

PURDUE BANDS & ORCHESTRAS

“ALL-AMERICAN”

MARCHING BAND





GAME DAY	3
HISTORY & FIRSTS.....	5
TRADITIONS	7
BIG BASS DRUM	9
AUXILIARIES	11
HAIL PURDUE (BAND VERSE).....	12

GAME DAY

A band member's day is packed with amazing performance opportunities. For a noon kickoff, the band members report for inspection at 7:30 a.m. and are usually dismissed around 4:30 p.m.

PREGAME

- Forming the Block "P" – Purdue was the first marching band to break military ranks to create a formation on the field.
- "I Am An American" – A tradition formed during the late 1960's, this eloquent expression of patriotism is recited as the 30-yard United States and Indiana State flags are rolled out on the field.

IN THE STANDS

- Purdue's band provides spirit during the game.
- Watch for the roving pep bands that entertain throughout the stands.
- "Hail Fire" – A crowd favorite that includes dynamic hand movements and sounds.
- Next to the student cheering section, horn and drum moves are as flashy as the action on the field.

HALFTIME

- A new performance every game.

POSTGAME

- Hats are worn backwards for every Big Ten victory.
- The Cadence – a thrilling drum rhythm launches the band onto the field.
- The postgame show includes "Hail Purdue," the "Purdue Hymn," and halftime highlights.



HISTORY & FIRSTS

HISTORY

- Organized in 1886, a year before Purdue's football team was formed.
- Members received ROTC drill credit for participating in the band.
- Named the "All-American" Marching Band by a TV broadcaster in response to the first halftime show with lighted uniforms and instruments.
- Noted alumni include Neil Armstrong (*baritone, first man on the moon*), Orville Redenbacher (*tuba, founder of Orville Redenbacher popcorn*), and Russell Games Slayter (*tuba, inventor of fiberglass*).

FIRSTS

- **1907** – First band to break military ranks to create a formation of any kind on a football field – the Block "P."
- **1919** – First band to carry the colors of all Big Ten schools.
- **1919** – First band to become an annual performer at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.
- **1920** – First band to play opposing school's fight song.
- **1921** – First band to create an oversized bass drum.
- **1935** – First band to perform a halftime show with lights on their instruments and uniforms.
- **1954** – First band to create national recognition for its featured twirlers.
- **1963** – First college band to have members invited to perform at Radio City Music Hall.
- **1969** – First marching band alumnus to walk on the moon, Neil Armstrong.
- **1995** – First university without a music school to win the Sudler Trophy.
- **2008** – First college marching band invited by Ministry of Culture to perform in China.
- **2010** – First Big Ten band to march in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.



TRADITIONS

GOLD DAY

The Friday before every home football game, the band rehearses in matching t-shirts and baseball caps, and they fine-tune their halftime performance for game day.

BLOCK "P" FORMATION

Since being the first band to break military ranks to create a formation on the field, the Block "P" has been a staple of band routines. The Block "P" has been formed around the world, including on top of Mount Fuji, at the Grand Canyon, on the Great Wall of China, and underwater in Hawaii.

FLOATING PURDUE FORMATION

While the band has been spelling "Purdue" on the field for many years, Dr. Al G. Wright was the first to put it in motion in the 1960's.

"I AM AN AMERICAN"

During the pregame performance, this eloquent expression of patriotism is recited as the 30-yard United States and Indiana State flags are rolled out on the field.

SCORES FOR PUSH-UPS

Every time the Boilermakers score during the game, the Big Bass Drum Crew does a push-up for every point scored.

TUBA CADENCE

After the game, the band marches to Slayter Hill and members stop halfway to perform a dramatic depiction of their aching muscles and bones, while the tuba section plays alone. At the end, they sing, "Well, maybe just one more time..." and finish their day with a concert at Slayter Hill.

DRUM MAJOR BREAKDOWN

Band members are released from duty after the postgame concert at Slayter Hill. The drum majors continuously high step as they individually release all of the sections. At the end, the drumline plays and the drum majors continue to high step with their maces in between their teeth as the rhythm races faster with each step. The Big Bass Drum closes the event by running at full speed and stopping just inches from the director.



BIG BASS DRUM

HISTORY

- The drum's size was dictated by the size of animal skins used as the original drum heads.
- A specific railway baggage car was obtained from the New York Central Railway to transport the drum when it was first made. The band traveled by train in those days.
- The "World's Largest Drum" title was awarded to Purdue when the University of Texas failed to complete a contest between Kappa Kappa Psi honorary band fraternity brothers. Both schools were to bring their drums to the national convention, but the Longhorns did not show up.

THE CREW

- Seven members make up the Big Bass Drum Crew. They are selected after an audition process and they serve a yearlong term.
- Selection criteria:
 - Athletic standards that mirror the ROTC physical fitness standards.
 - Drum handling trials such as running, spins, stopping, and steering of the drum.
 - Public relations interviews which prepare crew members for media insights pertaining to the drum's history.
 - Attitude check! Crew members are expected to work together to represent the band and Purdue University in a first-class manner.

ON THE MOVE

- The original carriage of the drum used bicycle tires, which easily caught on railroads and pot holes. Today the tires are constructed from Ford Model A tires.
- In 1937, Horner Motor Company donated the first commercial pick-up truck. Today, Tom Sibbitt Chevrolet (from Greensburg, IN) donates the truck to move the drum.
- In 2013, the drum made its first international trip to Ireland for the St. Patrick's Day Parade.



AUXILIARIES

TWIRLERS

GOLDEN GIRL

- Purdue's Golden Girl ranks among the nation's best twirlers.
- This elite solo twirler position was created in 1954 as the counterpart to Purdue's "Golden Boy" quarterback, Lenny Dawson. Today, the position is one of the band's most treasured traditions.

GIRL-IN-BLACK

- Originally performing as the "International Twirler" in 1962, a reporter asked, "Who is that girl in black?" and a tradition was born.
- The Girl-in-Black is a complement to the Golden Girl.

SILVER TWINS

- In the 1960's, twirling twins Karon and Sharon Roeske attended Purdue. Dr. Al G. Wright said, "The chance of finding twins that are twirlers is a million to one, so I named them the 'Silver Twins' and put them on the field."
- The dazzling duo adds a splash of silver to the band. They specialize in coordinated or mirrored routines, as their goal is to work completely in tandem.

ALL-AMERICAN TWIRLING TEAM

- Majorettes joined the band in the 1930's and have evolved into many forms throughout the years. The All-American Twirling Team keeps the tradition alive with flashy baton tricks and spins.

GOLDUSTER DANCE TEAM

- In 1980, the Golduster Dance Team was added to the band.
- They perform jazz, hip-hop, Broadway, pom, and ballet dance styles in their high-energy routines.
- Featured during one song in each halftime performance.
- Cheer on the sidelines throughout the game.

GOLDEN SILKS COLOR GUARD

- The Golden Silks Color Guard adds to the visual display of shows by incorporating elements of dance with flag choreography.
- The team draws its roots from the "All-American" Marching Band's flag corps established in the late 1970's.

BIG TEN FLAGS

- Purdue was the first Big Ten band to carry the colors of all the conferences' universities.

HAIL PURDUE

Band Verse:

In the Band we march and swagger

As we play for old Purdue.

At the halftime we do shows

No other band on Earth could do.

When we cheer the Earth will tremble,

For we're known throughout the land

As the best in marching music,

We're the Boilermaker Band!



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