

Laker Drumline

Marching Bass Drum Technique

This packet is intended to define a base framework of knowledge to adequately play a marching bass drum at the collegiate level. We understand that every high school drumline has its own approach to technique, so it's crucial that ALL prospective members approach their hands with a fresh mind and a clean slate. Mastery of the following concepts & terminology will dramatically improve your experience during the audition process and beyond. Happy drumming!

APPROACH

The technique outlined in this packet is designed to maximize efficiency of motion and sound quality. It is necessary to use a high velocity stroke while keeping your grip and your muscles relaxed. Keep these key points in mind as you work to refine the music in this packet. Tension in your upper body, lack of oxygen to your muscles, and squeezing the stick are good examples of technique errors that will hinder your ability to achieve the sound quality, efficiency, and control that we strive for.

GRIP

● Fulcrum

- Place the mallet perpendicularly across the second segment of your index finger.
- Place your thumb on the mallet so that the thumbnail is directly across from your index finger.

*** This is the essential point of contact between your hands and the stick. It should be thought of as the primary pressure point in your fingers and pivot point on the stick. The entire pad of your thumb should remain in contact with the mallet at all times. As a bass drummer, about 60% of the pressure in your hands should lie in the fulcrum.*

● Back Fingers

- Wrap your back three fingers around the stick so that the butt of the mallet rests comfortably on the fatty part of your palm, on the pinkie side of your hand.
- Adjust your hand so the fulcrum is set approximately 1/3 of the way up the stick, with no gaps in between fingers or in the thumb.

*** The back fingers provide critical support to the fulcrum, so they should remain in contact with the stick at all times. [Note: we will talk a lot about "palm side" and "finger side" of the stick when we discuss STROKE.] If correct, the butt of the mallet should NOT be visibly sticking out the bottom of your hand. As a bass drummer, about 40% of the pressure in your hands should lie in the back fingers.*

● Common Mistakes

- Gaps between fingers/thumb.
- Weak fulcrum: thumb settling above index finger, or to the left/right of the stick.

- Incorrect pressure distribution: Remember 60/40 balance between fulcrum/back fingers.
- Allowing “finger side” separation off the stick away from the back fingers.
- Choking up too far, resulting in a poor balance point on the stick and too much “butt” visible.

IMPLEMENT

● **Arm**

- With both mallets in hand, begin by relaxing both arms and wrists at your sides.
- Keeping your upper arms and shoulders relaxed, rotate from the elbow until your forearms reach horizontal (parallel to the ground).
- Upper arms should rest comfortably off the sides of your body, without the “chicken wing” look.
- ** *It is imperative that the forearms stay parallel to the ground when attempting to play in the center of the head. Adjustments may be made to the drum carrier or stand position, as well as upper arm angle, to achieve this.*

● **Hand**

- Wrists maintain a 45° angle above horizontal. Adjust carriers or stands as necessary so this angle accommodates playing in the center of the head.
- Rotate your forearms slightly inward toward the head, so the bead of the mallet rests approximately 1” from the center of the head (mallets inside of parallel to each other).
- ** *This position is known as “sticks out” or “tacet”. During the audition process, we will spend more time discussing how to transition between “sticks in”, “sticks out”, and “sticks down” -- as well as getting mallets into and out of mallet racks.*

● **Common Mistakes**

- Holding elbows too far from your body, causing improper arm angle and a “chicken wing” look.
- Holding elbows too close to your body, restricting mobility and range of motion.
- Setting forearms above or below horizontal.
- Setting wrist angles significantly greater or less than 45°.
- Sticks being angled outward at tacet position.

STROKE

● **Out-stroke**

- Think about the bead of the mallet being the first thing to move, motivated by gravity acting on the weight of the stick. Back fingers should allow “palm side” space within the hand, while maintaining “finger side” connection on the stick.

- As the mallet falls further from the head, the “palm side” space within the hand increases, along with the addition of wrist break, forearm rotation, and horizontal motion from the elbow.

*** Forearm stays parallel to the ground while playing in the center of the head. Stick path remains consistent regardless of height, on a natural “down & back” trajectory. If extended all the way, mallet would hit the back of your thigh.*

● In-stroke

- Initiated by the wrist, and motivated by rapidly closing the space on the “palm side” of the stick. Ideally, the butt of the stick contacts the fatty part of the hand the same instant the bead of the mallet hits the drumhead.

- Stick path should be identical to the out-stroke, resulting in a direct impact in the center of the head -- rather than the mallet “glancing off” the head on contact.

*** In-strokes should always be played with the maximum energy & velocity possible from the given stick height. It’s necessary to find a balance between articulation (velocity) & tone (touch).*

● Common Mistakes

- Changing the forearm angle above or below parallel as the stick moves.
- Stick path inconsistent from upstroke to downstroke, causing “scooping” or “slicing” motion.
- Back fingers separating from the stick, wasting energy and losing control of downstroke velocity.
- Back fingers not opening enough, restricting energy and range of motion.
- Back fingers opening at incorrect angle away from palm, causing glancing blow on impact.
- Not enough velocity = poor articulation & clarity. Too much velocity = offensive, harsh tone.

