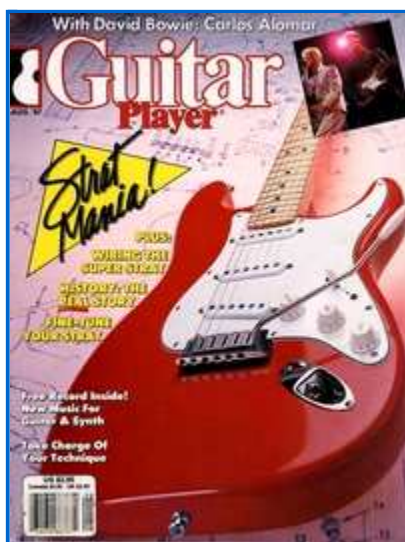


Dan Armstrong's SUPER STRAT

As appeared in Guitar Player Magazine
Aug, 1987



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You can wrest six wiring combinations from a pair of pickups. Three pickups, however, allow for a whopping 35 combinations. As alluring as this sounds to Strat players, it's a problem to access so many colors in a practical way. For over 20 years, I've applied my twisted mind to the question of how to switch three pickups. I experienced many an "aha!" during this time, including a "secret switch" for Jimi Hendrix, the 9-way switching for Fender's The Strat, and the "stock parts only" project for Guitar Player in Feb.'87. Those schemes have all been somewhat compromised by a perceived need to use the traditional Strat lever switch. By breaking free of this limitation, I was able to rethink this entire matter and arrive at a rational switching system that provides all of the very best combinations and still makes mechanical sense.

This modification yields 12 settings. It requires three mini-toggle switches (one is a 3-way), each relating to its own pickup. Here's what you get:

- * each pickup alone (three settings)
 - * three parallel pairs
 - * three series pairs
- * three pickups in parallel
- * three pickups in series
- * three pickups in series/parallel

All combinations are in phase. Tone controls follow the standard Strat convention, i.e., no tone control for the bridge position. The tone controls operate on the neck and middle pickups: they provide particularly interesting sounds in the series settings.

I've been using this system for years (with some variations, such as coil-splitting), and have duplicated it for many guitarists. Although it's more complicated than a 5-way switch, no one seems to have problems learning how to operate it efficiently. This is the most comprehensive and satisfying control system I've ever used-I'm completely spoiled by it.

This wiring is rather complicated. If you're a beginner at this sort of thing and not proficient at soldering and reading circuits, turn the job over to someone with more confidence and experience. If you wish to wire up this system yourself, here are a few pointers:

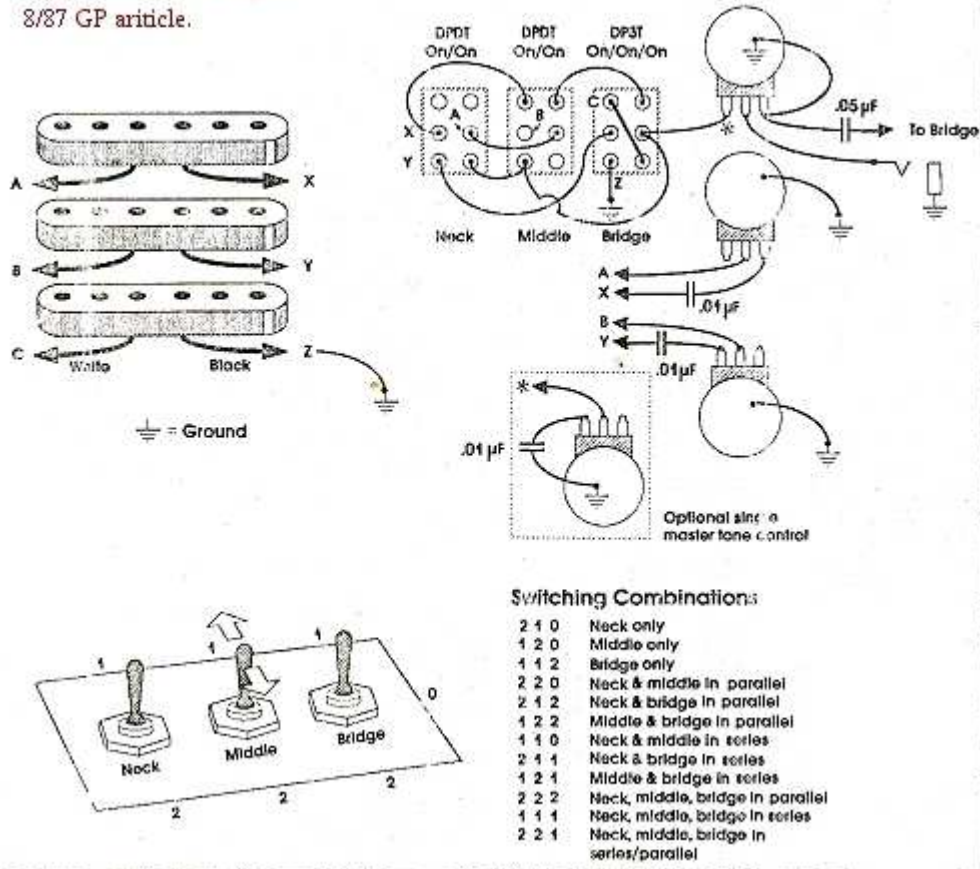
- *Use only high-quality switches. Cheap ones can be susceptible to noise and premature breakdown.
- *Use a good electronics-grade rosin core solder. (Never use acid-core solder. It corrodes metal parts, including switches pots jacks and wires.)

