Double Stroke Rolls

Double stroke rolls are open rolls, where you hear each note, as opposed to ***multiple bounce rolls***, which are closed and have a buzzing sound. Double stroke rolls are used in rudimental snare drum music, whereas buzz or press rolls are used in concert snare drum music.

Even though these rolls are called double *strokes*, you should only be playing **one** stroke. The second note should come from employing the "rebound" technique, where the stick bounces freely on the drum. Your 3 back fingers need to be in place to "catch" the rebound -one stroke, two notes (e.g. 5-stroke roll = 3 strokes, 5 notes). Personally, I feel as though they should be called double *note* rolls (e.g. 11-note roll).

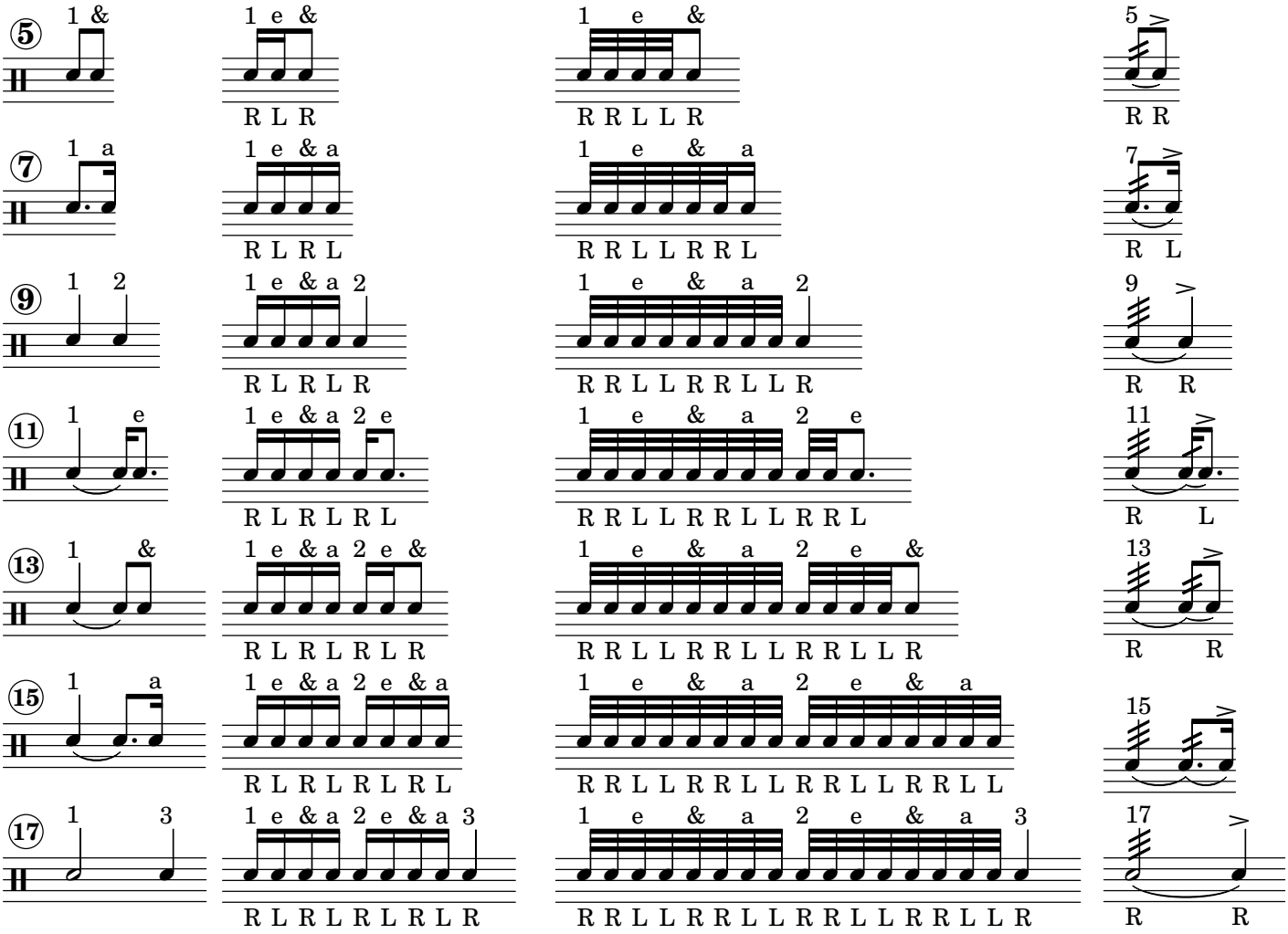
It's common for the dominant hand to be heavy, so you'll want to practice both hands with a goal toward having them be even. Beyond this, it's also quite easy to be 'first note dominant.' The first note of the double gets the primary stroke with distance, velocity, and ultimately, volume. The second note is a residual rebound that is caught by the back fingers. In order to make the second note equal volume to the main stroke you need to "snap" the stick back into place with the fingers. This will still be the case even if the primary note is generated close to the drum.