DYNAMICS

We will use dynamics and heights to define all music. We will also use stick angles to help everyone agree on what these dynamics should look like.

- **1.5” = pp** - Parallel with the head. Usually played at the edge.
- **3” = p** - Stick angle at 22.5° (halfway between parallel and 6”). Standard inner beat stick height.
- **6” = mp** - Stick angle at 45° (halfway between parallel and 12”).
- **9” = mf** - Stick angle at 67.5° (halfway between 6” and 12”).
- **12” = f** - Stick angle at 90° (horizontal; parallel to the ground).
- **15” = ff** - Forte with arms, rotation beyond horizontal. [AKA “full out”]
- **RFL! = fff** - As loud as possible with good technique. [AKA “Really Freakin’ Loud!”]

*** Unless otherwise specified, the notated dynamic will refer to the stick height of the accents, with the inner beats remaining at 3”. As stick heights change, it’s important that your grip, implement, stick path, and velocity DO NOT change. Lower stick height = smaller muscle groups (back fingers & wrist). Higher stick height = larger muscle groups (more fingers & wrist, addition of forearm rotation).*

Score

GV Eights

♩ = 120-200

The musical score for 'GV Eights' is written for four drum parts: Snares, Tenors, Bases, and Cymbals. The time signature is 4/4. The tempo is indicated as ♩ = 120-200. The score consists of five measures. Measures 1-4 show a continuous pattern of eighth notes. Measure 5 shows a change in the pattern, with some notes marked with 'x' and 'z'.

Variations:

- Any accent pattern/dynamic
- Crescendo/Decrescendo (each hand exchange, or entire exercise)
- Double Beat (1e, a2, &a, e&, 4 &)
- Triple Beat (1e&, 2e&, 3e&, 4e&)

Tenors:

- More around patterns will be added over time

Bass:

- Unison
- Split 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s (8th notes, 16th notes, Sixuplets, 32nd Notes)

Paradiddle Buildup

♩ = 140+

A

Snare/Tenor

Bass (Uni)

Bass (Split)

