

# LOCKDOWN OLYMPICS



## RWPS BRASS BAND 2021

Now is a time for great deeds. *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (Faster, Stronger, Higher) has long been the motto of the Olympics, and they are fantastic goals for brass players!

There are ten events. If you are able to complete all ten, you will receive the RPWS Olympic Decathlon medal for 2021. (*If you already completed this set of challenges in 2020, you will see a note in each activity for “returning champions”*)

Train for each event, and once you are ready, record yourself and email it to me. If it needs any further work I'll give you some guidance, and you can try again. Otherwise, I'll let you know to move on to the next task. If you like you can attempt more than one task in one recording/email. You can also attempt the tasks in any order.

*“The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part; the essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well.”*

- Pierre de Coubertin, father of the modern Olympic Games

*“It’s not about winning at the Olympic Games. It’s about trying to win. The motto is faster, higher, stronger, not fastest, highest, strongest. Sometimes it’s the trying that matters.”*

- Bronte Barratt, Australian swimmer and 2008 gold medalist

## SUMMARY OF EVENTS

### **1- Long Jump**

Play the longest note you can! Maintain a steady, clear sound for as long as possible.

### **2- Sprint**

Play an 8 bar rhythm as quickly as you can.

### **3- Marathon**

Play a simple 4 bar rhythm on all the notes you have learned without stopping.

### **4- High Jump**

Play notes that move progressively far apart.

### **5- Archery**

Play each of the notes you know as a short, accurate clear note. Can you hit the target?

### **6- Hurdles**

Play repeatedly up and down the notes you know, and get over every hurdle.

### **7- Gymnastics**

Move between low and high C without stopping the sound – are your lips flexible enough?

### **8 – Weightlifting**

Sliding up one note at a time, getting louder as you go.

### **9- Relay**

Listen to a series of 4 bar rhythms, and play them back

### **10- Trampoline**

Buzzing on the mouthpiece, “bounce” your sound up and down

## HOW TO COMPETE

Use your regular practice time to practice these exercises. Work on a few at a time, and when you think you are doing it well, make a recording and send it to [rwpssband@gmail.com](mailto:rwpssband@gmail.com). Audio recordings are fine – smartphones have a voice recorder app, as do most PCs. The files are small and easy to manage.

Expect that I may ask you to keep working on something! Even if you send me a good recording, if you think you can do it better a few weeks later, feel free to resubmit. I will let you know if you have successfully completed the event.

This should form *a part* of regular practice – students should still work on playing melodies and band music.

## **EVENT #1 – Long Jump**

To complete this event, you must submit a recording of the longest note you can play.

- Practice it, and time yourself many times before you submit. You should have a good idea of how long is good for you.
- This will be easier for smaller instruments – cornets will go much longer than tubas!
- You can pick any note, just make sure it stays the same pitch for the whole time. Don't let the pitch drop as you run out of breath.
- Play softly! Soft notes require less air, so you will be able to maintain it for longer.
- Use your tongue to start the note, so that no air escapes before your sound starts.
- *Returning Champions – try for a new “PB” (personal best) - a longer, steadier note!*

## **EVENT #2 – Sprint**

To complete this event, you must submit a recording of yourself playing the following rhythm:



- Start by practicing it slowly. To be sure, try saying the rhythm in “tas” and “ti-tis”.
- Increase the speed, but make sure it is both clear and has a steady rhythm.
- This will develop your articulation, and the coordination between your lungs and tongue
- *Returning Champions – try for a new “PB” (personal best) – faster and clearer*

## **EVENT #3 – Marathon**

To complete this event, you must submit a recording of yourself playing the following rhythm on a C, then D, E, F, G, A, B, high C without stopping in between:



- Make sure you fully understand the rhythm, playing the 2 and 4 beat notes for the correct duration.
- Keep a really steady pulse, don't let it speed up or slow down.
- Cut the longer notes shorter to breathe without making the following note start late
- It will take time! Be patient, and focus on making a great sound.
- This will build the muscles that support your lips and make you a much better player
- *Returning Champions – add the notes in between (sharps/flats). Use the fingering chart at the back of your music folder for guidance.*

## EVENT #4 – High Jump

To complete this event, you must play the following pattern, focusing on accurately jumping between the notes:



- Clearly tongue each note, but don't stop blowing the air between them.
- Keep a steady tempo, not too fast! Aim for quality.
- Tenor Horn/Eb tuba players, please note that the Fs are natural (1<sup>st</sup> valve) in every exercise
- Jumping accurately between notes builds confidence in your pitch
- *Returning champions – Double the speed – play “ti-ti ta” instead of “ta ta too” and when you reach the top note, come back down (play the exercise in reverse)*

