

**NOAC AIA DANCE CLOTHES COACHING OUTLINE
OLD TIME SIOUX**

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 Old Time Sioux 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. Old Time Sioux being an historic style, proper colors, designs, and proportions must be in place for the articles 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 Old Time Sioux 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 male Sioux dancer would have worn from ca. 1900-1930. It represents the research done by the use of vintage photos and authentic examples of outfit components.

A variety of literature was used. Amongst these were:

- (1) “Old Time Sioux Costume” by Norm Feder, *The American Indian Hobbyist*, Nov/Dec. 1958.
- (2) “Old Time Sioux Dancers” by Mike Tucker, 1969.

There are many modern reference materials currently available. Numerous books with vintage photos have been published. There are also books, magazines, and catalogs with photos of the many items used by Old Time Sioux dancers.

Of course, there were Sioux dancers earlier than 1900 and later than 1930. The dance outfits from these earlier and later periods can vary from what is described here. These dates are not “hard-edged” and there can be exceptions. However, the concepts in this form represent a reasonable norm. If a Scout-dancer chooses to use items that fall outside the range described above, he should be prepared to provide appropriate documentation. Vintage photos can provide such documentation, but one needs to exercise careful judgment when using photos. This is especially true of what are termed, “studio photos” since many of these feature items that belonged to the photographer and were loaned to the Native American being photographed. Tribal affiliation and appropriate dating are important.

The use of vintage photos and color photos of authentic outfit components will serve the Scout- dancer well.

OLD TIME SIOUX

MAXIMUM SCORE: 110 Points

Scale (Items 1-9): 0 = Missing or Inappropriate Item; 1-3 = Acceptable; 4-6 = Good;

7-9 = Excellent; 10 = Superior

Item 1: HEAD Roach; Roach Feathers; Spreader; “Wapegnaka” (Bull-tail); or (10)
other period-appropriate headdress

Superior: The standard is a northern style porcupine/deer tail hair roach, well made and correctly worn (usually less than 14 inches in length). The roach will include a bone or rawhide spreader with bone/wooden sockets and one or two imitation golden eagle tail feathers properly attached. Scalp feathers, quilled wheels, etc., may be worn. A roach pin may be worn; it should of the shorter, older style; 5” and longer modern style roach pins do not meet the standard. A lazy stitched or quilled “wapegnaka” with proper colors and designs may we worn with the roach or it may be worn with imitation eagle feathers as an alternative to the roach. A war bonnet may be worn if the rest of the outfit matches; i.e., war bonnets were usually worn by older men with more elaborate outfits.

Acceptable: A fiber roach may be worn.

Inappropriate: Top hats, bowlers, porkpie hats, Civil War hats, bandanas, fur turbans, nonvintage roaches, granny glasses, sunglasses, northern traditional visors, German silver roach spreaders, etc. do not meet the standard.

Item 2: NECK Choker; Peace Medal; Necklace; Neck Bustle; Cotton or (10)
Silk Neckerchief

Superior: The standard for a choker is one that is properly constructed of hair pipe, bone tube, brass beads, or dentalium with harness leather-type spacers. Ca. 2 ^” backed mirror or conch shell disk may be used in the center of the choker. Plastic bone tube and plastic hairpipe may be used. An otter fur choker also meets the standard. (Quality fake fur may be used.) Authentic or reproduction Peace Medals of proper date/era may be worn either around the neck or on the breastplate. Neck bustles must be properly constructed and sized with an appropriate variety of feathers and feather treatments.

Acceptable: Lower quality, but properly made examples of all the things listed above.

Inappropriate: Scout neckerchiefs, non-Peace Medal medallions do not meet the standard.

Colored pipes or tubes in choker do not meet the standard.

Item 3: CHEST AREA Shirt; Vest; Otter; Breastplate; Bandoliers
(10)_____

Superior: A buttoned, store bought shirt meets the standard. Shirts may be plain cotton, vintage calico-style prints, or striped: such shirts should be typical of commercial shirts available in the early 1900’s; a modern plain or striped dress shirt is a good substitute. A hide war shirt may be worn if it is consistent with the rest of the dancer’s outfit. Otter “breastplate” with metal-backed mirrors, quilled wheels, ribbons, quilled or beaded panels meets the standard. Long bone breastplates usually have two or three sections of 4-inch pipes, or two sections of 4-inch pipes with a center section of 1-2 inch pipes or appropriate beads. Harness-type leather spacers are used to separate sections and along each edge. In addition commercial cloth or fully beaded vests meet standard. Cloth vests can be trimmed with beadwork, metal sequins, or quillwork. Fully

beaded vests must be done with proper colors, designs, and beading technique to meet standard. A quilled breastplate of correct design meets the standard. Bandoliers may be made of beads, of deer toe/dew claw dangles, or of “junk” dangles meet the standard. If a “junk” type is chosen, the materials should be era-appropriate.

