

**QUAKERTOWN COMMUNITY
HIGH SCHOOL**

PANTHER MARCHING BAND



**MUSIC AND VISUAL
HANDBOOK
2015**

PRIDE

PASSION

EXCELLENCE

Dear “Panther” Marching Band Members,

The following handbook provides a comprehensive guideline of the music, marching, and visual aspects of our band. The purpose of this handbook is to provide each member with a valuable resource that serves as a “one stop shop” for our music and visual programs. Since every member is an integral part of this marching organization, it is imperative that everyone attends to the specific details of music and marching in order to achieve a quality program. This guide is intended as an outline or reference; much more detail and examples will be a part of everyday rehearsals.

The marching proficiency exam provides criteria for which all members are individually responsible to achieve. A student leader who has been properly trained and has successfully completed the proficiency with the highest marks will administer the proficiency. With the ultimate goal of uniformity and proper marching technique, this will serve as a means to that end.

WORK HARD! STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE! GREAT THINGS HAPPEN!

- Mr. Parker
- Mr. Santanello

REHEARSAL PROCEDURE

We deal with a very large “classroom” in a potentially distracting atmosphere. In order to have the most productive rehearsals possible, a structured procedure has been established.

1. Due to the large arena in which we work, it is essential that the majority of talking be limited to directors, drum majors, and student leaders. Corrections and instructions will come from the scaffolding or drum major’s podium first and then from student leaders. When instructors or directors are talking to another section, give them your full attention as if they were talking to you. Chances are that information will be useful to your own performance responsibilities. Questions are expected and encouraged under proper circumstances. Simply raise your hand.
2. Unless otherwise directed, you should end movement on the last count of the move. This ensures a realistic completion of the phrase and a proper check of the change of direction technique. You will hold that position until the person running the rehearsal says, “form check” or “set the form.” “Form check” means to look at the form around you and adjust to the form while remaining in the check position (the final step of the previous move). “Set” means to build the set by stepping off your dot coordinates. Once the set is checked or set up, you will stand in the “receiving” position awaiting further instructions.
3. You will start each move with your feet set in the last count of the previous move (unless it’s a hold). This is referred to as “minus one.”
4. You are expected to move expediently back to each set.

Have all needed materials at every rehearsal

- Instrument
- Drill Binder – includes all music, drill charts, and dot charts for easy reference
- Sneakers along with clothing conducive to marching
- Pencil
- Sun-block, water cooler, cell phone turned off, hat or bandana, sunglasses
- Sunglasses – wear sunglasses to protect your eyes but you must compensate for the change of perspective they might create.

HOW TO READ A DRILL CHART AND FIGURE YOUR COORDINATE

When figuring out and writing your coordinates, you should determine your position to the nearest 1/4 step. This allows for the smallest margin of error calculable when stepping off your set with your feet.

Steps are determined based on an 8 to 5 step size. This means 8 steps to every five yards or 8 steps from yard line to yard line. To be exact, an 8 to 5 step is 22.5 inches. Possible references to determine fractions of a step include: a 1/2 step by placing heel to toe and a 1/4 step by placing instep to the toe, with variance depending on the length of your foot.

Some fields on which bands perform often contain TWO sets of hash marks as noted on your drill sheets and by our practice field. The hash marks closest to the center of the field are found on college football fields and the hash marks further away from the center of the field are found on high school fields.

1. Your drill charts should be positioned so that the BSL is closest to your body, and the FSL is away from your body (backwards). This allows you to read and see the drill charts as you read and see the field.
2. Find your section and your dot on the field.
3. Determine the number of steps on the vertical plane from the nearest reference -point (i.e. 8 steps FFH for 8 steps in front of the front hash).
4. Determine the number of steps on the horizontal plane from the nearest reference -point (i.e. 3 1/2 OUT 35, SIDE 1).
5. From your vertical reference-point, step off your vertical distance (i.e. 8 steps FFH), and then step off the horizontal distance (i.e. 3 1/2 OUT 35, S1). This is your dot.

Abbreviations for Vertical Distance:

- *FSL – Front Sideline
- *BSL – Back Sideline
- *FH – Front Hash
- *BH – Back Hash

- *B – Behind
- *F – Front

Abbreviations for Horizontal Distance:

- *IN – Inside Yard-line (towards the 50)
- *OUT – Outside Yard-line (away from 50)
- *S1 - Side 1(also SIDE R or SIDE A) – The space right of the 50 from the performers perspective
- *S2 - Side 2(also SIDE L or SIDE B) – The space left of the 50, from the performers perspective

** This is not the only method of notating coordinates, but is a quick and easy method that is possibly the fastest way to write and read them.

