

The logo for the Wooster High School Marching Band is centered on the page. It features a stylized tree with a blue trunk and a white, cloud-like canopy. Below the tree is a drum with a white body and a blue and orange striped head. The text is overlaid on the tree and drum.

***Wooster High School
Marching Band***

***Squad Leader
Handbook***

General Information

Each person is a very important member of this band.

As a member of the Wooster High School Marching Band everything you do on the field is vitally important. There are no last chair players in a marching band. On the field the visual arena is so large and complex that no one can see everything that is occurring at any given time. Every member of the band may at some point in the show be the closest band member to someone in the audience. The attention of the audience is immediately drawn to anyone who is not absolutely uniform in every move. Absolute uniformity without errors requires 100% effort 100% of the time.

Good organization makes for efficient rehearsals.

A great amount of planning and preparation goes into every half-time and pre-game show. The formations, drills, and designs are worked out by the staff, reproduced, and distributed to you. The music that we play is carefully selected for each show. These arrangements represent the best material we can find from both a musical and entertainment standpoint. The band staff puts in many hours of work on every show before you get to the first rehearsal. It is our plan and goal to put in enough time in preparing the shows that the performances can be prepared and perfected in a minimum of rehearsal time, allowing us to use our time in the most efficient manner possible. In keeping with this philosophy, it is essential that all rehearsals begin promptly and move along without interruption.

Our objective is Excellence.

The Wooster High School Marching Band presents half-time shows which combine elements of traditional and contemporary marching band styles. The shows are designed by the staff and given to band members with instructions and/or sketches on drill charts. Occasionally, Squad Leaders will be given the option of designing drill maneuvers en route to the charted position in a design or formation. At all times we must strive to please those members of the audience who enjoy seeing unfolding designs, sharp individual appearance, marching precision, and hearing good music performed well.

The Squad Leader

This handbook and drill manual should help you to become an effective Squad Leader. The Squad Leader is an important link in the efficient functioning and success of any marching band. These people must “take charge”; provide leadership, example, and direction.

Squad Leader Responsibilities

1. Provide a good example through your attitude and all that you do both in and out of rehearsal. An effective Squad Leader is a superb role model for the highest effort and accomplishment in marching, playing, and discipline.
2. Serve as a liaison facilitating communication between the band and directors.
3. Helping to motivate your squad to memorize its music on time (or early). Being available to listen to your squad's music checks.
4. Being in attendance at all rehearsals, and coming prepared to these rehearsals. Make sure charts (both your own and your squad's) have been studied and marked before going out on the field to learn a new drill. If there are questions concerning directions, routings, etc., ask a director prior to a rehearsal in order to save valuable rehearsal time and keep rehearsals moving along.
5. Be patient of squad members who are really trying but having difficulty in learning a drill or music. Help them in any way you can by spending extra time with them, suggesting alternate techniques, etc. However, do not tolerate laziness and lack of effort among your squad members. Being a "nice guy" does not help the quality of the group.
6. Help the directors to ensure that your squad has the correct and necessary equipment for all rehearsals and performances. This includes wearing the uniform properly as outlined in the Wooster High School Band Student Handbook.
7. Strive for excellence throughout your squad at all times.

The Voice of Experience

1. Negativism spreads; those who don't know may believe what they hear instead of what they see.
2. The band doesn't change as much as you do. The most impressionable year in band is the first one.
3. The band is an emotional group, so expect some ups and downs.
4. Everybody has feelings, even the squad leaders and band staff! When the band is criticized, all of us feel it.
5. There is always room for improvement; constructive suggestions should be welcomed, even if they hurt a little.
6. Anybody can be a critic - this takes no skill or background, and bears no responsibility.
7. More drive and spirit in rehearsals means a better performance with fewer mistakes.
8. For the benefits received, expect some sacrifice. All for one, and one for all - or, know what is best for the band and do it.
9. Adjust to the situation.
10. When problems exist, are you part of the problem, or part of the solution?
11. No pain, no gain.

