

DRUM MAJOR

... BE READY



A PRESENTATION BY

**Chris Earl
Vice-Principal
Dress & Dress - Victoria**

1	It Starts at Practice	Knowledge Preparation Communication Co-ordination
2	Drum Major on Parade	Knowledge Preparation Communication Co-ordination Presentation
3	Drum Major in Contests	Knowledge Preparation Communication Co-ordination Presentation
4	Preparing a Display/Presentation	Planning Collaboration Communication Demonstration
4	With Mace and Words	The Corps The information The commands - word Mace signals Check paces Wheels
5	Putting into practice	Practical session on basic mace signals and words of command, marking out circle/march-off course
6	The link	Corps co-ordination and co-operation with Pipe Major and Drum Sergeant
7	It All Comes Together	Practical session
	Appendices	Dress and drill sheets Intermediate exam syllabus Circle/march-off diagram

1 It Starts at Practice (or does it?)

The vernacular phrase “band practice” is something of a misnomer for pipe majors rightly expect pipers and drummers to do their practice at home and come together as corps to refine, polish and merge the musical components to a level of competency that will become a natural progression when tunes are performed in competition and at community engagements.

Likewise, when it comes to dress and drill, the drum major provides instruction to develop skills among players in those disciplines in an efficient and time-productive manner. Often, there will be limited time available at a band rehearsal for these aspects of pipe banding.

Preparation for achieving a well-turned out band begins well before any allotted practical time at a rehearsal or when on parade and can include:

- A band dress guide that articulates the accepted uniform of a pipe band and any uniform requirements particular to your band (eg, position of laces, position of flashes), preparation of uniform before a performance, appearance and maintenance of “uniform” aspects of instruments.
- Preparation of rehearsal plans for drill in conjunction with the pipe major and drum sergeant, compatible with requirements for upcoming engagements.
- Liaison before a band rehearsal with event organisers on what will be required of the band for performance and presentation, communicating that information with the pipe major and drum sergeant, and when required all players.
- Being fully conversant with the requirements of a contest, including all report times and other information in the appended notes.

When armed with information, the drum major and the leadership team are then equipped to inform the band at rehearsal and begin the next stage of preparation for a successful and satisfying performance.

Be well prepared to make the most of the journey for both the band and yourself . . .

2 Drum Major on Parade

The success of all band performances will be determined by the attention to preparation, planning and communication – always be aware of the parade requirements, the area available or the route to be taken and whether any compliments (including salutes) are to be given.

Once fully armed with that information, the band can be fully appraised and prepared both at rehearsal and again before step-off for the parade.

The level of information and preparation along with attitude and approach to community engagements should be no different to those exhibited at a competition. – always look to showcase your band for there's sure to be no shortage of "judges" in any audience.

The giving and returning of compliments applies both on parade and on contest day. On parade, dignitaries should always be saluted as a sign of acknowledgment and respect. On contest days, the senior drum major will likewise salute the official party and also winning bands performing their victory march. In the latter, the drum major of a successful band will return the compliment.



3 Drum Major in Contests

The band: A drum major has several important duties to undertake on the days of contest that can assist the musical leadership in achieving both the desired final preparation and a performance to put something of a smile on the PM's face.

- Have an arranged time for the band to be dressed and ready for final preparation working backwards from the line time.
- Arrange with the musical leadership a dress check time
- If acting as band representative, be prompt in reporting to the official tent
- Be in possession of all information for times, locations and communicate accurately and succinctly with both musical leadership and band.
- Assist musical leadership in bringing corps together as required, that player needs (eg water) are met and the band arrives at the point on time, liaising with marshals and officials as required.

The solo competition: A popular event at highland gatherings, the drum major solo is an opportunity for those with practised agility to demonstrate their flourish. This event, like the band, requires preparation, planning, practice and rehearsal to demonstrate dexterity and accurate musical timing and a refined knowledge of matching flourish to each part of the tune played by the duty band.

Massed bands: The “crowd pleaser” wherever pipe bands gather, a successful massed band required advance planning and additional communication between bands and among players.

In planning and preparation, be aware of the performance requirements and liaise with both designated contest officials and the event promoter on timings and area available both for assembly and presentation. Know the bands taking part an identity the flank and centre bands – usually allocated to the senior bands on parade to enhance the musical experience.

On the day, assembly can be divided into two parts – pipers and drummers. The senior drum major will nominate assistants to ensure an efficient alignment of bands as they enter the massed band formation and squaring off of the corps which is particularly important where counter marches are to be performed.



Drum majors, irrespective of role in massed bands, should ensure their band is aware of tunes to be played before entering the assembly area.

If the senior drum major, reiterate tunes to players before step-up and also brief all drum majors on mace movements during the presentation.