There are nine numbered double stroke rolls on the rudiment sheet. Only two of them have even numbers. For now, we are only going to concentrate on the odd-numbered rolls. 10-stroke rolls are very similar to 11-stroke rolls, and we'll take a look at 6-stroke rolls in a later section. The reason most of the rolls are odd-numbered is that after a series of doubles (always an even number) there is a single note at the end. Take for instance a 5-stroke roll, the first in the series. It goes: double-double-**bap** or 2, 4, 5. It's not good to count individual numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) or in groups of 2s. Instead, we want to count *musically*.

As we learn how to count them, let's also take a look at the notated breakdown of rolls and notice several key components to their inherent makeup. For starters, we are going to begin all of our rolls on beat 1.

Let's look at my roll grid. First thing we do is take out all the ornamentation: #, accent, slashes through the stem, tie, and sticking. What we are left with is a basic rhythm. Next, we fill in the spaces with 16th notes. After this, we essentially just double each of the 16th notes, with the exception of the final note of the 7 and 15 stroke rolls. Now, we are playing 32nd notes, which is the final breakdown. While you will sometimes see rolls fully written out in this method, you will encounter the traditional notation (last column on grid sheet) more often.

Double Stroke Rolls



Last column — how it appears on the rudiments sheet
First column — like the last column, without ornamentation
– Take out number, accent, slashes through the stem, tie, sticking
Second column — 16th notes
Third column — 32nd notes

Double Stroke Rolls

It's time to notice some important factors at play. **Each roll is increasing in increments of one 16th note.**

The 5-stroke roll ends on the "&" of 1
The 7-stroke roll ends on the "a" of 1
The 9-stroke roll ends on beat 2
The 11 ends on the "e" of 2
The 13 ends on the "&" of 2
The 15 ends on the "a" of 2
The 17 ends on beat 3

You should count all of these rolls in a musical fashion. For example:

11-stroke roll should be counted: 1-e-&-a 2-**e**

Sometimes, I find it helpful to count in 8th notes for the larger rolls:

13-stroke can be counted: 1 & 2 & 3 & **4**
15-stroke can be counted: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 **&**
17-stroke can be counted: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & **1**

This method can be used for the smaller rolls as well, but I don't find it to be as useful.

Now, let's notice that the **sticking at the end of each roll alternates between ending on the same hand and ending on the opposite hand.**

5-stroke rolls begin and end on the same hand.
7-stroke rolls begin and end on opposite hands.

This scheme continues throughout.

5, 9, 13, 17 = Same Hand	7, 11, 15 = Opposite Hands
5, 9, 13, 17 = End on the # or &	7, 11, 15 = End on the 'e' or 'a'

If you use the 8th note counting method:

5, 9, 13, 17 = End on # (same hand)	7, 11, 15 = End on & (opposite hand)

