

# The Search for the Perfect Walkout Song

By Bryan Betts

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Whenever Hunter Burton stepped to the plate for the Paladins last season, the 2010 single “Teach Me How to Dougie” would blast over the speaker system and his younger brother Peyton would dance.

Shimmying and running his fingers over his hair, the showboating seven-year-old would win cheers from the crowd for his surprisingly well-executed rendition of the popular dance. He would even perform on the dugout when the team played at the Greenville Drive Stadium downtown, establishing a strong claim to the song’s boast that “everybody love me.”

Yet for all the fun, the song and dance routine would prove distracting as Burton tried to focus for the coming at bat, showing just how hard it is to pick a good walkout song, the musical snippet that plays when a hitter comes up to bat or when a pitcher enters the game.

There are a lot of factors to consider—from personal taste to crowd reaction—and players on this

year’s team have picked songs that run the gamut of musical genres, from rap to classic rock to country, anything to get themselves “in the zone.”

Third baseman Chris Ohmstede went with the classic walkout number “Black Betty” by Ram Jam. Center fielder Will Muzika has stuck to pop music in recent years, walking out to Ke\$ha and Carly Rae Jepsen and, this year, to T-Swift’s regret-tinged breakup confession “I Knew You Were Trouble.”

Other players have walked out to dubstep and club music. Classical music even made an appearance a couple years ago when a senior pitcher chose to have “Ave Maria” play when he took the mound.

Catcher Zack Greenwell called it “at least a six month process” to choose a walkout, during which time players evaluate everything they hear, scour YouTube and their iTunes libraries, and even solicit suggestions on Twitter, all in search of just the right song.

“A lot of study time

wasted over the walkout song,” said pitcher Brant Masters.

Greenwell selected his walkout song, the 80s hard rock hit “The Stroke” by Billy Squier, based on its appearance in the 2007 Will Ferrell comedy *Blades of Glory*. Last year he went with the Beastie Boys’ “Intergalactic,” a song which teammates said would have the whole dugout bobbing their heads.

Pitcher Jacques de Gruy has one of the most popular walkouts amongst teammates, drawing on his nickname “Googly Bear” for the walkout “Good Googly Moogly” by southern rapper Project Pat.

Similarly, pitcher Jake Wolff puns on his last name with Duran Duran’s new wave single “Hungry Like the Wolf.” Meanwhile pitcher Emil Brignola plays off of his Asian-American background with the song “Kung Fu Fighting.”

During the fall, the team played scrimmages to prepare for the season, and this year, the upperclassmen chose the freshman

player’s walkout songs. Highlights included Aqua’s kitchy one-hit wonder “Barbie Girl” for a freshman with long blond locks and “Ms. New Booty” by Bubba Sparxxx for a player with a particularly pronounced physical asset.

Generally players keep the same walkout song for the entire season, making it all the more important to choose right the first time lest they get stuck listening to the same bad song over and over again. However, superstitious players will occasionally change their walkout song to try to get out of a slump.

For Burton, after the distractions last year, he chose to go with an expression of faith, Aaron Shust’s Christian rock single “My Savior, My God.” Burton said he chose the song for several reasons, partly because he found it calming, but said that there was one factor at the front of his mind.

“I chose this year not to pick a song that Peyton could dance to,” he said.