## EVENT #5 – Archery

To complete this event, you must play the following pattern, focusing on accurately pitching every note:



- Each note should be short and accurate
- Count the rests out loud (2, 3, *breathe*) when practicing. For the recording, count in your head
- Breathe on beat 4 each time, so your breath is ‘in time’ with your notes
- Practicing this will develop confidence when pitching notes
- *Returning Champions – Aim for an even higher degree of accuracy and clarity*

## EVENT #6 – Hurdles

To complete this event, you must play the following pattern, focusing on fast and accurate movement of your valves/slide:



- Keep a steady speed throughout. Start practicing slowly.
- If you can play it accurately, try playing it faster.
- Focus on fast and accurate movement of the fingers/slide. Try and ‘feel’ the pattern.
- This event builds muscle memory in the fingers, as moving up and down these patterns are common in other pieces.
- *Returning Champions – try for a new “PB” (personal best) – faster and clearer*

## EVENT #7 – Gymnastics

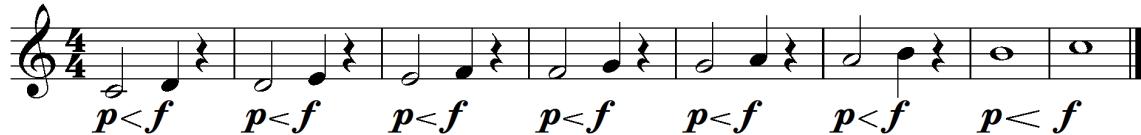
To complete this event, you must play the following pattern, without using your tongue to separate the notes:



- The notes are slurred, but don't use valves (or the slide)
- Blow steady air for the whole slur, and use your lips to change the note.
- To practice, play a C. Then play a G. Then play a C, but without stopping blowing, just change the C into a G by changing the shape of your mouth to what it is when you play a G.
- Try not to use an extra burst of air from the lungs to change note.
- This technique is difficult to master, but really teaches your lips how to prepare for each different note, and how to move smoothly between your low and high notes.
- *Returning Champions – In bar 5/6, exchange the Gs for high Cs.*

## EVENT #8 – Weightlifting

To complete this event, you must play the following pattern, focusing on dynamics:



- **p** means soft, **f** means loud. Start the first note soft, and increase the volume
- Make sure the peak (loudest point) of each crescendo is the second note
- Keep the speed steady.
- Developing control of dynamics enables you to play more expressively.
- *Returning Champions – Go for a bigger dynamic contrast (pp-ff)*

## EVENT #9 – Relay

To complete this event, you must listen to the recording on the website, and fill in the gaps.

- There will be 8 two bar rhythms, and space in between for you to copy them
- For all the rhythms, play your E. There will be two recordings, one for B flat instruments (cornet, baritone, eupho, trombone) and one for E flat instruments (tuba, tenor horn). Make sure you use the correct one!
- Use your best sound, and cleanest articulation.
- Practice several times before attempting to record.
- This activity helps develop your ability to hear rhythms as patterns in order to better understand them. Also, listening to my sound will help you develop your own.
- *Returning Champions – Use the special “Returning Champions” relay track*

## EVENT #10 – Trampoline

To complete this event, you must buzz this pattern on your mouthpiece:



- Start by buzzing a low note, then bend the pitch up and down with your lips
- Try and keep the volume even, and just use your lips to change the pitch
- Make the high and low ends of the pitch as different as possible. It should be at least G at the highest and C at the lowest, but further if you can.
- It should sound a bit like a siren. Make sure it moves up and down at an even speed, and doesn't skip from low to high – I want to hear all the sound in the middle.
- Be sure to spend plenty of time practicing this before you submit the recording, to ensure the best quality outcome.
- Being in control of the mouthpiece means you are in control of the instrument, so this is an excellent form of practice.
- *Returning Champions – Go for a bigger range between your lower and higher notes*

### Tips

- Don't send a recording of your first attempt. You should practice each exercise on several occasions before you submit a recording.
- If you don't understand something, look at the website for tips ([www.rwpsband.com](http://www.rwpsband.com)). If you still don't understand, ask! If you think you are doing it right, but it is not quite working, send me a recording and I will give you feedback.
- Some of these will seem easier than others. Different people will find different activities easy or difficult. I guarantee, ALL of these are achievable *with a reasonable amount of practice*.
- Empty your spit valve before you start a recording 😊
- If you learn to do all these, your band music WILL seem easier. There are all activities with multiple benefits – music literacy, rhythmic comprehension, range, endurance, flexibility, control etc will ALL improve by spending time on this.

### Privacy

- Any videos or recordings submitted will be saved for the duration of the Olympics (so I can refer to them when giving later advice), then deleted at the end.