

Understanding Illegal Alignment

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Topics

- Alignment – why do we care?
- What is illegal alignment?
- How/When do we call a foul?
- Translating the rules to a diagram
- Translating from positions to players
- What about the libero?
- Player Tracking: not just for illegal alignment
- Questions and Wrap-up

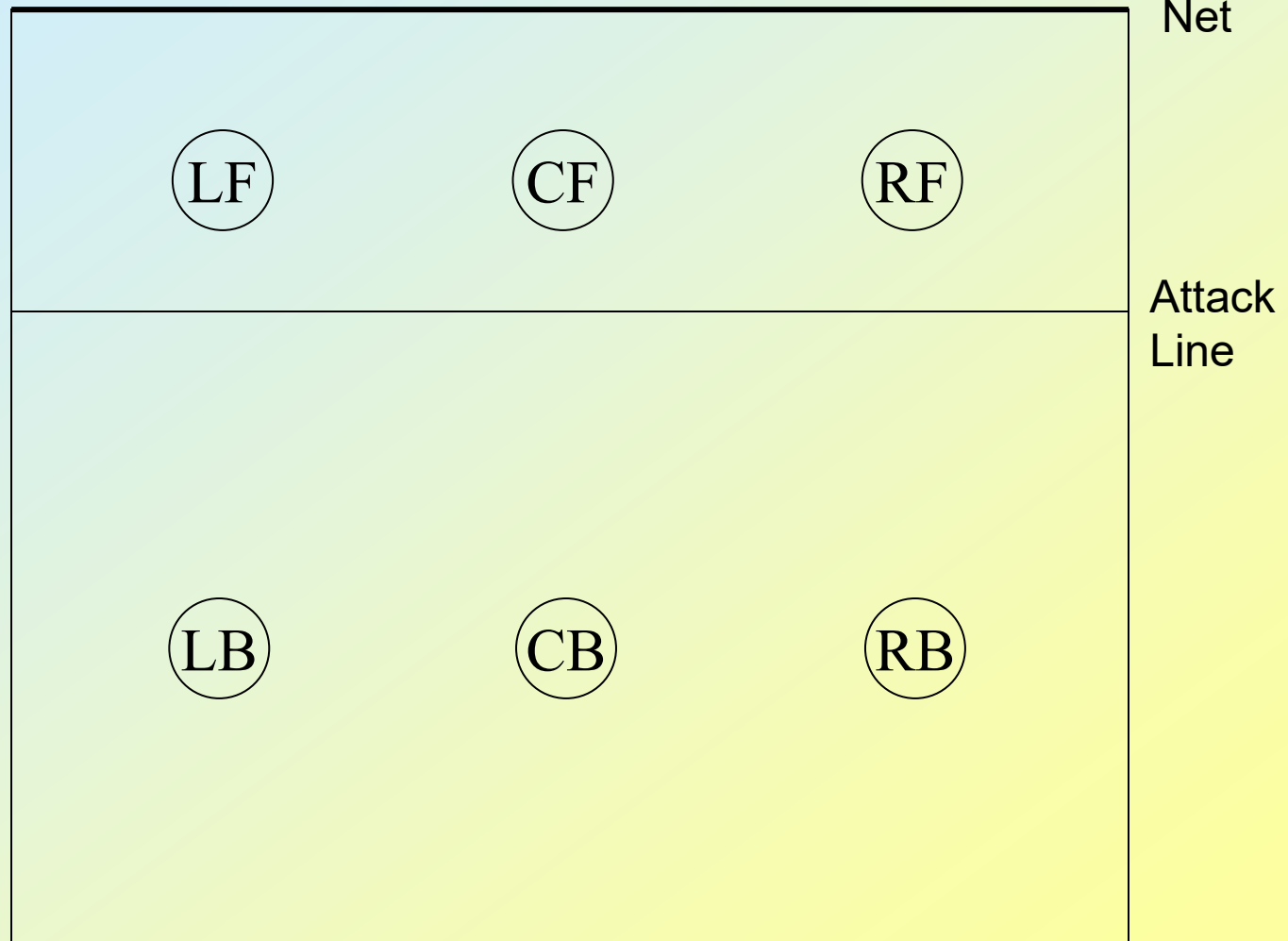
Alignment – Why Do We Care?

- Alignment Premise
 - Players must be in the proper positions relative to each other at the contact of the serve
- Why?
 - Rotational concept: Want players in a variety of positions for both defensive and offensive purposes
 - Different servers
 - Front Row/Back Row
 - Different serve receivers

Alignment – The Rule (1)

- Basics:
 - Three front row players: left front (LF), center front (CF), and right front (RF)
 - Three back row players: left back (LB), center back (CB), and right back (RB)

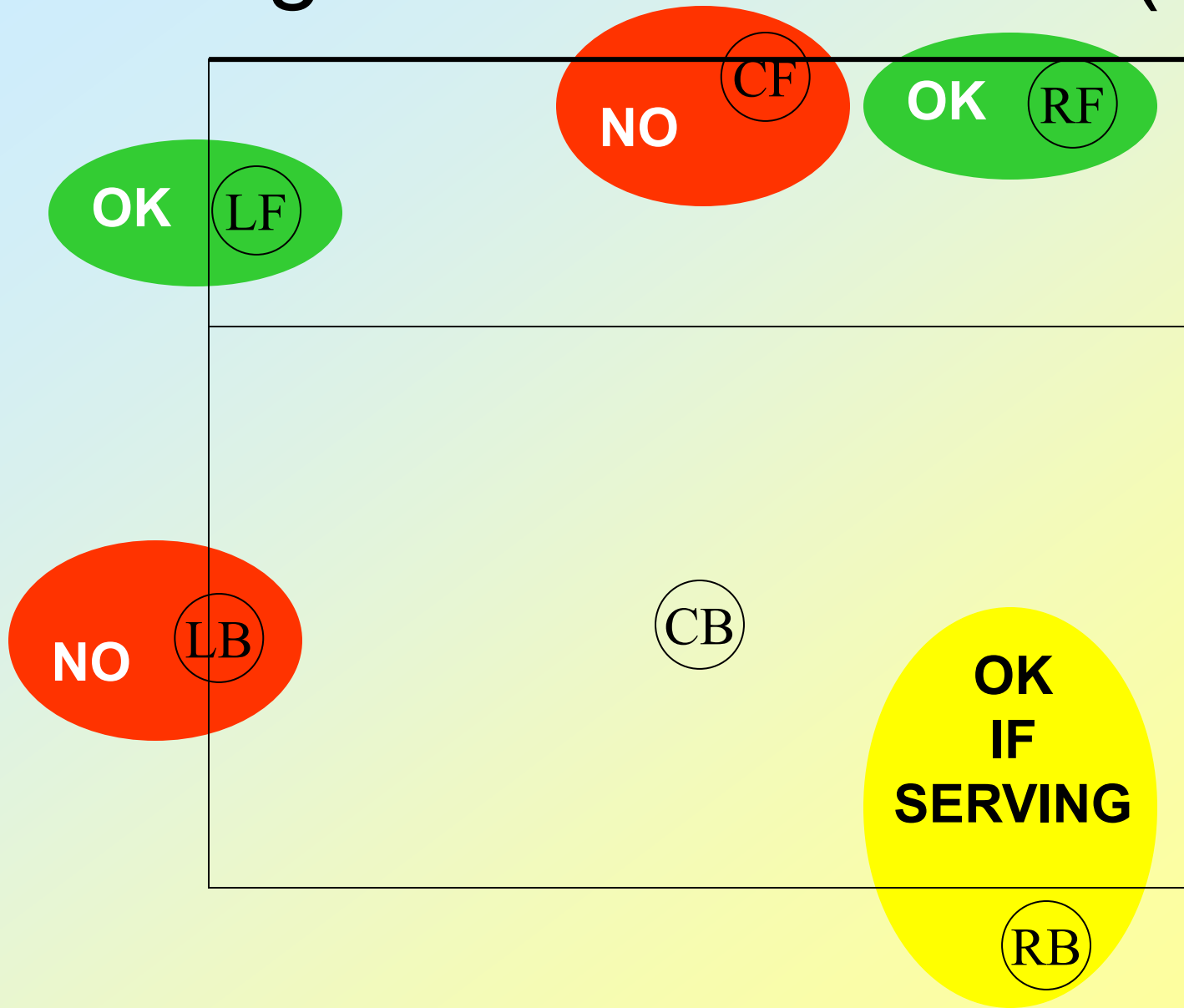
Alignment – The Rule (1)



Alignment – The Rule (2)

- At the moment of serve, all players, except for the server and including the libero, shall be within the team's playing area and may be in contact with the boundary lines or center line, but may not have any part of the body touching the floor outside those lines.

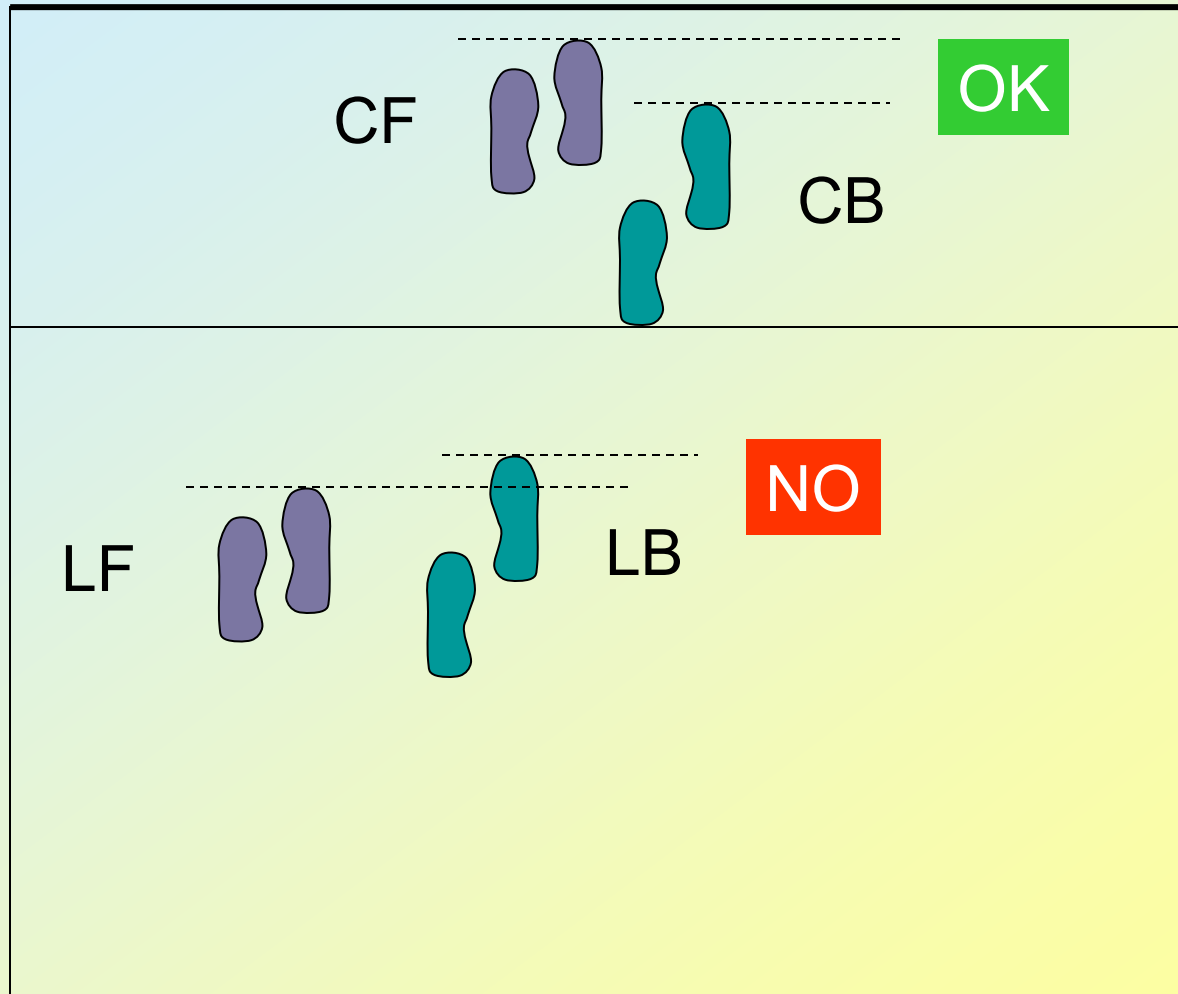
Alignment – The Rule (2)



