Shortstop:

Relay man on throw from outfield to third base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Leftfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up centerfielder.

Centerfielder:

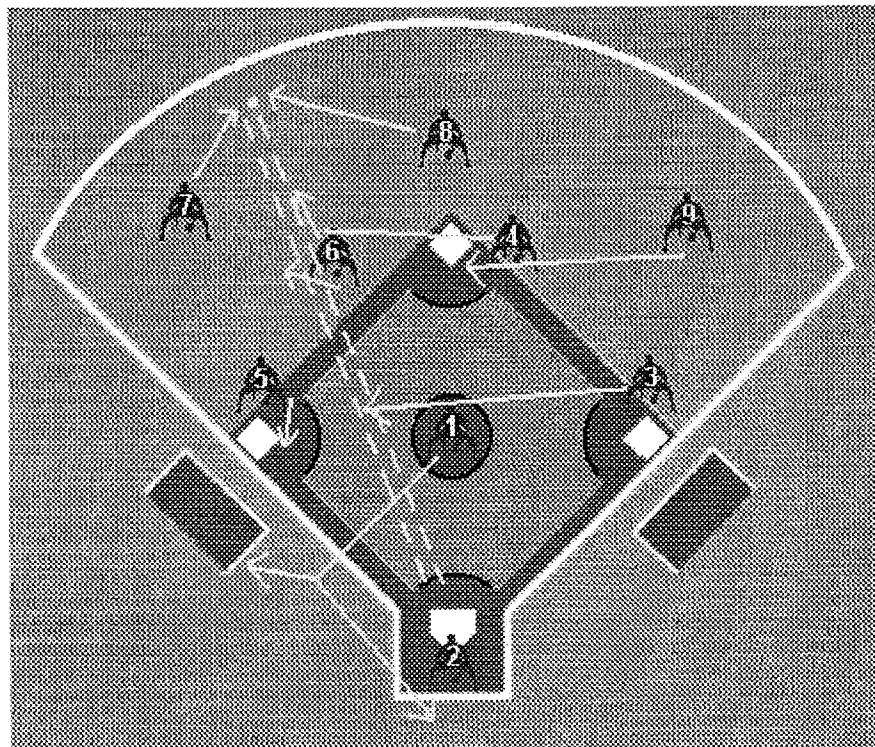
Retrieve ball or back up leftfielder.

Rightfielder:

Move in toward second base.

## SITUATION #5

Double, possible triple  
to left-center field. Man  
on first base.

Pitcher:

Half way between home and third. Back up base where play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Cut-off man to home

\*Shortstop:

Relay man in left center line up for play at home.

\*Second Baseman:

Trail shortstop about 30-35 feet behind and call play as it develops.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Leftfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up centerfielder.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up leftfielder.

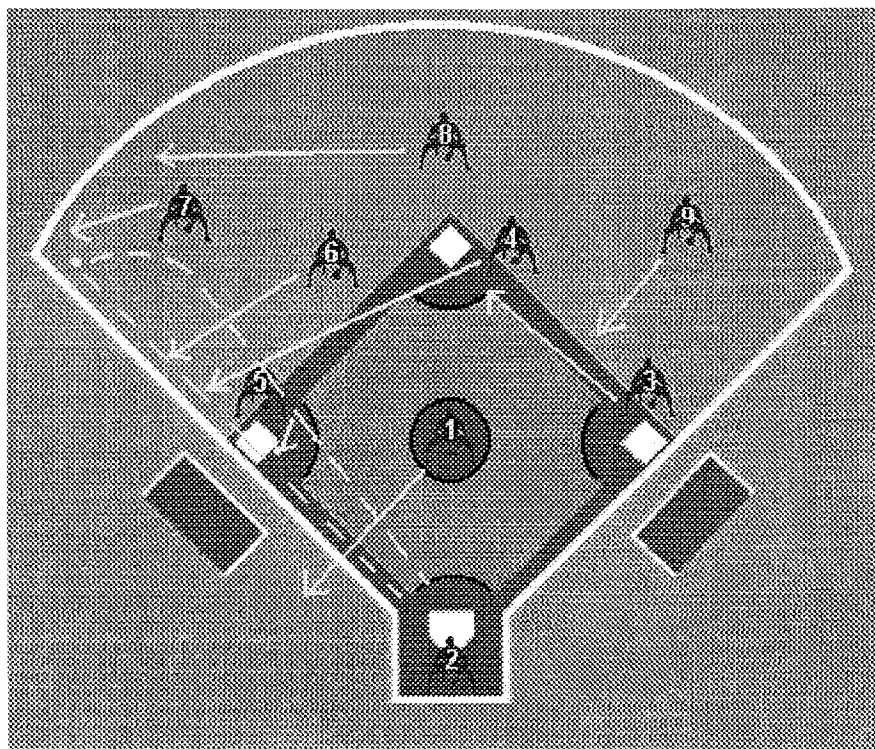
Rightfielder:

Cover second base.

\*Relay and trail man line up for home. Adjust their position to third base if there is no play at home.

## SITUATION #6

Double, possible triple  
down left field line.  
No one on base



Pitcher:  
Back up third.

Catcher:  
Cover home plate area.

First Baseman:  
Trail runner after watching  
him touch first base.

Second Baseman:  
Trailer behind shortstop  
call play as it develops

Shortstop:  
Relay man line up for third.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third.

