



Western Illinois  
University

Marching Leatherneck

Drumline  
Handbook

2026

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*Drumline Coordinator*



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*Welcome to the Western Illinois University  
Marching Leatherneck Drumline!*

The following information is intended to help you prepare for the season. All members of the Marching Leathernecks must read all documents received. The informational letters we have sent and the band manual, which you will receive at the beginning of camp, are essential to you as they contain important information not covered in this handbook. In this handbook, you will find information regarding initial schedule, equipment, warm-ups, and initial literature.

***LEATHERNECK DRUMLINE LEADERSHIP***

The Marching Leathernecks are proud to have these members as our undergraduate drumline staff:

Brandon Rowe, Drumline Captain/snare drums  
Ian Hart, tenors  
Emma Frost, bass drums  
*tbd*, cymbals

***IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION***

KN's Office: 309-298-1235/ KA-Nichols1@wiu.edu

Bands' Office: 309-298-1505

***DRUMLINE LEADERSHIP***

Brandon Rowe: be-rowe@wiu.edu

Ian Hart: ij-hart@wiu.edu

Emma Frost: [eg-frost@wiu.edu](mailto:eg-frost@wiu.edu)

OPS: 298-1949

Marching Leatherneck Webpage: [WIU Bands](#)

## ***IMPORTANT PLACES***

KN's office: Sallee 102

Bands' Office: Sallee 202A

School of Music Office: Browne 122

Equipment Storage: Sallee 122

Indoor Rehearsal space: Browne 129

Outdoor Rehearsal space: Corbin/Olsen Field

Football Games: Hanson Field

## ***SCHEDULES***

### ***ML Camp***

***Camp starts for everyone on Sunday, August 16.***

**DRUMLINE WILL MEET**

**at 7 - 9:30 pm**

**BROWNE HALL (room 129)**

**Please refer to the ML Handbook for the remainder of the camp schedule.**

If you have questions regarding auditions, feel free to contact Dr. Nichols (309/298-1235) or the Bands' Office (309/298-1505). For camp, you will specifically need to have:

1. Sticks or mallet you have already
2. Money for sticks or mallets to match the line
3. Three ring binder containing the Drumline handbook

## REHEARSALS

It is crucial that all rehearsals start on time. The Marching Leathernecks rehearse Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 4:15 until 6:15 p.m. on the Corbin-Olson field. These are “ensemble” rehearsals. Make the necessary plans to be on the field and ready to play **no later than 4:10 p.m.** As a member of this organization, you are expected to have your music and warm-ups prepared prior to rehearsal. You will also need to show up with necessary materials (binder, sticks/mallets, instrument, etc.) **Failure to do so can result in lowered letter grade or expulsion from Drumline.**

### EXTRA MANDATORY REHEARSALS

Please include the following rehearsal times in your schedule. Due to the spectrum of responsibilities and activities of the season, it will be necessary for the drumline to supplement the daily marching band rehearsals.

Sunday, August 23 noon - 2                      show drum maintenance

\*\*\*\* there is a possibility that these may move to Tuesday nights\*\*\*\*

Monday, August 24                      7-9 pm

Monday, August 31                      7-9 pm

Monday, September 14                      7-9 pm

Monday, September 21                      7-9 pm

Monday, September 28                      7-9 pm

Monday, October 5                      7-9 pm

## SECTIONALS

**Sectionals** outside of our scheduled rehearsals are a vital part of the Leatherneck Drumline success. You are strongly encouraged to participate and make necessary plans for these sessions to be a positive and successful supplement. Your section leader will organize all sectionals.

## *PERFORMANCES*

Please be sure to make the necessary plans to be early for all events. The Drumline call will be **one hour** prior to the rest of the ensemble. We will need the time to access the instruments and do any last minute maintenance.

Periodically you need to check the Marching Band calendar. Bring all possible conflicts to Dr. Nichols' attention as soon as possible. See **Marching Band Handbook regarding absences and tardiness.**

## *EQUIPMENT*

All practice instruments will be storage in the Shed at the practice field. Show instruments are stored in Room 122, Sallee Hall. Unless other arrangements are made, be sure to have all of your equipment on the practice field before the start of rehearsal. **It is the responsibility of each player to store his/her instrument in the proper place after every rehearsal and performance.** Covers will be used for all rehearsals. Additionally, the covers should be **taken off for all performances** and placed back on the drums **immediately after the performances** (ready for the next rehearsal. Cases will be used for all off-campus performances. You are responsible to pack your own instrument and cover in the case. Cases are stored in the same area as the instruments.

**It is the responsibility of each member of the drumline to take care of his or her own instrument and to keep the storage area clean and organized.** If there is a problem with an instrument, please notify your section leader.

