

Figure Marching

BODY



fit for fun



No maximum number
depending on adequate
supervision



10 minutes per week

Aim: To get the boys interested in figure marching and try and work on their discipline in general

Introduction:

Boys of Junior Section age come in all shapes and sizes, are full of energy, interested in learning something new, eager to try out something new and above all looking for fun. Figure marching is sometimes looked upon as difficult and boring, both by boys and leaders alike, but in actual fact is neither when carried out properly. With the guide of these simple instructions it is very easy to teach and for the boys to learn. Figure marching can be used for displays, for achievements, for building team discipline or for variety in the programme.

It is essential when undertaking a figure marching session that you know exactly how much you want the boys to do. It is best to keep sessions down to around 10 minutes and not over this time, otherwise the boys will begin to get bored.

The use of music is an important part of this activity but not many companies will be blessed with a musician; it is therefore a good idea to use a tape or CD of appropriate music. The addition of music allows the boys to put a rhythm to their marching and helps them to keep in step.

Some reasons for doing figure marching:

1. If approached in the correct way it can be great fun.
2. All Junior section boys can work together, creating a sense of teamwork within the section.
3. Some boys are naturally rhythmic; others are not so blessed so marching offers them a tool by which they can work on their rhythm and timing.
4. Figure marching can be a useful lead into company section drill, (if this is part of the programme for the older boys).
5. A good figure marching routine that has been well practised is excellent to perform at open evenings and displays, as it shows parents a more disciplined side to what goes on in the BB.

Equipment:

- Large hall or open area
- CD/tape player with tunes that boys can march to
- Chalk or masking tape to mark the floor

Preparation:

As with all activities it is essential that preparation be carried out prior to the session. Here are some areas you may wish to look at.

- Consult a pianist if available over the sort of music and the tempo at which it must be played.
- If using a CD or tape player, ask the boys to choose the music.
- Plan many weeks in advance this will allow you to see how you are progressing. It is always possible to change the schedule as you work through if you think it is going too quickly or too slowly.

Presentation:

1. Know exactly what you want the boys to do but be ready to adapt if necessary.
2. Set a good example in the way that you stand, and as you move around, march in time to the music.
3. Keep the presentation to 10 minutes or less; you can get through a lot in this time.
4. Make sure you can be heard by all of the boys.
5. Keep all instructions as clear and concise as possible.
6. Teach a little at a time.
7. Give praise and congratulate continually, correcting any faults and suggesting improvements.
8. Show how much you are enjoying the period yourself.
9. Never use drill as a punishment, which can only have a detrimental effect on the way that the boys view it, and will form an opinion of drill that will stay with them for the rest of the time that they remain in the company.
10. Explain to the boys how the commands are made i.e. in two halves. The Caution which tells the boy what to do for example 'Right' and then the Executive which tells them when to do it, for example 'Turn' (see the section in this pack on Simple Drill).
11. Ensure that a clear boundary is set in which the boys know to march.

The following four movements are quite easy to use but will need some practice over a number of weeks using one of the sequences at a time. Adding these together would make a useful item for the company parents' night.

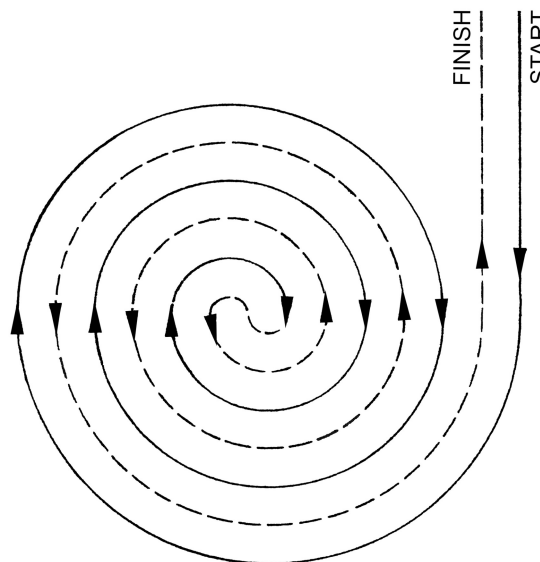
More suggestions for Figure Marching can be found in the "Figure Marching Handbook" available from BB Supplies.

Use chalk or masking tape to mark the floor according to the following diagrams, which will help the boys to learn where to make the key moves.

The Circle Maze

The Circle Maze looks difficult but is not. It can be done in a circle or a rectangle but it is more difficult to do the Rectangle as you need to execute sharp corners and boys have a habit of cutting corners.

As shown in the diagram, the section is led in ever decreasing circles until the Leading Boy reaches the centre or what he decides is the centre. Once he has reached that point he must then turn around and work his way out in the opposite direction, marching between the files of boys still approaching the centre. This is probably the hardest part.



Rectangle



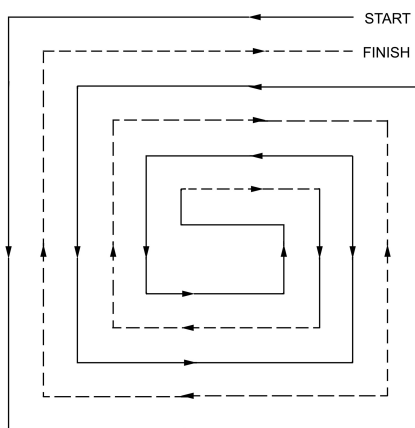
Maze

In this Maze the boy leads his Section in ever decreasing rectangles until the centre is almost reached; this is achieved by taking all turns to the left and on reaching the centre, turning to the right and commencing to increase the size of the rectangles by marching between the files advancing towards the centre, until the whole Section is free again.

