



2026 Valdosta State University Blazin' Brigade Drumline Auditions

Thank you for your interest in joining the Valdosta State University Blazin' Brigade Drumline for the 2026 season! The Blazin' Brigade Drumline audition for all sections is comprised of two rounds; a video audition of basic exercises and an in-person ensemble audition. Video auditions are due no later than **Friday, July 31st** at 11:59:59 pm. The in-person ensemble audition will take place the first day of drumline camp on **Wednesday, August 5th, 2026** at Whitehead Auditorium in the Fine Arts Building (pending move-in times). In this packet you will find a schedule for the audition process, audition instructions and exercises, and answers to frequently asked questions. **All** members, new and returning, are **required** to audition. Please note the schedule is subject to change.

Registration

2026 Blazin' Brigade Drumline Au
dition Form



When submitting your audition video, please:

1. Make sure your hands and feet are clearly visible.
2. If you are auditioning for battery, please mark time during all exercises.
3. Practice pads are sufficient.

Audition and Drumline Camp Schedule, August 5 (schedule TBA)

August 6th-8th: See below.

Please note that auditions for the Blazin' Brigade are comprised of a two-part process: 1. The individual audition video, and 2. full ensemble auditions/rehearsal. The individual audition video will help the instructional staff tentatively place potential members into a section; the full ensemble audition/rehearsal will help instructional staff evaluate potential members both individually and as a unit/section. Potential members are evaluated on consistency of technique and sound quality as well as tempo control and rhythmic accuracy. Cuts may be made by the instructional staff at any point during the audition process, video or in-person. **Rehearsal times are subject to change based on Housing/early dorm move-in.**

- 9:00-12:00 am: Full Ensemble Audition/Rehearsal (Battery: Whitehead Auditorium; Front Ensemble: Percussion Studio A 1040)
- 12:00-1:30 pm: Lunch (on your own)
- 1:30-5:00 pm: Full Ensemble Rehearsal (Whitehead Auditorium and Percussion Studio A)
- 5:00-6:30 pm: Dinner (on your own)
- 6:30-8:30 pm: Full Ensemble Rehearsal

Potential members could be moved around to determine their best fit within the ensemble. If a potential member's skill set or attitude is deemed to be a poor fit or potential issue during the course of the season, that member may be cut as determined by the instructional staff. No potential members, new or returning, are guaranteed a placement on the Blazin' Brigade Drumline. In the event the number of potential members auditioning exceeds the number of instruments owned by the Blazin' Brigade, a marching cymbal line may be created at the discretion of the instructional staff.

What will I be asked to play for the individual video audition?

Video auditions for the battery (snare, tenors, and basses) will include the following four exercises demonstrating fundamental skills. The video should show the potential members full body with the **hands and feet clearly visible**. Any video that doesn't meet this minimum standard will be disqualified. If you do not have access to the instrument you are auditioning for, practice pads should be sufficient for instructional staff to evaluate the quality of an individual's technique.

Battery (all should be played while clearly and visibly marking time):

1. 8-8-16 (**ALL** play the snare line; splits for tenors and basses will be reserved for the ensemble audition; 12 inches **only**)
2. VSU Bucs (accent/tap)
3. Double Triple
4. 16th Rolls

Front Ensemble:

1. 8-6-4-3-2-1 (diatonic only)
2. Green scales (three (3) major keys)

3. 16th Timing (version A w/ the check pattern)
4. Four-Mallet: Measures 1-15 of 7-7-5-5-8 (Optional if no experience with four-mallet technique)

What should I bring for the ensemble audition/drumline camp?

Potential members should bring appropriate playing implements: marching snare drum sticks, tenor sticks, and/or bass drum mallets. Front ensemble members should bring keyboard mallets and at least one pair of drum sticks. The VSU Blazin' Brigade Drumline will provide all instruments for the 2026 marching season. The following implements are what we use in the battery and front ensemble; depending on supply issues, all members should be able to purchase sticks and mallets from the Blazin' Brigade (but please bring what you have to camp).

