



## **Marching Manual**

Created by Tyler Jacks

With special thanks to Westwood High School, Leander High School, Westlake High School, the Santa Clara Vanguard Drum and Bugle Corps, and their staffs for assistance and inspiration

## Posture:

### **Basics**

- Stand tall, but relaxed - legs straight but not locked (soft knees)
- Feet at a 45 degree angle facing out (first position, or “pizza”) with arches over dot
- Chin up, angle of head 10 degrees above parallel with the ground - make an “L” with hand, place thumb on sternum, chin goes to extended index finger
- Chest presented slightly forward - “Superman Chest”
- Weight 60% platforms/40% heels - rock all the way forward (heels off the ground), all back (toes come up), centered, then just slightly forward
  - Foot is broken down into platforms (third of your shoe near the toes), arches (the middle of your shoe), and heels (the back third of your shoe)

### Teaching tips/reminders:

- Separate upper and lower body by placing middle finger on hip and thumb on lowest rib and lifting tall
- String attached from heels all the way up through points of alignment and pulling out the top of the head - come onto releve (platforms) and leave upper body where it’s at while heels come back to the ground
- Flop over and then slowly bring your upper body back straight, stacking one vertebrae at a time and thinking tall

### **5 Points of Alignment**

- Heels, knees, hips, shoulders, ears
- Stack each body part vertically on top of each other - whole body should be in a line
- “Ears over shoulders over hips over knees over heels”

### Common Issues:

- Leaning back (especially with heavier instruments) - hips presented too far forward and are out of line with shoulders
  - Fix: instructors can use two fingers to move the shoulders forward and the hips back - first time marchers usually feel like their butt is sticking out in order to look correct
- “Banana Back” - individual points of alignment are stacked, but the hips are rotated incorrectly, like water is spilling forward towards your toes from the pelvic bowl
  - Fix: hips need to be tucked under the body, often compares to the sensation of squeezing the butt together - one hand on the stomach and the other on the back, zip abs up and tuck hips under

\*\*\*\* Take pictures, take videos, look in the mirror. The feeling is hard to master, and oftentimes students feel like they stick their butt out to look correct. Whatever the feeling is for you, memorize it and check yourself frequently. Posture is the building block for everything we do \*\*\*\*

## **Standing Positions** (all elements previously discussed still apply)

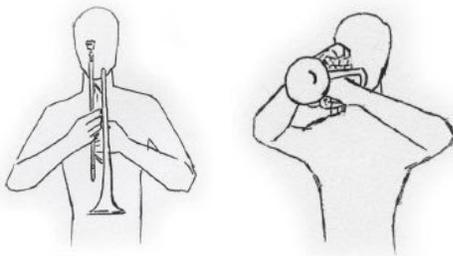
### Without Instruments

- Standby
  - Defined, relaxed position used when not at set, usually when receiving instructions
  - Make closed fist with right hand, place a comfortable distance down in front of you (somewhere around or below your belly button) with back of hand facing out
  - Left open hand closes over right, left palm to back of right fist
- Set
  - Motion to set is fast and precise, with complete stillness at arrival
  - Performance position without instruments - mimics instrument in playing position
  - Right fist roughly 6 inches in front of mouth, left hand clasped over right
  - Elbows wide in a triangle shape - roughly 110 degree angle, or slightly more than 90 (rotate arms and make an L at 90 and then rotate back and expand slightly as a method of checking) - and even with each other, as if sitting on a table top
  - Straight line from knuckles to elbow - no broken wrists

