

# A Guide to Marching

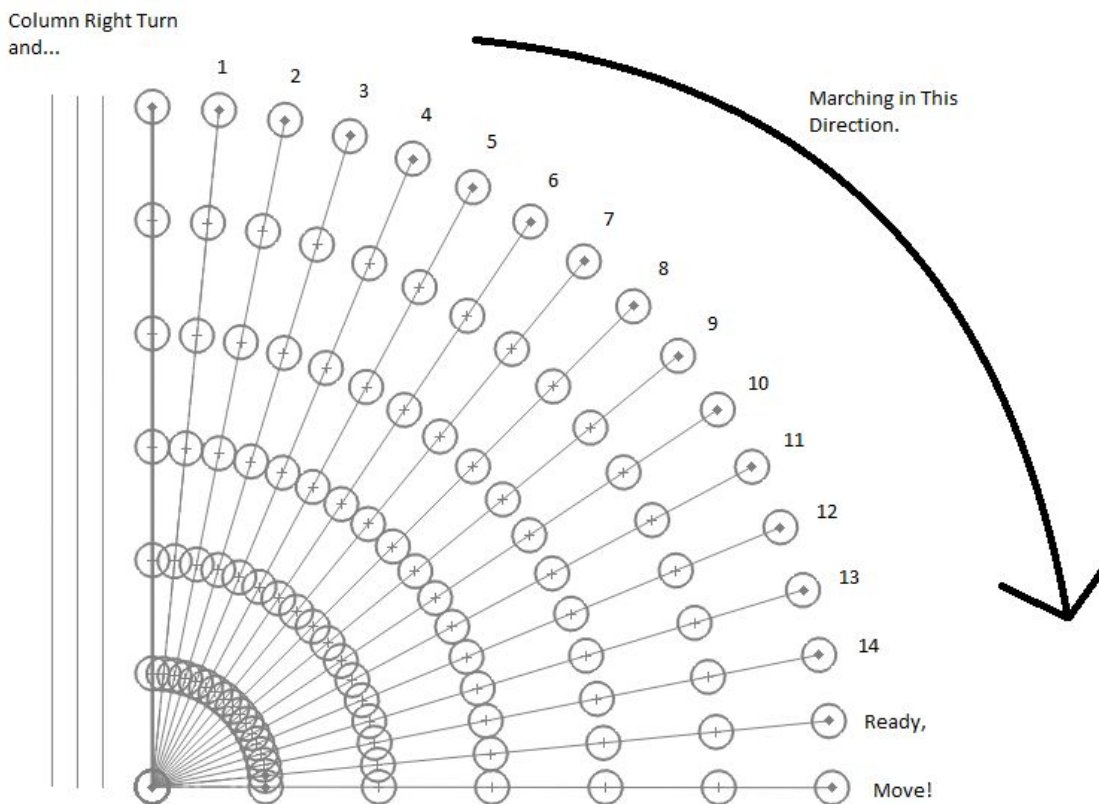
## The Subtleties of being in a WSHSB Rank

Advice compiled by Anna Fisher and Brian Talbot  
With gratitude to the Borow Family

### Turns

It is a truth acknowledged by an experienced rank leader that a rank turning in the midst of playing a song is apt to botch the delivery. This can be due to numerous factors:

When the front ranks finish a turn, there is a tendency for them to suddenly start taking full steps. This creates gigantic gaps between ranks. The best way to solve this is for the rank leaders to subtly adjust and move up until ideal space is achieved.



When turning, be sure to march straight ahead until the rank leader calls “Column Right Turn and **ONE...**”

Hold back until the turn begins

Turns will be on verbal commands for the first few days of camp. However, during a parade, we will not have the luxury of calling turns at the top of our lungs, and we may also be playing at the time. So, rank members must watch for the rank's signal of "one" to begin the turn.

Turns will go off the rails if the rank is drastically out of line.

While turning, pretend you're crossing a street - you may actually be crossing a street - and look both ways to match your rank leaders

The Pivot person (i.e., the rank leader on the inside of the turn) holds the rank. They perform a "pivot plus" or "floating pivot," moving very little during the turn.

Don't swing out during the turn. It makes it more difficult for the people on the outside.

## **Ranks**

Each rank of seven (or less) has the opportunity to name their rank during Band Camp. This name must correspond with the letter assigned to them by Mrs. Borow. For example, A Rank could call themselves the "Ambitious Aardvarks" or just "A Rank" However, F Rank is always called "Frank." C Rank has a traditional name of the "Classy Clarinets," but this can be changed each year as desired.