4 Preparing a Display/Presentation

The “circle format” is the traditional “tried and trusted” form of presentation of a pipe band performance and continues to be used in competition where eye and foot contact – particularly between pipe major, bass drummer and leading tip - are central to the performance.



However, contemporary indoor performances and some outdoor locations can be better suited to a variety of other “open formats” where eye and foot contact is maintained and half the players do not have their backs to the audience.

Alternative formats can be fun to prepare and enhance the audience experience.

Through preparation and knowledge for performances, the drum major can be part of collaborative planning for the band’s presentation at these engagements from the way a band enters and leaves the performance space in a manner co-ordinated to the music and the format that best suits your band.

The preparation of effective formats for performance can lead to more intricate and adventurous presentations in the manner that are a hallmark of Tattoos. Importantly, any display or presentation must match the music and capabilities of the band and its players. Most Australian championships offer a display marching event within the designated area (see PBA Dress and Drill Manual)



5 With Mace and Words

Massed bands preparation Mace signals and words of command for use in massed band performances.

Develop an understanding of the structure of pipe band music and co-ordinate mace signals, wherever possible, to the parts.

In Massed Band formation it is an advantage to space files 3 paces apart, this allows for ease of movement when Counter Marching. Drum Majors position themselves 3 paces in front of Pipe Majors. The Drum Major in charge, positions himself 6 paces in front of other Drum Majors

It is most essential that the Drum Major In charge briefs all other Drum Majors on movements which will take place and convey to all Band Members the same

MACE DRILL:

All Basic Movements are led by the Drum Major in charge.

EXAMPLE

Cease playing * Drum Major in charge brings the mace to the precautionary position AU other Drum Majors carry out the same movement 4 beats later After a further 4 beats the Drum Major In charge, and ALL other Drum Majors complete the movement together.

MARK TIME

Drum Major in charge gives signal only.

HALTING

Drum Major in charge gives this signal only

COUNTER MARCHING

Drum Major in charge will give a signal with Mace ferrule uppermost arm fully extended above shoulder A reverse swing can be used for this movement if so desired All other r Drum Majors on reaching the ground on which the Drum Major in charge right about wheeled, will raise their Mace ferrule uppermost On passing last rank of drummers, Drum Majors will smartly bring their Mace to the carry position in two movements Hold that position until the Drum Major in charge gives a new movement.

CEASE PLAY SIGNAL:

At end of piano part, Drum Major in charge gives precautionary signal to other Drum Majors, on the fifth beat following all Drum Majors move mace to the cease play position. All Drum Majors complete cut-off and on signal from Drum Major in charge return mace to either carry or standing position (as previously communicated by Drum Major in charge). Only the Drum Major in charge gives signal for bass drum beats.

6 The link

The Drum Major is the link person – with the Pipe Major and drum sergeant, between the pipe and drum corps, with contest officials and event organisers.

Success in the role is determined by good communications, co-operation and collaboration in assisting a band deliver an enjoyable performance.

