

ENSEMBLE VISUAL PRESENTATION

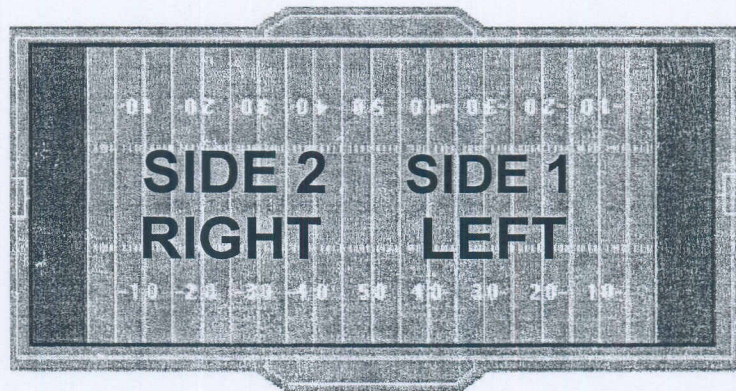
LAYOUT OF THE FOOTBALL FIELD

The football field is the stage on which our production occurs. Each performer must understand the parts of field in order to find his or her place within the visual design. The following information will help you to understand how we use and refer to the parts of the field.

Sides

We divide the football field into two halves, separated at the 50 yard line between the two end zones where the goalposts are located. **As the field is viewed from the press box or home stands, side 1 is on the left and side 2 is on the right.** As a performer standing on the field and facing the press box, side 1 will be on your right, and side 2 will be on your left.

Press Box



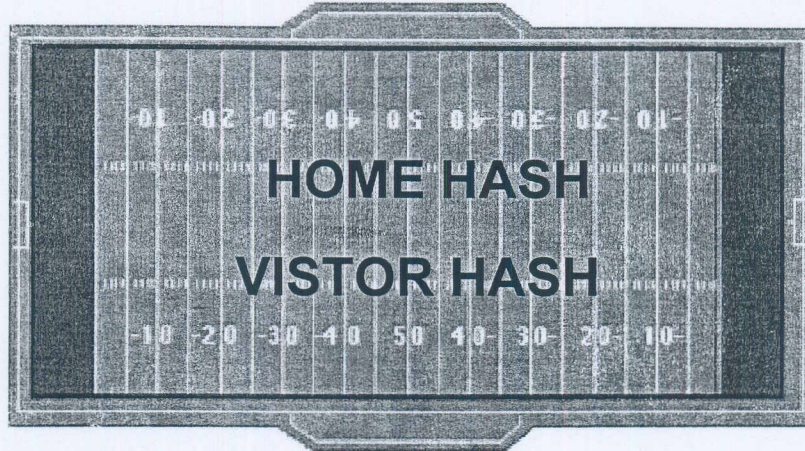
Yardlines

Each 50-yard half of the field is divided by lines that are placed every five yards. They are labeled at the 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50 yard lines. The yard lines are labeled from the outsides of the field in to the center, where they meet at the 50 yard line. Therefore, the 45 yard lines are the next lines to either side of the 50, the 40 yard lines fall outside the 45 yard lines, and so on. Note the placement of the yard lines on the above diagram.

**Hashes
& Sidelines**

The field is divided along its length into thirds by two "hashes." The **home hash** is closer to the press box and the home stands, from which the audience views the production. The **visitor hash** is closer to the visitor stands. The sideline is the side of the field. The **home sideline** is closer to the press box and the home stands, and the **visitor sideline** is closer to the visitor stands.

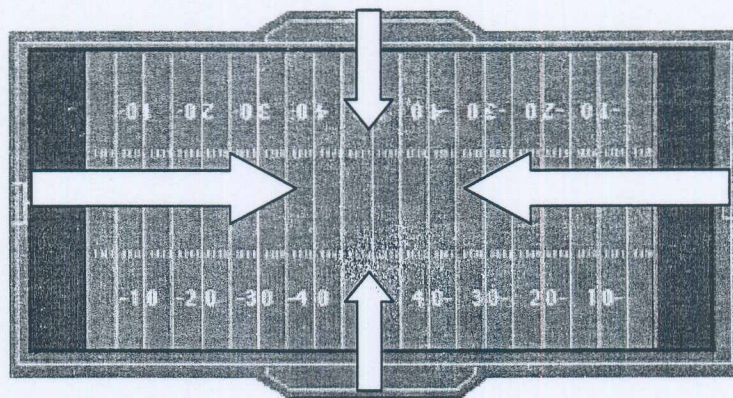
Press Box



Inside

The **inside of the field** is the center of the field – towards the 50 yard line from either end zone, and between the home and visitor hashes.