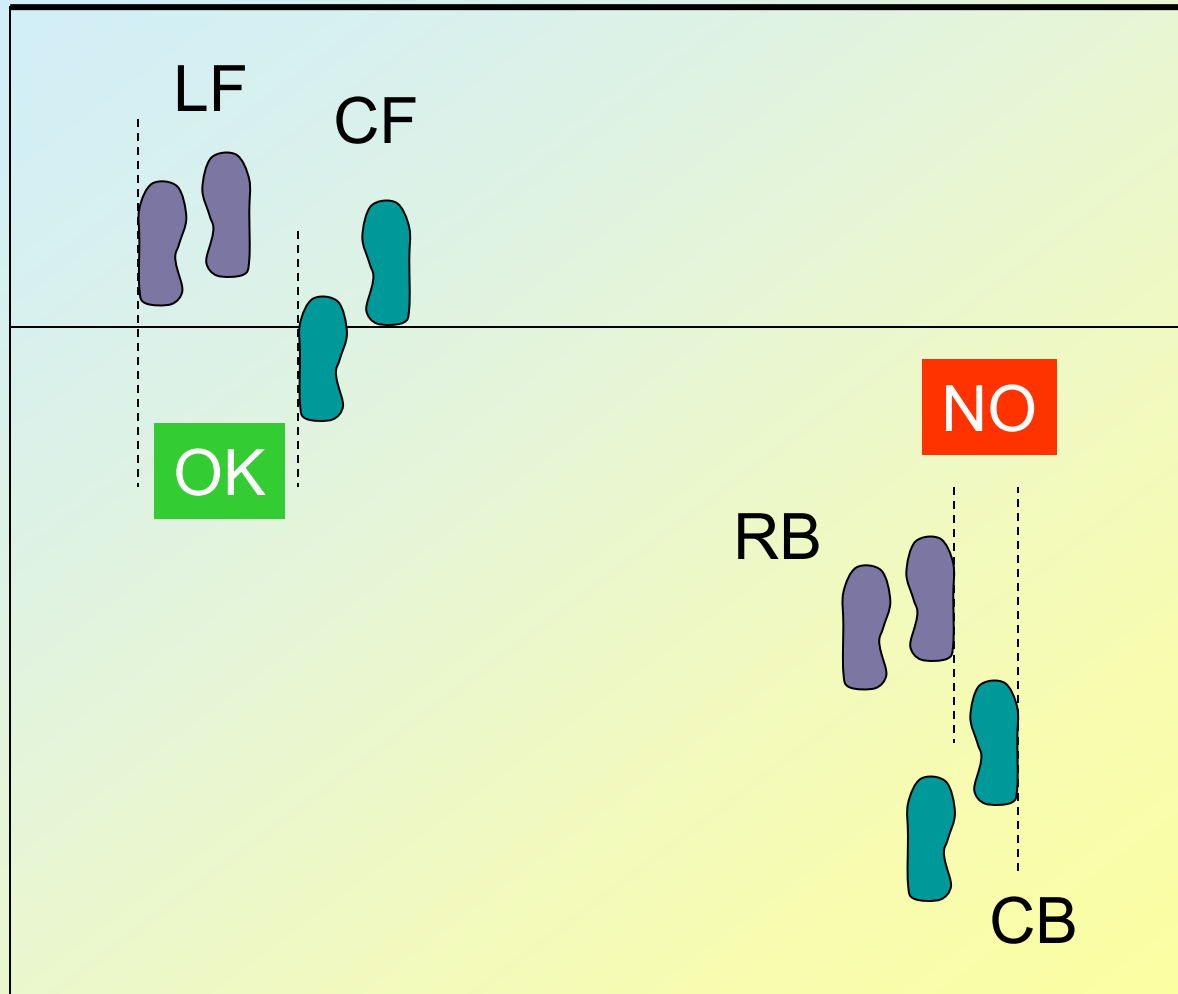
Alignment – The Rule (3)

- At the moment of serve, all players shall be in correct serving order.
- Right side player must be closer to right sideline than corresponding center player.
- Left side player must be closer to left sideline than corresponding center player.
- Front row player must be closer to center line than corresponding back row player.
- Judge foot positions only

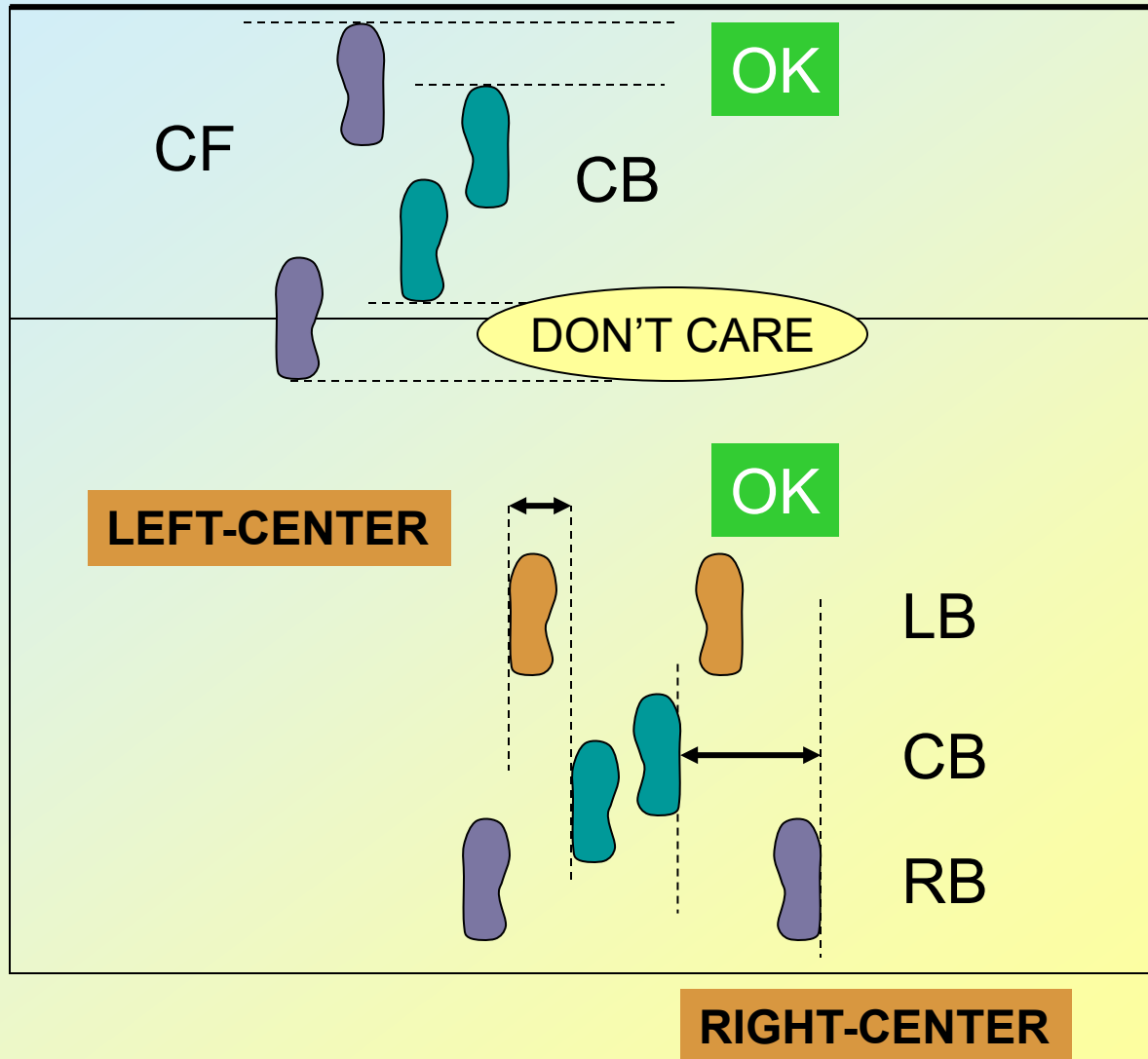
Alignment – The Rule (3)



Alignment – The Rule (3)



Alignment – The Rule (3)



Making The Call

- At the moment of serve, all players shall be in correct serving order.
- Whistle upon service contact
- RB is not considered for serving team
- Referee judges serving team alignment
- Umpire judges receiving team alignment

Making The Call

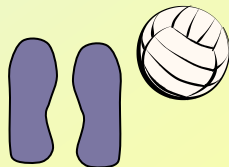
OK FOR SERVING TEAM

LB



CB

RB



We don't consider
the server's position
when judging alignment

Alignment – At Contact

WHERE ARE THEY
POSITIONED WHEN
THE SERVE IS CONTACTED?

RF

RB

VERY
BAD

VERY
CLOSE

NO
PROBLEM

Making The Call (2)

- Illegal alignment is most often called by the umpire against the receiving team
- Do not patrol the sidelines to determine if players overlap illegally
- “Even” is technically illegal, but NEVER called
- Question to consider on close cases: Is advantage being gained?

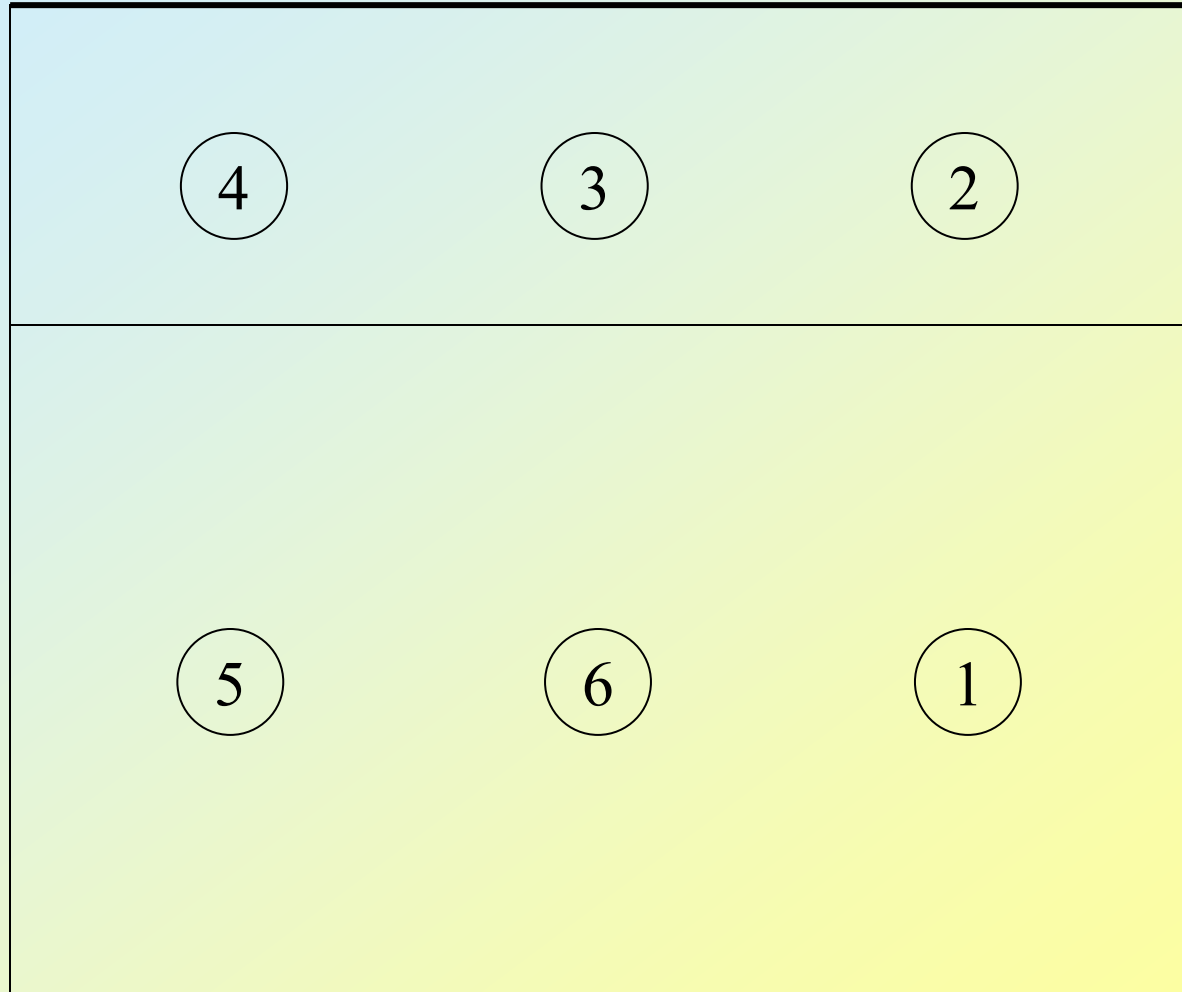
Making The Call (3)

- Can do some preventive officiating:
 - Player standing slightly out of bounds
 - Close call with player leaving early
- Do NOT make “gotcha” calls
- Signal is a circular motion of the entire hand with the arm extended