The Maze can also be performed by making all turns to the right to reach the centre and then turning left to come out.

Points to consider:

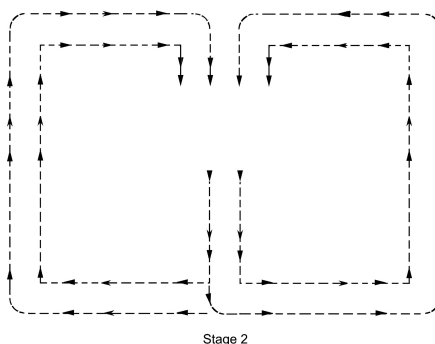
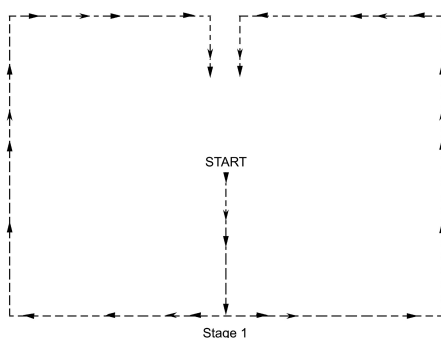
1. Good marching must be maintained all the time.
2. The final circle or rectangle should not be too small or boys will not be able to turn and confusion will arise.
3. The circles/rectangles must be made so as to leave sufficient room between the files for the boys returning to be able to march between.
4. Encourage the boys to look straight in front of them, not to the side where they will drift if looking at the other boys marching into the circle/rectangle.



The Snowball

The Snowball starts with a single file of boys and ends with four (or eight or sixteen) files, hence the name.

The Section marches in single file down the centre of the hall. At the end the first boy turns left, the second boy turns right, third boy turns left, the fourth boy right and so on. The boys, now in two files, continue to march round the outside of the hall until they meet at the centre top. When they meet, each pair turns to march down the centre of the hall. As the boys reach the end, the first pair turns left; the second pair turns right and so on. As the pairs meet at the top of the hall, they turn to come down the hall in fours. If the Section is large enough and space permits the fours can join to form eights down the centre.



Points to consider:

1. Every boy in the Section must know exactly where to go. At first a leader is advised to stand at the point where the files coming down the hall divide.
2. Dressing must be maintained as the boys march on either side of the hall and as the twos and fours are coming down the centre. To maintain dressing after dividing and turning, the first, third, fifth boys etc. need to take shorter spaces and the second, fourth, sixth boys etc need to take longer paces until they have levelled off in pairs.
3. Correct turning and marching must always be encouraged.
4. Boys must meet face to face, before turning to march up the hall in pairs.

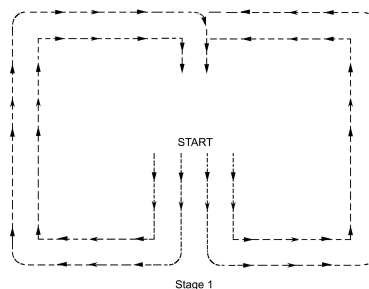
Reverse Snowball

Once the Snowball is completed the Section may proceed to another movement or the Snowball may be reversed so that the boys are again in single file.

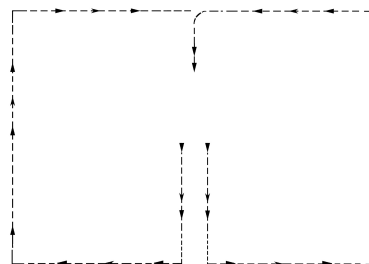
To reverse the Snowball the boys march down the centre in fours (or eights if the Snowball was continued to eights). As each four reaches the end of the hall the right hand pair wheel to the right and the left hand pair wheel to the left and continue marching round the hall.

On turning at the top corners, the first pair step out and the second pair shorten pace slightly so that the first pair reach the centre first and wheel down the centre followed by the second pair. The third and fourth pairs do the same and so on.

The boys are now in pairs marching down the centre. As each pair reaches the end the left hand boy turns left and the right hand boy turns right and continues marching round the hall. The single boy acts in the same way as the pairs did in the explanation above, coming down the centre in single line.



Stage 1



Stage 2

Points to consider:

1. As they march along the sides of the hall the boys must keep level with their opposite pair on the other side. Similarly when they are marching in single file they must regulate their pace and distance to arrive at the centre at the same time.
2. Judging pace is a matter of practise. It is always alright on the night. The boys rarely let you down.
3. Leaders should occasionally halt the Section to show where the dressing is good and where it could be improved. It helps to show the boys where they are going wrong.

The Diamond

This is a movement combining two crossings, and is fairly simple once the art of crossing has been mastered. It is useful for part of a Display item and is more suitable for larger Sections. As for a Plain Cross, the Section is in two files on opposite sides of the hall marching in the same direction. The boys in the lead on reaching the end of the hall, turn inwards and march towards a point about half-way down and on the opposite side of the hall, the files cross in the process.

On reaching the side of the hall the leading boy of each file turns inwards towards the corner. The files again cross. On reaching the Corners they turn right and left and are back in their original places.

To obtain the best visual results the leading boys should have joined up with the rear of their file, so that two unbroken triangles are formed.

Points to consider:

1. It is important to keep the distance between each boy constant.
2. All the points in simple Crossing apply.
3. It will help, at first, to mark the centre of each side of the hall with a chair.