The bass drums will be responsible to purchase **one pair** of mallets for performances. **Snare and tenor players are responsible to purchase their own implements as well.** You should have two to **three pairs** available at all times. **New players will all need to purchase a stick bag as well.** Tenors may need to purchase other types of implements depending on music. We are fortunate to continue our endorsement

with Vic Firth. Sticks and mallets are available through Dr. Nichols. Cymbal players will be responsible to purchase at least one pair of fingerless workout [gloves](#).

It is important that everyone bring to camp a **3-ring binder with plastic sleeves for music**. Music, additional warm-ups, and valuable information will be given to you throughout the season. This will aid in keeping everything organized and continue the development of **our** drumline.

## ***AUDITIONS***

Placement audition will happen on Sunday, August 16, at 7 pm in Browne 129.. To expedite the process, all first season members are requested to submit a video to Dr Nichols by Monday, August 3 (no later than 11:30 pm), with the following materials:

1. *Eights, Double Beats, Triplet Rolls, and 16<sup>th</sup> Note Timing* (bass drum auditions should focus on bass drum 2)
2. *...Truck*
3. Cymbals should demonstrate the Cymbal Rhythm Grid on page 19
4. Tenor and bass drum performers may use a standard snare drum practice pad.

- **At this time, the music does not need to be memorized**
- **If you wish, you may submit videos on more than one instrument**
- Feel free to contact KN or for assistance. Depending on instrument, audition may be individual or as a group. Audition panel will consist of KN and section leader. Other faculty, staff or clinicians may also be involved in the audition process.

## General Considerations

*Technique (MUY IMPORTANTE . . . . Stay relaxed and breathe!)*

### Hand position

1. Make sure that you are holding the mallet or stick at the proper balance point
2. Keep all fingers intact and keep a firm grip
3. Snares (RH) and tenors should keep your palm facing the ground
4. Snares (RH) and tenors - make sure that movement is initiated from the wrist
5. Snares (LH) and bass drums - rotate the forearm
6. Know your playing areas (center, off center, edge) and when to use them
7. Know the four basic strokes (full, down, up, dead) and when to use them
8. Be consistent in where your stick tips or mallet heads strike the instrument's surface
9. Start slowly, use a metronome, and gradually increase the tempo

### Posture

1. Eyes straight forward and chin up
2. Shoulders should be relaxed, but not slouching forward
3. Arms at a comfortable and efficient playing angle
4. Spine straight
5. Legs straight, but do not lock your knees

### Feet

1. Heels together when at attention
2. Mark time for all exercises and music

## *Musicianship Tips*

### 1) General tips

- ✓ **Learn your music before rehearsal**
- ✓ **Use your ears**
- ✓ **What is YOUR sound within the ensemble**
- ✓ **Always think of what is next**
- ✓ **Learn music in sections (chunk)**

### 2) Playing area on the surface of drums

- ✓ **Center - articulate (general playing area for snares and basses)**
- ✓ **Off Center - resonant (general playing area for tenors)**
- ✓ **Edge - thin and many overtones (only utilized if instructed to do so)**

3) Tempo and Rhythm

- ✓ Use metronome consistently
- ✓ Subdivide
- ✓ Count aloud before and during your passages

4) Dynamics (these are not inclusive; dynamics need to be relative to literature and ensemble)

- ✓ Dictated by implement height  
Snare drum and tenor drum parameters

<b>ZONE 1.</b>	<i>pp</i> = 1" grace notes
<b>ZONE 2.</b>	<i>p</i> - 3" no forearm
<b>ZONE 3.</b>	<i>mf</i> - 6" no forearm
<b>ZONE 4.</b>	<i>f</i> - 9" (General warm-up dynamic) no forearm
<b>ZONE 5.</b>	<i>ff</i> - 12" some forearm
<b>ZONE 6.</b>	<i>fff</i> - 15" +

Bass drum parameters - think of a clock face

<b>ZONE 1.</b>	<i>p</i> - RH at 1 o'clock/LH at 11 o'clock
<b>ZONE 2.</b>	<i>mf</i> - RH at 2 o'clock/LH at 10 o'clock
<b>ZONE 3.</b>	<i>f</i> - RH at 3 o'clock/LH at 9 o'clock (General warm-up dynamic)
<b>ZONE 4.</b>	<i>ff</i> - RH at 4 o'clock/LH at 8 o'clock

Cymbal parameters (measurement indicates space between cymbals)

<b>ZONE 1.</b>	<i>p</i> - 3"
<b>ZONE 2.</b>	<i>mf</i> - 9"
<b>ZONE 3.</b>	<i>f</i> - 12"
<b>ZONE 4.</b>	<i>ff</i> - 18" +

- ✓ Again, **always** be conscious of what the music calls for.
- ✓ Layers of sound or addition of instruments dictates some dynamics.