Battery:

Snares: Innovative Percussion Paul Rennick Field Series **FSPR2** Marching Snare Drumsticks

Tenors: Innovative Percussion Marching Tenor Stick **TS-1**

Basses: Innovative Percussion Field Series **FBX** Marching Bass Drum Mallets

Front:

Marimba: Innovative Percussion James Ancona **IP 2003 and 2004**

Vibraphones: Innovative Percussion James Ancona **IP 2006 and 2007**

Xylophone: Innovative Percussion **OS 5**

Bells: Innovative Percussion **OS 5 and IP 907**

ALL: Innovative Percussion Chris Lamb Drumsticks **CL-1**

What will I be asked to play for the ensemble audition?

The exercises from the video audition will be used during the ensemble audition. Additional materials may be handed out during the ensemble audition to help instructional staff evaluate potential members' reading skills and quickness in learning. All potential members are highly encouraged to memorize the individual audition materials. Final member placement for the Blazin' Brigade Drumline will occur during/after rehearsal.

Other questions?

For questions regarding the Blazin' Brigade Drumline audition process and/or marching season, please contact:

Dr. Ryan M. Smith
Assistant Professor of Percussion
Percussion Area Chair
Marching Percussion Coordinator
ryanmsmith@valdosta.edu
229-249-2711 (e-mail preferred)

For other general questions about marching band, camp, housing, etc., please contact:

Dr. Patrick Forrester
Director of Bands
cforrester@valdosta.edu

2026 VSU Blazin' Brigade Video Battery Audition Exercises

S/T/B

8-8-16

Ryan M. Smith

Play three times at 12", 9" and 3"

4/4

R - - - - - L - - - - - R - - - - - - - - - -

L - - - - - R - - - - - L - - - - - - - - - - R

Double Triple

1

R - - - - - L - - - - - R - - - - - L - - - - -

R - - - - - L - - - - - R - - - - - L - - - - -

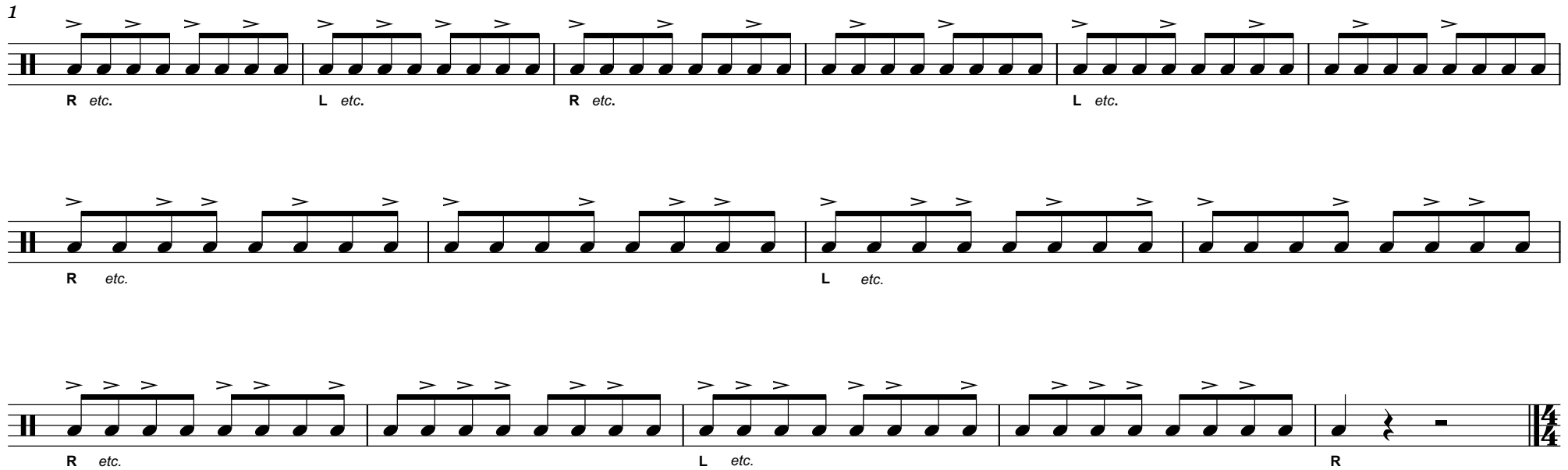
R - - - - - L - - - - - R - - - - - L - - - - -

