

# DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

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## SOME BASICS:

PREVENT THE NEED TO PLAY DEFENSE, when possible:

- a) **Don't let them get on**
- b) **Don't let them hurt you if they do**



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**The 3 B's of DEFENSIVE COVERAGE:**

*(Listed in order of importance and responsibility):*

**1) Ball**

**2) Base**

**3) Backup**



## DEFENSIVE STRATEGY – Some Basics:

### **BUNT DEFENSIVE:** *Typical vs. Logical*

**Typical:** Catcher covers, **CALLS** and covers

**Logical:** Catcher covers, **LISTENS** and covers



## DEFENSIVE STRATEGY – Some Basics:

### 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> DEFENSE: *Typical vs. Logical*

**Typical:** 2<sup>nd</sup> cuts across infield for throw from catcher

**Logical:** 2<sup>nd</sup> receives throw in baseline



## DEFENSIVE STRATEGY – Some Basics:

### STOP GAME-BREAKER THROWS:

Runner is 2 feet or less from a base



### 2 OUTS, RUNNER ON 1<sup>st</sup>, GROUND BALL TO SS:

Make the force at 2<sup>nd</sup>

Avoid throwing across infield

### RUNNER ON 1<sup>st</sup>, SHORT BALL HIT UP MIDDLE (ground):

Look for force at 2<sup>nd</sup>

**FORCE THEM TO DO THEIR #2 OPTION:**

Defensively take away their #1 intent

**DON'T MAKE YOUR INFIELDBERS TOO DEEP:**

Slap Defense

Runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> – key run

Bunt Defense

Winning Run on 3<sup>rd</sup> – less than 2 outs (OF too)

**KEEP THE LATE INNING LEAD:** (9 outs left – 5<sup>th</sup> inning or later – 5 or more run lead):

Outfielders play 3 steps in to prevent blooper hits

SS and 2nd play back near grass to eliminate last 9 outs

**CLOSE GAME – 4<sup>TH</sup> INNING ON – HAVE PITCHER WARMING UP:**

Don't get caught by surprise

Make sure you've told all pitchers this throughout the season

**LATE IN A VERY CLOSE GAME:**

Have catcher slow down the pace

Helps keep your pitcher from rushing and causing mistakes

**SCORE WHEN YOU CAN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN!!**

- *In 65% Of Games – The Winning Team Scores More Runs In One Inning Than The Losing Team Scores The Entire Game!*
- SCORE WHEN YOU CAN, AS MANY AS YOU CAN!

## DEFENSIVE STRATEGY – Some Basics:

### 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> DEFENSE – Make the offense **hit/bunt** to score if:

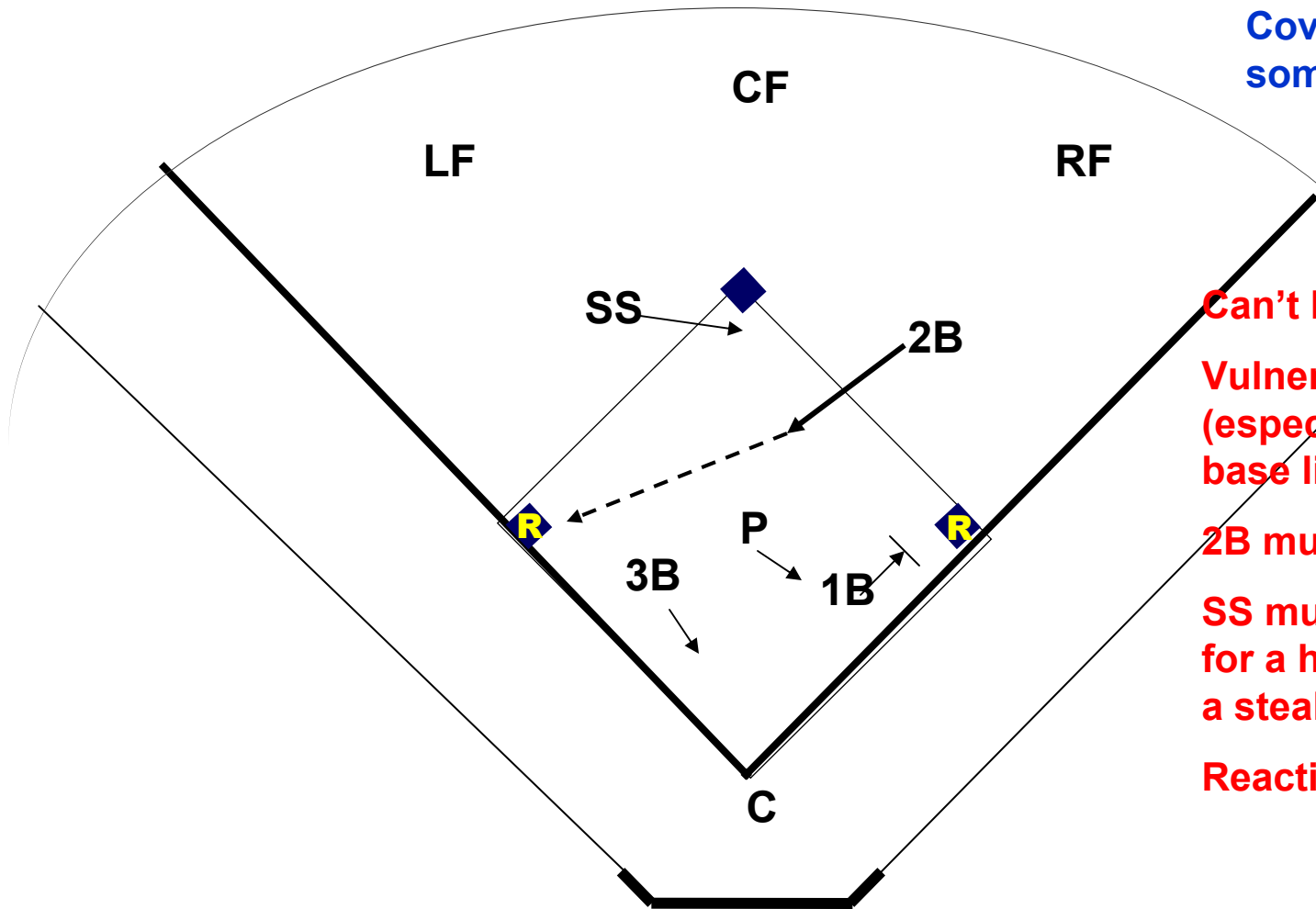
- Your pitcher is dominating.
- Your defense is prone to commit errors in this situation.
- A weak batter is at the plate and/or on deck.
- The run that at 1st is not significant.



## 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> - 2B cuts across



Covers everything somewhat.