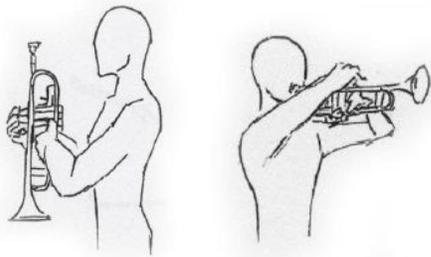
### With instruments

- Standby
  - Similar to without instruments in the relaxed position used to show attention while receiving instructions or checking drill, but each section has their own deviation
  - Look to older members and leaders for definition in holding the instrument - strive to look the same and always keep the elements of posture intact
- Set (horns down) - carry position
  - Flutes/clarinets: hands on instrument in same manner used to play but with instrument vertically in front of you, straight up and down, roughly 6 inches away from the body, with mouthpiece/tone hole at eye level
  - Neck strap instruments (low reeds, saxes): hands on instrument in same manner used to play but with instrument horizontally in front of you, parallel with the ground, comfortably at the end of the neck strap and roughly 6 inches away from the body
  - Trumpets, mellophones, baritones: horn in front of body (6 inches or fist and a thumb from the chest) with mouthpiece at eye level, wrists remain straight (line from hand to elbow) and elbows remain wide, right hand fingertips on the valves and thumb between first and second valve casing against the lead pipe, left hand held against the long side of the valve casings, trumpet thumb between 1st and 2nd valve casing, mello/bari thumb between 1st and 2nd valve casing - space between palm and instrument in both hands
  - Trombones: horn in front of body (6 inches or fist and a thumb from the chest) with mouthpiece at eye level, wrists remain straight (line from hand to elbow) and elbows remain wide, bell and slide components make a 45 degree angle, or a V facing away from you, with the left hand in a normal holding position, and the right hand gripping underneath the slide brace

- Sousaphones: no variance between set horns down and up, but maintain visual stillness while the rest of the band moves to different versions of set - left hand on lead pipe and right hand on valves, look to leaders and returning members for detail
- Set (horns up) - playing position (should be mostly “normal” with some adjustments)
  - Flutes - parallel with ground, watch for drooping angles and right hand/arm moving too far back
  - Clarinets - uniform, comfortable angle for playing position with wide elbows - look to leaders and returning members for exact definition
  - Bass clarinet and alto/tenor sax - vertical, straight up and down, horn angle
  - Bari sax - slightly off to the side - look to leaders and returning members for exact definition
  - Trumpets, mellophones, baritones: horn 10 degrees above parallel with the ground (look at the leadpipe), keep wide, tabletop elbows and straight wrists (arms will be at slightly different angles to match elbow height to compensate for different heights of left vs right hand placement), right hand “C” shape over valves, right thumb between 1st and 2nd valve casings, left hand grasping around the valve casings with plenty of space between palm and instrument
  - Trombones: horn 10 degrees above parallel with the ground (look at the leadpipe), keep wide, tabletop elbows and straight wrists, maintain 45 degree angle and “V” shape of the slide and bell
  - Sousaphones: see set horns down



Carry position (left) and playing position (right)  
From: Santa Clara Vanguard



\*\*\*\* Occasionally, we may have need for a 4th position while holding our instruments that we will call “trail.” This position involves keeping the instrument down and close to your side, and will help us with fatigue or with narrow pass-throughs in drill. There is a good deal of variation for every instrument here, so look to leaders and returning members to make sure that every section looks uniform \*\*\*\*

## Horn Moves

- Unless otherwise instructed, we will “bring our horns up on the duts”
- The vocal:
  - You will get 8 beats from the metronome before we start any exercise. You will hear the first four, then on beats 5, the next upbeat, and 6, you will say three loud and crisp “duts” - 1, 2, 3, 4 (all from the met), “dut dut dut” (students), 7, 8 (met)
- Horns up:
  - Bring your horn from carry to playing starting with the first “dut” and ending with the last
  - Because we start motion on count 5 and end motion on count 6, we will call this a 1 count horn move, because motion is occurring over the course of one full count, traveling from 5 to 6
  - The motion should be smooth but precise, limiting any extraneous motion beyond the rotation of the instrument, with absolute “visual silence” before we start moving on count 5 and immediately upon arrival on count 6
- Horns down:
  - At the conclusion of an exercise, unless otherwise instructed, we will bring our horn down from playing to carry with another 1 count horn move on counts 2 and 3 once we are finished, leaving count one empty for another moment of visual silence
  - For a vocal we will say “and down” on counts 2 and 3, respectively
    - The full vocal will resemble this: “dut dut dut” (silent 7 and 8 - usually where we will breathe - followed by however many counts the exercise is - and then a silent count one) “and down”
  - The motion should be identical to bringing the horns up, except in reverse, and the ideas of smooth but precise pathways and visual silence before and after the move remain intact as well
- Alternative horn moves:
  - At times, the staff will ask you to bring your horn up or down either faster or slower than that one count horn move. It is important to remember that we referred to our normal horns up as a 1 count horn move, even though if we were to put it starting on count 1, it would end on count 2. Always think about how many beats you are traveling in time, which is not always the number of the count you end on.
  - For example, a horn move that starts on 1 and ends on 3 will be referred to as a 2 count horn move, because we travel on counts 1 to 2, and on 2 to 3. A 3 count horn move that starts on count 1 will actually end on count 4 (traveling from 1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4).
  - This concept is important to remember when we talk about finding the halfway point of slower horn moves. A 3 count horn move cut in half would be 1.5 counts, and that would mark where you should be halfway between carry and playing. 1.5 counts through a move starting on count 1 would actually occur on the upbeat after beat 2