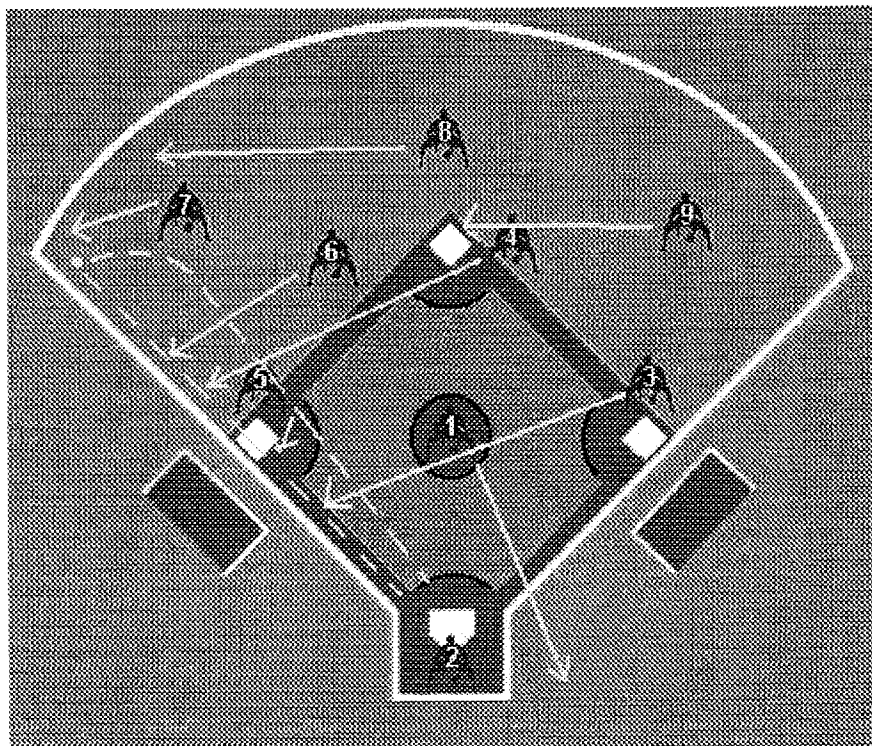
Leftfielder:  
Retrieve ball.

Centerfielder:  
Back up leftfielder.

Rightfielder:  
Back up second base area.

## SITUATION #7

Double, possible triple  
down left field line.  
Man on first.



Pitcher:  
Back up home plate.

Catcher:  
Cover home plate.

First Baseman:  
Cut-off man to home.

Shortstop:  
Relay man down leftfield line.

Second Baseman:  
Trail man behind shortstop  
call the play as it develops.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third base.

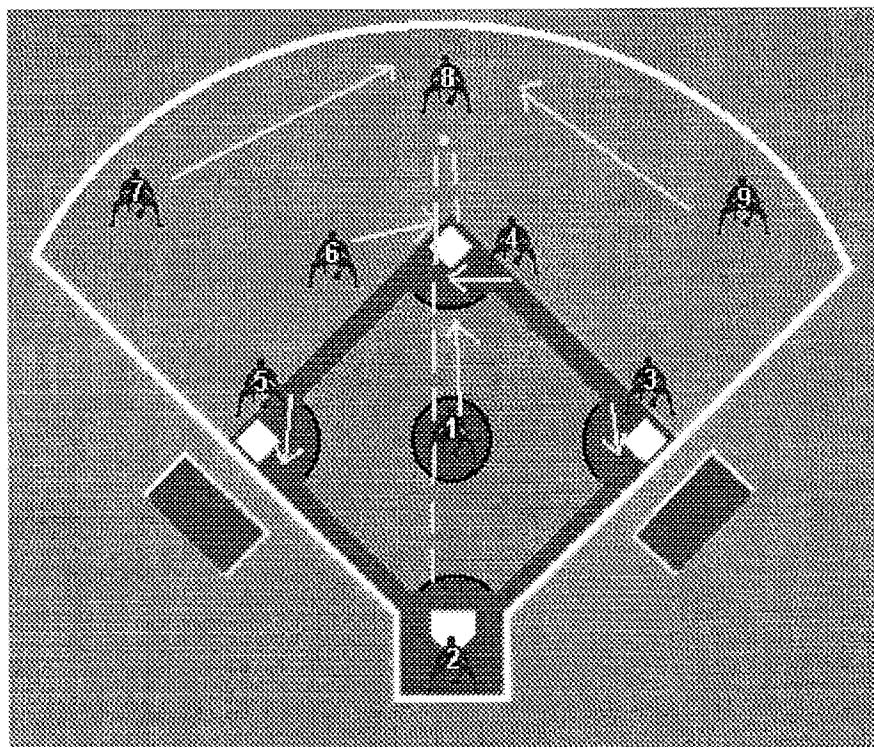
Leftfielder:  
Retrieve ball.

Centerfielder:  
Back up left fielder.

Rightfielder:  
Cover second base.

## SITUATION #8

Single to center field.  
No one on base.



Pitcher:  
Back up second base area.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third.

Catcher:  
Protect home plate area.

Centerfielder:  
Retrieve ball.

First Baseman:  
Cover first.

Leftfielder:  
Back up centerfielder.

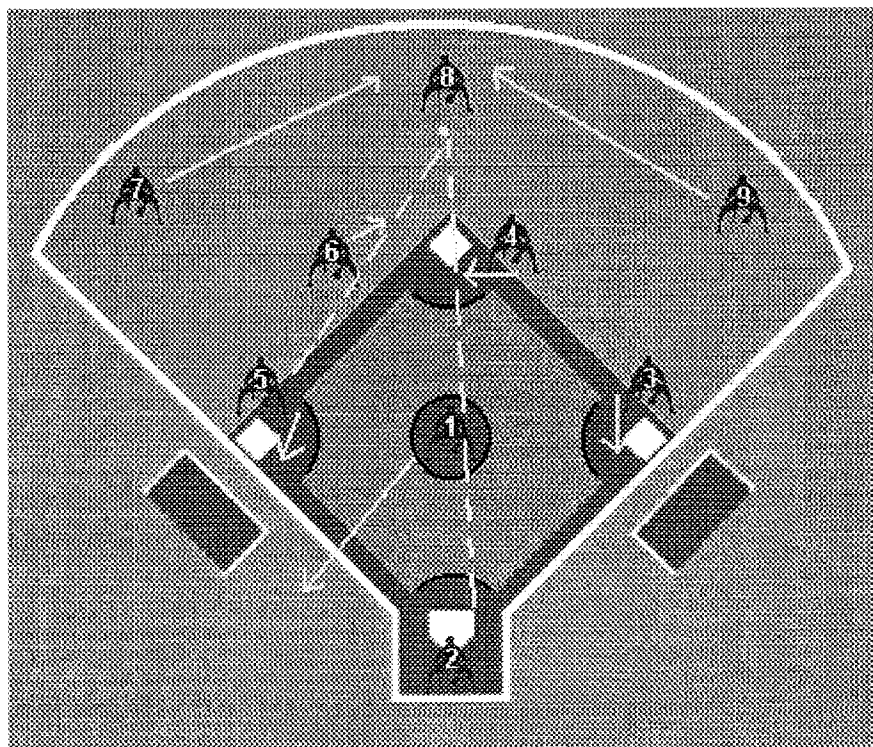
Second Baseman:  
Back up second base.