Can't hold the runners  
Vulnerable to bunt  
(especially down the 1<sup>st</sup>  
base line)

2B must read R3

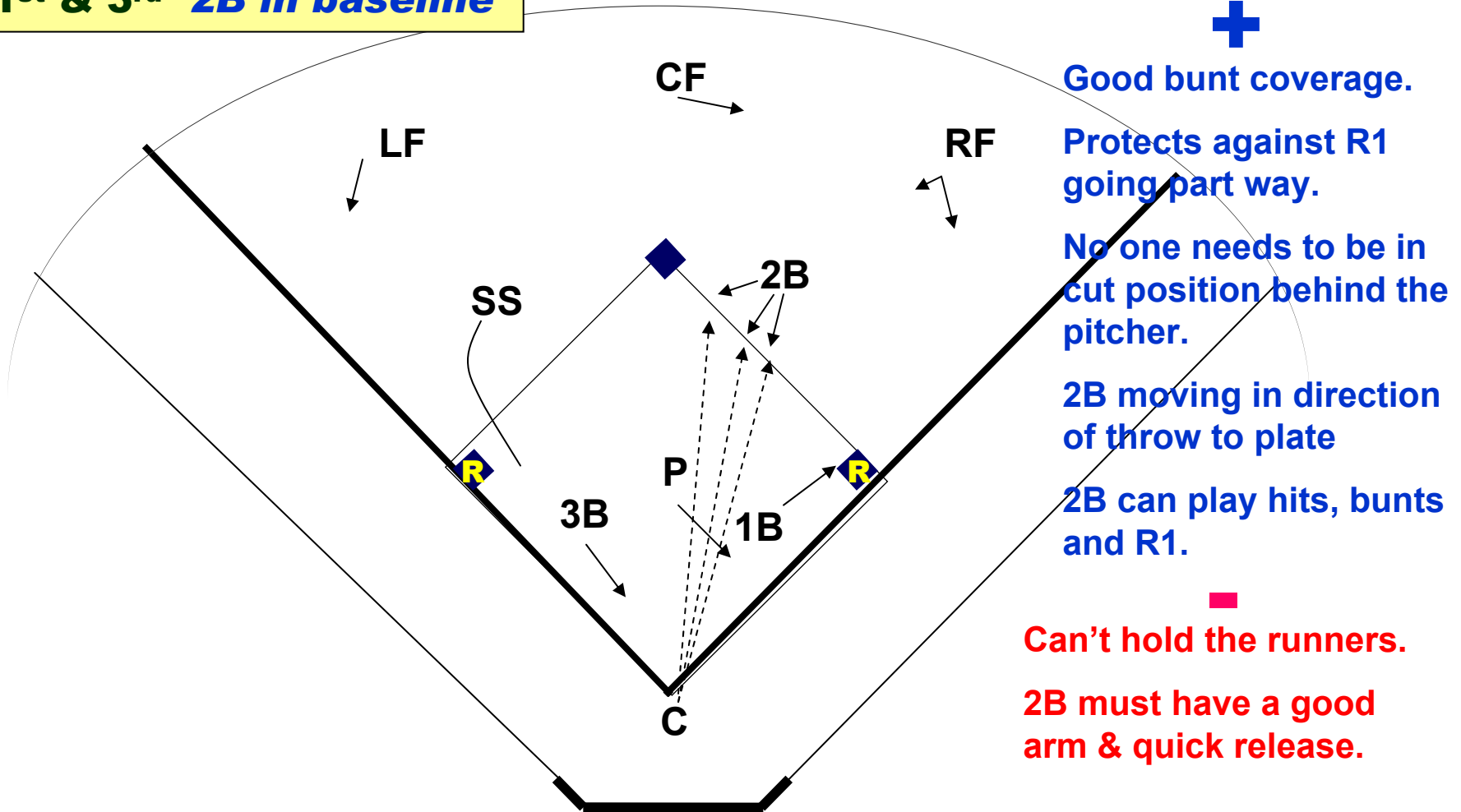
SS must play the batter  
for a hit and runners for  
a steal.

Reactive

## When to Use 2B Cuts Across

- The offense is expected to hit away.
- You don't know what the offense has planned and you want to be fairly well prepared for anything.

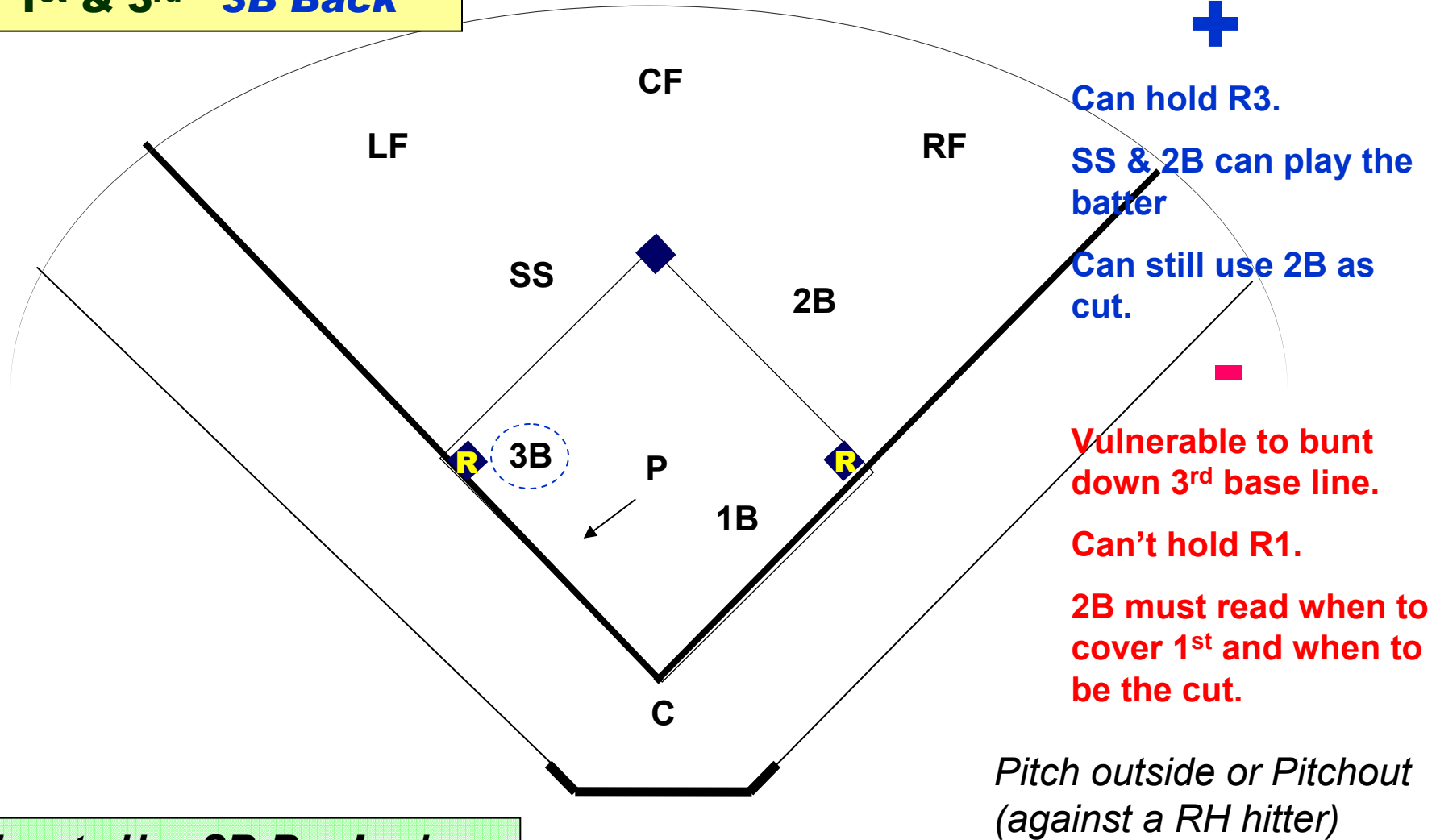
## 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> - 2B in baseline



## When to Use 2B in Baseline

- The offense wants to use the trail runner as a decoy having her get caught in a rundown.
- The Batter walks
- 2B needs to be in position to handle a hit, cover for a bunt, or receive a throw from the catcher and return throw to the plate for a play on the lead runner should she attempt to score.

