

**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
HIGH SCHOOL**

**"MIRAGE"
INDOOR COLORGUARD
ENSEMBLE**

**HANDBOOK
2008**

EFFECTIVE January 2008

COLORGUARD HANDBOOK

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Program Objective

The Mirage Indoor Colorguard Ensemble provides an opportunity for all students to refine their musical and marching skills through the art of colorguard performance. It is designed to further develop and improve skills as a foundation for the outdoor marching band program while building individual musicianship. Finally, in addition to the musical and visual development of the students, this program will also help build a strong work ethic, commitment and teamwork.

What is Indoor?

Over the next 5 months, your child will be given basic instruction on in the area of colorguard and percussion. For the colorguard, this includes the handling of traditional color guard equipment (flags, rifles, sabers) and dance movement. For the percussion, this includes the proper techniques involved to play the various instruments and marching technique. This training will be expanded into a 4 to 5 minute visual production including music and motion.

Our Indoor Units compete in circuits, which are similar to leagues in sports. While each circuit makes its own rules, and has its own judges, they usually conform to those rules set by international competition. The circuit in which we are primarily participating in this year is the TIA (Tournament Indoor Association). TIA is divided into chapters depending on location. We are members of Chapter 1 and we are required to compete in a certain number of shows within our chapter. Each chapter holds a "chapter" championship which will be the conclusion of our 2008 competitive season.

There are many different categories in which groups can compete. First, each category is divided into scholastic or independent. In order for a group to compete as scholastic, all its members must currently be enrolled in the same school, or school district. The groups are then divided by what they are. Some examples are percussion, majorettes, dance teams, and color guards. These groups are then broken down into levels. These levels are Cadet, Middle School, Novice, Intermediate A, A, Open, and World.

Competitions are usually held on weekends, with the majority of the shows we attend being on Saturdays. Start times vary depending on the host and last several hours. Most shows are very close while others are further away. We provide bus transportation from WTHS to the competition for all of the students. All students are expected to ride the bus to and from all competitions.

We hope this is a start in answering any questions you may have. We will continue to provide you with information as necessary.

Welcome to the wonderful world of Indoor!

Eligibility Requirements

The Mirage is open to all WTHS students. Clinics will introduce basic skills to interested participants in mid December with final casting decisions to be made in early January. Please be aware that since this is a training ensemble, colorguard students planning to return to the marching band next season will have the first priority to a performing role in this year's ensemble. It is our goal to include as many interested students in the program as possible, however due to the nature of this year's show and the ability level of the interested students may result in cuts. Furthermore, students who are participating in indoor colorguard in addition to another musical instrument are expected to maintain their abilities on their primary instrument so that the outdoor program continues to build in quality.

Code of Conduct

All members of Mirage are expected to adhere to the code of conduct set forth in the WTHS student handbook. In addition, all members of Mirage must adhere to the following conduct guidelines for both rehearsals AND performances:

1. No Chewing Gum
2. No Swearing (if necessary, administrative action WILL be taken.)
3. No Jewelry
4. No Running/Screaming
5. No Eating in uniform (Exception is water.)
6. Any other etiquette as defined by the instructional staff.

Casting

Each student will be "cast" in a role in the show. This is similar to a play/musical production.

All students will not spin all pieces of equipment.
All students will spin a flag at some point in the show.

A flag is most utilized in our activity. Flag technique is the student's primary responsibility to rehearse and master. Saber and rifle roles become more of an advanced responsibility for the students to grasp. They require a higher degree of motor skills as well as muscle development.

The staff makes an attempt to offer the most basic instruction in all equipment choices and dance instruction. However, the responsibility is placed upon the student to continue to rehearse and development their equipment and dance capabilities.

Attendance

Attendance at ALL rehearsals and performances is very important to every Mirage member. Indoor Colorguard is a co-curricular activity. Therefore, the directors must approve all absences before they are considered excused. Please understand that an absence from this activity has a direct effect on the ENTIRE TEAM.