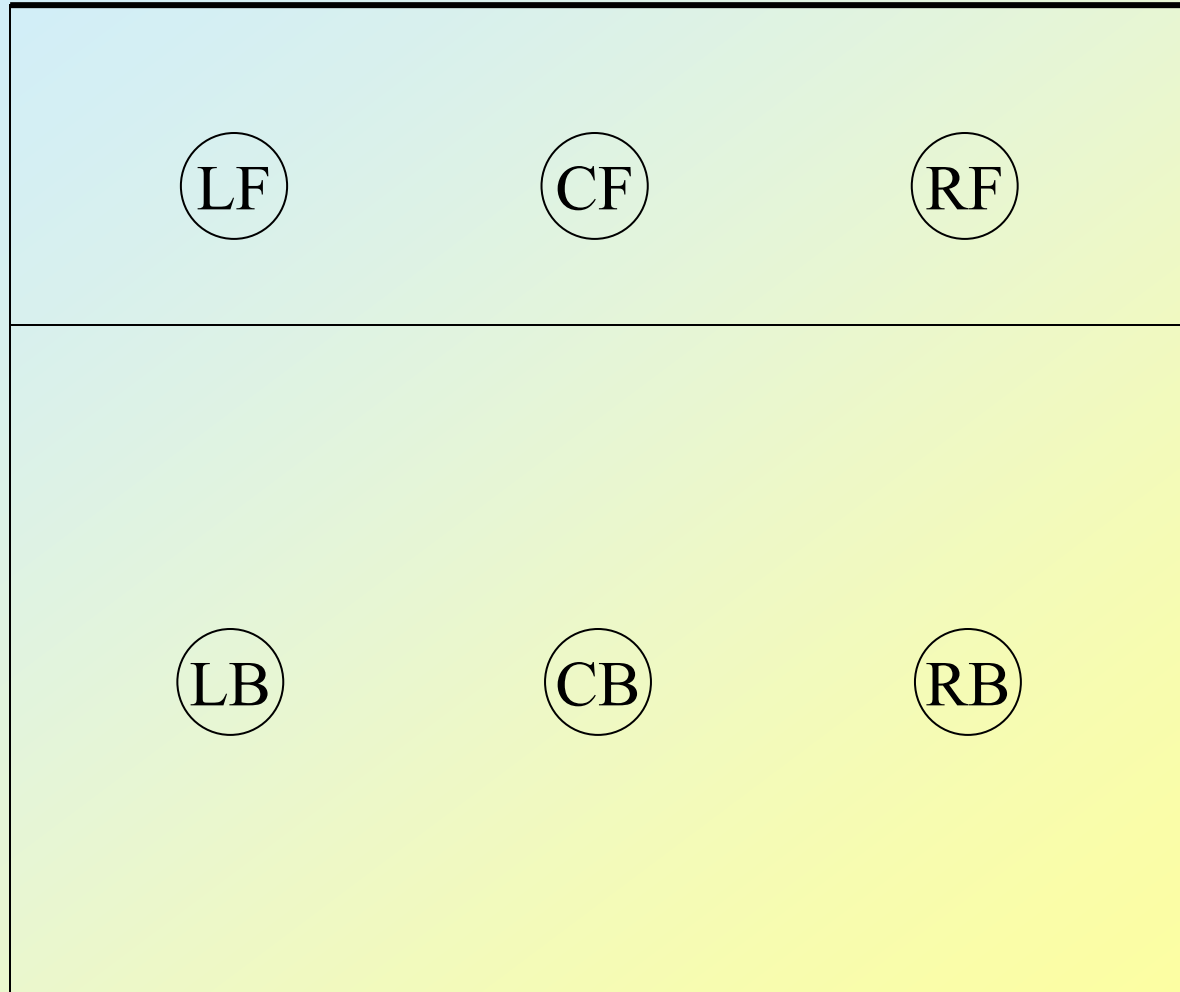
Evaluating Diagrams

- Look at individual pairs of players for possible overlaps
- Formations typically are created to optimize the positions of the setter and/or primary passers
- Develop a strategy for assessing all players:
 - Left to Right
 - Front to Back

