



United States Twirling Association, Inc.

Coach Level I Manual



U.S. TWIRLING ASSOCIATION COACHES' LEVEL I MANUAL and CERTIFICATION TEST INSTRUCTIONS

The Coaches Level I Manual was designed to provide currently active baton twirling coaches prospective and information on coaching the sport of baton twirling. It should also act as a guide and is the foundation of the USTA Level I Coaches' Workshop.

Coaching certification provides valuable information, ideas and credibility through a national standard of training and licensing.

If you are interested in achieving Certified Level I status, you may do so by completing the Level I Coaches Home Study Test. See the simple instructions below.

HOME STUDY INSTRUCTIONS:

- The Level I Coaches' written exam is open book.
- Complete the application information on the test form.
- Complete the test online or/ and mail to the address below.

USTA Coaches Test
C/O Karen Cammer
45 Cherry Valley Avenue
West Hempstead, NY 11552
Phone: (516) 485-3890
Email: BTNI1@aol.com

USTA Professional dues must be paid to USTA Member Services before Coaches' test results are released.

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INTRODUCTION

This book is designed to provide prospective, as well as currently active, baton twirling coaches' textbook information on coaching the sport of baton twirling. It is the foundation of the USTA Level I Coaches' Workshop. Coaching certification provides valuable information, ideas and credibility through a national standard of training and licensing.

The Level I format is designed for the coach who teaches classes at the beginner level, regardless of whether the coach is teaching a recreation group or developing competitive athletes. Sound teaching theories for initial instruction apply to both examples. Emphasis at this level is in developing effective methods, logical philosophies and a successful and positive program.

The text includes coaching theory, methods, procedures, official and unofficial terminology, definitions, teaching aids and a wealth of ideas and inspiration to encourage the growth and development of baton twirling students and coaches. The book has been developed in a format to allow a home study method of learning and to encourage its use as an easy reference guide.

The educational program for USTA professional coaches is progressional in nature. This Level I program is the foundation for continued certification at Level II. Coaching theories, methods and techniques presented at Level I are expanded at Level II.

Within the workshop format, supplemental videotapes, live demonstration, additional handouts and updated information are disseminated. Additionally, questions and feedback magnify the effectiveness of this printed information.

History and Facts

The United States Twirling Association is dedicated to the development of the sport of baton twirling. The Association was founded in 1958 as the first national twirling organization to be run democratically and it remains the only twirling organization that elects its Board of Directors through its membership.

The United States Twirling Association is incorporated in the State of Indiana and is classified as a 501 (c) (3) non-for-profit organization by the Internal Revenue Service. Currently, the United States Twirling Association has a membership of over 4,000 of which 550 are of professional status.

There is United States Twirling Association activity in almost every state with the largest memberships being California, Ohio, Texas and New York. Many of the states have State Councils which promote and govern United States Twirling Association twirling in that state. Every United States Twirling Association Certified Coach at least 18 years of age is automatically entitled to membership in the Council of the state where he/she resides.

The USTA is a sport-oriented organization, that sanctions approximately 200 local, state & regional competitions each year. The organization utilizes a competitive format, which is aligned with other subjectively judged sports adjudicated on an Olympic level scoring system where scores are shown to the competitors and audience immediately following each athlete's performance.

Each year the United States Twirling Association holds the National Baton Twirling Championships and Festival of the Future competition. The location is rotated geographically to encourage participation by all its membership and to help develop twirling throughout the United States. This competition selects the U.S. National Champions in Men's and Women's Solo, Strut, Dance Twirl, Two Baton, Three Baton, Flag, Rifle, Teams and Corps. The Festival of the Future is a competition for beginner and intermediate twirlers and teams. The U.S.T.A. also offers, every other year, the U.S. Trials Competition to select a team of competitors representing the United States into the World Baton Twirling Championships. In the opposite years a team is selected at Nationals to compete in the International Cup Championships in the events of solo, two-baton, three-baton, dance twirl, dance twirl pairs, teams and groups.

The United States Twirling Association also, from time to time, sponsors and sanctions National and Regional Conventions. These conventions provide training classes and seminars for coaches and athletes in twirling and related areas such as dance, gymnastics, sports medicine and psychology. United States Twirling Association members may apply to serve in one of the departments which propose rule and procedure changes and establish new programs.

The U.S.T.A. has developed extensive and comprehensive Professional Training Programs for member athletes, coaches and judges:

- Judges are certified and required to update and retest regularly.
- Certification for coaches was developed in coordination with the Judges' program.
- U.S.T.A. offers a complete system with logical, progressive skill development for teachers and coaches for training and educating athletes - The *USTA Competitive/Achievement System*

The Association is the official representative of the United State to the World Baton Twirling Federation, which hosts the annual World Championships each summer. There are now 22 other countries world-wide which participate in these Championships. The United States Twirling Association is also a member of the National Council of Youth Sports.

Philosophy

THE UNITED STATES TWIRLING ASSOCIATION EXISTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION FOR THE SPORT OF BATON TWIRLING.

Therefore:

The foundation basis of all decisions and actions is based on the precept that twirling is a **TRUE SPORT**. The principles and priorities are defined as:

- Fair competitive structure
- Availability of recreational avenues
- Safety of the athlete
- Proper development of the Athlete and Professional through systemized teaching and testing programs based on the logical progression of skills, all of which service every segment of the twirling community.

We are committed to supporting and enforcing the goals and philosophies of the World Baton Twirling Federation.

We are dedicated to the nurturing the science of baton twirling through research and development

We recognize and accept the responsibility to initiate and lead through an emphasis on the development of innovative, challenging new programs.

We seek harmonious alliances with other twirling and sport organizations.

The business/administrative sector of the organization is structured to support and provide avenues and opportunities for growth and expansion.

We ascribe to and enforce the concept that high ethical and behavioral standards for athletes and professionals is vital to the proper psychological and social development of the individual, creating a safe and healthful environment in which to participate and which fosters growth, pride and respect.

We thoroughly understand, acknowledge and pledge to provide each athlete with the following unqualified rights:

- Right to participate at a level commensurate with the athlete's maturity and ability
- Right to have ethical and qualified adult leadership
- Right to participate in a safe and healthy environment
- Right to proper preparation and training
- Right to equal opportunity to strive for success and reach her/his own unique potential
- Right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Right to have fun in our sport

We ascribe to the concept that setting and maintaining high standards of achievement is necessary in order to sustain the environment that supports, aids, guides and fosters excellence and creativity.

Mission

The U.S.T.A provides opportunities for members and supporters to participate in the sport of baton twirling at all recreational and competitive levels.

USTA COACHES' CODE OF ETHICS

“Ethics is the department of human behavior relating to morals or the principles of human duty. The word is derived from the Greek and means manners, the manners of people, and their way of life. In its more academic sense it is usually understood as the study of wisdom in conduct, right conduct.”

Ashley Montague

Purpose: To promote high standards of professional conduct.

This code is broad in scope and general in application. These prescribed rules of conduct generally apply to professional relationships and problems rather than to personal morality or the individual's non professional pursuits.

Compliance is essentially volunteer. Currently, there is not a commission charged with the specific responsibility to investigate and pass judgment upon cases of alleged violation of this code. It should be noted however, that the USTA Board of Directors and the USTA Education department encourage compliance and that the board is empowered to appoint a commission to apply pressure when careful investigation indicates flagrant violations.

A. General Axioms of Professional Conduct

The Coach's conduct should be such as will:

- Keep him/her physically and mentally fit
- Be a worthy example for students and parents
- Bring no reproach upon himself
- Bring no reproach upon the coaching profession or USTA
- Contribute harmony and mutual advantage in all professional relationships

B. Conduct Standards Pertaining To Coach-Athlete Relationships

Character building is a direct result of all teaching; therefore, it is a primary responsibility of the USTA Coach. The USTA Coach works with children at an impressionable age when example is stronger than precept. A coach's efficiency, determined in part by his influence on athletes, depends not only on his coaching skills, but also on his conduct and reputation outside the coaching situation.

1. **WELFARE OF THE ATHLETE: THE COACH'S PARAMOUNT CONCERN**
All interactions, whether written, verbal or demonstrative, should be protective of the athlete's self esteem.
2. **RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUALITY OF EACH ATHLETE**
The injunction to respect individual differences and to deal with each student's according to his own performance and behavior is a matter of both ethics and methodology. It is a positive challenge to the coach to relate to each child's individual performance when the task involves a mass of students in a single day of coaching.

*Immorality, Religion and Morals by Ashley Montague, 1971, Hawthorn Books, Inc., NY, Chapter 3, p40.

3. OBJECTIVITY

Neither by word, deed or attitude should the coach impair the right of a child to fair and impartial treatment. There should be no trace of prejudice or preference because of style, background, previous accomplishments (or lack of), region or associations. Each and every student must be taught open-mindedly with consideration to the new, the old and the unusual in material, technique and styling.

4. COURTESY

The very nature of the Coach-Student relationship and the nervous strain of coaching and performing or competing are open invitations to petty tyranny and irritability. Therefore, a coach is encouraged to show students the same courtesy expected of them.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

The coach is obligated to hold inviolate all confidential information s/he has about a student, including those athletes who are current or former students.

C. Conduct Standards Pertaining To Relationships With Associates

1. SOLICITATION OF STUDENTS

The USTA Coach will never knowingly solicit the students of another coach, either by word or action.

2. PROTOCOL FOR CHANGING COACHES

When a student/parent from another coach indicates interest in a change of coach and a lesson is scheduled, it is the responsibility of both the parent and the new coach to notify the former coach prior to the actual lesson. It is the responsibility of the new coach to inform the parent that s/he must contact the former coach and terminate the coach-student agreement prior to the lesson. This is a professional courtesy.

3. SHARING THE COACHING ROLE

In the case of two or more coaches for one athlete, it is advised that the coaches and parent interface on the roles of each. Mutual benefit, clarity and consistency for the athlete will then be maintained.

4. POLICIES

Opportunity should be maximized for coaches to participate in the formulation of rules and in the evaluation and revision of them.

5. MUTUAL HELPFULNESS

The sharing of advice, counsel and idea-exchange on methodology is to the mutual benefit of all parties and to the profession. Cooperation within an honest and open exchange of information is obligatory.

6. MERIT

The USTA Coach recognizes and appreciates the accomplishments of his/her professional peers. Sincere respect generates positive relationships. Jealousy, selfishness, fraud, deception and false claims for advancement interfere with positive interaction and are detrimental to the promotion of the profession, as well as the professional involved.

7. **NON-INTERFERENCE**
Intrusion by comment or action with the coaching duties of a contracted coach by another coach is a distinct infraction of professional etiquette.
8. **CONFIDENTIALITY**
Confidential correspondence or conversations, professional evaluations, personnel records and all other confidential facts should be held inviolate by all coaches.
9. **PROFESSIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**
Successful professional interaction dictates mutual respect throughout conflict or disagreement. Professional dignity, good name, influence and honor of all should be maintained. Any attempt to resolve professional differences must occur at an appropriate time and place.
10. **COMPLIANCE PROCEDURE**
When a situation occurs in which a coach disagrees with the methodology or conduct of another coach, these recommendations should be engaged:
 - a) Approach the person directly with whom you disagree. Discuss in a private environment. Be open-minded, a good listener and be specific in what you question. Do not prolong a discussion that is dead-ended. Always try to conclude the discussion amicably, even if the problem is unresolved.
 - b) When a serious ethical question remains unresolved after discussion, contact the current Education Department Director. Complaint should be written concisely with all pertinent information included.

D. Conduct Standards Pertaining To Public Relations

1. **COOPERATIVE RELATIONS WITH PARENTS**
The professionally minded coach will seek to exercise patience and sincere courtesy in parent-coach conferences. The coach will promote understanding and full cooperation between the coaching profession and the parents. The coach will provide insight and knowledge of coaching methods, terminology or philosophy that will assist in greater understanding and goodwill.
2. **CONSTRUCTIVE, NOT DESTRUCTIVE**
It is the obligation of the coach to provide warranted constructive criticism of the profession that will lead to solutions.
3. **PROFESSIONAL IMAGE**
The coach must set the example of professionalism.
4. **PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT**
Membership, promotion and active participation in baton twirling organizations-local, state, regional and national-is rightly expected of every professional coach.
5. **PROFESSIONAL STATUS**
The coach should actively work for such economic and social conditions as will permit coaches to render the best possible service. Adequate salaries, due respect and reasonable working conditions are essential for an effective teaching/learning experience.

How to Become a USTA Coach

ELIGIBILITY: Anyone 16 and over presently teaching the sport of baton twirling is WELCOME to follow the outlined steps to becoming a USTA Coach and listed in the USTA Professional Registry.

COACH CLASSIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

REGISTERED COACH: No Testing Required

- To Become a Registered Coach mail professional dues with name, address and phone number along with a twirling coach resume to:

**USTA Membership Services Dept.
18511 State Route 501
Wapakoneta, OH 45895**

APPRENTICE COACH:

- Is under the age of 16, has passed at least the Home Study Part of Level I, and pays professional dues. This category DOES NOT carry the USTA Liability Insurance.

LEVEL I COACH:

- Applicant may attend Level I Coach Seminar or do as a Home Study - Open Book Testing is required. If Coach has passed at least the Home Study part of Level I, they pay Professional dues.
- The Level I format is designed for the coach who teaches classes at the beginner level - whether it is at a recreation level or developing competitive athletes. The Level I Coach Seminar is progression in nature. The Level I program is the foundation for continued certification Level II. Coaching theories, methods, and techniques presented at Level I are expanded at Level II.

LEVEL I HOME STUDY INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Contact USTA on the Website at www.ustawirling.com to order the Level I Coach's Manual.

At the same time order the Level I HOME STUDY TEST.

2. The Level I Coach's written exam is open book.
3. Complete the application information on the test form.
4. Complete the test online or request a hard copy via email and return to:
Karen Cammer
45 Cherry valley Avenue
West Hempstead, NY 11552
Email: BTN11@aol.com
5. USTA Professional dues must be paid to USTA Headquarters before Coach's Test access and results are released.

LEVEL II COACH:

1. To Become a LEVEL II Coach, one must have passed the Level I Home Study Test.
2. LEVEL II Certified Coach is achieved by attending a 12 hour Seminar in one of the following Segments:
 - A. Groups
 - B. One, Two, Three Baton
 - C. Strut and Dance Twirl

Objectives of the Level II Workshops are as follows:

- A. To provide a positive, logical, and progressive learning environment from Level I to Level II.
- B. To assist the recreation coach and coach of competitive athletes with valuable information and resources to produce an effective twirling program.
- C. To provide continuing instruction in USTA competitive achievement program at classes A and AA in both compulsories and movement technique. With the use of these tools, thus providing all coaches credibility and the stature of the studio or program using this system.
- D. To encourage and inspire all coaches in the most important quality: **To Always remain teachable and open minded.**
- E. To provide coaches the resources that will lead logically, confidently and simply onto Level III.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE ATTENDED THESE SEMINARS ARE IMPRESSED WITH THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION AND HANDS-ON LEARNING THAT IS COVERED. MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND ONE THIS YEAR!

To find out where these workshops will be held in the future contact, check the "Events" listing on the USTA website www.ustawirling.com.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SANCTION A LEVEL ONE, LEVEL TWO COACH SEMINAR IN YOUR CITY, STATE OR REGIONAL?

Educating our coaches on all levels will help the sport of baton twirling grow locally, state wide, regionally and nationally. WE WELCOME your inquiries and will help you have a successful workshop.

**All USTA Coaches pay yearly Professional Dues:
Your Professional Membership Dues expire every year on August 31st.**

USTA OBJECTIVES

The USTA Education Department set forth the following objectives pertaining to the USTA Coaches Certification Workshop:

- To provide a learning environment at Level I that adapts to the particular needs of the part time coach, i.e., home study when necessary or the workshop format when the situation allows.
- To provide the recreational coach or other coach of beginners with the tools necessary to conduct an effective twirling program for beginners.
- To provide information and instruction in the USTA Competitive Achievement System at classes C/B/BI/BII. In so providing this system, USTA offers a logical, efficient and measurable national standard of excellence that starts at the very initial level of instruction.
- To provide coaches the resource information that will lead them logically, confidently and simply onto the next level of coaching. (Level II)

DEFINING YOUR OWN OBJECTIVES

The success of your own coaching endeavor will be greatly enhanced if you take the time for this important process. Some considerations include the following:

DIRECTION – Decide initially the direction you would like to adopt your program. Will your group be recreational only? Will the emphasis be on performance activities (shows, parades, halftimes, recitals)? Will the emphasis be directed towards competition activities? Will the program consist of both performance and competition activities? Some form of activity that gives a specific direction for your program and specific goals for your students is necessary for a successful program.

TIME/COMMITMENT – Determine the amount of time and energy you are willing to commit to your coaching program. Include administrative time (see section on administration), program design time, choreography time, as well as teaching time.

MONETARY CONSIDERATIONS – While wealthy coaches are rare, it is only reasonable to consider your own monetary needs and goals. It is not unusual that the coach with the highest income is that person who coaches at the beginner level. This coach usually teaches, teaches in the class situation, rather than private individual instruction, with low overhead administrative expenses. Even if you start small, do you want a positive growth potential? If so, design your program accordingly. Can you add classes, additional days, and additional sites? If desired, could you hire additional assistant coaches? Most importantly, who determines your fee schedule? This element will determine the ceiling on your earning potential, especially if you are limited on the lesson fee per student you may charge, and/or the hourly wage you can earn.

ADMINISTRATION – Who will be responsible for the administrative work for the program? Are you within a recreational department that will complete the administrative activities such as; advertise the program to secure new students, provide copying services, notify students and parents of pertinent information, provide facilities and maintenance, provide rewards for incentive, provide funding for basic activities and

collect fees? If you are not planning to associate with a recreation program, who will be responsible for those and other administrative duties? Will you have a parents' or other booster-type organization to assist with fund raising and administrative activities? Are you willing to accept the limitations placed upon you by working for someone else?

EVALUATION PROCESS – It is known that the evaluative process is inherent during teaching and coaching. If you want to assure a quality program, however, you need to include a formalized format to evaluate athletes, thereby providing student, parent and coach with progress reports and incentive. This format can be included as part of your class time or you can set aside a special day and time for this process. Determine what will work most effectively for you and your students. The USTA Competitive Achievement System, as explained in future chapters in this manual, is specifically designed to accommodate the beginner coach. It is logical, progressional in nature and provides both the process and the procedure to evaluate your students. Additionally, the coach will enjoy the prestige of associating with a system that rates students consistent with a national standard, regardless of your geographic location. This system is used throughout the United States and since its inception, has proven its worth for the proper development of beginner twirlers.

SELF-EVALUATION – A good, straight forward look at yourself, your own capabilities, your energy level and your degree of commitment for this endeavor, will greatly enhance your chances for success. Start by listing your own baton twirling skills-your strengths and your weaknesses. Then list your own teaching/coaching skills, again, list both your strong and weak areas. If you have decided to coach your own program without the resource of a recreation program, evaluate your own administrative abilities. Now be creative; note specific methods and resources for improving your weak areas. Evaluate the importance of your skills; both strong and weak. Are the weak areas tolerable and fixable? There are numerous successful beginner programs that are taught by coaches with a limited personal twirling background. There are successful coaches who have only a high school majorette history. Start at the level at which you are comfortable and then grow from there.

RESOURCES – Do not overlook the vast resources available to you to increase your twirling and coaching knowledge and to enhance your current skill level. The most important characteristic of a good coach is to always remain teachable. Some of your most effective resources will be other twirling coaches. These people endure similar trials and tribulations of coaching. Since their background and experience level may vary from your own, they may hold feasible solutions or suggestions for concerns or problems you encounter. Many coaches who come together at USTA Coaches' Certification Workshops emphasize that an important reason they chose a workshop format was to provide the opportunity to interface with other coaches and with clinicians of the highest caliber.

LET'S GET ORGANIZED HOW TO GET A CLASS STARTED

There are several avenues available to a person who is interested in teaching a beginner class. Since you have already worked on defining your own objectives, then your direction is clear. The options listed here are in no specific order of preference or recommendation. You must decide what fits your needs and desires best.

COACHING WITHIN AN ESTABLISHED PROGRAM

Where to apply:

CITY RECREATION DEPARTMENT
SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAM
YWCA-YMCA
IN-SCHOOL PROGRAM
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
COMMUNITY CLASS
MILITARY BASE
DANCE STUDIO
GYMNASTIC STUDIO
DAYCARE FACILITIES
ESTABLISHED BATON GROUP
HEALTH CLUB

If you have decided to coach under the auspices of an established program, then your task may be as simple as walking in and applying for the job. Be prepared. Have a resume' of your twirling experience and most importantly, any teaching experience you have. Note your teaching experience even if it is as an assistant to a more experienced coach. Note other experience that relates to your work with youth. If you are a USTA Certified Coach, note it in a prominent place on your resume'. Needless to say, never claim titles or positions that are untrue. Some of the best beginner coaches are those persons who never competed at all. Some of the weakest coaches are those with competitive titles a mile long. A strong baton twirler is not always a strong coach. While related, the skills still differ significantly. Your embellishments will always catch up with you. When interviewed, be prepared to expand on your philosophy of coaching and ideas you would specifically like to bring to the current program to make the baton twirling portion of the program even more effective. Present yourself in a positive, enthusiastic manner. Being prepared with a professional resume' will enhance your image.

Remember that employer's want dependable, responsible staff. If a prospective employer labors under the stereotypical notion of "majorette/baton twirler", s/he may view you as a disorganized air-head with little real ability who likes to show-off in public. You must be prepared to dispel that stereotype by being prepared, speaking intelligently and enthusiastically, by understanding the type of on-going programs currently offered, and by presenting clearly and precisely what you have to offer.

You should have in mind what you would like to receive as a wage and your justification for that amount (certification, experience, etc). The salary may already be determined. Then you must decide if it is commensurate with your abilities and experience. If negotiable, encourage your employer to set up your wage on a per student basis. Since the parent usually bears the burden of lesson fees, this should not cost the employer anything. This is beneficial to both of you. The more effective your program and style of teaching, the more students you will get. This encourages and rewards you for striving for excellence in your coaching. Remember, your supervisor/employer is probably accountable to a board of directors or higher authority. Therefore, the more students in the baton twirling program, the better your employer looks.

If the information is not offered, ask about benefits that go along with the job. Do you have use of other areas of the facility, such as pool, weight room, etc.? Can you use the facility for private lessons outside of class time? Sometimes this is a good bargaining point if the salary is less than adequate. Are students required to pay a membership fee as well as the class fee? If so, how much and does it cover other areas for the student? Be aware that an additional membership fee may restrict the number of new students available to you. What about insurance? Is there medical and liability coverage for both you and your students and for persons viewing the class? Is there a charge for this coverage? (See Section on Insurance) What services are provided by employer? Will employer provide copy service? Do they advertise your program? If so, when and how often? What is the total lesson fee charged, and how is that amount dispersed? Do they collect fees, and when can you expect to receive a paycheck? This is all information you have a right to know if you are to be an employee, so ask if the information is not forthcoming as a part of the interview.

In addition to the areas covered above, decide your preference on the subjects of teaching schedule, appropriate site, class size, student age breakdown for classes, before you go into an interview. (See next section) Again, be flexible whenever possible. Since you are depending upon someone else for a job, you may need to establish yourself before demanding the moon.

SET UP YOUR OWN BEGINNER PROGRAM AND BE YOUR OWN BOSS

Setting up your own classes can be time consuming initially, but rewarding, too. If you have defined your own objectives, this process is easier. You need a clear understanding of your needs and preferences to give substance to your program.

Considerations include: SCHEDULE, FACILITY REQUIREMENTS, TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS DESIRED, AGE OF STUDENTS YOU PREFER, SIZE AND NUMBER OF CLASSES, FEES, ADVERTISING, INSURANCE.

FACILITY -This can be the biggest roadblock to starting a beginner class. Insurance may be closely related to the procurement of a suitable facility, so read that upcoming section carefully. This is surmountable. Once again, definition is in order. What are your needs? You do not have to have a full size gymnasium to teach a beginner class. Most beginner classes will not be throwing the baton up for a while. Therefore, gymnasium height is not essential for a while. Many facilities have rooms or areas that are large enough otherwise.

Here are some suggestions:

RECREATION DEPARTMENT/YWCA - Some will allow private enterprise to use their facility to boost their own roll call. Check on rental fees and insurance. You must calculate the amount you are charged for rental fees and insurance into the amount you charge for lessons. If this becomes exorbitant, you will not have any students. (See sections on Insurance and Setting Your Fees) Check the rental charge if you procure your own insurance and can show them a "certificate of insurance coverage".

LOCAL SCHOOLS - Check the elementary schools first. They are often used less because they rarely have full-size gymnasiums. Do check the junior and senior high schools and even the colleges. Remember your space requirements for a beginner class are minimal Find out the hours you may use the facilities and all charges or fees to do so. Again, calculate the amount of your monthly fees into the amount you would be required to charge for lesson fees. Is it profitable?

PRIVATELY OWNED BUSINESSES, SUCH AS DANCE STUDIOS, GYMNASTIC STUDIOS, and HEALTH CLUBS - Since these businesses need to stay open with paying customers using the facilities, they often rent space for a nominal fee. Within the scheduling parameters, you may be able to set up your own program. Business owners are all different, so negotiate and then calculate again. You may be able to negotiate the use of office space, copy equipment, advertising as a program within their business, etc.

RENTAL OF STUDIO FACILITIES - The feasibility of this option can vary drastically, depending upon the city or region. You must do some legwork and find a suitable site that is within your financial means. The overhead costs for rent, heat, electricity, telephone, maintenance can be daunting, so do not proceed if you are faint of heart. Talk to someone who has experience in this area and ask about the pros and cons of renting or owning your own building. USTA Headquarters office can help you connect with someone who is a studio owner/coach nearest your vicinity, if you do not already know of someone.

MILITARY BASES/NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY/VFW - These may be good sources for a teaching facility. They often have large rooms or drill floors that would be suitable. You might offer to teach a class for their military children in exchange for the use of the facility for your own classes.

CHURCH GYMNASIUMS/APARTMENT OR CONDO COMMON ROOM - Some will let you use it rent free; others will charge a nominal fee.

YOUR OWN BACKYARD - Do not forget your own yard or patio as a possible lesson site, especially if you are lucky enough to live in a climate that is conducive to year-round good weather. Once again, be aware of insurance ramifications if a child or visitor should be hurt or injured on your property (see section on Insurance).

NON-PROFIT STATUS - For those coaches who teach as a part of a group that is incorporated under the IRS laws and qualify as Tax-exempt, 501 (c)(3), use of many public facilities becomes a more realistic possibility. Check with your local school district on their rental policy for nonprofit organizations and for youth organizations. (See section on Non-Profit Status.)

FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS - Elks Club, Lions Club, etc. Often these groups are looking for youth activities to sponsor or help because it gives them recognition within their state/national organization. You may even talk them into providing your liability insurance.

SCHEDULE - Know your preference for teaching days and times. If you are a part of another business, be prepared to be flexible to fit into the current schedule. Be aware of the limitations and requirements of your chosen facility.

CLASS SIZE - Determine the minimum and maximum class size of your preference. This varies from coach to coach, but a general consensus seems to be a minimum of four students and a maximum of ten students. Since a class situation calls for minimum individual help, determine your own best numbers. If the class is too large, you may not be able to coach and evaluate each member efficiently.

STUDENT AGE/ABILITY - An age breakdown for each class is important for the pacing you will establish in your coaching. How many new skills you can teach in one class time will be determined by the age, maturity, and desire of your students. Older students can usually understand technical theories easier than young students. Generally, the younger the student, the shorter the attention span. Therefore, if you group your students by age, such as five years and under, six to eight years, nine years to eleven years, twelve years and older, you will usually have a workable learning environment. If you place a five year old with a ten year old, you will probably frustrate yourself and both students. Most ten year olds are more coordinated, can learn at a faster pace, do not require constant stroking, feel rewarded at the mere accomplishment of the skill, and often are there due to self-interest, rather than parental interest. Since each child is unique, there are ALWAYS exceptions, but it is usually a good idea to avoid crossing age barriers.

SETTING YOUR FEES -This is an important process. Consider EVERYTHING that costs you money...rental, utilities, insurance, copies, supplies, travel expenses, music, sound equipment, rewards, to name the basics. Consider your own twirling and teaching experience. Consider your instruction as a twirler. How extensive is your educational background in general, in baton twirling, baton twirling coaching, and related arts? Usually, the younger the coach, the lower the pay. D.O.E. means exactly that, depending on experience. Additionally, your pay should be higher when you receive your coaching certification. This license indicates you have received training, testing and resource information to enhance your coaching skills. The higher your level of certification, the higher your fee can logically become.