## Cymbal technique

The following techniques will be utilized initially:

- 1) Orchestral crash – cymbals are placed in front of body, held in a somewhat horizontal position (slightly angled to floor)
- 2) Overhead crash – bells of cymbals in line with eyes
- 3) Horizontal hinge choke – a la high hats
- 4) Overhead Taps – similar position to overhead crash; cymbal edge in line with eyes; “tapping right cymbals against the outer edge of the left cymbal” produce the desired sound
- 5) Frontal Taps – both cymbals touching players sides of mid-section; tapping apex is at the naval-level
- 6) Slide choke – cymbals

\*\*\*During camp, we also will be discussing posture, cymbal placement (port, prep, crash, etc.) for articulating a sound, cymbal placement for holding for snare drums, and various visual elements (icing on the cake!).

## WARM-UPS

Although warm-ups are an **essential** part of every rehearsal, we may be short on time due to the stats of the shows. If available, come early to rehearsal to start getting your mind, hands, and instrument prepared. **It is important to be on time for each rehearsal** so that we have full attendance at warm-up if time permits. The warm-ups will evolve throughout the season (many of the warm-ups are brought to the line through members), but we will start simple and strive for an ensemble that is well balanced, musically excelling, technically progressing, and can perform with intensity. Remember that the intent of each warm-up is always:



*To prepare you physically to play.* Those that have marched before know this includes arm, wrist, and finger muscles as well as developing the shoulder, back, and leg muscles.



*To prepare you mentally to play.* Many of the warm-ups may seem very simple (as simple as doing nothing) but the intent may be for you to relax your mind enough to think very clearly about something extremely easy. This makes technically difficult exercises much easier to accomplish.



*To prepare you musically to play.* The percussionist's ultimate goal is to make music. In order for this to happen on the field, all members of the percussion section have to learn to make music together. Again, by starting simple in a warm-up, we become more musically conscientious. Once you have control of the specific part you play, listen to the entire percussion section for the music.

# ML Camp Materials

METRONOME MARKING = 60 – 152

## Eights

Musical score for Snare Drum, Quint Toms, Bass Drums, and Cymbal Line in 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The Snare Drum staff uses 'r' for snare and 'l' for tom patterns. The Quint Toms and Bass Drums staves show melodic lines. The Cymbal Line staff shows cymbal patterns.

Musical score for S.Dr., Quints, B. Dr., and Cym. in 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The S.Dr. staff uses 'l' for tom and 'r' for snare patterns. The Quints and B. Dr. staves show melodic lines. The Cym. staff shows cymbal patterns. A '5' is written above the first measure of each staff, indicating a five-measure phrase.

### Performance notes:

- **Everyone** should be striving for relaxed, controlled full-strokes throughout exercise. One fluid motion per note
- **SNARE DRUMS** – measure 4 and 8 should be both hands together
- **Bass drums** should play unison for the odd reps

- **Cymbals** should execute use an orchestral crash for odd reps and overhead crashes for even reps

METRONOME MARKING = 60 – 140

## Double Beats

The image shows a musical score for a drum exercise titled "Double Beats". The score is written for four parts: Snare Drum, Quint Tom-toms, Bass Drums, and Cymbals. The time signature is common time (C). The exercise consists of five measures. The Snare Drum part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with a change in the pattern between the second and third measures. The Quint Tom-toms part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with a change in the pattern between the second and third measures. The Bass Drums part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with a change in the pattern between the second and third measures. The Cymbals part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with a change in the pattern between the second and third measures. The score is written in a standard musical notation style with a treble clef and a common time signature.

### Performance notes:

- **Everyone** should be striving for relaxed, controlled full-strokes throughout exercise. One fluid motion per note
- **Bass drums** should play unison for the odd reps
- **Cymbals** should execute use an orchestral crash for odd reps and overhead crashes for even reps

METRONOME MARKING = 60 – 126

## Triple Beat

Musical score for four drum parts: Snare Drum, Quint Tom-toms, Bass Drums, and Cymbals. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two measures. The Snare Drum part features a steady eighth-note pattern with 'r' (right) and 'l' (left) strokes. The Quint Tom-toms part has a similar eighth-note pattern with 'r' and 'l' strokes. The Bass Drums part plays a pattern of eighth notes, with a double bass drum stroke on the second and fourth eighth notes of each measure. The Cymbals part plays a pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks, indicating a Horizontal Hinge Choke.