## **Being In Line**

If you are in your rank and you can see both of your rank leader's lovely faces, you are not in line, unless you are remarkably tall. You are aiming to be shoulder to shoulder with your rank members.

If the two rank leaders are way out of line with each other, follow the one on the left. The left rank leader is the one in charge.

If a rank leader asks you to “step back,” “come back,” “wait,” “come forward,” etc., they want you to adjust yourself so you’re in line again. Similarly, if they shout “line up,” they want the rank to adjust.

Don’t over adjust. With every step, create the best alignment you can.

When a Rank Leader says “Elbows Frozen,” they mean “don’t swing your arms.” Hold your arms or instrument steady.

## **Spacing and Columns**

In theory, there are supposed to be two Mrs. Borow full steps in between each rank. However, since this can be a tricky measure while marching, there are a few ways to find the right spacing.

The Borow method involves being about four normal steps behind the rank in front of you. Then, when in half-steps, you can be the proper eight beats (Column-Left-Turn-And-1-2-3-4...) behind.

Note to Rank Leaders: You should have an idea of the amount of space needed and maintain that healthy distance (this especially applies to trombones).

## **Flank Drills**

“Left Flank March” is only used at Band Camp.

During the Flank Drill competition Friday of Band Camp, we follow the rhythm of Mrs. Borow’s commands, not necessarily the words she says. So:

“Right Flank March” is three steady beats

“To the Rear — March” holds out the “rear”

And

“Left-Flank March” has two quick beats at the beginning

## **Nutrition and Hydration**

Courtesy of Noah Kararo

1. Hydrate starting three days prior to the parades. Drink at least four glasses (8 oz. servings) of water or a sports drink (one with high water content).
2. Pro tip: When you wake up, drink 8-16 oz of water right away to help compensate for the eight hours you were asleep.
3. To keep cool before parades, thoroughly soak and wash a hand towel, t-shirt or bandanna in water and freeze overnight in a ziplock bag. Bring the clothes in your cooler and tie them to your wrists during “warm-ups.” The wrists, being the thinnest area of your arm, have quite a few blood vessels close to the surface which will increase the cooling effect of the clothes.
4. Limit your intake of soda during your hydration period because that can dehydrate you quickly.
5. Eat a complete breakfast the morning of camp/parades. Consume a protein (eggs or sausage) and a complex carb (wheat toast or oatmeal) for lasting energy and to maintain balance and blood sugar. Also, fruit to give you that initial burst of energy.

## **Miscellaneous**

Subdivide! (be thinking of 8th note and 16th note beats, even if you’re only playing half notes).

Play musically.

Remember posture.

We march *through* puddles, but *around* benches (If you *can* somehow march through a bench, go for it, but don’t disrupt the line).

The Drums should be reminded frequently to pick up their legs.

After a cadence the snare marching pace will usually slow down; match the beat, fast or slow.

You can’t always be counting your steps carefully between you and the previous rank while you’re playing: find some way to automatically adjust yourself. Memorize your music if you can, or find a simple benchmark. Compare, for example, the position of your flipfolder (this may not work for all instruments or heights) relative to the feet of the person in front of you. If I (B.T.) can see their feet, I know I’m lagging, if I can’t see their knees, I know I’m ahead.

During Band Camp, there are breaks - take advantage of them! Join the Frisbee or football games or chat in the shade with friends, old and new! One of the beauties of Band Camp is that there are no limits between age, band, or section. Get to know these awesome musicians!

### **To Rank Leaders on Their Role**

You are the representatives of rank, leaders in your section. How you inspire, lead, and form the musicians in your rank affects the band.

Inspire camaraderie in a way that suits you, whether it's by giving nicknames, creating inside jokes, or carefully constructing compliments.

You lead by service. Never hesitate to help with music, technique, or direction.

“Charity, always charity.” Yelling and shouting should be accompanied by affection and esteem.

Be attentive to the needs of your rank. Are they hydrated? Did they have breakfast? Are they having trouble with the pivot or the kick?

Aim for non-verbal turns as early as possible during the week.

If you have members who haven't mastered right from left, give them a rubber band/hair tie for their left arm. Two times out of three, that will be the way they are turning.

Older rank leaders: Make sure you give the opportunity for younger/newer rank leaders to give stationary and moving commands, especially if they're unused to it. They are the future. Invest in them.