



Fall 2023 Bass Packet

Drew Young, Director

ABILENE HIGH DRUMLINE FALL 2023

AUDITION INFORMATION

THIS PACKET CONTAINS:

Important Dates/Information

Exercises/Audition Music:

Technique Summary

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Clinic and Audition: Thursday, April 13th, 2023**
- **Drum Camp: July 24-28 8 am-1 pm @AHS Band Hall**
- **Band Camp (starts July 31), ALL rehearsals and performances.**

Note: If you cannot make ANY of the required dates, I NEED TO KNOW. Everyone must be at every rehearsal. The Battery has much less flexibility than the Front Ensemble. **If you cannot attend any portion of Band and/or Drum Camp, you will be placed in the Front Ensemble.** Every single person must be here all the time!

Who should audition?

Anyone who wants to be in the AHS Drumline – incoming middle school percussion students, plus all oboe and bassoon players (these instruments are not used on the field). *Returning members must also audition.*

The AHS Drumline has two sections: Battery and Front Ensemble.

The Battery is the marching part of the drumline: Snares, Tenors, Bass drums, and Cymbals. This section will consist of members who audition and will be placed on the Battery. These members will march on the field during Halftime.

The Front Ensemble is the sideline part of the drumline: Marimbas, Xylophones, Vibraphones, Rack Drums, and other accessories. This section will consist of members who audition and will be placed on the Front Ensemble. These members will play an instrument on the front sideline of Halftime performances. (Marimba, Vibraphone, etc.) **They will play their drum/cymbal whenever we are not rehearsing the halftime show.** (Stands, Pep-Rallies, Parades, etc.)

You will only try out for one instrument; however, all students will be placed according to where we feel they can be most successful based on that audition. Previous experience on a specific instrument DOES NOT guarantee a spot. Please prepare the required materials to the best of your ability.

Everyone will be placed on a drum/cymbal. Your audition will determine what position you have in the Battery or Front Ensemble

How do I have a good audition? BE PREPARED! On the day of auditions, you should be comfortable with everything in this packet. PRACTICE! Do not expect to sight-read your way through it. ASK FOR HELP! No one expects you to learn it all alone.

QUESTIONS: If you don't understand something, please ask!

Email Mr. Young, or reach out on Remind: drew.young@abileneisd.org

What do I need to prepare?

You only need to play the music for the instrument you want to audition for. All auditions will be performed live with a metronome.

Battery

Battery Snare: AHS Fight Song, Stick Control, $\frac{7}{8}$ Paradiddles.

Battery Tenors: AHS Fight Song, Stick Control, $\frac{7}{8}$ Paradiddles.

Battery Basses: AHS Fight Song, Stick Control, $\frac{7}{8}$ Paradiddles.

Battery Cymbals: Properly demonstrate Standby, Set, Gumption, Flip-up, Flip-down, Tabletop to Dinner Plate, and Bishop.

Front Ensemble

Front Ensemble Snare: AHS Fight Song

Front Ensemble Tenors: AHS Fight Song

Front Ensemble Basses: AHS Fight Song

Front Ensemble Cymbals: AHS Fight Song

There are practice recordings on the AHS Percussion website.
Please utilize this resource: <http://www.eagleband.com/percussion.html>

V: BASS DRUM

This section serves as a guide to The Cavaliers' approach to marching bass drum. Though no written explanation will fully communicate the necessary concepts, auditionees will be expected to know the information in this section and apply the information to the best of their ability.



TECHNIQUE

Our goal as individuals is to play in a consistent manner. Our goal as a bass line is to look, play, and move as uniformly as possible.

The following information outlines our high-level technique guidelines as to how we approach:

- 1) Contacting the stick (Grip);
- 2) Holding the stick (Hand Positions); and
- 3) Hitting the drum head (Stroke)

THE GRIP

Our grip, much like match grip on a snare drum, employs a three-point fulcrum.

- Thumb pad on the mallet, parallel to the shaft.
- Pointer finger and middle finger wrap around opposite of the thumb, creating a "triangle" between the points of contact.
- Ring and pinky fingers wrap naturally around the stick and remain relaxed.
- Remove tension in the hands; the grip at times may be "firm", but never "tight."



HAND POSITIONS

The Cavaliers employ two primary hand positions: “mallets down” (non-playing position) and “tacet” (playing position).

Non-Playing Position (Mallets Down)

- Let your arms hang naturally at your sides with the mallets in your hand using the grip previously described.
- The mallet should sit comfortably in each hand and maintain a 45 degree angle from your forearm.
- Rotate your hands outward to make the palms of your hands parallel to the side of your body.