Requests for excused absences - These include major family events (i.e. weddings), religious education classes and/or holidays, standardized tests (i.e. SATs), college visitations/placement exams, and previously scheduled family business/vacations that cannot be changed. All requests for excused absences **MUST** be made in advance to one of the directors, Mrs. Shannon Schoch or Ms. Lauren Siefert, who will determine whether the absence(s) will or will not be excused. All absence requests are due in writing by January 21, 2008. Submission of a request for absence does **not** guarantee approval.

Emergency Absences - These will be granted on a case by case basis (i.e. sick from school, death in the family, etc.). In this case, please notify **IMMEDIATELY** of the situation via phone 856-589-8500 x7161, or email Mrs. Schoch at sschoch@wtps.org and Lauren Seifert at lsiefert@hotmail.com

Lateness - Students are expected to be ready to rehearse at the assigned rehearsal time.

Additional Attendance Policies

Any student who misses a rehearsal during the week of a performance may or may not be allowed to perform on that upcoming weekend's performances. The student will still be required to attend the performance in full uniform. In an **EMERGENCY**, students may be excused from only **ONE** rehearsal to accommodate a conflict. In these circumstances, the instructors must be notified in advance.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Every member's role in the ensemble is crucial to our success. Unlike a sports team where substitutes are available, all of our players start all of the time. We cannot rehearse or perform successfully and to the ensemble's full potential without every member in attendance. Should attendance become a problem, the staff reserves the right to remove you from the program. Please remember that early communication is **KEY** to working through scheduling conflicts that ultimately keep the best interests of both you and the team in mind.

Rehearsals

All students must wear sneakers and clothes suitable for the activity (NO JEANS!) to rehearsals and as prescribed by the staff. The instructional staff reserves the right to remove a student from rehearsal should their attire prove improper or dangerous for the activity. T-shirts and shorts are recommended as it may become hot in the rehearsal gym.

The indoor colorguard activity is physical by nature. All students will be subject to conditioning exercises during rehearsals to increase stamina, flexibility, and agility. Water is the best refreshment to keep one's energy up. Gatorade is fine, but we encourage the use of water bottles, as they are handy and stay cool throughout the rehearsal.

With any physical activity, there is the potential for injury. Should a student suffer an illness or ailment prior to or during a rehearsal, they must notify the staff immediately so that they may accommodate the situation.

Competitions

Competitions are usually on Saturdays starting in February, with occasional Sunday competitions. We try to compete three weekends a month, taking time off on Easter, major school functions, etc. The competitions vary in starting times and locations, but they are usually all-day and/or evening events.

We almost always have a short practice before leaving for a competition, so we will be asking the students to report to WTHS a couple of hours before we plan on leaving for the competition. Because we have 2 competing groups, we try to juggle gym time and need to leave ample time to load the equipment truck as efficiently as possible. We provide bus transportation to and from the competition for members and chaperones.

Students are expected to follow the code of conduct as outlined in the Washington Township High School Student Handbook when not on school property. This includes adhering to rules on school buses as set forth by the Board of Education. Please remember that you are constantly representing our program and school when we are on the road. We take pride in what we do as competitions are long, tiring, fun and rewarding; even if they don't always turn out the way we want them to. *Watching the progress of everyone's shows from February to April is really a wonderful experience!*

How We Are Judged

Judges are men and women who have been trained and are certified to evaluate particular areas of our show. Just like units who compete in circuits, judges belong to, and are trained by, certain associations. The judges association we see the most is the National Judges Association (NJA). These are the judges that evaluate TIA competitions.

There are several judges who evaluate our show. The judges watch the performance and then they must "rank" and "rate" what they just saw. Using a standard scoring system, they then determine what score to give. There are not specific deductions for errors, but errors usually disrupt the effectiveness of the performance, causing the judge to place the group lower on the scoring scale. The Timing & Penalty judge can not award points, but he/she can access a deduction of points for timing and certain rule infractions.

You will see the judges talking into tape recorders during a performance. This allows instructors to have a running commentary on what the judge is seeing and feeling through out the performance. It also helps to support the judge's score. After the competition is over, there is a meeting between the judges and instructors where any questions can be answered and further explanations can be made.