Rightfielder:  
Back up centerfielder.

Shortstop:  
Cover second base.

## SITUATION #9

Single to center field.  
Man on first.



Pitcher:  
Back up third base.

Catcher:  
Protect home plate.

First Baseman:  
Cover first.

Second Baseman:  
Cover second base.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third base.

Shortstop:  
Cut-off man to third base.

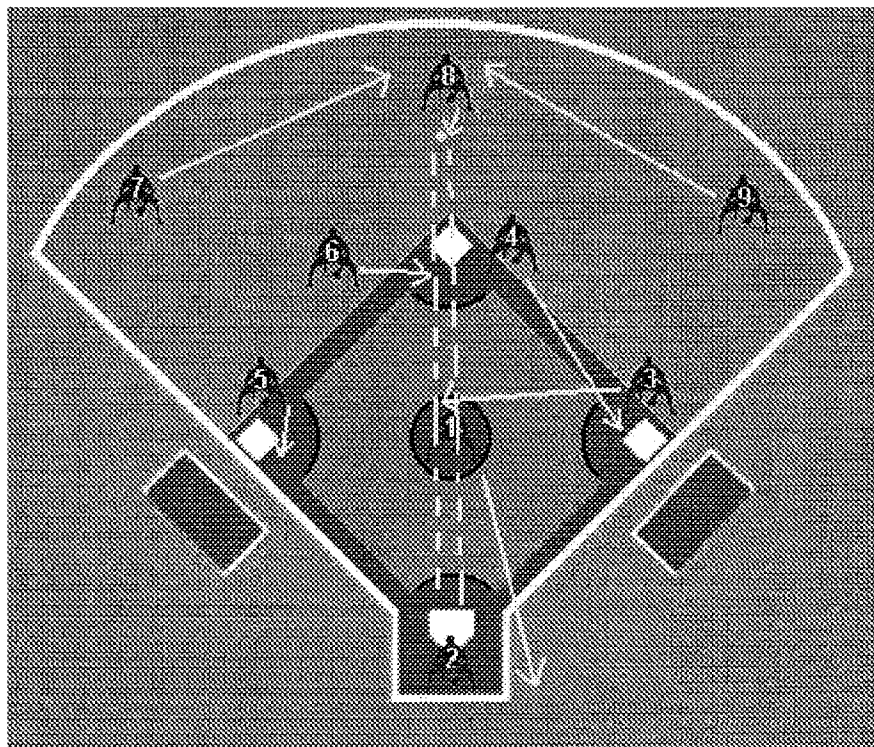
Centerfielder:  
Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:  
Back up centerfielder.

Rightfielder:  
Back up centerfielder.

## SITUATION #10

Single to center field.  
Man on second base.



Pitcher:  
Back up home.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third base.

Catcher:  
Cover home.

Centerfielder:  
Retrieve ball.

First Baseman:  
Cut-off man to home.

Leftfielder:  
Back up centerfielder.

Second Baseman:  
Cover first base.

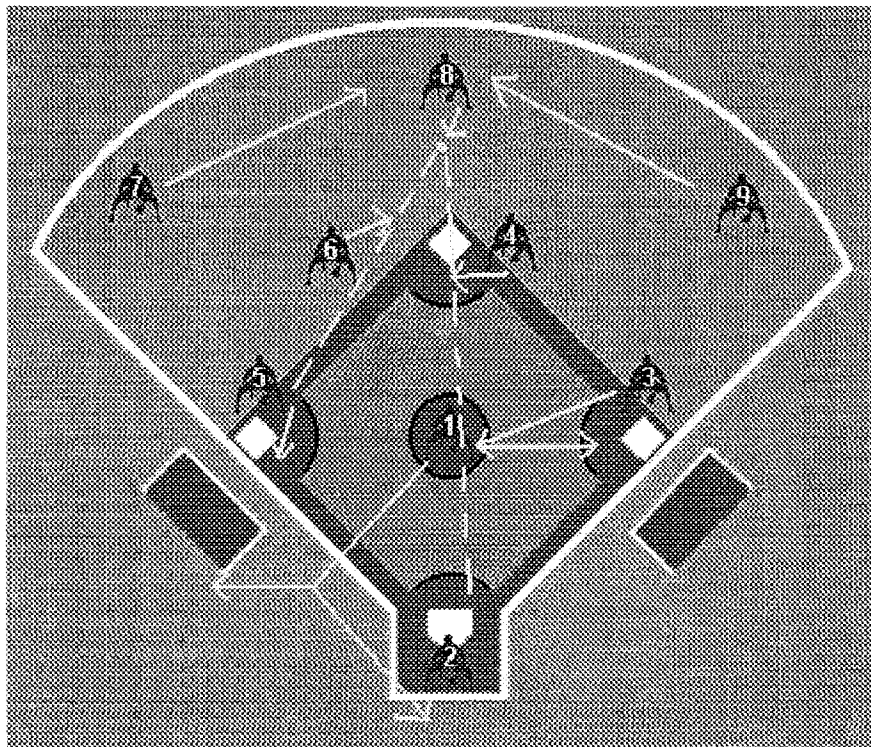
Rightfielder:  
Back up centerfielder.

Shortstop:  
Cover second base.



## SITUATION #11

Single to center field.  
Men on first and second.

Pitcher:

Halfway between home and third. Then back up base where play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Cut-off man to home. If throw goes to third, hustle back to first base.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base.

Shortstop:

Cut-off man to third.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:

Back up centerfielder.