Fundamentals

A basic system is needed to provide consistency of movement, spacing, and terminology. Fundamental movements such as the measured step, high knee lift, pointed toes, posture, and turns must be mastered before moving to more complicated routines. All movements are to be executed with snap, drive, and precision; avoid anticipation (early start) or hesitation (late start). The appearance of any marching band will be improved only as each individual member improves.

I. The Basic Block Band

A. Squads and Files

Squads consist of four people and are designated by a number with the first squad in the block being number 1. *Files* are those lines running from front to rear, and they are designated from right to left as A, B, C, or D. Hence, a person in the 28th squad from the front of the band, in the third file from the right would be labeled 28C.

B. Standing Positions in Block Band

Parade Rest/At Ease – Right foot stays in place, left foot is brought out and placed 22.5 inches to the left. Left hand is placed in the small of the back with fingers extended and joined, palm out. No talking is allowed in this position. This is the command given to relax the band while receiving instructions. This is also the position that should be taken upon hearing the command “Fall In”.

Attention – Heels and toes together; body erect; when there is a free hand place knuckle of thumb against trouser seam, cup hand slightly, bending fingers from the middle joint; raise chin slightly. When standing at attention the arch of the foot is on the line. There is no movement or talking in this position.

C. Instrument Carriage

1. Pregame and Halftime: hold instrument with two hands at all times, either perpendicular to the ground in the center of your body or in proper playing position.
2. Parades: above principles apply or as dictated by squad leaders with approval of the directors.
3. Playing Position: trumpets, trombones and flutes are parallel to the ground. Others maintain uniform horn angle as dictated by squad leaders with approval of the directors. Absolutely no horn swing.

D. Marching Step

The normal marching step is a 22.5 inch step resulting in 8 steps for every 5 yards. The normal block band interval is four 22.5 inch steps, or 2.5 yards between each person. This spacing is for both squads and files.

E. *Guide*

In pregame and halftime we guide to the yardlines, hashmarks, sidelines, and each other. In parades we guide off the squad leader to the right (*Guide Right*), from front to back (file), and by diagonals. *Guiding* is done with peripheral vision, not by turning the head or body.

II. *Stationary Commands*

A. *Fall In*

In addition to material given in regards to this command earlier, the directors designate where a given squad will stand. All other members quickly assume proper squad and file position (block band) in the *At Ease* position. *Attention* will usually follow the command of *Fall In* and attendance will be taken.

B. *Attention*

Command: “*Band, Ten Hut!*” (or whistle command: *Twееееet-Tweet-Tweet*).

Response: “*Move!*” – Snap to position of *Attention* in one count.

Position of *Attention* is poised, not rigid. Check the following:

1. Head - up
2. Chest - out
3. Shoulders - back
4. Stomach - in
5. Heels - together
6. Toes - together
7. No talking
8. No movement

Try to feel these above items wrong, and then right (*ex. - lock knees, then relax*).

C. *Parade Rest*

Command: “*Band, Parade Rest*” (or whistle command: *Twееееет-Tweet-Tweet*).

Response: “*Move!*” - Snap to *Parade Rest* position in one count.

D. *Instruments Up*: Instruments snap to playing position in one count (*on “up”*).

Command: “*Band, Horns Up!*” Response: “*Up!*”

Baton Signal: Ready... Response: Up with the baton. “*Aaaand-Up!*”

Instruments Down: Instrument snaps to carry position in one cnt. (*on “Down”*).

Command: “*Band, Horns Down!*” Response: “*Down!*”

E. *Right Face*

Command: “*Band, Right Face - Face*”

Response: “*And*” - Lift up heel of the left foot and ball of the right foot.

“*Move*” - Pivot 90° to the right on the ball of the left foot and heel of the right foot. (Snap shoulders and waist around)

“*Two*” - Snap the left foot to *Attention* position (heels together).

F. *Left Face* - exact opposite of *Right Face*.

G. *About Face*

Command: “*Band, About Face*”

“*And*” - Raise left heel and foot up to the ball of the left foot.

