



DRHS Band Parent Organization

www.desertridg bands.org



MARCHING BAND 101

A booklet to help marching band parents understand what this is all about!

Welcome to the band parent organization (BPO). Yes, if your student is in the band, you are a BPO member! This handbook is designed to give you information on how the Marching Band operates, and what ways you can be involved. There are many ways you can contribute to the band that will not cost you extra money. In fact, the donation of your time and talent is a valuable asset to the students, directors, and other parents. So, as you read through this handbook, think about what appeals to you, or what you might have a talent for. Please consider helping out whenever possible during the year. You'll be glad you did. It's a great and fun way to get to know kids, other parents, and the staff.



A SPECIAL NOTE TO 1st YEAR MARCHING BAND PARENTS:

Welcome!!! All of the information in this handbook and the Marching Band season in general can seem quite overwhelming. Please do not hesitate to contact a board member for additional information or to answer any of your questions.

FOOTBALL GAMES & COMPETITIONS

Football Games

Desert Ridge High School Football Games, both "Home" and "Away" are the primary work of the Marching Band. The Band performs at all games, and provides the spirit and fun in the stands. The BPO have their own section near the band, so make sure to wear your booster T-shirt, and sit with the rest of the parents. BPO members that volunteer to help with the band during games or competitions need to sign up prior to the event in Charms. Only volunteers on the sign-up list will be provided with free admission for that event. The students really enjoy the support we provide them, and the parents enjoy the camaraderie and fun. Here are some examples of how BPO members can help out during events:

Hair Braiding

All marching band students with shoulder-length hair or longer are required to French braid their hair prior to each game or performance. Parents that can French braid or are willing to learn are asked to volunteer.

Chaperoning/Hospitality

For every "Away" game, parents are needed to chaperone students on the bus (District policy requires at least one adult on each bus for "Away" games, festivals, etc.), assist the staff and board members with snacks, drinks, and basic care-taking duties for our kids!

Stands Preparation/Clean-up

Stands must be roped off and percussion instrument stands setup prior to each game. Supply carts must also be moved to and from the stadium and the band room. After the game, students are asked to pass all trash and empty water bottles forward so parents can dispose them. We attempt to leave the stand area as clean as possible after each game.

Water! Water! Water!

During the hottest months of the year, we dress our kids in long sleeve, wool uniforms and ask them to carry heavy instruments! As you can imagine, they get very thirsty, and it's a health concern to all of us that the students have plenty of cold, clean water to drink. Parents are needed to assist with donating cases of water, getting it iced down in the band coolers, making sure coolers get on the bus, out to the field, and into the hands of thirsty kids before, during, and after warm-ups and performances. When the game or festival is over, we sweep the stands with garbage bags to collect the empty bottles. Don't worry if you can't be at the game to perform all these tasks. We'd appreciate just cases of water or bags of ice!

Pluming and De-Pluming

You may have noticed the unique headwear our students wear, known as "Shakos" (a military style hat with a brim and plume). Approximately 3-4 parents, wearing cotton gloves, are needed to insert a "Plume" into every student's Shako just prior to performance. Then, each student must be "De-plumed" immediately following the performance. This all occurs in a matter of minutes. It's an easy and fun task, and usually can be done in conjunction with chaperoning or watering duties.

Percussion/Pit Crew

This is a specialized group of people that assist the auxiliary percussion section. These instruments are stationary, and therefore are called "the pit". The instruments are big

and heavy, and must be loaded onto carts, and pulled out onto the field just prior to the performance.

Competitions

In the music world, festivals and competitions are more important than football games! All of the above tasks are required at all the competitions the band performs in as well. Competitions are usually on Saturdays and can easily be all-day events. Check Charms for dates of festivals. If you aren't able to help, you can still come out in your booster shirt and cheer the band on. It's great to have a cheering section at competitions too! Unlike football games, competitions are serious business for the band, and follow all ABODA (Arizona Band and Orchestra Directors Association) traditions and protocols.

Q: What is ABODA?

A: ABODA (the Arizona Band and Orchestra Directors Association) is a professional organization that oversees music events. It is not the only one in Arizona, but it is the biggest and most established, and the one behind all of the events we are attending this year. It is comprised of directors from all over Arizona. Another organization that presents competitions and festivals is the Arizona Marching Band Association, or AzMBA.