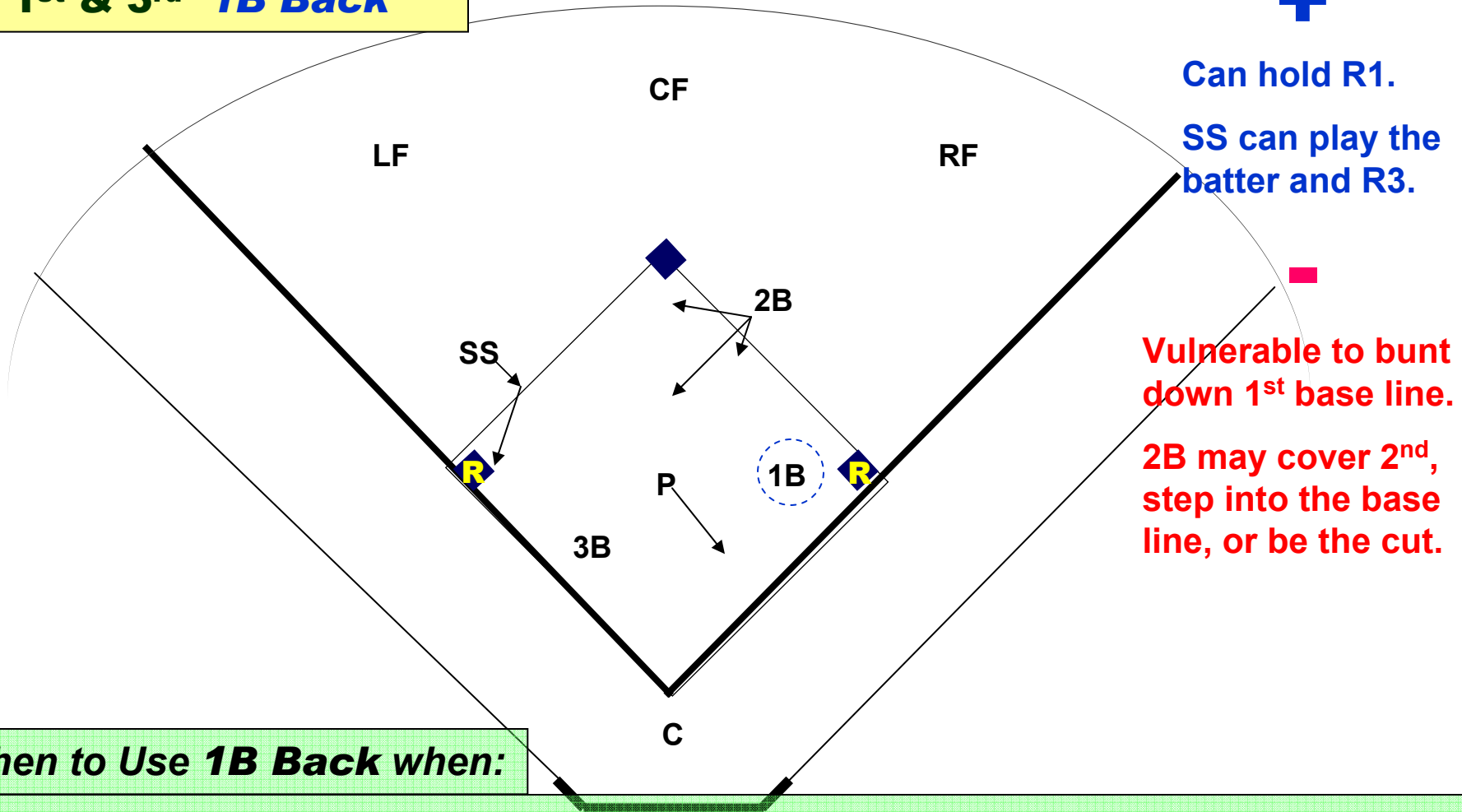
## 1st & 3rd - 3B Back



### When to Use 3B Back when:

- You expect the offense to hit away.
- Squeeze bunt is low percentage - when the batter has two strikes, there are two outs, the offense is behind by a lot with few outs left in the game.
- The batter is either a poor bunter or a very good hitter.

## 1st & 3rd - 1B Back



### When to Use 1B Back when:

- You expect them to hit away w/ strong, left-hand pull hitter at the plate.
- Squeeze bunt is low percentage - when the batter has two strikes, there are two outs, the offense is behind by a lot with few outs left in the game
- 2B has good game sense and very good arm, and you want her to have the option to cover 2nd for a straight steal, step into the baseline to counter a delay, or move into cut position for a play on the lead runner. This frees the SS to play the batter w/o worrying about steal coverage of 2nd, and allows her to be in position to hold the lead runner at third, or even pick her off.