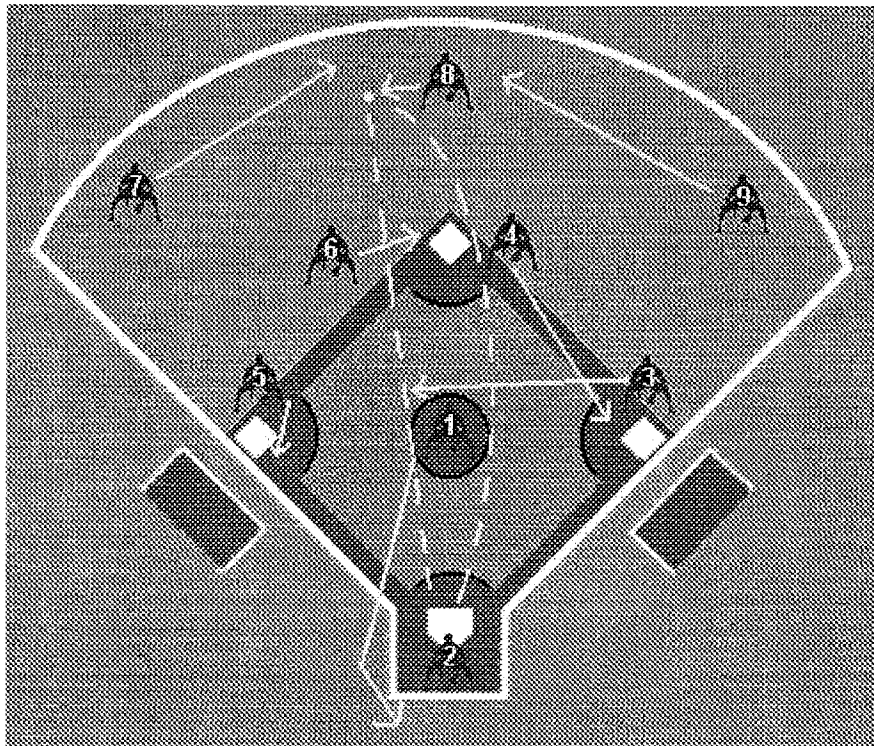
Rightfielder:

Back up centerfielder.



## SITUATION #12

Fly ball to center field.  
Men on first and third.



Pitcher:  
Back up home plate.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third.

Catcher:  
Cover home.

Leftfielder:  
Move toward fly ball.

First Baseman:  
Cut-off man to home.

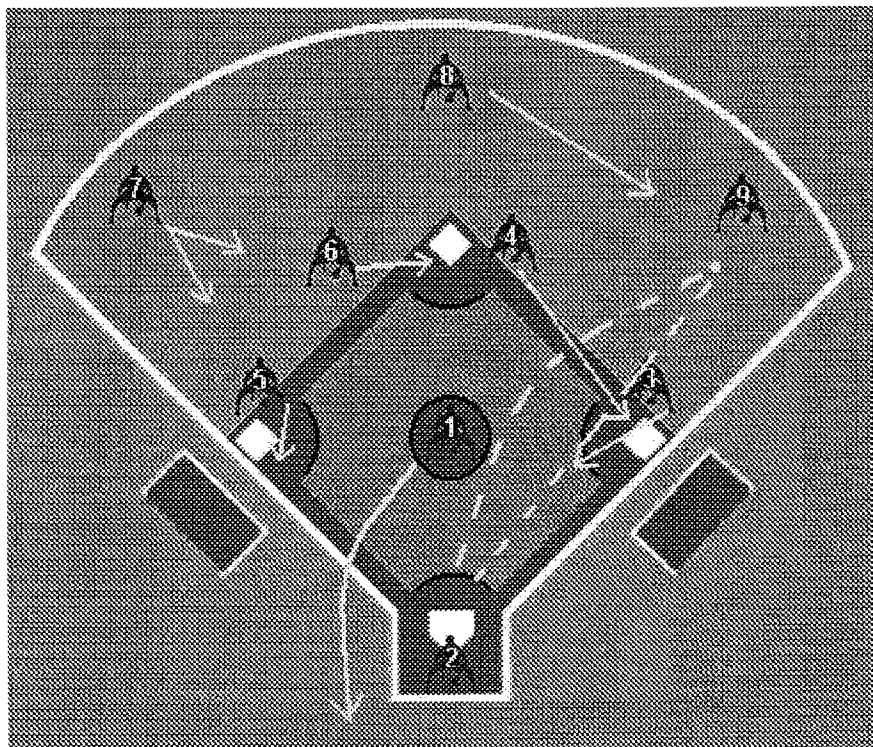
Rightfielder:  
Move toward fly ball.

Second Baseman:  
Cover first base.

Shortstop:  
Cover second base.

## SITUATION #13

Fly ball to right field.  
Men on first and third.



Pitcher:  
Back up home.

Catcher:  
Cover home.

First Baseman:  
Cut-off man to home.

Second Baseman:  
Cover first base.

Shortstop:  
Cover second.

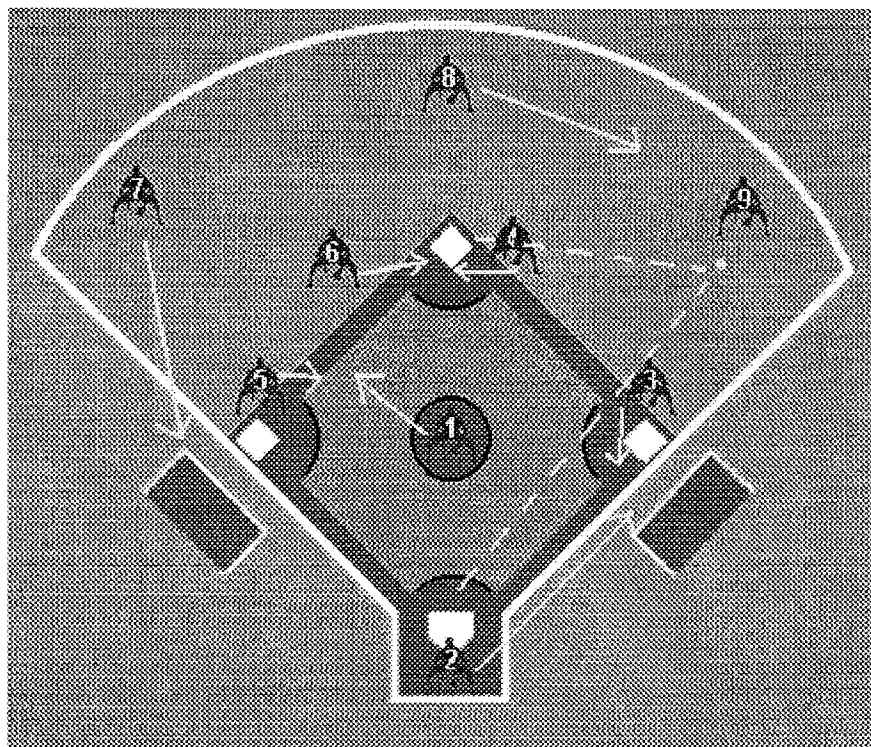
Third Baseman:  
Cover third.

