

March Past

Coaching Manual 5th Edition



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March past competition is one of surf lifesaving's great traditional events. The event allows club members of all ages and fitness levels to train and compete. March past is a qualitatively judged event, which makes it very technical to coach.

It is strongly recommended that March Past Coaches own a copy of the latest Surf Sports Manual to guide them on the intricacies of the event. Excellent coaching resources and assistance are available through the State and National March Past Panels.



Technique

Each of the following technique components should be uniform within the team. Judging will be based primarily on the uniformity of the team action as well as the general techniques outlined below.

1. Body Carriage

- The body should be upright, not leaning forward or backward with the head held slightly high but generally with the eyes looking straight ahead
- The whole body should be relaxed with no apparent stiffness

2. Arm Action

- The arm should swing naturally from the shoulders with no excessive movement of the top part of the body
- The arm should be slightly bent but on no account should there be any "hooking" at the elbow or a rigid stiffness of the arm
- If the arm swing is correct, it should be uniform within the team and should swing forward and behind the body, but in no way be restricted
- Hands should be closed, not tightly but naturally, with the thumb pointing forward along the top of the first finger

3. Leg Action

- The movement of the leg must spring from the haunch and be free and natural
- The legs should be swung forward freely and naturally from the hip joints, each leg, as it swings forward, being bent sufficiently at the knee to enable the foot to clear the sand
- The toes shall be slightly pointed and the foot should hit the sand with the ball of the foot
- The toe of the moving foot shall clear the sand and should be uniform throughout the team
- The foot should be carried straight to the front and, without being drawn back, placed firmly upon the sand with the knee straight without jerking the body

4. Timing and Length of Pace

- The rate of marching shall be 100 - 105 paces to the minute - The nominal length of pace shall be 47 centimetres
- Each person shall step off with their left foot keeping time with the standard (flag) bearer

5. Wheeling

- On reaching the wheeling point the standard (flag) bearer and belt person, in succession, shall move around a quarter of the circumference of the circle having a radius of 2.7 metres in nine equal paces of approximately 47 centimetres
- When the centre (or axis) of the reel reaches the wheeling point the pivot persons shall move around a quarter of the circumference of the circle (the left hand pivot person at a radius of 1.2 metres in nine equal paces of approximately 21 centimetres and the right hand pivot person at a radius of 4.2 metres in nine equal paces of approximately 73 centimetres).

March Past Technique - Drills

The reel party shall move around a quarter of the circumference of the circle so as to facilitate the pivot person's remaining in line with the centre (or axis) of the reel which requires that the front handle reel person's wheel commences approximately one pace past the wheeling point.

When the rear rank reaches the wheeling point the left hand person shall follow the left pivot person and the extreme right hand person shall follow the right hand pivot person. The remaining persons in the rear rank shall maintain their dressing and spacing, whilst the rear rank shall proceed around a quarter of the circumference of the circle.

Drills

March Past is essentially a drilling discipline. Each segment of which (if not all) should be part of every session.

- Each of the techniques i.e. body carriage, arm swing, leg action, length of pace and timing should be reviewed at every section for each team member
- The standard bearer should be continually assessed for their ability to maintain the correct rate and timing of marching with and without music
- Ensure each team member, but most importantly the standard (flag) bearer, can consistently march the correct length of pace i.e. 47 centimetres and this can be assisted by regularly performing drills requiring team members to march between two given points, say 9.4 metres apart in twenty equal paces
- As the season progresses wheeling drills should be undertaken by the different elements of the team i.e., standard (flag) bearer, belt person, reel party including pivots and the rear rank separately and as a team

Key points

- Conduct technique drills at all sessions
- Length of pace drills are important
- Undertake drills on both hard and soft sand
- Timing of marching is at the correct rate

Training Sessions

Due to the nature of the march past event, training formats, strategies and goals will be more aligned to those detailed in the R&R sections of this manual rather than the other disciplines. However, it is still useful to break the overall year up into phases in order to be able to place different emphasis on varying components of the event.

Coaches should be conscious of their duty of care, particularly if teams are undertaking long periods of training on extremely hot days. It is essential that appropriate breaks occur and that team members ensure an appropriate intake of fluids is maintained.

Coach should ensure that the training area is safe for the team, making sure it is free of obstacles like seaweed (particularly the dried out type), rocks, driftwood and sharp objects etc.

