Most PIAA Districts begin their Baseball Play-offs with umpires using the 3-Man System. This bulletin will present a “Readers Digest” version of 3 umpire positioning and mechanics as presented in the NFHS Baseball Umpires Manual with a few PIAA adoptions.

Adding a 3rd umpire does not make each individual umpire’s job easier until the positioning and mechanics of the 3-Man System are understood by all. The 3-Man System is the most complicated because it is a blend of the 2 and 4 man systems.

Please study the system as presented and apply the techniques when working your games.

**PIAA Instructions for Working the 3-Man System**

**ABBREVIATIONS:** The plate umpire will be described as PU, the first base umpire as U1, and the third base umpire as U2.

**I. Pre – Game Duties.**

A. The Crew Chief should call his crew and confirm the assignment, umpire positions, and dress code. Discuss parking arrangements. Have a rule book, case book, District Rule Interpreter’s phone number, and make sure a second umpire has plate gear.

   B. Report to the game site at least 1 hour prior to game time.

   C. The Crew chief should report to the Game Director.

      1. Report that your crew is at the site.

      2. Determine the time at which they want your crew at home plate.

**II. Umpires Pre-game Talk.**

A. The crew chief will conduct the pre-game talk.
B. The following basics should be discussed:

1. Arrival on the field.
   a. The crew should walk an unfamiliar field to look for potential problems.
   b. Observe infield practice and check for uniform, jewelry, and facial paint problems.

2. Positions to be taken during:

   **Bench Decorum:**
   1. Absolutely no remarks or orchestrated chants directed towards the other team or their fans.
   2. All team personnel must be in the assigned bench area/dugout. Coaches and players are not to sit on buckets or stand out side of the assigned bench area.

   **3. Communication signals.**
   a. Infield Fly – Touch the brim of your cap.
   b. Time play – Touch your wrist.
   c. Possible Rotation – Both hands pointing to the base you are responsible for.
   d. Runners on 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} – Double tag up – Hit one fist on top of the other.
   e. Reverse rotation – Wave open hand behind back.
   f. Plate umpire stays home – Plate umpire points at the plate.

   With runners on 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} less than 2 out, situations (a), (c), (d), (e), and (f) are possible!
4. Field Coverage: Shaded sections determine areas of responsibilities for U1, U2, and PU

**No Runners, or runner on 3rd only**
U1 has the CF moving in or going back

**Runner(s) on 1st, 1st and 2nd, 1st and 3rd or bases loaded. U1 has CF moving in or going back**

**Runner(s) on 2nd or 2nd and 3rd**
U2 has the CF moving in or going back

**With 2 outs U1 will go back to the “A” position and U2 to the “C” position. It makes sense that the 3rd out will probably be at 1st base.**

**THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT FIELD COVERAGE**

a. The Plate Umpire oversees everything. He covers all errors.

b. When on the baseline, go out on all balls in your area - except sharp base hits.

c. When an umpire goes out, **HE STAYS OUT.** The other two will work the 2-man system.

d. **Umpires in the “B” and “C” positions never go out** – They just get angles.

e. The plate umpire has fair/foul calls up to the front edge of the bag when U1 and/or U2 are on the lines.
5. Basic Positions

No Runners or Runner on 3rd Only

Any force play situation at 2nd base or a runner(s) on 2nd or 2nd and 3rd with 2 outs.

6. Basic Rotation

No runners - ball hit to the outfield - no umpire goes out

U2 is responsible for plays on the batter at 2nd or 1st when U1 has moved towards the plate.

U1 would not start to the plate until the batter has committed to 2nd base.

7. Reverse Rotation

This can occur in any situation when the Plate Umpire is going to stay at home.

The plate umpire will stay home anytime there is a runner at 2nd base.

Exception: Runners on 1st and 2nd tagging on a fly ball.
8. Movement when an umpire goes out

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

a. When an umpire goes out HE STAYS OUT and the other two revert to the 2-man system
b. An umpire will never go out when in the B or C position.
c. With runners on 1st and 2nd tagging on a fly ball, if U1 goes out, the plate umpire will make the call at 3rd. If the ball is misplayed at 3rd, the plate umpire would also return to the plate for the call.