## **Marching:**

- All posture principles remain intact - body will move through time and space evenly and will not be ahead or behind of feet

## **Forward Motion**

- Initiation
  - On count 8 of the beats before the move, press the right platform firmly into the ground - “push”
  - Simultaneously on count 8, lift tall and extend through the left leg to create space for that leg to move forward, remaining straight
- First step
  - Moving from the hip as one unit and maintaining that long leg shape, start bringing your left foot forward on the upbeat of count 8 - “and” - turning it from a turned out position to a “ski line path” (or parallel with each other if your toes are pointed straight in front of you) to take your first step
    - The foot should be as flexed as possible throughout this motion (toes pointed up toward the sky)
    - Left heel should remain close to the ground
    - As left foot comes forward, the right heel will naturally raise off the ground
      - Keep this right heel as low as possible to maintain a straight “trailing” leg
  - The completion of the first step will be when the back of the left heel strikes the ground with a long leg and flexed foot on count 1 - “push and 1”
    - The “articulation” of the back of the heel specifically is what will define foot timing and accuracy and precision across the band
  - If motion is stopped here, weight should be 50/50 between the left heel and the right platform with the body centered between the two
- Pass through
  - After the articulation on count 1, let the left foot roll down smoothly while simultaneously allowing the right foot to start rotating to a “ski line path” or parallel position, and begin moving forward to take its first step
    - Maintain long and lifted leg shapes throughout all of this
  - The next checkpoint that we have after count 1 is the upbeat between 1 and 2, or the crossing count. It is here that your right ankle will come even with and begin to cross your left ankle on its way to making the first step with the right foot
    - In this position, the left foot is firmly pressed into the ground and the right leg is lifting tall, creating space for the right leg to pass through with a tall and straight leg shape - this should be a similar feeling to the original initiation of motion
    - The right foot and left foot are identical in shape, with the right foot flat and hovering over the ground next to the left foot that is flat and pressed into the ground. The right foot is about to begin the flexed foot shape to complete the second step

- Second step
  - Continue moving the right foot forward, allowing the leg to move as one unit with the motion swinging from the hip. Flex the right foot and keep the heel low to the ground until the articulation point on the back of the heel strikes the ground on count 2
  - The left foot will naturally rise just like the right foot did on the first step. Allow this to happen, but keep it as low to the ground as possible to maintain a long and straight trailing leg.
  - The frozen position on count 2 would be the right foot on the heel with the toes pointed toward the sky, the left foot on the platform with the heel just slightly raised, both legs long, weight and upper body centered 50/50 between the feet
    - The second step requires covering twice as much distance as the first step because the trailing leg is coming forward from behind you. It is critical for timing purposes to move through the crossing count and land on beat 2 (with the back of the heel articulation) smoothly and swiftly
- Third through seventh step
  - Continue marching forward in the same manner that you took the first two steps, remembering these key terms and concepts...
    - Long legs, flexed feet, low heels, ski line path
- Eighth step (prep)
  - The final count of this 8 count move will be approached differently to prepare yourselves to stop motion and come back to your set position
  - After the seventh step, you will be frozen with your left foot forward and flexed, balanced on the back edge of the heel, and your right foot back and resting on the platform with the heel slightly raised. Both feet should be parallel to each other, or in a ski line path
  - The process to begin the 8th count will be identical to the previous steps, all the way through the pass through, when you are frozen with your right foot hovering over the ground and your ankle bones next to each other
  - Rather than continuing to place your right foot forward with the back edge of heel articulation, you will take a tendu (toe down) step in a turned out position to prepare the feet to come back to a "pizza" or first position
    - The timing of this step is every bit as important as the previous steps that had a back edge of heel articulation, however, the part of the foot that makes contact with the ground on the beat this time is the platform
- Close
  - Both feet are balanced on the platforms with the right foot in front in a turned out position and the left foot behind with the toes pointed straight forward
  - The left foot will now come forward and place down in a turned out position to complete the 45 degree angle that you started with before you began moving
    - This placement is mostly flat footed, and needs not be a full tendu step
    - Contact with the ground - articulation - must happen on the count after 8
  - Weight should come back to 60/40 when standing still, but be gentle on arrival