HOW TO MARK YOUR DOT CHARTS (DRILL SETS, ETC.)

In order to get the most out of the little rehearsal time that we have, all members of the band are expected to keep track of their exact coordinates in the drill at all times. The most effective way of monitoring one's spot on the field is by marking the coordinates of each set (see above) into a single document known to us as a DOT CHART. Marking sets into a dot chart provides all members with a "one-stop" reference without disrupting the flow of rehearsal. Dot charts will also be "checked off" by section leaders – failure to maintain an accurate dot chart will result in the loss of third quarter privileges at football games.

Procedure for Marking Dot Charts:

When filling in a dot chart, the first thing one must look at is the drill chart. Each drill chart will contain the following:

1. The drill set number – each set is ordered in chronological order
2. The number of counts for the drill set
3. The measure numbers during which the drill set is taking place
4. Each member's individual coordinates (dot)

Each entry on the dot chart should include the member's coordinates as per the drill sheet as well as the appropriate set number for easy reference. These coordinates should be marked in a way that the member can understand. For more detail on how to write coordinates, see, "How to Figure Your Coordinates," on the previous page.

All show music should also be marked with all drill sets. This process is a quick and easy way to get everyone in the band to know where they are supposed to be going as well as what they are supposed to be playing at all times. **NO EXCUSES, NO OBSTACLES!**

THE MARCHING TECHNIQUE PROGRAM

Posture

Body breakdown: alignment in a straight line

Uniform horn/arm/head position

Military presence

Correct posture consists of standing tall in a straight body alignment, uniform positions of the head, arms, and instrument, a military presence that projects showmanship. The following exercise is used to foster achievement in this area:

Body Breakdown (“The Hindu ”) - This can be defined as an exercise to help achieve consistency in posture. The purpose of this exercise is to achieve the ideal body alignment in a straight line. The exercise begins with the feet shoulder width apart and the rest of the body in a relaxed, yet attention-like position. Movements then are executed over periods of four counts. The succession is actually the exercise in reverse. Once stance is de-aligned to the ending position, posture alignment is then built in reverse. This is followed by an expansion of the body’s space both upwards and outwards.

- 4 counts- head and chin down- Neck relaxes and chin should be hitting the chest.
- 4 counts- shoulders come in- Pull your shoulders forward (shoulders should feel like you have your arms stretched straight out in front of you, and then dropped down in front of chest).
- 4 counts- upper back- The bottom of your sternum up should be relaxed over the rest of your body (slightly bent over).
- 4 counts- lower back- A totally bent over position with the legs still straight.
- 4 counts- bend the knees- Knees bent over your toes, everything is totally relaxed.
- follow steps in reverse order to build up to perfect body alignment
- 4 counts onto platforms
- 8 counts windmill arms up
- 8 counts windmill arms down.
- Out of time down off the toes.

What to watch for:

- Hyper-extended back (No “C” in the back!)
- Shoulders slouched or shrugged in a tense position – they should be down, back, and relaxed
- Hips not rolled under the back (Tuck in your backside!)
- “Ostrich head” – get the ears in the alignment

Stationary Commands

The following are our most commonly used commands:

With no steady tempo:

The Ready – “Band to the Ready”

Receiving – “Receiving”

In Tempo, called in three counts as quarter notes with the inflection of med, low, high, followed by a dead count on four with execution on the next count:

Attention – “Band ten hut”

Mark Time – “Mark time mark”

Forward March – “For ward move”

Backward March – “Back ward move”

Halt – “Baaand halt”

Mark Time

Timing

Consistent height of heels

Control of hips and upper body

Uniform leg motion

The “low” mark time is defined with a two-inch lift of the heel while the front part of the foot remains on the ground. The performer should maintain consistent timing, correct height of the heels, uniform leg motion, and control of the upper body during execution of this technique.

<p>What to watch for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Spaghetti Legs/StairMaster - created by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ too much hip movement▶ the heels passing each other without one heel always being on the ground▶ weight is leaning too far forward on the foot	<p>Check heel height by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ On the “and” count, the back of the front knee should clear the back knee▶ Front of the foot has all 3 points of the platform touching the ground on the “and” count
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Forward March

Ski Line Path
Straight Leg
Toe roll - “Roll Step”
Phasing/timing
Initiation/resolution
Upper Body

The forward march is a gliding roll step. Legs are kept very straight, forcing the foot to stay as low to the ground as possible. The lead toe should be raised into the air to exaggerate the movement of the foot as it rolls from the heel to the toe during each step. Left and right marching steps should stay in paths that are best explained by the comparison to the paths that are made by cross-country skiers. The marching movement of the feet should reflect good timing, with heels hitting the ground on the down beats and ankles passing on the “and” counts. The posture of the upper body (10 degrees forward) should stay controlled while marching forward. If preceded by a mark time, the legs are locked straight during the two counts before the step-off count.

