



PRE-DRILL CAMP 2026 · LEADERSHIP SEMINARS · DAY 2

Supporting the Auxiliary

"Have Their Backs."

Coach Megan and Coach Brint

Auxiliary Coaches · Instrumentalists, Sunday, August 2, 2026

The Hampton University Marching Force

HAMPTON'S HEARTBEAT

Icebreaker

Two moments from *Hidden Figures*: a team of people who get where they are going by backing each other, trusting each other's work, and making room for one another to shine. That is exactly the deal between the band and the auxiliary.



CLIP ONE

Hidden Figures — “You Are The Boss”

youtu.be/sQLYZoUxxvg

Watch · 1:08



CLIP TWO

Hidden Figures — “Give or Take”

youtu.be/JAEnv1PvBvw

Watch · 1:30

— THE PREMISE

Coaches, talking to the band: the auxiliary is not decoration on the edge of your show—they are the visual voice of it. Every flag, every eight-count, every routine is built on the sound you make. When you are steady, they fly; when you are shaky, they fall, no matter how hard they have worked. The best bands in the country treat their auxiliary as full partners, not an afterthought—and it shows on the field.

— ONE SHOW. TWO HALVES. ONE STANDARD.

What the Auxiliary Actually Does

Before you support it, respect it.

- ◆ Twirling batons, spinning flags, and dancing full-out for a whole show is **athletic**—it takes strength, timing, and hours most of you never see.
- ◆ They memorize as much choreography as you do music, and they perform it while **nailing a toss** or landing a turn on an exact count.
- ◆ They train through blisters, drops, and bruises to make it look effortless—and effortless is the hardest thing there is.
- ◆ The auxiliary is not the "extra." On most fields, they are the first thing the crowd's eyes find.

Reference: Winter Guard International calls color guard "the Sport of the Arts" — the auxiliary are performing athletes.

You Are Their Floor

Everything they do, they do on your sound.

- ◆ The auxiliary doesn't perform to music in general—they perform to **your** music, on **your** counts, in real time.
- ◆ Your sound is the floor they dance on. A solid floor lets them take risks; a shaky one makes them play it safe.
- ◆ When the band is locked in, the aux can push harder, sell bigger, and trust that the hit will be there.
- ◆ Supporting them starts with a simple mindset: **your performance is part of theirs.**

Hold the Tempo

The single biggest thing you do for the auxiliary.

- ◆ Every routine is counted to an **exact tempo**. Rush it or drag it and their toss lands wrong, their turn finishes late, and the whole visual breaks—through no fault of theirs.
- ◆ The aux can't "feel it out" mid-routine the way you might. They are locked to the count you set. **Be the count they can trust.**
- ◆ Watch the drum major, not the excitement. The moments you most want to speed up are the moments they most need you steady.
- ◆ Rock-steady time is the greatest gift the band gives the auxiliary. Give it every rep.

Hit Together, Give Them Dynamics

Clean sound gives them clean visuals.

- ◆ A **unified hit** gives the aux a sharp visual accent to nail. A ragged hit gives them nothing to catch.
- ◆ **Dynamics** give them levels to perform to—a swell to grow into, a drop to get delicate on. Flat sound is a flat canvas.
- ◆ **Consistency** lets them trust it. If the hit lands in a different spot every rep, they can't build a routine on it.
- ◆ Clean, together, and the same every time—that is what lets the aux design something great on top of you.

Give Them Room

Know where they are—and stay out of their space.

- ◆ Flags and batons need **airspace**; dancers need floor. Drift into their zone and you don't just crowd them—you can hurt them.
- ◆ Know your **spacing and intervals** cold, and know where the aux sets up in every drill. Your form protects their performance.
- ◆ Never make the auxiliary dodge the band. On a clean field, everyone has room to be great.
- ◆ Awareness is support: eyes up, know what's flying near you, and hold your form so they can hold theirs.

Know the Show Together

Learn their moments, not just your part.

- ◆ Know where the auxiliary **features** are—the moments the show is built around them—and know them as well as you know your own.
- ◆ Learn their counts and their big hits so you can lock to them, not just to the page in front of you.
- ◆ Understand the **whole show**: what story it tells, where the visual lives, and how your part serves it.
- ◆ A band that knows the aux's show performs *with* them; a band that only knows its own notes performs *next to* them.

Be Their Hype

When they feature, you make the moment bigger.

- ◆ When the auxiliary takes the spotlight, your **energy** amplifies them. Play bigger, sell harder, and lift their moment.
- ◆ The crowd takes its cue from the band. React to a great toss, and the stands react with you.
- ◆ Be their loudest fans on the field—visible support tells everyone watching that this moment matters.
- ◆ You are not competing with the auxiliary for the crowd. You are **handing** them the crowd—and they hand it right back.

One Unit, No Cliques

The auxiliary is the band. Full stop.

- ◆ No "us and them." Dancers, guard, and twirlers are Marching Force, the same as any horn line or drum.
- ◆ Don't let the band and the auxiliary split into separate worlds—warm up together, eat together, celebrate together.
- ◆ Back them up when it's hard: the long days, the tough reps, the crowd that doesn't clap. Have their backs the way you want yours had.
- ◆ One unit is not a slogan. It is how a show becomes seamless instead of stitched together.

Communicate

The partnership is built off the field, too.