## Backward Motion

- Initiation
  - This should be identical to the initiation for forward motion
  - On count 8 of the beats before the move, press the right platform firmly into the ground - “push”
  - Simultaneously on count 8, lift tall and extend through the left leg to create space for that leg to move backward, remaining straight
- First step
  - Moving from the hip as one unit and maintaining that long leg shape, start bringing your left foot backward on the upbeat of count 8 - “and” - turning it from a turned out position to a “ski line path” (or parallel with each other if your toes pointed straight in front of you) to take your first step
    - This motion can be thought of as a heel extension behind you - the foot shape will stay flat
    - Left heel should remain close to the ground
    - As left foot comes backward, the right heel will naturally raise off the ground and partially start turning to be parallel - it may even slide just a little bit closer to you, which is okay
  - The completion of the first step will be when the left platform strikes the ground with a long leg on count 1 - “push and 1”
    - The part of the foot that contacts the ground will always be the platform in backwards motion - you will not fall back on our heels
  - If motion is stopped here, weight should be 50/50 between the left and right platforms with the body centered between the two
- Pass through
  - After the first step is articulated with the left platform behind you and the right foot pointed in front of you, let the right foot start to come back, maintaining that pointed shape with a long leg
    - This motion can be thought of as another heel extension and then ultimately a reach behind you to complete the second step
    - The foot should be kept just above grazing the ground
  - On the eighth note beat in between the first and second step - the crossing count - the right foot and left foot should be even with each other, with the right foot flat and hovering just slightly over the ground
  - The ankle bones crossing in time is a big check point that we will focus on here
- Second step
  - Continue the extension feeling with the heel in the right foot and reach behind you to take the next step with the right platform - again never falling back on your heels
  - As you reach behind you, keep the right heel low to the ground and both legs long
  - The left foot will naturally begin to point as it is stretched in front of you and may slide slightly back

- Freezed position would be the right foot behind you and left in front, on both platforms with the left foot pointed, weight 50/50 and body centered between feet
- Third through seventh step
  - Continue marching forward in the same manner that you took the first two steps, remembering these key terms and concepts...
    - Long legs, pointed feet, low heels, ski line path
- Eighth step (prep)
  - Freezed position on the seventh step would be with the left foot behind and the right foot in front balanced 50/50 between both platforms
  - The crossing count happens the same as it has with the previous seven steps, freezing with the ankle bones even with each other and the right foot hovering over the ground
  - Continue the motion to reach behind you with the heel, except begin to turn the foot out to match the turned out position - "pizza" - that we started with
  - The eighth step will be a "prep" step in this turned out position and will still be articulated the same way that all the previous steps have been - with the platform
- Close
  - Both feet are still on the platforms after the eighth step, but the right is turned out and behind you and the left foot is still in that ski line path in front of you
  - To complete the move and get you back to the full starting position, place the left foot at the correct turned out angle, meeting the right foot in a "close"
    - This is just a placement, and is meant to be mostly flat footed
  - This is the only moment that you will fall back on your heels, as you will return to the 60/40 balance on your feet that you began the move with
    - Make sure to let the weight fall back graciously, and don't let that change your posture

## Direction Changes

- Forward to back
  - Counts 1 through 7 are exactly the same
  - Count 8 is a prep step just like it is if you were to close, but instead of being prepped at the turned out angle, it is prepped with the toes straight in front
    - This is assuming the direction change is straight forward to back
  - You are now frozen with your weight 50/50 between your two feet on their platforms with the right foot in front and both toes still in a ski line path
    - You should notice this is identical to most times that you are frozen in backwards march - you are already prepared to start going backwards
    - Your upper body should remain centered throughout the direction change and should resemble hitting a wall before moving the other direction
      - Don't let yourself sway when you legs stop and move again
  - On the following count 1, you will lift the back left platform just enough to be able to rearticulate it back on the ground and create a sense of time
    - Your body does not travel anywhere on this step

