



Competititon Team Orientation

Updated September 2023

Thank you for your interest in the ASAO Competition Team!

To audition, dancers must perform improvisation routines to various types of songs and in a wide range of styles. Dancers must also demonstrate advanced skill level and choreography retention, in both group and individual settings. At the conclusion of auditions, dancers are invited to enroll in the group they have been chosen for. This prestigious invitation comes with great commitment!

Under special circumstances, a late invitation or younger opportunity to audition to the team may be presented by the studio owners. Accommodations for late/younger registration will be made accordingly.

Etiquette

As a member of the team, you will be considered one of ASAO Dance's Elite Performers. Elite Performers are held to a higher standard than recreational dancers, due to the extensive commitment and type of events they are participating in. Dancers must have good standing in attendance, classroom etiquette, and company ambassadorship.

It is at the discretion of the studio owner to determine a dancer's eligibility to remain on the team. As an ambassador of the company, dancers agree to uphold the values and morals of the company in all aspects. Defamation of the company, its staff and students, or immoral behavior, in public or on social media, will result in removal from the ASAO Competition Team. There will be no tolerance for negative attitudes, bullying, or poor sportsmanship in the dance studio or at ASAO Events. If a dancer is found acting in a manner found to be disrespectful, he or she will be removed from the ASAO Competition Team.

ASAO is a dance company that prides itself in being an all-inclusive, positive resource for dancers and families. **Any parents or responsible parties found to be discussing our program negatively will result in termination of that dancer from the program.** We do not promote gossiping or permit dancers to speak negatively of other studios while on our premises or at any ASAO coordinated functions. Bullying, by dancers, families, or guests will not be tolerated. Bullying is defined at the discretion of the studio owner. ASAO owner, Ashley Burger reserves the right to dismiss dancers and family members from functions and future program enrollment/attendance without any advance notice or explanation.

Dancers should expect to wear a black leotard, black shorts, and tan tights / tan jazz shoes to competition rehearsals. Dancers should arrive at competitive events in their team warmups with hair neatly arranged, unless otherwise specified.

Financials

Each dancer is responsible for \$1200 for a group routine with all teammates. **Solos/Duos/Trios are not an option unless the dancer fulfills his or her obligations for the team routines first.** Dancers are eligible to audition for a Solo/Duo/Trio on a separate day (which will have a different orientation). Scholarships/Tuition Waivers do not apply to competition fees. Dancers are responsible for a warm up fee of \$150 if he or she does not yet have the warmup for the current season or if warmups owned by the dancer are not in satisfactory condition, as determined by the studio owner ONLY. If dancers on the team for a second consecutive season vote to update the warmup, dancers are responsible for the difference in cost (ie. new pants, adding shorts or shoes).

Dancers may be responsible for private lessons as needed, at the discretion of the studio owner.

Shoes, rehearsal wear, hair/makeup needs are the responsibility of the dancer. There may be specific requirements by style/category/age. Dancers are required to have a clean, neat pair of Bloch Pulse Jazz shoes and Sunlight Tan tights for performances. Dancers are also required to have Maybelline New York Matte SuperStay Lipstick in shade 80/Ruler. Competition Dancers are also required to have Ardell Professional Demi Wispies false lashes.

Attendance

Rehearsals will be by individual routine for 8-10 weeks, learning choreography for the competition routines. Dancers that are unable to keep up with the technique needed to execute choreography will be expected to practice outside of class; should at home practice not be sufficient, dancers will be expected to sign up for private lessons. Competition Rehearsals are not a time for technique lessons, they are for learning and executing dance routines. Dancers must be enrolled in a technique course relevant to their competition routine style category.

Weeks 11-15 will be used for full team run throughs (all routines) to practice choreography retention and showmanship. Additional, mandatory rehearsals may be scheduled during this time if dancers did not complete routines by Week 10. Team practices will also be used to cover lessons in competition/convention etiquette, improvisational techniques, skill focus, conditioning, adequate warm up and cool down, speed learning, and performance hair/makeup.