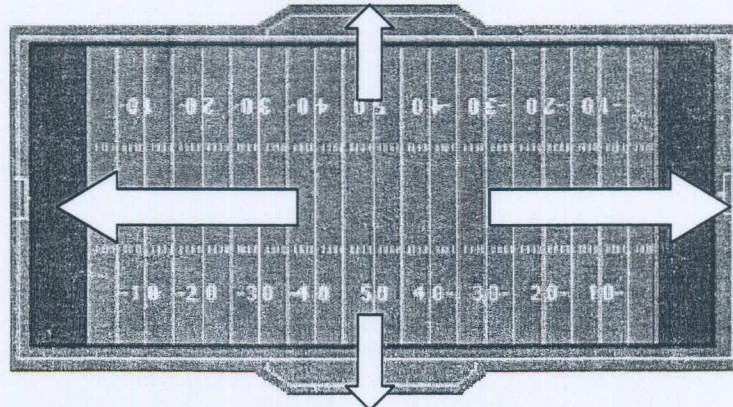
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Outside

The **outside of the field** is towards the end zones and side lines.

Press Box



THE DRILL

The drill is a series of pictures we create on the field throughout our production. These pictures morph and flow together as we move from each one to the next, creating the overall visual design of our show. The following are the components you will utilize in learning the drill:

- Drill Charts** Drill charts are sets of pages that show the **forms**, or pictures created on the field. Each performer's position within the drill is shown on each page. Staff members and section leaders will have sets of drill charts in order to help performers find their places within the drill.
- Drill Set** We refer to the individual pages of the drill as "sets." Each set falls at a specific point in the music. We learn the drill one set at a time in sequence, and the visual story unfolds as we move from one set to another. Each performer is expected to memorize his or her specific position in each set just as he or she is expected to memorize the music for the production.
- Coordinates** Each performer will receive a set of coordinates for each section of the production. Your coordinates tell you your position in relationship to the yard lines and sidelines of the field in each drill set. All coordinates must be copied into dot books before we begin to learn drill!
- Dot** Your "dot" is your specific spot on the field for any given page of drill.
- Dot Book** Your dot book is a spiral-bound set of index cards in which you will write your coordinates for each drill set. Only one set is written on each page of your dot book. You will need your dot book for every rehearsal, as you will use it to find and check your dot for each move.

FINDING YOUR DOT

Your coordinates will give you the information you need to find your dot on the field in each set. Your position in relationship to yard lines and hashes or sidelines is given in 8-to-5 steps, which are 22.5 inches each. When we learn drill, we will often have **zero points** marked on each yard line. Zero points are spaced at 4-step intervals. The following system will help you to find your dot for each set of the drill:

- First **check the side of the field and the nearest yard line** for your dot. Remember, left and right in your coordinates means left and right as the audience views the field from the home stands. If you are looking at the home stands, this will be opposite of your personal left and right!
- Next, **locate the hash or sideline** that your dot references.
- Start from the hash or sideline. Following the yard line closest to your dot, use an 8-to-5 step **mark off your distance from the hash or sideline**. Remember, inside means towards the center of the field, while outside means towards the sideline. It is helpful to use the zero points to help find your distance from the hash or sideline. Remember, zero points are placed at 4-step intervals, so two zero points would be eight steps, three would be twelve steps, and so on.
- Once you find your distance from the hash or sideline, **mark off your distance from the yard line**. Remember, inside means towards the 50, and outside means away from the 50.
- Once you have marked off your distance from both the hash/sideline and the yard line, you have found your dot. Stand with your feet in open first position so the staff can check the form and make any necessary adjustments.

MAKING YOUR DOT BOOK

For each page of the drill, you will mark your coordinates on a page in your dot book. Each page of your dot book needs to include the following information:

- Set #
- Counts to get to the set (*NOT counts to the following set*)
- Corresponding measures of the music
- Coordinates
- Interval/Spacing
- Dress Point
- Sketch of form
- Subsets of the move if applicable
- Special instructions if applicable (equipment moves, choreography, facings, etc.)
- Any other information that will help you to memorize the set

The following layout is a good example of how to organize each page of your dot book:

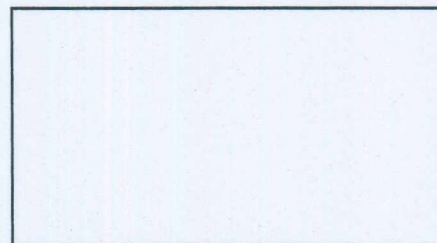
SET#: _____ COUNTS: _____

MEASURE#: _____

SIDE: _____

HASH: _____

NOTES: _____



DRAW A PICTURE

MOVING BETWEEN SETS

In earlier sections, we have discussed the basic concepts of moving and marching as individuals. Much as we try to blend our tone quality within our sections of the ensemble to create a uniform sound, we must consistently implement these techniques as we move within the drill in order to present a uniform visual style. However, in order to have successful performances, all performers must *also* understand the principles of how they move together as an ensemble. Just as we achieve musical balance within the ensemble by knowing how our part fits into the ensemble at any given moment, we achieve visual balance by understanding our relationship to the individuals around us and the forms we create on the field. When learning drill, holding form becomes priority to all other individual responsibilities. Even if our marching technique is flawless, it becomes useless if performers do not understand how they fit into the "big picture" of the production.