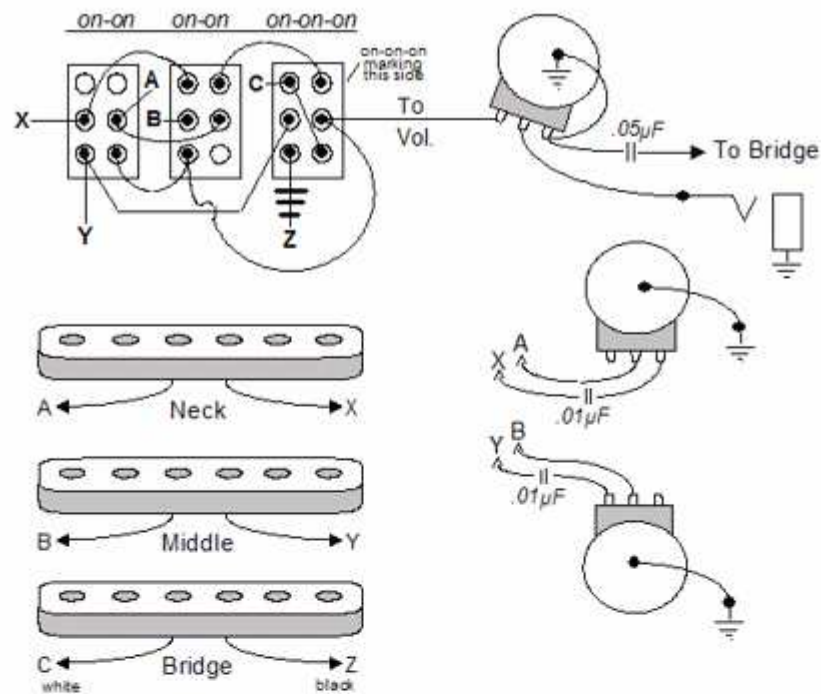
You'll need two DPDT on/on 2 position switches, and one DP3T on/on/on 3 position type. (Note: Make sure you get an on/on/on. This hard-to-locate switch is available from such specialty parts suppliers as Spitzer's Music, Chandler, and Warmoth). Replace the lever switch with three mini-toggles. Drill three little holes in the pickguard so you can mount the switches side-by-side with their levers about 1/2" apart. The entire triple switch array fits into the slot where the stock switch used to be.

Be sure to ground the switch bodies (some have a solder tab, others require wrapping a wire around each switch's threaded "neck" and wiring that to a ground point). If your bridge pickup is a humbucker (with or without a coil splitter), the circuit needs no modification. For guitars with only one tone control, use the optional master tone shown in the diagram. The .05uF capacitor in the string-to-ground line is for shock proofing; it greatly reduces the likelihood of shock if you touch both your strings and other electrical gear.

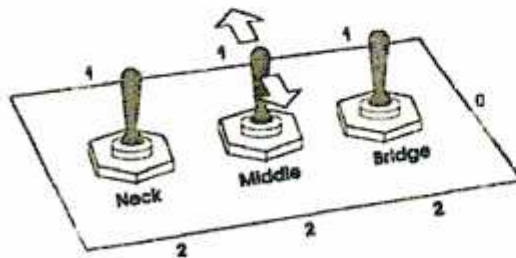
Where possible, larger versions of the images below are available by clicking on the image.

