

William Tennent High School Marching Band 2018

Wind Techniques & Guidelines

Setup of Arc:

- Our standard arc will be 30 yards wide and 28 steps (distance from sideline to hash) deep.
- In the segregated (by section) Arc, Woodwinds will be on the (performer's) right and Brass on the left, both in score order from outside in with the exception of Alto saxes who will be with the Mellophones.
- In the integrated Arc no member can be within 2 positions of someone playing the same instrument.
- It is the responsibility of every member to insure even spacing throughout the arc using their own eyes. No verbal communication should be necessary.
- When in Arc, toes and bodies should point slightly behind the conductor.
- Personal belongings will be placed behind the performer. Only instruments and uniform parts (at shows) will be in front.
- When instruments are placed on the ground they will be in front of the performer with the bell pointing toward the conductor in uniform fashion throughout each section

Arc Procedures:

- Stand-by will be given and an exercise or musical chunk will be assigned.
- The conductor will point to the center member of the Arc who will bring their instrument to the "Set" position initiating a fast ripple to the outsides.
- The assignment will start with an "8 & Go" from the metronome or the conductor.
- On beat 5 of the count off instruments will snap to playing position AND members will begin marking time.
- During exercises, members will do a "Step-out" at the beginning of each phrase.
- During show chunks, members will do a "Step-out" where direction changes would occur in the drill.
- At the end of Technique exercises, the final note will be sustained until released by the conductor.
- At the end of "Show Chunks" an appropriate "Plus-one" will be played and sustained.
- Following a release from the conductor, maintain instrument carriage and posture until given "Stand-by" or a Ripple down is initiated from the center.
- DO NOT empty spit valves, oil valves, fix equipment... when in the stand-by or set positions. This should be done between exercises.

Equipment Guidelines:

- When equipment is left on the sidelines instruments will be lined up by section in a neat, consistent fashion.

Breathing Exercises:

- Air is the fuel for both the visual and musical aspects of the show. Because of physical demand, wind players **MUST** commit to breathing as efficiently as possible.
- Breathing Exercises do not increase lung capacity. They work the muscles that control expansion and contraction of the chest cavity. A resting human uses only 20% of their lung capacity. You will need to use 100%.
- Always transition directly from inhale to exhale without “holding your breath” while playing (although some breathing exercises will ask you to do this for resistance purposes).
- Focus on filling the bottom of the torso as it is the most frequently neglected.
- When doing breathing exercises properly, it is normal to become lightheaded. To minimize this effect, be sure to exhale completely.

Breath Beats:

- Because of the need to breathe more often on the field than in a concert setting, we will use “Breath Beats.”
- Each member will be assigned a beat (1-4) on which they can breathe whenever they need to.
- Simply leave out the notes on the beat in question and re-enter on the next beat.
- When breathing during a sustain, re-enter with the softest possible tongue so your section sounds seamless.
- Avoid breathing during crescendos.

Learning & Memorizing Music

- The Marching Band Season is deceptively short and bad habits are hard to break so learn things right the first time!!
- Music is much more than notes
 - Before playing show music, circle the “details” (dynamics, key changes, articulations...)
 - Also mark release beats of any long tones (half-note or longer)
 - Write in breath marks that allow for achievable phrases **while marching**
- Do not “Play through” a piece of music when looking at it for the first time.
 - Focus on a manageable chunk (4 to 8 measures) and practice it as slowly as it takes to play it properly.

- Identify tricky parts (could be 1 measure or less) of the passage and work them individually. If necessary, isolate the fingers or articulation (i.e. practice the fingerings without playing or practice the rhythms with correct articulation on one note).
- Make sure the “details” are done properly before speeding up or moving on to a new chunk.

The Ensemble Sound:

Developing a cohesive ensemble sound requires consistency in members’ approaches to playing. The following are some of the most important aspects:

1. **Tone quality:** For a section to sound like a unit instead of a group of individuals they must focus on matching:
 - Embouchure: the way the mouth comes in contact with the instrument.
 - Aperture: the amount of space between the teeth and/or lips as well as the position of the back of the tongue.
 - This is the biggest contributor to poor tone quality in young musicians.
 - Many young musicians partially close off their aperture to limit air flow so they will be able to play longer without breathing. Do not do this.
 - Always aim for an “Ah” or “Oh” sound, never “Eee” or Rrr”
 - Articulation: Using the Tongue and Air to clearly define the initiation and length of a note.
 - DO NOT articulate with your lips!! This causes the note to begin with a closed off fuzzy sound.
 - Use the correct air speed at the initiation of every note, especially at soft dynamics.
 - Never use a heavy tongue.
 - Use a “Ta” or “Toe” syllable for accents/marcatos and a “Da” or “Doe” for other articulations.
 - Air: Air is everything! Without enough air, the items above cannot be achieved
 - As volume increases, more air and a wider aperture are needed
 - As volume decreases, use less air and a smaller aperture
 - AIR SPEED should not change drastically as volume changes. Slow air will make your articulations fuzzy and your pitch flat. Faster air will make you sharp and your tone too bright. (Note: air speed does change with significant range changes)
2. **Pitch:**
 - To play in tune you must first play with good tone quality (See above)
 - Listen to your immediate neighbors and the “bottom.” First match their volume and tone, then adjust to match their pitch.

3. **Balance:**

- All it takes is one individual playing too loudly to destroy an ensemble's sound. Listen to your immediate neighbors. If you can't hear them you're too loud!!
- A bottom up approach to balance creates a better ensemble sound. Be sensitive to the Low voices when playing loud dynamics.