## DEFENSIVE STRATEGY – Some Basics:

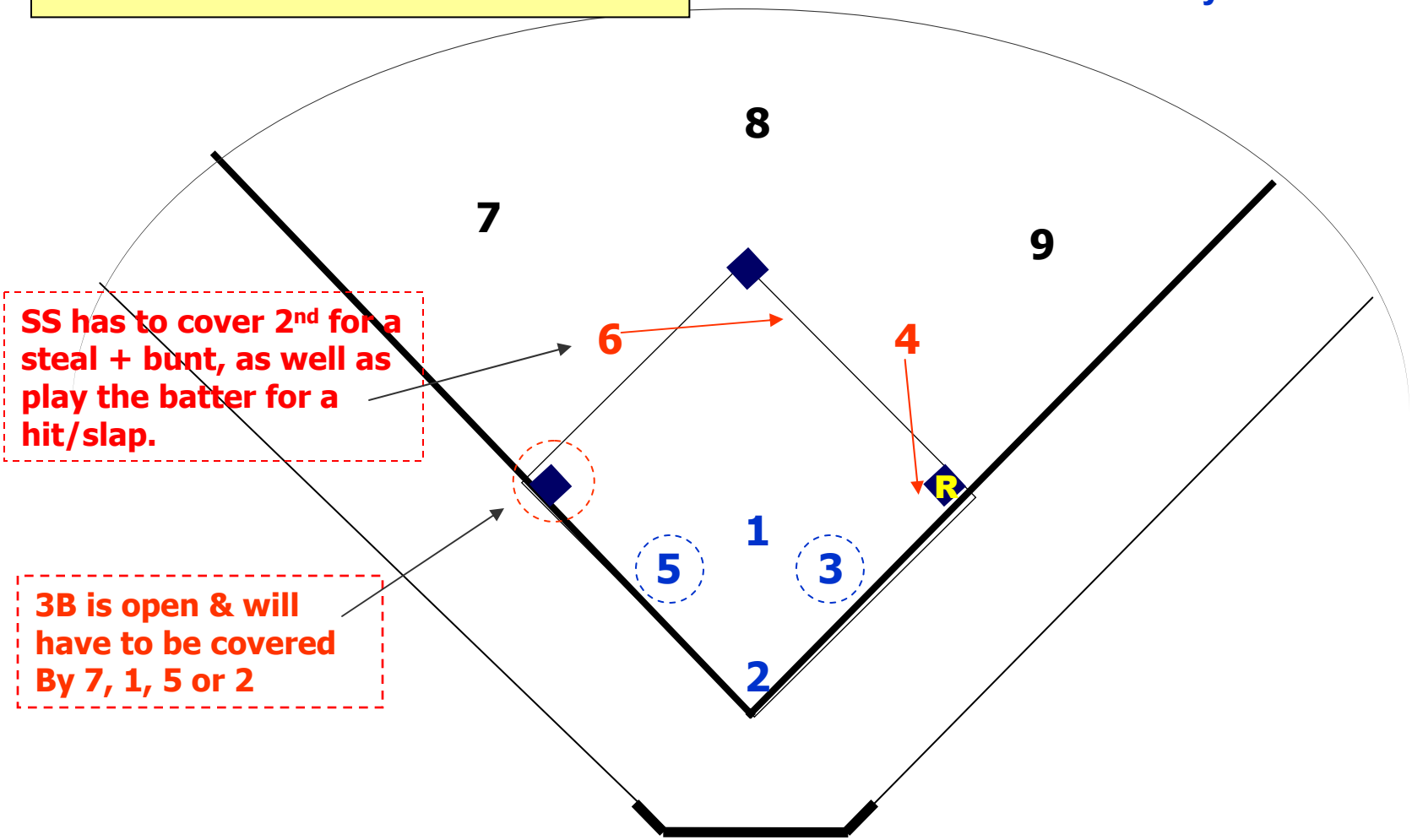
### 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Situations:

- Runner at 3rd, batter walks and keeps running to 2nd **2B in Baseline**
- The hitter is very weak **1B Back**
- 2 outs **3B in Back**
- 1 out **Most Confident & Likely Coverage**
- 7th inning and 1 out – score is tied, batters 3,4,5 coming up **3B in Back**



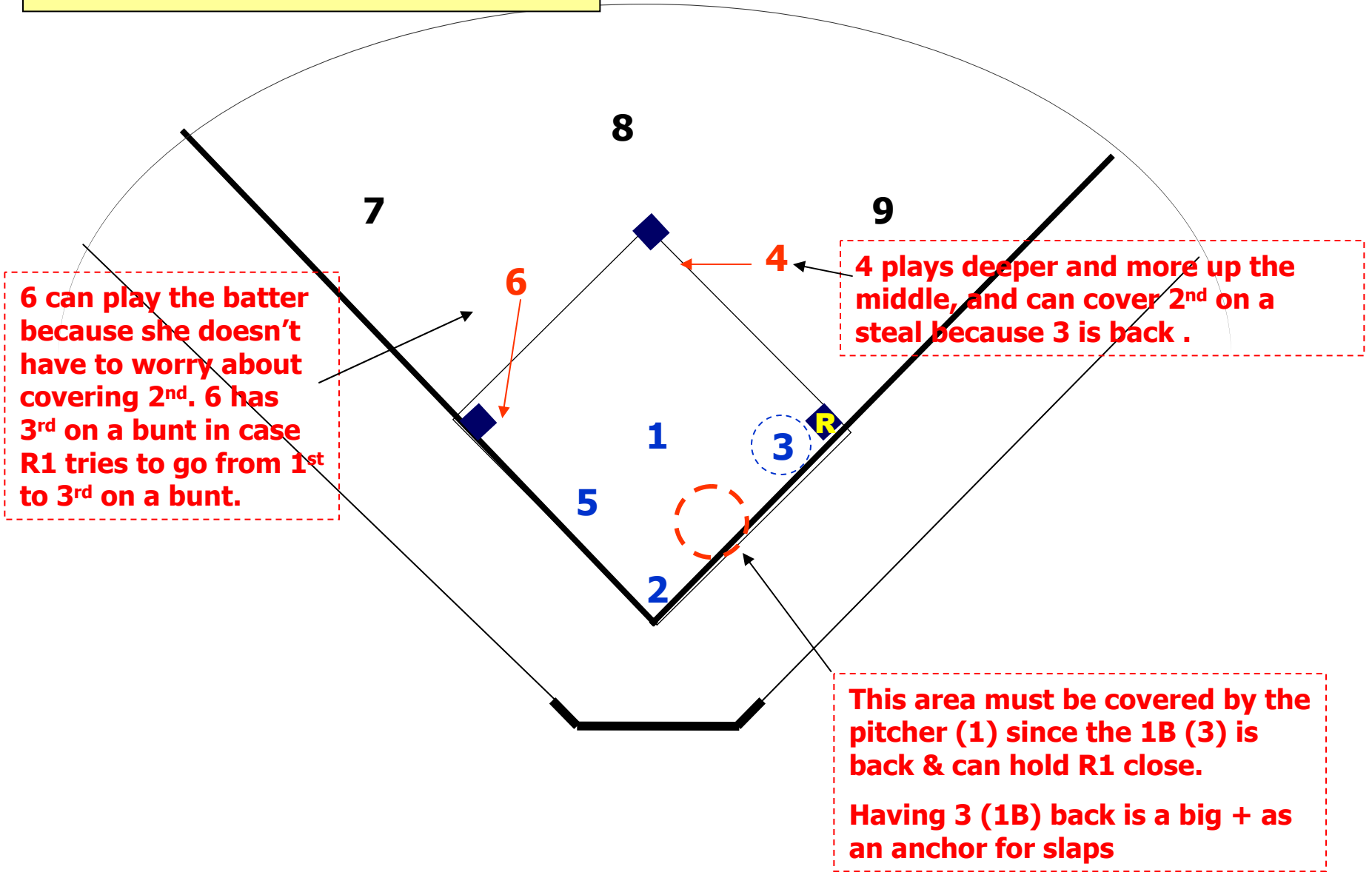
**BUNT COVERAGE – R on 1st**  
*Corners In*

