

## **Band Competition Basics 101**

Come and cheer on the Downers Grove South Marching Mustangs at their marching competition on Saturday! Attending the marching competitions is a fun way to support your student and see what they have been working on all summer long. They will be performing the same show at each competition and each week, you will notice it getting better and more things added or perfected. It is also a great time to volunteer and help out as a chaperone or moving the equipment for the pit. It is easy and fun to do. Plan on allowing enough time to watch some of the other bands DGS competes against as well.

If you are new to band competitions, here are some helpful hints to get you started: (These are things I wish I would have known as a new parent.)

1. Information on upcoming competitions will be emailed 1-2 weeks in advance. There is usually a complete itinerary, information on the competition location, map information, and a list of what the band students may need for the day. The students are also given printed copy and copies are available at the band mailbox.
2. If you missed the email, the itinerary, it can be found on the DGS band booster web page. Go to: <http://dgsbandboosters.com>. There is a link on the home page or you can go to Marching Mustangs tab and then Performance Schedule.
3. Keep up to date with the band changes and progress by signing up with the text alert system. Changes and updates will be sent directly to your phone as they happen. Follow the directions under News and Announcements on the DGS band booster web page (scroll down on the home page) or go to the Marching Mustang tab and then Celly Text Updates. This is really useful as the student arrival time back at DGS depends upon if they make finals. Mr. Hensel sends updates that include the competition results and estimated time of arrival back at DGS.

*Marching Mustangs Celly Account*

*If you would like instant text message updates for Marching Mustangs, text @MarchingMustangs 2015 to the number: 23559*

4. Competition days are usually very long days. Rehearsal time is scheduled (in most cases) prior to leaving for the competition. Make sure to check to see if a lunch needs to be sent with your child and if money is needed to eat at the concessions later that day. Some student sections start the day by meeting for breakfast the morning of the competition at someone's house or at a restaurant.
5. Check to make sure your student has their show shirt, long black socks, gloves etc. If they forget their socks or gloves, the uniform moms often will charge them \$2 for a new pair.
6. Competitions are not like football games. During the bands performance, it is quiet with minimal or no talking at all. Cheering is encouraged at the appropriate times to let the band and the judges know you appreciate their show.

7. Entrance into seating area is usually restricted while the bands are playing. The fans are asked to enter and leave the viewing stands in between each of the bands performances.
8. The host school usually charges a \$10-15 per person (**cash**) fee for each competition. This is usually the way the host band raises money for their music organization.
9. Make sure to dress for the weather. The competitions are usually held outside in the school's football stadium. It can get cold when the sun goes down and the winds start. Many of the parents will be wearing the show shirts or school colors. No spiritwear is required, just your support!!
10. Parking is often very limited at the schools. Plan on getting to the competition a little early to allow time to find a spot. Also check to make sure that you are headed to the right school. Some of the schools have several campuses (ie Lincoln Way East, West, North, and Central). The itinerary usually will specify which school the band will be competing at that day.
11. Bands are scored on visual performance, general effect and music performance. Normally, there are judges on the field who watch and listen for individual performances, as well as judges located in the press box to judge the sound as a group, watch and critique forms and arcs created along with music and visual general effect (i.e. How exciting is the show?)
12. The band is classified differently at each competition. The bands will be either competing by school size or by band size. At most of our competitions classifications are made by band size (A, AA, and AAA). For these competitions, we will be in the AAA category this year. At ISU the band competes in the 6A category (school size).
13. The band usually needs about 15-20 parents to volunteer for bus chaperones and/or equipment movement on and off the field for the competition. It is easy to do and as a bonus, you get into the show for free. Make sure you check on Charms office for volunteer opportunities.