Intervals An interval is the designated distance between two individuals. For example, a two-step interval is two 8-to-5 steps (or 45 inches) between performers. It is each performer's responsibility to know his or her spacing for each set.

Most groups can set a page of drill correctly, but problems commonly arise in the movement from one page to the next. If the individual performers do not understand their spacing in each and every move, repetition

Step Size When moving from one set to the next, each performer must take evenly-sized steps between the starting and ending coordinates. While each separate move between sets generally requires a new step size from the last move, step size within a single move must remain consistent unless otherwise instructed by the staff. Discrepancies in step size within a move keep the forms of the drill from moving smoothly from set to set.

A common problem is for a performer to start with a step size that is too large and then shorten his step size as he approaches his dot. A change in step size in the middle of a move will cause an "accordion effect" within the drill, ultimately causing interval problems within the form. Often when this happens, the feet also slow below the tempo of the music as the step size decreases.

As he approaches the end of one move, each performer should be thinking ahead about what his initial step size will be for the next move. When learning or cleaning drill, here is one technique to determine your step size for a move:

- Determine how many counts you have to get to the next dot
- From the previous dot, point ahead to your next dot.
- Now point to halfway between the two dots. This is where you will be in half the number of counts in the move.
- Continue to break the move down in halves until you are pointing to the place where you will be in one count. This is your step size, and your initial step must fall where you are pointing.

Using this technique, some moves will need to be broken down into thirds at some point – for example, if you divide an 18-count move by two, you have nine counts. From there you would point to one-third of the way (three steps/counts), and then another third of the way (one step/count).

If a change in step size is required it must be immediate and initiated as an ensemble. Control of the body, inertia, and proper foot placement will result in great spacing within the ensemble.

Plus One

As we rehearse individual moves or short series of moves within the drill, we will always end in what we call "plus one." This means that when we end a move or series of moves, each performer will not end by closing the feet on the final count of the move, but instead will take the first initial step of the following move. This initial step **MUST** be consistent with the step size and pathway of the next move, and this technique helps us to better internalize our step size and directional changes as we rehearse. The only time plus one will not be applicable is when the next move either is a halt or has not yet been learned. In these instances, we will simply close the feet on the last count.

Minus One

"Minus one" is the technique we will use when starting a move or series of moves in rehearsal. Rather than beginning a move with our feet in first position, we begin by placing our feet in position for the last step of the previous move. Like the plus one technique, the feet must be placed in a step size and orientation that is consistent with the previous move. As we begin the move, the foot that steps off will initiate motion on the last count of the count-off, cross the ankle of the planted foot on the "and" before the first count, and contact the ground in the proper step size and direction for the first step of the move on count one. Minus one will not be applicable if we are rehearsing a move that begins after we have been in a halt or standing position, but should be used at all other times in rehearsal.

Pathways

A pathway is the intended direction between two sets. Most pathways will fall in a straight line unless your staff instructs you otherwise. Straight pathways will help intervals to remain consistent and, along with even step sizes, will help the forms within the drill flow smoothly.

When a performer fails to maintain a straight pathway from one dot to the next, spacing problems occur. Often velocity, inertia, improper foot placement, and poor body control will cause a performer to have problematic pathways.

A performer should always be thinking about her next pathway as she approaches the end of a move. As we discussed earlier, she must prepare for each move on the final count of the previous by placing her foot so that it splits the angle between her current and intended direction in half. For example, if a 90° direction change to the right is needed, the foot will turn out at a 45° angle to its original pathway on the final step of the first move.

If a curved pathway is required, a specific pathway should be defined by a staff member. The rate of motion (step size and velocity) through the curved pathway must remain consistent.

Dressing Forms

A **form** is either the entire picture or a certain portion of the picture created on the field in a drill set. To **dress** a form is to check your position within the form. A **dress point** is the point from which you guide your spacing for each move and generally corresponds with the position of a nearby performer.

Dressing a linear form, for example, usually requires the performer to guide off of the performer adjacent to you in either direction.

Box-type forms will primarily dress to the performer at the front of each line, but will also have side-to-side and diagonal views that require attention.

In dressing a curvilinear shape as it moves on the field, each performer must look down the curve over the next two to three performers in order to estimate the angle of the curve.