Only 2 Bases covered



**BUNT COVERAGE – R on 1st**  
*1B Back*

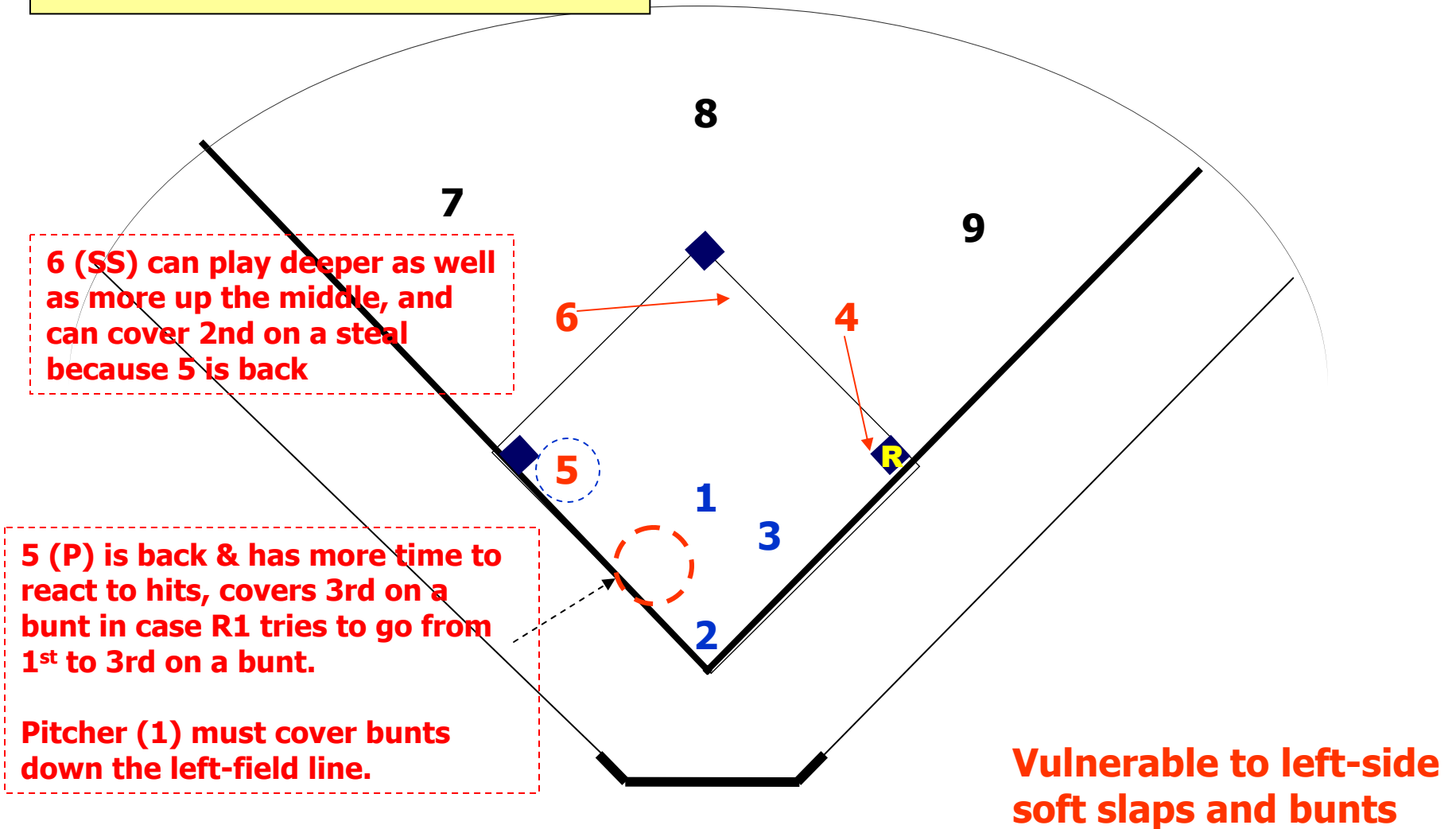
3 Bases covered



# BUNT COVERAGE – R on 1st

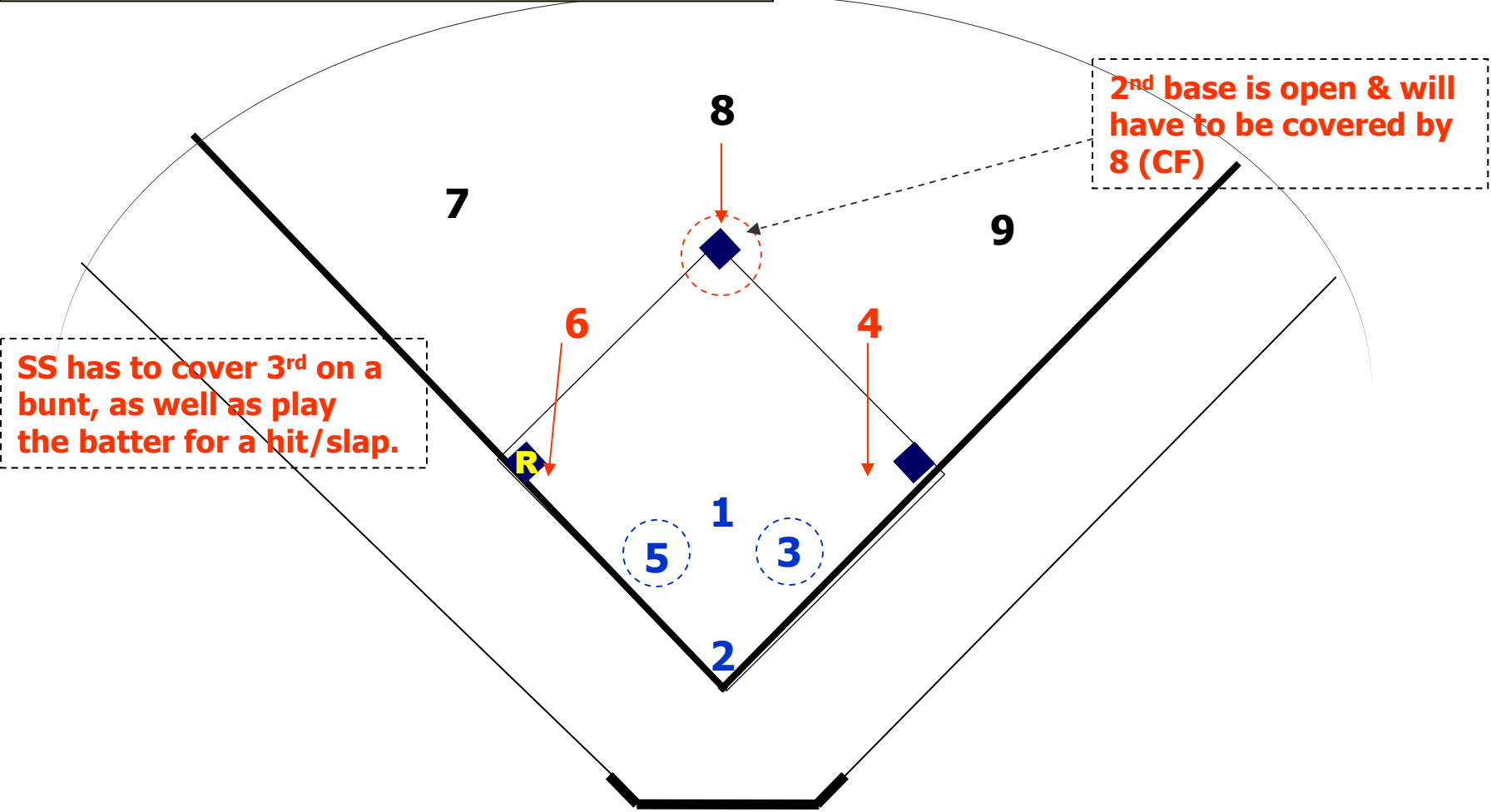