- Count 2 continues backward with the right foot just like any other count 2 in backwards march - make sure that count 2 is in time... covers twice the distance
- Back to forward
  - Counts 1 through 7 are exactly the same
  - Count 8 is a prep step similar to what we have done at the end of a backwards move before, but this time your toes will be pointed straight forward - still not falling back on your heels
    - We will call this prep step a “lock up”
  - You are now frozen on your platforms with your weight 50/50 between your right foot behind you and your left foot in front of you
    - Make sure that you are fully in control of your weight here and don't sway with the stopping and starting of motion
  - For count 1 of the next move, flick your left platform up to change your foot shape from pointed to flexed and land back on the ground for an articulation on the back edge of the heel on count 1
    - You are now frozen with your left foot forward on the heel and your right foot back on the platform - just like a normal snapshot of forward march
  - The next count is another step forward with the right foot just like any forward march step and you can continue moving forward for the rest of the move

## Slides

\*\*\*\*You will not always be marching straight forward or backward. Most of the time will be at an angle, and sometimes it might even be completely to the side. Regardless of the direction your feet travel, the upper body will always face the sideline. Marching directly to the sides while your upper body remains facing the front is called a slide\*\*\*\*

- All of the marching principles previously discussed still remain intact, but require different areas of focus when marching slides
- Start facing the direction your feet will eventually go
  - Leave the feet in place, turn your hips and upper body 45 degrees toward the front
  - Leaving your hips at the 45, take the rest of your upper body the full 90 degrees
  - It is important to not try and take your entire body except for your feet on the full 90 degree rotation - you will sacrifice posture principles and technique in your lower body if you do not separate the hips and upper body
- Think about twisting up rather than just turning - similar to a coke bottle cap unscrewing or a spiral staircase - keep the upper body lifted to maintain posture
- Avoid “shotgun shoulders” - having one shoulder more twisted around than the other
- Beware of drifting off course - consciously fight against the tendency to drift to a more comfortable angle

## Mark Time

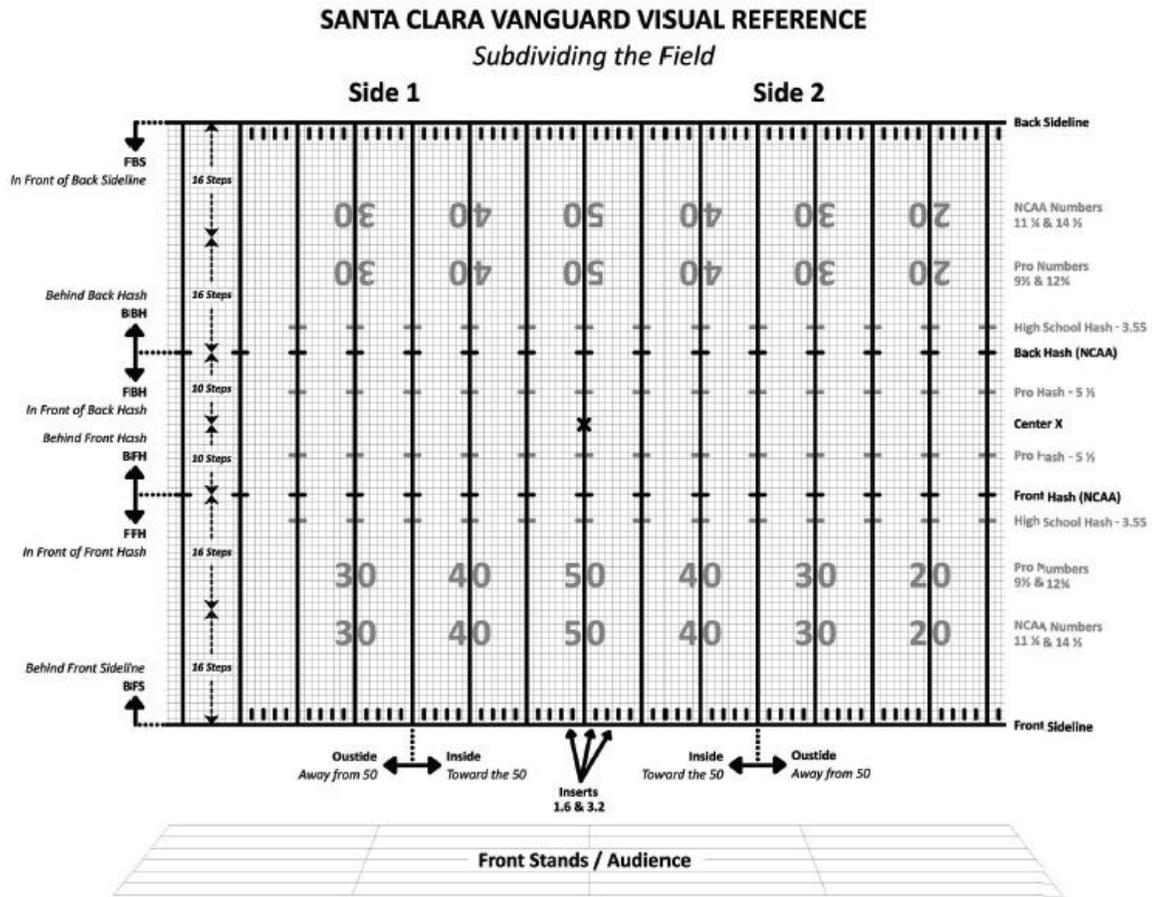
\*\*\*\*Marking time is a way for you to simulate marching while standing in one place. It will be used heavily for inside rehearsals and for beginning to get the feeling of moving your feet in time to the music that you play\*\*\*\*