Fees vary greatly around the country. To find out what the market will bear in your region, call established gymnastic or dance studios and inquire about their lesson fees, payment policies, additional fees they charge. Ask other baton twirling coaches in your area. Set your fees based upon your experience, your training, your expenses to run the program, your region. Be reasonable. If you undercharge, you will narrow your own profit margin and soon come to resent it. If you overcharge, you may not get or keep students. Many parents have their children in a variety of activities. They are often aware of what constitutes a quality program and what it should cost.

A word about raising your lesson fees...try to do so at the beginning of your regular season or on January 1 of the New Year. ALWAYS notify your students and parents IN WRITING at least 60 days prior to the scheduled date the new fee goes into effect. Coaches often report the loss of some students when the fees are raised. Be aware of the financial capabilities of the students you serve. You should always have a sound basis on which you have made your decision to raise your fee.

GETTING THE WORD OUT - Plan ahead and do everything you can to advertise your classes. Be enthusiastic and confident Use as many free resources as possible. Try these resources:

POSTERS - on bulletin boards in grocery stores, schools, laundromats, apartment or condo common rooms, gas stations, businesses, churches, clubs.

FLYERS - Make a small, eye-catching flyer and duplicate it inexpensively. Find out what the policy is at your local school for handing out flyers to advertise your classes. Hand them out at local celebrations and parades, to friends. Hand them out door to door.

WORD-OF-MOUTH -This is probably your single most effective way to get new students. If the kids have fun in your class, they will tell their friends. So, pass the word and encourage everyone else to do the same.

MEDIA - Many communities have sections in the local NEWSPAPER for community activities. This service is usually free and all it takes is a phone call to your local paper to find out many radio and television stations will do PSA's; or public service announcements, to notify the public of upcoming events. Call and find out. Note: These services are easy to take advantage of if you are non-profit. Some will provide the service anyway so ask.

DISPLAY AD - An effective eye-catching advertisement in the newspaper can spread the word.

CONTACT INTERESTED PARTIES IN WRITING - Oftentimes associated businesses receive calls inquiring about baton twirling classes. If that business does not offer twirling classes they are often willing to pass the word about your group/classes. This includes recreation departments, dance studios, gymnastics schools, YMCA-YWCA.

FREE CLINIC - Introduce children and their parents to the sport of baton twirling by offering a free clinic. Send a flyer out through the schools; use posters and PSA and any other resource feasible to pass the word. (Non-profit status helps in this area also). On the day of the clinic, provide used batons for participants to borrow. Use name tags (first name) so that it is easy to be friendly and use names. Teach a half dozen twirls, smile a lot, praise even the smallest success, and teach basic marching. Work with music throughout the day. If you have some experienced students, or can borrow some, have a brief demonstration, in costume if possible. Parents are always interested in where the beginner classes can take them. After the clinic hold a registration for your beginner, classes. You are on your way! This is a great way to pass the word about your program in the community, too.

INSURANCE

This can be a confusing and frustrating topic for many people. There are so many kinds of insurance, and often what is really needed is out of the financial reach for someone who is self-employed. Let's sort it out.

First of all, do you need it? Secondly, if so, what kind? Third, where can you get it?

DO YOU NEED IT?

You must decide, but in doing so you need to be aware of some pertinent information about insurance and the consequences of a lack of it. When you do not have insurance coverage for your students, you are gambling. You are gambling that your students will never get hurt in class or in practice, that you will never get hurt, that when they do get hurt, they will not sue you for payment of medical or dental bills or for negligence. Remember, you don't have to BE negligent to be SUED for negligence. Since you need to run your baton twirling business in a business-like fashion, it is reasonable to hold some insurance coverage.

KINDS OF COVERAGE

There are three essential kinds of coverage that can protect you and your students:

- 1) Accidental/ Medical
- 2) Dental
- 3) Liability

Some students will come to you with their own medical and/or dental insurance coverage. Due to the high cost of insurance today, many students will not have any medical or dental coverage at all. By offering an inexpensive source of insurance, you will be providing a service that may discourage further legal action against you in the event of an injury. Americans are quick to sue. By holding liability insurance for you, your coaching staff, your group, you protect your livelihood and possibly your personal assets from loss due to lawsuits. Before you pay for any kind of insurance coverage, be sure you know the following:

- **TERMS OF COVERAGE** - What exactly is covered under the policy?
- **LIMITS OF THE COVERAGE** - How much is the maximum dollar amount that will be paid per person per accident?
- **EXCLUSIONS** - What, if any, injuries or illnesses are excluded from coverage?
- **CONDITIONS OF COVERAGE** - What are the conditions of coverage? For example, in the USTA insurance described below, for the medical/dental insurance to be in effect, the coach must be a current USTA Certified Coach and must be in attendance at the event at which the injury occurred.

SOURCES TO SECURE INSURANCE COVERAGE

You can go to a reputable insurance company or insurance agent. An agent is a person who is usually in business with one or more insurance companies. Agents will, of course, want to sell you insurance from their company. Buying insurance is like any other business activity. To get the best coverage and price, **SHOP AROUND**. Set your criteria for your own needs and then, using that criteria consistently from one company to the next, ask for the cost of coverage. Be sure you key in on areas where a company changes your criteria. You could end up comparing apples to oranges instead of a valid comparison between companies offering identical coverage. Ask current coaches or studio owners where they get their coverage. Shortcuts in this important process may cost you dearly later, so take care that you investigate a source properly. Always use the official insurance policy as the last word in your coverage. Insurance policies are the same as a legal contract. Talk to an insurance expert for complete and accurate information.

Insurance coverage can be expensive and it can be difficult to get when a person is self-employed. USTA was the first twirling organization to offer a source of insurance coverage to their professional coach members. At the risk of sounding like a commercial, USTA offers the following insurance to its members and coaches.

USTA offers very complete and substantial coverage for its members. The insurance was designed for our sport and includes extensive dental coverage and coverage for the therapy which is often a follow-up to sports-related injuries. All individual members of the USTA (Full, Family, Elite, Professional) are covered by an accident policy in the amount of \$10,000 medical and \$10,000 dental for any accident which occurs 1) at a USTA sanctioned event; 2) at a lesson, practice, or performance which is supervised by a USTA Certified Coach; or 3) traveling to or from any of the above.

This insurance is secondary insurance and has a \$500 deductible. Claims must be submitted to a primary carrier first (often children are covered through a parent's work insurance). The USTA insurance will cover any amount, after the \$500 deductible, not covered by the primary carrier or up to \$10,000 medical if the member has no other insurance coverage. The USTA also has organizational/group membership which includes insurance coverage for an organization's/group's members. This is the same accident coverage that is given to USTA individual members. This type of membership is more economical for large groups whose individuals do not compete in individual events at USTA competitions and often a group director will insure parents and chaperones utilizing this type of membership.

LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR COACHES

Beginning September, 2000, all USTA Certified Professional Members receive liability coverage in the amount of \$2,000,000 with a \$1,000,000 umbrella. This coverage becomes effective on the day a coach or judge pays their professional membership fee and stays in effect through August 31 of the following year. Now twirling coaches have an avenue to have liability protection without expensive premiums. This will enable coaches to show proof of insurance when renting buildings, utilizing school facilities, and participating in parades and community events. There is an additional \$15 fee to issue each certificate of insurance naming a facility, school district, etc. as additional insured. (There is a "Certificate of Insurance Request Form" you will need to file along with the fee)

USTA COMPETITION LIABILITY INSURANCE

All USTA sanctioned contests, meets, workshops and clinics are covered by liability insurance in the amount of \$2,000,000 with a \$1,000,000 umbrella. Upon payment of the sanction fee, the contest/clinic director is supplied with an application to apply for a certificate showing proof of insurance. The insurance company will then issue a certificate of insurance to the facility and can name the school district, city, etc. as additional insured as per the terms of the rental contract. Certificates requested at least 30 days in advance of a sanctioned competition are issued free of charge. There may be an additional fee for certificates requested within 30 days of the competition. Certificates for clinics are \$15.

This liability insurance is included in the cost of the sanction fee and is at no additional cost to the contest/clinic director other than the fee for issuing the certificate of insurance (if applicable). Since most facilities require proof of insurance before the rental is approved, USTA has enabled organizations and individuals to continue to sponsor twirling events which might have otherwise been unaffordable because of the insurance requirement.

INCORPORATION AND NON-PROFIT STATUS

Incorporating your business can be a relatively simple procedure. It is an important step towards your personal security. In some states, incorporation means it is more difficult to sue you personally. Contact your state office that licenses corporations for information about incorporation. Many states require a nominal annual fee to maintain your corporate status.

Application and securing a Not-for-Profit status, officially 501(C) (3) from the Internal Revenue Service can be an elaborate and time consuming process. It is however, worth the effort. Your application procedure may be made easier if one or more groups in your state have already secured this status. If they have, contact those people and get hints about the process to pave the way for your application. You need a Constitution and By-Laws that meet certain specifications. You need a separate booster club/organization that hires you to coach. Be prepared to complete forms from the IRS; usually more than once. Contact your local IRS office and ask for complete information and application forms. This 501(C) (3) status will open many doors for you. It is worth the effort.

Note: The IRS publishes two pamphlets that will be helpful if you wish to seek non-profit status: 1) Publication 557- Tax -Exempt Status for your organization and 2) Form 1021 and Form 872-C – Application for Recognition of Exemption.

CLASS REGISTRATION

Your class registration process should be transactional in nature. This means there should be a mutual exchange of information between you the coach and your new students and their parent. If possible, hold the first registration for a beginning class at a time that is separate from the first class itself. In this way you avoid using class time for administrative activities. This allows you the freedom to interface with parents in a business-like manner. These adults are the people who will become your greatest supporters or your biggest headaches. Take time to smile, learn their names and be helpful. Your attention will soon be required primarily for their child, rather than to them.

Use a printed form for each child and gather the following information: Name, age, birth date, home phone, mother's name, mother's work phone, father's name, father's work phone, cell phone numbers, school, grade, emergency name, relationship and phone.

You may also want to use this as an opportunity to ask parents to indicate if they have certain skills and if they would share their skills with the group. For example, car pool, secretarial, sewing, public relations, distribution (flyers, posters), computer skills, graphic art skills, etc.

A suggestion about membership: Some coaches take advantage of the first registration of the year to require membership into the U.S. TWIRLING ASSOCIATION. For approximately \$30.00 per year, a student receives membership, insurance, three publications, an electronic monthly newsletter and a patch. It is a good bargain for the price. There are many national organizations for other sports that carry a much higher price tag and give a lot less for the money. In addition, your students will already have membership later if they enter an Evaluation Meet or a USTA competition. You are eligible for the liability insurance for your group. You and your students are covered with medical/dental accident insurance for all lessons, practices, performances, meets and competitions.

There are a lot of advantages for a little effort at the first registration for new students. (See Insurance Section for complete details)

MEASURING AND ORDERING BATONS

You may be eligible to become an official dealer for a baton company. You can sell batons to your students. In many areas this is a definite service to offer as the only baton available commercially is sold in music stores. These batons are often over-priced, sizes are often limited and many salespersons sell batons that are too short.

To become an authorized dealer submit your name and coaching credentials to baton company personnel. Batons purchased directly from the company are generally discounted to authorized dealers. Check your USTA publications and website for the name and telephone number of prominent baton companies. Quality of service, as well as baton quality and price, should be considered when choosing a baton company.

You need to know how to correctly measure your students for the proper size baton. A baton that allows a little growth room is best. Be sure the baton clears the floor when gripped by the end. The manner in which coaches measure their students for a baton varies. Star Line Baton Company says, "It is Star Line's suggestion that a teacher measure a child by having the child extend her/his arm to the side and then measure under the arm from the armpit to the end of the longest finger. The number at the end of the finger would be the baton length."

TEACHING METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The techniques described here are designed and used by USTA coaches with many years of coaching experience. Please refer to the TABLE OF CONTENTS for complete listing. The emphasis is for those coaches working with the novice and beginner level athletes; those students who are Level I athletes. Certain methods apply to athletes that are more experienced as well.

It is important that students understand some of the theories behind the techniques. The coach must always communicate at the appropriate age and maturity level of the athlete when teaching theory.

The techniques are not listed in any particular order. Since there is often a blending of theories or methods, study all of the techniques.

A. GENERAL TEACHING METHODS

1. LINE 'EM UP

Since teaching baton twirling requires an attentive student as well as a focused coach who is constantly evaluating the understanding and progress of the students, it will enhance your classroom discipline if the students are assigned a specific position at the outset of each class.

If your class is larger than four students, use two or more lines to fit your own teaching space. Vary the lines; change the first line often so everyone has a chance to be in front and so you can more easily observe all students.

FACE THE CLASS FOR BETTER ATTENTION HABITS

As much as possible, FACE THE CLASS FOR YOUR INSTRUCTION. It is well-known that people listen more attentively when eye contact is established and maintained. This means that you need to twirl backwards for much of your instruction. When the coach says, "Put your baton in your right hand", the coach will place his/her baton in the left hand. Discipline is easier to maintain and students will stay focused better.

Be aware of those twirls that by nature of the direction or position of the baton require that you face the same direction as the students. Also, be aware that the demand, or difficulty, of a move may require that the coach face the same direction as the athlete.

2. MAINTAINING ORDER AND DISCIPLINE

Maintenance of order and discipline is critical to class organization and the establishment of your authority in the class. You are the person they watch to learn. From registration day through completion, it is important that children know what is to be expected of them. Reinforce the use of proper manners, taking turns, and raising their hands to talk, to make it known from the beginning that students must learn in a group situation. It is important as a coach that you teach class as a whole and avoid too much individual instruction. Observe the class to spot problem areas and then address the correction to the whole group. Speak authoritatively and avoid talking too long.

Encourage active listening by establishing eye contact and having them stand up without twirling. Your attitude will be reflected in your students. Be smiling and positive, excited about the tricks or routines. To establish your professionalism be prepared and be on time. Communicate clearly and keep the class moving and interesting.

Your class will be composed of several different types of personalities. Be prepared to handle the unexpected. To encourage good behavior offer awards, give praise and positive strokes and provide incentive. If discipline becomes a problem, this can be handled in several ways:

- Correct inappropriate behavior at the time it occurs
- Take the student aside after class and talk to him/her
- Recognize that there is a problem
- List their unacceptable behavior
- Give them consequences if behavior continues
- Talk to the parent
- Let them know it is okay if they don't participate
- If the problem continues and is disruptive to others, eliminate the child from class

As a coach you should not be afraid to discipline. It is not your Objective to be their best friend. You will earn respect by being a good coach, being organized and knowledgeable.

3. PROPER WARM UP / COOL DOWN SESSION

Explain to your students the importance of proper warm up and stretching. Explain that it will both loosen you up and soothe and relax you. It can lengthen your muscles and help coordination by increasing the range of motion of your joints.

Describe the difference between static and ballistic stretching. Static stretching is a relaxed, gradual stretch that you hold for a short time (20-30 seconds). This is the safest type of stretching. Ballistic stretching is characterized by rapid bouncing or jerking movements. This type of stretching is not safe because it can stretch muscle fibers too far, and the muscle reacts by contracting rather than stretching.

Teach specific guidelines for safe stretching. Increase the body temperature by slowly running in place or some other cardio respiratory type of activity. Raising the temperature by gentle activity increases the pliability of connective tissue, such as tendons, joint capsules and skin, so flexibility increases and the likelihood of injury decreases. Ease into each stretch and don't force body parts beyond their normal range of motion. Do at least five repetitions of each stretching exercise. Breathing should be slow and rhythmic throughout the entire stretching routine. To increase or maintain overall flexibility, stretch every muscle group and joint. Perform stretching exercises regularly. Keep in mind the motto "use it or lose it".

Approximate warm up/stretching time is 10-15 minutes. For a one hour class, you need to move through the warm up period fairly quickly. It's beneficial to have your students get in the habit of warming up and stretching out prior to class.

As you are warming up/stretching in class, inform the students what muscle group or joint they are working on. Use specific anatomical terminology (hamstrings, quadriceps, abdominals, shoulder, pectoral, etc.). Make this time educational for your students. They can store this information away for future use. You might want to mention a "bone of the day" and discuss its anatomical location, as well as what muscle(s) attaches to it. SEE DIAGRAMS OF MUSCLES & BONES

Cool down session should be approximately five minutes. Explain the importance of a proper cool down. Following exercise it permits the return of both the circulation and various body functions to pre-exercise levels. An active cool down activity is more beneficial than a passive one because blood and muscle lactic acid levels decrease more rapidly. Active recovery keeps the muscle pumps going and prevents blood from pooling in the extremities, thus preventing muscular soreness after exercise. Try 30 seconds to one minute of jogging, decrease gradually to a walk, followed by mild stretching. Emphasize to students to never just stop and sit down after a session.

Some examples of stretching and warming up include:

- Head rotations for the neck
- Arm circles for the shoulders
- Hand presses for the wrists
- Torso rotations for waist and back
- Straddle sit on floor, reaching forward R & L
- Lying on back, lift R & L leg alternately toward face

This is extremely incomplete list of examples, but it should help you to get started. Several good resources are available for a more complete program of stretching.

At the Level I stage you must begin to lay the groundwork for those students who hope to attain higher levels of achievement. This includes the development of strength and conditioning program to build bodies capable of the demands placed on them at higher and higher levels. At the beginning stages you need to reinforce the importance of being physically active, regardless of the level athlete you wish to become. This includes weight control, heart rate and lung capacity. Design exercise programs that can be done independently or in class. These programs should gradually prepare the children for more physical demands through cardiovascular work (running, jumping, aerobics and biking), and strength conditioning (mild weights, tension bands, isometrics, and other muscle resistant activities).

More importantly, warm up, flexibility, strength and conditioning are at issue when dealing with the possibility of injury. Seven major factors related to training and technique can contribute to injuries. This includes:

1. Inadequate warm-up
2. Lack of training specificity
3. Poor pre-season training
4. Rehearsal and performance schedule
5. Improper teaching technique

6. Starting training too late
7. Development of muscle imbalances

Source: "Dance Medicine: A Comprehensive Guide" Allan J. Rayan, M.D., Robert E. Stephens, PhD, Pluribus Press, Inc. 1987.

For example, flexibility and quadriceps/hamstring balance can usually prevent strained or pulled thigh muscles. Or, years of forcing the range of motion of the hip can lead to the development of osteoarthritis of the acetabular creating temporary restriction of the hip or unusual clicking sounds. Repeated illusions done in the same direction over a period of years. (1.)

A whole collection of other injuries involve other bodily regions. As a coach, you must remember that "unreasonable risks frequently yield unacceptable results"(2).

(1) and (2): Dance Medicine - see source above.

4. THE IMPORTANCE OF PROGRESSIONAL TEACHING

Teaching students in a progressive manner is the foundation to the development of quality athletes. Taking twirls from a starting point along a continuum of progression allows the athlete to build skill; in a logical order. This order creates a strong base from which each new skill can be learned. Creating self-confidence and a sense of achievement is usually inherent to this process.

Though many athletes still have a desire to learn new, exciting moves, it is paramount to the learning process that they don't attempt moves beyond their skill level. It is important, as a coach, that you recognize their rate of progression and coach them accordingly. When a coach does not use a progressive method of teaching, the ramifications are obvious in Level II and III, but most importantly established at Level I. This is the level where basics are developed as well as learning style. Pushing too fast can cause you to skip fundamental skills necessary to progress, and create a sense of frustration for athlete and coach.

Equally important is maintaining challenge and motivating your student to new levels. An example of progressional teaching at Level I is:

- Wrist twirl
- Figure eight
- Figure eight flourish
- Figure eight flourish, whip
- Thumb roll
- Flourish, whip, thumb roll
- Thumb release
- Flourish, whip, thumb release
- Proper spot spin technique
- Proper set-up with spin
- Proper catch
- Catch, follow through
- Figure eight flourish, whip, thumb release, one spin, and follow through

5. EQUAL DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC SKIJS

This concept is broad in nature and requires planning and perseverance on the part of the coach for success. EQUAL DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS means the following:

A. ALL MODES OF TWIRLING ARE TAUGHT-

1. CONTACT MATERIAL- Twirls that are executed in the hand or close to the body, including FULLHAND 1WIRLS, FINGER 1WIRLS, WRAPS, SWINGS, FLIPS.
2. AERIALS- Twirls that are free of the hand or body, more than one revolution.
3. ROLLS- Twirls that roll on any body part, free of the grasping hand.

B. USE OF BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT HAND IS TAUGHT-

1. In all modes.
2. In both forward and reverse directions.

C. USE OF BOTH VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL PATTERNS-

1. In all modes.
2. In both left and right hands.
3. With vertical pattern in both forward and reverse directions.
4. With horizontal pattern in right hand forward direction and left hand reverse direction.

D. BODYWORK AND FOOTWORK COMPLEMENTARY TO TWIRLS IS TAUGHT

1. In stationary positions left and right.
2. In traveling mode left and right.
3. With the body in rotation left and right.
4. Use of basic ballet positions left and right.
5. With a variety of free hand, and when appropriate, head, accents.

E. MUSICAL SKILLS ARE TAUGHT-

1. Basic rhythm skills- BEAT, TEMPO, PHRASING.
2. Counting skills to music.
3. Marching skills.
4. Basic dance skills.
5. Basic dance-twirl combinations.

F. BASIC PERFORMANCE SKILLS-

1. Initial introduction to projection.
2. Low-demand performance skills, pleasant facial expression, minimal eye contact.
3. Concentration under pressure, ability to remember and perform routine for others with satisfactory technique.

The student should be taught the skills listed above. The successful coach will choreograph routines that display the athlete's broad base of skills. The routine design will exhibit the athlete's broad base of skills, even though ALL SKILLS the athlete knows are not within the design. Creating equal development of skills at the beginning stage promotes an athlete who is well rounded and more able to achieve in all areas.

The importance of this development becomes evident as the twirler becomes more accomplished. An athlete who becomes very proficient at spins must become equally proficient at rolls, contact material, etc. Although you will find students who may have a talent for one specific area, it is important that you highlight this ability rather than building the focus around it and neglecting other skills.

Build a check system for yourself as you begin work in designing routines. This check system would cover modes of twirls, level of difficulty within each mode and balance of quantity. Ask yourself questions while creating the routine and while observing the finished product.

1. Have you represented all modes of twirling?
2. Is the level of difficulty comparable in each mode? (I.e. Doing four spins with single element rolls is unbalanced)
3. Is there equal representation of skills? (I.e. Do you devote sufficient time to horizontals?)

Creating equal development of skills at the beginning stages promotes an athlete who is well rounded and more able to achieve in all areas. The ability to adjust to new demands in each twirl mode is more easily done when he/she has been familiarized with the demands of that particular mode.

7. MANDATE: TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY DAY ONE

Being proficient means doing something correctly, attempting to do it "perfectly." From the first day of class your youngest student can understand right from wrong. They can also comprehend doing something better. Establishing a desire for technical proficiency promotes a desire to excel. As many studies have shown, children will rise to your level of expectation. Set standards by which to measure an athlete's achievement for your benefit and theirs.

There are several methods of assessing technical proficiency. Start by visually assessing what the athlete is doing. Watch for technical skill and any problems that may be occurring. Several methods of observation are effective. One example is to have your class stand in a single file line and repeat a move. Look for differences in execution and the source of those differences. Isolate moves, work without the baton and isolate sections.

Technical proficiency can also be assessed by use of the CAS evaluation. The evaluation is designed as a yardstick by which to measure the athlete's proficiency.

To promote proficiency at Level I, a coach should recognize the following things:

- Performing a twirl well
- Proper use of plane, pattern, and direction
- Proper foot positioning
- Appropriate free hand position
- Establishment of rhythm in marching and dancing modes
- Basic concept of unison in a group situation

Checking a student's technical proficiency is relative to the coach's perception of correctness. Something you may perceive as correct may actually be a deficiency in skill development or simply wrong. Use the resources available to you to double check yourself and your students. Other coaches and professionals have valuable input. Reference materials such as videos and articles from twirling publications and other mediums are also excellent sources.

Make accomplishment a way of life for your students. Establishing the desire to become proficient inspires growth and achievement.

8. LEFT/RIGHT BATON/BODY DEVELOPMENT

It must be emphasized that it is the responsibility of the coach to utilize a program of instruction that requires the athlete to use both the left and right hands and the left and right side of the body. For example, the athlete should be taught both right thumb toss and left thumb toss. Additionally, the athlete should be taught to catch the right hand

thumb toss in the right hand and in the left hand, and the left hand thumb toss should be caught in the left hand and in the right hand. Another example, a left arabesque and a right arabesque should be taught.

Since both hands and both sides of the body are being taught in the class, the coach must take her routine design this same direction. The design must reflect development in the athlete in both hands and using both sides of the body.

Conditioning and flexibility exercises for **BOTH SIDES OF THE BODY**, and skill drills **FOR BOTH HANDS** should be an integral part of the instructional program. At the most fundamental skill level, the new beginner who has had 8 weeks of lessons can use the C Compulsories from the **USTA COMPETITIVE ACHIEVEMENT SYSTEM** as skill drills for developing both hands. As the athlete progresses the coach can utilize drills such as the following:

Maintaining consistent speed and tempo execute 4 RH THUMB FLIPS (the 4th flip is caught in the LH),
4 LH BACKHAND FLIPS,
TURN LEFT TO FACE BACK, 4 LH THUMB FLIPS (the 4th flip is caught in RH),
4 RH BACKHAND FLIPS,
TURN LEFT TO FACE FRONT, REPEAT DRILL.

Remember, the athlete must maintain consistent speed and tempo for all flips, all flips must be one revolution only, and appropriate reverse figure 8 or figure 8 connections must be demonstrated.

When the coach fails to teach or design with this left/right concept, the safety of the athlete is jeopardized and the development is lopsided and of a lower quality. All athletes have their strong side, but it is the mandate of the coach to develop both sides and require moves that will demonstrate skills on both left and right sides.

9. USING THE REVIEW SESSION TO REINFORCE

An important part of every class time will be the REVIEW SESSION. The REVIEW SESSION is used effectively at two different times in the beginner program.

First, at the beginning of each class or skill, have a brief review of past instruction. You may ask a student, or all students, to demonstrate a specific skill; or, ask students to recall specific characteristics of a skill as described in Section C.2 or, you may simply instruct the class to perform the skill for practice.

The second use of an effective review session takes place at the conclusion of the class. This brief review reminds athletes of skills learned in class that "day" and may serve as a time parents, picking students up, may casually observe the skills taught that day. Go through previously taught skills with your students and answer any questions they might have. Correct any problems they might have. Do not let them form any bad habits.

You may choose to use the review session as the reward time also. If you do so, be sure this time is truly a time that assists the athlete by reviewing the skill and is not merely a test time.

B.SPECIFIC TEACHING TECHNIQUES

1. THUMB-TQ-BALL TEACHING TECHNIQUE (ITB)

THUMB-TO-BALL describes the position of the hand on the baton to initiate the instruction of a twirl. The baton is held on the shaft with the thumb pointing towards the ball (big end) of the baton. This is a "check position" only. THE BATON IS NOT TWIRLED UNTIL THE THUMB IS WRAPPED AROUND THE SHAFT IN OPPOSITION TO THE FINGERS. The baton cannot rotate at the wrist if the thumb remains on the shaft.

Most instruction in baton twirling requires relating a part of the baton with a part of the body. It is important that the student understands the verbal instruction. If the coach and the student grasp the baton in a different manner, the message is not clear and confusion results, even though verbal cues are given.

EX: Instruction of Horizontal Wrist Twirl- Coach gives verbal cue for athlete to place baton in right hand, center shaft, and thumb-to-ball. Cue to see if athlete checks for thumb-to-ball position. Point ball straight ahead in front of body at shoulder height. Make a flat circle on top of arm with ball, and a flat circle under arm with tip. In this example, if the student has the baton thumb-to-tip instead of thumb-to-ball, the circles and therefore, the twirl will be incorrect. The description will not make sense to the student.

Since the baton is generally center-balanced, twirling thumb-to-ball or thumb-to-tip throughout an entire routine is not necessary. This is a teaching technique so that all students are uniformly orientated to begin instruction of a new twirl or trick. This technique can also be used equally effective in the thumb-to-tip method when needed. As the skill level develops and the athlete learns about revolution, the thumb-to-ball method is critical. It plays an important role in timing on flips and aerials.

2. BODY, FEET AND FREE HAND

Teaching baton twirling is so much more than just the action of the baton. The coach is responsible for training the WHOLE ATHLETE. From day one, the coach must understand and instruct technical proficiency that relates to all athletic and artistic elements. Here are three of the most obvious elements, body, feet, arms and hands and the general technique that should be taught at every class, starting at Level I.