*3B Back*

3 Bases covered



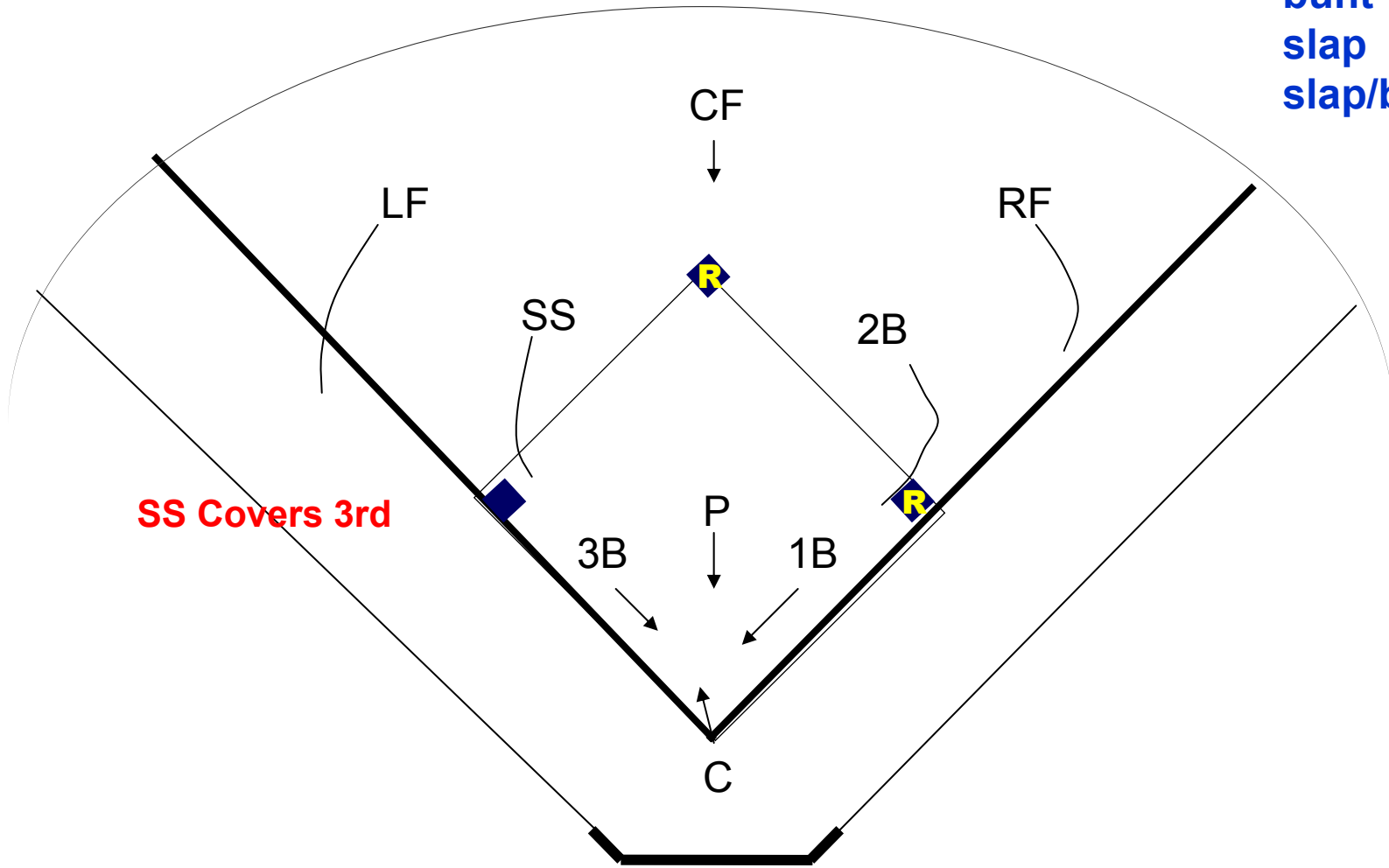
**BUNT COVERAGE – R on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1 out**  
*Possible Squeeze*

