

Drum Majors

Speaker Script · "Command the Field. Own the Show."

PRESENTER Joshua Gibbons

SLIDES 16

THE HAMPTON UNIVERSITY MARCHING FORCE · PRE-DRILL CAMP 2026

Presenter notes for every slide, in order. Bracketed cues are stage directions; quoted lines are suggested wording — say them in your own voice.

01 Drum Majors

SLIDE 1 — TITLE: Drum Majors

PRESENTER: Joshua Gibbons. BREAKOUT — drum majors only.

OPEN: "Two sides to this job. The craft, and the show. Miss either one and it falls flat."

02 Icebreaker

SLIDE 2 — ICEBREAKER: We Were Soldiers, "First On, Last Off" (2:41)

SET UP: "Hal Moore, before a shot is fired, swears he'll be the first to set foot on the field and the last to step off."

Play it.

AFTER: "That's exactly what the field asks of a drum major. And it's the creed — First In, Last Out — that bookends this whole camp."

03 The Premise

SLIDE 3 — THE PREMISE (statement slide)

Read it.

"Every eye finds you first. But at an HBCU the drum major is more than a conductor — you're the face of the show."

Takeaway: "Conductor and showman, at once."

04 The Role of the Drum Major

SLIDE 4 — THE ROLE OF THE DRUM MAJOR

Four jobs: Time Keeper, Field Commander, Standard-Bearer, Showman.

Don't rush past Showman — that's the one most drum-major training leaves out, and it's half of this deck.

05 Two Sides of the Same Job

SLIDE 5 — TWO SIDES OF THE SAME JOB

The hinge slide. Craft on the left, Show on the right.

READ THE CALLOUT: "A drum major who can only conduct is a metronome. One who can only perform is a cheerleader. At an HBCU, you are both."

Tell them the deck now splits — craft first, then show.

06 The Craft: Conducting Is Athletic

SLIDE 6 — CONDUCTING IS ATHLETIC

DEMONSTRATE, don't describe. Stand and show posture, isolation, the plane, economy of motion.

"A still, strong body is the frame. Only the arms move."

"The clearest conductor uses the least motion. Flailing is not energy — it's confusion."

07 The Beat and the Patterns

SLIDE 7 — THE BEAT AND THE PATTERNS

The ictus is the exact instant of the beat, the bottom of the stroke. "A clear ictus is a clear band; a mushy one is a ragged one."

Preparatory beat in tempo, and a definite release.

RUN THE PATTERNS LIVE: down; down-up; down-out-up; down-in-out-up. Have them do it with you.

08 Lead With Your Eyes, Not Your Ears

SLIDE 8 — LEAD WITH YOUR EYES, NOT YOUR EARS

The core marching-drum-major idea. Take your time.

"Sound travels about 1,130 feet per second. Across a field the back of the band hears the front late."

"If everyone plays to what they HEAR, the band drifts apart and slows down. The only fix is one visual clock — you."

LAND: "The band watches. It does not listen. Conduct so clearly a player 80 yards out can lock to your hands."

09 Be the Metronome

SLIDE 9 — BE THE METRONOME

"Steady time is the drum major's first gift to the band."

"Do not rush the exciting parts. The moments the band most wants to speed up are exactly where you hold firm."

"That steadiness is what lets the show go wild on top of a solid floor."

10 The Show: This Is Entertainment

SLIDE 10 — THE SHOW: THIS IS ENTERTAINMENT

The deck pivots here. Change your energy with it.

"At an HBCU the band is a SHOW. The crowd came to be moved, and you set the energy that moves them."

"Full-out, always. Half-energy from the podium tells the whole band and the whole crowd to relax."

11 Make an Entrance

SLIDE 11 — MAKE AN ENTRANCE

"The show starts the second you step onto the field."

"Before you conduct a single note, your strut, your salute, and your presence tell the crowd who runs this field."

Every step says The Marching Force has arrived.

"Nail the entrance and you have the crowd BEFORE the first downbeat."

12 March It, Dance It

SLIDE 12 — MARCH IT, DANCE IT

"You don't just stand and beat time. You perform."

High energy, the strut, the high-step. And you dance — hit the moves with the band.

CRITICAL GUARDRAIL: "Every move is still clean and controlled. High energy is not sloppy energy — the precision is what makes it pop."

CUE: this is a good place to actually get them up and moving.

13 Work the Crowd

SLIDE 13 — WORK THE CROWD

"The crowd is part of the show. Play them like an instrument."

Parades, the battle, the fifth quarter — "this is where showmanship wins and where the Force makes its name."

"Never break character. On the field you are always performing."

14 Command the Field

SLIDE 14 — COMMAND THE FIELD

Voice, whistle and signal, presence, poise.

"Mumble a command and you've already lost the field."

DRILL IT: have each drum major give one command at full voice right now. Correct it on the spot.

15 Poise Under Pressure

SLIDE 15 — POISE UNDER PRESSURE

"Something will go wrong. The band will do whatever you do next."

"Your calm is the band's calm. Panic on the podium spreads instantly."

"Never show frustration to the field or the stands. Handle it in your face and your hands, then debrief later."

LAND: "The greatest compliment is a band that never looked worried — because you never did."

16 Command the Field. Own the Show.

SLIDE 16 — CLOSE: Command the Field. Own the Show.

"The craft earns their respect. The show wins their hearts. Be both."

End on the sign-off.