Diagram from the original
8/87 GP article.





Dan Armstrong's Super Strat



Get 12 pickup combinations with this replacement selector setup. Drill 3 holes in the slot of the normal strat selector switch and put these three mini-toggle switches in its place.

Parts: 2 on-on mini-toggles
1 on-on-on mini-toggle
a fair amount of wire

from Guitar Player Magazine 1987

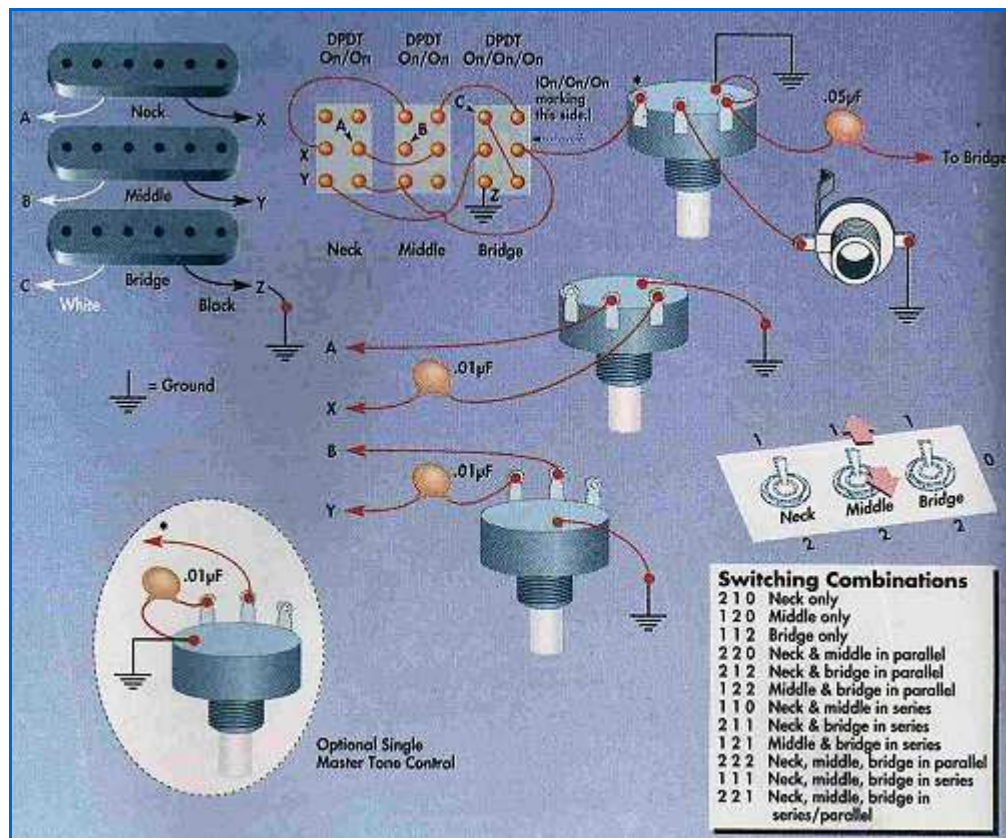
N - M - B		
2	1	0
1	2	0
1	1	2
2	2	0
2	1	2
1	2	2