**2 Bases Covered**



**BUNT COVERAGE – R on 1<sup>st</sup> & 2nd, 0 out**

Fake:  
bunt  
slap  
slap/bunt

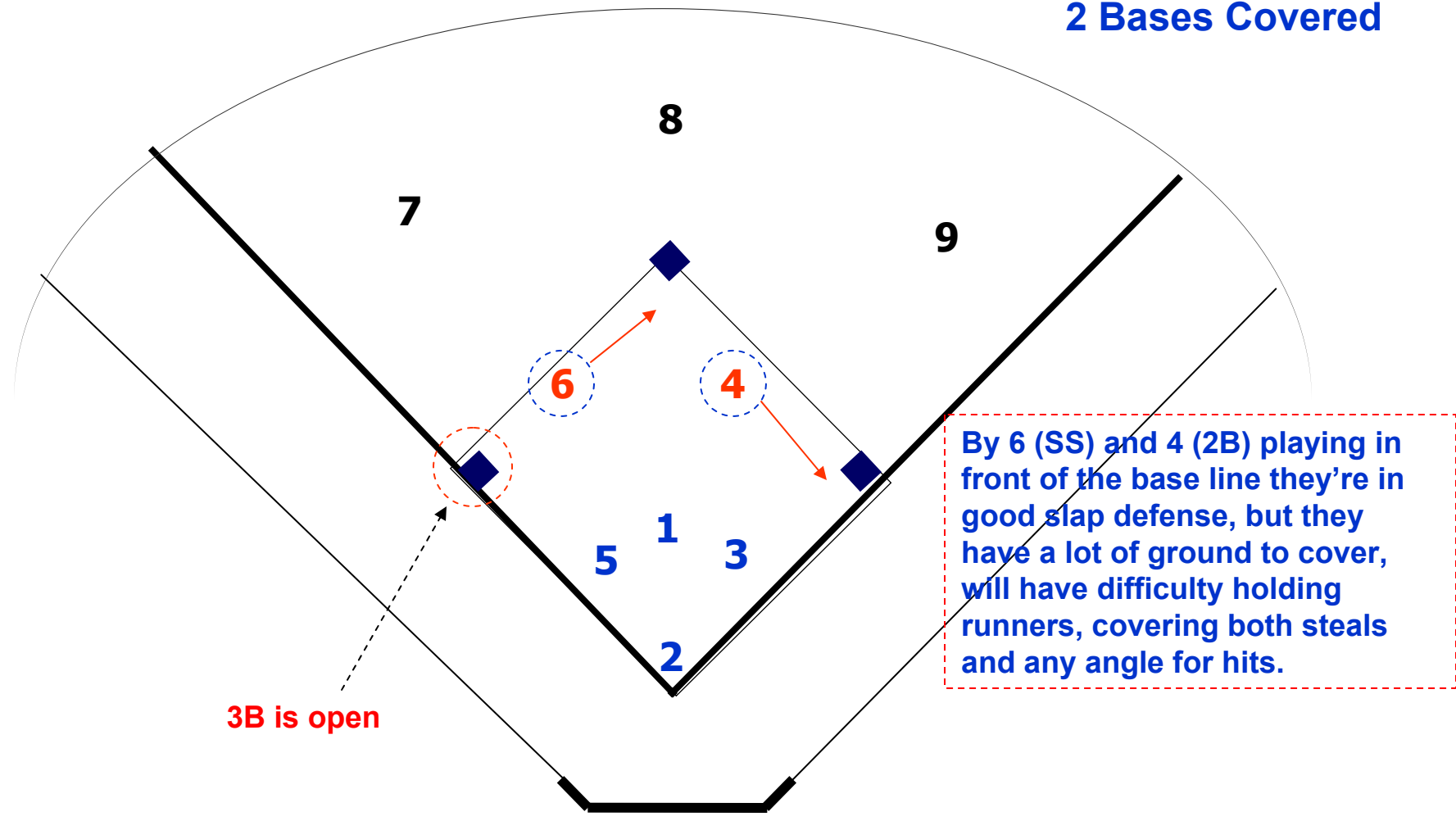


# SLAP COVERAGE – RUNNER on 3rd



# SLAP COVERAGE – Middle Infield In front of Baseline

2 Bases Covered



3B is open

By 6 (SS) and 4 (2B) playing in front of the base line they're in good slap defense, but they have a lot of ground to cover, will have difficulty holding runners, covering both steals and any angle for hits.

# SLAP COVERAGE – 1B (3) Next to Pitcher (1)



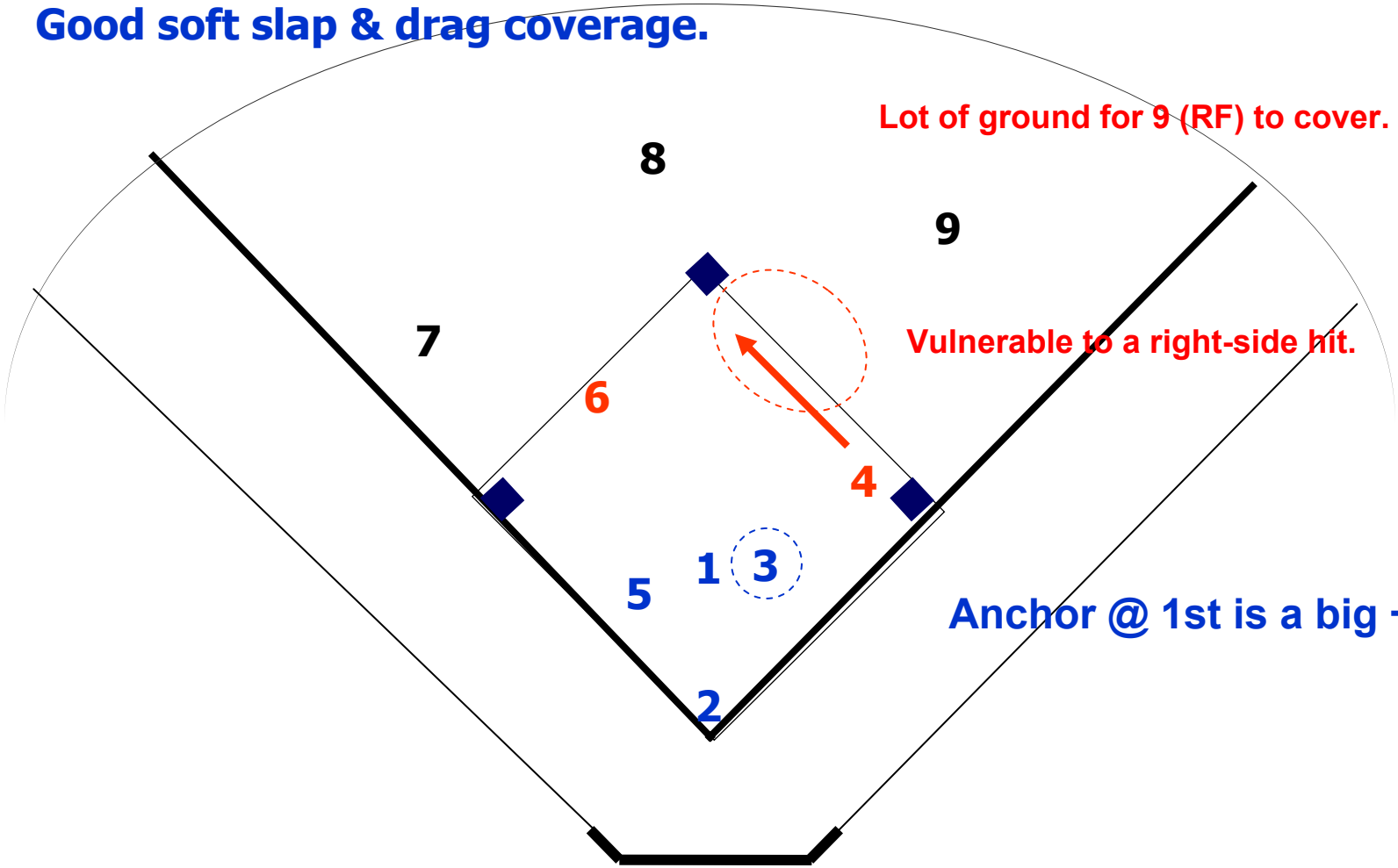
# SLAP COVERAGE – 1B (3) Next to Pitcher (1)

Good soft slap & drag coverage.