BODY-Some considerations:

- POSTURE- maintenance of spinal alignment,
- ALIGNMENT-head over shoulders, shoulders over hips, hips over knees, knees over balls of feet; equal position of left-right elements, i.e., shoulders, hips, knees and feet when applicable.
- CARRIAGE- alignment and posture while moving.

- **STRENGTH and FLEXIBILITY-** equally on both left and right sides, on both the front and back of body; for example, on the front of the thigh, the quad sep muscle and on the back of the thigh, the ham string, also the chest shoulders or back.
- **POSITION OF THE BODY IN RELATION TO TIMING OF BATON OR FEET-** On set-up or wind up twirl, on actual twirl or trick, on follow thru. For example, shoulders should be parallel with the front plane at the time of the release on a spin trick.

LEGS/FEET- Some considerations:

- **TURNOUT-** Legs and feet are turned out equally from the centerline of the body.
- **EXTENSION-** Legs feet are extended in straight line when applicable.
- **ALIGNMENT-** hip, knee, ankle and foot are aligned properly for movement; preparing for the move, within the move, during follow thru.
- **STRENGTH AND FLEXIBILITY-** Both left and right, front and back in legs, ankles, feet.
- **WEIGHT PLACEMENT ON BALLS OF FEET-** For balance, proper alignment of body parts, control, fast reactions, coordination of all elements.
- **IN RELATION TO ACTION OF BODY, ARMS/HANDS, BATON-** Proper timing and position in relation to other elements.

ARMS/HANDS- Some considerations:

- **WRIST FLEXIBILITY-** In all modes, aerial, contact material- full hand, fingers, flips, swings, wraps.
- **ACCURATE LINE OF MOVEMENT-** For control, pattern, plane, placement, release, catch, revolution, position of thumb and fingers for accuracy on release and reception. (Example: releasing and catching the baton in center), accurate line in relation to body (Example: release baton in center line of body)
- **STRENGTH-** Power for aerial height, for overall accuracy and control, for strong revolution on baton, for arm dominate tricks, acrobatics.
- **FREE HAND/ARM-** Positioned accurately for balance, attractively for artistic effect, variety of positions for greater demand.
- **FOR PROPER TIMING-** Action coordinated in terms of time and position related to body, feet, baton.

Instruction for correct body, feet, arm and hand begin on the first day of class in a simplistic, easily understandable manner. Students are taught appropriate foot and free hand positions when learning all basic moves. This information is reinforced by repetition and a gradual progression to more difficult footwork, bodywork and free hand positions, always with proper technique as a priority.

3. TEACHING PATTERN AND PLANE

There are two levels of instruction for teaching pattern and plane. First, the coach must understand the concepts clearly and apply appropriate actions in the teaching arena. (For technical definitions see Appendix on Pattern and Plane.) For example, line students up to face a specific direction within the lesson environment. Refer to a specific wall or position in the room to orientate students for proper plane. Consistent use of facing this direction, or wall, in the lesson room will reinforce the concept of plane.

The second level of instruction deals with teaching the athlete the concepts and helping him/her to apply the concept consistently. Use of lines on the floor of lesson room will assist the athlete with a visual reference to understand pattern. A visual description referring to correct standard patterns for beginner athletes, as "a box" sometimes assists the athlete to understand this concept. When athletes have problems maintaining the correct vertical pattern on the front plane, the coach should have the athlete stand facing a wall (free of Obstructions). She can execute the twirl and the wall will physically inhibit moving the baton off pattern. At levels of higher proficiency, those who participate in the individual events of dance-twirl, strut, three-baton, will also use non-standard patterns at an oblique angle.

Correct instruction in pattern and plane are critical at this initial Level I. Control, speed, revolution, accuracy will depend upon proper pattern and plane. Good overall general handling requires the athlete to use proper pattern and plane. It is the responsibility of the coach to correct errors early and instill these important concepts.

GENERAL APPENDIX I

PATTERNS & PLANES

A. DEFINITIONS:

1. PATTERN: a "model, sample, or specimen; anything formed into shape to be copied. "1 In terms of Baton Twirling, pattern is the actual angle the baton "cuts into space"; or the angle of the baton in which a twirl is executed.

Judges refer to a twirl as being "on pattern" or "off pattern", meaning correct or incorrect execution of the baton angle in the proper plane in reference to the body and the designated "front" or in reference to the routine design. (As in Strut, Dance Twirl and 3 Baton)

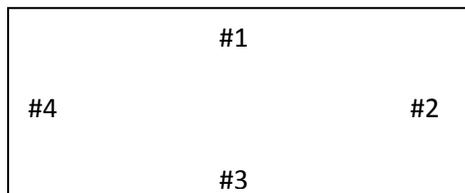
2. PLANE: "in geometry; an even superficies, 2 Superficies: "The exterior face of a body."3 Relating to baton twirling, a "plane" is the direction in which patterns must be established to be correct in relationship to the body and the designated "front", or in relationship to the routine design. (As in Strut, Dance Twirl and 3 Baton)

NOTES: "Patterns and Planes have no relation to Baton "rotation direction".
"Patterns are not stationary."
"Planes are stationary "fixed positions".

3. PARADIGM: "an example or model"4

This term will be used to refer to the "stage setting", or the designated audience "front". (for one Baton)

PATTERN/PLANE PARADIGM Judge/Audience



#5 up, #6 down, #7 level from shoulder

1The World Famous Webster's New School & Office Dictionary, (New York, NY: Fawcett World Library, 1960 p. 533.),2 Ibid., p. 555.; 3 Ibid., p. 728.; 4Ibid., p. 525.

B. STANDARD PATTERNS (THE "NORMAL")

1. VERTICAL

- a. front
- b. back
- c. R side
- d. L side

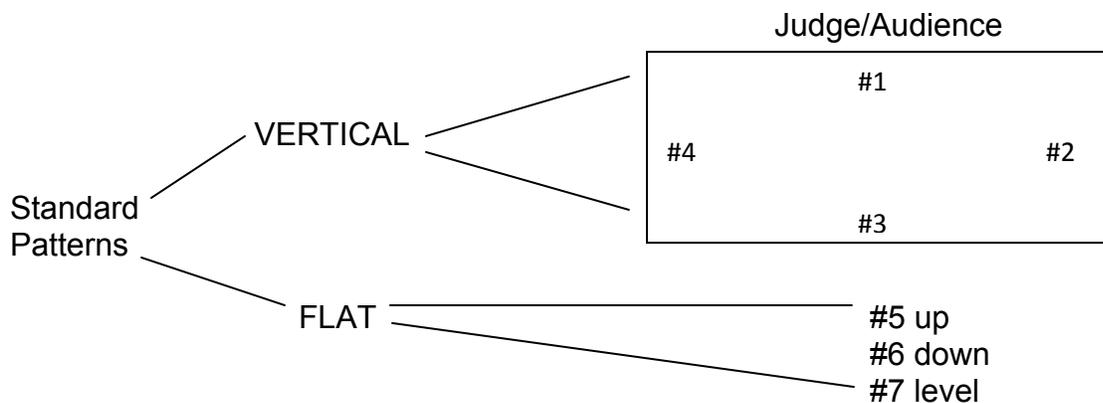
Examples:

- RH thumb toss to Plane 1
- RH thumb toss to Plane 2
- RH thumb toss to Plane 3
- RH thumb toss to Plane 4

2. FLAT

- a. top
- b. bottom
- c. level

- LH flat toss to Plane 5
- RH BH flat flip to Plane 6
- RH flat wrist twirl in Plane 7



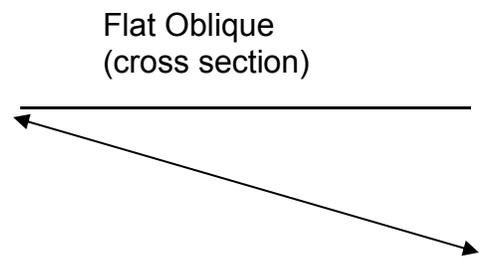
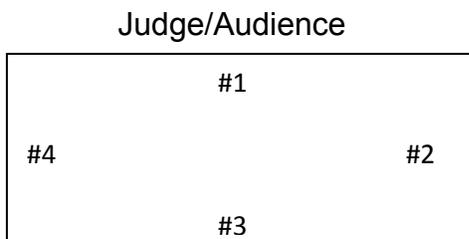
NOTES: *Vertical Patterns may be executed in 4 Planes.
 *Flat Patterns may be executed in 3 Planes.

C. ACCEPTABLE NON-STANDARD PATTERNS

1. OBLIQUE

- a. vertical
- b. flat

Examples:
 continuous vertical elbow rolls
 continuous flat back neck rolls



2. DEAD STICK

a. vertical

Examples:
vertical dead stick-left 1 turn RH to LH

b. flat

flat dead stick pull RH to RH with half turn

c. oblique

vertical circle-dead stick pull across shoulders
RH to LH from "high to low"

NOTES: *Oblique Patterns are used all the time in Strut and Dance Twirl (where pattern is defined as: the angle of the baton in direct relationship to the body) *Oblique Patterns are used frequently in 3 Baton in Bowling Pins, in using "slice", etc.

D. PATTERNS & PLANES (FOR SINGLE & MULTIPLE BATONS)

1. PATTERNS

- a. SINGLE PATTERN - (1-2 or 3 batons) - one established pattern and one plane
- b. DOUBLE ("DUAL") PATTERN - (2 or 3 batons) - 2 different patterns on 2 planes
- c. TRIPLE PATTERN - (3 Baton) - 3 different patterns on 3 planes

2. PLANES

- a. Mono-Plane (1-2 or 3 batons) - one established pattern and one plane
- b. Bi-Plane (2 or 3 batons) - same pattern 2 sides/levels
- c. Tri-Plane (3 baton) - same pattern 3 sides/levels

E. TERMINOLOGY

(common phrases *for* use in communication in teaching and judging)

1. FOR 2 BATON

- a. "Dual Pattern" - any time the batons are revolving in 2 different patterns. Example: L flat & toss, R vertical toss, catch R flat waist wrap-c/L vertical.
- b. "Bi Plane" - any time the batons are revolving in the same pattern on 2 different sides or at 2 different levels.
Example: -vertical front – side -flat high and low

2. FOR 3 BATON

- a. "Mixed" Pattern - any time the batons have a combination of patterns.
Example: vertical - flat cascades
- b. Tri-Plane - any time the batons are on the same pattern on 3 different sides or at 3 different levels. Example: vertical front-side-back (box), flat showers.

4. TEACHING DIRECTION

(See Appendix for definition) The Level I athlete must learn to connect twirls moving in a forward direction to twirls moving in a reverse direction. Therefore, s/he must understand both directions within the first few weeks of beginning instruction. As in all instruction, progressional teaching is imperative.

At Level I, for example, the following order would be appropriate progression to ensure the athlete's clear understanding of the theory of direction:

1. Forward figure 8
2. Reverse figure 8
3. "Rainbow" action of moving baton from one side of body to other side of body in high vertical pattern
4. "Golf swing" action of moving baton from one side of body to other side of body in low vertical pattern
5. Forward figure 8 flourish
6. Reverse figure 8 flourish
7. Right and left second position arabesque a terre
8. Right hand figure 8 at right side, in right arabesque a terre, connected to right hand reverse figure 8 at left side in left arabesque a terre; and the same move, facing the back executed in left hand
9. Left hand reverse figure 8 at left hand, in left arabesque a terre, connected to left hand forward figure 8 at right side in right arabesque a terre; and the same move facing the back executed in right hand
10. Right hand figure 8, front low matched pass RH to LH, LH reverse figure 8, high matched pass LH to RH, RH figure 8
11. Same as # 10, facing back, opposite hands

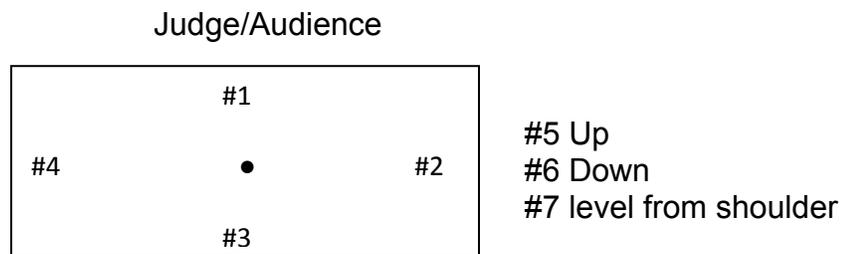
The teaching of direction is an important part of instruction that allows the athlete to twirl smoothly, on pattern, with proper control and handling and eventually, with speed. It is imperative for the individual athlete, regardless of event and for the team athlete. When an athlete does not understand the concept of direction, a "break" in the flow or movement of the baton occurs. Loss of control and improper handling are magnified. Smooth connections or transitions are impossible. The USTA Competitive/Achievement System has been shown to assist coaches in instilling this concept of forward and reverse direction.

GENERAL APPENDIX I I

DIRECTION OF BATON REVOLUTION

A. INFORMATION

1. A basic assumption must be made that the body is in DIRECT RELATIONSHIP to the baton.
2. In all cases, when referring to the "clock", the face of the clock will be seen from the contestant's viewpoint.
3. Pattern is the angle of the baton in which a twirl is executed.
4. Plane is the direction in which a pattern must be established to be correct.
5. A Paradigm is the model of the stage setting.



B. STANDARD DIRECTION OF BATON REVOLUTION

1. VERTICAL

- a. Baton rotates clockwise in Plane #1.
Example: RH thumb flip c/LH (to front)
- b. Baton rotates counterclockwise in Plane #3.
Example: LH thumb flip c/RH (to back)

2. FLAT

Baton rotates in the same continuous direction in all 3 flat planes.

- a. Executed clockwise in Plane #5.
- b. Executed counterclockwise in Planes #6 and #7.

Examples:

- 1) Planes 5 & 6 - RH flat 2 finger figure 8
- 2) Plane 7 - RH flat wrist twirl

C. NON STANDARD DIRECTIONS

1. OBLIQUE

Can be executed in any direction of baton rotation and "cuts through" the other planes.

- a. flat
- b. vertical

Examples:

- elbows (forward & reverse)
- back neck roll

2. DEAD STICK

Executed with no baton rotation.

- a. vertical
- b. flat
- c. Oblique

Examples:

vertical dead stick
flat dead stick
oblique dead stick

D. ACCEPTABLE VARIATIONS OF STANDARD

1. SIDE PATTERNS

VERTICAL PATTERNS in Planes 2 & 4

Executed either clockwise or counterclockwise depending on which surface is the established "front". (Seldom seen)

2. "TO THE REAR"

STANDARD DIRECTION OF BATON REVOLUTION "TO THE REAR"

Vertical Pattern executed clockwise to Plane 3 & cc in Plane 1. (Seen frequently)

3. REVERSE DIRECTION

STANDARD DIRECTION "IN REVERSE"

- a. Vertical Pattern executed cc in Plane 1 and c in Plane 3 (Baton actually revolving in "reverse rotation")
- b. Flat Pattern executed clockwise in Planes 6 & 7 and cc in Plane 5. (Baton rotating in reverse rotation)
- c. Oblique Pattern executed in reverse rotation from its "normal" flow.

E. TERMINOLOGY

(common phrases for use in communication when teaching and judging)

1. FORWARD & REVERSE

Refers to the actual direction of baton revolution:

Forward is the "Standard Direction"

Reverse is "Reverse" of Standard Direction

2. CLOCKWISE & COUNTERCLOCKWISE

Refers to the actual direction the baton revolves directly referenced to the face of the clock (from the contestant's viewpoint) facing any direction.

Examples:

- Clockwise vertical thumb aerial RH to LH (to front)
- Counterclockwise vertical thumb flip LH to RH (to back)
- Clockwise R circle (whole arm) in front

3. OPPOSITION (for 2 & 3 Baton)

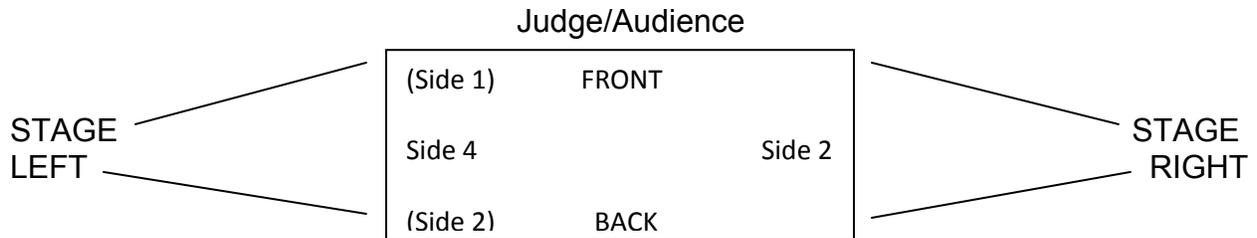
Any time the batons are rotating in exact opposite directions to one another in the same pattern

Examples:

- opposition fishtails
- opposition finger twirls
- opposition tosses (open hand)

F. DIRECTIONS OF THE BODY

This is for communication, especially 1n teaching, but also for judging. Reference the body to the following diagram.



Terms used:

1. Front - meaning the judge/audience "front"
2. Back - meaning the back side (opposite judge/audience)
3. R side - meaning contestant's entire right area
4. L side - meaning contestant's entire left area
5. R front corner - meaning front side and side 2 intersection
6. R back corner - meaning back side and side 2 intersection
7. L front corner - meaning front side and side 4 intersection
8. L back corner - meaning back side and side 4 intersection

5. USE OF PRIMARY MOVES TO ROUND OUT YOUR PROGRAM

Most coaches will develop certain basic moves that must be included in an instruction program to round out the athlete's development.

Here are some examples:

AT EASE: Feet in second position, baton in double handed grip behind small of back, tip pointing to left.

PARALLEL FIRST: Feet together.

BATON LOCKED ON ARM: Baton grasped in one hand thumb-to-tip, ball is locked firmly against inside of lower arm, and index finger is extended along shaft. This is the position of the baton used during Basic Strut; Baton locked on arm is used in either right hand or left hand, with thumb-to-ball or thumb-to-tip.

BASIC ATTENTION: Baton locked TIT on RA, feet in parallel first, LH on hip. This is the position used to start the Basic Strut.

MILITARY ATTENTION: Baton in "pencil position" on RA, both hands on hips, feet in parallel first. Fingers straight and together.

SECOND POSTION ARABESQUE A TERRE: Both left and right. See Appendix

SECOND POSTION LUNGE: Both left and right

TENDU (tahn-do) FRONT: First position, then point one toe forward (both left and right)
See Appendix

BASIC COMMANDS FOR MARCHING: Forward march, Halt 1-2, Mark time- March.

STEP-BALL-CHANGE: Left foot and right foot

PLIE' (plee-aa): French for, "to bend", as the knees.

RELEVE' (rel-ah-vay): French for, "to rise", as onto the toes.

CHAINE' (shan-aa) TURN: A three-step turn executed on balls of feet; to both left and right; spot on first step and back to same position on third step.

6. TERMINOLOGY - IT'S NOT OFFICIAL... BUT IT'S FUN

The terms listed here are to assist the athlete in visual association and recall of skills. For official terminology, see Section on USTA Competitive/Achievement System.

DIG &: DUMP - (Figure Eight)

Dig a hole in the front yard with your shovel (the ball), and turn the baton upside down to throw out the dirt in the back yard. Act it out and elaborate. Be demonstrative.

TWISTER - (First step to thumb roll)-Turn the baton over, palm up, to hit the back of the hand. Rhyme- "Twister, twister, how I love my sister, Twister, twister, now I have to kiss her" Now make a face and groan. Allows for eight repetitions in each hand.

PINCHER -Do the claws of a crab to hold the baton loosely with the first two fingers, which allows for more wrist flexibility with basic twirls.

BICYCLE - (Vertical Wrist Twirl) Used to describe the look of the vertical wrist twirl; "like your front tire on your bicycle".

STIR THE POT - (Horizontal Wrist Twirl) To begin teaching this skill, hold the end of the baton, stick the spoon (baton) in the pot and stir c.c. Talk about what you like to cook.

WINDMILL - Combination of a reverse figure eight with a forward flourish.

TWISTER X-TWISTER - Used to start a two hand spin, then cross left wrist over the top of the right to make an X and allow baton to roll over right thumb into left hand.

BABY IN THE CRADLE - (Front two hand) Used to teach placement of hand on front two hand; can also draw a smiley face on palm of left for visual reference to keep it palm up for catch in front two hand.

K-I-S-S-I-N-G- A term used when you want the hands to touch on a pass, or stand with toes or heels together. Ask, "who has a boyfriend?" Rhyme- "Mary and Joe sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G. Momma doesn't know, Papa can't see, K-I-S-S-I-N-G." Then later only a reminder is needed to make the hands "kiss" or to have the hands or toes touch.

BALANCE POINT - Use a piece of colored tape to make a spot on the baton, so they will immediately know where to hold the baton for the basic twirls, or where to balance the baton for arm rolls.

AROUND THE WORLD - Face front. Start baton in right hand over head and forward flourish to right side. Pass behind hips to left hand (South Pole). Left hand reverse loop up to pass to right hand over head (North Pole). Variations- pass under left or right leg or raised knee in front.

RAINBOW - To extend the baton over head and "draw a rainbow" from one side to other side, from one "pot of gold" to another "pot of gold".

GOLF SWING - To go extend the baton from one side of body to other side by swinging baton across toes.

PEEK-A-BOO - Facing the rear, to look over left or right shoulder to the front.

DOOR KNOB - Used to teach the thumb flip, to turn the baton over with the wrist, by rolling baton over thumb between knuckle and hand

FLIP YOUR PONYTAIL... - Used for forward flourish loop.

BRUSH YOUR HAIR - Used for reverse loop.

SECRETS, SHHHH - To bring attention to the important focal points to master a trick.

CHICKEN FEET - The fingers spread open when the left hand is on the hip for attention. Demonstrate chicken's web feet look when walking, and making a cluck sound.

7. RHYTHM SKILLS

Some children will come to their first class with an almost in-born sense of rhythm. Others will spend weeks, even months, without a clue of what a beat is! This is a skill that can be a gift, but it is also a teachable skill. Several methods of training may be used, but the following is often successful when teaching a child to feel the beat of music.

1. CLAPPING - listening to the music and testing his/her musical awareness is the first step. Have the student stand without a baton and clap to every beat of the music in tempo. After successfully hitting every beat, have them clap on only the odd numbered beat (or left foot beat). This may not be a quick process if they have no rhythm awareness.

2. MARCHING AND CLAPPING - Begin with the left toe pointed to make child sure of the foot. Use only the left foot while standing stationary on the right foot. Be sure the child's foot hits the floor on the beat. clap on left foot beat only. Check knee lift and toe point. Next march without music while the coach counts and claps on the left foot beat. Establish regular beat without music. next have the child clap and march simultaneously. Start the music again and repeat clapping to music on every beat, then on only the left beat. Now have the child clap on the left beat and march to the music.

3. COUNTING - Assuming the child was fairly successful at the first steps, you must check to see what is going on in his/her head. Now have the child count out loud while marching. Next try counting and marching with the music. Clapping at this point is optional. Teach the theory of odd and even numbers, the left foot hits the floor on odd numbers, 1-3-5-7, and the right foot hits the floor on even numbers, 2-4-6-8.

Now we have established -a beat, but can your student pick it up in the middle? To test this skill, we march every other eight counts for a one and a half minute record. The coach may assist with starts during the first half by lifting students left knee on count eight. Then continue to count but let him/her start independently. Next restart the music and have him/her start marching. At some point say "stop" then the twirler must start again when he/she feels the beat. You should now be ready to march a basic square with rhythm!

4. RHYTHM TOOLS - Use tambourine, rhythm sticks, triangle, tom tom drum to teach variation of tempo and rhythm skills. Stores for - teachers tools will have information on rhythm tools and drills.

5. SOUNDS OR SONGS -Use a variety of sounds or songs to demonstrate different tempos and use of rhythms.

8. TEACHING MEMORIZATION SKILLS

Some children memorize easily while others may forget things every lesson. Try to recognize their ability to memorize and work together to acquire this skill. Be patient and helpful in this phase of twirling education.

The way the coach designs the routine can affect the students' ability to memorize. Lesson material alone needs to be recorded in a manner that both the student and parent will know what was done and what should be practiced. This can be done through written notes, video tape, or cassette tape. Whichever method chosen should clearly reinforce what was attempted in the lesson and what the coach wishes to have practiced. These reference materials also serve as sources for memorization. Any changes or additions should be recorded for quick reference in case of a memory loss during practice time.

Logical progression of phases and skill development is one of the largest aids to memorization. Making sure that both body and baton follow through smoothly and lead directly to the next move will help make students tie the routine together physically and mentally.

VERBAL CUES - A popular teaching method is to use verbal cues as memorization tools to teach the child to talk through the routine, memorizing structure and thereby creating mental imagery. At the beginner level it is more important to develop the skill of mental imagery as a memorization tool rather than as a technique building tool.

REPETITION is probably the most effective method to build the memorization of routines. Executing sections over and over again with acceptable technique is the best way to "program" the mind and the body. As each new move is added request the student to start from earlier points and tie together the sections. Never continue to add until the material already given can be performed without forgetting. Slight memory lapses may be expected, but basic memorization (not perfection) must be expected before you can continue. As sections are memorized return to the beginning to check the complete product and to find trouble spots that may need to be reviewed.

REQUIRING FEEDBACK. - Have student give feedback on information taught.

DRILLING – Pick a student as a role model; she becomes leader and all students execute skill or section of routine repeatedly.

CHANGE OF LINES – Change line up so all students have "center stage"; this may improve concentration and desire to remember when in front line.

ASSIGN HOMEWORK – Assign a specific number of repetitions to be executed before student returns next lesson. Do not forget to check it next week. Reward students who complete assignment Let parents know of the assignment and ask for their observation and participation.

ASSIGN HELPER – Ask a student who is proficient at skill, section to help student memorize; this may help student by working at slower pace, with individual attention and appropriate role model. Sometimes this is most helpful when used outside of actual class time. Be sure you instruct «helper" in facing the same direction, executing section in small portions, repeating, praising.

It is the coach's responsibility to check routines for memorization. Try to avoid neglecting one routine for four weeks, while you design another. Check routines regularly with notes or tapes if necessary.

Try not to overload the young or inexperienced child with too many routines. Work to their ability level and limit demand of routine memorization if they are already working to their capacity. Be selective, if necessary, about the number of solo routines and group routines that they are involved in.

C. COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

1. CREATING VISUAL IMAGES BY VOCAL DESCRIPTION

One of the most effective teaching methods uses the innate imagination of every child. This is utilized in two distinct ways.

First, the coach describes the twirl by relating the baton to a specific body part. This is a physical description of the action of the baton/body or feet or timing. For example, a vertical wrist twirl may be taught beside the body, under the arm. By utilizing the thumb-to-ball method, the coach describes the action of a forward loop with the ball circling under the arm. The coach enhances the physical description by relating the action to a visual image: "It looks like the front tire of your bicycle as it rolls down the street"

Note: As the wrist flexibility necessary for success on this twirl develops, the coach will move the wrist twirl to the shoulder height position at the side of the body, as used in C Class Compulsories #1 and #2. See Competitive/Achievement System section.

Second, this technique is expanded by describing a wide range of subjects. Here are some examples:

FORM WITHIN A GROUP ROUTINE..."This form looks like a football" Or, "I want this form to blend smoothly and fluidly into the next form like water pouring slowly from one vessel into another."

A SPECIFIC MOOD CREATE BY MUSICAL SECTION..."The music is exciting and powerful at this point and I want you to express that power by extending your arms fully and using your upper body strongly. The music says you have tremendous physical strength, like a body builder, with the fluid grace of a ballet dancer. Stretch yourself to your fingertips, separate each no, pull the neck long, feel each vertebrae separate in your spinal column. Your body becomes the crescendo."

FACIAL EXPRESSION OR PROJECTION TECHNIQUE..."The music is light and lyrical in this section. Be playful, have fun, raise your eyebrows and let yourself enjoy the section along with the audience/judge. Let the judge/audience know that this silliness is great fun, too brief to be ignored, and invite him to join you in the fun by your facial expressions and body posture."

FOR CLARITY IN PERFORMANCE QUALITIES..."You must hold this position for two counts or it is lost and blends into the next move. If it looks like mush, the judge cannot read the move clearly and you will lose credit and impact"

FOR TIMING OR MUSICALITY..."Each member has a specific count and each of you must know what your count is and how many counts you have to complete your move. When you listen to the music and count, you can almost see the pianist's fingers move from one end of the keyboard to the other end. Your timing from one member to the next must look like the music sounds."

The examples are endless for the use of this teaching technique. It is a valuable tool for getting team members "on the same wave length", or for raising the level of consciousness in an individual athlete.

2. COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK TECHNIQUES - DO THEY UNDERSTAND?

It is generally accepted that the coach will, at the beginning of each lesson,

- TELL 'EM WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO TEACH 'EM
- TEACH'EM
- TELL 'EM WHAT YOU TAUGHT 'EM

In terms of communicating, clarity and logic, this method is simple and direct. Be sure you **DESCRIBE NEW TWIRLS. CORRECT PROBLEM AREAS AND PRAISE EVERYONE. In addition, you must give VERBAL PRAISE WITH INDIVIDUAL NAME RECOGNITION.....**"very nice, Suzie!"

Ninety percent of your instruction should be to the class as a whole. Students must learn that you will teach and communicate during class to all of them at the same time. When you communicate or demonstrate individually **TO AN EXTREME, YOU LOOSE THE ATTENTION OF ALL THE OTHER CLASS MEMBERS.** Whenever you absolutely **MUST** give individual attention, assign the other class members a task during this time. For instance, do 10 twirls or practice with a friend. You do it five times then watch your friend do it five times. **KEEP THIS INDIVIDUAL HELP TIME TO A MINIMUM IN YOUR BEGINNER CLASS.**

OBSERVE AND EVALUATE not only student skill, but student comprehension. Do they understand what you expect? If a student does not understand what you are saying, you can repeat it over and over and they will still not understand. Try another description; paint another picture for the student (see Section on Creating Visual Images) For example, wrist flexibility is imperative at the beginner level. The baton cannot rotate in the proper plane or pattern if the baton is squeezed tightly. About the second or third lesson, have the students all squeeze their batons very tightly. While holding the squeeze, try to do a wrist twirl. It simply won't work. When they participate in this drill, they understand holding the baton with a loose grip.

REPEAT your simple instructions often. Telling them once is often not enough. Be sure your repetitions are brief and easily understood. Ask for feedback again, if you are not certain they understand. Ask, "Why do I have you put your free hand on your hip?"

PRAISE even the smallest success. Your praise will be rewarded many times over by their feelings of achievement and their joy of accomplishment. Your students must leave every lesson feeling successful. If they do not feel good about themselves; they will not be there long. Your praise is often the most important reward you will give your students. Be generous at this beginner level. Praise for good attitude and good attentiveness and for trying hard.

To teach effectively you must do more than talk and demonstrate. "Test" your students' comprehension by a verbal quiz of information that you have repeated to them several times. For example, on Day One, you told your students the parts of the baton. After you tell them, ASK THEM to name the parts. Do not allow them to do this timidly or quietly. Get them to shout the names out. By asserting the information loudly and aggressively, they will remember it. It also serves to wake up the space cadets and air heads, bless their dear hearts.

Another example of this technique is a role reversal method...you have taught basic strut. After a couple of weeks of you describing proper technique, tell them you are the student and they are the coach. Ask them to raise their hands and tell you one thing that is important to execute a proper basic strut. You should expect responses like, "point your toes", "raise your knees", "start on your left foot", "pivot on your right foot", "keep your baton locked on your arm", etc. You fill in the loose ends by asking questions like, "what about my head and chin?" or "what do I do with my free hand?", or "what about my body?" This is a great opportunity to have two-way communication and to stroke their memory skills and to encourage even the shyest student to speak up. Do not let one student dominate the responses. Have them raise their hands to allow everyone to participate.

This method is also effective when used to check their memory of official terminology. Coaches differ in their expectations in this area. Some coaches required their students to know and be able to say all official terms. Other coaches only require that the student know what the twirl is if the name is called. Regardless of your requirement, check their memory by you calling out the name of the twirl, without demonstration, and have the student execute the twirl.

3. COMMUNICATION – IT'S MORE THAN TALKING

The astute, effective coach is also an effective leader. It is imperative that the coach is a good listener and knows when to talk and when to listen.

The coach must teach good effective, **ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS** to athletes. When you are giving specific instructions, athletes should not be allowed to talk, twirl, diddle around with the baton, visit with each other, dance, etc. The athlete should maintain eye contact with the coach during these times. Eye contact encourages **ACTIVE LISTENING**. To demonstrate how the athlete must **FOCUS** on the coach and what is being said, use this method for demonstrating **GOOD ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS**.

First, explain to athletes that you want them to use **ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS**.

Second, demonstrate by describing the sounds going on around them at the time.....use examples they can hear such as, a fan or blower, furnace, burl of lights, doors closing elsewhere in building, balls bouncing, conversations on sidelines or, heaven forbid, students chatting while you are talking. This is easy **WHEN YOU FOCUS ON ALL THE SOUNDS AROUND YOU**.

Third, explain that **ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS** mean you focus all your attention on the coach and you filter out the other sounds and activities. Remember, eye contact is important. If your students do not learn to listen actively; they may not learn to **FOCUS** and understand your instruction.

These listening skills are so very important because they may be the first step in teaching sound mental skills that are critical to the performer. Since the stress and pressure in class is minimal compared to that of the performance situation, the athlete must learn to **FOCUS** and maintain attention on a specific task.

HAVING TROUBLE GETTING YOUR STUDENTS TO LISTEN? The older they get, the more apt they are to use lesson time as social hour. After all, the social aspect is an important part of the reason they are there. Try one of these approaches to encourage good listening habits.

- **REWARD BEST LISTENER OF THE DAY** - sticker, etc.; something quick and fun.
- **REWARD BEST QUESTION OF THE DAY** - sticker, etc.
- **USE A STOPWATCH** when the problem is severe within a group. Start the watch every time someone does not stop talking when requested to do so **ONCE**. At the end of the class, **ALL CLASS MEMBERS** must run laps for the amount of time on the watch, or pay some other penalty. This uses **PEER PRESSURE** as a means to encourage good listening habits.
- **REPEAT OFFENDERS** can be broken of this rude habit by catching them in the act, so to speak. Immediately, have them take a lap, or two.
- **DESIGNATE A SOCIAL TIME** for this important interaction so students will understand and feel comfortable using class time for instruction, rather than social visiting.

Good listening skills often seem like a lost art. While these skills are more than just good manners, the politeness aspect is still important in the development of good students. EXPLAIN, then ENCOURAGE, REWARD, and when necessary, PROVIDE CONSEQUENCES. Be sure you always PRAISE when good listening skills are used.

NOTE: Be sure to use your own good listening skills when students talk to you and when talking with parents.

4. ESTABLISHING ESPIRIT de CORPS

Espirit' de Corps, French for the spirit of the group, develops group loyalty and provides enthusiasm for the activity. Maintain interest and pride in your group. An effective group spirit begins and ends with the coach, the learning standards and the degree of fun and enthusiasm injected into the program. Students, some enthusiastic leaders, will come and go, but the coach and her standards are steadfast and ongoing. Here are some ideas to encourage esprit' de corps:

STUDENT STANDARDS - Including class behavior, performance standards, standards of behavior while touring.

STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE- For coaches and students in program; these should include physical appearance, attitude, minimal social graces (eating, drinking, manners, etc.), preparedness, timeliness, as well as excellence in instruction, technical proficiency. This also includes the desire to improve each performance by evaluating strengths and weaknesses; reveling in the strengths, working to eliminate the weak areas next time.

OFFICIAL SLOGAN - What is your motto? Your philosophy?

OFFICIAL LOGO - Use it on stationery, notices, bills, flyers, posters, patches, stickers, and banner.

OFFICIAL PRACTICE UNIFORMS. TRAVELING UNIFORMS - Use logo as part of design.

OFFICIAL BANNER - Use logo, use banner during all activities for name recognition.

OFFICIAL SONG OR CHEER - Have members help compose these to popular tune.

NICKNAMES - Must be loving and issued by coach with good feelings; no hurtful nicknames, just silly, fun ones. Nicknames, when applied appropriately, can assist athletes to perceive characteristics of which they may be unaware about themselves. Sometimes the athlete herself will choose the nickname.

BIG SISTER/LITTLE SISTER - Especially effective to bring new students into new situation, such as, first meet or competition. Make posters, small good luck gifts.

SECRET PALS - Draw names, or have coach assign. Define parameters of gifts, activities, so there is a degree of balance between students. Some are great secret pals, and some need lessons in this art.

POSTERS - At meets or competitions for good luck.

GOOD LUCK GIFTS - Especially effective at important events. Keep them token only, or they can become cost prohibitive for members or coach.

Whatever methods you use to establish this important SPIRIT in your group, it is well worth the effort. Espirit' de corps establishes your group as an important social unit and BRINGS 'EM BACK FOR MORE.

D. EFFECTIVE., QUALITY TEACHING

1. VARIETY, THE SPICE OF I.EARNING, KIDS LIKE ACTION

To maintain the interest level of the athletes, it is important that you, the coach, provide variety in your program. This can begin with something as simple as a change of line-up. Always make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be in the front row at least once during a class; rotate the lines frequently. You can help maintain the lines and spacing in an interesting fashion by having the athletes stand on colorful marks on the floor. Incorporate fun activities, such as a novelty day, into your program. Give your athletes the opportunity to twirl flag batons, learn a funky dance twirl routine, do pairs tricks or create new tricks. The possibilities are limitless with what you can do on novelty day. Be creative! Games, trick contests and speed drills are also a great way to keep the interest level high.

Here are some examples to help you get started:

1. TRICK. RELAY

Form two teams. Have each member run to the end of the floor, complete a specified trick, run back and tag the next member, then go to the end of the line. The first team to finish wins.

2. TRICK. CONTEST

Split the class into groups of three. Have all the groups take turns doing the same trick. If one person in the group drops, the whole group must sit down. The last group standing wins. NOTE: If you are working with different levels, combine weaker with stronger athletes in each group. They will motivate and inspire each other.

3. SPEED DRILL

Select a trick, and have the athletes do as many repetitions as possible within a given time frame. Chart their progress. Don't be afraid to experiment and create your own twirling games and drills. Use your imagination! You will find that your students will be more enthusiastic about coming to class if you provide them with variety in the program versus doing the same repetitious things during every class session.

2. IDEAS TO MAKE YOUR TEACHING MORE EFFECTIVE

TAKE YOUR VIDEO CAMERA TO CLASS, film your students doing some basic skills and let them see themselves. They love it. They become stars, if only momentarily. Film them in BASIC STRUT, MILITARY STRUT, C COMPULSORIES, and DOING THEIR BASIC ROUTINE.

DEVELOP CASSETTE TAPES OF THE MUSIC YOU USE IN CLASS for the athletes, so they can practice at home.

DEVELOP VIDEOTAPES OF THE EVENTS, ROUTINES, SKILLS YOU TEACH IN CLASS and you want them to practice at home. Have someone else film, you or get an experienced athlete to film. Be sure to film from the back so your students can stand in front of the television and "follow the leader".

HOLD A USTA ESSENTIALS MEET- By utilizing this program within your teaching; you are requiring your students to meet a national standard consistent with athletes all over the United States. In addition you are setting a standard of excellence that requires your athletes to strive for perfection within low demand, short duration events. If your athletes do not learn this important value at the most beginner level, they may never learn it. Since it is evaluative only, not competitive, it can be fairly pressure free for the athletes. (see USTA COMPETITIVE ACHIEVEMENT SYSTEM SECTION and SECTION ON EVALUATIVE PROCESS)

INVITE THE PARENTS for a demonstration day so students can show their progress and achievements.

3. TEACHING EFFECTIVE, REWARDING PRACTICE HABITS

Coaches' philosophies about practice are as varied as the people coaching. USTA has no official policy regarding practicing, but here are some considerations for you.

Practice sessions designed by the coach will be more successful than those that occur under a parent's untrained eye in a stress-filled, pressurized environment. Coaches, with parental support, must teach athletes about the positive results that occur following consistent, disciplined and focused practice. One would think one could assume the accomplishments would be obvious. The positive rewards are not, so it is up to the coach to reinforce them.

Too often, a parent's constant demand for practice time results in the child's decision that baton twirling is too much work and no fun. Parents can diminish the importance of "playing around" with the baton. This "playing" can serve several important purposes. The child gains confidence in handling the baton and therefore, learns not to be afraid of it. Critical wrist flexibility is increased due to additional use of hands and fingers and wrists. Tolerance becomes greater for the occasional bump or thump that occurs during this sport, thereby increasing level of courage needed to progress. Some of those basic skills do get practiced, if only by accident, during that pretend show or contest. The

athlete can use her imagination to create new tricks. Most importantly, children are smart enough to repeat an activity at which they have had fun.

At this first level, little or no actual out of class practice time may be necessary for the athlete to progress nicely in class. Often, enthusiastic athletes practice entirely on their own. Most importantly, reward those athletes who practice with praise. Be sure athletes understand the basic value of practicing to improve, to make it easier, and to remember better. If a child is interested in rapid improvement, a little practice will go a long way to assisting this goal. Be sure the parent understands the importance of their occasional participation in the child's practice session, and their consistent praise and encouragement **EVERY OPPORTUNITY, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, SHOULD BE TAKEN TO PRAISE AND STROKE THE ATHLETE FOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS MADE IN PRACTICE.**

What about rewards? The longevity of willing practice will depend upon the coach and parent success in making the athlete understand that the **GREATEST REWARD COMES IN THE ACTUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT.** Occasional tangible rewards are fine, but if they occur too often, the athlete comes to expect a reward "in payment" for accomplishments. Find small tokens to reward most often, with only the rare big reward. Says Carrie Jerger, former Coaches' Commission Chair, "I once had a student who caught a seven spin for a .03 cent teddy bear sticker."

DESIGNING THE PRACTICE SESSION should include the following:

If you take some time to design practice sessions with your students, the sessions will be more productive and rewarding for all. Coach input is imperative. Most parents feel inadequate.

State specific numbers rather than dock time. It is harder for the athlete to cheat. For example, "This 'Week practice your basic twirls on page one 10 times each." Or, "I want you to do 20 right hand figure 8s and 20 left hand figure 8s before I see you again." A word of caution-be reasonable. Most families live busy lives and high, unreasonable numbers will discourage everybody, parent and athlete.

Encourage **PERFECTION**, not merely numbers or time. For example, "Practice the first section of the class dance-twirl routine until you can do it with the music." Or, "Practice your basic strut until you can point your toes for the entire 32 counts."

Teach **PATIENCE**, especially for oneself. Students must learn that the better they get at baton twirling, the longer some twirls and skills will take to perfect. It is easy to learn a figure 8 in one lesson and walk out of the class executing it correctly. It will take longer for most athletes to achieve a correct thumb release.

Anytime you can train the athlete to have an active role in designing their own practice session, you will make your task as coach easier. This takes some lesson time. It also takes time to teach **GOAL SETTING.** See Section on Goal Setting for details.

Teach your athletes to **EVALUATE** their own success, on individual tricks or twirls, during practice sessions. They must learn to pat themselves on the back when they accomplish something.

Above all, teach parent and child to do everything possible to avoid leaving a practice session feeling negative, disappointed or discouraged. Try to end on a positive note so that returning to the practice gym will be remembered positively.

4. GOAL SETTING FOR SUCCESS

GOAL SETTING FOR ATHLETES -

Athletes love to learn new material. It gives them a sense of accomplishment when they progress in skill development. It is up to you, the coach, to emphasize to your athlete the importance of executing lower demand tricks with correct baton and body technique before moving on to higher demand tricks. You must guide your athletes in developing strong mental discipline skills during their practice sessions, emphasizing consistent, correct executions of all material. This includes the warm-up and cool down portions of each practice session. Your athletes must be made to realize the danger of developing bad habits by practicing with poor technique.

Goal setting is one of the most important methods to teach your students consistent and organized practice habits and how to measure their own achievements and growth. **SHORT TERM** goals are simple and easy to accomplish in a brief time span: one practice session. **LONG TERM** goals require hours, days, weeks, and months of practice to accomplish. Students should learn how to effectively use both kinds of goals.

Goals should be established based on the skills and growth that are within the control of the athlete. These include accomplishing a specific trick by a specific date, performance qualities, memorization, perfection, consistency, etc.

Encourage your students to set specific goals at the different levels, as follows:

Level I goal: Practice the trick until it is executed with baton and body technique.

Level II goal: Execute the trick five (or more) times in a row with correct baton and body technique.

Level III goal: Execute the trick five (or more) times in a row including a trick before and a trick after. Maintain correct baton and body technique throughout the sequence.

Goal setting provides a yardstick against which an athlete can gauge success. It is your responsibility to aid your athletes in establishing challenging, yet realistic goals. As the skill level of the athlete progresses, so will the demand of the goals. Remember, goals should vary in terms of challenge to accomplish. Some should be easy to accomplish. Some should be a challenge.

ALWAYS TEACH the athlete to evaluate the success of their goals. This is the single most important part of the process of goal setting to derive maximum benefit. Goals that are accomplished are positive strokes and reinforce good practice habits. When the athlete evaluates her own success, she clearly understands where her next practice session should lead; the next practice session becomes less threatening and more enjoyable. She pats herself on the back. This is imperative if practice session end with a knock on the head or fall or other physical mishap.

GOAL SETTING clearly provides a STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE for the athlete, a PATHWAY TO SUCCESS and a POSITIVE EXPERIENCE IN THE SPORT.

USING GOAL SETTING TO STREAMLINE AND IMPROVE YOUR PROGRAM

Just as you assist your athletes in establishing and accomplishing goals, you must also set some short and long term goals for yourself. Following each class meeting, evaluate whether or not you covered everything for that day's lesson plan. It is reasonable to say that you should be able to cover everything listed on your lesson plan during the first class meeting. The following page is an example of a short term goal.

Also; Design LONG TERM GOALS for polishing routines for performance, for YOUR OWN CONTINUED EDUCATION, etc.

SAMPLE

TO:
FROM:
RE: MY PRIVATE STUDENTS
CARRIE JERGER, TEACHER (349-6253)

GOAL SETTING

This is the start of a new competition season. To create an improved atmosphere of learning and progressing, it is important that we set some goals. Below are listed some of my goals for you. Please read my goals for you and see if you understand the validity of those goals in regards to yourself. Then, please list your own goals for yourself. When you set your own goals keep in mind the degree of your commitment to the sport, your willingness to sacrifice other activities to devote to practice, your own on-going attitude. Be realistic. Be specific in what you would like to accomplish. The column on the right is to list the specific ways you can achieve the goals listed on the left. If you need help in determining the ways to achieve your goals, let me know. We will go over all of this next week. Please bring it back. (use the back of the paper if you need more space)

MY GENERAL GOALS FOR YOU:

- To convey information and instruction to improve your **CONDITIONING** in regards to your strength, flexibility, stamina, self-discipline, concentration.
- To encourage you to utilize goal-setting techniques to achieve at a higher level than in the past.
- To help you to help yourself be prepared physically, mentally and emotionally for each competition.
- To choreograph the best possible routines for you and to help you polish those routines.
- To work consistently with you and your parents to convey the importance of a good, positive attitude.

GOALS

WAYS TO ACCOMPLISH GOALS

5. HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR TWIRLING BUSINESS

Contributed by Joyce Dalton, Ohio

It has been really rough the past few years to keep the baton business high. Band directors in my area for the most part do not use twirlers. So exposure is quite *limited*. Exposure is the best way to advertise. Parades, mall shows, recitals, nursing homes, etc., can all help to expose twirling and your program. My three performances of July 4th Parade, recital and mall shows have been best for me. I always get new students from these. When they call to enroll, I ask how they chose my studio and many times it is one of those three. So get out there and show your stuff...IT WORKS!

I have also found group twirling classes are better for beginners. Lower cost of lessons and they have more FUN with a group. Then as they develop and their interest becomes more motivated, they usually switch to private or duet. What really boosted my business was when I had a corps for all ages...Senior Floor Corps, Junior Parade Corps and Juvenile Parade Corps. Corps always kept students interested and highly motivated to excel. So, all you young coaches out there give it some thought.

I find you must have some kind of group activity to keep most twirlers interested. There are a small handful of students who want to twirl individually. So, if your time permits have several teams, all age groups. If not, just make it fun! I always set a goal whether it be a contest (for those who want it), recital, or parade. Each class has their own goal.

It is also nice to have more than one teacher going at a time. If you have older students, they can help. Let them start with the lower level beginner. Your income is doubled. Watch the payroll.

A picnic or yearend party for your groups is always a good idea. Other twirlers hear about this and how much fun they had and they want to be a part of it next year. I always keep a picture bulletin board of contest, parades, and their picnic so everyone can see what they are missing. They always question... "How can I get into that group?"

To sum it all up: Make twirling FUN, be organized with business procedures, and keep up to date on the latest. Parents want to know you do. But most of all, make it WORK FOR YOU! It can be fun for you and rewarding in personal satisfaction and pay. HAVE A GREAT TWIRLING YEAR!

6. COMMON PITFALLS IN COACHING - HOW TO AVOID THEM

Coaching is an enjoyable and gratifying profession; however, as in all professions, there are pitfalls. Here are some of the potential problems you may encounter.

“WATCH ME” STUDENT

It's quite common in a group or class setting to have at least one "watch me" child. Do not allow this child to distract you from the rest of the group. You must make it clear that everyone will receive their fair share of personalized attention when you do individual checks.

DISRUPTIVE STUDENT

Another common problem in a group or class setting is the disruptive child. This individual demands constant attention and this may be attributed to a number of factors. Some possibilities are emotional changes, conflicts in the home environment, or it may just be their normal personality. You must make it clear that disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. If it gets to the point that this individual impedes the progress of the class, the problem needs to be eliminated.

FAILURE TO TEACH PROGRESSIONALLY

You must avoid teaching a trick to a student too early in his/her development. Sometimes it's not the individual's fault that they can't do a trick. Find out what a good progression would be leading up to a trick and follow it. In addition, when something isn't working in the routine, don't assume that it's due to a technical deficiency on the part of the athlete. It's up to you, the coach, to evaluate the problem and find a solution. The source of the problem could be an error in the choreography or staging. You must be able to admit your mistakes, correct them and move on.

LEADING BUT NOT SEEING

Problems can occur if you always lead your class and never observe. Observe and evaluate your class frequently so that you are aware of whether or not everyone is learning and executing the material correctly.

HO-HUM!

If you are becoming bored with your teaching, the chances are your students are becoming bored with their twirling. When you design your class, avoid being too rigid and regimented. If you are not providing your athletes with enough variety, think of ways to make your class more interesting and FUN!

MY STUDENTS JUST DON'T LOOK. VERY PROFESSIONAL

When you can look at your own students with an objective, critical eye, do you like what you see? If the answer is no, you must spend some time evaluating the areas in which they are weak.

Are they sloppy? If so, develop a new reward system for excellence. The system should cover good attitude as well as proficient baton twirling skills. Attitude is the first step in a search for excellence. If needed, focus on one area at a time.

Upper body- are they pulled up, looking proud and energetic?

Footwork- is it clean in all phases of their twirling? Are they adding extraneous steps, skipping steps? Is the footwork technically correct with proper turnout and toe points?

Free hand- are the free hand positions assigned, attractive?

Unison and/or uniformity- are they together? With the music? Are the styles uniform? Twirls correct?

Projection level- do they look like they enjoy twirling?

Discipline- lack of practice can often be a deficiency.

Now that you are aware of some of the pitfalls that exist in the coaching profession, take steps to avoid them. Don't let one small problem escalate into a multitude of larger problems. Get right to the root of it, and eliminate it immediately!

E. SUCCESSFUL GROUP ROUTINE DESIGN

1. USING THE K.I.S.S METHOD

The most effective group routines for this novice and beginner level are often those designed with simplicity in mind. So, Keep It Simple, Sweetie, or the acronym, K.I.S.S.

Most athletes at this level can execute only basic skills in baton twining, movement and dance. Performance qualities are characteristic of the athlete's lack of experience and sophistication.

Since CLARITY, UNIFORMITY OF STYLE, UNISON, ENTHUSIASM should be primary goals at this level, it is important to design accurately for this Level I athlete. Here are some important considerations for your K.I.S.S. group design:

DETERMINE PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE OF THE ROUTINE- Is this a warm up routine? Is it for a performance? Should it have a specific theme? Is this for a parade or a show? Is it for competition and if so, is it a large or small group, team or corps, twirling or dance twirl? If it is competitive, does the event have specific criteria that must be met within the design? What and where is the audience? i.e., front only or both sides of a basketball court, etc.?

AGE AND ABILITY CONSIDERATIONS-In all phases of your design process, age and ability must be considered. Dance steps, style of movement, demand, complexity must be determined. If you overload the athlete, your final product will be messy and unprofessional. Worst of all, you may permanently frustrate your athletes.

COACHING HOURS- Consider the total class hours you have available to complete all instruction and to polish and perfect the routine. Students can vary greatly in the amount of new material they can handle weekly. Over estimate the number of lessons needed, rather than under estimate. This should include instruction and practice time for entering and exiting performance area independently. This should also include time to polish performance and projection qualities, not merely memorization. Athletes will only perform WELL, material of which they are totally confident.

MUSIC SELECTION- Should be age and ability appropriate; Do not choose classical orchestration for primary beginners. The athletes will not be able to "live up to" the dynamics and impact of this type of music. If the beginner athlete is 10 years old or older, she may feel that Disney music is "*beneath*" her maturity. While music that each particular age can relate to is important, it is more important to select music with a good beat and an appropriate tempo for twining and moving in unison.

FORMS- While your design at this Level I may have changes in formations, the forms should be simple and few, with dead stick or easy baton, footwork on the actual form change. Athletes must be able to maintain readability of throughout the performance without sacrificing unison or technical proficiency of all individuals. Members will stay in form for prolonged period compared to Level II or III designs.

COUNTS- It is paramount that the Level I athlete learns to perform routines to specific counts that match musical tempo and phrasing. Coach must drill athletes consistently with counts; athlete must memorize counts of routine for unison.

COACH'S CHECKLIST- Make a checklist of all elements needed to satisfy the ultimate design for this routine. List twirling skills in all modes, movement, dance, partner or team tricks, exchanges, visual effect desired, statement or impact which you want to impart to audience. During the design process, refer to your checklist often to avoid gaps in the design criteria.

POSSIBLE FORMS CHART- Make a chart on graph paper with all the possible forms for the number of athletes in the group. In this way blending from one form into another becomes more obvious for the designer to visualize. Forms that are difficult for the athletes to maintain accurately can be eliminated.

In all cases, design your group routines with simplicity and clarity in mind. Common coaching errors in group routine design include:

USING INAPPROPRIATE MUSIC- this may be a tune that the coach is particularly fond of, but is unsuitable for age or ability or musical characteristics.

NOT ALLOWING ADEQUATE COUNTS TO COMPLETE AN EFFECT OR A FORMATION CHANGE. Do not rush beginners, they need thinking time as well as time to move from point A to point B. Their reactions may be slow at this stage of development.

USING MATERIAL THAT IS TOO HIGH IN DEMAND, OR TOO DENSE- Material, whether it is twirling or movement, that is too difficult for the athlete to perform to the music with a confident demeanor, is too difficult for the Level I athlete. Do not compact higher demand material too densely. ISOLATE the most difficult moves and give the athlete time to think, breathe and if necessary, rest mentally and physically, before the next demanding move. If they cannot perform it CLEANLY, do not use it.

DO NOT ASSUME THAT MATERIAL SUITABLE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL ATHLETE IS APPROPRIATE FOR AN ENTIRE GROUP!

Individual athletes have the freedom to adjust material during a performance to recover from errors. A group's members must always maintain unison and proper timing in relation to the other members of the group.

MOVES THAT DO NOT FIT THE MUSIC- These may be stylistic problems, technical proficiency problems, or moves that do not fit the phrase of the music. While you are in the design process, LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE MUSIC. Keeping in mind your age and ability considerations, what does the music say to you? Is it smooth and flowing, thereby requiring like movement? Is it staccato, requiring sharp, clean moves? Are there specific accents musically that need literal interpretation for maximum impact? Is the musical phrase crescendo and need a high dynamic movement? Is it diminuendo and say low and extended? When the phrase of the music changes, the movement must also change.

POOR UTILIZATION OF TIME- This results when the coach fails to use a checklist during the design process. Necessary criteria may be deleted; routine may be boring or repetitious. Make the most of your performance time for maximum effect.

DESIGN IS INAPPROPRIATE FOR COMPETITIVE EVENT ENTERED-If you enter a dance twirl team in twirling team competition, do not expect high scores or placement. even if your dance twirl team is very proficient. While the dance twirl team should emphasize a simultaneous combination of dance and twirl throughout the design, the twirling team should emphasize twirling. There should be an emphasis on aerial exchanges in the twirling team routine. While a twirl team may utilize dance to enhance their program, a dance-twirl team should NOT include straight twirling sections.

COACH'S FAILURE TO LEARN AND UNDERSTAND RULES OF COMPETITIVE EVENT- In all cases, it is the responsibility of the coach to know and understand all rules and necessary criteria for competitive events. This includes rules relating to time limits, boundaries, penalties, as well as appropriate material for an event.