Musical score for four drum parts: S.D. (Snare Drum), Quint T-t. (Quint Tom-toms), B.D. (Bass Drums), and Cym. (Cymbals). The score is in 3/4 time and consists of three measures. The first two measures are identical to the previous score. The third measure features a triplet of eighth notes for all parts, indicated by a '3' above the first note. The Snare Drum part has a triplet of eighth notes with 'r' and 'l' strokes. The Quint T-t. part has a triplet of eighth notes with 'r' and 'l' strokes. The B.D. part has a triplet of eighth notes with a double bass drum stroke on the second and fourth eighth notes. The Cym. part has a triplet of eighth notes with 'x' marks.

### Performance notes:

- **Everyone** should be striving for relaxed, controlled full-strokes throughout exercise. One fluid motion per note. At slower tempos, control everyone note with hand (not rebound)
- **Bass drums** should play unison for the odd reps
- **Cymbals** should execute a Horizontal Hinge Choke (a la high hat) for odd reps and orchestral crashes for even reps



# Cymbal Rhythm Grid

KN

**A**

Cymbals



9 **B**



17 **C**



25 **D**



**E**

33



**F**

41



**G**

49



53





METRONOME MARKING = 150

# We're Marching On

TENOR

The musical score is written for a Tenor voice and a group of Non-Resonant (NR) instruments. The time signature is 2/4. The Tenor part begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The NR parts are written on ten staves, each with a different clef: the first two are soprano clefs, the next three are alto clefs, and the last five are bass clefs. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'V' (forte) and '>' (accents). There are five specific sections labeled A, B, C, D, and E, each enclosed in a box. Section A is in the Tenor part, B is in the second NR staff, C is in the fourth NR staff, D is in the seventh NR staff, and E is in the ninth NR staff. Trills are indicated by a '3' over a bracketed group of notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

METRONOME MARKING = 150

# We're Marching On

Western Illinois University Fight Song

The musical score is written for Bass Drum (BD) in 2/4 time. It consists of ten staves of music. The first staff is labeled 'BASS DRUM' and includes a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 2/4. The score is divided into sections marked with letters A, B, C, D, and E. Section A is the first measure of the first staff. Section B is the first measure of the fourth staff. Section C is the first measure of the fifth staff. Section D is the first measure of the eighth staff. Section E is the first measure of the ninth staff. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth notes, quarter notes, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and dynamic markings like accents and slurs.

METRONOME MARKING = 150

# We're Marching On

## CYMBALS

CYMBALS

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

# Georgia

Perc. Edited and Arr. by  
A. F. Brennan, 1993

snare

12/8

1

*ff*

*mf*

**A**

5

8

*cres.*

10

13

15

*fff*

# Georgia

Perc. Edited and Arr. by  
A. F. Brennan, 1993

quints

12/8

1

*ff*

**A**

6

9

*cres.*

12

15

*fff*

# Georgia

Casces

1

5

10

15

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for the Casces part of the piece 'Georgia'. It consists of four staves. The first staff starts at measure 1 and ends at measure 15. The second staff starts at measure 5 and ends at measure 15. The third staff starts at measure 10 and ends at measure 15. The fourth staff starts at measure 15 and ends at measure 15. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns and rests.

# Georgia

Perc. Edited and Arr. by

A. F. Brennan, 1993

cym.

hold for snares

A 8 B

1

ff

11

hold for snares

14

fff

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for the cym. part of the piece 'Georgia'. It consists of three staves. The first staff starts at measure 1 and ends at measure 11. The second staff starts at measure 11 and ends at measure 14. The third staff starts at measure 14 and ends at measure 14. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns and rests. There are also dynamic markings like 'ff' and 'fff' and performance instructions like 'hold for snares'.

# ...Truck

Snare  
Tenor  
Bass  
Cymbals

SNR  
TNR  
BD  
CYM

SNR  
TNR  
BD  
CYM

# Rosanna Cadence

## Snare Line

## Rosanna Shuffle Cadence

EMC

♩ = 172

7

12

18

25

31

35

2

39

43



Bass Line

# Rosanna Shuffle Cadence

EMC

$\text{♩} = 172$

Measures 1-47 of the Bass Line. The notation includes rhythmic patterns with left (L) and right (R) foot indicators, dynamic markings (ff, mp, f), and articulation marks.

Cymbal Line

# Rosanna Shuffle Cadence

EMC

$\text{♩} = 172$

Measures 1-44 of the Cymbal Line. The notation includes cymbal patterns with symbols (Cr, HH, Sz, Sk, CC, U) and dynamic markings (f, mp, ff).

# Concentration

Brain

The musical score for 'Concentration' for Brain is written on three staves. The first staff starts with a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains five measures of music with notes and rests, and is labeled with 'r' and 'l' below. The second staff starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature, containing six measures of music with notes and rests, labeled with 'l' and 'r' below. The third staff starts with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature, containing seven measures of music with notes and rests, labeled with 'l' and 'r' below. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

*The WLU Marching Leathernecks are proud to be supported by the following companies:*