Centerfielder:  
Move toward fly ball.

Leftfielder:  
Back up second base. Actual position to depend on where rightfielder throws.

## SITUATION #14

Single to right field.  
No one on base.



Pitcher:  
Move to back up second  
base area.

Catcher:  
Follow runner to first.

First Baseman:  
Cover first base.

Second Baseman:  
Cover second base.

Shortstop:  
Back up second base.

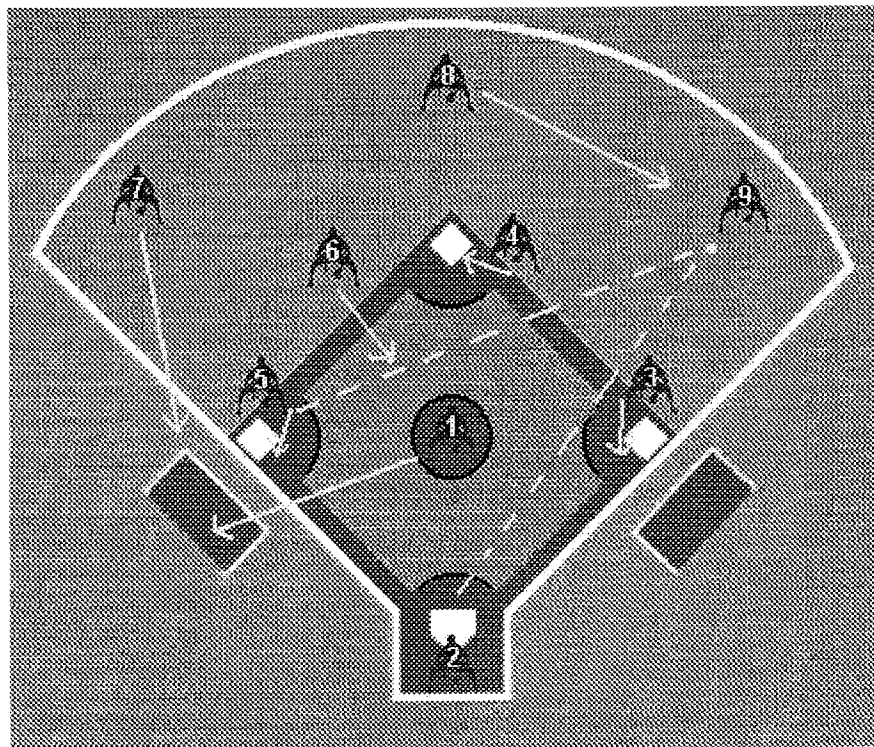
Third Baseman:  
Protect third base area.

Centerfielder:  
Move to back up rightfielder.

Leftfielder:  
Move in toward third base.

## SITUATION #15

Single to right field.  
Man on first base.



Pitcher:  
Back up third base.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third base.

Catcher:  
Protect home plate.

Centerfielder:  
Back up rightfielder.

First Baseman:  
Cover first.

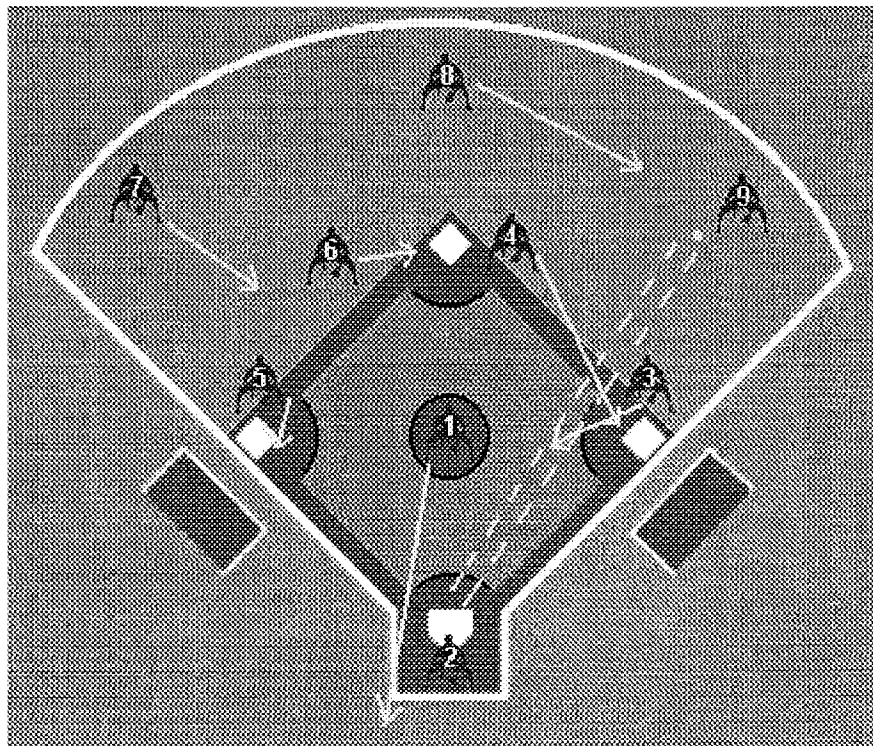
Leftfielder:  
Move in toward third.

Second Baseman:  
Cover second.

Shortstop:  
Cut-off man to third base.

## SITUATION #16

Single to right field.  
Man on second base.



Pitcher:  
Back up home.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third base.

Catcher:  
Cover home.

Leftfielder:  
Move in toward second base.

First Baseman:  
Cut-off man to home.