The fact that you may never have entered a group in an event before is irrelevant. It is your responsibility to know the rules and criteria. You are the professional; inform yourself.

USTA rules are obtainable by contacting going to www.ustwirling.com and click on "Shopping" to view the current Information, Procedures and Rules manual or other needed information.

Regardless of the size, age or ability of your beginners, design your routines with SIMPLICITY and your students will perform well. Athletes and parents will be happy. Your performance will be applauded positively.

2. MUSIC SELECTION FOR LEVEL I

Level I athletes include novice and beginner students. **ABILITY IS YOUR FIRST CONSIDERATION.**

Design, and therefore music, must be:

- low demand, uncomplicated
- short duration (1.5 - 2.5 minutes)
- distinct beat
- slow to mid-range tempo
- somewhat repetitive
- obvious phrasing. easy to count
- fun to listen to repeatedly
- for older athletes (10 years +), possibly popular in nature

AGE is your second consideration.

Design and music should be:

- age appropriate
- primary and juvenile - silly children's songs, Disney music, children's movies,
- junior and senior - popular music, rap, funk, rock and roll, new age, easy listening, movie soundtracks

STYLE AND THEME CONSIDERATIONS are also important. Since the dance moves and twirling combinations must match the music, it is important the athlete, by nature of his/her maturity, be able to interpret the music effectively. If the music is orchestrated elaborately, it may demand balletic dance. The athlete must be able to live up to the demands of the music in terms of twirling ability, dance ability, training background and performance qualities.

VOCAL OR INSTRUMENTAL- This is primarily a matter of personal choice. Some coaches will never use vocal selections. Years ago it was considered a no -no. Now it is generally a matter of personal preference. While vocal music is acceptable, be certain the vocals are not distracting or inappropriate to the age or theme. You need to consider if you should interpret the lyrics within the design of your routine. In most cases, the answer is, yes.

WHERE TO FIND MUSIC- Check in your area for a music store that allows you to listen to music before purchasing. If the clerk or better yet. manager or store owner knows you have need of music often and you are good for return business, she will often be happy to recommend appropriate artists and specific albums or songs. If you cannot find a music store that will allow you to hear the music before buying, go to the local radio stations and ask to listen to some of their tapes. Your local library will often carry selections you can check out. Whatever your source, listen to a wide range of music. You may be surprised to find appropriate music in unusual places. Ask for assistance from the professionals.

Tell the clerk your basic needs; since baton twirling is often an unknown element, you may be more successful by explaining your needs in musical or dance terms. Tell them

the student age range, theme, need a good beat, primarily instrumental. Listen to the radio often to find current selections. If you miss the name of the artist or song, you can usually find this information by calling the radio station and giving the time the song was played.

PERSONAL PREFERENCE- You will probably need to like the music to create effectively and to be able to listen to the music repeatedly during the creative and teaching process. Continually work to expand your own personal musical library. Otherwise, you may find you overuse one or two kinds of music and become predictable or worse, stale.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDING- Many an otherwise effective performance has been marred by a scratchy, sloppy recording. Remember, most performances will mean your recording will be amplified greatly to be heard by the audience. Find a parent in the business, go to a radio station (some are willing to record for a nominal fee or without charge), or if necessary, PAY for a professional recording. This is particularly important if you are mixing several different cuts of music. The transitions between cuts should be smooth and clearly audible. The effort and cost are well worth the positive effect and end result.

Your choice of music as well as the quality of sound is a direct reflection on the quality of your coaching and your group's performance. As in all design aspects, take pride in your musical selection and the final recording.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE OR USE MUSIC- It may be necessary for you to contact the two licensing agencies in the United States to receive permission to reproduce copyrighted music. These two agencies are BMI and ASCAP. There is usually a fee for permission and it may be sizable. Refer to your local library for information on local offices for these agencies and statutes. You may be liable for failure to receive a release on a copyrighted arrangement.

3. DESIGN HINTS

Creating an original design is like creating a work of art. Preparation, training, discipline, and an objective eye will enhance the final product. Here are a few hints to assist you in the process.

MUSICALITY- Regardless of the nature of the group routine, show or competitive, large or small, EVERYTHING WITHIN THE DESIGN SHOULD CORRELATE TO THE MUSIC. This element places a tremendous importance on your choice of music. You will be hearing the music repeatedly during the creative process as well as the coaching process. If you are irritated by the sound or bored by the repetitiveness, if it jangles your nerves, DO NOT USE IT. You should be inspired and excited by what you hear to create your own work of art within the design.

Everything, the drill, dance, baton, projection, effect, should be interpretive visually in the musical sound. Therefore, after making your selection(s), you must make a complete time signature of the program, beginning to end. Know the timing, tempo,

phrasing of every segment of the design. You may want to use a variety of tempo treatments for interest and challenge. Make detailed notes, first in general terms, of what you visualize should happen to accurately interpret the music. You cannot do this if you start with a piece of music and begin your instruction without the complete musical program. Remember the recommendation to remain simplistic in your design.

CHART YOUR DRILL DESIGN- While there are computer programs becoming available for this process; these are not yet readily available to all coaches. For many years designers have depended upon graph paper to chart forms and the drill, or master floor plan of your routine. Remember to make your forms and drill interpretive of the music. Powerful, flowing sounds may interpret as movement and curved lines. Staccato sounds may look like sharp isolated moves in straight rigid lines. When there is a high twining demand, be sure your Level I athletes are in a form that is easily clean and allows their attention to be focused primarily on their twining and secondarily on their alignment. The variations for interpretation are infinite. Listen to the music and feel.

DEVELOPING THE DESIGN -The design should be consistent from beginning to end, with high points throughout and a definite climax. If the design is based on a particular theme, seriously consider a resolution or conclusion as part of the climax. Again, plan your design from beginning to end; first in general terms and then with specific choreography.

UTILIZING ALL LEVELS OF MOVEMENT- Even at this most elementary proficiency (novice and beginner athletes) you should use all physical levels of movement. This includes moves that are low on the floor, plie' or bent knees, releve' or raised on toes, leaping or jumping off the floor, facing stage front, stage back, stage left and right. Use oblique angles when athletes are ready. Baton and body can be developed at all spatial levels.

USING EXCHANGES AND TEAM MATERIAL- Capitalize on the fact that you are using a group of performers, rather than an individual. At this Level I, use low demand exchanges and partner tricks. Use of these simple tricks are a source of great fun for your students. This will possibly be the introduction to partner tricks. This means you must teach certain pertinent theories regarding passing or exchanging on specified counts, "rainbow" theory for accurate placement on exchanges, release and catch counts on exchanges, uniformity of set ups for release of aeriels, etc.

Develop VISUAL EFFECTS that are interpretive and musical and that utilize all members of the group. Even at Level I, visual effects can enhance your design. Members must understand their role in the visual effect.

When your visual effect involves timing of member movement or twirling that is NOT *IN UNISON*, such as sequential or alternating, be certain the members understand the effect you are trying to achieve. Members must be *drilled* and disciplined in the

importance of freezing during a stop action to avoid pulling the focus from members who are moving with purpose in the design.

CHECKLIST AND NOTES- Keep faithful and copious notes on material you teach. It is imperative that you have a plan and that you know consistently, from week to week, what you have taught. Keep these notes up to date when you make changes in the design.

AVOID CHANGING your design repeatedly. This is confusing for the athletes and frustrating. Only make changes when absolutely necessary. Do your homework ahead of time to avoid too many changes.

USING YOUR OBJECTIVE EYE AND INTERFACING WITH COACHING PEERS- Your design can only be enhanced when you can look at it with an objective eye. Divorce yourself from the time and effort you have put into it. Look at your design with a critical eye. Are you achieving whatever goals you set for yourself at the onset? Is your design creating the mood and impact you desire? Is it effective? Are your students living up to the design? Does it meet all required criteria? Whenever you are lucky enough to have coaching peers available, capitalize on this opportunity and have them critique your design work. Make your own decisions, but listen to perceptions of other professionals and learn.

STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE- Work to be original and creative, BUT FIRST AND FOREMOST, and STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE. Do not use substandard material regardless of how original it is. Set high standards for yourself as a designer and maintain those high standards for the students as you teach. REACH OUT AND CHALLENGE YOURSELF. Do not be satisfied to maintain the status quo. Like most skills, being creative takes practice. The more you create the more creative you become.

4. PARTNER TRICKS AND EXCHANGES

Interacting with a partner while twining will be one of the most enjoyable skills your athlete learns as a novice or beginner. There are some very specific theories you need to introduce to make this experience successful. These theories include the following:

TIMING- Like a clock, counting, learning the appropriate time to successfully execute a skill. Here is a drill to use to teach timing: Start by assigning counts to a basic figure 8 (2 counts each). Require all students to execute four figure 8's with your count. Start with a slow tempo and gradually built up to medium rate tempo. Condition your students to begin by saying, "5-6-7-8". Most music suitable for twirling for Level I is 3/4 time or 4/4 time. Measures will be counted by eight count increments. Cue your students to begin following the 5-6-7-8 cue, starting on "1". The consistent use of this starting cue develops assertiveness needed to move at appropriate time with music and in synchronization with other members. Reinforce the number of loops in the figure 8 as executed to counts in the various tempos.

UNISON- Executing a skill at the same time as another member, staying together.

Now that the athlete understands timing, you can teach unison. This is a skill that is critical for effective group performance. When a student has difficulty understanding or executing a timing drill the unison drill becomes even more frustrating. In these cases continue drilling for better timing skills to help; individual attention is warranted.

Unison drill: Members must understand their own individual responsibility required for UNISON.

Each member must know the skill and the counts and must be able to execute said skill and counts accurately. Members must also understand why unison is important for a clean, clear appearance AND, when executing partner skills, to enable accurate timing to achieve the skill. For example, a typical novice partner trick is:

Partners face each other, feet in parallel first position; baton is TTB (thumb to ball in RH). On the counts as follows-

1-2 partners do matched pass around each other RH to LH,

3-4 partners do matched pass behind own back, L.H to RH,

5-6 REPEAT 1-2

7-8 REPEAT 3-4

When partners are not in unison, in correct position as defined by counts, the passing becomes difficult, the batons may collide.

There are many such novice tricks that will demonstrate this problem clearly. REINFORCE the need for unison consistently. In doing so, remind your athletes that the **WAY THEY STAY TOGETHER IS BY CONFORMING TO THE COUNTS**, yours or the musical counts.

SIMPLE PARTNER SKILLS- Whatever partner tricks you teach, remember to start simple and progress to those that require greater skill, timing or trust. Athletes will generally be more successful on those skills in which the athlete can visually track the path of the baton. Some sample partner skills:

1. Partners are back to back, feet in parallel first position, one partner begins and they alternate with front two hand twirl, back pass around partner as well as self; partners learn importance of correct timing on this trick.

2. Partners face same direction, standing side by side, feet in second position with near feet of partners touching; in unison, partner execute front two hand, pass around left leg; partner on right will pass baton in front between partner's legs and receive baton from between her own legs; both will execute second front two hand in unison then pass

around right leg; partner on left will pass baton between own legs and receive baton with hand between partner's legs. Teamwork is essential for this trick.

3. Partners face each other, execute flat swing *overhead*, then swing under leg and pass baton to partner's L.H from under right leg. L.H flat swing behind back, grasp partner's baton with RH, neck wrap and spin away from partner.

After athlete has learned finger twirls have them grasp hands and execute finger twins over and under arms. When rolls are achieved, partners can rollover each other's arms, etc. Be creative. Even on this Level I, innumerable partner tricks can be developed in which teamwork, timing, unison and fun is required.

COURAGE- If you have not already dealt with this issue, than it is appropriate to do so before teaching exchanges or exchange theory. As in all your progressional teaching, **START SMALL**. It is imperative that the athlete is comfortable with the close proximity of the baton. Chances are that the athlete has already endured innumerable bumps, thumps and dunks on the head, arms and legs. Students learn by trial and error, usually on their own, that it hurts when they hit themselves while twirling and that it hurts more when the baton is air born. On one hand, athletes need to understand that getting hit with the baton will occur some times. Yes, it hurts, but it is a hazard of the sport and she needs to learn to be brave. Athletes in other sports have other hazards, too. Track runners fall, basket ball players, too, swimmers get water up their nose, and gymnasts fall off the balance beam or twist an ankle. Baton twirlers occasionally get whacked with the baton. Tell them to rub the bump, stomp their foot and say, "bug juice", or whatever, and **THEN KEEP GOING**. When they draw blood or appear more seriously injured, attend to it appropriately. For the small bumps, get them to keep going. Reinforce the notion that baton twirlers are **BRAVE**. They have to be to use a metal stick, spinning so close to them. Teaching your athletes to be assertive and to keep on going when it is reasonable to do so, is a positive life lesson.

ATHLETES MUST LEARN NOT TO BE AFRAID OF THE BATON. This must be learned prior to successful instruction for exchanges. **EVERY YEAR COUNTLESS BEGINNER ATHLETES QUIT TWIRLING BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID OF THE BATON.** With many of your athletes, you will probably never know that this is the reason they quit. It is most difficult to admit fear and to work to overcome it. Take special care in your instruction during this phase; watch their faces and their reaction.

Teach assertiveness and praise lavishly when they successfully overcome their fears. Individual execution with class enthusiastic applause for success can help. Most importantly, **TAKE IT SLOW AND PROCEED ONLY WHEN THE STUDENT IS OBVIOUSLY READY TO DO SO**. If necessary, ask them if they want to try exchanging with a partner before proceeding.

RELEASES AND RECEPTIONS- Needless to say, athletes must execute dead stick (non-spinning) releases and catches to themselves, **BEFORE** learning exchanges. Hold the baton horizontally in front of waist in both hands (palms up). Lift baton up dead stick, no revolution. Practice four different catches:

1. RH fingers up, thumb forward
2. Same in LH
3. RH palm up, wrap thumb around baton to "kiss" fingers
4. Same in LH

Be sure athlete is keeping fingers together, elbow at side on catch rather than reaching up, and eye on baton for catch. Practice catching baton from a vertical dead stick toss. Remember to check that thumb is wrapped in opposition to the fingers for the catch.

EXCHANGES- When batons are released to a partner either by passing, or tossing or rolling. The athlete must learn how to TARGET THE BATON, RAINBOW THEORY, SET UP, RELEASE AND CATCH COUNT THEORY, and most importantly, THE ATHLETE'S TWO RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EVERY EXCHANGE.

The student must understand that when they release the baton, whether it is to herself, or to a partner, THE BATON WILL GO WHERE THE HAND SENDS IT. Therefore, the athlete must DETERMINE THE TARGET, **AIM** THE HAND WITH THE BATON, AND RELEASE TO THE TARGET. Always have the athlete aim at a line on the floor first, NOT ANOTHER ATHLETE. When she can successfully, hit the target on the floor, she is ready for a human partner.

The nature of many toss exchanges requires understanding of the "RAINBOW" THEORY. This is when two partners become the "pots of gold". The baton is released and aimed towards the high halfway point between the two partners. The path the baton takes is like a rainbow, arching between two pots of gold. The high point of the arch is the target at the time of the release.

The timing required for accurate aerial exchanges includes the counts for the SET-UP (wind up), the RELEASE count, the CATCH (reception) count, and the FOLLOW-THROUGH count. All participants in the exchange must know these counts and abide by them always.

This brings up the issue of TRUST. Partners/teammates must be able to trust each other. This will only develop if athletes are taught that exchanges are only practiced when both partners are aware a release will occur, and is ready for receiving the baton. That old, or sometimes not so old, fear of the baton will certainly raise its ugly head if batons are thrown at an athlete who is not expecting it. Be sure your athletes communicate with each other. Until they are ready, do not allow them to practice their exchanges without your cues and counting.

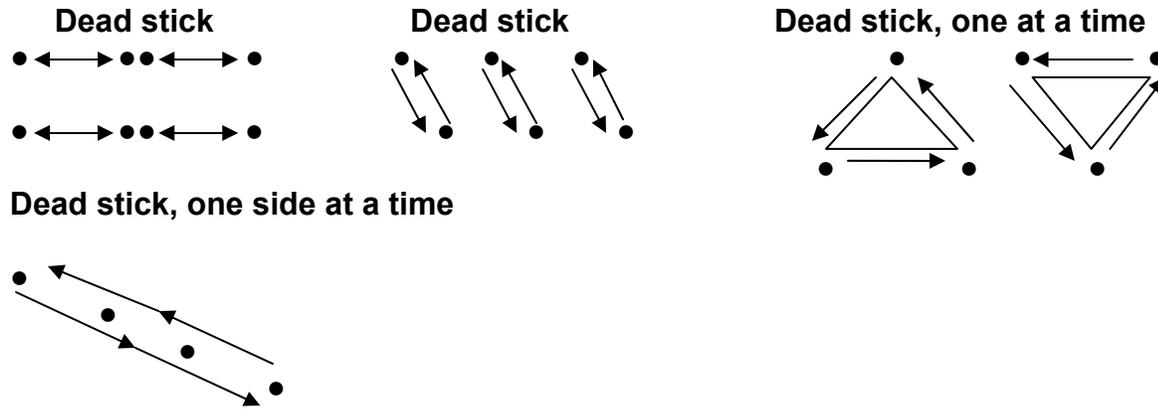
Remember the beginning of this section on exchanges; mention was made of the ATHLETE'S TWO RESPONSIBILITIES. The athlete should understand that there are two and that they must be achieved in order:

- To release the baton accurately in terms of time (count), path and placement
- To focus on reception of baton coming to athlete.

In her anxiety, an athlete can be so concerned about the baton coming at her, that she fails to release her baton accurately. Additionally, the athlete must understand that once a baton has left her hand, she cannot recall it to correct errors. Therefore, at the time of the release her mental focus must be on releasing correctly. Then, the athlete must immediately REORIENTATE her focus on the baton coming to her. Now, and only now, she must concentrate on catching and following through successfully, regardless of the error(s) she may have made on a previous release.

NOVICE EXCHANGE CHART

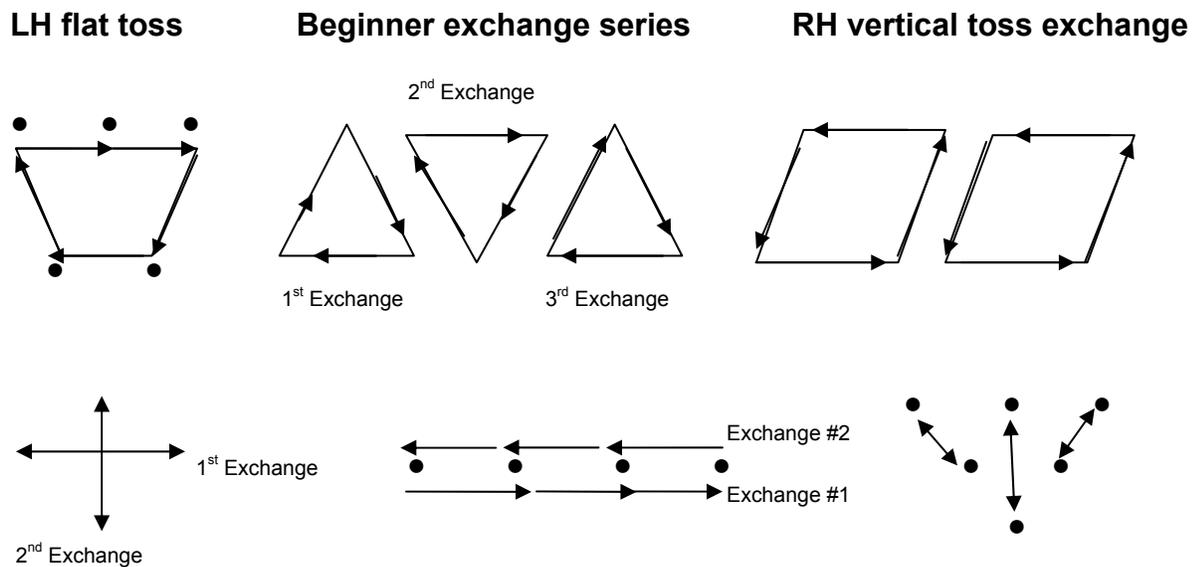
- All exchanges are with member releasing and catching facing each other for visual tracking of baton for release and catch.



- Athletes will use horizontal release, swing release or thumb release when ready

BEGINNER EXCHANGE CHART

- All exchanges are with members facing each other for visual tracking of baton on release and reception.
- Using basic, standard releases and catches



5. USING PROPS, NOVELTY BATONS

If your group design is for a parade routine or a show performance format, or a competitive show corps, you may want to consider the use of props or novelty batons as additional equipment. (USTA competitive Show Corps will be scored under a props caption.)

Some of the possible equipment includes:

- Pikes, Rifles, Sabers
- Multiple batons- two baton or three baton features
- Juggling items- batons, balls, rings, bags
- Flag batons, lighted batons, hoop batons, fire batons
- Streamers or ribbon batons
- Pon poms, discs with streamers
- Thematic props such as, lariat or hatchet for western, or spears for jungle, top hat and cane for Broadway, umbrella for "Singin' in the Rain"
- Balls, Hoops, Hats
- Clown or circus items
- Make your own prop for color or flair.

The list is limited only by your own imagination. If you are using a specific theme, the possibilities are even greater.

When the designer utilizes props or novelty batons several considerations are important to insure the effectiveness of these features.

WORTHWHILE TIME UTILIZATION requires that these features be relatively brief, interpretive of the music and theme, with smooth transitions.

TRANSITIONS, the time and staging that is required to transfer from a standard baton to the prop, should be clean, and whenever possible, a surprise. Discipline and minimal extraneous movement are critical for proficient change of equipment. In your design determine where you want the focal point to be and then create the timing and action aimed at that point; be sure members who are not within that focal action are executing their prop change without pulling the focus.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS must remain proficient in terms of proper bodywork, footwork, free hand and head positions throughout all features.

STAGING, or the time or position of the feature will add or detract from overall effect of the prop. Determine the position in the performance area that will be least disruptive visually and will be effective for the drill design.

Consider the **ATHLETE'S ABILITY** to handle the equipment and the transition.

Develop the **EQUIPMENT AS A PART OF A UNIFIED WHOLE**. Avoid the pitfall of throwing in a prop without thought of its pertinent effect. In all cases, design all equipment usage with quality as a prominent standard.

6. NOTE REGARDING COMPETITIVE GROUPS

The U.S. Twirling Association, Inc. recognizes the need for many types of baton twirlers and baton twirling groups. Many twirling programs will never include competitive twirling for either individual or group athletes. Competition is not necessarily appealing to all coaches or all athletes.

If, as a coach, you consider competitive group participation, the USTA would like you to have some basic information about these events. Please refer to the most current Information, Procedures and Rules Book of the U.S. Twirling Association, for the USTA sanctioned group events of:

- TWIRLING TEAM
- DANCE-TWIRL TEAM
- PARADE CORPS
- SHOW CORPS

Many coaches use a combination of show twirling and competitive twirling in their twirling programs.

7. GROUP FUND RAISING

Fund raising can provide coaches with many opportunities to improve the quality of their twirling program.

Fund raising can:

1. Offset program administrative expenses - copying, advertising, rewards, music, travel, building rental, etc.
2. Provide financing for major projects, equipment, events such as, sound system, travel funds, evaluation meet, etc.
3. Make the program more affordable for parents by providing an opportunity to offset expenses of lessons, costumes, travel, uniforms, equipment; or provide scholarship opportunities for needy, worthy students.

There are at least four types of fund raisers. Using a variety of fund raisers increases the positive aspects of your fund raising efforts. These include:

1. ALL GROUP FUND RAISER - ALL members required to participate. Profit goes into group's general fund or as pre-designated for special project account. Net profit pre-designated to cover group administrative expenses or specific project or divided equally by specified group members.

2. INDIVIDUAL FUND RAISER - Participation can be optional. Net profit is split between organization and individual members with a pre-determined percentage split. For instance, 80% to the individual team member, 20% to general fund. Funds that are designated to an individual member should be retained in the "scholarship account" with that member's name; disbursement conditions must be announced and administered consistently. Conditions would include time of disbursement, stipulations and restrictions for receiving funds. For example, a member may not be allowed to earn fund raising dollars to offset lessons, but be allowed to earn for travel expenses to a distant

clinic or parade. Authority of each group would determine and announce all conditions prior to commencement of fund raiser. All conditions should be in writing for clarity and to avoid problems later. Remember that you could jeopardize non-profit status with IRS if funds are solicited for a group member for a specific purpose and then distributed to member for personal use other than specified purpose at time of solicitation.

3. SOLICITATION OF DONATIONS OR FUNDING FROM BUSINESSES, INDIVIDUALS OR CORPORATIONS - A professional looking presentation will enhance your chance of receiving a donation. Presentation should be concise, orderly, complete and appealing. Find out what type of support to which the business is attracted. Do they want exposure in the community? If so, they are unlikely to donate for travel projects outside the community.

4. GRANTS AND CORPORATE OR INDIVIDUAL SPONSORSHIP - Application process will vary depending upon donor. Your public library will have valuable information on corporations in your area that award grants and also information on completing grant applications.

The possibilities are endless. Regardless of what type of fundraiser you select, be organized and professional. Stress manners and responsible accountability to your group members who are interfacing with the public and/or business community. Communicate in a timely, complete fashion with your own group and with responses, and thank yous to donators.

USTA COMPETITION INFORMATION-GROUP EVENTS

TWIRLING TEAMS

Concept Summary:

A Twirling Team is a group (minimum of four members) whose entire performance is accompanied by music of their own preference. One major emphasis is synchronic twirling with simultaneous blending of baton and body. The routine is designed to encompass the major modes of twirling, exchanges, dance, maneuvering and motion within the time allowed using the entire floor. Other important emphasis is placed on content, precision and unison along with the general effect.

Skills Developed:

Difficulty of baton and body moves together, exchanges, ambidexterity, smoothness, teamwork with musical interpretation, utilization of time and space, and choreography with the baton.

Philosophy Statement:

The intent of this event is to present a minimum of four twirlers accompanied by music performing a show of synchronic twirling and body moves requiring mental discipline and physical stamina. The emphasis would be on exchange work, teamwork, utilization of floor and space, precision and unison, and general effect.

Time Limit: 3-4 minutes (plus 10 second leeway). Penalty for overtime or under time is 2.0. Timing begins on the first note of the music and ends on the last note of the music.

DANCE TWIRL TEAMS/TRIOS (only 3 members)

Concept Summary:

A Dance Twirl Team is a group (minimum of four members) whose routine is a blending of dance steps or series in combination with the baton, and that is coordinated with the music.

It must take into consideration the following:

- Floor designs using the rhythm and musical phrases
- Interpretation of music with simultaneous blending of baton and body
- Staging of the team members
- Exchanges incorporated with dance steps and to accent the music
- Continuity where the dance twirl element should be continuous
- Change of pace in accordance with musical changes
- Unison and uniformity
- Technique of the entire group

It should include an interrelation of all elements - baton and dance as individual members, and the group as one unit.

Philosophy Statement:

The intent of this event is to provide an avenue for teams to compete where the major focus is on dance composition with the baton. It is designed to display the dance skills of a group combined with the baton work.

The benefit of participating in this event is to improve the entire unit's dance and twirling skills, to develop a group identity rather than placing the emphasis on the individual, and to encourage good sportsmanship.

Time Limit: 2-3 minutes (plus 10 second leeway). Penalty for overtime or under time is 2.0. Timing begins on the first note of the music and ends on the last note of the music.

PARADE CORPS

Concept Summary:

A group consisting of a minimum of 8 twirlers, maintaining constant forward progressive directional movement. The first 1.5 minutes of the routine must be constant forward progressive line of direction with the floor pattern of your choice, incorporating strut, drill, twirling. During the second and third minutes the corps may use the gym floor to floor as long as the corps maintains drill movement in a progressive fashion within their program. Auxiliary units are optional, but when present, will be judged and evaluated for their total involvement in the performance. There is no required floor pattern, and there are no boundary lines (with the exception of the finish line). The floor pattern is the choice of the coach/choreographer.

Parade Corps must enter from the judges' left. No member can begin the routine on or across the center line. Parade Corps must exit to the judges' right, crossing the finish line.

Time Limit: 2-3 minutes (plus 10 second leeway). Timing begins on the first note of the music and ends when the last member crosses the finish line.

SHOW CORPS/SHOW TEAMS (fewer members than Show Corps)

Concept Summary:

A group event that is composed of at least 8 twirling members. The Show Corps must use props such as flags, rifles, hoops, ribbons, etc. to create musical interpretation and visual effectiveness.