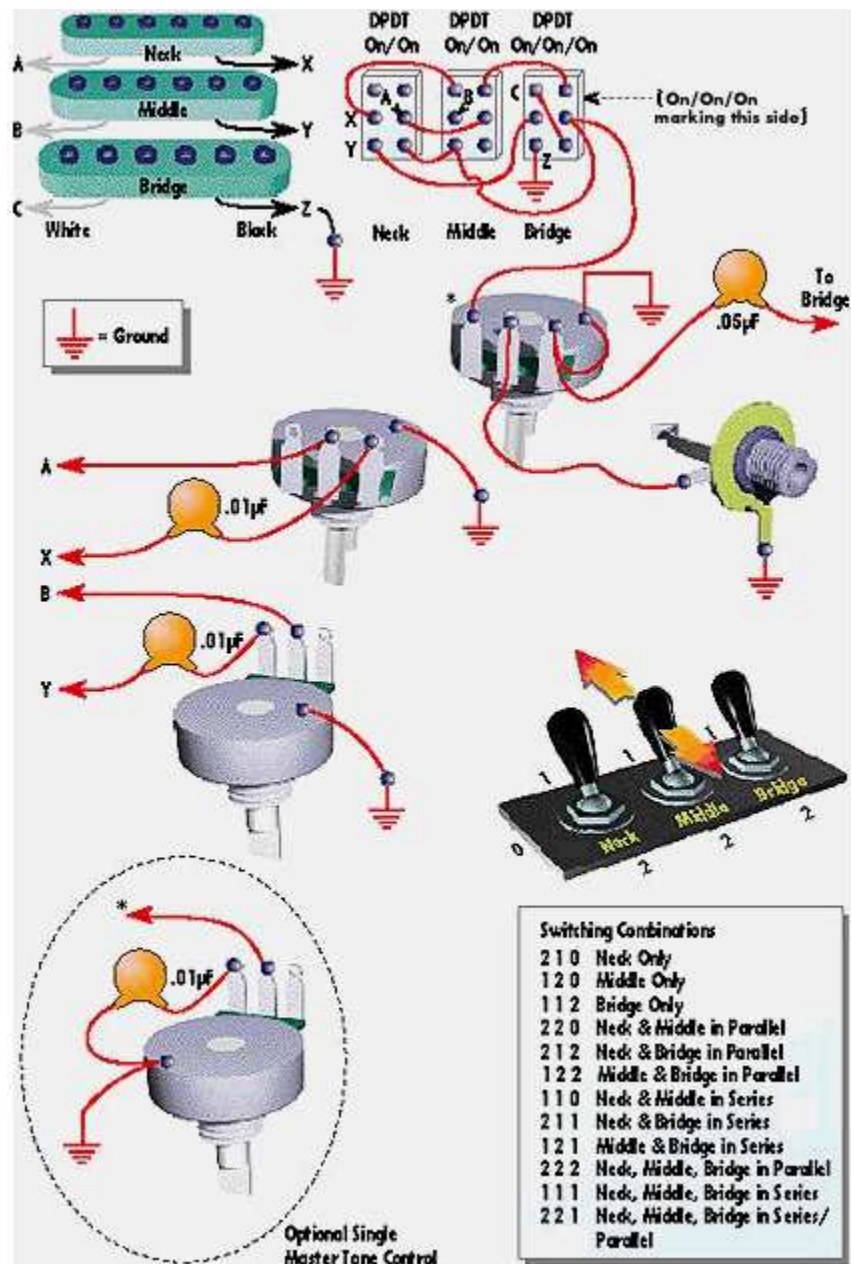
Neck only
Middle only
Bridge only
Neck and Middle Parallel
Neck and Bridge Parallel
Middle and Bridge Parallel

N - M - B		
2	2	2
1	1	0
2	1	1
1	2	1
1	1	1
2	2	1

All Parallel
Neck and Middle Series
Neck and Bridge Series
Middle and Bridge Series
All Series
Neck and Middle Parallel w/ Bridge Series

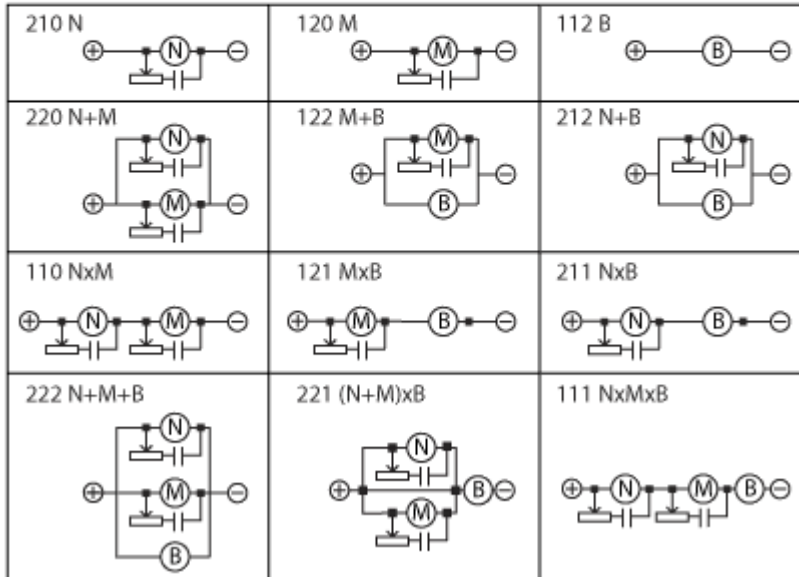
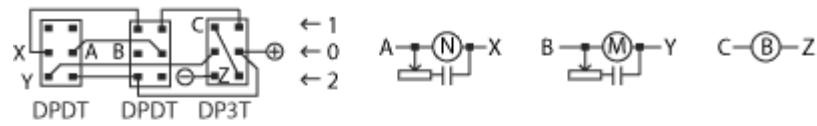
Drawn by Ashley Bass 1996

