

CHALK TALK

The 'Staging Area' in the Two-Umpire System

The "staging area" is an important zone for the base umpire whenever there are runners on base. The staging area is just behind the pitcher's circle. It is approximately six feet wide and 22 feet long. Use of the staging area helps the base umpire keep the field in proper officiating balance in concert with the plate umpire. The base umpire must always use the pause, read and react technique to help decide how to best cover each play.

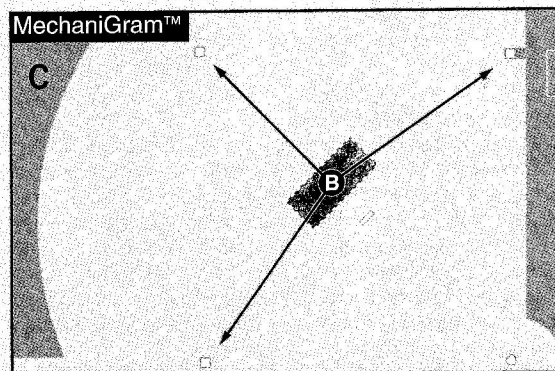
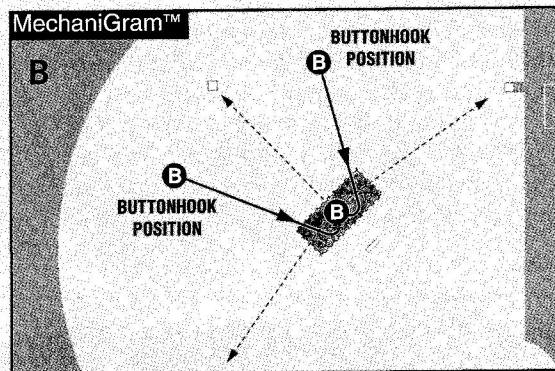
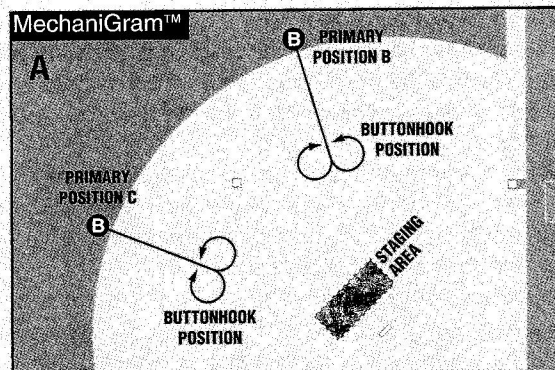
MechaniGram A shows each of the two approved primary positions for the base umpire depending on which bases are occupied by runners at the time of the pitch and how to move inside the diamond and buttonhook in the direction of the ball. MechaniGram B shows the umpire moving into the staging area and turning to a more open view of the playing field. MechaniGram B also shows the umpire moving from the staging area into the proper calling positions for each base.

When a ball is batted to the outfield and the base umpire does not go out on the ball, the base umpire, from the position behind the second baseman or shortstop, must move inside the diamond and buttonhook in the direction of the ball. If a play initially develops that is the responsibility of the base umpire, the base umpire must move toward the play and obtain the best possible unobstructed angle (MechaniGram C).

If the play is a routine fly ball, the base umpire, making sure not to interfere with any player, should slide into the staging area to open up the view of the playing field. The base umpire will then take a secondary read on the developing play. From the staging area, the base umpire can easily see any tag ups and move to make a call at any base.

The staging area can also be used to open up the field on extra-base hits, when there are multiple runners and when the base umpire is uncertain where the play might occur.

The staging area can also be a lifesaver when a base umpire is unsure which way to go to cover a play. When that happens, the umpire should move into the staging area, find the ball, let the ball take the umpire to the play, look to see if another umpire is on the call, and either fade away or make the call depending on which umpire has the call.



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