“*One*” - Snap left heel down.

“*Two*” - Take a 22.5 inch glide step with the right foot.

“*Snap*” - Pivot 180° to the left.

“*Four*” - Snap the right foot to Attention position (heels together).

III. *Moving Commands*

A. *Mark Time*

High Mark Time (Chair Step) - lift leg high and keep calf vertical to the ground with toes pointed. Always start with left knee snapping up on “Up!”

Command: “*Band, Mark Time, March*”

Response: “Up!”

Low Mark Time - Toes do not leave the ground. Heel rolls off the ground up to the ball of the foot. Knees bend directly forward to the point where they just cover the toe.

B. *Forward March*

High Step - 22.5 inch step where there are eight equal steps taken between every five yards (8 to 5). Use high knee lift as in high mark time, with toes pointed. The left foot strikes the ground 22.5 inches in front of the right foot on beat 1. Hit the yardlines with the ball of the foot. Feet and knees act as shock absorbers. No movement from the waist up. Think of the legs as doing all the work while the upper body remains completely relaxed.

Command: Four whistles; or “*Band, Forward March*”

Response: “Up!”

Glide Step - This step is characterized by a smooth and flowing manner of marching. This style of marching is particularly effective when using a 22.5 inch step, marching “8 to 5”. However, it may also be used with various lengths of strides ranging from less than 22.5 inches to slightly more than 30 inches. The *Glide Step* uses no knee lift. Beginning with the first step, every effort is made to keep the foot parallel to the ground, and every step is made to a “flat heel” with the foot rolling from heel to ball – in direct contrast to *Mark Time* where it rolls from ball to heel.

Don't pick up the foot or knee. Instead, the foot is extended in front to a point 22.5 inches (or other prescribed length) forward and in line with the foot rolling to the ball of the foot. The body is to remain virtually motionless from the waist up, eliminating all movement in the upper half of the body, and contributing to the appearance of dignity and smoothness.

C. *Halts*

Hit-Halt - At the end of a sequence, left foot is place in position beside right.

Halt Kick - At the end of a sequence, the left foot is placed in position beside the right foot. The right foot points to the side and returns

D. *Flanking Movements*

Flanking movements or turns are executed with snap. Turns are quick, during which the instrument remains in contact with the mouth. The ball of the right foot hits the yardline, then pivot on the ball of the foot. Be sure to take a full step in the new direction immediately after the turn. The left knee should come up as the turn is being executed in high step marching.

Left Flank - Turn 90° to the left, pivoting on the **ball of the right foot**. Snap shoulders and waist around.

Right Flank - Turn 90° on the **ball of the right foot**, using the crossover step. Snap shoulders and waist around.

To The Rear - 180° turn, pivoting on the ball of the right foot and snapping around **to the left**.

E. *Slow Turns*

Slow Turn In 4 and *Slow Turn in 8* - These are individual turns that are designated by degree and direction. They are executed by turning and marking time simultaneously in place. Use the half-way technique as described later in this book. Unless otherwise indicated, always turn **left**.

F. *Other Marching Steps*

Step 2 (or 4) - A sequential movement, stepping off every other count, or every fourth count.

Drop-off - All forward march until “dropped-off” into the charted position.

Stack Up - Each person in the entire unit moves directly to a predetermined destination (usually a yardline) and marks time upon arrival.

Pick up - Each person marks time until “picked up” from the rear, then all step off together.

Pinwheel Turn Done in 4 and 8 count sequences. Four or 8 steps per 90° or 180° turn. All guide to the outside. Center person either pivots in place or moves as the others in the squad, depending on position and direction of turn.

Follow The Leader - This particular maneuver is rather self explanatory. The “leader”, or first person of a squad or larger group, is shown the exact path he is to follow on the field, and the other members of that group merely follow the leader’s **exact** path. The path of the drill may be a straight line, a curved line, or a combination of both. The two main problems in execution are cover and interval. The group must cover down (follow the exact path of the leader) and maintain a consistent interval.