Members' responsibilities include:

- Synchronic Twirling
- Exchange Work
- Teamwork
- Staging (utilization of time and space, design patterns, creating pictures to music with all props including batons)
- Precision and unison of all members with all props including batons
- Creative handling of all equipment chosen to be used as props
- Musical interpretations with all equipment chosen as props

Skills developed are correct baton and body technique, continuity and form development, choreography with baton, uniformity of body position, speed in relation to music, teamwork, musical interpretation and visual musicality, utilization of time and space, mental and physical stamina, exchange execution, ambidexterity, and recovery from error.

Emphasis must be placed on precision and unison by all members throughout the entire program.

Time Limit: Small Corps (8-14 twirling members) - 4-6 minutes (plus 10 second leeway); Large Corps (15 or more twirling members) - 5-7 minutes (plus 10 second leeway). Timing begins on the first note of the music and ends on the last note of the music.

The full set of specific rules for group events can be found in the USTA Information, Procedures and Rules manual which may be purchased from USTA.

CLASS STRUCTURE

A. LESSON PLAN

1. FORMULATING LESSON PLANS

When formulating the lesson plan keep in mind that it needs to be logical and progressional. Your lesson plan should include the following:

- Introduction
- Warm up session
- aerobic and stretching
- Basic terminology
- Basic movement skills
- Basic dance steps
- Combination of skills
- Cool down session
- Rewards
- Conclusion
- Summary, pass out notes, preview of next lesson

Refer to the sample lesson plans. These samples cover DAY ONE, DAY TWO, DAY FIVE AND DAY EIGHT in an eight week session. You may wish to use these as a guide to formulate your own unique lesson plans.

As you develop your plans, remember to evaluate the effectiveness of your teaching as you proceed. Do not become rigid about the plan. When appropriate, be adaptable or spontaneous. Remember that even though you have designed a specific lesson plan, students and class composition will vary. You will need to adjust your pace to meet the needs of each class.

Some classes will be made up of very slow learners. While the progression or order of skill instruction will remain the same, the pace may need to slow down. Slow learners may only be able to absorb one major new skill per lesson. This may be especially characteristic of very young students, or accumulatively, of students who have already learned a lot of new skills. Occasionally roaches are lucky enough to get a class filled with "quick takes", students who learn and retain skills almost as quickly as you can teach. It is your job to evaluate the progress and to adapt accordingly for each class situation.

The sample lesson plans that follow are all written in a similar order. After the first three lessons, you may want to vary the order for more interest. While you vary the order of instruction, be sure to include all the different items.

When you are teaching a technical skill (a front two hand or later, a thumb roll), as opposed to very simple skills (a wrist twirl or figure 8), it is wise to instruct the technical skill early in the class hour. Even for older, more mature students, it is easier to get and keep students attention in the first half of the lesson than in the second half. For this reason, the reward session should also be primarily in the second half of the lesson.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

BEGINNER LESSON-DAY ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduce yourself, if you would like, tell your class a little about your background in baton twirling. Welcome them to the class.

Have your class sit in a semi-circle so that you can see all of your students and they can clearly see you as well as each other. Have each student introduce him/herself. Pay close attention and memorize names right away.

Let your students know briefly, what will happen during the class today. (**"TELL THEM WHAT YOU WILL TEACH THEM"**)

Hand out BASIC SKILLS, BOOKLETS with student names on each one. Be sure they understand to bring the booklet back at each lesson. Have students place their booklet on floor in front of them and you can use this to assist you in memorizing names with faces.

WARM UP SESSION

Refer to Section on suggested Warm up moves.

TEACH TERMINOLOGY

Parts of baton, BALL, TIP, SHAFT

Basic THUMB-TO-BALL position

(Do not forget to have them wrap the thumb around the baton in opposition to fingers, and "kiss" fingers with thumb. See Section on Thumb-to-Ball)

Be sure students repeat names after you loudly and clearly. This will assist their memorization process. Instruction of terminology will take place as a part of the ongoing lesson.

As noted by the different sections in this handbook, terminology will come in several forms, i.e., official terminology, fun or silly terms helpful for memorization, technical terminology needed for clarity and understanding. You must determine what requirements you will use in your program for terminology. Be consistent from day one. Whatever your choice, remember that clarity in communication may be dependent upon the terminology you use and require.

TEACH BASIC TWIRLS (TEACH THEM)

RH/LH VERTICAL WRIST TWIRL (face right)

RH/LH FIGURE EIGHT (face right)

RH HORIZONTAL WRIST TWIRL (face front)

LH HORIZONTAL WRIST TWIRL (face front)

FRONT MATCHED PASSES (face front)

INTRODUCE BASIC MOVEMENT SKILLS

Simple introduction to rhythm.

Clapping to music; students clap with LF beat Students then clap with moving only LF. Be sure they understand that the beat/clap occur when the foot hits the floor.

Introduce marching skill.

Have students march in large square. Clap for emphasis on left foot beat.

REVIEW SESSION- ("TELL THEM WHAT YOU TAUGHT THEM")

Very briefly go over the major skills taught during the lesson. If the skill is particularly difficult to accomplish have class members and parents on sidelines applaud the accomplishment enthusiastically. Praise efforts lavishly. If it is difficult for you to praise, practice. Look for small improvements. Look at the student's facial expression. When she is very intense and concentrating, praise the effort, regardless of the success. As in all things, praise will become easier with practice.

REWARD SESSION

Choose one or two skills and "test" student achievement Remember to REWARD EFFORT enthusiastically. ALL students must receive reward for first few lessons. Be sure students understand that they are rewarded for sincere effort, for "trying hard". To start with, use skills that are easily achieved. Your PRAISE is usually the greatest reward, given consistently throughout the lesson.

COOL DOWN SESSION

Refer to Section on Proper Warm Up and Cool Down. This section will be brief for new beginners and become longer as need dictates with intermediate students, or after high energy output.

CONCLUSION - BEGINNER LESSON, DAY ONE

Pass out hand outs. Remind students to bring batons, basic booklet, and etc. next lesson.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

BEGINNER LESSON - DAY TWO

INTRODUCTION

Reintroduce yourself; remind yourself of student names. Introduce any new students to class and give them basics booklet.

WARM UP SESSION

See suggested Warm up Session. (Page 5)

REVIEW SESSION

Briefly review the skills taught last lesson. Remind students of how each twirl/skill is accomplished. Whenever possible have a student tell YOU the important elements of the skill the student is executing the skill during the review session. Correct any problems.

INTRODUCE NEW BASIC MOVEMENT/TWIRLS

FRONT TWO HAND
FIGURE 8 FLOURISH

PRACTICE MARCHING SKILLS

Use clapping drill to remind students of beat Practice marching skills. Emphasize knee level, toe points, starting on left foot, posture and carriage, free hand position, position of baton on right arm, chin level

REVIEW SESSION

Briefly review major skills taught during lessons and important skills taught in first lesson. Be sure students understand they are accountable for skills taught in all lessons. Review terminology as well as skill. PRAISE.

REWARD SESSION

Reward success in both EFFORT and in SKILL ACCOMPLISHMENT. Reward good attention habits, good attitudes, "trying hard".

CONCLUSION

Hand outs, reminder about class next week, bring booklets, be sure to hand out last week's notices to new students, etc.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

BEGINNER LESSON - DAY FIVE

Will basically follow previous lesson plans with additional introduction of new skills. In addition, introduce a new skill that is lots of fun.

SUGGESTIONS

Dance with music

Simple prop – Pon poms, flag batons, etc.

Pair's tricks - See section on exchanges and team tricks.

Reward Day - evaluate skills for specific rewards,

Start a SIMPLE routine to music.

While you should be working with music whenever possible, be sure to develop skills that incorporate dance steps to music and twirling to music.

The use of a skill that centers on FUN reminds you and your students that this activity should be fun.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

BEGINNER LESSON - DAY EIGHT

WARMUP

Have a fun, different warm up session.

SUGGESTIONS

Aerobic warm up with bouncing super balls

Runs sprints

Skip around room, run backwards

Play a relay game with class divided into two teams

Use the baton for these games

REVIEW

Specifically, review any skills that will be tested during evaluation session; allow time for students to ask questions.

EVALUATION SESSION

Evaluate skills and reward with stars or other significant designated symbol.

VIDEOTAPE SESSION

Film students doing basic strut or basic skills. Most students have probably never seen themselves twirl Take a monitor, TV; show them the video right away. Students love this session. They are stars, if only briefly!

REWARD ACCOMPLISHMENT OF FIRST 8 LESSON SESSIONS

Reward certificate, ALL students should receive certificate. To reward excellence, add specific sticker or star to certificate to represent excellence. Be sure parents are present and award certificates with a lot of praise and applause.

CONCLUSION

Summarize this 8 week session. Remind students of all they have learned. Hand out notices that clearly instruct parents on registering for next session. Give time, date,

place of next lesson, payment instructions. Encourage students to register for next session.

2. WHAT BEGINNERS SHOULD KNOW BY END OF FIRST YEAR

The skills that a beginner WILL know by the end of the first year of instruction will depend upon several things. First, what is the length of lessons in the program? How many total lessons and what size are the classes in the program? What are the ages of the students? Second, what is the objective of individual program, including the quality and consistency of instruction? Third, the coach's degree of enthusiasm, dedication and preparedness will determine the effectiveness of the program.

These issues all deal with the quality of the program and the instruction. There are certain skills that SHOULD be learned by the conclusion of one year of instruction in any high quality program. These skills are MINIMAL:

SOCIALIZATION- Students understand social skills of:

- Pay attention
- Observe keenly
- Imitate accurately
- Taking turns
- Appreciate the accomplishments of others
- Take pride in one's own achievements
- Understands evaluation process and its benefit
- Understands the concept of striving for excellence
- Tolerance of classmates who are different from themselves
- Displays respect for coach

COMMUNICATION- Students must:

- Learn to listen attentively Retain specific information and can convey accurate responses when questioned.
- Convey questions in areas that are unclear

PHYSICAL SKILLS

- Wrist and digital (finger) flexibility
- Basic coordination of low demand foot positions, free hand positions
- Ability to flex and point toe at the ankle joint
- Understanding of proper carriage and body position during stationary and traveling movement
- Can execute basic movement skills
- Has initial introduction to flexibility, strength and cardio-vascular conditioning

MENTAL SKILLS

- Ability to maintain FOCUS on task at hand
- Memorization skills (Including terminology, series, sections, routines, performance, commands)

TWIRLING SKILLS

- Contact material – full hand twirls
- Understands forward and reverse directions
- Can execute simple pattern changes cleanly, vertical to horizontal and horizontal to vertical.
- Knows how to connect forward and reverse directions smoothly
- Can pass baton smoothly
- Swings, simple wraps
- Standard thumb flip
- Open hand toss
- Knows standard catches, both hands
- Can execute simple partner tricks with correct timing
- Isolated, single rolls
- Basic finger twirls

(Note: Coaches vary on amount of finger work, rolls, flip and aerial work taught in class situation; most will introduce this work by the end of the first year)

DANCE SKILLS

- Has satisfactory balance
- Understands turn out
- Is beginning to understand body control
- Small variety of free hand positions that can be accomplished while twirling and dancing
- Can work with arms and feet in opposition
- Knows basic ballet movement and terminology
- Knows basic isolation moves of head, shoulders, hips, knees
- Can execute very simple combinations of dance and twirl
- Can dance with dead stick baton moves

MUSICAL SKILLS

- Understands rhythm
- Understands beat concept and can stay in step while marching
- Understands uniformity to musical demands, can meet demands with correct counts

PERFORMANCE SKILLS

- Can perform basic dance and twirl routine to music
- Can perform basic marching and twirl routine to music
- Understands projection, showmanship while performing
- Can use minimal eye contact with audience while performing
- Is learning to recover quickly from errors while performing
- Understands basic forms and movement to change forms
- Can enter and exit a performance area without coach assistance

B. DESIGNING YOUR BASIC BEGINNER PROGRAM

Designing your basic beginner program has been initiated if you determined your own objectives, as recommended in the beginning of this handbook. Your design should be consistent with these objectives. In addition, there are these considerations:

AGE BREAKDOWN

Teaching 5 year olds with 12 year olds is difficult and unfair to both students. The 5 year old is less coordinated, has a short attention span, will learn at a much slower pace. The 12 year old is coordinated, has a long attention span and will often learn quickly. Initially determine the age breakdown of classes. Occasionally you will combine ages, but when you do so, be sure to warn parents of the possible pitfalls of doing so. If possible use an age breakdown similar to that listed here:

- 3, 4, 5 year olds - Tiny Tots Class
- 6, 7, 8 year olds – Primary Class
- 9, 10, 11, 12 year olds - Junior Class

COACH'S ATTITUDE, DEMEANOR AND CLASS CONTENT ACCORDING TO AGE OF STUDENTS-

The coach's attitude and demeanor should always be positive. A smile is reassuring and encouraging, and brings out the best in each student. This is true regardless of the age or ability of the students. However, certain considerations should be given to designing your beginner program according to the age you are teaching. Read information for all ages as there is always a carryover of characteristics.

CLASS CONTENT -

Class content will be based upon:

- Your overall objectives
- A logical progression for skill instruction
- A formal evaluation process that provides a yardstick for students and parents
- Instruction in a variety of skills that meet the needs of the whole child
- Fun activities that keep the class interesting while learning
- Instruction that at all times maintains the dignity of the child in a positive learning environment
- Instruction that develops the strength, flexibility and cardio-vascular conditioning needed for the sport
- Methods that are based on safe instruction for the age and ability

TINY TOTS CLASS DESIGN -

When teaching a TINY TOTS CLASS of 3, 4 and 5 year olds, each class should be filled with a large variety of activities that are based on FUN AND ACTION. These activities should be of SHORT DURATION and LOW DEMAND. Movement that is simple for older students can be difficult for this age. Attention span is short and small muscle control is minimal. With these physical and mental capabilities in mind, your design should incorporate the following:

ACTION is critical. Most children this age love to move. Standing still for a prolonged time span is the same as punishment to this age child. Have the class skip and run and jump. Using music is fun and you can incorporate rhythm skills while the action is ongoing. Try having them skip around the room while they are doing horizontal wrist twirl. This teaches them to focus on two skills at one time, skipping and twirling.

CHANGING ACTIVITIES OFTEN is important for the tiny tots' age group. **TIMING** of activities can also be important. **TEACH TECHNICAL SKILLS IN THE FIRST HALF** of the class. Concentration skills are more acute at this time. When you see the class's attention wandering, it is time to change to another activity.

REPETITION is important. For instance, wrist flexibility is critical to execute basic full hand twirls and later, higher demand twirls. When the coach uses a variety of movements that require wrist flexibility during all phases of the class, these tiny tots are using and flexing the wrist area repeatedly. Move the fingers and wrists during warm up without a baton and then with a baton in the hand. Have students do wrist twirls, swings, figure 8s during the class time. At some time have students squeeze fists tightly then loosen grip. Have them "shake" the baton with loose grip to demonstrate the importance of gripping the baton loosely. Repeating this exercise several times will reinforce it.

COACH'S ATTITUDE -It is important that regardless of the skill you are teaching, your instruction is conveyed with joy and enthusiasm. A dry serious delivery of information at this age will not get or keep your student's attention. Be responsive and fun loving, use your imagination, especially for this tiny tots' age group. They love to pretend. Capitalize on this and use it to make your class's fun and your students enthusiastic and open for everything you have to offer.

DISCIPLINE is important because students are learning as many social skills as twirling skills at this age. If you are animated and enthusiastic, you will keep the students' attention. Remember to **REWARD BEHAVIOR** and **EFFORT**. Give a sticker to the students who **PAY ATTENTION** or **LISTENS** or **TRIES HARD**. When a student repeatedly refuses to pay attention, or causes a distraction to the rest of the class, have her sit on the sidelines and watch. Do not let her run around or play. Try to get her back into the class as soon as possible. Most importantly, students who disrupt the class are usually asking for more attention. Students must learn that you will only reward them with your attention when they do something positive. You can often get a wayward student back into the class by offering a sticker reward for a skill you know the wayward student can accomplish. Tell the whole class first; repeat the reward; then invite the student to join the class. Praise lavishly when she performs the skill successfully for you as a part of the class. Be sure the student understands that she must take part in the class activities or she will not be welcome to return to class.

EXPECTATIONS- Your expectations and those of the parents of this age student should be realistic. In a class situation, most tiny tots will learn basic full hand twirls,

some fun tricks, marching skills, brief dance and twirl routine, some simple dance and body movements, a lot of social skills during this first year. Be sure your parents understand this from the onset. Clarity at this point will make your students and their parents supportive and enthusiastic about you and your program.

FUN- This is the single most important element for success in your tiny tots' class. Children learn a lot when they play at this age. Their minds are open and free to explore. Enter your class prepared. Be creative and develop fun activities that have your students learning while they are having fun.

PRIMARY AND JUNIOR CLASS DESIGN -

When teaching a PRIMARY OR JUNIOR CLASS, your enthusiasm is still important, but it does not necessarily need to manifest itself in numerous games. The attention span of the 6, 7 and 8 year old is longer than the tiny tot student. Motor skills are developed better. The coordination and mental skills of the junior student is even more developed. The theories below may apply to both the primary or junior student.

CLASS CONTENT- Some activities that are action packed are important elements in your program. While it is not necessary to change activities as often in the primary class time, as the tiny tot class, a variety is still necessary. Change the order of the class for interest. Change the line up often, so everyone has a chance to be in front. Content will depend upon your basic skills program as noted in your basic skill booklet.

In almost every class, a new skill should be learned. The exception would be the class that is centered on review for an evaluation session. The number of new skills taught in a class depends upon the capabilities of the students and the number of skills that have already been taught and need to review. Be sure time allows you to complete your instruction thoroughly.

RATE OF INSTRUCTION - How fast you teach these skills will depend upon the age, ability and attentiveness of your students. Since this will vary from class to class and student to student, you must pace yourself and your class accordingly. Gear your rate on the DEGREE OF SUCCESS your students achieve. Do they understand each skill? Are they capable of executing the skills? Do your students successfully pass evaluation?

Your task is made more difficult when one or two students have trouble with the skills and the majority of the class excels, or vice versa. When you cannot group students by ability as well as age, you must cope with this variety of capabilities. Be patient with slow learners. Give them extra help whenever you can. Keep the "fast takes", or quick learners, interested by assigning numbers of tricks for them to accomplish, or use them as helpers to assist the slow learners. You can also assign the slow learners a task while you teach the others a new skill. Never push the slower students to learn skills before they are ready. Try to maintain the unity of the class while you are meeting the demands of individual students. Group activities and games will help.

REPETITION is still important to reinforce appropriate action and attitude. Repeating a move, whether it is a twirling skill or marching or dance step, assists the student in memorization and perfection. Repetition also develops the strength and flexibility in the musculature and skeletal system that is being worked when the skill is executed. Repetition should be evaluated for quality. Quantity, in and of itself, without quality, may have a negative result. When students practice or repeat a move with poor or incorrect technique, they become good at doing the skill poorly. Since the point of repetition is **IMPROVEMENT**, be a consistent quality control on the repetition within your drills.

COACH'S ATTITUDE - As always, your positive attitude is the most important element for your success. Evaluate your own attitude consistently. If you are not inclined to praise easily, you need to learn this skill. Observe your students carefully. Praise small achievements; improvement on a wrist twirl, wrist flexibility on a figure 8, nice position of free hand, good body position, nice toe point (even if it's only one foot). Remember to praise the important achievements; paying attention, practicing, trying. Your **PRAISE IS THE GREATEST REWARD YOU CAN GIVE YOUR STUDENTS**. The coach's ability to praise must be practiced to improve.

DISCIPLINE - Discipline is implicit in the learning environment. To learn, students must listen and focus on the directions from the coach. Often students who are undisciplined are a distraction to other students. Teach your students to raise their hands to talk or ask questions. Earn your students' respect by your tone of voice, your sincere attitude, your enthusiasm for the sport and for their participation in the class. Be consistent in your discipline. Require good manners towards you and towards classmates. Reward good behavior. Your ability to punish your wayward students is limited. When students repeatedly break the rules, individually or collectively, use an athletic form of punishment, i.e., running laps, jumping jacks. As the coach, it is your responsibility to be a role model and to maintain control in the learning environment. Be secure in your authority to do so.

EXPECTATIONS - See Section 11.

EVALUATION - In the USTA Judges Workshop, applicants are taught an important theory that applies to coaches as well.

"THAT WHICH IS REWARDED WILL BE PERPETUATED"

It is important that coaches recognize this dictum and understand it. When you fail to evaluate your students accurately, you are considerably less effective in your coaching.

BASICS BOOKLET

The pages that follow are two examples of a basic twirl skills list used in successful Level I programs. The coach must design some form of basic twirl skill list so each student will have a written record of twirls, official terminology, and a practice list.

REWARD SYSTEMS

THE COACH'S ATTITUDE, EXPECTATIONS- A MIRROR

Your students will achieve **ONLY AT THE LEVEL OF YOUR EXPECTATIONS**. If you want students with a desire for excellence, the desire must begin with you. Your program and the reward systems you use will reflect your own attitude. Let's take a look at the philosophy of rewarding students.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SHOULD BE REWARDED, WHETHER THESE COME IN THE FORM OF PROGRESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT, IMPROVED QUALITY OR POSITIVE AND ATTENTIVE BEHAVIORS. Behavior that is rewarded is reinforced and happily repeated. Rewards should be designed to recognize immediate accomplishments and also to recognize achievement in **LONG TERM GOALS**.

It is important for the coach to understand that **REWARDS**, regardless of the nature, **MUST BE EARNED**. In the first weeks of a new beginner class session, rewards should occur often. The coach will become somewhat more selective in rewarding in the last half of session, but remain generous.

In the succeeding session of classes, the coach becomes more selective and more creative in rewarding. The coach must also become more technical in both expectation and explanation. Additionally, the coach must place a value on the accomplishment. Small accomplishments equal small reward. Big accomplishments deserve more significant rewards.

When a student **ACHIEVES A SKILL THAT IS DIFFICULT FOR THEM**, regardless of how difficult the skill is for other students or for the coach. **THE ACHIEVEMENT MUST BE RECOGNIZED AND REWARDED**. At this Level I, the reward often has its greatest impact when given in a public forum, in front of the whole class, and/or in front of parents.

IMMEDIATE REWARDS- The greatest reward a student will receive is the easiest for the coach to give.....that is, the coach's positive attitude reflected in tone of voice, smile, praise and approval. These rewards will stay with a student long after the more tangible rewards are gone and forgotten. Self confidence, positive self esteem and a clear sense of purpose can be life gifts a coach passes along to his/her students. It is important that these rewards be an integral part of the weekly lessons. The coach can make tremendous gains by praising the smallest accomplishment. This does not mean the coach will praise when it is not deserved. Children have an uncanny ability to detect ingenious praise. When a student finally remembers to stand on left foot for basic strut, the coach's immediate recognition and praise will reinforce the behavior. Level I athletes need this positive reinforcement often. As an athlete progresses, the coach will become more selective in her praise. **REWARDS IN THE FORM OF PRAISE** should always be an important element in the student-coach relationship.

IMMEDIATE REWARDS OF TANGIBLE NATURE-The following ideas will assist the Level I Coach in rewarding achievement during the weekly class:

1. STICKERS- It can be truly amazing what an 8 year old will do for a sticker. Do not forget to use stickers as behavioral rewards. EX: The student who pays attention the best, the best listener, the best practicer, the most helpful, the most improved those who tried hard. At the end of each weekly class, have the athletes line up and demonstrate a trick or twirl or other skill that was just emphasized in class.

2 BEAUTY PRODUCT SAMPLES- Many students from about age 9 years and older feel stickers are for babies. Since growing up is so important to many at this stage, this idea can help the coach reward the older student (Note: The more advanced an athlete becomes, the more appealing the stickers become again.) Beauty product samples can often be obtained by contacting beauticians, Avon representatives, and cosmetic consultants at local department stores. These people will often donate out of date samples that are still good, but are dated by the distributor and will be thrown out after that date. In addition, point out to these people that you are helping to expose potential customers to their products.

3. STRUTTER OF THE WEEK- Use any small item, sticker, gum, little certificate, etc. Every week choose one student to receive the "Strutter of the Week" for the best basic strut or the best military strut.

4. TRICK/SKILL OF THE WEEK- Name somebody the "BEST" using a skill you are emphasizing. Reward for correct technique. Use these students as role models for that move. Be sure you have these students DEMONSTRATE the skill immediately. The reward can be the RECOGNITION ITSELF, or can be something small and tangible.

5. SPECIAL TREAT DAY-Gum day (use sugarless) At the end of class, instead of a sticker, have the students earn a stick of gum for a specific skill. If the student does not do the skill correctly or passably, have them practice it more, go to the end of the line and try again. This is a great opportunity for a clear WORK ETHIC to kick in. If they work for it, they can get it. Everyone who tries hard should get a special treat.

6. LEADERSHIP POSITION- This important reward prepares athletes for future leadership roles. Start by placing everyone in a leadership capacity in the following way: With the coach observing and contributing when necessary, have each student lead a portion of the warm up session. Each student can pick a part of the body to warm up. Leader will go to head of class and demonstrate as she leads classmates. Use this leader position during other portions of class to aid confidence. When a student executes a portion of the routine in a particularly positive way, have her demonstrate for the rest of the class.

REWARD SYSTEMS FOR LONG TERM GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS- After the first few lessons, most baton twirling skills may take longer than the lesson time to accomplish. This means the coach must have a LONG TERM REWARD SYSTEM as a pan of the program. Here are some ideas to use when designing yours:

1. EVALUATION DAY- Students are warned at least a week in advance that the following week will be EVALUATION. Do not surprise students, tell them in advance and review the skills to be tested. By nature of your weekly instruction, students should already be familiar with your standards. Remind and reinforce these standards in your review session. For example, if the free hand must be on the hip to pass the skill, be

sure athletes understand this and are drilled in advance. Are there specific positions for the feet? Be sure students are familiar with your PROCEDURES and POLICIES for test day. How many students will be evaluated at one time? Who will evaluate? How many chances will they get? Will there be another opportunity to be evaluated on those skills not accomplished? What is the reward?

2. PROGRESSIONAL PROGRAM- Certificates or patches, etc. should be given in reward when a student passes a specific level. Recognition should occur in the form of some formal reward. These long term accomplishments should be rewarded in a more public ceremony, even if it is only in front of the class and parents at the end of class. These accomplishments are significant and give credibility to your program.

3. PERFORMANCE TIME- As soon as your class is ready, have them perform for the parents, even if this is only within the class time to start. **BE SURE THERE IS APPLAUSE, WHENEVER THEY PERFORM.** When they improve substantially enough, public performances in parades, PTA meetings, their own school. etc. says several things to your students. First, that you have confidence in their ability and want to show others their progress. Secondly, the audience response of applause is a reward in itself. Thirdly, their parents' pride in their performance is a reward.

4. CAPTAIN/LEADER DESIGNATE- This is listed as a reward because it should be an earned position. This athlete will serve as a role model for the other athletes. She must be conscientious, responsible, a good technical role model, demonstrate the ability to get along with other team members, lead without being bossy, capable of being authoritative when necessary and most importantly, take instructions from the coach in respectful accurate manner.

5. A COLLECTIVE LONG TERM REWARD SYSTEM- This system is ongoing for the duration of one term, or longer.

EVALUATION - A TEACHING MUST

A. EVALUATION AS A TEACHING TOOL

IMAGINE THIS SCENARIO:

You have just taught your beginner class a basic twirl, figure 8 flourish whip. You watch them as they attempt to accomplish this trick after your initial instruction. You observe various degrees of success. The "quick takes" have pretty much got it down. The slow learners are struggling. They keep forgetting which direction the loop is supposed to go. You verbally remind the class to watch the ball of the baton at the top of the "rainbow", as it is falling towards the floor, let it keep going in the same direction and loop behind the arm. Some of them got it that time. For the others you show them how their fingers must be towards the ceiling and how the loop brushes their hair up in back. You remind everyone in the class that they must hide their hand behind their waist at the back position. As you circulate, giving clues and hints and reminders of how to accomplish this new skill proficiently, **YOU ARE USING EVALUATION AS A TEACHING TOOL.**

When you evaluate you **OBSERVE, MAKE A JUDGEMENT**, and by your comments and corrections, **PLACE A VALUE** on your student's success. You are using evaluation when you survey the class and observe. When several students make similar errors you know the areas you must emphasize to everyone. As the errors diminish overall and most students are successful, you hone in on the individual students who need personal attention, while you praise and encourage the others. In the teaching of a single skill you are utilizing EVALUATION, as possibly the single most important teaching tool you will ever use. Like all methods, the more you practice, the better you will get. We can often find in our coaching, that the reason our students are deficient in certain skills, is NOT because we, as coaches are deficient in the skill, but because we **ARE TRULY WEAK OR MERELY FEELING INSECURE ON EVALUATING THE SKILL OBJECTIVELY.**

We know that baton twirling judges and licensed evaluators use evaluation to successfully complete their task. As previously mentioned in this handbook, judges are taught,

"THAT WHICH IS REWARDED IS PERPETUATED"

In coaching, too, we must understand this dictum. As coaches we must take it a step further, **"THAT WHICH GOES UNCORRECTED IS ASSUMED CORRECT"**. When you evaluate as you teach, you must consistently and diligently correct student errors. Equally important, you must go beyond mere correction and teach PERFECTION. This is an important use of your coaching evaluation in your instructional program.