1. Early/Pre-season Phase

- Can start as early as mid-winter, particularly if a new team is being formed or new members are being introduced to an established team
- The main focus of this phase is to ensure an adequate understanding and performance of technique and to build team spirit
- All team members should be requested to maintain an adequate physical fitness program
- Fitness programs for march past team members will largely be individual. Team based fitness activities should be encouraged.
- Coaches should assess whether each team member has a sufficient level of fitness to undertake the training programs.
- A level of basic fitness can be achieved within the team through group marches and gradually extending the duration
- The main emphasis during this period is on team members attaining the basic technique, including correct body carriage, correct length of pace, correct arm swing and correct leg action
- More specific training usually commences in October or November and it is important at this time to discuss the team's goals for the ensuing season and the commitment of all members to pursuing those goals

2. Mid-season Phase

- This is the heavy phase of training with both workloads and intensity increasing at a progressive rate. Training should include at least two sessions each week
- Whilst each session should have an element concentrating on basic techniques, it is important to ensure that the training program has enough variety to prevent boredom
- Sessions where route marching is scheduled will be of a longer duration. They can be varied by conducting the route march in various formations such as, three rows of four, reel positions (without the reel) and pairs.
- The variations within the route marching drills can assist in developing uniformity of technique within the team
- Other sessions may concentrate on different sections of the competition, e.g. wheeling, covering, spacing and dressing



- Each session should have a substantial element of continuous full run-throughs, i.e. marching around a course continuously, for three or four circuits. This will help develop concentration by the team members
- Training during this phase should gear the team to being mentally, as well as physically, prepared for the rigours of competition
- Analyse competition results and introduce routines to minimise deductions

3. Championship Preparation

- This phase of approximately six weeks in duration should encompass the major championships of the year
- Analyse competition results and evaluate against set goals
- Training should still be always carried out in whatever conditions present themselves during the session as these conditions may also prevail when in competition
- Sessions working on individual drills should be used to focus on any weaknesses
- Mental preparation is of the most importance in this final phase and team members should be encouraged to help motivate each other and prepare

4. March Past Training - Competition for the championship events

- Training sessions should simulate competition with the coach and/or other outside assistants assessing the team through each of the sections of the event (use of a competition judging card will assist this process)

Training Checklist	Yes	No
Ensure team members attain a level of fitness appropriate to the event and that strong team spirit and bonding is implemented		
Concentrate on new team members basic skills		
Set goals for the season and reassess them throughout		
Introduce as much variability into sessions as possible		
Training is broken into drills, at first, building into simulated competition run-throughs		

Competition

Warm Up

- Ensure that all entry requirements are complied with
- The team should arrive at the competition venue at least one hour before the scheduled start of the event. This will enable sufficient time to examine the beach and have a brief training session to ensure that timing and technique is in tune. This will allow time for team member's nerves to settle and to focus on their individual tasks and the team as a whole

Equipment

- All march past equipment and costumes should be checked prior to departure for the competition
- The reel, line and belt must be in appropriate condition, e.g. reel polished, line neatly wound, belt clean and line and knots correctly tied
- The standard, costumes and caps should be clean and tidy and a sufficient number of costumes and caps to equip all the possible team members
- The coach should ensure that the team is properly dressed and equipped a reasonable time prior to competition so that there are no last minute doubts about the presentation of the team and its preparedness for competition

During the Season

- The performance of the team at local carnivals or minor competitions is a direct reflection on the training they have been doing and the level of commitment they have shown
- Competition at this stage should be an extension of the team's training
- Feedback on the team's performance can be gained through analysis and discussion of the deductions incurred at these competitions
- The team should be acquainted with the various sections being judged
- The coach should review the judge's cards and develop a full understanding of the errors for which the team are being deducted
- Video analysis can assist the team in understanding technique errors for which they are being deducted
- A team's mental endurance is important as it will determine the team's ability to remain focused and calm during any unexpected situations or prolonged delays



Championship Preparation

- Preparing for a major championship should not differ excessively from a normal carnival preparation except that the team may need to arrive at the venue several days before the start of competition (depending on the location of the championship)
- Allow the team to adjust to unusual circumstances, both relating to accommodation and beach conditions
- Give sufficient time for the effect of distractions which can occur at championships to be absorbed and for the team focused on their competition objective
- Ensure all entry requirements and papers have been attended to.
- Thoroughly check all equipment and costumes
- Arrive at competition venues in sufficient time to acquaint the team with the competition arena and have a warm up session
- Ensure team members are properly motivated and are concentrating on the task in hand

Equipment

- No holes, tears, dirty marks, twisted straps or lack of neatness or uniformity across costumes and caps
- Chin straps are tied correctly and there are no ragged ends
- The standard has no holes, tears or fraying (this should be checked before the carnival)
- The standard is fixed to its pole leaving excess rope, after attachment to the bottom eye on the pole, neatly coiled around the pole with no loose ends showing
- The belt person's quick release pin is functioning and correctly fitted in the fastenings
- The line is attached correctly to the belt
- The line is attached to the reel with a quick release knot

March Past music is available on CD through the local State March Past Panel.

Competition Checklist	Yes	No
Ensure entries made		
Check gear		
Warm up		
Motivate team		
Analyse results		