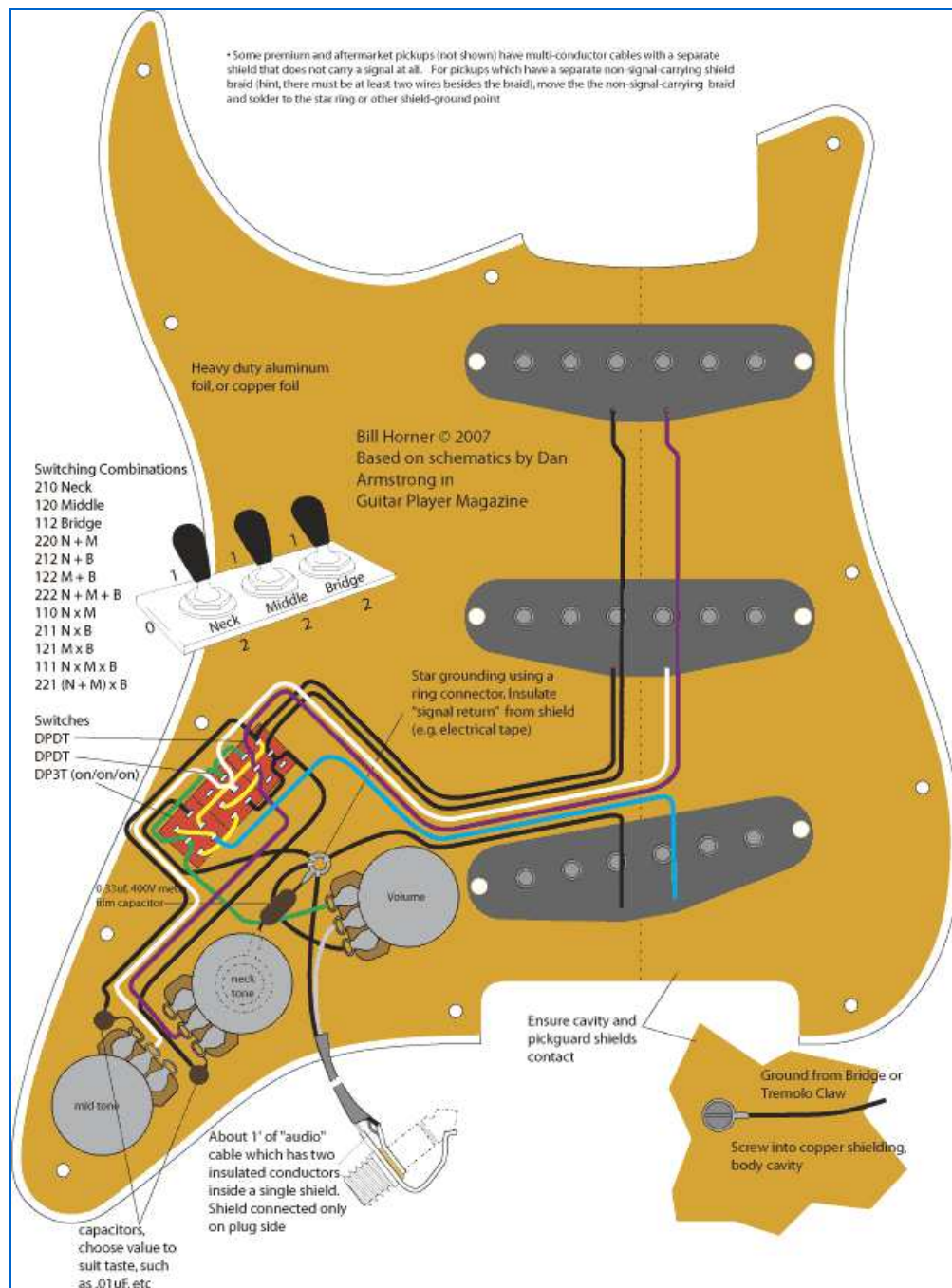


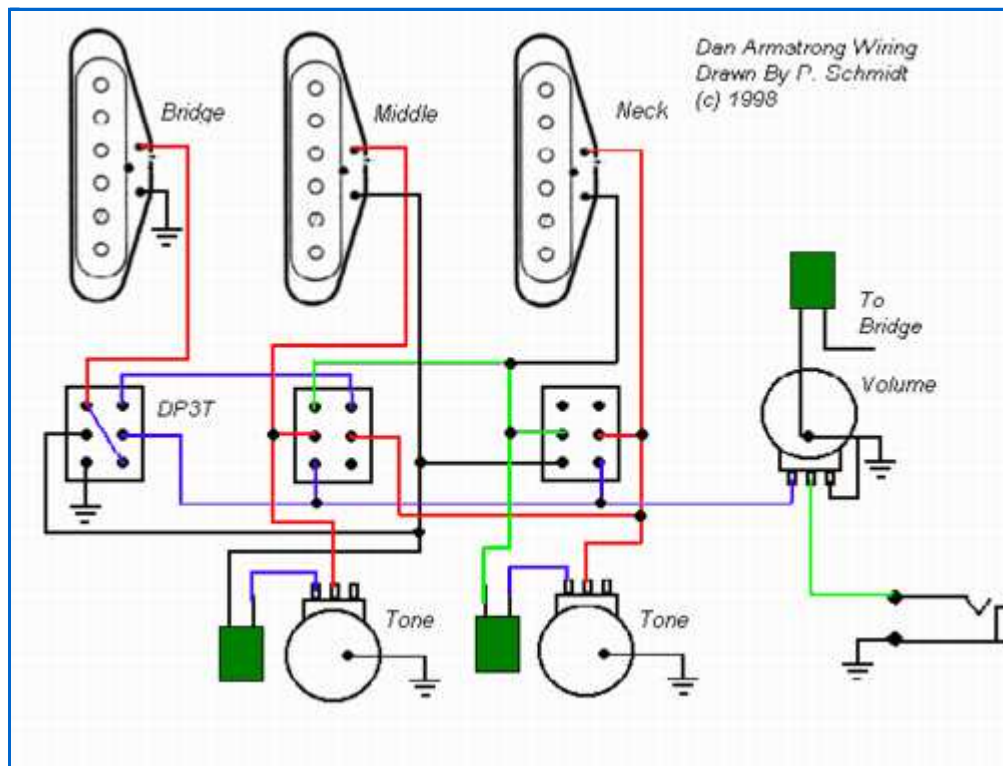
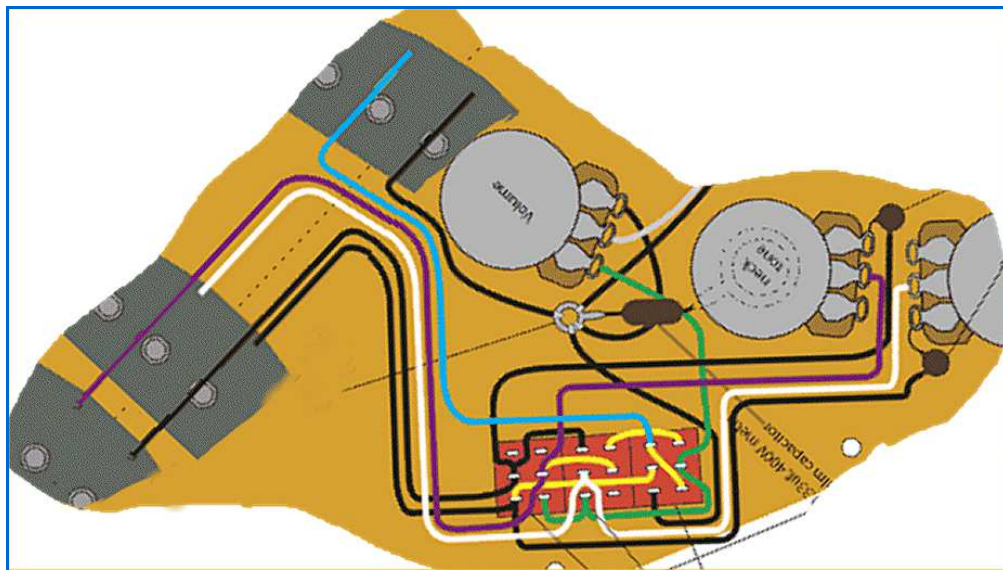


Dan Armstrong 12 Position, 3 Pick Up, Schematic

Redrawn by Bill Horner 2007







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