



## Clothes Coaching Outline Southern Women's Traditional Dance Plains or Lakes

DANCER:\_\_\_\_\_

CONTEST# \_\_\_\_\_

LODGE #\_\_\_\_\_

COACH:\_\_\_\_\_

### THE PURPOSE OF THE NOAC AIA COACHING SESSION:

Plains Powwow Culture is a 'popular' culture, evolving continuously in many areas; certainly, in the areas of the music, the dance and the dance clothes. Dance competitions continue to be increasingly popular not just at the summer tribal gatherings, but at big annual dance competitions happening throughout the year. Hundreds of dancers compete for thousands of dollars in prize money. Powwow-style dancing is a passion for many people and the most competitive among them actively keep their eyes on the latest fashions and their ears open to the latest songs. Smart dancers are always looking for ways to improve their dance moves and their dance clothes. Even the best-dressed dancers know their dance clothes can always be 'bumped up a notch'. While dance clothes are not 'judged' at these dance competitions, they do matter. Savvy dancers know they have to look their very best if they want to catch the judges' eye and make a positive impression. And when you look good, you feel good and then you're sure to dance your best.

In our many years of experience and involvement in dancing and powwows, we know that 'powwowing' is a family activity; rare are the dancers who go it alone. The construction of a set of dance clothes is far too complicated an endeavor to be accomplished by any one person. A set of dance clothes is a compilation of items made, received as gifts, purchased, and borrowed for the event. *It Takes a Family to Dress a Dancer*. From Tiny Tots to Golden Age, all dancers have help with their clothes. And guidance from experienced dancers is some of the best help you can get.

At the NOAC AIA Dance Clothes Coaching Session a dancer has the opportunity to discuss his dance clothes with a senior powwow dance enthusiast, tapping into years of experience in the areas of dance, dance clothes, craft and powwow culture. This outline is to be used as a guiding framework, with the understanding

that 'change happens' and everyone needs to keep his eyes open to the latest trends - competitors and coaches alike.

It is the goal of all Arrowmen who have been selected as NOAC Dance Clothes Coaches to share their knowledge and experience with younger dancers (and their support teams) in the hope of inspiring yet another enthusiastic, better-dressed dancer.

### **A note about DANCE CLOTHES:**

The most important thing about a set of modern Southern Women's Traditional - Plains or Lakes dance clothes is the overall look. Dance clothes are meant to be danced in, not to be judged in a still position. The components of your dance clothes should move well when you dance and work to enhance your dancing style. For this reason, materials, size, shape, and placement of the individual dance clothes components listed above must be in order. When specific materials are called for - such as beadwork - an adequate substitution of cloth, fabric applique, sequins, painted material can be used. However, proper colors, designs, and proportions must be in place for the article to get maximum points and for your dance clothes to have maximum visual impact.

This outline is not just a "scoring sheet"; it is a resource for you to constantly improve your dance clothes to be the best they can be. When you look at the individual scores of the various headings as well as the overall score, think of what you can do to improve each item, even if just by just a couple of points. Our goal is to help you to elevate your dance clothes to a higher level. By continually improving your dance clothes, your presentation on the dance floor will improve as well.

### **A note to DANCERS:**

This outline is designed to summarize what a Southern Women's Traditional - Plains or Lakes dancer would wear at a contemporary powwow. It represents the norm as defined by modern dancers in the Southern Plains or Lakes areas across the country.

Be aware that although a printed or recorded work may have been relevant at the time of its making, Southern Women's Traditional - Plains or Lakes are ever-changing dance styles and these works can sometimes become outdated within a short period of time. If possible, attend powwows and notice the subtle trends being added to Southern Women's Traditional -Plains or Lakes dance clothes of today. If you live in an area where it is difficult to attend powwows, you can use resources such as:

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), [www.gatheringofnations.com](http://www.gatheringofnations.com),  
[www.powwows.com](http://www.powwows.com), or [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)

to view photos and video footage of powwow dancers. Please be respectful of other's dance clothes. Model your dance clothes after contemporary dancers, but do not copy a specific set of clothes verbatim. While Southern Women's Traditional - Plains or Lakes dance clothes of the past have their place in history, some of the components may not appropriate for contemporary dance styles. Stay current and up-to-date on your dance clothes' style.

### WOMEN'S SOUTHERN TRADITIONAL DANCE MAXIMUM SCORE: 60 Points

#### SCALE:

0 = Missing or Inappropriate Item

1-3 = Acceptable

4-6 = Good

7-9 = Excellent

10 = Superior

#### STANDARD ITEMS

#### SCORE

**Item 1: HEAD:** Feather Plumes, Barrett, Hair Ties, Crown (10) \_\_\_\_\_

Superior: Imitation eagle feather plume(s). Typically a beaded hair barrette or beaded crown secures the plumes at the center back of the head. Beaded, shell or decorative hair ties, all coordinated in color and style. French braided hair. Short hair.

Acceptable: Items in place but mismatched or not necessarily coordinated. Fluffs instead of plumes. Undecorated hair ties. Braided hair. Short hair. No beaded crown.