- To mark time, start from a set position with your feet in 1st position - or pizza
- The first movement will be peeling up your left heel from the ground and picking up the foot to place it back on the ground next to the right foot, but this time the toes will be facing forward, preparing for a ski line path
- The next movement is identical to the first, but with the right foot
  - Peel the right heel off the ground, place next to the left, both toes pointed forward
- For the rest of the steps in a given move that you are marking time for, the only motion is picking up the heel of the foot (starting with the left and then the right) a few inches off of the ground - not too high - and placing it back down on the beat
  - The platforms will stay on the ground the whole time, except for the first steps
  - It is important to realize that we are trying to reinforce the timing of the beat in the HEEL of the foot, so the beat happens when the heel hits the ground, not when it is lifted up
    - It can also be tempting to feel timing in your knees, but isolate timing to your heels
- The last two beats of a mark time move will be similar to the first two but in reverse
  - The second to last beat (usually count 8) will be picking up the right foot and placing it in the correct turned out angle
  - The last beat (usually count 1 after the 8 count move) will be picking up the left foot to match the closed shape in first position that the right foot has started

## Step Outs

- Often, we will replace the first counts of a move with step outs rather than just staying in place in order to more closely resemble the way we move on the field
- We will take 2 count step outs, which means that the first two counts of the move will be as if it were a 2 count forward phrase ending with a forward to back to direction change
  - Step 1 with the left foot is identical to the first step we always take
  - Step 2 with the right foot is a tendu prep step in order to start going backwards
- Counts 3 and 4 will be as if we were performing a 2 count backward move ending with a close
  - Step 3 will be the rearticulation with the left foot to start going backwards
  - Step 4 will be the right foot prepping into the close
  - Step 5 will be finishing the close with the left foot
- The rest of the counts following will function normally
- This exercise can also be performed starting backward or in any direction - just swap in the correct direction change needed and treat it as a 2 count move

## Field Orientation and Coordinate Cards:



## Always use NCAA references

From: Santa Clara Vanguard

### **Breaking down the field**

- There are many different sizes of steps that you will take while on the marching field
- The most common step size is an “8 to 5”
  - An 8 to 5 means that you will take 8 steps to get from one yard line to the next
  - This step size is the standard across almost all marching bands, and will be what we refer to when we break down the field further
- The sideline that is closest to the tower and the “home” audience is the front sideline
  - You will face the front sideline almost all of the time during a show
- The opposite sideline is the back sideline
- There are two “hashes,” or small horizontal lines that split up each long yard line from sideline to sideline
  - The hash closest to the front is the home or front hash and the hash closest to the back is the back or visitor hash
- At the front and back of the field, there are 5 inserts between each yard line that run along the sideline
  - Each insert marks 1.6 8 to 5 steps

