

Navigating Successful Turns

From the director -

Please watch the short, 36 second, YouTube video link included at the end of this document. Also, read the commentary included, under their YouTube, which details their own problem with turns. What he wrote includes the same laments your director and band members share. It's hard to execute parade turns. Required are the precision, judgment and timing as an individual, within each rack and then the entire block.

Know that the WSHSB Patriots continue to do turns in 16 counts.

The video compares two marching blocks, turning in real time, in diagram form:
The block on the left executes the turn correctly.

The block on the right makes the turn fast. But - because the left rank leader does not maintain his pivot point and instead, forces forward movement/big steps - the entire rank swings out while turning. Every left rank leader, thereafter, follows this bad example. As a result, the whole block is out of formation. This causes the block to have to correct course, after having made the turn. Not good..... and of course, this is all a lot harder to do, while playing (which I'll try to avoid, if at all possible).

The band on the left is the correct example to follow. All the left rank leaders use a "fixed focal point" (our version of the "pivot"). That left rank leader calling the turn does of course advance – but only a very small distance, during the turn, just enough so that column 1 ends up exactly where it is supposed to be, after the turn. Doing this puts his rank on the course of an exact 90 degree turn. Every subsequent rank leader waits a full 8 beats (count them...) before calling the next turn. But while waiting, each rank leader slightly advances with very small steps – probably much smaller than "1/2 steps", as we've grown accustomed to calling them. And the ranks that've already turned stay in very small steps, to accommodate the ranks who are still turning – not leaving the back ranks behind, in the dust....

Then there is the block on the right. Yes - they finish the whole turn faster. But their 1st left rank leader does not mark time/pivot in place/take very small steps. Instead, as happens often with our band, he/she swings waaaaay out, due to wanting to keep moving forward, taking huge steps. By not waiting his turn and just pivoting (i.e. taking very small steps) he/she leads the entire rank way out of line. Every other rank leader then, of course, follows that same flawed example. As a result of swinging out, it messes up the entire turn, forcing the whole block to have to make a huge correction after making the turn.

Keep in mind that the success of our turns – and honestly , our entire marching system – depends on precise timing, as well as correct "left to right" and "front to back" spatial judgment, at all times. Please watch this video several times. Study it well, hopefully before we begin camp on Monday. It's only 36 seconds. Just know that I will be relying heavily on each of you, to help train each set of rank members and to make our block look sharp/precise. Remember to take turns calling the turns, too, as not everyone comes to every parade and all rank leaders need to be prepared.

Here's the YouTube link→ [Going around corners in a parade](#)