Adjusted Step A step size other than 22.5 inches used in some drills. Step size is determined by the distance to be covered in a given number of steps. Cover half the distance in half the counts, then do the other half (Halfway Technique). **All steps** are the **same size**.

Float - Moving to a form using an **adjusted** step. The number of steps involved in the *Float* will be given.

Build - Moving to a form individually using “8 to 5” step size. Upon arrival in the form, the individual marks time the remainder of the counts to complete the sequence.

Horns To Press Box - A playing position that involves raising the instrument higher than normal playing position. The brass players raise their horns 30° above level position and the woodwinds lean their heads back 30°. It is used to direct sound to the press box and higher sections of the stadium, as well as for a visual effect.

G. *Ensemble Marching Style*

1. *Form Control* - The form is always the priority! Stay in the form. Constantly adjust.
 - a. *Alignment* - The straightness of a line or the roundness of a curve.
 - 1.) *Dress* - Alignment to your side.
 - 2.) *Cover* - Alignment to your front.
 - b. *Spacing* - The space between centers of individuals.
 - 1.) *Interval* - Spacing to your side.
 - 2.) *Distance* - Spacing to your front.
2. *Coordinates* - Points on the field. Determined by using the field markings.

IV. *Table of Abbreviations*

This is a list of commonly used abbreviations that will be seen on your charts.

CF	Company Front
DO	Drop Off
FM	Forward March
FTL	Follow the Leader
HALT	Hit-Halt
HPB	Horns to the Press Box
LF	Left Flank
MT	Mark Time
NCP	Next Charted Position
PW	Pinwheel Turn (Will be written as either RPW or LPW)
RF	Right Flank
SU	Stack up
TTR	To The Rear
SLT	Slow Turn

V. *Strategies for Teaching Marching Fundamentals*

1. Form a circle to practice MT.
2. Break down moves into individual counts. Freeze on certain counts.
3. Strive for "Individual Precision".
4. Always maintain proper posture - attention position. Body carriage - proud.
5. Give commands while in lines, blocks, and other forms.
6. Have individuals who do something particularly well demonstrate for others.
7. Work individually with persons who are having difficulties.
8. Facing Moves - Freeze on first step after move to ensure proper step size.
9. High Step - Use *Heel and Toe* routine:
An eight count exercise. Raise left heel off the ground on count 1. Raise leg high on count 2. Place toe on ground on count 3. Lower heel on count 4. Continue with the right leg, then alternate legs, gradually increasing the tempo. Work for smooth movement with toes pointed. Don't bob or sway.
10. Glide Step Concepts - Roll, Smooth, Legato.
Four Count Sequence: 1. Heel, 2. Arch, 3. Ball, 4. Toe. Emphasize toe point up when on heel.
11. Count out loud while executing movements.
12. "Rhythmic Integrity" - Use a variety of tempos for commands as music is in a variety of tempos. However, always make sure tempo is steady. Clap hands while marching.
13. Be positive! Compliment as well as criticize.
14. Keep eyes off the ground. Look at a point in the distance about 30° above eye level.
15. Use the interval poles to check accuracy (especially in 8 to 5 marching.)
16. Beginning to march and play simultaneously:
A. MT holding long tones and playing scales (repeated quarter notes first).
B. FM8 holding long tones and playing scales (quarter notes first), building from there.
17. Develop the habit of always maintaining the attention position (discipline) at the end of any exercise or movement. This will then carry over into performance. Attention position is maintained until the Command *At Ease* is given.
18. Always set the example. The other band members look up to you and learn by observing you. If you strive to set a good example you will find yourself relaxing more (and yelling less).
19. To improve the timing of the glide step, brush the calves of the legs on the "and" of the beat.
20. Use your eyeballs to check the form. Move the eyes from side to side.

Come up with your own strategies:

- 21.
- 22.
- 23.
- 24.
- 25.
- 26.