



RACINE SCOUTS

DRUM & BUGLE CORPS

2017 Visual Technique Packet

(Specific Visual Audition Information will be furnished during audition camps)

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Posture

At the Racine Scouts, we strive for a tall and lean posture at all times. The overall goal of our posture is to create a powerful visual presence throughout our performance. To achieve this look we have a certain set of body checkpoints to be aware of:

- **The Chin should be slightly elevated**, especially to support proper playing position in the brass
- **The Spine should feel lengthened.** ****This feels like you are lifting your upper body out of your hips****
- **The Heels, Back of the Shoulders, and Back of the Head should all be in alignment.**
 - o Think standing straight up against a wall or a pole
- **The Chest should be expanded, with the Shoulders pulled back and as broad as possible**, creating a natural slope from the Neck to the Shoulder.
- **The Stomach should be in.** Think squeezing your abdominal muscles
 - o ****Careful to not stick out your stomach and bring your shoulders too far back, this creates tension issues and ultimately could lead to muscular injuries****
- **The Legs should be straight**, but the Knees should **not** be locked out

While holding your instrument, whether at carriage or in playing position, the muscle groups around your shoulder blades should be engaged, ultimately pulling them together. The pectoral (chest) muscles should NOT be engaged while you are holding your instrument!

Lastly, your body should be centered evenly between the left and right side to achieve a uniform and balanced look across the ensemble. Your body weight distribution should mainly be placed on the platforms (ball) of your feet (60%), with the other 40% being placed on your heels.

Foot Placement

When we are standing at attention, or relaxed position, our feet will be in what is called “Open 1st Position”. To achieve this look, start with your feet together in “Closed 1st Position”, which is heels and toes together. Next, turn your toes out 22.5° to achieve a 45° angle between the left and right feet. In Open 1st Position, the heels still remain together, as in Closed 1st Position.

Horn Carriage (Brass)

In the Brass section we have four basic positions the horn will be carried in at any given moment: **Relaxed, Attent, Playing, and Trail** (mainly used for parades).

We will begin with Attent position. This position is used when the corps is brought to attention, and also while marching and not playing during our performances. Attent position is characterized by four main checkpoints:

- **The Mouthpiece** should be at eye level.
 - o **Tubas** will be slightly lower due to the construction of the instrument.
- The Instrument itself should be **perpendicular (90°) with the ground.**
- The Instrument should have a **space equal to approximately 1.5 hand widths between the chest and the bottom valve caps.**
- **The Arms** should create a 90° angle, with the instrument being at the center of the angle

Secondly is Relaxed position. This position is similar to the Attent position, with some minor differences. To get to the relaxed position from the Attent position, simply bring the horn straight down toward the ground, maintain the perpendicular angle to the ground. The hands should be at hip height on the body. **The right hand will maintain control of the instrument** while in the Relaxed position. As you are moving to the Relaxed position, the instrument should turn 90° to the left (valves to the left), with the instrument eventually being between the body and the right hand. **The left hand** is then placed over the right hand at hip height.

*** **Tubas:** Your Relaxed position is characterized by placing the tuba straight to the ground very carefully. Then placing your hands on the top with the left hand over the right hand.***

Next is the Trail position. This position is mainly used while parade marching, and in certain situation where it is called for within the visual program. The trail position has two major checkpoints to be aware of:

- **The Left arm** is carried at the side. It is straight, and line with the profile of the body, with the hand making a relaxed, closed fist.
- **The instrument remains in the control of the Right hand.** The instrument is brought down to the right side of the body, and **carried parallel to the ground.** The mouthpiece should be in front of the body, while the bell is behind the body.

Lastly, is the Playing position. This is where you will spend a majority of your time throughout the season, which is why it is crucial that we look uniform across the brass section from player to player. Here are the body checkpoints to be aware of:

- **The Arms**, much like the Attent position, should form a 90° angle, with the instrument being the point where the angle is created from.
- **The Bell of the Instrument** should sit at an approximate 10° rise above parallel from the ground. This is often referred to as “Box 10”
- **The Right Hand**, which is also the playing hand, should have a nice curvature through the fingers. The thumb should be placed under the lead pipe, in between the 1st and 2nd valve cases. The thumb should remain straight, not bent or jammed in between the lead pipe and valves. The entire hand shape should be make a capital letter C.

Marching Technique

The marching technique is the meat and potatoes of how we move about the field, and therefore a crucial component in how we achieve uniformity in our performance, and how we move with grace throughout our performance. Whether Forward or Backward Marching, each contains the following components: **The Push, The First Step, Crossing Count, and the Second Step.** These will be discussed in detail in each of the following sections.

Forward Marching

The Forward Marching technique we use is referred to as a “straight leg technique”. Simply put, this means that the leg is straight on the downbeats. The length of your leg should extend through each step, with the movement being initiated from the hips. **Please note:** “Straight Leg” does NOT imply that the knees should be locked out. The leg will still appear straight with a natural knee bend.

The articulation of time while forward marching should happen on the EDGE of the heel, with the toes flexed and high!