Q: What is the difference between a Rating and Ranking?

A: For many years, ABODA held music "Festivals," meaning there wasn't "competition." Each band was "Rated," with the rating being based on a numerical score. Ratings were announced, but scores were meant to be private, for the directors. There was no "winner" at a Festival. Several bands could receive the same Rating. A few years ago, ABODA agreed to start including "Competitions." In these events, the scores are announced, and "Rankings" are announced: 1st place, 2nd place, etc. The events that we are attending this season often have two portions: Rated Festival performances, then Ranked Competition performances.

Q: What are the Ratings?

A: In a Festival-format event, Ratings are given to each performance: Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent, and Superior. These ratings are based on a rubric that represents a perfect performance. Judges assess rigorously against that high standard. It may seem disappointing to get a low rating in the early season, but it should be expected. As the performance becomes more polished and precise, the ratings should reflect that. A rating of 'Good' may look like the equivalent of a 'C' grade, but at an early point in the season, this only tells us that there are a lot of aspects to the show upon which the kids can improve. Another term you might hear: If ALL the judges in the panel give Superior ratings, then the band is deemed to be "Superior with Distinction."

Q: What is the difference between the ABODA State Marching Festival and the ABODA State Marching Championships (or 'Super State')?

A: The ABODA State Marching Festival is a non-competitive Festival (see above) that is only open to bands that qualify in previous ABODA events. You must participate in at least 2 (or 3?) events to perform at ABODA State Festival. The 20 bands in each Division with the highest scores from previous festivals (2 best scores averaged) are invited to State Festival. At that festival, the top 8 highest-scoring bands in each Division are invited to go on to the State

Marching Championship the following week. That Championship, often called 'Super-State,' is a Ranked Competition format. The State Championship will be in Sun Devil Stadium, with 8 bands in each of 4 divisions.

Q: What are the 'Caption Awards'?

A: Caption Awards are awarded to the band (or bands) that presented an outstanding performance in a specific category. Essentially, each judge can select a band or bands that was the most outstanding for the category which they were judging (see below for judges and captions). For example, a Music Judge can choose which band had the best Music performance of the event. They can award a few Caption Awards (often just called 'Captions'), or none at all, at their discretion. There is no direct correlation to the score from that judge. At an early-season show, a band may receive 'Good' scores, but also receive Captions. This means in that event, that band (or bands) was the outstanding performers of the day in that caption.

Note: These Captions can be awarded even in a non-competitive, Festival event. So, in the normal human nature to be competitive, it is often possible to guess at who had the best score of the day, even when bands get the same Rating. If 6 bands received Superior ratings, but one of them received 4 or 5 Captions while the others did not, then you might presume which band 'won' the 'non-competitive' event. In reality, this may not always be true, as the judges and captions are weighted differently, and the final math may not be as obvious as it seems!

Q: What are the Divisions about?

A: In ABODA events, the Divisions are based on the size of your band, by the total number of students performing on the field. The current breakdown has bands with greater than 110 performers in Division I. Bands with 109 and under members are in Division II. Division III is for bands with less than 80 members. Bands with less than 60 members are in Division IV.

Q: Tell me about judges.

A: The adjudicators are usually band directors and other marching band staff members from around the community. There are some smart rules about not judging groups with which a judge may be affiliated, to avoid conflicts of interest. For bigger events, like the State Festival and State Championship, ABODA will fly in judges from other states. Sometimes we get some relative celebrities. For example, one of the most successful and well-known percussion instructors in the country, Ralph Hardimon, has been the percussion judge at the State Championship in recent years.

ABODA events have 6 judges:

Music (2 judges) – They assess the quality of the music performance. Things like tone quality, intonation, phrasing, dynamics, expression, blend and balance, rhythmic interpretation, articulation, ensemble cohesiveness (timing and togetherness), and more.

General Effect – This judge looks at the various effects that a performance can elicit from the audience. Emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual elements of the design, production and execution of the show. For example, a combination of smooth movement, beautiful flags,

and a well-played ballad might create emotional and aesthetic effects (oooh, aaah). A show that applies music selections in a clever way to reinforce a thematic concept might create an intellectual effect (oh, clever!). The effectiveness of the music score is assessed, including the style, pacing and continuity, and impacts and flow from one featured moment to another.

