



## ***MARCHING BAND***

### ***MARCHING BATTERY TECHNIQUE***

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## I. Purpose of Manual

This book will act as a guide for the Stevenson University Marching Band Drumline. It contains terms, ideas, concepts, etc., that will be utilized throughout the season.

## II. Materials

Stevenson University has invested a tremendous amount of resources and funding for the success of the marching band and will provide ALL equipment needed.

- **Yourself** - You must be present and **ON TIME** to maximize our time at rehearsal. Therefore, all members are expected to arrive early enough to be ready for down stroke right at the scheduled rehearsal time. Arriving “just in time” or late is unacceptable. **TO BE EARLY IS TO BE ON TIME!!!!**
- **Binder (provided by students)** – A 3-ring binder with plastic sheet protectors is required of each ensemble member. These binders will hold this manual, technique, music, drill, etc. Each member should have a pencil with them at every rehearsal.
- **Equipment** – All necessary equipment, sticks, mallets, carriers, stands, bags, music, etc. is to be brought to each and every rehearsal.
- **Drum Stands** – Use of drum stands will be permitted for members of the ensemble for the purposes of learning music, however they are not to be used as a crutch. Part of playing a drum in the drumline is carrying your instrument.

## III. Technique and Approach

The most important element of approach to the instrument is to be (and appear) comfortable and natural.

- A. **Grip** - The grip we will use is matched (also known as the “American” grip), which means the thumb will stay on the side of the stick, slightly raised towards the topside, as opposed to resting completely on top or the side. The fingers will wrap completely around for maximum control. The grip will be the same for all instruments in the ensemble. Here are the guidelines:
1. **Fulcrum** - This is the balance point of the grip and the focus of all of your control. It is between the 1st joint of the index finger/1st joint of the middle finger, and the pad of the thumb. The fulcrum should remain closed, so that there is no gap between the body of the hand and the thumb.
  2. **Palm Should be Parallel to the Ground** - Allows for the most power to be taken from the stroke.
  3. **Fingers Should Remain on the Stick at all Times**- During legato strokes, the back fingers will “guide” the stick into the head and give your stroke more power.
  4. **Wrist Turn** - All motion starts with the wrist. There should be little arm movement, although the arm should be FULLY RELAXED – not stiff! The arm will come into play as needed.
  5. **Prep Stroke** - The up turn of the wrist before a beat is played. The upstroke should occur during the 2 16th notes prior to the down stroke (ex. + a **1**).

B. **Strokes Used**

**The 2 primary strokes we will utilize will be:**

**Legato** – The basic stroke, which is described, as long, flowing, connected, smooth, relaxed, rebound. The stick should take a straight path into the drum. The motion initiates from your wrist and, of course, all fingers must remain on the stick.

**Staccato (Down stroke)** – Short, pressure from the back fingers serves to control the height of the rebound (stopping the stick). We use this to control the rebound, for example, in accent to tap patterns.

**C. Playing Position** – Each instrument has different playing positions, please see below.

**1. Snare Drum**

- Sticks should be 1/2 inch apart, 1/2 inch off the head.
- Sticks should form a 45-degree angle at the tips.
- Primary playing area is in center of drum, on an area the size of a quarter.
- Elbows will be **slightly** elevated – no tension!! The idea is to get the arms away from resting on the body

**2. Tenors**

- Sticks/mallets should be 1/2 inch apart, 1/2 inch off the head.
- Sticks should form a variable angle at the tips, depending on what drum you are playing.
- Primary playing area is 1 1/2 inches from rim closest to you. Aim for the pinstripe!
- All vertical motion initiates from the wrist; horizontal movement initiates from the elbow.
- I suggest following the QB for more detailed instructions.

**3. Bass Drum**

- Mallets should be 1/2 inch from the head.
- Primary playing area is in the center of the head, on an area the size of a quarter.
- Mallets should form a 45-degree angle from the body.
- Full wrist turn is essential, but arm should stay relaxed. Arm will come into play as needed, especially for “Full Stroke” playing.
- Wrist turn initiates from the back of the forearm, near the elbow, not near the hand.