*Note: this is the position in which we start and end all exercises and music - **we never bring the mallets up to the rim.***

Playing Position/Tacet (Mallets Up)

- Forearms are parallel to the ground
- The mallets should make roughly a 45 degree angle with the ground
- Depending on the size of the drum, you may need to pull your elbows back or extend them outwards
- **At this point, adjust the height of the drum so that your mallets are in the center - adjust the drum to the player, not the player to the drum!**
- The head of the mallet should rest in the center of the drum head and be as close to the playing surface as possible.
- Ensure that the back of your forearm to the back of your hand is one continuous flat surface.

Moving Between the Two: When moving from “mallets down” to “tacet”, nothing should change in your grip or wrists; the motion is simply achieved by raising the forearm up from the elbow. Depending on the size of your drum your elbow may move forward or backward relative to your body to achieve the head of the mallet being the center of the drum.

STROKE

The key to an effective stroke is a straight mallet path to and from the drum head. To achieve this, we:

- 1) Define 15 inches (flat to the ground - see “Heights”) as our major checkpoint to understand where we are going and what our hands need to do to allow the stick to naturally get to that point
- 2) Throw the mallet into the head so that it rebounds directly back to the defined 15 inch checkpoint
- 3) Ensure that we maintain the 45 degree tacet position

STROKE CONTINUED:

Mallet Path: The mallet must travel in a straight path from the 15 inch checkpoint to the drum head. Try starting at 15 inches and throwing the stick into the head, allowing the stick to come back to 15 inches on its own. Theoretically, if you throw the stick directly into the head, it should come back to the same location. Ensure you are maintaining the same grip and analyze how your wrist and forearm move from 15 inches back to tacet, or when the drum head is contacted. Reversing this motion helps garner a better understanding of the mallet path.

A Note on Rotation/Wrist Break: Our stroke uses a combination of arm rotation and wrist break. “Arm rotation” refers to a motion similar to turning a doorknob, whereas “wrist break” refers to the bending of the wrist joint, similar to knocking on a door. Rather than focusing on either of these motions, our stroke technique is centered around moving the mallet in a straight line path to the 15 inch checkpoint from the 45 degree tacet position. To achieve this, a combination of arm rotation and wrist break must be utilized. This can be difficult to achieve at first and will take some time! Strive for a smooth motion; be sure to practice in front of a mirror.

DYNAMICS

A good musician produces a consistent quality of sound at all dynamic levels. Moreover, the Cavaliers strive to find balance between both musical dichotomies; technical precision and tasteful musicianship.

Members of the Cavaliers Bass Line are expected to:

- Produce a consistent sound across any dynamic level
- Match volume/sound quality to other musicians
- Play with nuance and micro-shaping when called upon
- Have a “musical imagination” and subjectively understand why different types of music demand different approaches to sound

Sometimes the performer will be asked to play “flat”, where every note sounds exactly the same. This is how we approach most exercises, especially the more simple ones.

Other times the performer will be asked to play more nuanced, and with a higher degree of musicality to help the music have the right effect. This approach is usually limited to our show music or our more complicated exercises.



HEIGHTS

Heights are often employed to help match approach within dynamic levels. Each height level roughly correlates to a musical dynamic level; however, sometimes we will instead refer to the angle of the mallet in relation to the drumhead. Observe the following table:

Height	Related dynamic	Degrees from the drum	Notes
1"	pp	<0°	"tacet position"
3"	p	0°	Default tap height - often with some added velocity
6"	p/mp	22.5°	
9"	mp/mf	45°	
12"	mf/f	67.5°	Begin to use arm at this height
15"	f/ff	90°	Default accent height for most exercises
18"	ff+	112.5°	Avoid "slamming"!

Playing with accurate heights is important; however, it is possible to play the correct height and still not achieve the right dynamic or quality of sound. **It is each player's responsibility to use their ears to make sure that their playing is correct for the musical moment.**

SOUND QUALITY

There is no one approach to hitting the drum that is superior to all other approaches. The word "quality" in "sound quality" should be read as a synonym for "characteristic," rather than referring to whether a sound is "good" or "bad." As such, members of the bass line will be asked to produce different sounds from the drum in different musical situations.

The ideal Cavaliers bass drummer shows consistent musicianship, flexibility, and control of their sound. Furthermore, **the ideal candidate can produce a clear articulation on every note, regardless of speed or dynamic level.** In cases of particularly fast figures such as 32nd note 4's, the player will need to employ a slight crescendo throughout the figure so that all notes are clearly heard by the audience.

RYTHMIC EXECUTION I: INDIVIDUAL TIMING

Execution of rhythm is the most fundamental and important aspect of what we do. Members of The Cavaliers Bass Line are, simply put, expected to have perfect or near-perfect rhythmic abilities. All combinations and permutations of duple, triple, and odd (5s, 7s, 9s, etc.) should be well within the performer's grasp.