Since we know that what we reward is perpetuated, it is imperative that we instill in our students a clear image of PERFECTION in the skills they are learning. Not all students are precise or exact in their twirling skills. Some are perfectionists, some just barely get by and some students are somewhere in the middle of these two polarities. It is up to the coach, YOU, to **REWARD THE RIGHT THINGS**. When you use accurate, consistent EVALUATION your program is effective.

SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS THAT YOU WILL EVALUATE WHILE TEACHING ARE:

- Class behavior and learning attitude
- Twirling skills in all modes, patterns, directions, in transitions, connections
- Movement skills, body, feet, head, stationary & traveling
- Group twirling skills
- Memorization skills
- Musical skills
- Performance skills
- Leadership characteristics
- Your own teaching program
- Your own education in the sport of baton twirling

B. ESTABLISHING, MAINTAINING AND UPDATING STANDARDS

This process begins and ends with the coach. Evaluation, as a teaching tool, as a semi-formal process and as a formal procedure must be designed into the program to derive maximum benefit.

After you have determined the basics to be taught in your beginner program, you must decide the **DEGREE OF SUCCESS** that is acceptable for each skill. **ABSOLUTE PERFECTION** is a wonderful goal to which you should aspire. However, it is not a practical goal for most of the students you will acquire in your coaching career. Keep in mind that the longer one knows a skill, the easier it is to execute the skill. This means that the degree of success will most likely be higher after a time elapses for the student to practice, and **ABSORB** the skill mentally as well as physically. **ONLY YOU CAN DETERMINE THE STANDARD ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR PROGRAM.**

It can be hard work to maintain high standards for your students. We are surrounded in our society with programs and activities and school philosophies that are content to maintain the status quo, or "barely keep their heads above water". Few activities set and demand adherence to high standards. Therefore, you may find that when you establish and maintain high standards, you are a rarity.

While it can be difficult to maintain high standards of coaching, you will never regret it. The rewards are numerous and can be readily observed at every class and every performance of your students. Some parents will even express their admiration and preference of your program over lesser programs, programs that do not demand high standards.

Your **PROGRAM STANDARDS** are reinforced at every lesson. Therefore, your standards must be consistent from class time to evaluation time. If you expect certain details to be present in a skill when you formally evaluate it, you must teach these same details during lessons. You must define and establish **STANDARDS** for:

- Baton Twirling
- Class Standards
- Coaching Standards
- Performance Standards
- Fund Raising
- Practice Habits
- Evaluation Process

These are all important program standards. Once you have established these standards, do not keep them a secret. Be sure students and parents understand the standards and realize your commitment to the standards.

After establishing your **PROGRAM STANDARDS**, review and update them often. While some standards are steadfast and worthy to stand as originally defined, many need updating or expanding. Occasionally, you will find a standard that no longer applies as stated. It is up to the coach to determine acceptable standards.

The quality of the program will only be as successful as the quality of standards.

To assist you in establishing your program standards USTA offers the official **COMPETITIVE ACHIEVEMENT SYSTEM**. This formal system for evaluation is national in scope and therefore, offers a **NATIONAL STANDARD** by which students and parents can measure their progress. This is a valuable yardstick that offers immediate credibility to your educational program.

Additionally, this system offers **A PRECISE, DETAILED AND DEFINITIVE STANDARD**. Use this established system to define your own standards. As you can see by the information, the Competitive Achievement System (C/AS) has descriptions and definitions of proficiency levels for twirling skills, movement skills and musical skills. Greater detailed information is available. Contact the U.S. Twirling Association, Inc. office.

C. IMPORTANCE OF ROLE MODELS

A role model is that important example of excellence that a student emulates. This begins at the very initial level when a child sees a baton twirler in a parade or football halftime and says, "I want to do that too." This role model performer is one of your best resources for reaching and gaining potential new students. Your own students, while performing, become role models for the public and for other children. This is why it is so important that your performances be high quality and why your students must have behavior standards that are above reproach.

The emulation of a role model continues as the beginner student observes the intermediate or advanced twirler and thinks, "If she can do that, so can I." This is an important observation for the beginning student because as she dreams of success she establishes goals to achieve her dreams. This is the path that breeds a positive desire and the notion of striving for excellence. This sense will become the cornerstone of your educational program as you develop a range of students from the novice level to intermediate and advanced levels. The novice and beginner students are soon working to achieve membership on a team that is more advanced than their level.

The coach is one of the single most important role models a student has. The coach is a significant influence in terms of attitude, effort and often, in behavior outside of baton class. This can be noted in many ways. If the coach is frequently late arriving to class, the students and parents learn that timeliness does not appear important to the coach.

Soon they, too, are late arriving to class and performances. When the coach speaks to students in a disrespectful tone of voice, you will often see a lack of respect between classmates or even towards the coach. It is imperative that coaches understand the importance of their own responsibility as a role model to students.

POSITIVE ROLE MODELS are an important element in every quality program. What if your twirling program is new or made up of primarily beginner students, or you live in an area that has no quality twirler role models for your students? Since positive role models are important, capitalize on videotapes as a means to demonstrate quality baton twirling. Take advantage of every opportunity you have to educate not only students, but also their parents, as to the scope of the sport of baton twirling. Videotapes are available from USTA to assist you in this task.

D. THE BENEFITS OF IN-CLASS, SEMI-FORMAL EVALUATION

We understand the importance of the evaluative process during the daily class that is a critical part of the actual teaching process. Most coaches include some form of an in class evaluation procedure in which students are "tested", or evaluated on the specific skills taught within the class time. Rewards will vary from a star sticker for each individual skill to a certificate, patch, etc. for the achievement of each level in the program. The benefits of this type of semi-formal evaluation, usually executed by the coach, include:

ACCOUNTABILITY- Students are held accountable for learning the skills defined by the coach and program. By requiring a "test" the coach says, these skills are important and you must be able to demonstrate the skills at a minimal proficiency level; AND I will know, without doubt, if you can do so."

YARDSTICK- This evaluation process clearly demonstrates the achievement to the student and to the parent. It gives definition to the areas that need attention, to the strengths and to the weak areas. After the initial evaluation in class, the parent can actively see the areas that need additional assistance.

SPECIFICITY- This process clearly emphasizes to the coach, the individual strengths and weak areas of each student and possibly, of the instructional program or coaching process. An important part of the evaluation process, for the coach, will be to assess the actual program, coaching and evaluation process.

EDUCATION- Students and parents are educated in the evaluation process during a non-threatening, short duration, hands-on procedure. Since the in class evaluation is a part of your program, there should be no additional fees expected. Since this semi-formal procedure is judged by the coach herself, the student is more comfortable with the process.

Some considerations for your in class evaluation procedure include the following: Be sure **YOUR CLASS INSTRUCTION** includes all elements that you will require in the evaluation process. This includes foot position, head and free hand positions, body positions, technical aspects of pattern, baton path, speed and control.

Students must understand the **ACTUAL EVALUATION PROCEDURE** you will use. Will they be tested as a group, or one at a time? Will they get one chance only, or will there be "do overs?" Will you answer questions or review before beginning evaluation? Will there be another chance to be tested if a student is absent on day tested, or if a student does not pass certain skills? If they execute a forward figure 8 instead of a reverse figure 8, will you correct them or must they know the reverse direction on their own? If possible, when testing one student at a time, have an experienced twirler or assistant coach help by working with students who are awaiting the testing process. If additional experienced helpers are not available to you, assign partners to work together or assign specific tasks for students to complete while awaiting their turn to be evaluated.

Always **FOREWARN** students that you are evaluating certain skills. Let them know when and how the evaluation will take place. **REVIEW** the skills to be tested, answer questions and give individual help to all students. Use the review as a time to reinforce your standards, expectations and **PRAISE**.

E. PREPARING STUDENTS AND PARENTS FOR THE FORMAL EVALUATION PROCESS

You have held a semi-formal evaluation procedure within the class situation. Your students and their parents are initially prepared for the notion of a formal evaluation process. Even with this background some students and/or parents are hesitant to engage in any formal evaluation process. While time, or lack thereof, is probably the number one reason parents will not allow their children to participate, lack of information is often the number two reason. You can successfully prepare your students and their parents for this formal procedure by implementing the following steps.

STEP # 1: PREPARE WRITTEN NOTICE FOR PARENTS

Include student readiness statement, time, date, site of evaluation meet, evaluative nature of meet, entry fee information, awards, entry specifics, and requirements for participation.

STUDENT READINESS-Let parents know specifically why students are ready, i.e., students practice same events as part of class and skill development. Students are primed for formal evaluation to bolster their self-esteem and test themselves.

EVALUATIVE NATURE OF MEET AND THE BENEFITS- Some parents will support an evaluative event, but question a competitive event. By meeting a national standard of achievement, students and coaches give credibility to the educational program and to the level of achievement attained. The accomplishment is enhanced by the formal receipt of professional evaluation and tangible reward. Since the meet is evaluative, NOT competitive, students will not WIN or LOSE, or beat another person; the measurement is a comparison to the national standard. Many students will receive like evaluations. Measurement for all is based on improving your own performance from the last evaluation meet. Students who are precise and practice with purpose will most likely achieve a higher rating and will be rewarded accordingly. Be sure they understand that **ALL ATHLETES RECEIVE A REWARD FOR EFFORTS IN EVERY EVENT.**

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS- These would include; lesson time, extra practices, costume and accessories required and entry fees. Give details of these requirements and allow adequate time for everyone to meet the requirements.

STEP # 2 - PRACTICE DURING CLASS

Prepare the student by practicing the actual procedures that they will use during the Meet. The more familiar these procedures become, the more comfortable the student is and the more likely she will want to enter the meet. Parents will NOT enter their child into a meet when the child is resistant.

STEP # 3 - GIVE INSTRUCTION FOR COMPLETING ENTRY FORMS

ENTRY FEE INFORMATION- Let parents know how much the fees will be and their purpose, i.e., paying for sanction fees, evaluator fees, awards, building rental, supplies, etc. Parents will not appreciate an ambush for additional fees without first understanding the need for the fees and the benefit of the meet.

ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS- Since the sport of baton twirling is like many specialty activities, it has a unique language of its own. Your printed instructions to parents and your availability to complete forms accurately will make this process easier for the parent and athlete and also make it much more likely that participation will occur. Be sure to ALLOW ADEQUATE TIME TO COMPLETE THE ENTRY PROCESS.

STEP # 4 - BE AVAILABLE TO HELP DURING EVALUATION MEET

It is important that the coach be available to assist students during a meet, especially if this is the first meet. Regardless of your pre-meet preparation, students will feel anxious during this new experience. Observe students carefully. Look at their faces. Some students cover extreme anxiety with loud boisterousness, some with quiet introspection. Seek out students that seem anxious in extreme. Your calm reassurance, occasional reminders and praise for performance and effort will make the experience positive. Sometimes it is necessary to explain technical theories for parents in a simple manner. Whenever possible hold a brief training session for students and parents to explain the formal evaluation process, including scoring. This will help parents interpret evaluation sheets and scores at the meet.

STEP # 5 - INTERFACE WITH STUDENTS FOLLOWING MEET

Following the meet, talk to students. Find out what they liked the best, the least. See if they have questions about what occurred. Do they need reassurance about any of the events in which they participated? About the procedure: Do they understand the rewards? Use this time to again praise your students' efforts and to reinforce the notion that next time they should work to improve their performance at this past meet.

F. BENEFITS OF FORMAL EVALUATION MEET

When you use an OFFICIAL USTA SANCTIONED COMPETITIVE ACHIEVEMENT SYSTEM EVALUATION MEET the benefits include these important items;

1. A YARDSTICK by which parents and students can measure progress in the sport of baton twirling.
2. EVALUATION IS BY PROFESSIONAL, CERTIFIED BATON TWIRLING EVALUATORS.
3. EVALUATION is based on a NATIONAL STANDARD.
4. This is a FUN DAY for participants; a special time for attention from mom & dad, to dress up, and to be part of a special performance.
5. Since DEXTERITY, COORDINATION, GRACE, STRENGTH, FLEXIBILITY are physical elements stressed as a part of baton twirling program, these elements are TESTED, REINFORCED and REWARDED in the evaluation process.
6. Shy children often BLOOM into CONFIDENT, ASSURED individuals. Lifelong skills of ASSERTIVENESS, SELF- DISCIPLINE, BODILY AWARENESS, DETERMINATION, PRIDE AND POSITIVE SELF- IMAGE.
7. The evaluative process is an important, positive step towards helping athletes deal with the COMPETITIVE SITUATION. Every day in school, church and in special activities, our children must compete; for a grade, for a position on a team. Later they must compete for admittance to a good college, for scholarships, for jobs or for promotions. Competition, whether we like it or not, is a part of the fabric of our everyday American life. Would it not be best if we provided a positive means for our children to deal with the stress of competition? Participating in an evaluation meet is an intelligent first step.

USTA FOUNDATION EVENTS

USING THESE IN YOUR PROGRAM

The following event descriptions offer a variety of specific activities that the coach can utilize to make the beginner program interesting, fun and challenging for students. These events can be used within the instructional program or on an individual basis.

For specific information on FOUNDATION EVENT PROCEDURE, see each event and the section on EVALUATION AS A TOOL.

A. BASIC STRUT EVENT

Basic strut is an excellent example of an event that is either evaluative or competitive, AND fits nicely into the beginner program. It is of short duration and low demand. The athlete can easily be successful. It emphasizes body control, toe points, arm and foot opposition movement, some fundamental performance skills. It allows the coach to stress musical skills of beat, timing, counting to music. Students learn discipline and have fun doing so. It is suitable to use in the first eight week session.

Basic strut can be used during the beginning class and carries over nicely to the first official evaluation meet and then the first competition.

BASIC STRUT includes the following criteria:

- 40 total counts
- 8 count introduction - hold attention position
- 32 count square, starting on the LF
 - Corners on counts 8-1 - L flank
 - 8-1 - L flank
 - 8-1 - L flank
 - 7 – LF halt
 - 8 – RF closes
- Left hand is free hand and stays on left hip; fingers straight and together, thumb to back, wrist straight
- -Baton locked on right arm, thumb-to-tip OR cradled on right arm, finger straight; arm will swing forward in opposition to left foot striking the floor.
- Body is straight, shoulders level, chin level
- Knees raise to a position that is perpendicular to floor; foot is under raised knee or slightly forward.
- Toes pointed to floor when raised.
- Corner pivot takes place on ball of foot
- Left foot will strike floor on odd numbers, 1-3-5-7.
- Right foot will strike floor on even numbers, 2-4-6-8
- Eye contact is generally straight ahead or towards judge.

The BASIC STRUT event is an important foundation event for those athletes who will participate in group events such as PARADE CORPS. It is also foundation for the

competitive individual event of strut. It is certainly an easy tool to teach musical rhythm, tempo, beat and meter concepts that are important whether an athlete is competitive or a show twirler, a parade performer or half-time performer.

B. BODY FORMS EVENT

The **BODY FORMS** event is evaluative in nature. It is an important foundation event for the instruction of movement and the concept of perfection. Since the baton twirling demand is low and the event is short in duration, it is an excellent event to emphasize proper movement and position of the body, feet, free hand, head and baton to the beginner student. Again, students can easily be successful. **TECHNICAL PERFECTION** is the ultimate goal. For many students, the instruction of this event will be the introduction to the theory of **TECHNICAL PERFECTION**.

BODY FORMS includes the following criteria:

- 32 counts total
- Performed to either the first 40 counts of the strut music or the presentation music, which is the second 32 count section.
- Content is simple but varies according to the level of the athlete. See Section on Movement, twirls, floor pattern allowed is free style, based on simplicity, as defined by *Competitive Achievement System* criteria.
- Tosses, higher demand illusions or cartwheels are not allowed.
- Athletes hold introduction 8 counts, facing towards the back, begin event following introduction.
- Projection includes eye contact towards judge.

As in the Basic Strut and Military Strut events, Body Forms is a foundation event in the logical progression from class to meet to competition.

C. MILITARY STRUT EVENT

The military strut event is a foundation event that will challenge most beginners. Therefore, most coaches will not instruct this event to first session beginners, but wait until later in first year. Its origin rests with the military drum major who led military bands and directed the band by beating time with a baton. The bass drummer hit a heavy downbeat on alternate counts beginning with count number one. Likewise the drum major hit a beat, emphasizing wrist snap on the same odd numbers and hitting a second beat on the even numbers. By following the tempo beating of the drum major and the heavy beat of the bass drum, all band members could stay in time musically. Coordination of beat and feet, use of three basic corner pivots (left flank, right flank, rear march), straight alignment of body, feet, free hand, baton are emphasized in the instruction and make this event worthwhile in the beginner program.

MILITARY STRUT criteria include the following:

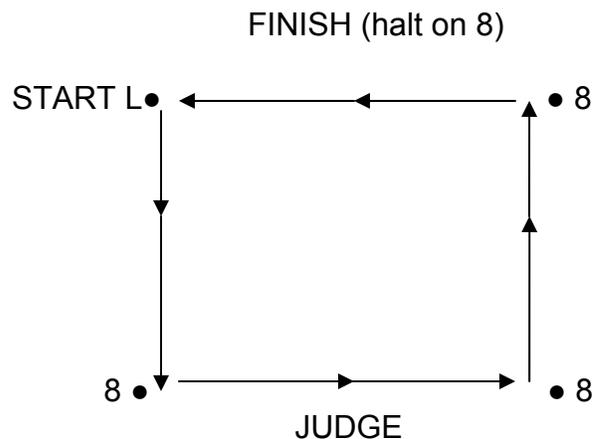
- 40 counts total, including 8 count introduction while holding military attention position, facing front
- 32 count retraced "L", start on left foot, facing judge

- corner counts -
 - Corner # 1 - 8-1 - left flank
 - Corner # 2 - 7-8 - rear march
 - Corner # 3 - 7-8 - right flank
 - Corner # 4 - 7 - left foot halts
 - 8 - right foot closes
- Beat/Feet coordination - Downbeat with wrist snap, on odd numbers when left foot hits the floor; second beat low on even numbers when right foot hits the floor; two count military beat is continuous throughout the 32 counts.
- Knee level, body position, toe points, free hand position same as for basic strut
- Head position: chin level, eyes straight ahead in direction of movement

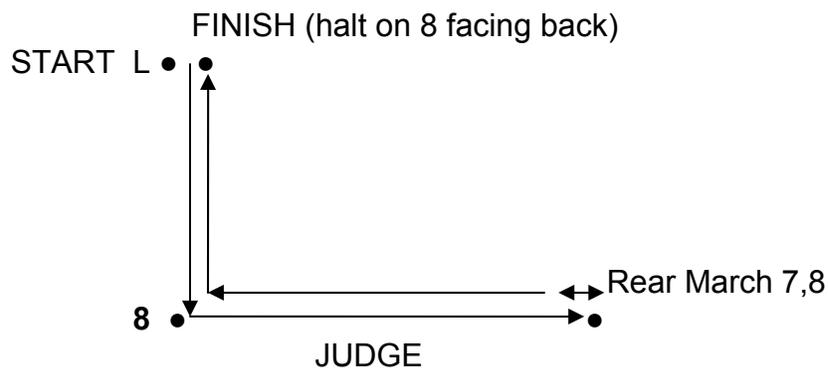
As with the Basic Strut and Body Forms event, MILITARY STRUT is an excellent progressional tool to carry the student from skill development to evaluation meet to competition, with confidence.

FLOOR PATTERNS

BASIC STRUT (32 Count Square)



MILITARY STRUT (Retraced "L")



D. RHYTHM TWIRL EVENT

This event is one of the best kept secrets emerging from the development of the Competitive Achievement System. RHYTHM TWIRL was originally designed as a foundation event for the individual championship event of DANCE-TWIRL SOLO. It has subsequently demonstrated its value as a foundation event for group twirling, show twirling, teams and parade work. This means it is an ideal event for the beginner student, late in the season when a coach and twirling program will benefit by its inclusion, and following other basic skill instruction.

RHYTHM TWIRL is fairly short in duration, although it is twice as long as basic strut, military strut or body forms. It is low demand and as an evaluative event, emphasizes perfection, rather than higher demand movements or combinations. Since the strut events have already introduced the musical skill of beat, RHYTHM TWIRL is the finest event for continued teaching of musical skills. A variety in tempo treatment, phrasing, musical interpretation and expression, correlation to music are the most important elements of musicality that are introduced to the student in the instruction of this event.

Kids love action and movement, music and dance. This event combines all of these elements and by teaching one basic RHYTHM TWIRL to an entire beginner class, the coach can develop these important skills in a class format.

RHYTHM TWIRL criteria include the following:

- 64 counts of the official Rhythm Twirl music.
- Movement, twirls, floor pattern are free style within definition by level of the *Competitive Achievement System*. Simplicity is the emphasis.
- Higher demand twirls, tosses, bodywork are not allowed.
- Event begins on first note of music and ends on last note.

RHYTHM TWIRL, like the other foundation events, is a perfect logical step in the progression from class to evaluation meet to competition, OR from class to performance arena. This is an excellent event for students to perform for peers in school setting.

E. STANDARD SOLO EVENT

STANDARD SOLO is USTA's newest evaluative event. There are several levels available. This event clearly and simply demonstrates crucial twirling skills such as passing the baton, changing pattern, transitions from one twirling mode to another, set up and follow through, connecting material. Emphasis is on PERFECTION IN EXECUTION. It is perfect for either individual instruction or for class instruction.

The value of this event is apparent and is magnified when one considers that regardless of the nature of your instruction; individual or group, regardless of the proficiency level of your students; novice to advanced, regardless of the main focus of your twirling program; show or competition, STANDARD SOLO ENCOMPASSES SKILLS NEEDED FOR SUCCESS within all of these venues. Additionally, the most beginner coach can teach this important event and learn while doing so.

This event clearly demonstrates the general theory behind solo routine design. It is particularly helpful for coaches who only have time to teach classes and not private lessons. By introducing beginner athletes to this event, the coach is taking the next logical step in correct progressional instruction.

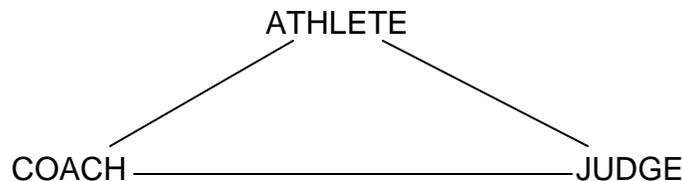
STANDARD SOLO criteria is defined and designed by USTA. Variation and styling are not allowed. Adherence to the written word and striving for PERFECTION IN EXECUTION is required. Moves may not be added or deleted in the performance of this event for official evaluation. It is performed to the official USTA music for beginner and intermediate solo. The DVD and written descriptions are available through USTA.

RESPONSIBILITIES/ROLES - COACH/ATHLETE/JUDGE

"To have a solid foundation on which to learn and develop, athletes must have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, what the consequences (both positive and negative) are, and a system that continually reinforces the priorities and philosophies that are necessary for this development."

Quoted from USTA Coaches and Judges Workshops, Clinician's Guide, Base I, 1988, page 6. Based on this philosophy and on an idea called the "Triangle Concept", USTA has developed its training workshops for educating, testing, and licensing Coaches and Judges.

TRIANGLE CONCEPT:



This concept is based on the idea that there must be a partnership between the three individuals as shown in the triangle diagram. An athlete's rate of progress, the success of the learning experience, and the maintenance of self-esteem of all parties is based on consistent enforcement of the philosophies and priorities.

This has long been an important part of my philosophy for instructing children, with a critical difference the peripheral addition of caring, informed, supportive, honest parents. Why do I include parents in this process? This is not to indicate that the parent is the central figure. It is to recognize the fact that parents, in most cases, are the primary influence in their children's lives. While peers and other outside influences certainly affect the success of this learning experience, the informed parent is essential. Most parents have little or no knowledge of the sport of baton twirling, whether it is the coaching or judging process, the actual twirling or performing process, or the learning process. It would certainly be easier on me in many cases if I were dogmatic and taught only the pure USTA "Triangle Concept" process. Many coaches teach with the philosophy, "I am the expert. If you don't like how I coach, take your child elsewhere." If I am totally honest with myself, deep down inside, I, too, must admit that that is a part of my philosophy. I must be true to my own beliefs, skills, knowledge, and experience as a coach and judge. I would be less than genuine if I did not express my basic faith and confidence in myself. However, I do recognize the value of a cooperative, informed parent as an essential contributor to the learning process. When the parent becomes involved in the coaching process to the extent that it interferes with the productive learning process between coach and athlete, the parent has overstepped bounds. In doing so, several things can occur. The relationship between coach and athlete can be

affected negatively; the learning environment can become stilted or otherwise negative; the confidence that each person, parent, coach, and athlete should feel in the process may be diminished; the creative flow of the coach may diminish. This is why it is imperative that the lines of accurate, appropriate, timely communication must stay open.

Just as children inherit physical characteristics from their biological parents, I often see that a child's attitudes are a direct reflection of their parents' behavior and attitudes. So, in a positive, growing relationship, there is clear communication between all parts of the triangle. Adult matters are handled between adults. Concerns, questions, suggestions are dealt with in a timely fashion. Problems are forthrightly and honestly addressed at the appropriate time and place. Problems are not blown out of proportion. Parents do not project their own personal or business anxieties onto their child (or coach or judge); nor does the coach or judge project their anxieties onto the child. All parties recognize the need for clear communication and also understand that communication means two-way interaction.

Needless to say, the intensity of parent involvement varies from family to family. However, the tasks and responsibilities of each party are definitive, clear, and do not vary.

COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

- to teach specific skills, starting with low level mental and physical demand; this includes twirls, body/dance moves, performance and musicality skills (when applicable);
- to teach memorization (short term, and then developmentally into long term);
- to teach progressively for each student; to teach at the mid-level of development, mental and physical stamina;
- to teach the athlete to deal with meet/contest/performance situation, including:
 - 1) conquering shyness and self-consciousness, 2) maintaining focus without distraction, 3) error recovery, 4) being evaluated by an outside authority, 5) concentrating under the pressure of criticism, 6) accepting evaluation (including criticism), 7) expected behavior, conduct, dress code;
- to teach the athlete how to deal with higher demands and pressures that occur during State, Regional, National, World Championships competitions;
- to teach the skills and events necessary for positive self-esteem
- to reinforce teaching methods with appropriate, consistent reward system;
- to instruct athletes in goal-setting techniques, practice methods, mental preparation, conditioning, nutrition, health habits, visualization techniques, relaxation methods;
- to be a resource person for information on sports psychology, sports medicine, and related activities;
- to teach "theory" to those athletes who have clearly reached the higher level, for greater understanding and higher proficiency;
- in teaching groups, to teach tolerance of others, patience, leadership, commitment, responsibility;

- to evaluate the progress of each athlete, based on their commitment to the sport, their attentiveness in lessons, their desire to excel, their efforts as indicated by their practice habits, their openness to new ideas & to greater degree of difficulty, their responsiveness, their willingness to contribute to the process, and their listening skills;
- to develop a program adaptable for each individual athlete;
- to teach consistently with these values and methods

ATHLETE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- to learn specific skills, starting with low level mental and physical demand; this includes twirls, body/dance moves, performance and musicality skills (when applicable);
- to learn memorization (short term, and then developmentally into long term);
- to learn, at the mid-level of development, mental and physical stamina;
- to learn to deal with meet/contest/performance situation, including: 1) conquering shyness and self-consciousness, 2) maintaining focus without distraction, 3) error recovery, 4) being evaluated by an outside authority, 5) concentrating under the pressure of criticism, 6) accepting evaluation (including criticism), 7) expected behavior, conduct, dress code;
- to complete assigned practice requirements using proper technique;
- to schedule and complete adequate practice to accomplish memorization, perfection of material, projection techniques, and most importantly, to allow self to attain defined goals;
- to learn how to deal with higher demands and pressures that occur during State, Regional, National, World Championships competitions;
- to utilize taught goal-setting techniques, practice methods, mental preparation, conditioning, nutrition, health habits, visualization techniques, relaxation methods;
- to be receptive to information on sports psychology, sports medicine and related activities;
- to learn "theory" for greater understanding and higher proficiency;
- in groups, to learn tolerance of others, patience, leadership, commitment, responsibility;
- to evaluate the progress of self in realistic and accurate manner, based on own 1) commitment to the sport, 2) attentiveness in lessons, 3) desire to excel, 4) efforts as indicated by practice habits, 5) openness to new ideas & to greater degree of difficulty, 6) responsiveness, 7) willingness to contribute to the process, 8) listening skills, 9) maturity; to contribute information to Coach in a timely manner that will enable Coach to develop a program appropriate for your own goals and desire for excellence;
- to communicate with Coach effectively;
- to communicate accurately with parents on status of routines, quality of practice, goals, program, instructions from Coach;
- to practice consistently, utilizing goal-setting and practice techniques;
- to attend lessons consistently, prepared and practiced;
- to have reasonable expectations of yourself and your Coach

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- to provide positive atmosphere conducive to learning the skill of baton twirling;
- to provide positive reinforcement, strokes, rewards when appropriate, encouragement;
- to provide adequate lessons and sufficient time for athlete to achieve goals;
- to provide discipline, and when needed, direction, in practice situations;
- to understand athlete's goals, coach's program, and how parent will assist in those areas;
- to recognize that while the parent is knowledgeable about the athlete, the coach will not necessarily have the same view of the athlete in terms of both positive and negative behaviors/attitudes; while the coach can learn about the child from the parent, the parent, too, can learn from the coach about the child;
- to understand what while the parent says, "that's the way she is," the coach may know that unless a child's behavior or attitude changes, "the way she is" may greatly diminish the child's success;
- to communicate clearly and in a timely fashion with both coach and athlete the parents' degree of commitment - financially, emotionally, and in terms of support (both in time and energy); to accept the limitations that may occur due to the parents' unwillingness or inability to support the athlete;
- to be present at practices sufficiently (weekly) to evaluate quality of practice session, progression of skills, needs, degree of athlete's commitment to the sport, and when appropriate to communicate same to Coach;
- to be silently present at lessons (for a sufficient amount of time) to ascertain quality of instruction, quality of coach/student relationship, progress, and at the conclusion of the lesson, to ask questions;
- to handle the pressures and tension of performing/competing in a positive, supportive fashion; to understand that this activity is the athlete's, not the parent's;
- to project to the athlete only calm, supportive reassurance before, during, and after performances/competitions;
- to assist the athlete to understand that there are no guarantees in competition, and that their task is only to do the best performance of which they are capable;
- to consistently reinforce the appropriate focus (the athlete's performance of the moment) and not distract the athlete from the task at hand;
- to prepare those elements of performance/competition that the parent provides (proper costuming, hair, make-up) in an organized, pressure-free atmosphere;
- to allow adequate time for coach to interact with athlete prior to performance; this includes mental preparation, positive strokes;
- to allow adequate time for athlete to warm-up prior to performance; this includes uninterrupted practice, mental preparation; to see that this occurs;
- to communicate honestly, directly, and in a timely manner with coach and to only expect solutions to problems when this occurs;
- to have reasonable expectations of athlete, coach, self;
- to support coach's program and athlete's goals;
- to understand that talent and capabilities are only indicators of potential, and that the elements of desire, commitment, self-discipline, self-awareness, confidence,

commitment to excellence, enjoyment of sport, overall mental, emotional, and physical health are necessary for successful outcome;

- to understand that regardless of the age, your child is always your child...that fear of failure is one of the most common roadblocks to success; helping the child to understand that the sun will rise tomorrow regardless of the outcome;
- to understand that the parent's philosophy of winning will help or hinder the process and may affect the self esteem of all involved;

NOTE: SEE COACHES LEVEL II FOR JUDGE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

HELPFUL IDEAS ON TRICKY, TOUCH, OFTEN TRAUMATIC TOPICS

A. THE STUDENT - THEIR MOODS, FACES, THEIR OWN BAGGAGE

Just as there are different teaching styles, so there are different learning styles. Many factors can account for the differences..... personality, physical features, intelligence, energy levels, desire to learn, ability to focus, confidence, to name just a few. Other factors include home environment, goals, association with the coach, ongoing emotional experiences.

The best way to deal with learning styles is to **KNOW THE STUDENT**. Here are a few common types of learners. In some cases, an individual student may display more than one of these characteristics. This is meant only to make you aware of differences you may encounter and make suggestions for dealing with these extremes.

THE INNOVATOR likes to make up twirls or variations of them. Unfortunately, sometimes she also does it on the floor during a performance. This student requires careful guidance as well as responsiveness to her ideas.

THE QUICK KID can often catch a trick on the first or second try. Such ability is nice, of course, but make sure she doesn't think she has conquered the trick just because she caught it once. She needs discipline sprinkled with enthusiasm.

THE CONCENTRATOR doesn't do a trick instantly. She has to concentrate on it and work it out for herself. Be patient with these; they often have a good deal of self-direction and their discipline will turn them into excellent twirlers.

THE SLOW LEARNER resembles the concentrator but needs, and with luck, asks for your help in working through the twirl. You may very well need to explain the skill in several ways several times. Your patience is required with this type learner because they are quite capable. Often, this student retains the skill better than the quick kid.

THE CASUAL LEARNER takes the whole process rather nonchalantly. The trick here is to get her inspired enough to come out of the casual state.

THE ATTENTION CRAVER demands your attention constantly. She may, in fact, be able to do a trick and pretend she cannot when you check her. Or she may always be announcing, "I did it." Your job here is to show her she will only get her fair share of the attention no matter how she behaves and that your positive encouragement is more appealing than discipline.

THE BENT BATON KID insists the stick is at fault for her mistakes. This kind needs to be educated that the baton does only what she makes it do.

THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAMER works hardest on the tricks you tell her are the hardest to do. If you use that fact, you can get her to work very hard to improve tremendously.

THE I CAN'T DO IT- KID is probably the one that accounts for most frustrated twirling teachers. They often say it before they've even tried it. Your task is to tell them convincingly that those words don't exist, or at least they don't mean anything to you. Do not allow her to say this in your presence. Be firm and encouraging.

THE ANGEL does everything well. The solution is to find out why she is such an angel and try to get more students like her.

All these types and more are likely to show up among your students. Be especially aware of them in class situations where a good part of your job is inspiring every individual student to learn at an appropriate pace.

B. PARENTS - SOME HINTS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF THIS RELATIONSHIP

Parents are an important aspect of developing a good student and of keeping them. You see the student once a week and the parents are responsible for the follow through of your instructions, especially with younger children or those who are less motivated. Educational research indicates that those students with more parental involvement learn better and faster. For baton twirling coaches, parental support is important since we do not have daily contact. Keep the following suggestions in mind while working with parents.

LEARN FROM THE PARENTS about the child. Parents can tell you practice patterns, enthusiasm, problems, and frustrations. Remain objective, however, and evaluate what they say along with your own observations and judgments.

OBSERVE THE RELATIONSHIP between the parent and child. In some cases you may find it better for the child not to have the parent present during a lesson. Or, you may determine that a parent telling the child to practice will get no results. In this case you must take over the practice assignments.

HELP THE PARENT HELP THE CHILD by explaining areas in which the student needs help. For example, if you expect the child to memorize a section by the next lesson, explain to the parent how repetition of bite size pieces helps memorization. By adding moves a few at a time, with much repetition, the student gradually remembers the section as a whole.

BE AWARE OF FINANCIAL STATUS and do not suggest things that you know would be clearly out of the family's financial reach. This requires careful attention, and you may be able to suggest things, but do not insist upon them.

EDUCATE THE PARENTS about twirling, USTA, and good sportsmanship. Parents must practice good sportsmanship for their children to develop appropriate behavior in this area. The parent is a role model. Teach parents that they free a child to improve and grow when, after a performance the student learns to evaluate the performance in terms of three strong points and three weak areas. The very best performance has

areas in which the performer can improve. By the same token, the weakest performance has areas or tricks that were positive. By focusing on that in which **THE STUDENT HAS CONTROL; THE PERFORMANCE**, the student learns that outcome is secondary to the **EFFORT**. Additionally, the coach and the parent are consistent, sending like messages to the child. Sports psychologists have learned this important competition technique. Use it with your students. Teach it to your student's parents, and watch your students grown and shine.

COMMUNICATION should be transactional, or two-way, in nature. On really important issues, put it in writing. Printed notices help for clarity and for later reference and reminder. A chief complaint about coaches from parents deals with communication. This occurs when coaches fail to notify students and parents of important information in a timely manner. Remember you are dealing with parents in two of the touchiest areas of their lives; their children and their money. Make it clear from the outset that lesson time is for instruction, not for prolonged conversation with the parent. If needed, schedule a conference or telephone call to discuss necessary items.

FOR CLEAR COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

- Give clear instructions
- Repeat instructions
- Listen with empathy
- Be certain verbal and non-verbal communication is consistent
- Be enthusiastic, with praise
- Watch their reaction to the message
- Be open
- Be mentally fresh
- Remove distractions
- Practice on improving concentration
- Philosophy of winning must be defined; compatible with coach's philosophy of winning

PROBLEM SOLVING - the following may assist you in an acceptable resolution:

Step # 1: Limit and define the problem

Step # 2: Analyze the problem

Step # 3: Suggest possible solution(s).

Step # 4: Suggest the best solution(s).

Step # 5: Test and implement the solution.

When a **CONFLICT** occurs, you must manage it with calm assurance and respect for the dignity of all persons involved. Do not allow students to say or do abusive things to each other or to you. The Golden Rule is ideal in this situation. Be sure conflict between parent and coach is not viewed by students. When tempers flare, it is the rare person who can calm down quickly and continue a reasonable discussion of the conflict. This means that **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT** is a challenge, even to the person experienced in communication and interpersonal relationships. These simple suggestions may help:

- **TAKE A TIME OUT** when tempers are too hot for reasonable discussion. Back away from the conflict and arrange a discussion for a time when people are calmer and more reasonable.
- **LISTEN ATTENTIVELY** - Do not interrupt or react excessively to information. If you need to, sit across the table and write notes on grievances as they are conveyed.
- **OBSERVE CAREFULLY**, especially nonverbal language. If extreme emotion is obvious; anger, fear, hurt feelings, but not spoken of in the verbal, speak to these feelings also. These signs may tell you more than the words you may have been expecting about the intensity of feeling. Not all emotions are justified or unjustified. Anger can be misplaced. Fear of the unknown requires a gentle, reassuring hand.
- **SPEAK TO THE PERTINENT ISSUES** when exchanging information. You may need to prioritize your concerns and deal with the most important. Stay on track to achieve the best solution.
- **AVOID PERSONAL, DISPARAGING REMARKS.** Never stoop to personal derision. End the discussion before it comes to this.
- **DO NOT ARGUE. PERCEPTIONS ARE RARELY CHANGED**, whether the perception is accurate or not. Speak to the perception.
- Try to **CONCLUDE** discussion on friendly terms, even if you only agree to disagree. Work to develop adequate compromise to satisfy both parties.
- When necessary, have a third party act as **ARBITOR**. Someone who can negotiate a solution is better than no solution at all.

C. TEACHING BEYOND YOUR PERSONAL SKILL LEVEL - DO'S & DON'TS

There are three very different aspects of this issue. First, when the safety of the athlete is at stake, it is the mandate of the coach to only teach the athlete within the realm of their own coaching knowledge. Outside expertise must be sought to insure the safety of the athlete. This may or may not require a change of coach. Most coaches can learn safety techniques by attending a lesson with a qualified coach and can then continue to coach the athlete successfully. This would usually occur for the Level Hand Level III Coach more often than the Level I Coach. It is important that coaches at all levels understand this mandate.

Second, when the safety of the athlete is not an issue, the response may be very different. Twirling, teaching, and life experiences are varied from one person to the next. This means that each coach brings something unique and special to his or her style of teaching. While a variety of twirling and movement skills are important, continuing education, open mindedness, and a willingness to learn are even more essential for effective coaching.

It has long been observed that some of the best coaches are short on personal twirling titles. At the same time, some of the most outstanding champions are not the most effective coaches.

Regardless of twirling history or experience or titles, a coach will reach a time in her career that demands an honest evaluation of her own effectiveness; her strengths, her weak areas. The older and less experienced the coach, the more apt she is to be

lacking in twirling experience. It is a positive coaching attribute that a coach continually learn twirling skills, movement skills, and most importantly, coaching skills. It is an equally important coaching skill that a person **LEARN TO TEACH A SKILL**, not necessarily **LEARN TO EXECUTE THE SKILL ITSELF**. The older the body becomes, the more important this coaching skill becomes. Not all students have the strength or flexibility or patience or perception to execute all skills. By the same token, not all coaches have the necessary attributes to accomplish certain twirling or movement skills, but they are capable in **ACQUIRING THE KNOWLEDGE TO TEACH THESE SAME SKILLS**. If this were not true, many Olympic gymnastics, ice skating and diving coaches would be out of work. Each individual coach must **NOT LIMIT HER STUDENTS to ONLY** those skills the coach herself can execute. Most coaches, when asked, will tell you that s/he is a better twirler now, after coaching, than s/he was while actually performing or competing.

Third, learning to teach beyond one's personal skill level can be successful as long as the progress of the athlete is held paramount. At no time should a coach retard an athlete's progress because the coach is unwilling or incapable of teaching at the necessary skill level for the athlete. When an athlete moves beyond the coaching capabilities of the coach, it is time for the coach to actively assist the athlete to find a qualified coach.

COACHING RESOURCES

A. CONTINUING EDUCATION – AN INTERESTING PEEK AT THE LEVEL II COACHES WORKSHOP & HANDBOOK

The Level I Coaches Handbook and Workshop has focused on teaching the novice and beginner level athletes. The Level II Coaches Handbook and Workshop will continue with instruction on teaching the very large range of athletes who fall into the experienced beginner and intermediate range.

This range of athletes covers a large and diversified group of students. Coaches must expand their own skills to meet the many needs of this group of athletes. To meet the needs of the Level II Coach, this handbook and workshop will include the following:

- **GROUP ROUTINE DESIGN**
Increased demands in elements of drill and twirl that effectively develop your groups.
- **PERFORMANCE EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL LEVEL II GROUPS**
- **HOW TO GET AND KEEP MORE STUDENTS IN YOUR PROGRAM**
- **IDEAS TO INDIVIDUALIZE BEGINNER SOLO ROUTINES**
- **KEYS TO DESIGNING SHOW ROUTINES THAT WILL WOW 'EM!**
- **COMPETITION ROUTINE DESIGN FOR INDIVIDUALS -**
Solo, Two Baton, Three Baton, Strut, Dance Twirl
- **COMPETITION ROUTINE DESIGN FOR GROUPS -**
Parade Corps, Show Corps, Twirling Teams, Dance Twirl Teams
- **MORE INFORMATION ON THE COMPETITIVE/ACHIEVEMENT SYSTEM (A/AA LEVELS)**
Essential Events, Short Program Need more information on **TECHNIQUE?** This is the **MOST COMPREHENSIVE SOURCE** available today in the sport of baton twirling.

These topics and much, much more will be available in the **LEVEL II COACHES HANDBOOK AND WORKSHOP** - all geared to that important and large range of intermediate athletes.

B. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

(As Applied to the Sport of Baton Twirling)

ACCENT - special stress given to a musical note with a phrase

ACCURACY - exactness; correctness

ADJUSTMENT POTENTIAL - usually used in reference to aerial tricks; the possibility of being able to accommodate physically for an inaccuracy in the release of the baton. There is less adjustment potential for a trick that is thrown low enough so as to require exact timing, especially on a leg catch, than there is if the baton is thrown high enough to take the time to move under it in the event of inaccurate placement. A trick with low adjustment potential represents a high level of difficulty. Inherently, a trick that requires perfect synchronization of movement to be successful would have a low adjustment potential.

AERIAL- any movement where the baton is released in the air outside the radius of contact material

AERIAL ROLL - referring to a release in the air from or into a roll

AESTHETIC - of or pertaining to the sense of the beautiful; artistic

AMBIDEXTERITY - the use of both hands with equal facility

AMPLITUDE (of movement) - greatness of size, fullness, breadth of movement

ATHLETE - one who performs the sport of baton twirling; baton twirler

AURAL - of, pertaining to, or perceived by the ear. Usually used in reference to the music (e.g. visual and aural agreement are necessary for good musical interpretation.)

BODY DESIGN (in space) - the shapes, lines, forms, patterns that are displayed through movement of the body in the space available.

CHAIN CIRCLE ROLLS - a type of continuation roll executed with a perpetual rotation of the body in the same direction with the floor design of a large circle with loops.

CLOSED ROLLS - rolls executed with the hands or arms as an integral part of the roll in a closed position.

CLUSTER (drill) - any configuration of elements gathered or occurring closely together; a formation or picture that is made up of elements in close spacial relationships which may have no easily recognized form.

COMBINATION COMPONENT (rolls) - a mode of roll that connects two or more roll types together to create more rolls

COMBINATION ROLLS - a mode of roll that connects two or more roll types together to create more rolls

COMMUNICATION, TOTAL - see "Total Communication"

COMPLEX - having many varying parts

COMPLEX (combination roll) - the highly developed connection of two or more rolls III such all intricate blend as to obscure the individual characteristics of the separate parts.

COMPLEXITY - the number of parts

COMPOSITION - the design of the program; the setting for the moves and how the moves are used in relation to each other and in relation to the music.

COMPOSITIONAL DIFFICULTY - difficulty created through compositional factors such as tempo and meter changes, staging, intricacy and complexity, degree of timing accuracy required, risk frequency, etc.

CONFIGURATION - the form of a figure as determined by the arrangement of its parts; outline, contour.

CONNECTION MATERIAL (seclusion roll) - the use of a roll or rolls as a factor in a "contact" series for the express purpose of a connecting maneuver between two other modes.

CONTACT MATERIAL - a category of twirl mode that includes the following types of twirls: full hand, finger twirls, swings, wraps, flips, hand rolls, and combinations of these.

CONTENT - substance; an evaluation of the substance of a program relative to "demand" and "logic".

CONTINUATION ROLLS, CONTINUOUS ROLLS - a mode of roll marked by un-interruption in space, time, or sequence; characterized by continued occurrence; continual repetition of the same roll.

COORDINATION - a blend of effects and elements, visual to visual and/or visual to audio.

DEFICIENCY, TECHNICAL - see "Technical Deficiency".

DEGREE OF DEMAND - level of difficulty of a move or series of moves.

DELINEATED CHART - a refinement of the linear scale. In this judging aid, a description of the actual qualities required is delineated for each of the five different scoring ranges.

DEMAND - urgent requirement or need. Also see "Degree of Demand"

DENSITY - thickness of consistency; the number of parts in relation to time and space (i.e. how many movements are in a specific amount of time) as it pertains to Group Competition, the number of exposures and/or people within each situation (how heavily populated an area is).

DESIGN, BODY - see "Body Design in Space"

DIFFICULT, DIFFICULTY - requiring great physical or mental effort; hard to do or achieve, usually referring to a situation where a challenge requiring special skills or ingenuity is present.

DROP IN (roll) - a combination component in which the baton drops between the shoulder blades.

DUAL DIRECTION SPINS - an aerial trick composed of multiple spins originating either to the left or right; the body then stops and reverses the direction of the spines).

DYNAMICS - variations in force or intensity, especially in musical sound; also refers to the greater or lesser use of energy by the body while moving in time and space.

EFFECT, GENERAL - see "General Effect"

ERROR - any deviation from correctness or accuracy for any reason. This includes technical deficiencies and flaws as well as deviations from uniformity in a group situation.

EXPOSURE SITUATION - any instance when a movement or series of movements is displayed that has the possibility of error (this can be an individual trick or a series); a twirling movement that is presented for evaluation.

EXPOSURE TO ERROR - error potential in relation to both technique and flaws. This encompasses all problems that are caused by weakness in knowledge/skill, as well as momentary mental lapses.

EXPRESSION - the communication of one's feelings or imagination, especially through artistic activity; ability to communicate intensities of emotion.

EXTENDED ROLL - a roll executed on the extended arm away from the vertical center of the body.

FIGURE 8 ROLL - a type of continuation roll executed in the baton design of a figure eight.

FLAW- instantaneous variation from intent usually caused by a momentary mental lapse rather than technical deficiency.

FREQUENCY, RISK - see "Risk Frequency"

FRONT LOOPS - a type of continuation roll- executed with the baton making more than one loop in the same plane.

GENERAL EFFECT - an evaluation -of.the degree of success of the compositional elements and performance techniques used to obtain desired results.

GYMNASTIC MOVE - tumbling skills performed with flight, revolving, inverted or requiring support of hands.

HEAD BOB (roll) - a combination component in which the head moves down and up in a quick motion allowing the baton to roll across the back of the neck.

HIGHLIGHT (roll) - a type of seclusion roll often used for a spectacular effect, to display visual musicality, or to focus on the degree of skill required to execute the move.

INHERENT DIFFICULTY - the degree of difficulty of the essential characteristic of a move or series of moves without regard to performance or compositional factors; innate demands.

INSTANTANEOUS TO THE PERFORMANCE - not a regular occurrence (usually refers to a flaw in the performance which is an instantaneous variation from intent).

INTERFACE - when two or more separate factors are interrelated to the degree that they cannot be evaluated in isolation from the other. (e.g. "content" and "precision and unison" when judging teams)

INTERRUPTED SPINS - an aerial trick composed of spins with the body rotating in the same direction "interrupted" by a body move such as: leap, attitude, pose, jump, etc. The spins must occur both before and after the body move.

INTRICATE - having a pattern of intertwining parts that is sometimes difficult to follow

INTRICACY - how the parts are intertwined (complicated intertwining).

JUDGEABILITY - the conditions of the setting in which exposure situations are presented that determine the perception of the situation, both visually and in relation to the audibility of the music (can the judge distinctly see and hear what is being presented?) A performance with low judge ability (poor staging, drill masks, etc.) would not have the opportunity to earn full credit regardless of the inherent difficulty of the content because the content would not be made sufficiently available for the judge to evaluate.

LEVEL, PROFICIENCY - see "Proficiency Level".

LEVEL, OF TOLERANCE - see "Tolerance Level".

MILITARY ATTENTION - feet together, hands on hips, fingers together, baton in RH, head forward.

MODE, TWIRL - see "Twirl Mode".

MULTIPLE SPINS - an aerial trick composed primarily of spins.

MULTIPLE TRICK (aerial) - a combination aerial trick involving two or more parts or elements.

OPEN ROLLS - rolls executed with the arms open or in such a position as to not assist the roll.

PERFORMANCE DIFFICULTY - difficulty created through performance factors, such as technique, degree of perfection, expression, timing accuracy, communication with the audience, projection of mood, conformity to music, etc.

PERSONALITY - the dynamic character, self, or psyche that constitutes and animates the individual person and makes his or her experience of life unique.

PRECISION AND UNISON - the evaluation of how well the performers of a team display, through performance accuracy and uniformity of movement.

PRIMARY (aerials) - refers to the major body move executed in an aerial trick

PROFICIENCY LEVEL, PROFICIENCY RANGE – these terms refer to the five different scoring areas on the linear scale and the delineated charts (fair, average, good, excellent, superior).

PROGRAM TOTAL - see "Total Program".

RANGE, PROFICIENCY - see "Proficiency Level/Proficiency Range".

REORIENTATION FACTOR - refers to the performer having to readjust focus to the baton on aerial tricks. This adjustment will have varying degrees of physical demand but will always require mental and visual demand. The reorientation may be vertical or horizontal.

RETRACTED ROLL - a roll executed close to the vertical center of the body

RISK - the possibility of error

RISK FREQUENCY- the number of situations presenting exposures of all priority levels and how often these situations occur

ROLE MODEL - a person, group of people, or a particular instance of a performance serving as an example of the standard for a high or highest degree of achievement in a certain area.

ROLL - any movement where the baton makes one or more revolutions on the surface of any part of the body without being held by or caught in the hand.

SECLUSION (roll) - a mode of roll isolated from the roll mode (series) for a specific purpose.

SECONDARY (aerials) - refers to the subordinate body move executed

SEQUENCE - a following of one thing after another; the order of succession of the elements in an exposure situation; a related or continuous series.

SEQUENTIAL - a ripple-like effect produced by a group by having each member execute an identical move in succession rather than in unison.

SEVERITY OF ERROR - the degree of gravity or seriousness of an error in terms of cause, intensity, aesthetic considerations, and consequences. An error that is slight, quickly recovered and/or caused by a momentary mental lapse, would not be given as much negative consideration as a more obvious one which is not as easily recovered and/or the result of a technical deficiency.

SIMPLE (combination roll) - fundamentally connecting two or more rolls together with a low density level and without sophistication.

SITUATION CONTROL - a term used to define "professionalism" and in its broad sense encompasses all aspects of the competitive situation (the performance of the program, the ability to handle flaws with a minimum of disruption, the ability to control

the audience's reaction, the ability to overcome problems with the facilities such as inadequate lighting, slippery floor, etc.).

SPACE HARMONY - the harmonious method of connecting places in space in the act of creating a visual phrase through use of the vertical, diagonal, and horizontal planes.

SPEED - rapidity of movement

SPIN - a movement of one or more rotations of the body, vertically, on the ball of one foot. Also see "Dual Direction Spins", "Interrupted Spins", and "Multiple Spins".

STAGING - proper placement of the performer(s) and of the ideas with respect to both position and time so that maximum effect is achieved by controlling the mind and eye of the viewer.

STAMINA - the physical strength required to resist or withstand fatigue or stress; physical endurance.

STANDING OR SUPPORTING LEG - the leg which bears the body weight.

STATIONARY COMPLEX - an-aerial trick with "movement" in a stationary position using either a single body move (element), or a combination of body moves which can include spins, movements of the extremities, or any combination of these.

STYLE - the way in which something is said or done, as distinguished from its substance; the combination of distinctive features characterizing a particular person, people, school or era; a quality of individuality expressed in one's actions and tastes.

STYLISTICALLY SECURE - displaying strong confidence in one's own distinct individuality through performance and programming--

SUB-LEVEL, SUB-RANGE - these terms refer to the division of each proficiency level/range into "low", "medium", and "high", with appropriate numbers assigned to each.

SUBJECTIVE JUDGING PROCESS - the procedure used to analyze and evaluate the competitive presentation. The process involves a series of steps from general (initial impression of the degree of excellence displayed) to the final step of choosing a specific score.

SUSPENSION - a temporary stopping of movement

TECHNICAL DEFICIENCY - a lack or shortage of accuracy in baton or body technique; insufficient display of correctness of the technique; weakness of technique.

TECHNIQUE - the degree of skill or command of fundamentals exhibited in any performance; disciplined movement in relation to strength, flexibility, and control.

THEME - an idea, point of view, or perception embodied or expanded upon in a program; the effective development of a central idea through the use of all components of the program.

TIMING - synchronization of movement

TOKENISM - the use of material simply for the sake of inclusion; a) it has no relation thematically to the total program (e.g. any material used that doesn't fit the music for interpretation but still requires the physical skill - usually fashionable or trendy"), and/or b) it displays the weaknesses of the athlete in relation to technique but is included because it is "trendy".

TOLERANCE LEVEL - error point, acceptability limit, standard. The accepted norm in terms of the accuracy of a movement that will earn the highest amount of credit. Any negative deviation from this standard will earn lower amounts of credit relative to the

severity of the error. Levels of tolerance for the same move may vary depending upon the demands of the setting in which the move is presented (intricacy, complexity, etc. of the situation).

TOTAL COMMUNICATION - the highest form of entertainment value, where the audience is in total understanding of the program. It also is present when the audience is feeling the emotions conveyed by the performance.

TOTAL PROGRAM - a competitive presentation that is thematically or stylistically complete, maximizing the quality of baton and body skills with simultaneous blend, with no dull spots or lapses in maintaining interest.

TRADE-OFF - a compromise among desired goals or possibilities when all cannot be achieved simultaneously; yielding one consideration in return for another.

TRAP (rolls) - an interception of the movement of the baton with any part or parts of the body, with the exception of the hands, while a roll is in progress. This is done for the express purpose of either preventing passage to facilitate a change in direction (reverse) or to redirect the intent of the roll by slightly restricting the baton while allowing the rotation path to continue.

TRAVELING COMPLEX - an aerial trick requiring movement from "point A" to "point B".

TWIRL MODE - a grouping or categorization of the twirling moves with respect to their usage.

UNIFORMITY - a consistent relationship

UNISON - an instance of agreement; moves executed by all performers in a group in the same number without variation in reference to time and space; uniformity of movement.

VARIATION (aerials) - refers to a reception of the baton other than full hand right and palm up right and left.

WORKING LEG - the leg which is moving without weight