Visual – This judge assesses the visual components of the show, from drill / formations design to body movement elements, to colorguard, to props and design elements (like color palettes), to the way visual elements coordinate with, and reinforce, musical and conceptual elements. For drill and movement, they look at precision and uniformity of individual technique, like pointed toes and smooth steps, and execution of forms, like straight lines, smooth curves, consistent intervals between people in lines, etc.

Percussion – This judge looks at many aspects of the percussion performance. Uniformity and precision of individual technique, as well as quality of the ensemble as a whole. Similar to the Music judges, they assess phrasing, dynamics, expression, blend and balance, rhythmic interpretation, articulation, ensemble cohesiveness (timing and togetherness), and more. At some events, this judge may stand on the field, near the Front Ensemble, so they can better hear and see the details of the performance at the sideline, and on the field. This judge's score counts for only a small percentage of the overall score (I think 5%?).

Auxiliary – This judge assesses the quality of the color guard performance. Everything from body movement and dance, to use of equipment, like flags, rifles, sabres, etc. Individual precision and quality, as well as uniformity and 'cleanliness,' or togetherness, of execution within the whole color guard section. This judge's score also counts for only a small percentage of the overall score.

Each judge needs to assess all these several different aspects of their caption, and assign scores based on a rubric. Their score, out of a possible 100 points, is computed on a weighted scale, with some captions counting for more than others, to arrive at a total score for the whole band, out of 100 points.

Q: Why are we so concerned about timing and getting off the field quickly?

A: Each band has a scheduled time slot. We have 15 minutes to get on, perform, and get off. That provides some flexibility as to how much of that time is actually performing time. Some bands used to try to play 13 minutes of music. Most bands these days opt for less than 10 minutes of music: to give more time to enter and exit the field, and to have less material to learn and clean. In some competitive circuits, there may be a minimum performing time. These timing rules are enforced in the performing venue, by Timing and Penalty officials.

As we enter a stadium to perform, we are guided as to where the 'starting line' is. We will hold there until the previous band has started to leave the field. Usually, at that time, we can cross the starting line to begin setup, but have not actually started into our time slot. Stepping across the starting line while the other band is still performing will earn us a penalty. In the transitional setup time, anyone stepping ON the actual football field will trigger our time-clock to start prematurely, so students, pit crew, and prop crew need to be careful during that set-up time. When we are finished performing, we need to get all people, instruments, and props off the field before our time slot expires, or we will receive a numerical penalty. If timing is running tight for some reason, the students and crew may be told to get off as quickly as possible. In this case, they might go directly to the closest sideline or end-zone to try to get all feet and parts off the actual football field. In some venues, the penalty line may

be actually off the side the of the field, so we need to get off the football field, but also off to one side of the stadium.

Timing penalties are deducted from the final tabulated score, and can make huge differences in Ratings and Rankings.

Q: Explain the 'Pit' or 'Front Ensemble' to me.

A: Marching band evolved from military bands and parade bands. Everyone moved, and all instruments were carried. As recently as the early 1980s, bands and drum corps still carried bells, xylophones, and even timpani (1 per player) on and off the field. As field pageantry became more theatrical and moved beyond traditional Sousa march music, composers and arrangers liked the idea of using more orchestral percussion instruments. Thankfully, they started parking the large instruments on the front sideline, to contribute to the musical score, but not necessarily be a big part of the visual production... like a 'pit orchestra' in music theatre. These front-sideline percussion instruments and players are often referred to as the 'pit,' like the 'orchestra pit.' We see several timpani ('kettle drums'), grand marimbas, vibraphones, tubular chimes, giant concert bass drums, gongs, electric guitars, and much more in a modern band.

Another thing you might notice: Many bands also use electronics and amplification in the front ensemble. There are many reasons for this, including using microphones to amplify wind-instrument soloists, adding synthesizer and sampler sounds to the show, and amplifying the pit instruments.

DESERT RIDGE FIGHT SONG!!!

**Go Red and Black, don't you look back
We'll stand behind you all the way.
With all our pride, we'll always fight
and lead our team to victory.
Honor and pride are on our side
there is no better team you'll find.
So let's go and fight and win
Go Jaguars!!! Desert Ridge High!**

BPO MEETINGS

Please refer to the band calendar in Charms, for meeting dates.
<https://charmsoffice.com>