# CYMBAL INFORMATION

## I. Marching Cymbal Hold - The Garfield Grip

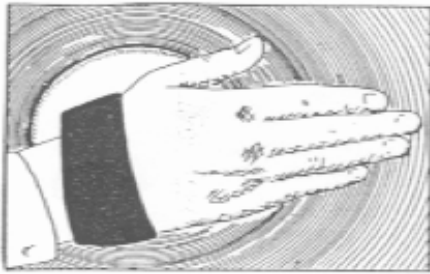
The Garfield grip (Created by Thom Hannum and the Garfield Cadets Drum & Bugle Corps) is a highly recommended grip since the weight of the cymbal is distributed over the entire surface of the palm. This grip is the most effective means of controlling the cymbals while at the same time reducing hand tension.

Step 1- Hold the cymbal in a vertical position and put the entire hand through the strap to the wrist.

Step 2- Turn the hand so the palm is facing away from the pad of the cymbal.

Step 3- Rotate the entire hand downward and turn the palm toward the cymbal until it touches the pad. The strap should rest at the base of the thumb and forefinger.

Note: The strap may have to be loosened if the grip is too tight. Note: It is important to keep fingertips off the surface of the cymbal in order to allow the instrument to vibrate freely.



## II. Sound Production

The single most important aspect of cymbal playing is sound production. The visual effect the cymbal creates, while extremely important, is secondary. At the point of attack using a standard crash, the cymbals should NOT meet exactly together “edge to edge.” This will result in what is called an “air-pocket” which is a momentary vacuum that locks the cymbals together and kills most of the sound. To create a full crash sound, apply a flam technique. At the instant of attack, the bottom edges of the cymbals meet first, followed by the top edges. Unlike an actual flam, there should be no audible “grace note.” Using this sound quality technique, a full sound should be produced.

To begin, your arms, from the shoulder to the elbow, should be level to the ground. From the wrist to the elbow should be approximately at a 45-degree angle towards each other. Wrists are bent to allow for the cymbals to be parallel. The cymbals should be 2-3 inches apart with the knots of the cymbals in line with your eyes. To prepare for the crash, open the cymbals up to an “A.” To do this, straighten the wrist to create a flat line from the tip of the fingers all the way to the elbow. Then, break the wrist back so the cymbals form a “V.” This is where the first crash or “grace note” happens at the bottom of the cymbals. The crash hits bottom then pushes through to the top and opens back up to the original “A” position. To finish, open back up to the “V” And snap back to set. (set, A V A V, set = one crash) The snap to set should happen two counts after the crash (ex- crash on one, snap back on three).



**SET**

**A**

**V CRASH**

**A**

**V**

**SET**

(bottom through top)

### III. Set Position



The set position is initiated by the instructor or drum major before the tap-off. It is a quick, snappy movement that demonstrates that you are prepared to move into a position for playing. When moving from parade rest to set, it is as if someone is tightening back two strings attached to your elbows.

#### Playing Positions

##### a. First (Hi-Hat) Position

The cymbals are tilted slightly to the left, with the left cymbal touching the forearm and the edge of both cymbals touching the belly. In this position the “hi-hats” are played.



##### b. Second Position (Orchestral)

In this position, the cymbals are no longer touching the belly, and are shifted slightly higher. They are at roughly a 30° angle. This position is used to play a “sizzle,” “suck,” “sizzle-suck,” “smash,” “gong,” “choke,” and “crash.”

##### c. Third Position

Cymbals are at roughly a 70° angle. However, the arms are now at head height. This places the cymbals at face level. You should be able to see between the cymbals like a sight, though the cymbals are barely separated. This position is used to play a “crash,” “choke,” “sizzle,” “sizzle-suck,” “smash,” “ping,” and “scrape” hits.