We do not have the same judges every competition. Since there is usually more than one competition being held each week, what judges we see depend on what show we attend. It is quite possible that you will recognize certain judges from previous weeks, and of course there are certain judges we would prefer to see, but it really is a random process. No judge expects a group to be perfect. However, when an error is made, the judge would like to see a student make a smooth correction, and continue on with the performance. Many times, a quick recovery can be a plus that crosses out the negative of the mistake, since it is a good reflection of the training the student has received. The judges do not know exactly what it is that the group is supposed to be doing, so the members are trained not to "broadcast" (usually by facial expressions or body language) the fact that a mistake was just made. After all, there are a lot of people doing a lot of things all at one time, and the judge can't watch everything all at once.

Financial Obligations

This year, there will be a tour fee of \$150 to offset costs incurred throughout the season. This fee will be due by January 30, 2008. Any student who might have difficulty securing these funds in time should contact Mr. Corigliano or Mrs. Schoch as soon as possible to set up a payment plan in advance.

We are constantly working closely with the Marching Band Booster organization to try and cut costs wherever possible for our students. However, there may be certain costs that the student must cover during the season. This may include but is not limited to: uniform, equipment, and any long distance trips. Please be prepared to handle some out of pocket expenses in order for the entire program to run successfully.

Parent Support and Responsibilities

The support of your student's participation in this and all their scholastic activities is invaluable. Positive reinforcement and encouragement of success are vital keys to providing your student and yourselves as parents with the most rewarding experience. Many parents have asked what their roles can be in the activity. In conjunction with the Marching Band Booster organization, there are many things for parents to do, and without their help, our program would not be able to function. Here are some areas that we always seem to be shorthanded in.

Colorguard Sewers, Cutters, Pinner and Ironers - Making our own flags and/or uniforms are a big money saver. An average flag costs about \$48 to buy but only about \$20 to make. Even if you can't thread a needle, there is always something else that can be done, such as cutting out material, pinning pieces together, pressing seams, etc.

Handlers - Trying to pack up two competitive groups and take them to another location to perform is no small feat. We use a truck to transport all our equipment and props to the competition. This truck has to be loaded and unloaded to and from the competition. We also need help getting each group on and off the gym floor to compete. We are under time limits that include getting everything into the gym, performing, and getting everything out of the gym all within 8 minutes. All of our groups use a tarp to cover the floor during their performance and that takes a lot of people power to put it down on the floor, and then get it out of the gym after the performance. While all groups try to help each other as much as possible, sometimes their performance times are so close together they're not available to help. This situation is also hard on the handlers, because no sooner have you gotten one group out of the gym, when you have to do it all over again for the next one. *The more people we have helping in this area, the easier it is.*

Prop builders and Equipment repairs- we usually need to have things made for our shows such as platforms, backdrops, props, etc. We also need weekly maintenance done on these items.

Spectators and Supporters - it is always more fun to perform before a loud crowd of supporters than a "polite" audience. The more family and friends we have in the audience, the more exciting it is for the members. We also ask that you support your child's interest in the activity. It takes up a lot of time, but it really is a worthwhile activity. The rewards are really incredible!

Staff Contact Information

The staff has been selected due to their extensive qualifications in the marching arts. If at any point you have a general concern or a question about any aspect of the program, please communicate with the staff. We believe that communication between parents, students, and the indoor staff is **crucial** to the success of the program!

Co-Directors

Shannon Schoch
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Lauren Siefert
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2007-2008 INDOOR CONTRACT

I, _____ hereby certify that I have read and understand the contents of this handbook. I recognize and fully understand the rules and regulations by which I may participate, and I am prepared to face the consequences of violating the contents of this handbook.

I accept the condition that my commitment will create a position specifically designed for me in the 2007-2008 indoor show. I therefore enter into this contract in good faith that I will fulfill the entire duration of the competition season. I do not enter into this contract carelessly or superficially, but with sincere commitment, dedication, and integrity.

Student Signature

Date

I hereby certify that I have read and understand the contents of this handbook. I recognize and understand the rules and regulations by which my child may participate, and I acknowledge that he/she will have to face the consequences of violating the contents of this handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED BY JANUARY 21, 2008