The Push:

The push comes from the entirety of the right leg muscles being engaged. The motion, and energy, comes from the right platform being pushed off of into the first step. The left heel should stay low to the ground, and the toes should be immediately flexing. The right heel **MUST** stay low to the ground (no more than ½ inch), otherwise the bend in the leg happens before the first step. The initiation of forward motion comes from your core, with the motion of straight leg coming from the hip joint, like a pendulum.

The First Step:

Remember: **The articulation of time comes from the EDGE of the heel landing on the downbeats. This is crucial in order for us to achieve visual clarity and a unified pulse across the ensemble!** Both quads should be engaged, with both legs being straight at this point. **The weight of your body should be balanced on your front heel and your back platform** (this is regardless of which foot is in front/back). It is also crucial to be aware that your back heel should stay low to the ground. Always be thinking **LOW heels! HIGH toes!**

Weight Transfer/Crossing Count:

The weight transfer happens immediately after the downbeat. As this is happening the front foot begins to roll through, while the back leg immediately begins to flex as it pulls through to the next step. This will allow the knee to remain unbent, and the shape of the leg to remain straight as well. The traveling leg should be pushing down through the heel, and should remain a long straight line, coming out of the hip like a pendulum.

The crossing count is when the feet and legs are directly in line with each other. This occurs on the upbeat or “and” of each beat. The traveling foot should travel the “and” count **FLEXED**, which creates the correct leg shape, also preparing the foot for a solid shape on the next downbeat. The weight of your body should be entirely on your forward foot, but still straight up and down! Also, the traveling leg will not be completely straight, as a slight knee bend is needed in order for the foot to clear the ground. Always think of the shape of the leg as being long as you move forward.

The Second Step:

The traveling foot should be flexed and pushed forward. Remember, the articulation of time happens with the **EDGE** of the heel. The shape of the leg should long and straight. On the stationary foot, the weight should shift to the platform, while keeping the heel **LOW**.

Backward Marching

Our backward marching technique will also be a “straight leg” technique. Remember, “straight leg” does NOT imply locked out knees!! The articulation of time here happens with the entire platform of the foot on the ground on downbeats. The heel should remain at a relevé; the height should be comfortable (approx. 1 inch) in order to be able to maintain stability and control in the upper body carriage and the leg shape. When moving, you should be thinking about pointing the front foot as you pull from the back leg.

The Push:

The push comes from the same place as the forward march. The right quad should be completely engaged, with the push coming from the right platform. As the left foot extends out, the right heel comes slightly off the ground, so that only the platform remains in contact with the ground. The left foot should slightly flex to clear the ground as it moves back (the toes should never be above parallel to the ground in the backward march).

The First Step:

The platform of the foot articulates the time! Half of your body weight should transfer to this foot (left in this case). For the downbeat, the weight of the body should be balanced between the platforms of both feet evenly. Close attention should be paid that the heels of each foot remain at an even distance off the ground!

Weight Transfer/Crossing Count:

Your weight for the crossing count should be over your back (stationary) leg. The weight transfer occurs immediately following the downbeat. When we are moving, every step is initiated by a push from the front foot (energy should remain through the platform of the foot). DON'T REACH BACK, PUSH OFF!! As the front leg pulls through, the weight of the foot stays on the platform. Reminder: THE HEELS NEVER TOUCH THE GROUND DURING THE BACKWARDS MARCH!! The traveling foot should stay flexed a little through the crossing count, so as to maintain the straight leg shape. Both legs should be straight at this point.

The Second Step:

As the foot travels through the crossing count to the second step, the foot should stay flexed, with the heels low to the ground, so the foot can articulate fully on the platform. At this point, your body weight should be evenly distributed between the platforms of both feet and the heel height should remain even between both feet.

Direction Changes

When executing a direction change in either the forward or backward marching, it is imperative that we use a “toe touch” for the step one beat prior to a direction change. What this means is that our **heel comes slightly off the ground, while the platform of the foot is planted in spot**, to prep for the direction change. This creates a change in technique for the forward march, because we **do NOT articulate the time with our heel** one beat prior to the direction change, **we use the platform of the foot**. There is no technique change in the backward march.

The initiation of motion into the new direction comes from the platform of the foot, the quads, and the abdominals. These areas of the body need to be flexed in order to push the body in the new direction.

Halting

The halt always happens with the platform of the foot, whether in forward or backward march. There are two parts to a halt: **The Halt Count**, followed by **The Close Count**. (Ex. Halt 8 – Close 1)

In the Forward March:

The platform of the foot should articulate the time, not the heel, on the Halt Count. The foot articulating on the Halt Count should be turned out slightly (22.5°) as the platform articulates, in order to set up the 45° angle made by the feet as they close together. The foot on the Close Count, should be turned out slightly, with the heel lining up with the other foot. Your body weight should be completely between both platforms, in order to ensure the entire body stops in time.

In the Backward March:

In the backward march, the platform of the foot on the Halt Count still articulates the time. **THE HEEL DOES NOT DROP TO THE GROUND!!** This is to ensure visual clarity, and to help maintain body control and stability. As you bring the other foot back in on the Close Count, this when we glide down to the heels. Remember, as in the forward march, the weight should be between the platforms to ensure that the body stops in time.