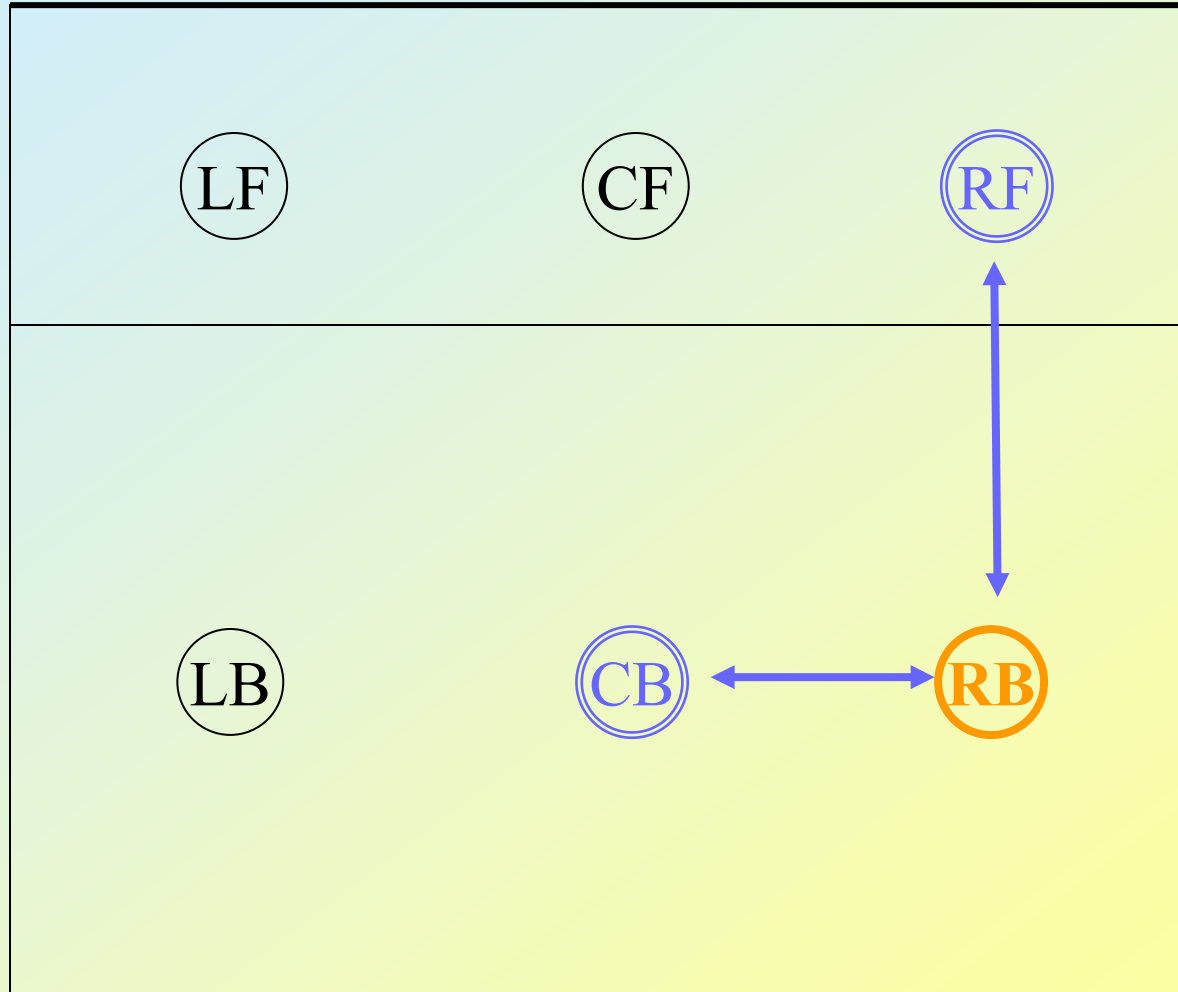
Zones



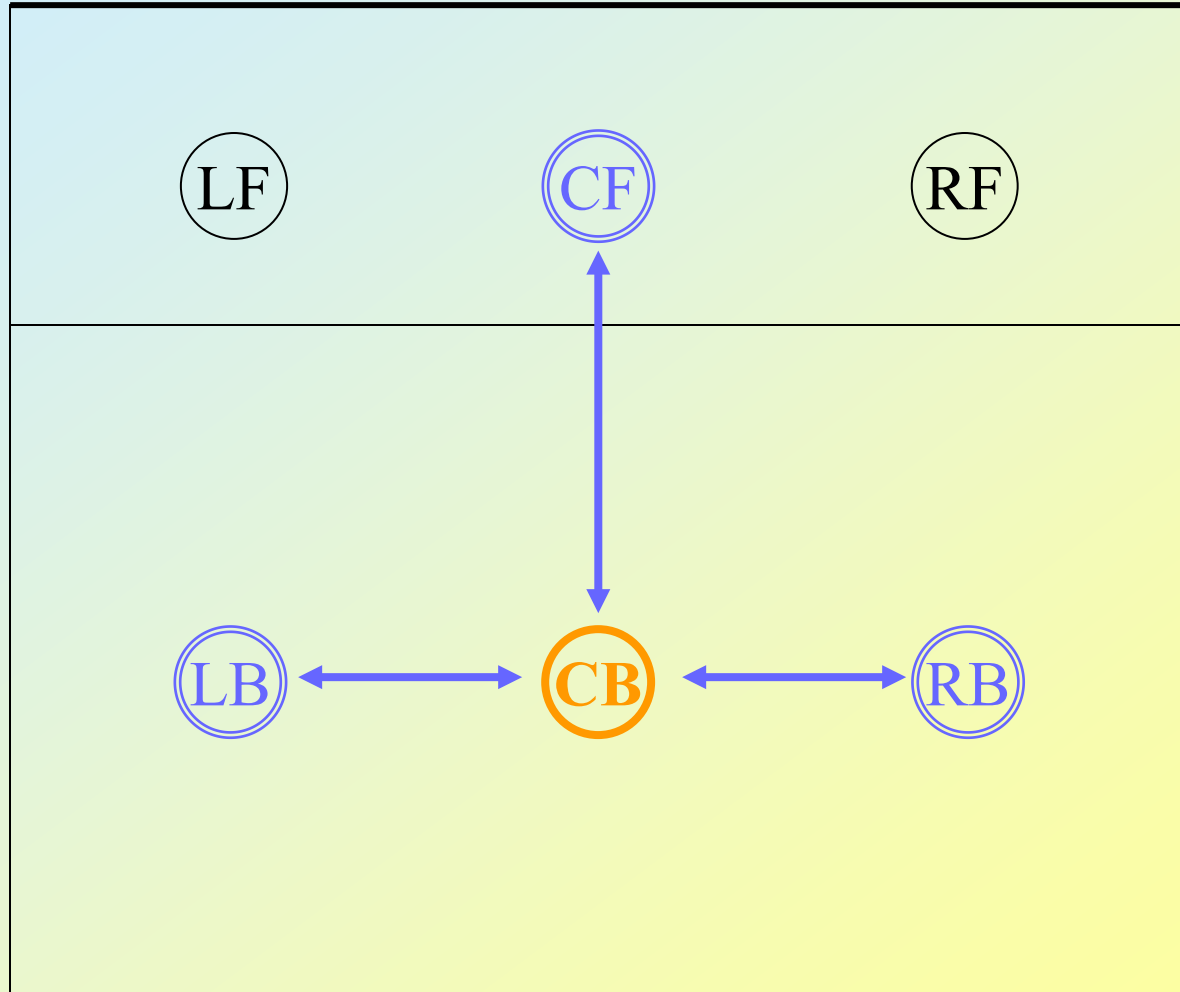
Right Back Alignment



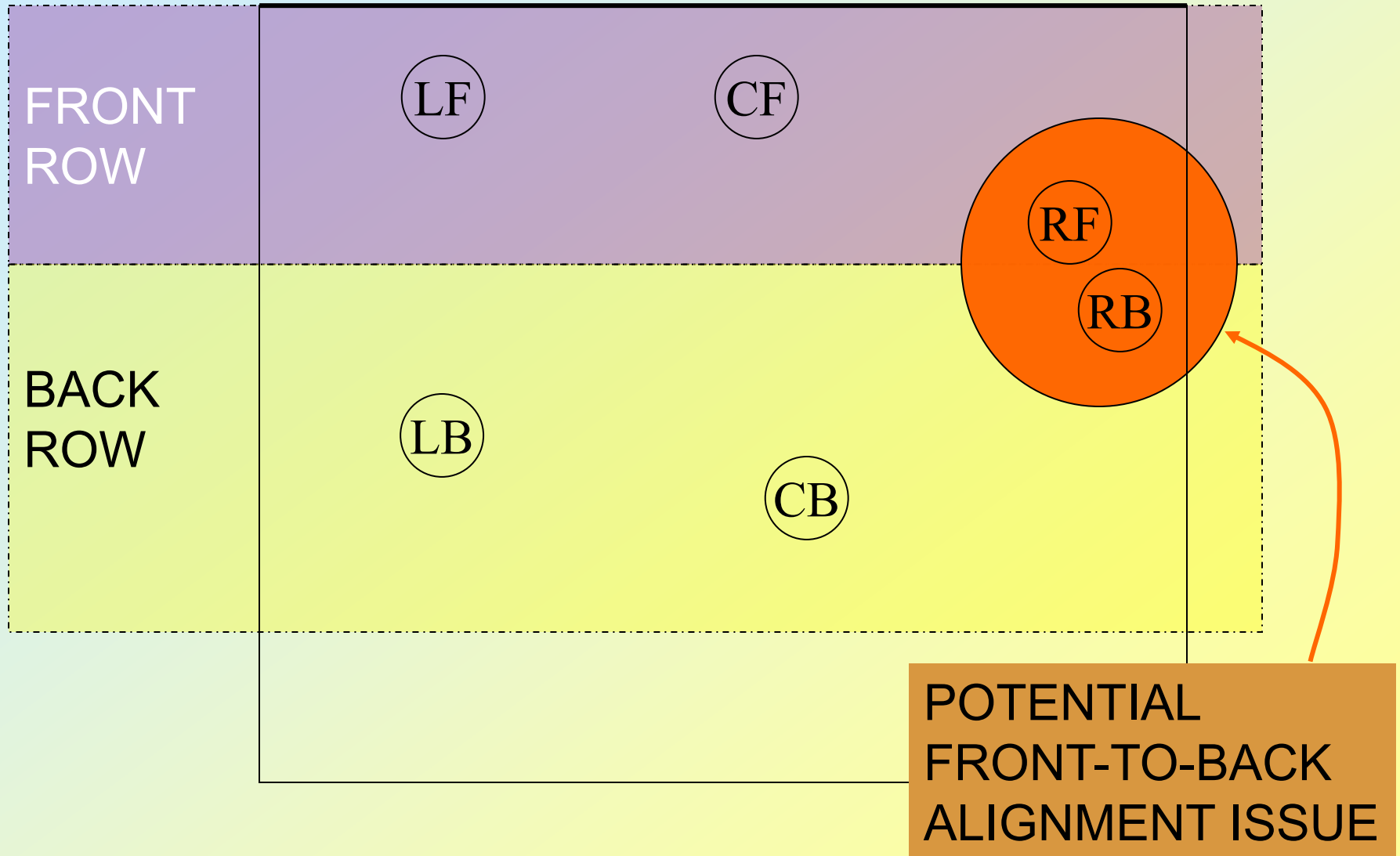
Right Back Alignment



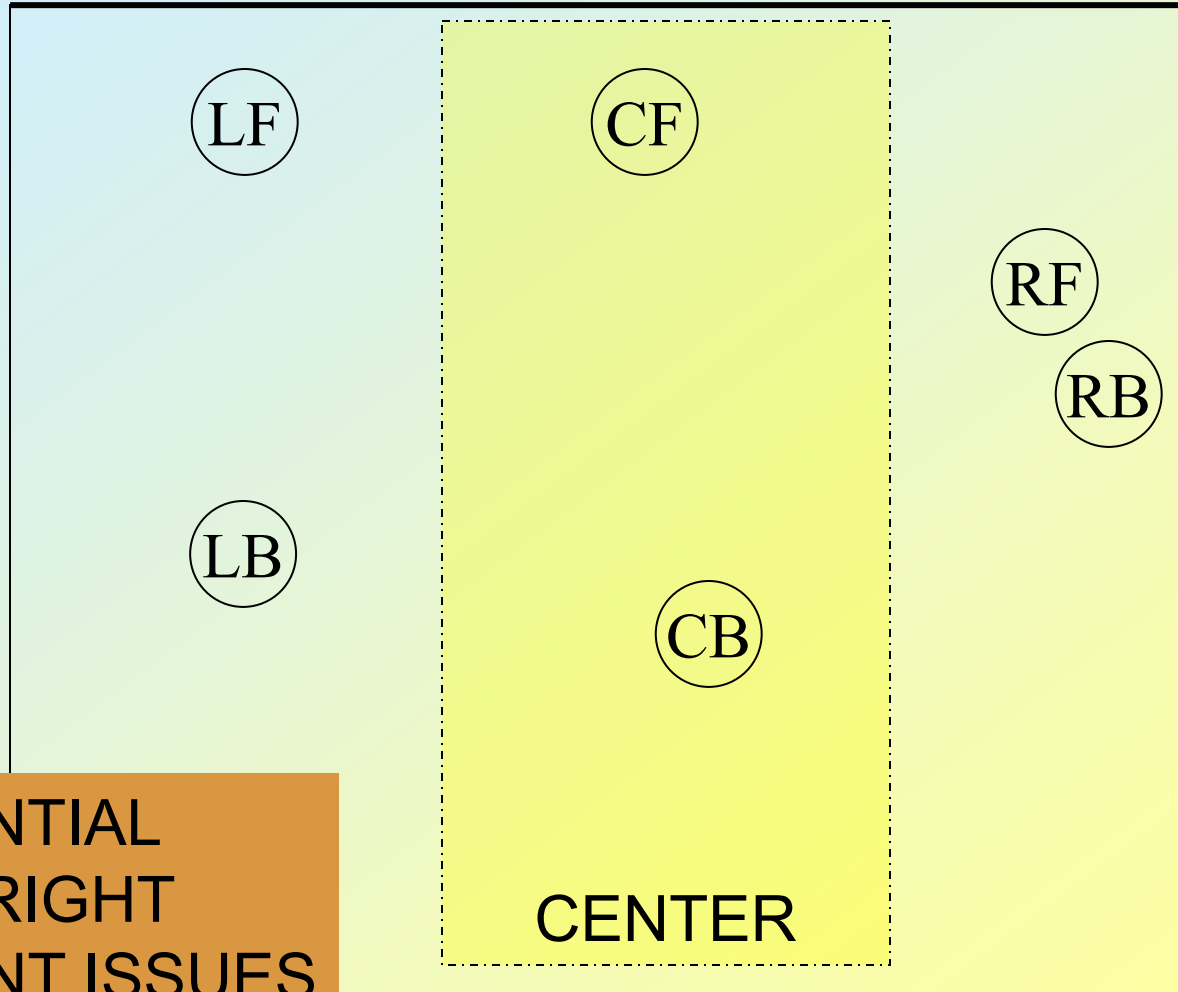
Center Back Alignment



Right Back Setter #1

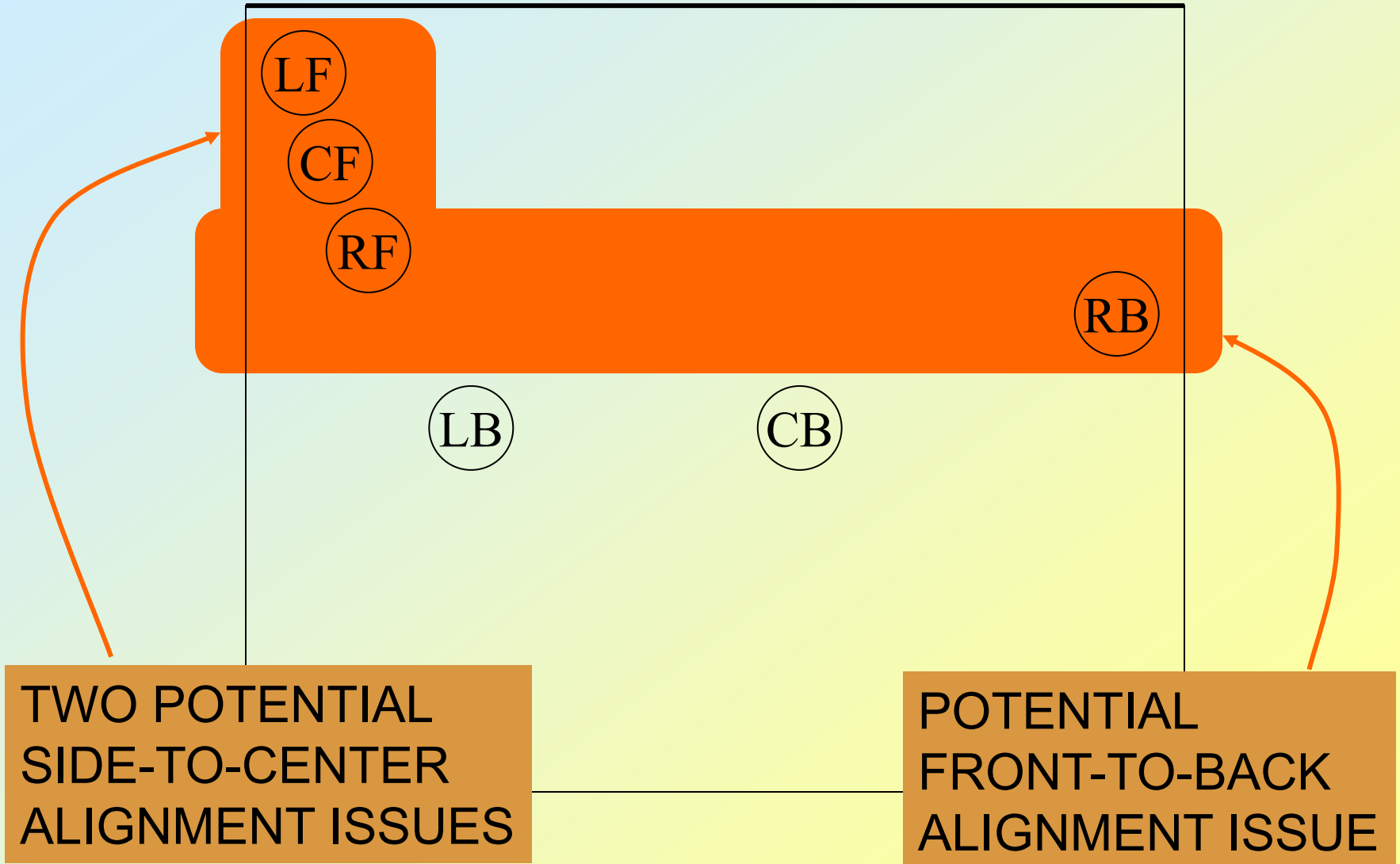


Right Back Setter #1

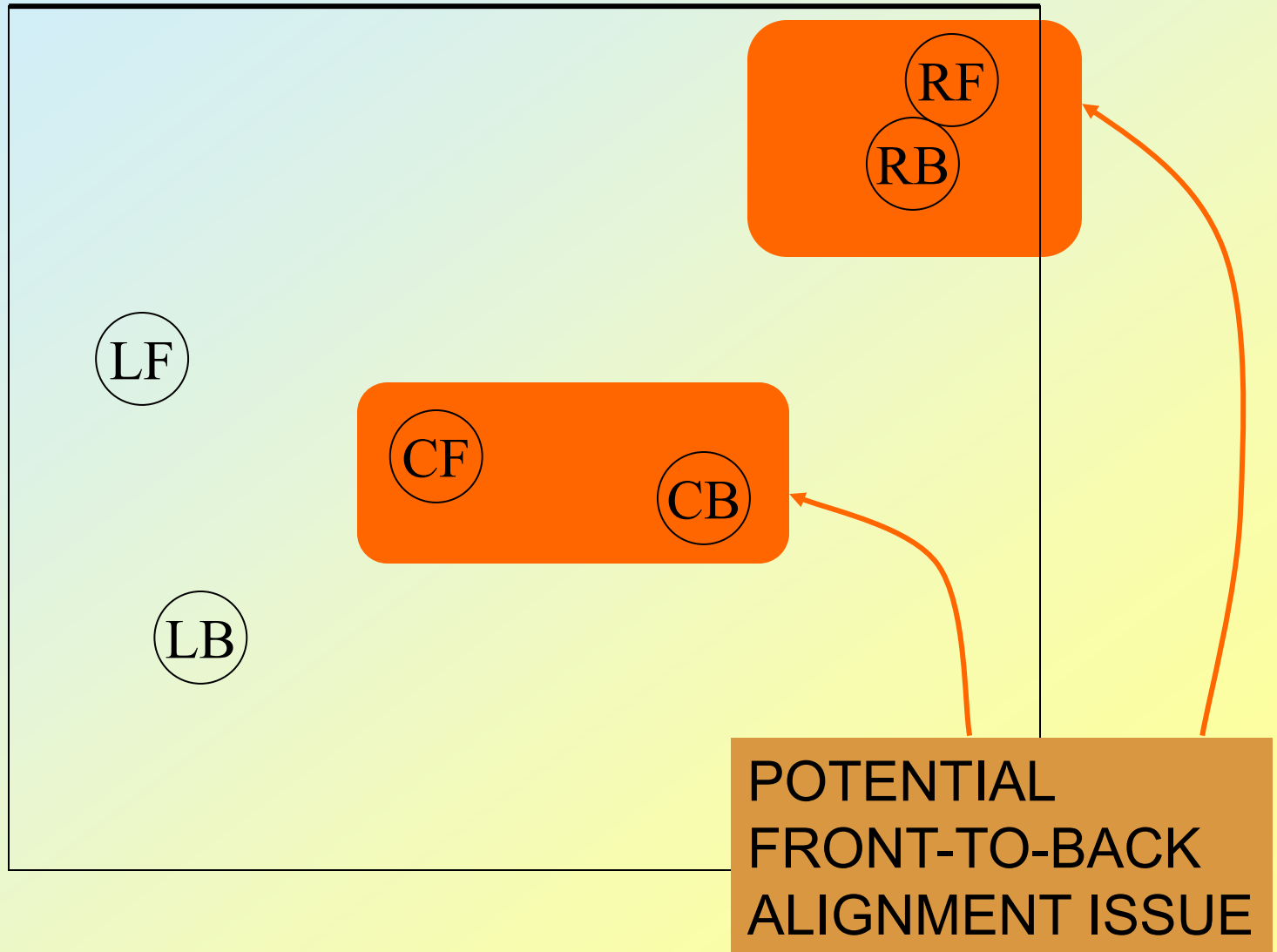


NO POTENTIAL
LEFT-TO-RIGHT
ALIGNMENT ISSUES

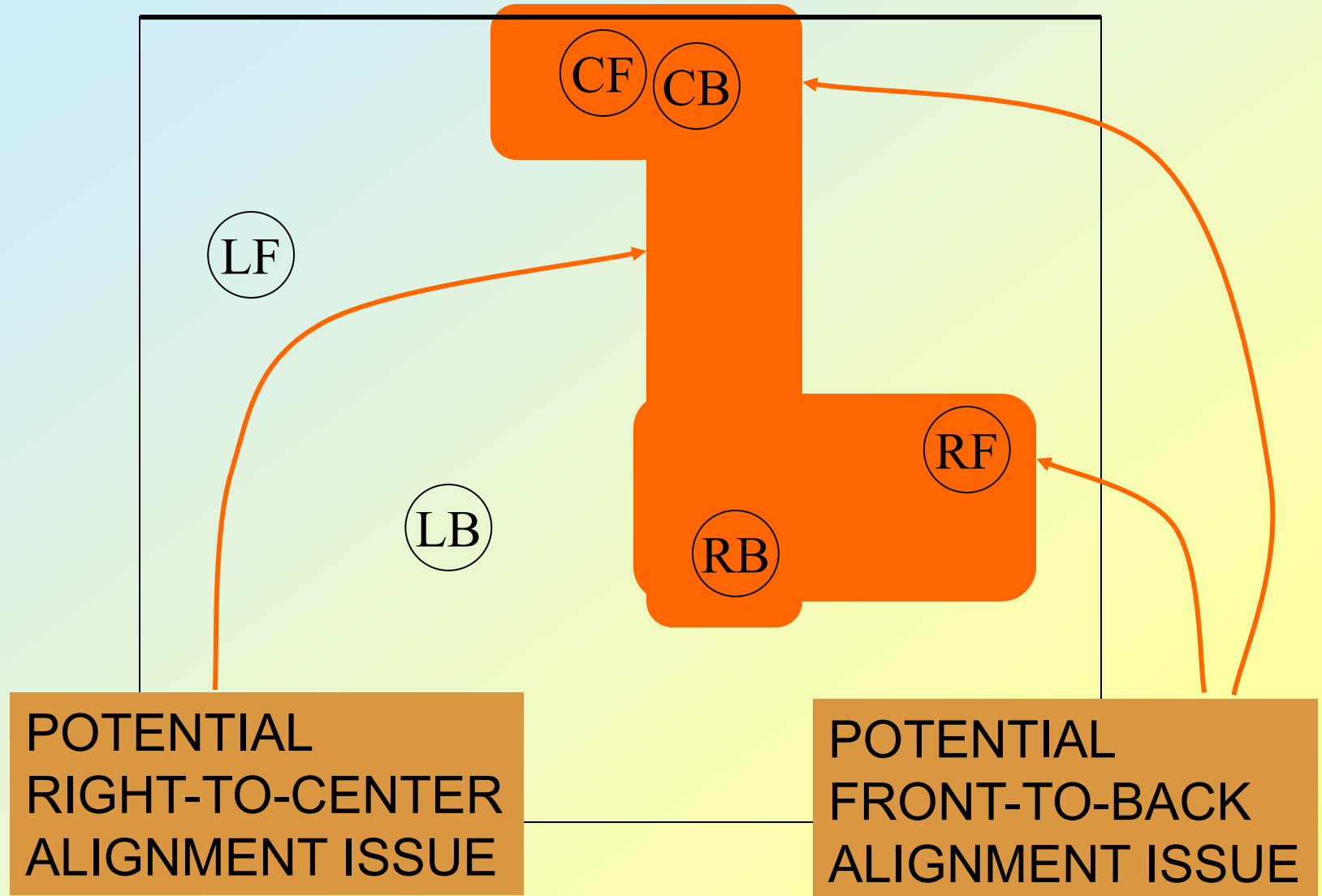
Right Back Setter #2



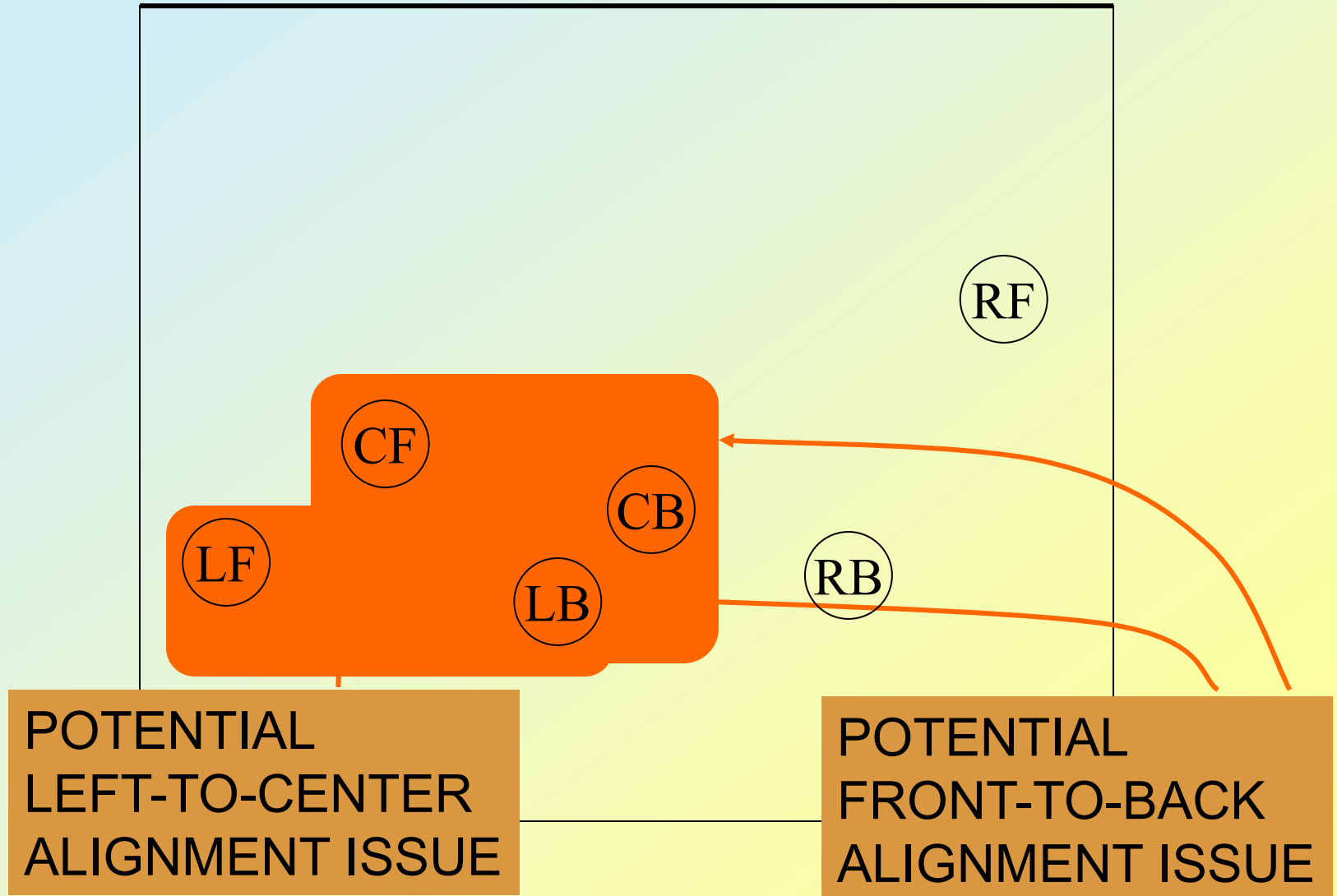
Right Back Setter #3



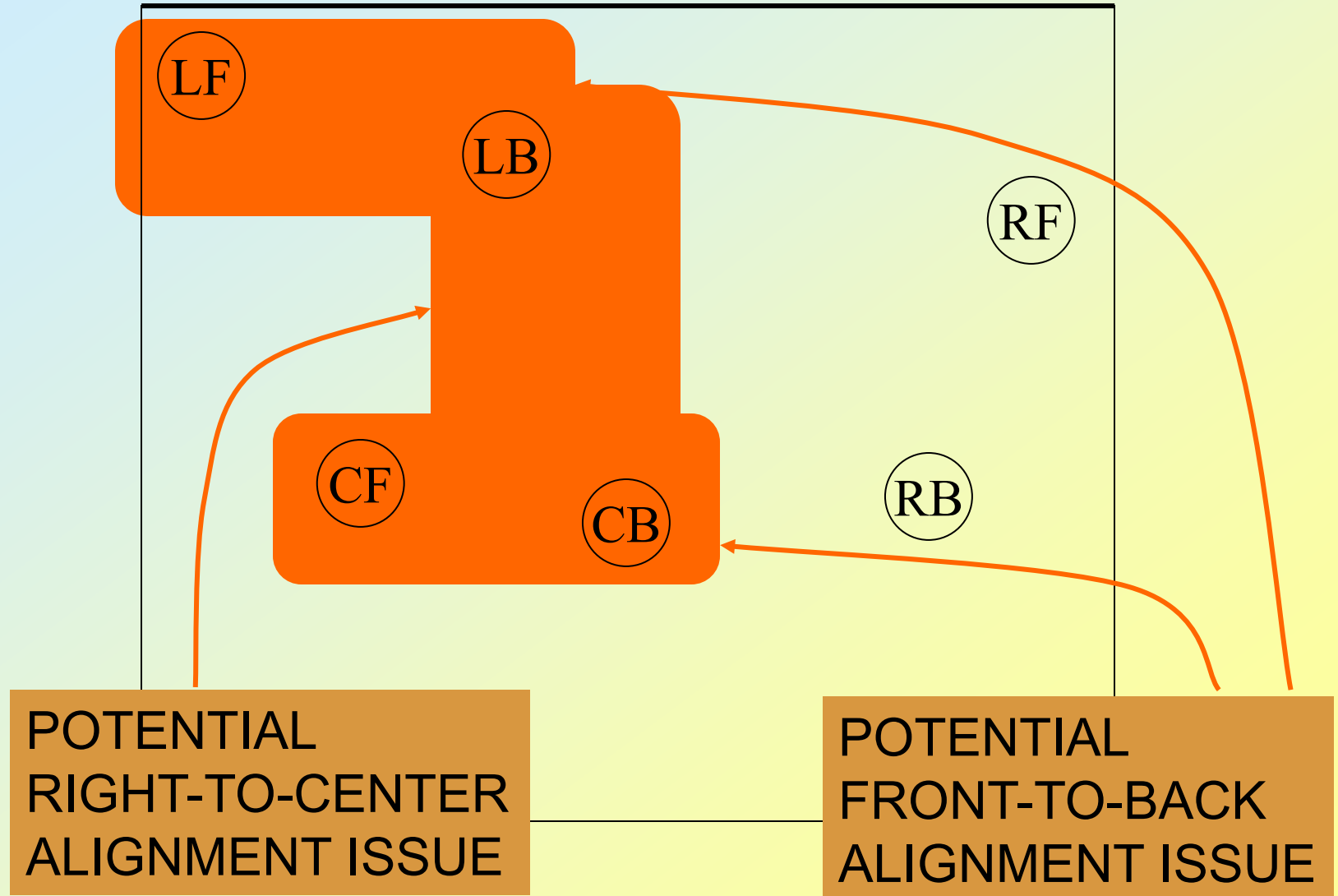
Center Back Setter #1



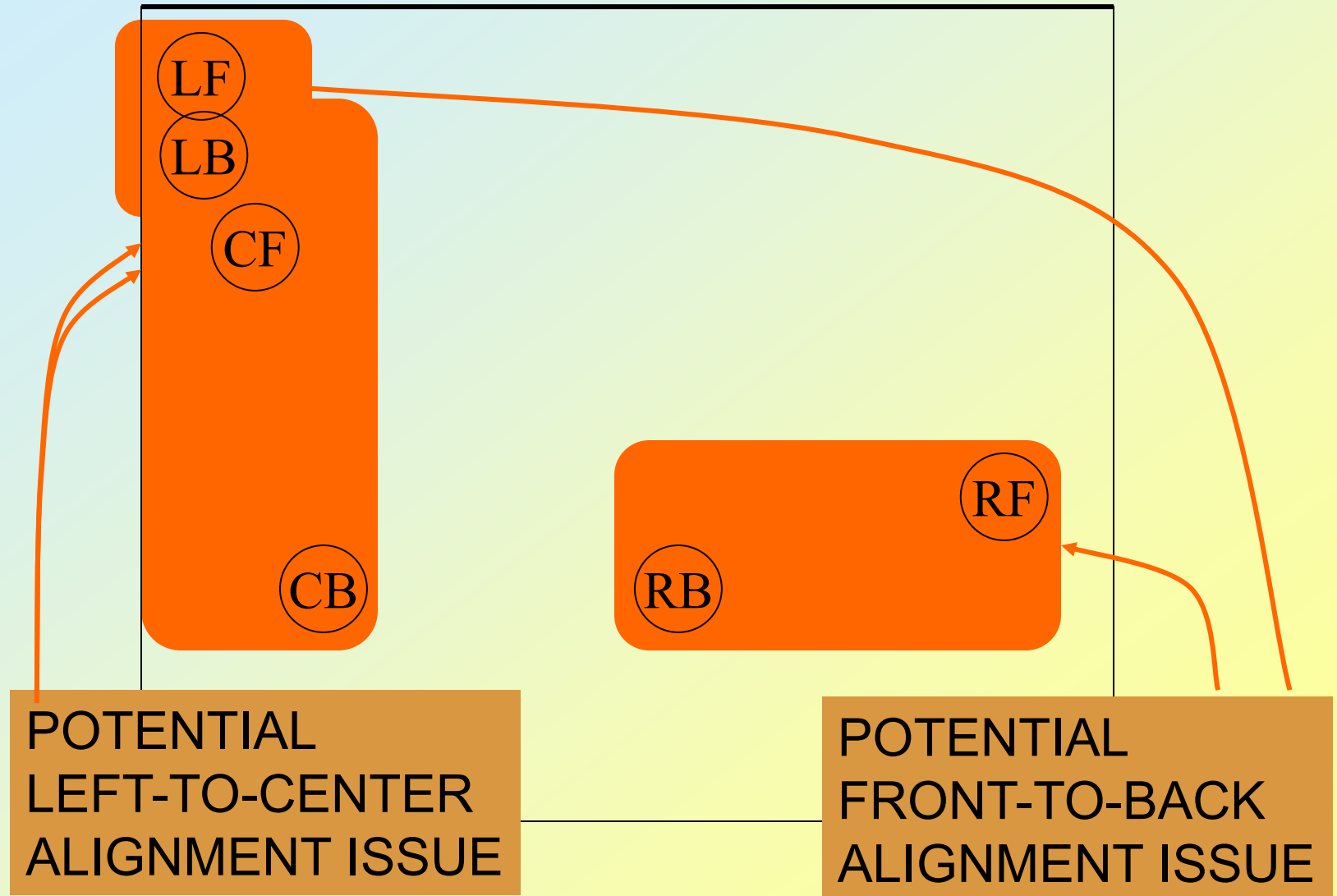
Center Back Setter #2



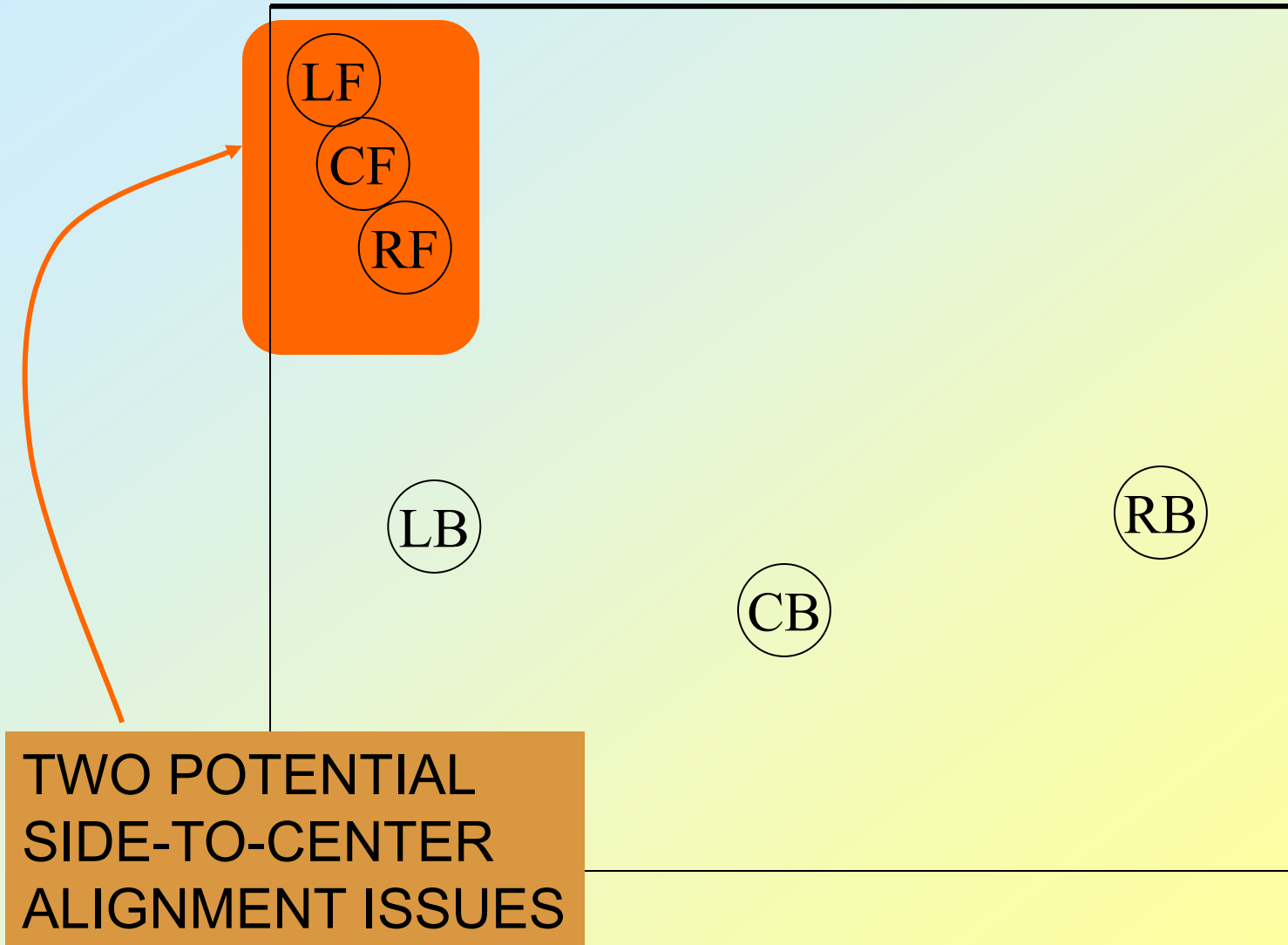
Left Back Setter #1



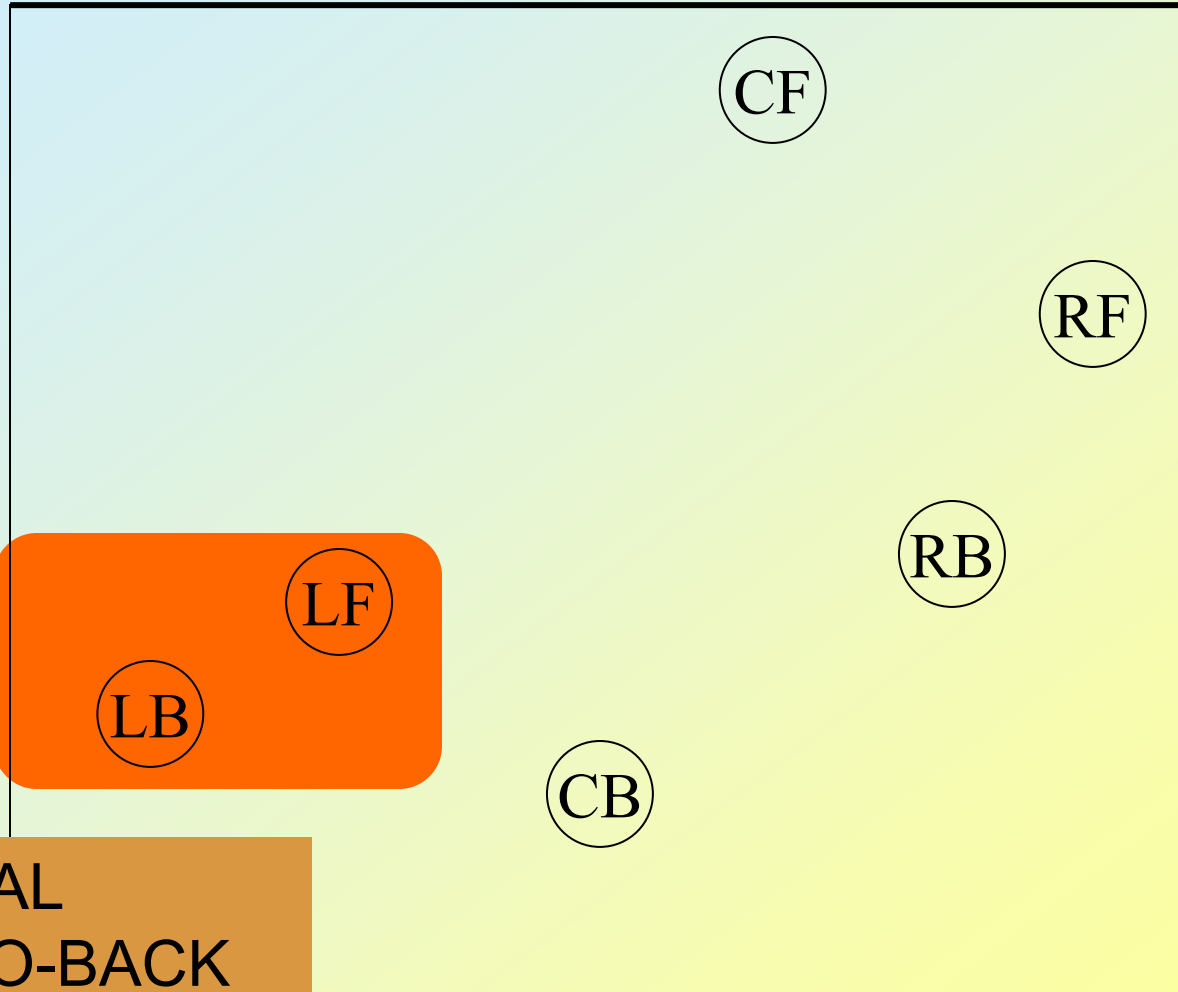
Left Back Setter #2



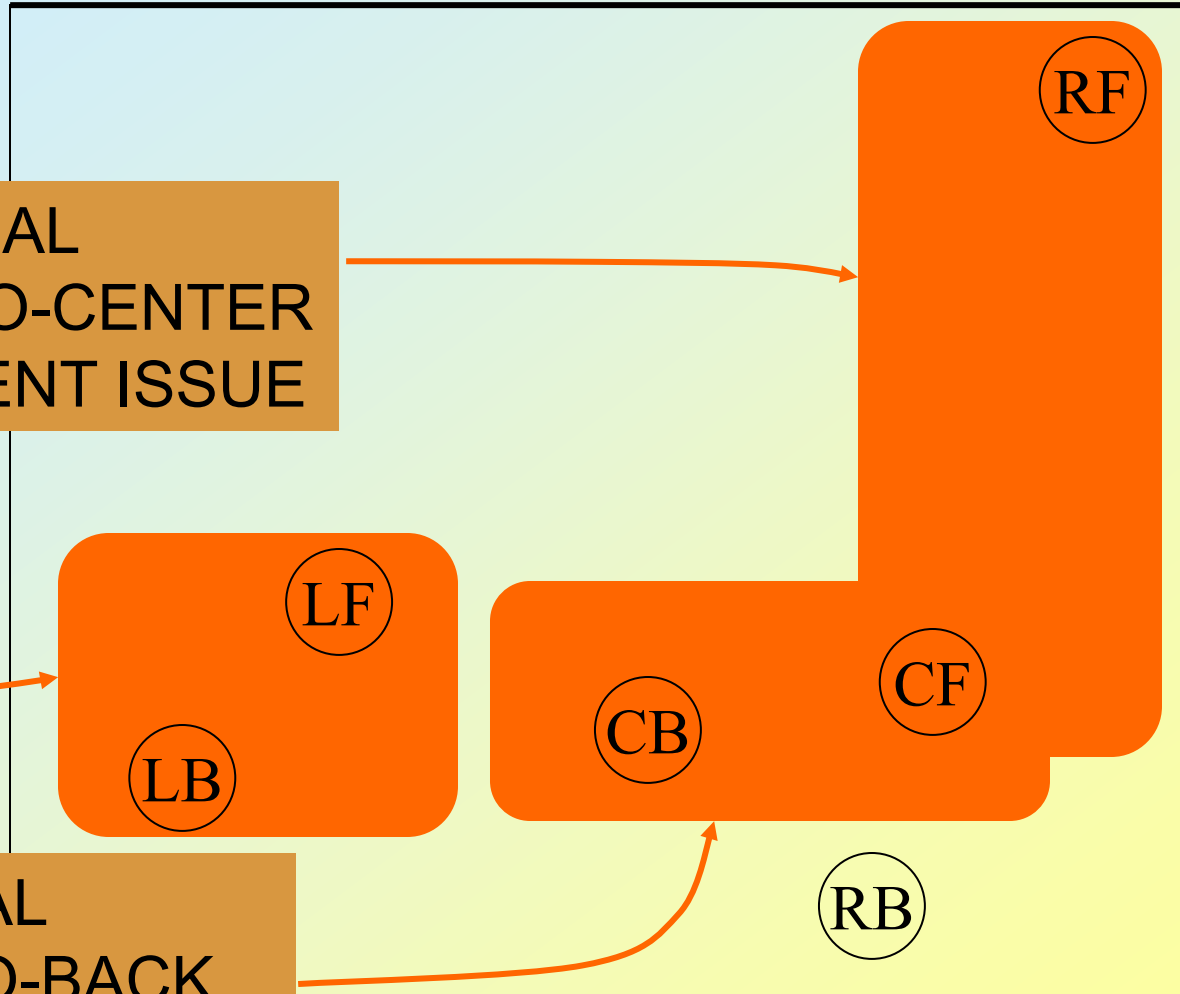
Left Front Setter #1



Center Front Setter #1



Right Front Setter #1



POTENTIAL
RIGHT-TO-CENTER
ALIGNMENT ISSUE

POTENTIAL
FRONT-TO-BACK
ALIGNMENT ISSUE

Right Front Setter #2

POTENTIAL
RIGHT-TO-CENTER
ALIGNMENT ISSUE

LF

LB

CB

RB

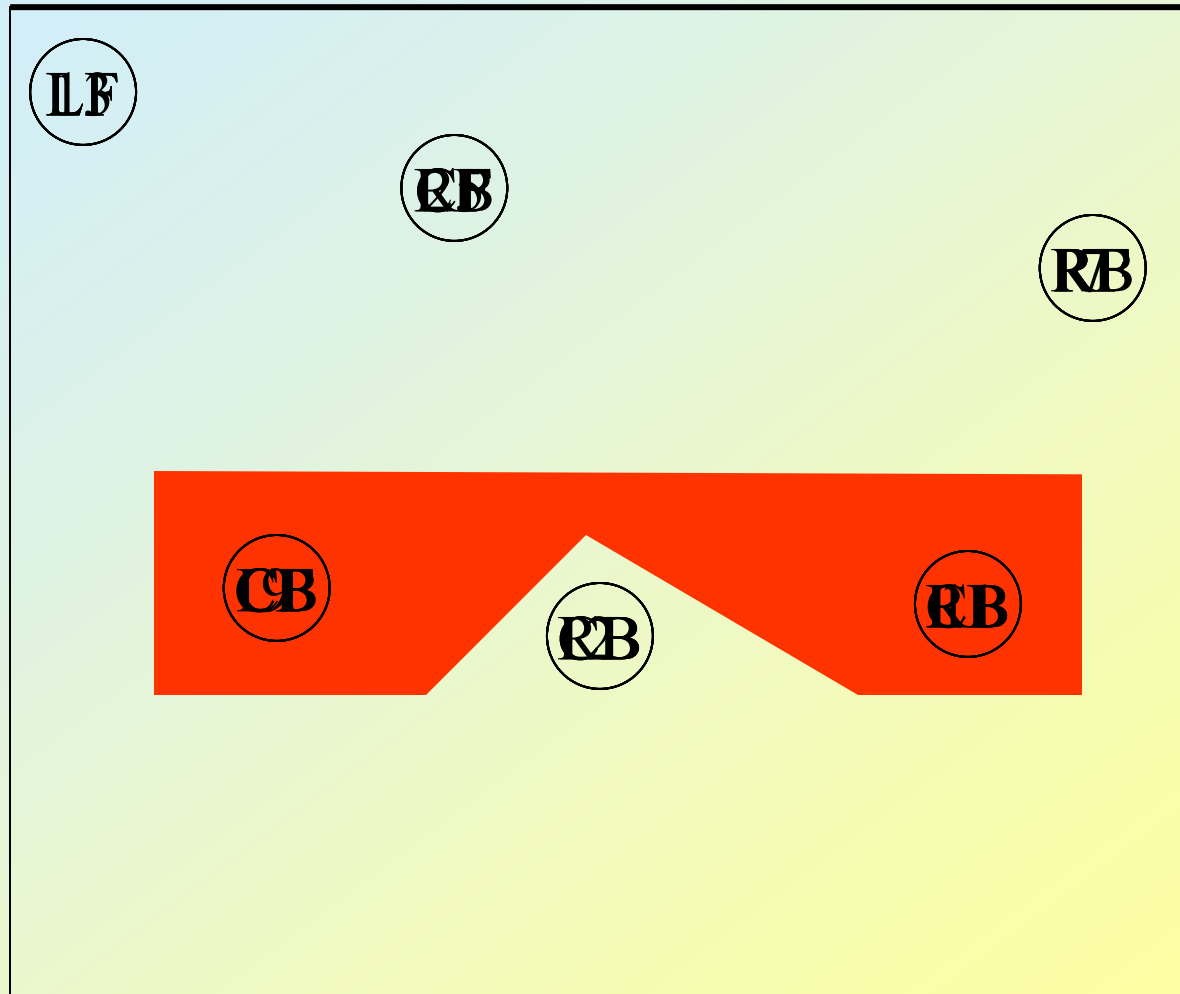
CF
RF

The diagram illustrates a layout for 'Right Front Setter #2'. It features a large rectangular frame with a light yellow background. On the left side, there is a brown rectangular box containing the text 