R - - - - - L - - - - - R - - - - - R

VSU Bucs

2

1

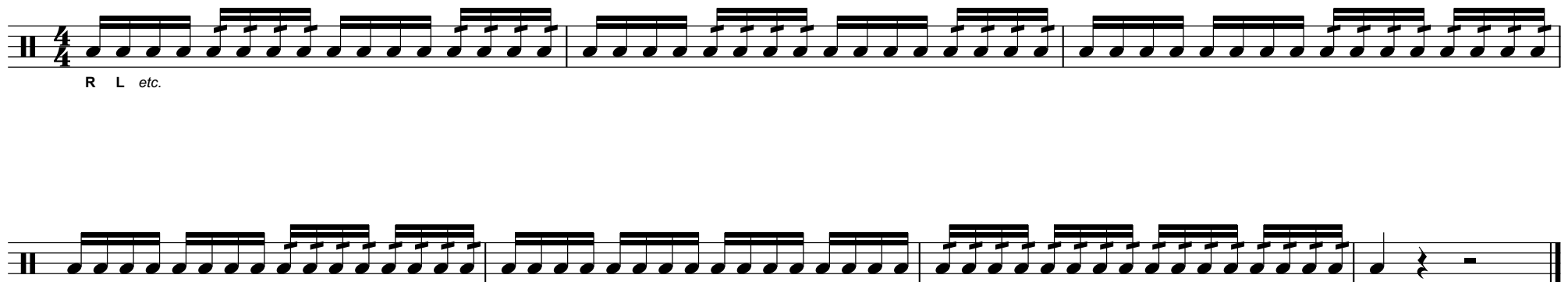


VSU Bucs drum notation. The piece is in 2/4 time and consists of 16 measures. The notation is written on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The first measure is marked with a '1' above the staff. The notation features a series of eighth notes with accents, alternating between the right and left hands. The first four measures are marked 'R etc.', the next four 'L etc.', the next four 'R etc.', and the last four 'L etc.'. The piece ends with a final measure marked 'R'.

R etc. L etc. R etc. L etc. R etc. L etc. R etc. L etc. R

16th Rolls

*May also be played as tap rolls



16th Rolls drum notation. The piece is in 4/4 time and consists of 16 measures. The notation is written on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The first measure is marked with a '1' above the staff. The notation features a series of sixteenth notes with accents, alternating between the right and left hands. The first four measures are marked 'R L etc.', the next four 'L etc.', the next four 'R etc.', and the last four 'L etc.'. The piece ends with a final measure marked 'R'.

R L etc. L etc. R etc. L etc. R etc. L etc. R etc. L etc. R

2026 Blazin' Brigade Front Ensemble Audition Exercises

8-6-4-3-2-1

Diatonic

The Diatonic exercise consists of two staves of music. The first staff is in 4/4 time and contains a continuous eighth-note pattern. Above the staff, the number '8' is written at the beginning and '6' at the end. The second staff is in 2/4 time and contains a continuous eighth-note pattern. Above the staff, the numbers '4', '3', '2', and '1' are written at the beginning, middle, and end of the staff respectively. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

Green

Play in 3 keys

The Green exercise consists of two staves of music. The first staff is in 2/4 time and contains a continuous eighth-note pattern. Below the staff, the letters 'R' and 'L' are written, followed by the word 'etc.'. The second staff is in 4/4 time and contains a continuous eighth-note pattern. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

16th Timing

2

A. With check pattern (on any note)

Four staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, featuring 16th notes and check patterns. The notation includes the following labels:

- Staff 1: R L R L sim. (under the first measure), R L R sim. (under the second measure), R R L sim. (under the third measure).
- Staff 2: R L L sim. (under the second measure), L R L sim. (under the fourth measure).
- Staff 3: 2x (above the first measure).
- Staff 4: 4x (above the second measure).

7-7-5-5-8 (first 15 measures)

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, featuring chords and 16th notes. The notation includes the following labels:

- Staff 1: 7-7-5-5-8 (first 15 measures).
- Staff 2: 7-7-5-5-8 (first 15 measures).
- Staff 3: 7-7-5-5-8 (first 15 measures).