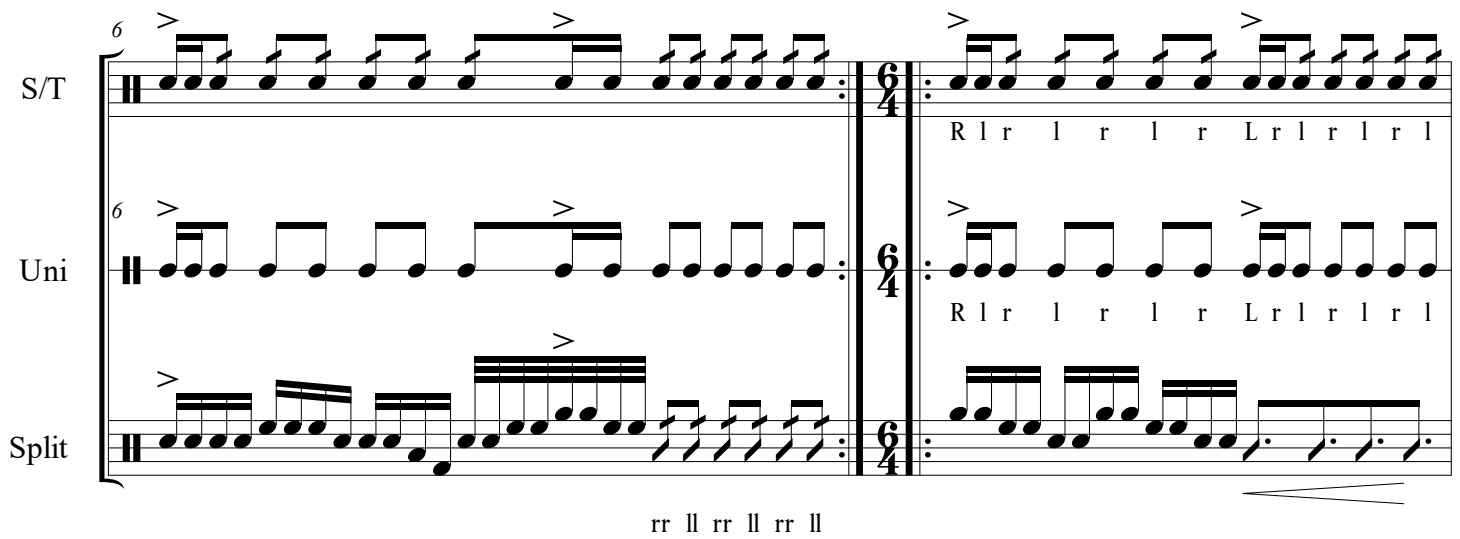
R r r r

S/T

Uni

Split

rr ll rr ll

6 

S/T

Uni

Split

rr ll rr ll rr ll

8 

S/T

Uni

Split

R r l l r r l

10 

S/T

Uni

Split

R R R R R R

12

S/T

Uni

Split

12

3/4

4/4

R l r l R l r l

R l r l R l r l

r R l l R r l L r r L l r R l l

R R R L

15

S/T

Uni

Split

15

4/4

3/4

R l r L r l R l r L r l

R l r L r l R l r L r l

R R R R

R l r l R l r l R l r l R l r l

R R R R L

R R R R L

18

S/T

Uni

Split

18

4/4

B

R l r l r l r

L r r L r r L r r l r r

L r l r l r l

R L R L R L R L

R r r

R R R R L

R r l r l r

R L R L R L R L

R r r

R R R R L

R r l r l r

R L R L R L R L

Paradiddle Buildup

22

S/T

Uni

Split

R l r l r l r l

L R L R L R L R

L r l r l r l r l

R R R

25

S/T

Uni

Split

R L R L R L

R l r l r l r

L R L R L R

L r l r l r l

l R l R l R

R R R r R

29

S/T

Uni

Split

R L R L R l r l r

L R L R L r l r l

R R R

L R

31

S/T

Uni

Split

R L R l r L R L r l

r l r l r l r l r l r l r l

32

S/T

Uni

Split

R L R l r L R L r l R L r L R l R L

R L L R R L

R L L R R L

34

S/T

Uni

Split

r L R l R L R L R

L R R L R R L R

L R R L R R L R

GV Triplet Rolls

 $\text{♩} = 140+$

Buzz

Snares

Tenors

Basses

The first system of the score is for three drum parts: Snares, Tenors, and Basses. Each part is in 12/8 time, indicated by the '12' over the '8' in the time signature. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 140+$. The word 'Buzz' is written above each staff. The Snare part features a continuous pattern of eighth notes with occasional triplet groups. The Tenor part follows a similar pattern but includes some sixteenth-note runs. The Bass part consists of a steady eighth-note pulse with triplet accents.

Diddle

5

Snares

Tenors

Basses

The second system of the score continues the drum parts for Snares, Tenors, and Basses. The word 'Diddle' is written above each staff. The Snare part begins with a measure rest marked with the number '5', followed by a pattern of eighth notes. The Tenor and Bass parts continue with their respective eighth-note patterns and triplet accents.

9

Right

Snares

Tenors

Basses

This musical score shows measures 9 through 12 for three percussion parts: Snares, Tenors, and Basses. The Snares part features a consistent eighth-note pattern with accents on measures 9, 10, 11, and 12. The Tenors part begins with a 'Right' marking and uses a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with accents. The Basses part also starts with a 'Right' marking and features a more complex pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, including some beamed sixteenth-note runs. All parts conclude with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of measure 12.

13

Left

Snares

Left

Tenors

Left

Basses

The image shows a musical score for three percussion parts: Snares, Tenors, and Basses. The score is for measures 13-16. Snares play a continuous eighth-note pattern. Tenors play a pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. Basses play a pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, often with beamed sixteenth notes. All parts have accents and slurs.

17

Tap 5

Snares

Tenors

Basses

R R R L r l R l r L L L L r l R l r L r l R R R R

21

Dynamic

Snares

Tenors

Basses

r r r r r r r l r l r l r l r l r l R R R R R R r l r l r l r l r l

25

Snares

Tenors

Basses

r r l l r r

29

Snares

Tenors

Basses

GVSU Marching Warmup

Kyle Morse

4

7

11

13

16

17

19

21

22

mf

mp

f

ff

mp

ff

D D

GVSU Street Beat

WillG

GVSU

Snareline

Tenorline

Bass Drums

Cymbals

CR CR SIZ UP

S.Dr.

T. Dr.

B. Dr.

Cyms

SIZ UP SIZ UP SIZ UP SIZ UP

Dr.

Dr.

Dr.

ms

SIZ UP SIZ UP SIZ UP

[illegible]

The musical score is arranged for four parts: S.Dr. (Snare Drum), T. Dr. (Tom Drum), 3. Dr. (3rd Drum), and Cyms (Cymbals). The score is divided into two systems, each starting with a measure number '16'. The S.Dr. part features a complex rhythmic pattern with accents and a key signature change to one sharp (F#) in the second system. The T. Dr. part provides a steady rhythmic accompaniment with a key signature change to one sharp. The 3. Dr. part features a complex rhythmic pattern with accents and a key signature change to one sharp. The Cyms part provides a steady rhythmic accompaniment with a key signature change to one sharp.

[illegible][illegible]

28

S. Dr.

T. Dr.

3. Dr.

Cym.

CR

CR

CK

CK CK CK

R L R R L R R L R R L

R L R L R L R L

R L R L R L R R D

R L L L L L L R L R