<p>What to watch for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶Straight legs (“Scissor Club”)▶Toe roll (“Tube of Toothpaste”)Ankles pass on “and” counts (“Take a picture on “and” - looks like a standstill”)▶Maintain good posture/horn angle▶All steps same size in same phrase▶Control upper body (“Floating on a pane of glass”)▶Feet in ski path▶Move weight of body on count one, not just foot (“Rope wrapped around your waist pulling you forward”)	<p>Common errors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶Leaning forward prior to movement▶Excessive knee bend causing feet to come too far off of the ground▶Step 1 of the move is smaller than the rest▶Feet moving out of the ski-line
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Backward March

Ski line Path
Straight Leg
Platform
Phasing/timing
Initiation/Resolution
Upper body

The backward march is executed on the platform of the foot. The platform is created by the “triangle” formation made up of the big toe, and the ball of the little toe. At no time should the heel touch the ground for any reason, except for a halt. Left and right marching steps should stay in paths that are best explained by comparison to the paths that are made by cross-country skiers. The marching movement of the feet should reflect good timing, with the platform hitting the ground on the down beats and the ankles passing on the “and” counts. The posture of the upper body should stay controlled while marching backward

<p>What to watch for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Stay up on the platform (not the toes -staying on the toes creates too much bounce and not enough glide)▶ Ankles pass on the “and” count (“Take a picture”)▶ Maintain good posture/horn angle▶ All steps same size in same phrase▶ Control upper body (“Float across a pane of glass”)▶ Feet in ski path▶ Move weight of body on count one, not just foot (“Rope around the waist...”)	<p>Common errors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Leaning backward prior to movement (or during movement)▶ Excessive knee bend causing feet to come too far off of the ground▶ Step 1 of the move is smaller than the rest▶ Feet moving out of the ski-line
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Slides

Hip and shoulder positions during slides 0-45-90

A slide allows the performer to move laterally at any angle on the field while keeping the instrument flat towards the sideline. This is achieved by twisting in the middle of the body so that the hips face halfway (45 degrees) between the direction of the feet (0 degrees) and the direction of the shoulders (90 degrees).

What to watch for:	Common errors:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶Must TURN FROM THE HIPS, NOT THE SHOULDERS!▶Maintain proper movement technique and good posture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶Hips remain square, not at a 45 degree angle▶Drifting from a straight path because lower body pulls you in the direction▶Crunching of the space created by the shoulder, arms, and instrument.

Direction Changes

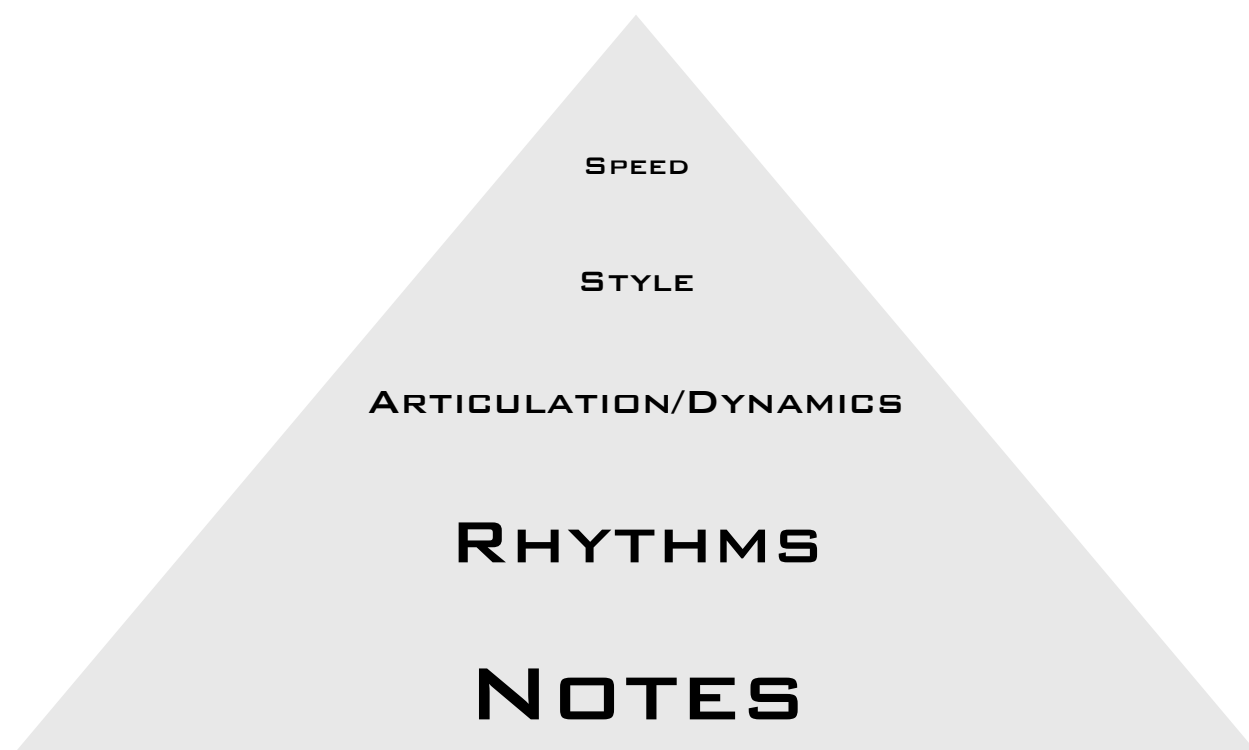
Foot placement
Weight exchange
Consistent step-size
Upper Body
Stab