Dancers that must miss rehearsal or their required recreational technique course have up to 3 excused absences during the competition season (from August-April). Excused absences are those for Academic Obligation, Illness/Quarantine, and Family Emergency. It is the responsibility of the dancer to learn the material missed before returning to the next rehearsal. If the dancer does not know the material by the next rehearsal, that absence becomes unexcused. There will be a zero-tolerance policy for unexcused absences; dancers with an unexcused absence will be removed



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from the ASAO Competition Team. A family vacation is NOT an excused absence, please plan accordingly. *Beginning 2024: Dancers are also required to be in attendance if rehearsals are held via zoom. Dancers are excused from classes one day prior to scheduled competition dancing for travel.*

Scheduling conflicts disclosed prior to registration may be subject to discretionary accommodations.

Dancers must display an understanding of timeliness for Competitive Events. Due to the nature of the competition scheduling, it is imperative that dancers display timeliness in their rehearsals, team practices, and recreational classes. Therefore, tardiness will count as the excused/unexcused absence.

Dancers do not have the option to choose which competitions to attend. The ASAO Elite Performers are a TEAM, therefore attendance (and timeliness) is mandatory at all team events unless otherwise specified. Dancers that have specific conflicts disclosed prior to auditioning may be excused at the discretion of the studio owner.

It is expected that a dancer be dressed and ready two hours before his/her call time to the competition stage, unless otherwise specified. There will be a zero-tolerance policy for lack of preparedness at an ASAO Competition Team Event. This includes nude colored or nail-polish free nails and natural hair coloring, as well as the required tights and footwear. Dancers are responsible for knowing what items are needed for their routines, from tights to shoes to accessories and props and costumes. Inability to arrive on time or forgetting any items as needed for the routine will result in removal from the ASAO Competition Team. In a Team performance, an unprepared dancer will cause their teammates the ability to participate in that routine for the event.

Convention Experience

The season opens with a convention - the most extensive commitment of the year! This is a 3-4 day function with 7-10 classes per day by industry professionals when we are not competing. Recreational dancers (this means non-competitive, typical studio classes) are welcome to attend for a separate price (however, the convention attendance fee is included for competition dancers in the initial \$1200). Dancers MUST attend all convention classes to be eligible for competing in this event. There are separate emails to be sent for this event with information for what to pack and how to prepare. This event is unique in preparation due to the strenuous nature of the class portion.

Competition Scheduling

Although each competition has 2-3 days blocked off, **the schedule is not finalized until week prior to the event. Once registration closes for the event, studios receive a schedule with when our routines are to report onstage.** Dancers are required to be ready two hours prior in case the event is running ahead of schedule; Dancers are expected to be present supporting for ALL ASAO ROUTINES. If a routine on the schedule is not prepared, the competition moves right onto the next one. There is no time to delay, therefore timeliness is imperative. Competition Schedules may include weekdays; please expect your child to miss school for competition dance.

ALL Dancers must be present for Awards Ceremonies, which are sometimes held very late at night. Most events are only Saturday/Sunday, but Convention (our season opener) is a special one because of the classes and scholarship auditions; therefore, that event begins on a Friday. We will not know the stage schedule until one week prior to each event; sometimes soloists may start as early as 8am on a Saturday. Typically, a competition schedules all soloists, then duos/trios, then small groups, then large groups (referred to as Line). Parents and Chaperones should plan accordingly.

24/7 COMPETITION & CONVENTION: The competition is tentatively scheduled to start at 8am on Friday. I only register our kids for 1 Convention event each season; the rest are only the Competition. The closing ceremony is at 4pm Sunday. They usually give out some additional awards, then I make the kids pose for photos in front of the stage as they are kicking everyone out and tearing down. We're usually completely out of there by 5:30-5pm at the latest. *The other competitions end times will depend on their Awards schedules.

Categories & Levels

Each dance routine is registered in a particular style category, size category, age level, and training level. This narrows down the routines they are judged against for overall awards, to be judged as fairly as possible. The categories below are examples, but these will vary slightly with each event we attend. My goal as an instructor is to expose our dancers to a variety of differences to get the most well-rounded dance experience.