## Reading coordinate cards

- Your coordinate card works the same as an X,Y grid in a mathematics class
- You will have an X, horizontal, coordinate
  - This will refer to some distance from a numbered yard line on side 1 or side 2
    - Side 1, when facing the front sideline is always to the right
    - Side 2, when facing the front sideline is always to the left
  - This will also say a certain distance inside or outside the yard line
    - Inside is always towards the 50
    - Outside is always away from the 50
  - Example: 3 steps outside the side 2 35 yard line
    - Find the 35 yard line on the left side of the field (when facing the front)
    - Face away from the 50 (toward the closest end zone) and take 3 8 to 5 steps
- You will have a Y, vertical, coordinate
  - This will refer to some distance from the sidelines or hashes
  - Remember that we have the front and back sidelines and front and back hashes
    - Front and back hashes are also sometimes referred to as home and away
  - Example: 7 steps behind the front hash
    - Find the hash closest to the front of the field
    - Take the 7 steps toward the back of the field (behind)
- Pick one component of the coordinate to find first - don't overwhelm yourself and try to find it all at the same time
- Make sure to pay special attention to side 1 and side 2, inside and outside, and behind and in front instructions
  - Most drill corrections result because you saw the correct number, but analyzed some additional part of the information/instruction incorrectly
- You might eventually have decimal points or fractions of steps
  - Do your best to mark off these steps as accurately as possible
    - Place one foot exactly one 8 to 5 step in front of you
    - Split that distance in two to get a half step
    - Split that half step again in two to get a quarter step
    - Find the way half steps and quarter steps look in relation to your shoe
      - Everyone's shoe size is different, but knowing how it feels for you will help finding fractions and decimals much easier in the long run
- Always be as exact as possible with drill coordinates - close is not good enough
  - Find the closest field reference point, like a hash, and actually march those 7 steps back from the hash
  - If there is a dot close to you when we're on the parking lot, use that to get to your spot rather than marking off all 7 steps
  - Eventually, when the coordinate is learned, find the distance you appear to be from the permanent reference points around you - hashes, yard lines, numbers, sidelines, etc
    - Don't use dots or painted-on markings that won't be there on a real field

## Procedures/Commands:

- Calling to set
  - To get called to attention, all students will follow this sequence...
    - Director: "Ready, and, set"
      - Staff member will say these words in time
    - Students: "Set!"
      - Students will reply in time on the next beat with this confident, succinct vocal. As they say the word, students will move *as fast as possible* in a snappy motion from either their standby or relaxed position to their set position.
- Detail to the ready
  - For a more formal call to attention, all students will follow this sequence...
    - Director: "Detail to the ready"
      - Students will reply to this command by quickly moving on their own to a modified standby position, with their feet at shoulder width and their head looking down roughly 3 feet in front of them.
    - Director: "Detail, a-ten-hut"
      - Staff member will say these words in time
    - Students: "Pride!"
      - Students will reply in time on the next beat with this confident, succinct vocal. As they say the word, students will move *as fast as possible* in a snappy motion from either their standby or relaxed position to their set position.
- Finishing a marching move (especially in learning drill)
  - As soon as a marching move is finished, all students will follow this sequence...
    - Students: \*Freeze\* (action, not vocal)
      - Absolutely no motion. Time for staff members to assess.
      - Do NOT fix mistakes here. Be okay with being wrong.
    - Director: "Check"
      - Students wait to move until their reply.
    - Students: "Eyes"
      - The immediate reply to "check" to find the correct dot. The eyes are the main thing moving, but the head can move slightly if needed. Everything from the neck down is still frozen.
    - Director: "Adjust"
      - Students move the rest of their body *as fast as possible* to arrive at their dot, then *immediately* return to their frozen position.
    - Director: "Standby"
      - After assessments, called here to receive further instructions.
    - Director: "Relax" (possibly)
      - Students might be told to fully relax, which ONLY applies to your upper body. The lower body MUST stay in your dot with your heels together in pizza position.