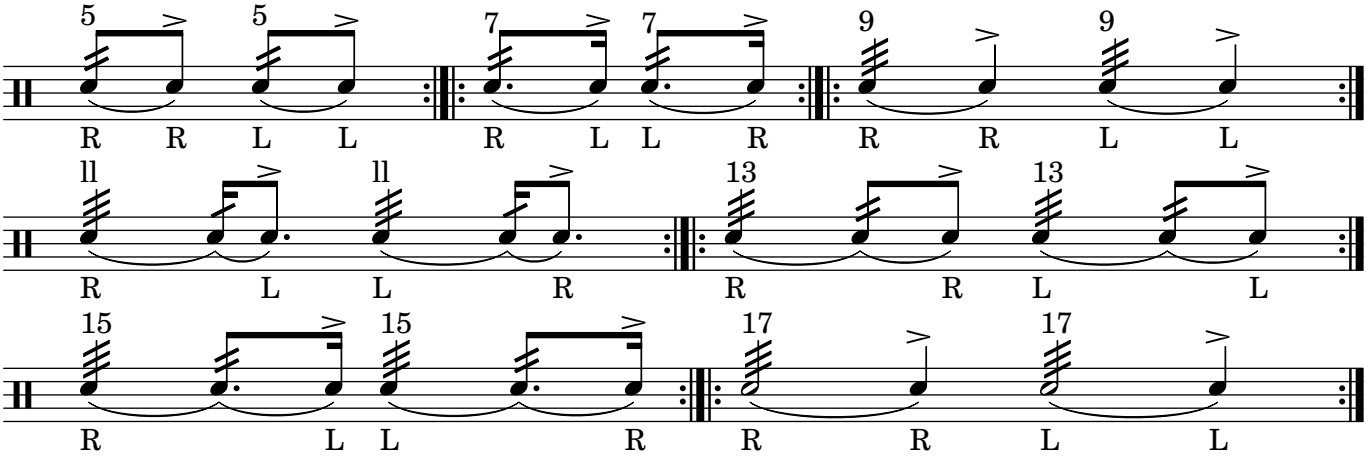
Double Stroke Rolls

It's time to address the slashes through the stems. What do they mean? A slash through the stem simply means to play a double (or diddle, or 32nd note). Throughout the rolls we see stems that have one, two, or three slashes.

The 5 and 7 stroke rolls only have 2 slashes through the stem, since they take up only one full beat or less and don't cross over into a second beat. From the 9-stroke through the 17-stroke, there are 3 slashes through the primary note since all of these rolls are larger than one quarter note. The 11-stroke roll has a single slash through the stem of beat 2. This is because we only need to double one single 16th note. The 13 and 15 stroke rolls have 3 slashes through the primary note and 2 through the stem of beat 2. The second beats of these rolls are the same pattern as the 5 and 7 stroke rolls respectively; therefore, they receive the same treatment. **In other words, 16th notes have one slash, 8th and dotted 8th notes have two slashes, and quarter and half notes have 3 slashes.**

To review what we have so far... We take a basic rhythm and fill in the 16th notes between the downbeat and the last note. We then double up each of the notes, except the last, which is a single accent. **Each roll simply adds an extra set of doubles – hence the number name increasing by 2s – and increases in increments of one 16th note. The rolls that end on a '#' or '&', will start and end with the same hand; the rolls that end on an 'a' or 'e', will start and end on opposite hands.** Slashes through the stems indicate rolls and rolls should be counted in 16th note form (or 8th notes for larger rolls, if you prefer).

Don't forget to practice rolls beginning with both hands. Here's an exercise to practice your double stroke rolls. Repeat each bar one time. Begin rolls close to the drum. The accented notes are down strokes. You can do the same thing with buzz rolls. This exercise is not to be played metronomically perfect. It will be in time, but with time changes throughout. Leave an even and natural amount of space as they switch hands and as you go from roll to roll. The 5 is in 2/4, the 7 is in 5/8, the 15 is in 5/4, and the 17 is in 6/4. The rolls in the middle are in 4/4.



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Rolls do not have to begin on the downbeat, nor do they have to begin on your dominant hand. Many times, we want to take a roll that begins and ends on opposite hands (7, 11, 15) and start them with the left, off the beat, so we end on the downbeat with our dominant hand. Finally, larger rolls can fit into smaller spaces. For example, a 7-stroke roll can be played in the space normally designated for a 5-stroke roll (8th note). Let's take a look at some of these examples. The examples that say "7 str." and "15 str." are incorrect, but that's how they are written in the Wilcoxon books.