'POTENTIAL RIGHT-TO-CENTER ALIGNMENT ISSUE'. An orange arrow points from this box to a rounded orange square on the right side of the frame. This square contains two white circles, one labeled 'CF' and one labeled 'RF'. In the center of the frame, there are four white circles arranged in a descending diagonal from top-left to bottom-right, labeled 'LF', 'LB', 'CB', and 'RB' respectively.

Translating from positions to players

- If we know the positions, we can apply the rules
- Unfortunately, players don't carry signs that say their current position
- All we know are their numbers, appearance, and perhaps the skill position they play
- So, how do we figure this one out...

What are their positions?



Need to Track Players/Positions

How can we do this?

Tracking: Other Reasons

- Libero Replacements:
 - Did the libero replace a back row player?
 - What position is the libero in?
 - The libero is still governed by the same illegal alignment rules. S/he cannot go where s/he wants in the back row until after serve.
- Back Row Block
- Back Row Attack

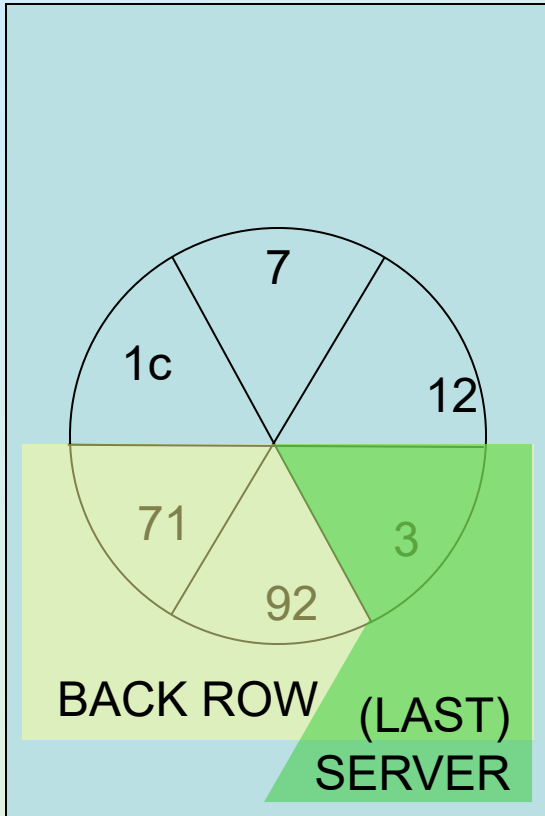
Tracking Players

- Need to formulate a personal method for tracking players
- Very likely will change many times over your career
- Changing methods is really a kind of evolution, adapting your tracking to what you can handle.