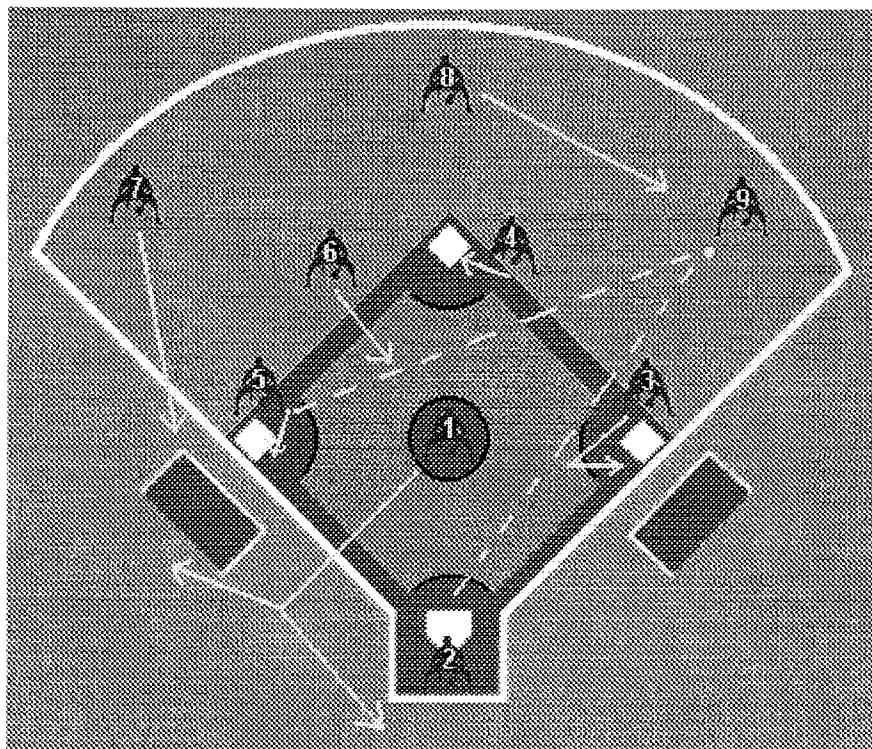
Centerfielder:  
Move to back up rightfielder.

Second Baseman:  
Cover first base.

Shortstop:  
Cover second base.

## SITUATION #17

Single to right field.  
Men on first and second.



Pitcher:  
Half way between third and home. Back up base where play develops.

Catcher:  
Cover home.

First Baseman:  
Cut-off man to home. Cover first if throw goes to third.

Second Baseman:  
Cover second base.

Shortstop:  
Cut-off man to third.

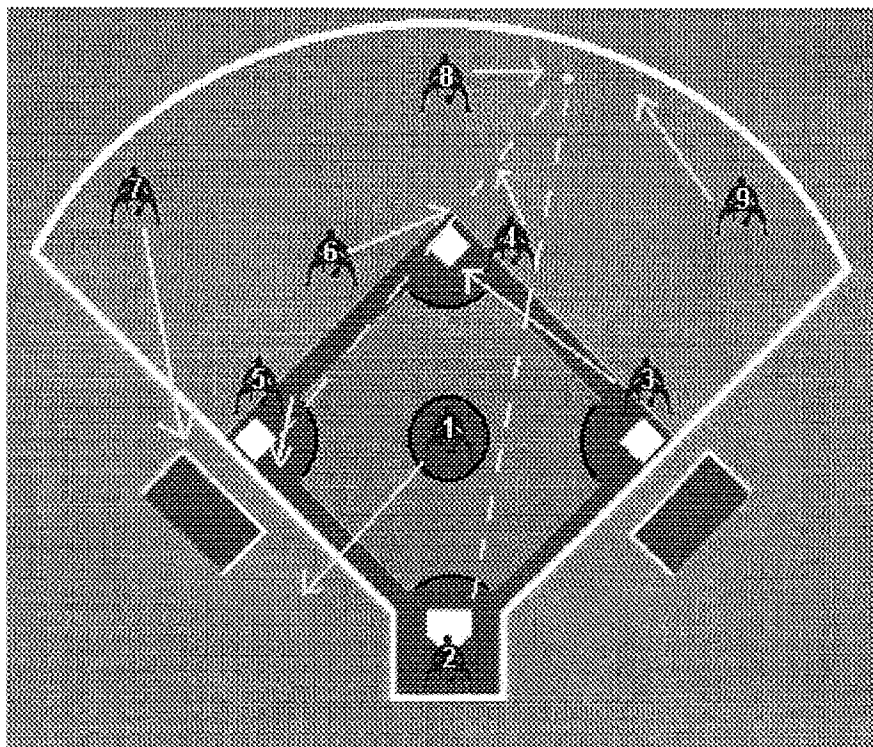
Third Baseman:  
Cover third.

Centerfielder:  
Back up rightfielder.

Leftfielder:  
Move toward third base area.

## SITUATION #18

Double, possible triple  
to right-center field.  
No one on base.



Pitcher:  
Back up third base.

Catcher:  
Cover home plate.

First Baseman:  
Trail runner to second base after  
watching him touch first base.

Second Baseman:  
Relay man to third base.

Shortstop:  
Trailer behind second baseman.  
Call play as it develops.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third base.

Centerfielder:  
Retrieve ball or back up  
rightfielder.