Inappropriate: Missing items.

**Item 2: Body:** Dress: Choose one of the following three (A, B, or C)

**A. Dress with Wrap Apron (Typically Kiowa or Comanche)** (10) \_\_\_\_\_

Superior: Dress with wrap apron fits nicely, are the proper length, made in the correct style, and made from the correct type of fabric such as dressy fabrics and/or bright, print on print, or brocade-like fabrics. Fringe on apron is the correct length and spaced correctly (no fringe may be indicative of a specific tribe and therefore OK). Gusset inserted with hem dropped 3-5 inches below the dress hem (if tribe specific). Bead and hairpipe breastplate (southern style front and back). Tack, beaded, or concho belt. Belt dragger.

Acceptable: Plain, simple fabric. No gusset inserted. Plain leather belt, no belt dragger. Medallion or scarf worn like a neckerchief instead of breastplate. No fringe on wrap apron unless tribe specific.

Inappropriate: Hem too short on dress or apron wrap. Improper fit or improper use of fabric. No medallion or breastplate. Scout neckerchief.

No belt.

-or-

**B. Ribbon Work Skirt and Blouse (Southern, Central Plains, or Lakes) (10) \_\_\_\_\_**

Superior: Skirt and blouse fit nicely, are the proper length, made in the correct style and made from the correct type of fabric - Broadcloth, wool, wool gabardine, for the skirt (may be brightly colored); dressy fabrics and/or bright, print on print, lined lace, or brocade-like fabrics for the blouse. Skirt has ribbon work, machine embroidery, fabric applique, or ribbon decorations. Appropriate blouse may or may not be decorated like a "ribbon shirt" depending on the tribe. Cloth, ribbon, or beaded trailer. Bead and hairpipe necklaces. Finger woven sash worn correctly under the blouse and over the skirt.

Acceptable: Fabric skirt which displays the correct use. Ribbon decoration on skirt. Plain blouse. Medallion or scarf worn like a neckerchief instead of necklaces. Ribbon trailer. No sash.

Inappropriate: Hem too short on skirt. Improper fit or improper use or see-through fabric on blouse. No medallion, necklaces, or breastplate. Scout neckerchief. No trailer.

-or-

**C. Cloth Dress/Buckskin (10) \_\_\_\_\_**

Superior: Dress fits nicely and is the proper length, made in the correct style, and made from the correct type of fabric; Suggestions - Broadcloth, wool, wool gabardine (all may be brightly colored). Dress bodice, sleeves, and lower portion have machine embroidery, appropriate beadwork (Including pattern and placement), fabric applique, cowrie shell, or elk's teeth decoration. Buckskin fits nicely, is the proper length and style, and made with the correct color hide (off- white, cream, brain tanned, smoked). Decorated with appropriate beadwork (including pattern and placement), cowrie shell, or elk's teeth. Cloth, ribbon or beaded trailer. Bead and hairpipe breastplate (southern style front and back). Tack, concho, or beaded belt with belt dragger.

Acceptable: Dress which displays the correct fabric use with simple decorations. Medallion or scarf worn like a neckerchief instead of breastplate. Ribbon trailer. Belt. No belt dragger.

Inappropriate: Hem too short. Improper fit or improper use of fabric. Wrong color buckskin (non-natural colors ie: red, black, purple, green etc.) No medallion or breastplate. No belt. Scout neckerchief. No trailer.

**Item 3: LEGS AND FEET:** Leggings and Moccasins or Boots. (10)\_\_\_\_\_

Superior: Southern style boots with beaded decoration. Fully beaded leggings and moccasins. Partially beaded moccasins if appropriate; hose/tights are optional.

Acceptable: Undecorated Southern style boots. Undecorated leggings and moccasins. Undecorated moccasins. Commercial hide boots.

Inappropriate: The use of tennis shoes or other inappropriate footwear in place of moccasins.

**Item 4: ACCESSORIES:** Choker, Jewelry (10)\_\_\_\_\_

Superior: Beaded crown, choker with a beaded medallion (decorative drop), beaded barrettes, beaded earrings, rings, and/or bracelets coordinated in style and color to compliment the dance clothes. Beaded flat purse or drop bag (if tribe specific). Big imitation eagle feather fan. Decorated arm shawl.

Appropriate: Accessories are present but not coordinated in color or design. Plain flat purse, drop bag or no purse/bag. Smaller fan of alternative legal feathers. Undecorated arm shawl.

Inappropriate: Accessories missing. No shawl.

**Item 5: OVERALL:** (20)

Scale: 1-5 Good start, room for improvement; 6-10 Solid basic dance clothes, lacking some items; 11-15 Excellent; 16-20 Superior

Does the set look complete? Do the dance clothes have the right "look"? Are the clothes consistent with current styles?

**FINAL SCORE** (60)\_\_\_\_\_

**Ribbon Scale:** White 1-16 Red 17-32 Blue 33-48 Gold 49-60