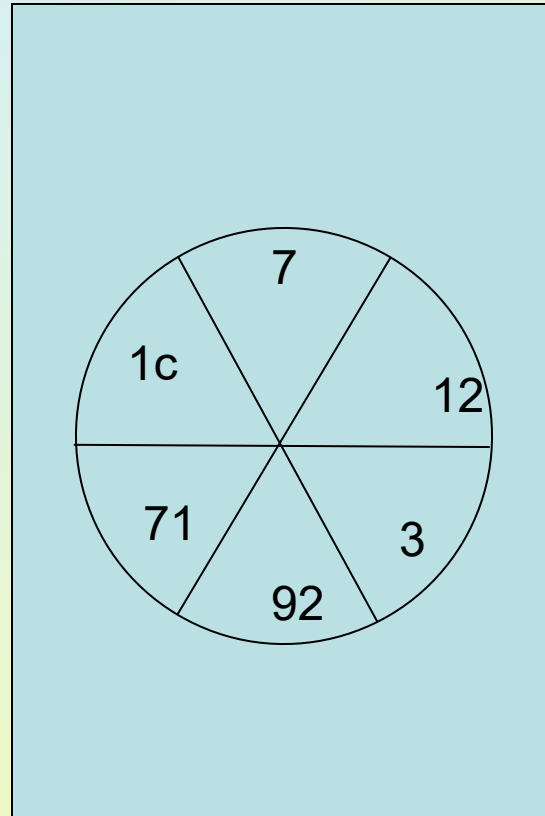
In The Beginning...

- There was the line-up card
- Allows umpires to ease into player tracking
- Lists the players in serving order
- Required in NFHS (high school)
- Forbidden in college and USAV

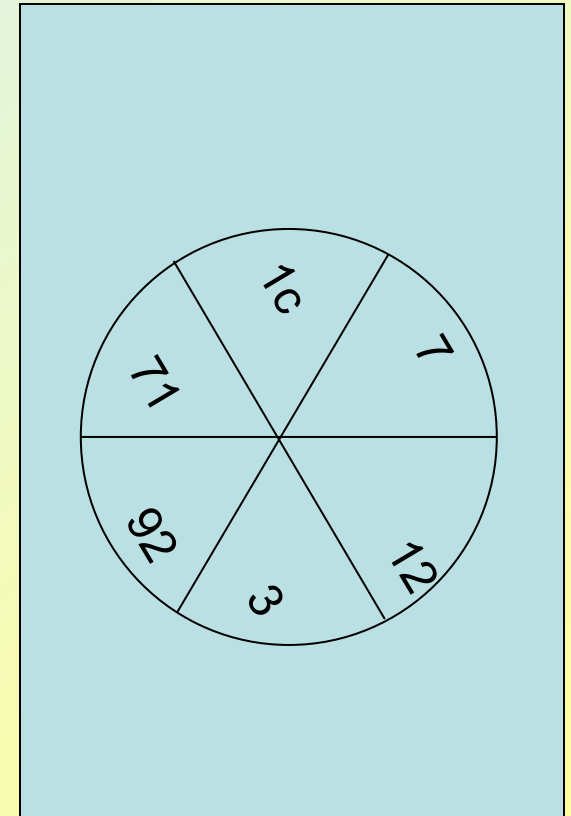
Line-Up Cards



Starting Lineup



Rotate 1 Position



Rotate x Positions

Line-Up Cards

WWS	NN
3 SERVER	14
12	35
7	17
1c	11
71 BACK ROW	21c
92	LAST 5 SERVER

Starting Lineup

WWS	NN
3	14
12	35
7	17
1c	11
71	21c
92	5

Rotate 1 Position

WWS	NN
3	14
12	35
7	17
1c	11
71	21c
92	5

Rotate 2 Positions

Line-Up Cards

	WWS	NN	
RB	3	14	RF
RF	12	35	CF
CF	7	17	LF
LF	1c	11	LB
LB	71	21c	CB
CB	92	5	RB

	3	
WWS	12	33
12-15	7	
17-20	1c	
	71 [•]	4 13
	92	
	14	
NN ^x	35	
	17	
	11	
	21c	
	5	

Line-Up Card Pros and Cons

- Good way to quickly determine positions
- Good backup for scorer w/ subs & TOs
- Takes a while to write down subs
- Why duplicate scorer's work?
- Can become a crutch for tracking
- ***** *Umpires staring at card and missing/delaying the play* *****

Tracking

- Very few people can memorize all 12 players in order, especially when order and players change because of rotations, replacements, and substitutions.
- Come up with a strategy for knowing where the “important” players are.
- This will evolve with your skill/needs.

Tracking – Early On

- If you track no one else, track where the setter is for each team
 - Illegal alignments often involve directly or indirectly the setter.
 - 99.999% of back row blocks are by back row setters.
 - Most back row attacks, especially at lower levels, will be by back row setters.

Tracking – Early On

- During warm-ups, identify the players who are setting. Check the line-up sheets.
- Know 5-1 vs. 6-2 offenses.
 - 5-1 has one setter setting in all rotations. The setter will be back row $\frac{1}{2}$ the time.
 - 6-2 has two setters who are opposite of each other. The primary setter will always be back row.

Tracking – Early On

- Tracking may start like “left court, setter is #9, in back row; right court, setter is #1, front row”
- Before each play could be as simple as “back/front” – left court setter is back row, right court setter is front row.
- Eventually evolve to “left side setter is LB; right side setter is LF”

Tracking – More Players

- Officials' next steps are to add a player or two to the mix. For example:
 - Know the player who is opposite of the setter. This helps mainly with some alignments, especially when the two are CF and CB.
 - Know the players on either side of the setter. This will help with the setter's alignment, but can become a bit difficult, especially in a 6-2.
 - Pick other opposites like the primary passers.