Acceptable: Lower quality, but properly made examples of all the things listed above.

Inappropriate: Modern ribbon shirts; improper materials or prints; bare chest; incorrect beads, etc.

Item 4: ARMS Cuffs; Armbands (10)

Superior: Fully beaded or quilled cuffs and armbands with proper colors, designs, and technique meet the standard. Brass armbands meet the standard. Beadwork or quillwork on cuffs will not normally match that on the armbands.

Acceptable: Loom beadwork that has correct designs and colors. Raffia-simulated quillwork is acceptable.

Inappropriate: Improper colors or colors do not meet the standard. Gauntlets, German silver or plain leather cuffs or cuffs decorated with sequins, tacks, etc. do not meet the standard. Fake beadwork does not meet the standard.

Item 5: HANDS Wing Fan; Rope; Quirt; Pipe Bag; Other Appropriate Objects 10)

(see list of appropriate items below)

Superior: An appropriately-sized wing fan (Canada goose, for instance) meets the standard.

Coiled ropes, sweet grass hoops, tomahawk pipes, quirt, and pipe bags meet the standard.

Acceptable: Lower quality wing fan, etc.

Inappropriate: Improper fans (macaw, loose fans, modern fans, etc.), mirror boards, peace pipes, calumets, shields, spears, lances, sabers, rifles, Contemporary Traditional dance sticks and improperly constructed pipe bags do not meet the standard. Gourd-stitch beadwork is not appropriate.

Item 6: MID-BODY Breechclout or Aprons; Tack Belt; Sash; Small Pouch; etc. (10)

Superior: Breechclout/aprons of high quality wool or trade cloth meet the standard. Decorations and materials should be appropriate to the period: ribbons, metal sequins, buttons, era appropriate coins, metallic fringe, etc.

Acceptable: Wool without decoration, wool felt with or without decoration.

Inappropriate: Non-wool, incorrect designs, materials, or construction (i.e., Contemporary Traditional beaded clouts, modern ribbonwork, BSA items, etc.) do not meet the standard.

Item 7: BUSTLE Vintage Sioux-Style Bustle (10)

Superior: Properly sized and constructed Sioux-style bustle appropriate to the period meets the standard. The bustle will typically include a variety of feathers and a variety of treatments i.e.: trimmed, stripped, shaved quills, different sizes in concentric circles, fluff tips, dyed (red, green, purple, orange, etc.) Spikes should be prominent and decorated with fluffs, sweet grass braids, hawk bells, quilled wheels, etc. Properly designed and constructed pheasant bustles meet the standard.

The bustle will include properly sized trailers of wool or buckskin. Decorations of ribbon, metal sequins, etc. should be period-appropriate.

The belt can be leather or it can be a sash. The sash may be woven or a strip of wool; it can be decorated with circular mirrors.

Acceptable: lower quality construction or materials.

Inappropriate: Contemporary bustles, butterfly bustles, other era/tribe-inappropriate bustles do not meet the standard.

Item 8: LEGS Leggings; Long Johns/Union Suits; Knee Bands; Ankle Bands; (10)

Bells; Quilled Knee Bands; Bells; Fur

Superior: Wool or hide leggings with or without beaded strips meet the standard; beaded strips are lazy-stitched with correct Sioux colors and designs. Hide leggings may be painted with appropriate stripes, etc. Wool or cotton long johns/union suits, plain or dyed, meet the standard. Knickers may be worn.

Large nickel-plated or brass bells (ca. 1 V” Dia-1 %” dia.) mounted on harness-type leather, may be worn at the knees and/or ankles, and/or legs, as appropriate. Fur knee bands and/or ankle bands should be worn with long johns. They can be angora, otter, buffalo, or skunk (Quality fake fur may be used.)

Acceptable: Felt leggings, bells that are too small or improperly worn, loom beadwork on leggings.

Inappropriate: Non-northern plains leggings, improper colors, designs on beadwork do not meet the standard. Jeans, shorts or pants do not meet the standard. Cow or sheep bells, fur or fake fur from improper species do not meet the standard.

Item 9: FEET Plains Hard-sole Moccasins (10)

Superior: Properly designed and constructed two-piece, hard-sole Sioux-style moccasin meet the standard. They may be fully beaded, partially beaded, partially beaded/partially quilled, or fully quilled, with proper designs and colors. Lazy stitch beadwork meets the standard.

Acceptable: Properly designed and constructed two-piece undecorated hard-sole moccasins. Properly designed and constructed two-piece hard sole moccasins of lower quality.

Inappropriate: Bare feet and improper footwear such as slipper-type moccasins do not meet the standard.

Item 10: 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)

Is the dancer knowledgeable about his dance clothes’ components?

FINAL SCORE (110)

Ribbon Scale: White 1-30 Red 31-60 Blue 61-90 Gold 91-110