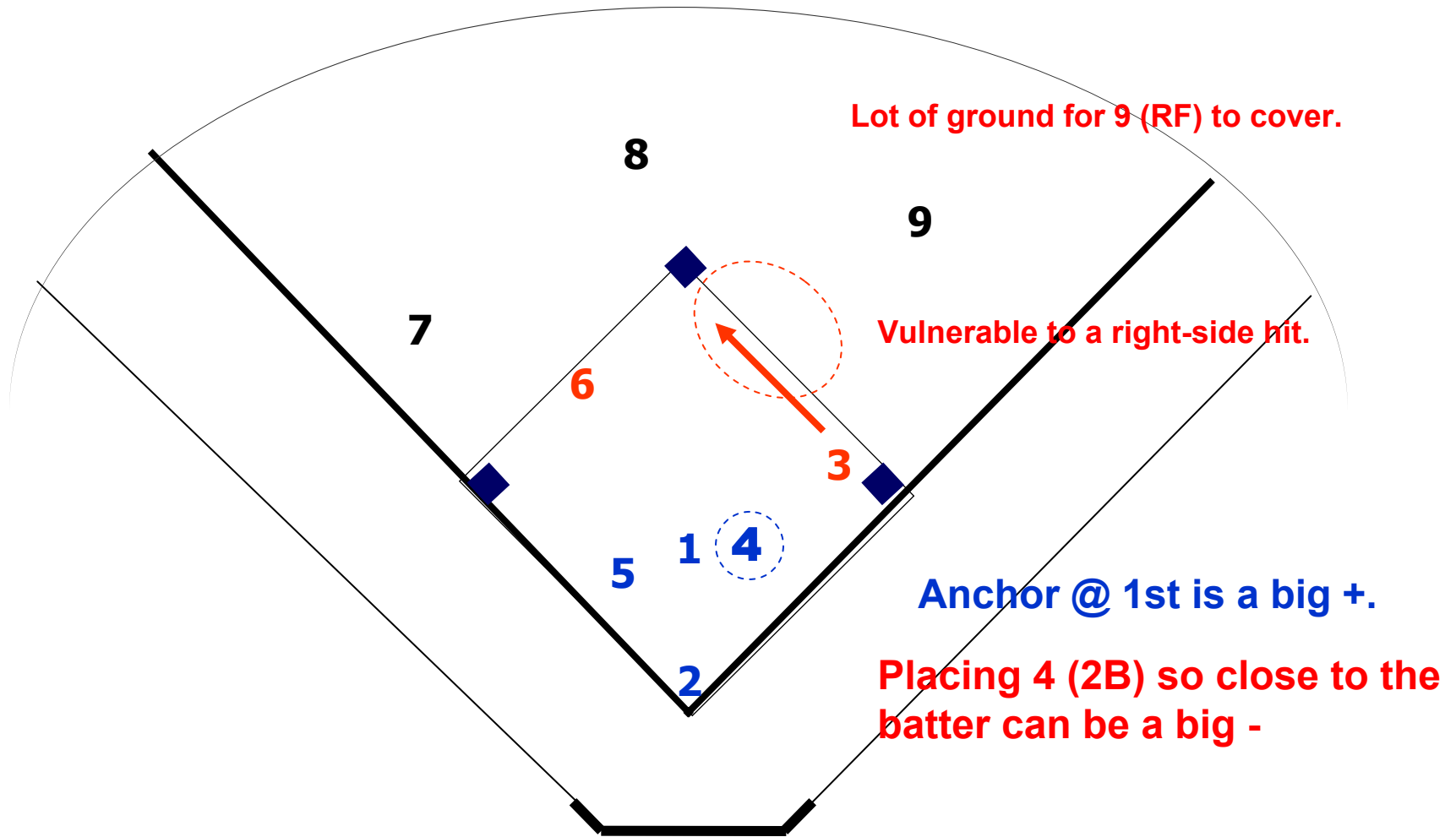
Lot of ground for 9 (RF) to cover.

Vulnerable to a right-side hit.

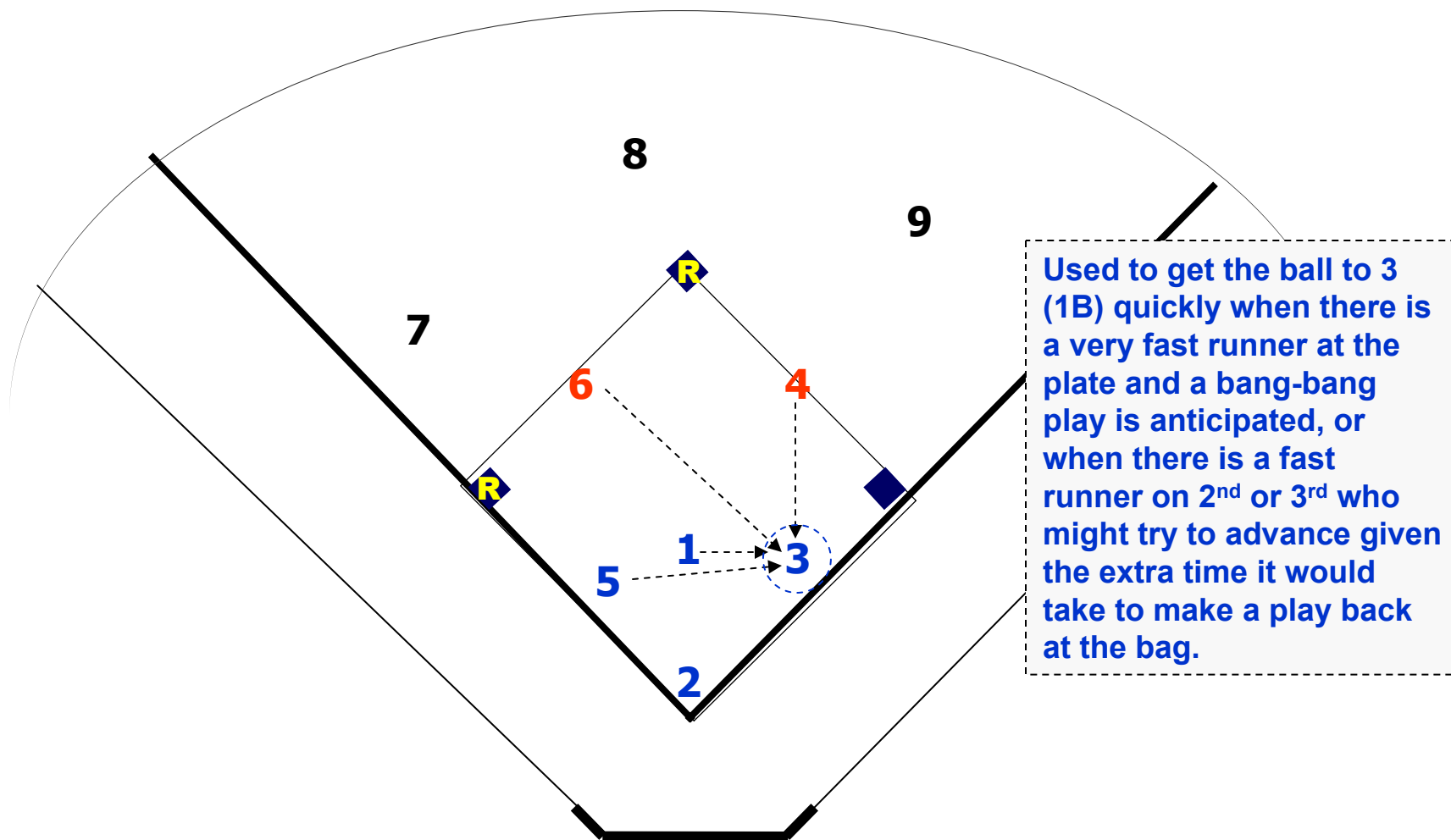
Anchor @ 1st is a big +.



# SLAP COVERAGE – 2B (4) Next to Pitcher (1)



## SLAP COVERAGE – Corners In, Throw Up Line for Tag



*This is called before a pitch, or even on the field as a play is developing.*

# SLAP COVERAGE – Regular Coverage

