

**NOAC AIA DANCE CLOTHES COACHING OUTLINE  
CHICKEN DANCE**

**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 Chicken Dance 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 as the NOAC Chicken Dance staff 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 Chicken Dancer would wear at a contemporary powwow. It represents the norm as defined by modern dancers in the Northern Plains and across the country.

Be aware that although a printed or recorded work may have been relevant at the time of its making, Chicken Dance is an ever-changing dance style 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 Chicken Dance 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) 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 Chicken Dance 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.

## CHICKEN DANCE

### MAXIMUM SCORE: 90 Points

Scale (Item 1-7): 0 = Missing or Inappropriate Item; 1-3 = Acceptable; 4-6 = Good; 7-9 = Excellent; 10 = Superior

### STANDARD ITEMS

### SCORE

<b>Item</b>	<b>1:</b>	<b>HEAD</b>	Roach;	Roach	Feathers;	Spreader;
			etc.			(10)

Superior: Roach - well made, worn correctly, appropriate flare, length should be a minimum of 14", coordinated with dance clothes, with spreader and roach feathers, or pheasant tails tipped with fluffs (can be decorated. Porcupine hair roaches are necessary). Headband, beaded or other decoration method, colors should coordinate with the dance clothes. A "Wapegnaka" or a Neck Bustle is a possible addition.

Acceptable: Fiber roach; discordant color porky roach; inadequate length, poorly constructed or worn out roach.

Inappropriate: Bandannas; no roach; war bonnets; animal skin headgear; missing spreader; feather visors; missing items.

### **Item 2: BODY/CHEST AREA** Yoke; Body Covering; Tie; Breast Plate; etc. (10)

Superior: Yoke with coordinated colored designs in beaded or fabric applique, sequins, with chainette fringe or ribbon of adequate length. Body covering to include full tights, colors coordinated with dance clothes. Beaded necktie and collar. Decorated otter breastplate, Loop necklace, or bone breastplate, worn appropriately.

Acceptable: Items that do not coordinate well with the dance clothes; inappropriate body covering length of yoke or fringe; simple or undecorated items.

Inappropriate: Lack of proper fringe; t-shirt; no body covering; yarn fringe; bandoliers; OA sash; missing items.

<b>Item</b>	<b>3:</b>
<b>BUSTLE</b>	(10)

Superior: Well-constructed round or shingle back bustle in coordinated colors, adequate size and contain uprights and a trailer. Trailer should be decorated with feathers and be a single or double trailer. Feather decoration, clean design and execution, colors complementing and coordinating with dance clothes, and properly worn. Back bustle should be affixed to waist.

Acceptable: Round bustle with little color or un-coordinated colors.

Inappropriate: No bustle, poorly made bustle, traditional style bustle, missing items or poor materials.

<b>Item</b>	<b>4:</b>	<b>ARMS</b>	Cuffs;
Armbands			(10)

Superior: Beaded as part of a set decorated with fluffs or ribbon hanging from armbands. Cuffs worn at the wrist with appropriate design elements as to coordinate with the overall theme of the dance clothes. Beadwork and/or quillwork on armbands and cuffs. Silver or well-made brass armbands are acceptable.

Acceptable: Armbands plain, cuffs are plain or mismatched in overall theme of dance clothes.

Inappropriate: No armbands or cuffs; missing items

**Item 5: HANDS** Fan; Mirror Board; Dance Hoop; Dance Stick;  
Other (10)

Superior: Fan- wing, flat or loose; mirror board; beaded or decorated dance stick or dance hoop - can be leather, fur or sweetgrass wrapped; items decorated in an appropriate way.

All must fit with the overall look of the dance clothes.

Acceptable: Undecorated items, only one hand item.

Inappropriate: No hand articles; objects considered to be from other styles; missing items.

**Item 6: MID-BODY** Aprons; Belt; Optional Side  
Tabs (10)

Superior: Aprons, of adequate length and width to cover mid body, with coordinated colored designs in fabric applique, sequins, or beaded, edged in chainette fringe or ribbon. Belt, beaded or other decoration (Concho, tack), coordinated colors. Side tabs (optional) adequately covering space between front and back aprons,

Acceptable: Un-decorated aprons and plain belt.

Inappropriate: No aprons; no belt; no fringe on aprons edges; missing items.

**Item 7: LEGS & FEET** Goats; Bells; Knee Bands; Plains Hard-sole Moccasins  
(10)

Superior: Angora "goats" or other appropriate animal, appropriate length, worn correctly. (Goats maybe dyed to match overall theme of dance clothes. Colors must be appropriate to overall look.) Other ankle coverings could include dyed strung feathers, although not necessary. Leg and ankle bells, sleigh or any variation of bells, fastened neatly, worn at both sides and at ankle. Ankle bells do not interfere with goats, properly attached. Knee bands, beaded, quilled, or other material. Fully or partly beaded or quilled Plains hard-sole moccasins, colors coordinated with dance clothes.

Acceptable: Goats of questionable length or size, gaps in the back, dirty. Undecorated leather moccasins or colored water shoes, canvas deck shoes painted or partially beaded. Bells loosely attached, wrong size or the wrong quantity for dancing.

Inappropriate: No goats, bells, or moccasins; leggings; tennis shoes; leather soft-sole moccasins; missing items.

### **Item 8: OVERALL**

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”? (20)

Are they consistent the current styles?

**FINAL SCORE**

**(90)**

**Ribbon Scale:**

**White 1-24**

**Red 25-49**

**Blue 50-73**

**Gold 74-90**