

# Stand Out!

## - Tips for Your Stand Performance

---

*by Karen Tarver, Director, Hightower High School Hi-Lites Dance Team*

How do you measure the success of your team's "football game performance" on any given week? Most directors would probably base their answer solely on the strength of the team's halftime routine. Although this is certainly an integral part of the answer, a "football game performance" consists of everything that occurs from the time your team arrives at the stadium until the members are dismissed after the game. The entrance into the stands, conduct and spacing while seated in the bleachers, precision and visual effect of stand routines, exit to stretch and warm-up before halftime, execution and audience reception of their halftime show, re-assembling in the stands for the second half of the game, and even their routine during the alma mater are all components of their total "football game performance."

As ambassadors of your school, it is very important to maintain the decorum and discipline of your team throughout the game. It is equally important to consider how your team looks from the other side of the field. Although often not considered, 50% of your team's "football game performance" will be judged by students, parents, and administrators seated in the visitor stands. Thus, when you choreograph entrances, exits, and stand routines, think how they will look from the other side of the field. Remember, you do not get a second chance to make a first impression.

The following provides suggestions to ensure that your team looks good throughout the game and not just during halftime. The cardinal rule is that you must take time to practice the seemingly insignificant details like entrances, exits, and stand routines until they become as much a part of your team rituals as performing during intermission. It is this attention to detail that separates the good teams from the great ones!

### **Entrances**

Not only does an organized entrance into the stands give a good first impression, it also sets the stage for the "football performance". The main thing to look at while deciding upon an entrance is *organization*, some kind of pattern that the dancers follow at each game to enter the stadium. Many teams choose to enter in one of the following ways:

- (1) Each line walks into the row and ripples or turns front once all dancers are in place;
- (2) Files line up and then guide to the front as they enter and turn front in a ripple or on a count/command.

Whichever you choose, it is important to practice this before your season starts and ideally, right before a game. That will ensure the team is comfortable with the process.

### **Stand Etiquette**

When deciding on team behaviors keep the following rules in mind:

#### **1. No Talking In The Stands.**

Unnecessary movement is noticeable and distracting, especially if your team wears hats or headpieces. Most dance teams are considered spirit organization, therefore it is paramount to be attentive to the game.

#### **2. Stand And Sit As A Group.**

Uniformity gives a polished look and makes an excellent impression for audience members of both sides.

#### **3. No Visitors In The Stands.**

People climbing in and out of rows is distracting and looks disorderly. Encourage your team to make transportation and personal plans before you depart for the game.



---

---

## **Stand Routines**

Some things to keep in mind while choreographing stand routines:

**1. Small Movements Cannot Be Seen.**

If you have a shoulder roll, add a head pop or an arm motion to the choreography. You want to accentuate movements so they can be seen from the other side of the football field.

**2. Think Simple.**

Some of the most effective stand routines I have seen have been very simple. Standing and sitting, leaning back and front, and leaning side-to-side are examples of movements that are very visual from across the field.

**3. Use Your Costume, Poms, And Props**

Hats and gloves can be some of the most visual aspects of a stand routine. However, both can be very distracting if the routines are not clean! A slight variance of a head position, or even a hat position, can change the visual impact drastically. Be sure to review all choreography before the game, even if it's the hundredth time to perform a routine.

**4. Parts, Parts, Parts!**

Parts can create a wonderful visual from the other side. Using simple choreography but performing it in several groups is a fabulous technique on and off the field. By having several groups, the routine can remain interesting for the audience member but be simple enough to perform to a variety of music played by your school band.

Highlighting the importance of behavior in the stands and performing fun and innovative stand routines will make your team confident and leave a great impression with all audience members. Getting your team to focus before they even enter the stands is a sure way to have a great game experience on and off the field. Stress the importance of etiquette and discipline in every football practice and soon your rules will become second nature for all team members.