Style Category

Styles are selected by the studio owner at the time of audition based on the dancers' technique. If a dancer has aptitude in a particular style, he or she is likely invited to perform a routine in that style. Likewise, sometimes the style a dancer wishes to compete in may not be the type of routine he/she is offered. Examples of styles include Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Lyrical, Contemporary, Musical Theater, Pointe (often grouped with ballet), Acrobatic Dance, Improvisation, Student Choreography, Hip Hop, Ballroom, Specialty (ethnic, novelty, clogging). Different competitions offer different style categories; it is up to the studio owner to select a style for each dancer that will work at all of the intended events. The rules for categorization of



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each dance at each competition vary too; for example, one competition rule may state, "If a Lyrical routine exhibits 3 or more Acrobatic Stunts, that routine is disqualified for being miscategorized."

Size Category

Solo – 1 Dancer

Duo/Duet – 2 Dancers

Trio – 3 Dancers

Small Group – 4-9 Dancers

Line – 10-15 Dancers

Extended Line – 16-24 Dancers

Production – 25+ Dancers

Age Level is typically grouped like this (but may vary from event to event):

Sidekick – Age 5-7

Mini – Age 8-10

Junior – Age 11-12

Teen – Age 13-15

Senior – Age 16-19

Open – Age 20-26 (these are often called independent dancers, as most recreational studios do not train past high school graduation)

*Dancers compete in the age category that best suits their group. Most competitions take the average age of the performers in that particular routine, and others may classify it by just the oldest or just the youngest dancer. Age is usually determined as of January 1st of the Competition Season, sometimes September 1st.

Training Level

Training Level is determined by the studio owner only. Regardless of how many years' experience a dancer has, the level of technique that dancer has achieved varies based on the type of education they were receiving, and hours of safe, quality, technically correct work put in outside the classroom. It will NOT be up to the parents to determine what level the dancers compete within. Many competitions rank the experience level by the average number of hours the dancers in the routine are training within OUR studio the CURRENT season. *I do not include staffing hours, although their registration in the ASAO Dancer Portal does reflect those on their schedule.

Awards / Scholarships / Adjudication Scoring

Dancers are scored in three categories for each event: individual routine, overall / category placement, and judges awards. Each competition does so slightly differently, therefore going to multiple competitions allows us to learn from different standards that will apply to future goals for each dancer.

Individual Routine (Adjudication)

Each routine is presented before 3-4 judges (at once). Judges each have a computer in front of them that records verbal notes as well as a video of the routine (to align where the notes go in the routine). Videos are sent to the studio owner only, not dancers. Video critiques will be discussed at team rehearsals between the various competitions we attend.

At the conclusion of the routine performance, judges award each routine points in a variety of categories. Most competitions award points in categories such as Technique, Performance, Choreography, Musicality, Costuming, Showmanship. The point scale at each competition will yield different names for the placement. Here is an example of one:

Platinum – 291-300 Points

High Gold – 276-290 Points

Gold – 261-275 Points

High Silver – 246-260 Points

Silver – 231-245 Points

Bronze – 216-230 Points

Some competitions award pins or ribbons to the dancers for their adjudication level, others award the studio with a trophy or medal. Replicas of trophies and medals can often be purchased by parents for the dancer's private collection after the event. It is not to be expected that the items given at the competition stay with the individual dancer; our STUDIO earns the awards for training the dancer just as much as the dancer earns the award by performing.

Overall/Category Placement

Dancers' routine scores may place within the divisions listed above (style, size, age, training) first through third. Some competitions award level placements within these categories by offering admissions to a National Competition (our dancers are registered at the regional/state level, even though some competition titles have the word National in them). Advancement to the next level of competition is not free of charge, dancers win



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the OPPORTUNITY to register and travel accordingly. Scholarships won will be applied to that registration ONLY, it is not redeemable for other ASAO training/events. Cash prizes go to the studio for additional equipment team events ONLY, not to the individual dancers. ASAO will NOT provide travel or lodging expenses for dance families to additional events achieved but WILL handle all administrative processing for those subsequent events. Parents should decide prior to an event if they are interested in advancing to Nationals, should their dancer's routine place at that achievement.