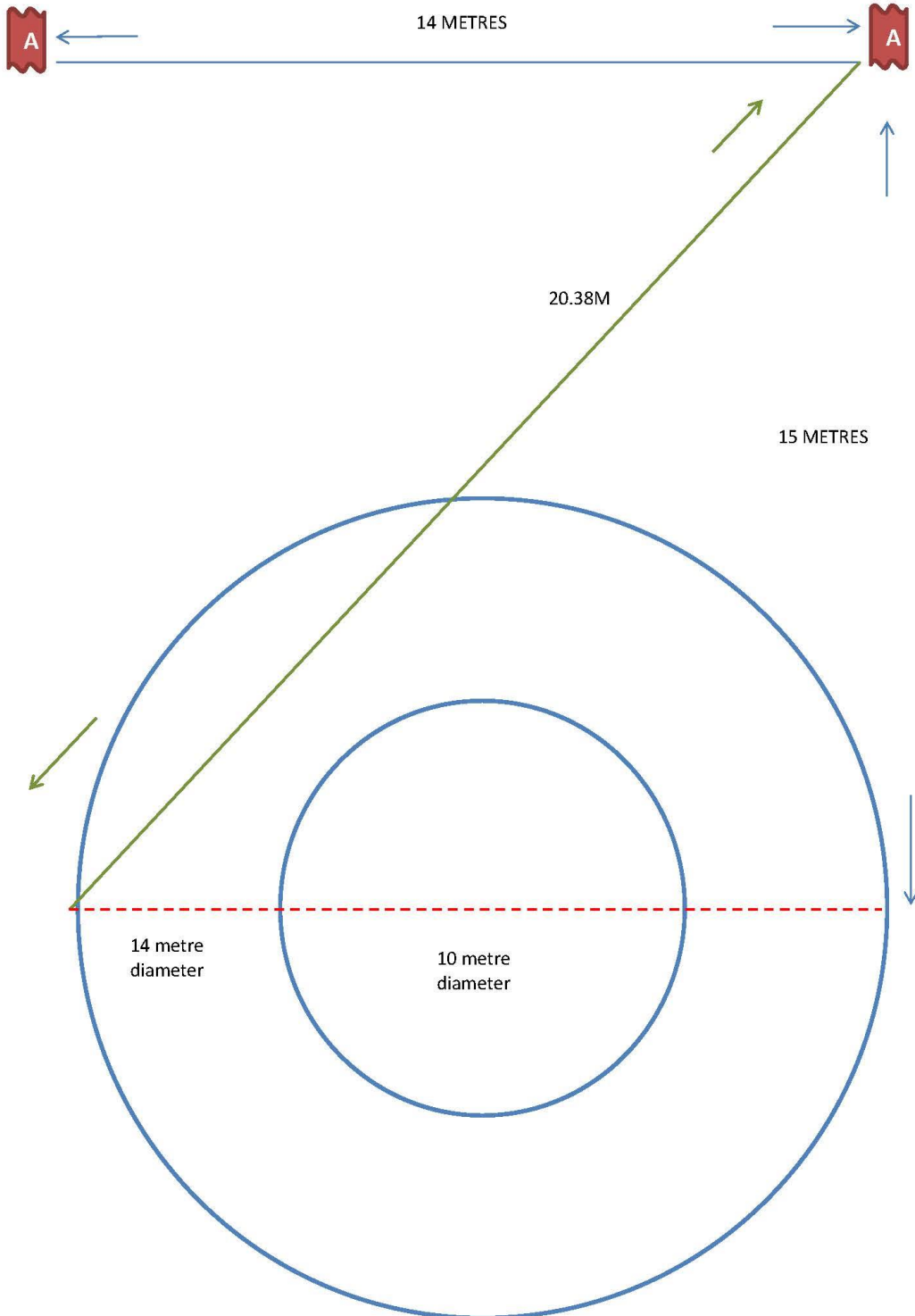
Be clear and firm, fair and understanding ... and enjoy the journey

7 It All Comes Together

Practical session

Appendices

TRIAL RULE – CIRCLE SIZE
DRAFT MEASUREMENTS





ADJUDICATION SHEET - DRESS INSPECTION

Band: **GOLDEN CITY**
 Competition: **RINGWOOD**

Grade **4**
 Date: **29 MARCH 2015**

PIPERS



When applied in Concert formation: Top - Left from PM/Rear rank Bottom - Right from PM/Front rank Single rank - L-R (clockwise from top left)
 When applied in conventional circle: Commence from right and move anti-clockwise

TENORS



BASS



DRUM MAJOR



SIDES



	Comment	Points		Comment	Points
Headwear/10			Cleanliness of uniform and instruments/20		
Tie, shirt, vest, jacket/20			General comments		
Kilt, sporran, belt/20					Total /100
Hose, flashes shoes/20					
Uniformity of dress/10			Signature of judge		
			Name		



AUSTRALIAN PIPE BAND COLLEGE – DRESS & DRILL

INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE SYLLABUS

A candidate for Intermediate Level should have, or be able to demonstrate in writing and through practical demonstration an understanding of the elements of dress and drill as practised by pipe bands in competition and associated performances as sanctioned and approved by Pipe Bands Australia and state branches. Instruction is based on the Pipe Band College Dress and Drill Training Manual 1995 (www.pipebands.asn.au/pdf/DrillDressManual.pdf)

The course of instruction for in preparation for examination at Intermediate Level covers:

- The role of the drum major as they relate to the responsibilities for dress, drill and discipline within the structure of a pipe band.
- The responsibilities and functional role of a drum major relative to dress, drill and discipline when attending a pipe band contest.
- The functional aspects of the duties of band representative on the day of contest.
- The responsibilities of drum major relative regarding personnel management within the broader parameters of the activities of a pipe band as they relate to the role.
- The various formations permissible for pipe band performance covering all aspects of musical contests and marching competitions including competitive street parades,
- The various diagrams and course layouts required for pipe band competitions, including the associated movements and evolutions required to complete the competitions within the context of the relevant rules, whether it be a static musical contest or marching element.
- The procedures associated with the preparation and execution of a massed band performance as they relate to the presence of a senior drum major and assistant drum major duties.
- The structure and performance of a pipe band tune as it relates to the pipers and drummers' contribution to the performance of a pipe band on both the contest and public arena and as it affects the performance of a drum major in the execution of duties when the band is on parade.

Further reading

RSPBA Drum Major Manual

http://www.rspba.org/documents/DM_Manual.pdf

Pipe Bands Australia Dress and Drill Manual

<http://www.pipebands.asn.au/pdf/DrillDressManual.pdf>

Pipe Bands Australia Contest Regulations

<http://www.pipebands.asn.au/rules.asp>