The following movement block is used to foster achievement in this area. Control of posture along with control of the weight of the body at the moment of direction change is very important. All halts are performed with a “stab” placement by the plant foot. This is demonstrated by touching the platform of the right foot first, followed by the heel.

What to watch for:	Common errors:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶Consistent step-size comparing forward to backward▶Complete each phrase before moving to next phrase “LOCK, TURN!”)▶Hit 90 degree angles▶Know your foot positions!!!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶Straying from ski path▶Change of step-size on first or lastcount▶BM 8 to 5 is smaller than FM 8 to 5.▶Leaning toward next direction

THE PYRAMID OF MUSICAL ELEMENTS

When learning a piece of music, a logical order of musical elements exists. While musicians should attempt to ascend the pyramid as quickly as possible (and ultimately perform all elements simultaneously), the following chart can be of assistance when developing rehearsal plans and planning practice sessions.



Notes - No passage can be learned correctly without knowledge of the NOTES. This is especially crucial with brass players - pitches need to be “slotted” in the lip (particularly in passages with leaps, etc.) before being combined with any other element. Once the notes are consistent, focus can move to the next level in the pyramid.

Rhythm - Correct notes must be placed in the correct order for the correct duration (hence - RHYTHM!). Rhythms should be approached with multiple techniques, including: counting, clapping, neutral syllables, sizzling, or playing on a single note.

IMPORTANT: If the notes are a problem, get rid of the rhythm (play out of time). If the rhythm is the problem, get rid of the notes (play on a single pitch or on the mouthpiece).

Articulation/Dynamics = Style - These go hand in hand. Passages should be played with varied articulation/dynamics to gain and “over-standing” of the material.

SPEED IS THE LEAST IMPORTANT ELEMENT! ONLY PLAY AS FAST AS YOU CAN PERFORM A SEGMENT PERFECTLY! ALL OTHER ELEMENTS MUST BE MASTERED BEFORE ATTEMPTING PERFORMANCE TEMPO!

THE THREE ‘R’S OF MUSIC REHEARSAL

We approach the rehearsal of music as a three step process:

READ, ROUGH-IN, REFINE

READ	Music is first presented. Focus remains on ensemble sound, notes, and rhythms. Stylistic elements are introduced, as are any musical elements that will require individual attention.
ROUGH-IN	Music has been read and now requires closer attention. Notes and rhythms are scrutinized for complete accuracy. Style (articulation) and dynamics are further reviewed, and a more complete concept of the piece is formed
REFINE	All elements of music are completely scrutinized. Articulations are intensified and dynamic ranges are extended to the extent that musicality will allow.

CHUNKING

With any piece of music, breaking the entire work down into manageable “chunks” is extremely important to the rehearsal process. Each “chunk” has its own unique musical characteristics and will thereby require a different rehearsal plan.

When dividing a piece into chunks, we logically divide the work into segments. One of the most efficient ways to chunk a piece is to look for points of contrast within the work.

Contrast points include:

- Changes in melodic material
- Changes in signatures (key and time)
- Changes in texture (instruments playing)
- Changes in style

Throughout our summer sessions, there will be times when student leaders will be asked to run music sectionals. Your sectionals should result in a presentable chunk of music, complete with accurate and effective dynamics and articulations (in addition to notes and rhythms, of course).

Objectives (WHAT are the SPECIFIC goals for this session?)	Plan of Attack (HOW are you going to reach your goal?)
Section Assessment (Did you achieve your objectives? What do you still need to work on in this chunk?)	For Next Time... (Based on your progress today, what is the next logical step for improvement?)