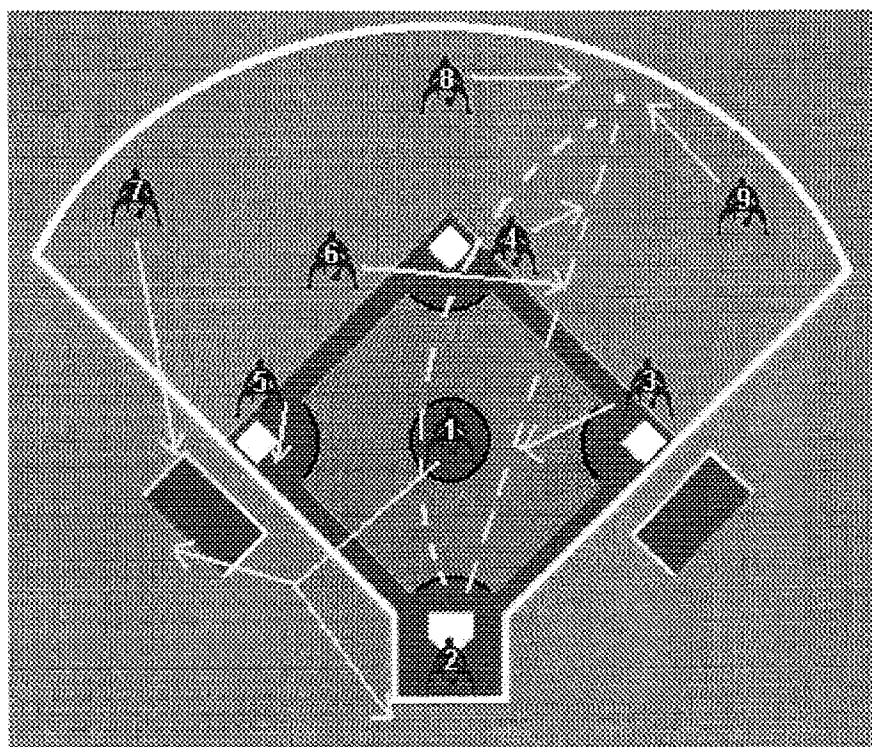
Rightfielder:  
Retrieve ball or back up  
centerfielder.

Leftfielder:  
Move in toward third base.



## SITUATION #19

Double, possible triple  
to right-center field.  
Man on first base.

Pitcher:

Half way between first and home. Back up base at which play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home plate.

First Baseman:

Cut-off man to home.

\*Second Baseman:

Relay man to home or third.

\*Shortstop:

Trailer behind second baseman.  
Call play as it develops.

\*Line up for home (primary). If no play at home, line up third.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up rightfielder.

Rightfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up centerfielder.

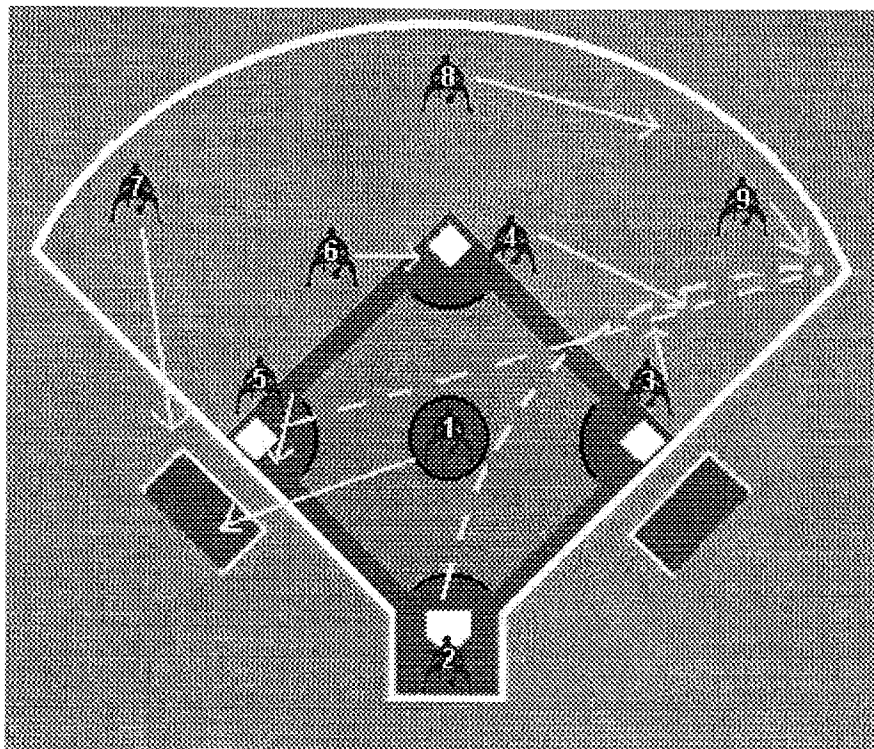
Leftfielder:

Move into area behind third base.



## SITUATION #20

Double down right field line. No one on base.



Pitcher:  
Bails up third base.

Third Baseman:  
Covers third base.

Catcher:  
Cover home.

Centerfielder:  
Bails up rightfielder.

First Baseman:  
Trails second baseman  
and calls play.

Rightfielder:  
Retrieves ball.

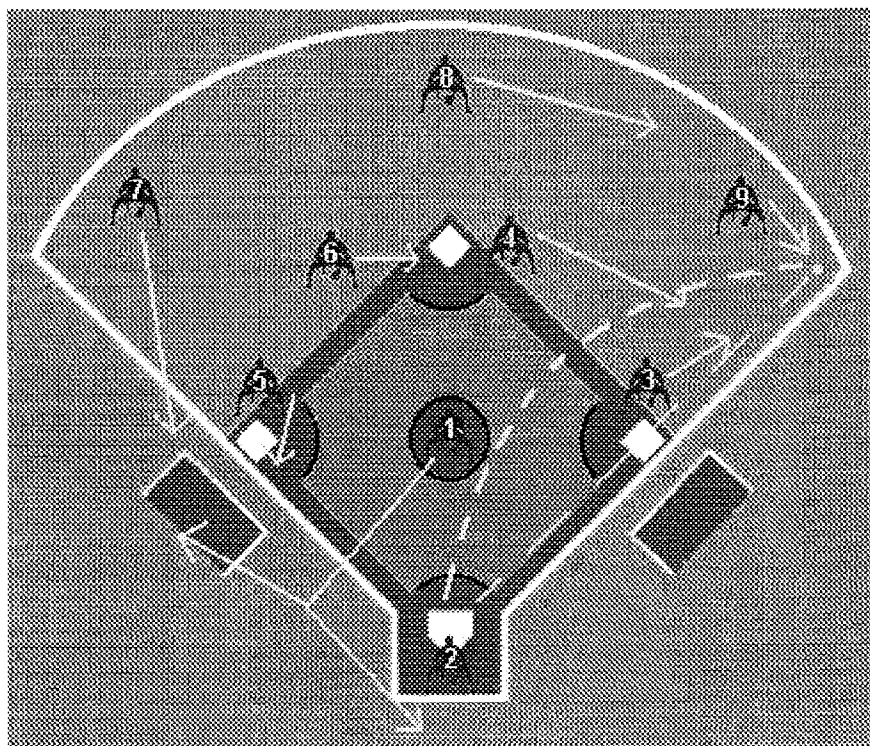
Second Baseman:  
Relay man to third base.