- ◆ Talk to the auxiliary and their coaches. Ask what they need from the band—then actually give it.
- ◆ Share feedback both ways, with respect: "that tempo felt rushed there" is a gift, not a complaint.
- ◆ Learn each other's language—counts, phrases, and cues—so a fix in rehearsal takes seconds, not arguments.
- ◆ The bands that look like one unit are the ones that talk like one unit all week long.

Supporting the Auxiliary: The Playbook

Four things every instrumentalist owes the auxiliary.

1 Steady Time

Hold the exact tempo and hit together. It is the floor they perform on.

2 Give Them Room

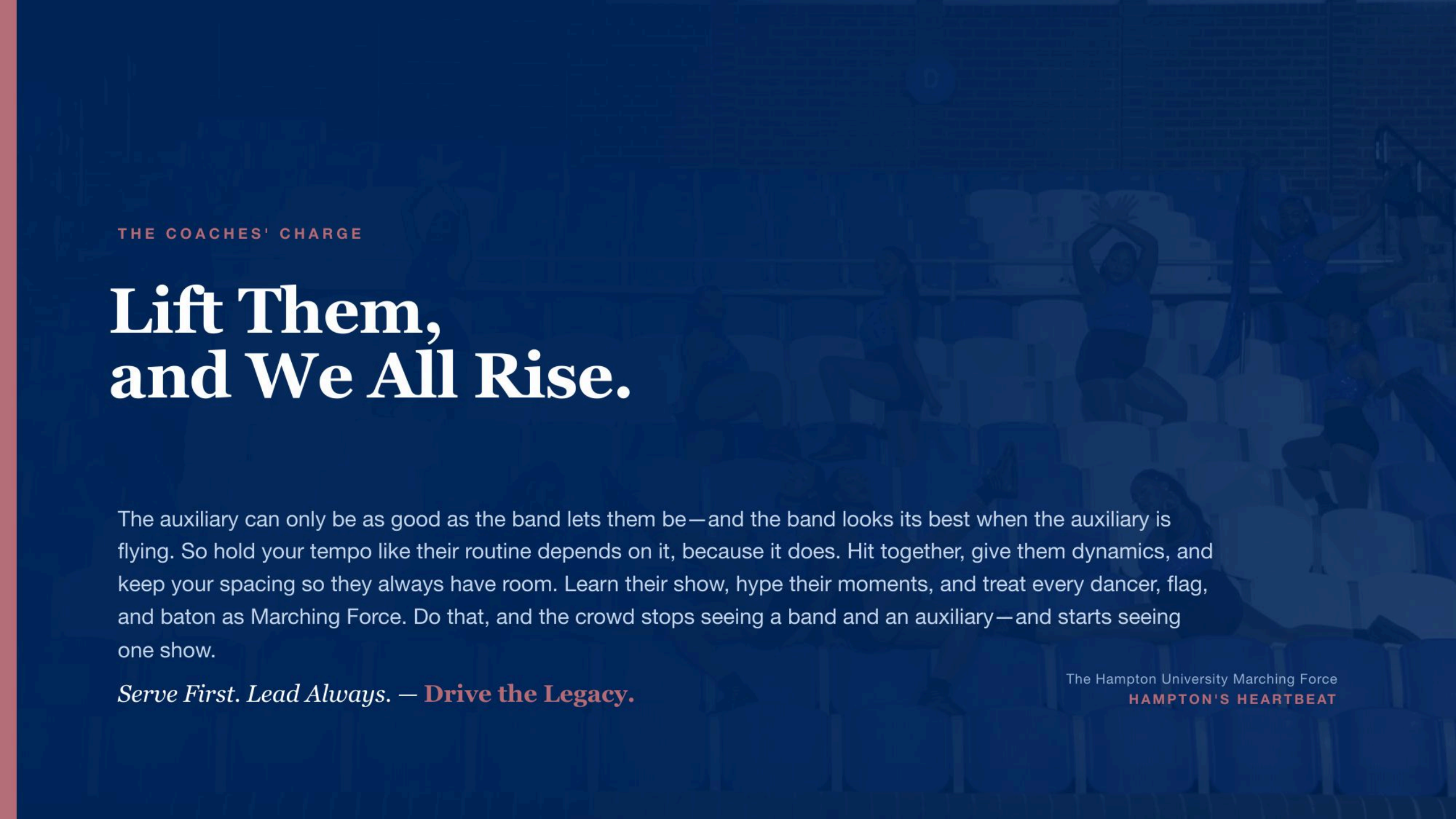
Know your spacing and where they are. Protect their space and their safety.

3 Hype Their Moment

When they feature, bring the energy and hand the crowd to them.

4 One Unit

Treat the auxiliary as band, communicate all week, and have their backs.

The background of the entire page is a dark blue-tinted photograph of a marching band auxiliary performing in a stadium. Several students are visible, some sitting on the bleachers and others standing, all in various poses that suggest a choreographed routine. The lighting is dim, and the overall mood is energetic and focused.

THE COACHES' CHARGE

Lift Them, and We All Rise.

The auxiliary can only be as good as the band lets them be—and the band looks its best when the auxiliary is flying. So hold your tempo like their routine depends on it, because it does. Hit together, give them dynamics, and keep your spacing so they always have room. Learn their show, hype their moments, and treat every dancer, flag, and baton as Marching Force. Do that, and the crowd stops seeing a band and an auxiliary—and starts seeing one show.

Serve First. Lead Always. — **Drive the Legacy.**

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