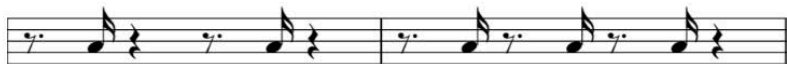
At The Cavaliers, our first rhythmic priority is individual accuracy. Because each bass drummer only plays a fraction of the written part, one is often asked to play difficult and isolated rhythmic partials. To achieve this with consistency, we frequently reference the "composite rhythm," which is the combination of an individual part and the player's tempo source (feet, metronome, other musician's part used as reference.)

As an example, let us reference bass 4's part from the first two measures of "Parrot":

Here is the written part:



And here is bass 4's part in isolation:



On its own, the above rhythm is challenging and is likely to be inconsistent. However, if the player imagines their mark time as "part of their rhythm", the resulting **composite rhythm** is much more achievable:

Bass 4's composite rhythm:
(feet marked with x noteheads)



Imagining and using one's composite rhythm can make even the most challenging individual parts considerably more manageable.

RYTHMIC EXECUTION II: LISTENING AND AWARENESS

Proper execution of individual rhythms (usually through the use of composite rhythms) is arguably the most important skill for a bass drummer to have. **However, each bass drummer's ultimate goal must be for the entire bass line to sound good together.** In order to achieve this goal, individuals in the bass line must have strong ensemble skills and be able to make tiny adjustments in rhythm in order to maintain the cohesion in the overall line. It is possible for a bass drummer to be overly focused on being individually perfect at the cost of making the line sound worse!

This level of rhythmic listening and adjustment is typically reserved for later in the season; however, a bass drummer should almost always be aware of how well their part is "fitting in" with the rest of the line.

MUFFLING

- Keep middle and ring fingers on the mallet. Extend your thumb, pointer finger, and pinky.
- Place your hand in the center of the drum head.
- Apply light pressure into the drum head from your middle and ring finger knuckles and the tips of your thumb, pointer, and ring fingers.

Procedural Items

- Begin each exercise with mallets down
 - Bring the mallets up 2 counts before each rep (count 7 of the count-off)
 - Bring the mallets back down on count 2 after the end of each rep
- Mark time and “dut” 4 counts before each rep
- Always move as a bass line. When transitioning between rehearsals, walk as a line with your drum on your right shoulder and your stand in your left hand. If you are not carrying a drum, help carry music stands.

Rehearsal etiquette:

- Rehearsal vibe should be relaxed but professional.
- Stay set after each rep until the instructor or section leader calls to relax.
- Stay engaged at all times - if you are not currently playing on a drum, make sure you are playing on a pad and still listening to the instructor’s comments.
- If you have questions, always feel free to raise your hand and ask.
- **When in doubt, do what the section leader/veterans do**



AHS Fight Song

♩ = 150

Rim-Clicks

A

f

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

Rim-Clicks

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

Rim-Clicks

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

2nd ending for winds

B

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

Rim-Clicks

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

Rim-Clicks

TAG

59

60

61

62

63

64

65

66

f

7/8 Paradiddles

A ♩=150

2 3

7/8 2/8 3/8 7/8

r | r | r | r | r | r | r | cont...

4 5

[illegible]

Musical notation for measures 9-11. Measure 9 starts with a treble clef and a common time signature. It contains two groups of eighth notes. Measure 10 has a new time signature of 3/4 and continues with eighth notes. Measure 11 begins with a fermata over a quarter note, followed by two rests.

BassLine

Stick Control

♩=110

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

R r L R L L R r r r r

The image displays a drum notation exercise titled 'Stick Control' with a tempo of 110 beats per minute. The exercise is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. It consists of 12 measures, numbered 1 through 12. Measures 1, 3, 5, and 7 feature a continuous eighth-note pattern on the snare drum, indicated by diagonal slashes. Measures 2, 4, 6, and 8 feature a continuous eighth-note pattern on the bass drum, indicated by quarter notes on the bottom line. Measures 9, 10, 11, and 12 feature a continuous eighth-note pattern on the snare drum, indicated by diagonal slashes. Measure 9 includes stick control markings: '>' above the first and third strokes, '>' above the second and fourth strokes, and '>' above the fifth and seventh strokes. Measure 10 includes stick control markings: '>' above the first and third strokes, '>' above the second and fourth strokes, and '>' above the fifth and seventh strokes. Measure 11 includes stick control markings: '>' above the first and third strokes, '>' above the second and fourth strokes, and '>' above the fifth and seventh strokes. Measure 12 includes stick control markings: '>' above the first stroke. The exercise is divided into four groups of three measures each, with the first group starting at measure 1 and the last group ending at measure 12. The notation is written on a single staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a time signature of 4/4.