Leftfielder:  
Moves into area behind third base.

Shortstop:  
Covers second base.

## SITUATION #21

Double, possible triple  
down right field line.  
Man on first.



Pitcher:  
Half way between third and home. Back up base at which play develops.

Catcher:  
Cover home.

First Baseman:  
Trail second baseman, call play.

Second Baseman:  
Relay man to home or third base.

Shortstop:  
Cover second base.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third base.

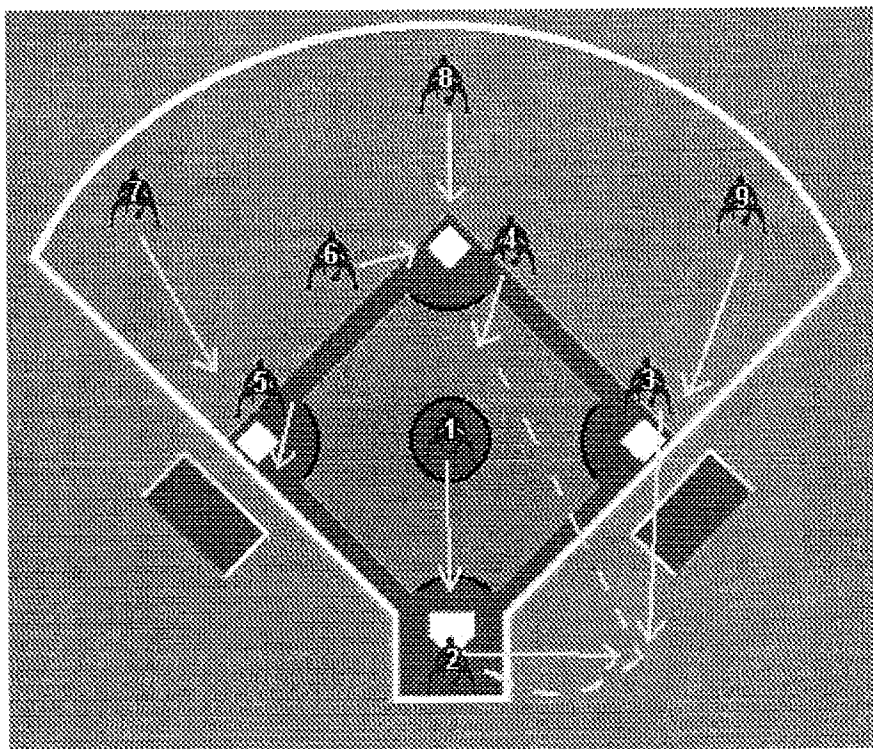
Centerfielder:  
Back up rightfielder.

Rightfielder:  
Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:  
Move into third base area.

## SITUATION #22

Pop fly behind home.  
Runners on first and third.



Pitcher:  
Cover home.

Catcher:  
Catch ball – throw  
to cut-off man.

First Baseman:  
Catch ball – throw  
to cut-off man.

Second Baseman:  
Cut-off man – react  
to runners.

Shortstop:  
Cover second base – call  
play for second baseman.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third base.

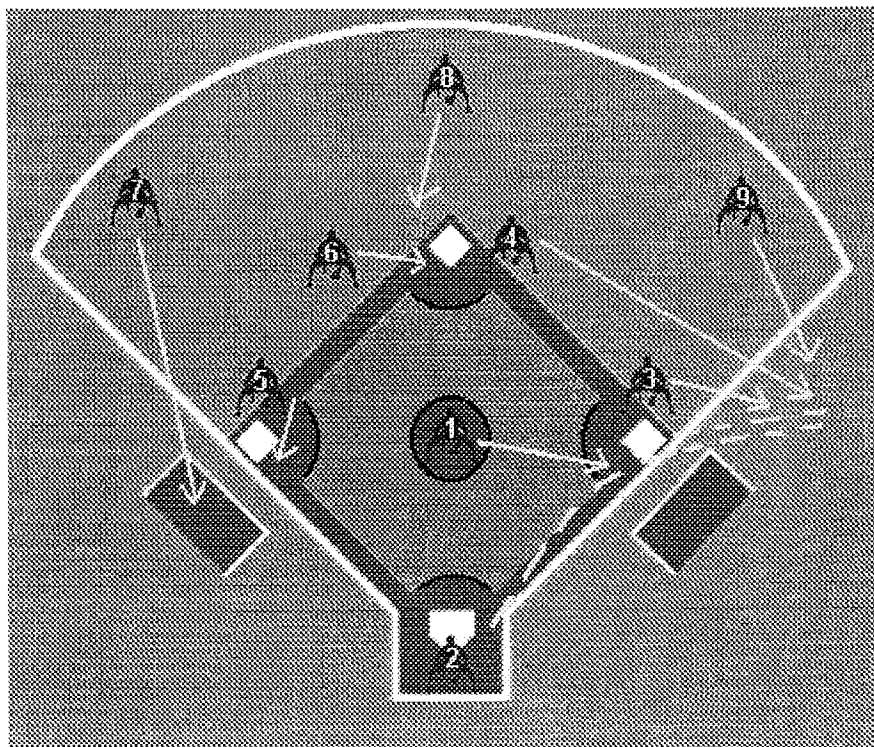
Rightfielder:  
Move to first base area.

Centerfielder:  
Back up second base.

Leftfielder:  
Back up third base.

## SITUATION #23

Pop fly behind first.  
Runners on first and  
third.



Pitcher:  
Cut-off man – inside  
first base bag.

Catcher:  
Cover home.

First Baseman:  
Catch ball – throw to  
cut-off man.

Second Baseman:  
Catch ball – throw to  
cut-off man.

Shortstop:  
Cover second base.

Third Baseman:  
Cover third.

Rightfielder:  
Move to pop up.

Centerfielder:  
Back up second base.

Leftfielder:  
Back up third base.