Tracking – More Players

- As you add more players into your consideration, determine what works best **FOR YOU** for tracking them:
 - Uniform numbers
 - Physical characteristics like hair color, hair style, body type, height, etc.
 - Some combination of the two

Tracking – Knowing Rows

- A next step might be learning rows
- Some people know the front row:
 - These are front row players
 - Last number (RF) will be the next server
 - When rotating, new 1st number in sequence
- I know the back row:
 - Potential back row foul players
 - Last number (RB) is current/last server
 - When rotating, new last number (server)

Tracking – Knowing Rows

- Back row example: 71, 92, 3 // 11, 21, 5
- Left side serving means 3 is my server and LB->RB is 71, 92, 3
- Right side is receiving. 11 (LB), 21, 5 (previous server)

Tracking – Subs & Replacements

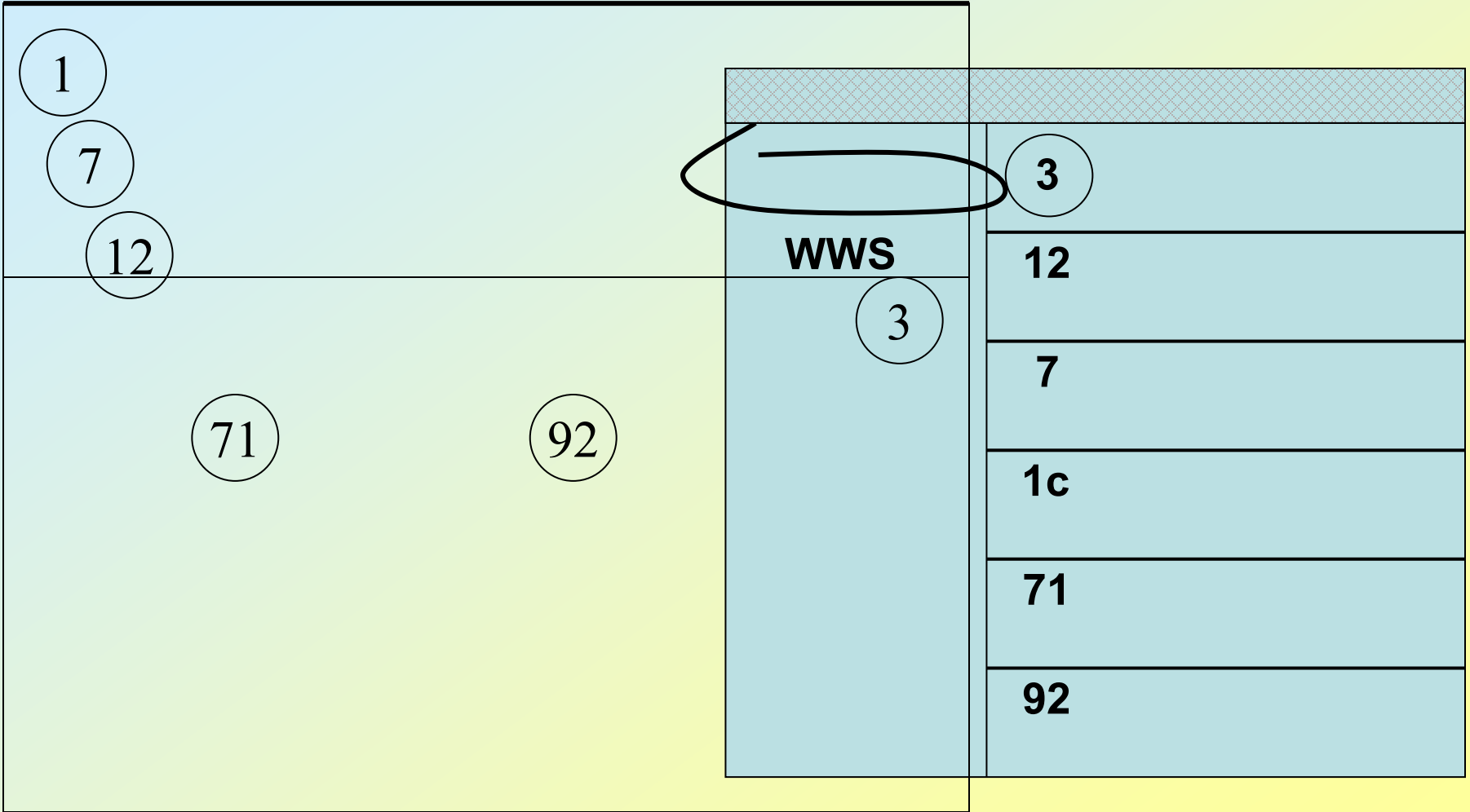
- Changes to the starting line-up do make it a bit more challenging.
- Incorporate sub numbers (or physical features) into your methodology
- Recognize patterns in substitutions
- With replacements, you may or may not want to incorporate that into methodology.
 - Not doing so allows you to know/remember who the libero replaced.

Tracking – Putting it together

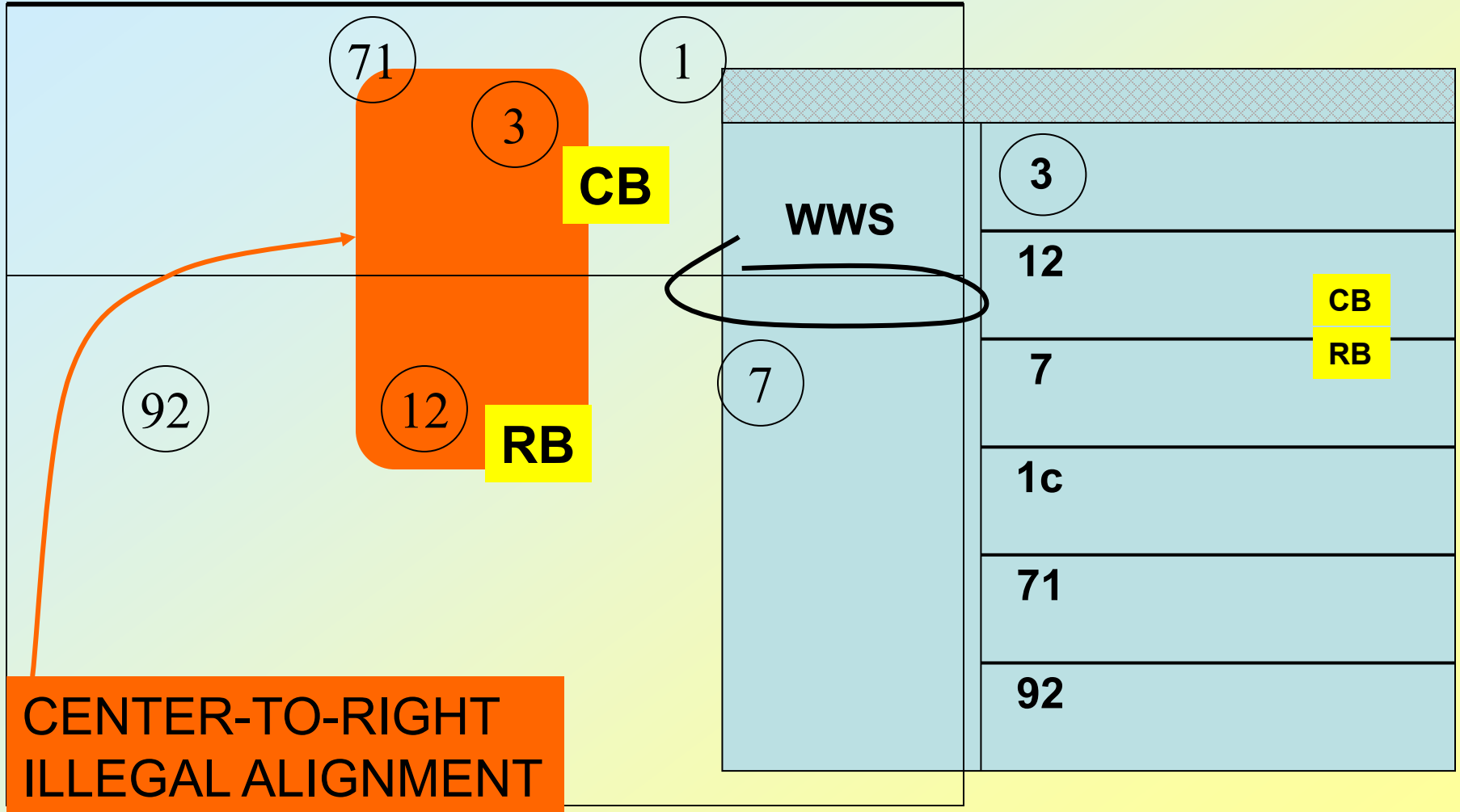
- Combine “row” strategy with others. This can give you a complete picture
- Ex: Left side:
 - Back row: 71, 92, 3
 - Offense: 5-1, 3 is setting
 - Opposites: 1 & 3, 12 & 71 (primary passers)
 - Can reconstruct positions as:

1	7	12
71	92	3

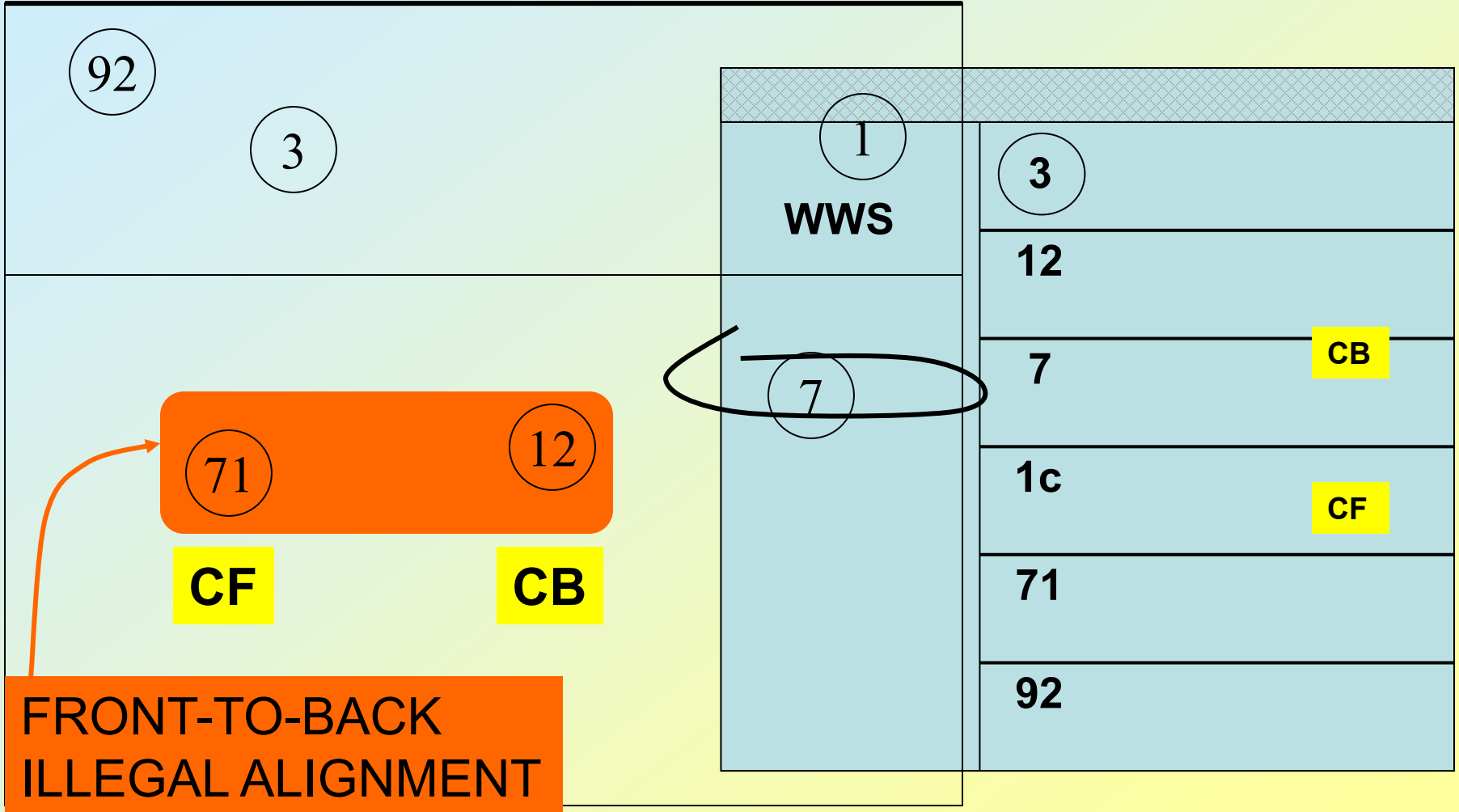
Y **LEGAL** II



Y ILLEGAL II



Y ILLEGAL II



Summary and Tips

- Know the rule: adjacent players in correct position at serve contact
- Be able to recognize legal/illegal positioning in diagrams
- Find a tracking strategy that works comfortably for your current skill level
- Don't dwell on line-card
- Practice

Questions?