Judges' Awards

At each competition, the judges are permitted to award specialty awards (often in the form of titles) to routines that stand out, regardless of individual adjudication or overall category placement. Often these awards are themed with the competition. In 2021, ASAO Dancers received the following Judges' Awards: (Notice they are from FLY Dance and themed with travel)

Judge Jazmine Young

Sassy Stewardess Award – "From the time she left the wings and entered the stage, her facials were amazing and sassy. She never let that energy fall." *Write What You Know

Co-Pilot Award – "A Duet that had amazing connection, amazing energy, so much fun on the stage and just left it all out there and made me want to get up and dance with you really bad." *Classic

Judge Karina Browne

Co-Pilot Award – "A duet that was so much fun to watch; they were so in sync and they complemented each other extremely well. They had excellent personality and stage presence and were a perfect match." *Classic

Judge Favian Herrera

Smooth Flight Award – "These dancers came on stage and made dancing look smooth. They traveled through space, transitioned well, and took control of the stage. Their energy was distributed in all the right places and they never seemed to tire." *Brave

Media

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY ARE PROHIBITED DURING COMPETITIONS

Parents, please do not risk getting our dancers disqualified by taking photo or video of the stage. Most of the events allow parents to purchase a professional video of their dancers. I usually buy all of these and put them in a Dropbox folder for competition parents. I will also take photos backstage, side stage, and in front of any fun props they have set up and add them to our folder. If you take any fun photos of the weekend, please send them to me and I will add them to our blog and sharing platforms for parents.

Parents will not be able to go into the dressing rooms / backstage with the Competition Team. Parents will be able to watch in the audience, and many of the dances are live streamed for family members and studio friends to enjoy.

Communication

Responsible parties are added to a Facebook Chat Group for reminders and urgent communications. Most of the contact will be via email. All conflicts of interest must be disclosed by the Sunday registration deadline after auditions to qualify for discretionary scheduling.

Transportation & Lodging

Transportation and lodging to the events are the responsibility of the parent. Each dancer is welcome to coordinate with one another, but it is expected that the parents will manage finances and make sure dancers have everything they need on the packing lists. We will communicate hotel blocks and information when able if dancers would like to lodge at the same place - swimming and styling hair together is a fun part of the trip! All food, hotel expenses, and fun side trips are the responsibility of the parent and NOT INCLUDED in the participation fee.

This first event is unique, as non-competition dancers (referred to as recreational dancers) can attend the class portion of the event, so there are quite a few more attending for carpool options.

Should you wish to send your dancer with another parent, please discuss meal/fuel/lodging costs with THAT parent. ASAO staff will not be responsible for communications or intermediary discussions regarding these topics. It is the responsibility of the DANCER PARENT to have adequate items packed, which includes enough healthy food for a 3-day weekend.

If any dancers will be traveling to/from studio events without a parent/guardian, the studio will require a signed medical release for the unaccompanied student to keep them easily accessible at all times. Please inform the studio director if your dancer will be traveling with another family.



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Hair/Makeup/Costuming

Costuming is selected by the studio owner only. Dancers are given the opportunity to vote for songs and costumes during the first rehearsal. Songs and costumes will not be changed once choreography has begun. Hair & Makeup will be dance professional, with a tutorial provided by the studio owner. False Lashes and Rhinestones are REQUIRED. Studio administration will keep/maintain costumes until the season has concluded; failure to complete the season successfully will result in loss of costume(s). Dancers are responsible for warm ups and additonal studio apparel as required. Dancers must make their own arrangements to have hair and makeup completed to a satisfactory standard two hours before their stage call time, unless a group event is pre-arranged. Costumes will be altered by studio administration; there is no fee for costume alteration.

Parents will not be able to go into the dressing rooms / backstage with the Competition Team.

MANDATORY EVENTS FOR COMPETITION TEAM MEMBERS

Dancers must be in appropriate Elite Dancers dress code for these events: natural hair color, nude or clear nails, no piercings or tattoos showing.

- August 23rd – Elite Performer PreSeason Social
- August 24th – Elite Performer Media Day
- February 16th-18th – 24/7 Dance Competition and Convention
- March 2nd & 3rd - Dance Force Express
- March 15th-17th – Kids Artistic Revue
- April 6th – ASAO Competition Team Showcase

Additional Rehearsals will be scheduled at a local theater. These are also mandatory; dates will be released as early as possible.

Dancers do not get the opportunity to select which competitions they attend. All dancers are registered as a team. Any scheduling conflicts MUST be presented by the deadline, otherwise dancer will be removed from the team. See **Attendance & Communication** for further details.