



RANDOM LITTLE TIDBITS

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Dog Talk's "Random Little Tidbits" on the AKC Obedience Regulations

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Random Little Tidbits (#3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 27, 29, 31, 32, 34, 38 & 39) have been updated to reflect recent current changes in the Regulations since written. If you have printed out these Tidbit numbers you may also want to update.

If there is a specific article you would like for a club newsletter, class handout, or to file away in your computer, drop me a note with the title of the article and I will send you the pdf file.



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Today's Random Little Tidbit -

When does an exercise and the scoring of that exercise actually begin?

A team (dog and handler) are under judgement from the time they enter the ring until they leave the ring. Once the team passes through the ring entrance the scoring begins and does not stop until the team passes back through the ring entrance on the way out. Scoring is not to be viewed as just points off as scoring in the Judge's Book can also reflect perfection indicated by a "0" for no points off.

So how does this all work? For today's Random Little Tidbits of information, it helps to know when an exercise actually begins and when it ends per the Regulations. This is spelled out in Chapter 2, Section 4. Plus, keep in mind: each exercise has basically two parts - the principal part and non-principal part. The principal parts of an exercise are the minimum standards spelled out in the description of the exercise. Non-principal parts of an exercise are the parts not required to be met for a qualifying score, for example, the Finish. This will be addressed more as various exercises are covered in future Random Little Tidbits of information.

For now, when the team enters the ring they are being judged during the time frame, before, between or after an exercise. Scorable errors (if any) are recorded in the Judge's Book under Miscellaneous penalties. Once an exercise officially starts the scoring then shifts to the exercise.

How can a handler know when an exercise is officially underway and they are no longer being observed before, between or after an exercise? It is quite easy actually. Before ANY exercise is to begin the judge MUST ask the following question, "Are you ready?" At this point NO exercise or scoring of that exercise has officially begun. A question was merely asked by the judge for feedback from the handler whether the team was ready to proceed with the exercise. Scoring of the "exercise" is not taking place during the question and answer period. Maybe the handler is not quite ready and they will inform the judge. Once they are ready and the handler gives an affirmative answer to the question the exercise is ready to proceed. The actual scoring of the exercise still does NOT start UNTIL the judge's first order. In the description of each exercise the judge's first order is spelled out. Once that first order is given, the scoring of the exercise now begins.

At the end of the exercise, the judge is required to order, "Exercise finished." The scoring of the exercise now stops and the team is being judged once again for actions before, between or after an exercise. Such scorable actions before, between or after an exercise will be covered later but for a quick look at a few, check out Chapter 2, Sections 22, 23 & 25.

Link to the AKC Obedience Regulations

<http://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RO2999.pdf>

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Today's Random Little Tidbit - Examining Foundation Exercises as Building Blocks.

In general terms, let's examine an obedience exercise and see how they work as every titling and non-titling class has a series of them. First, we must look at what is referred to as the foundation exercises. A foundation exercise is an exercise where an element of training skill first appears in the Regulations. The advanced exercises in the advanced classes are built on Regular Novice foundation exercises. Picture it as a house building project, Novice is the foundation, Open is the next level and Utility is the penthouse. Before the upper levels are added to the structure, one must first have a foundation. Having knowledge of this structure will help you understand how an exercise is looked upon from a performance angle and from a judging angle.

The first of the foundation exercises show up in the Novice obedience class--the basics of obedience skills dating back to 1936 with a few tweaks over the last 8+ decades. The next level of foundation exercises are found at the Open level. The Utility class is the highest level of skills with the exercises built upon Novice and Open. When reading the scoring sections of Open exercises, the last sentence most likely will have these words, "All applicable penalties listed under the Novice *.....* shall apply." The Utility exercises refer back to foundation exercises in Open and Novice for guidance in performance, judging and scoring: "All applicable penalties listed under the Novice *.....* and Open *.....* shall apply."

An excellent example of a foundation exercise is the Novice Recall, a foundation exercise for many of the Open and Utility exercises. Here is how one may look at exercises being built upon a foundation exercise:

1) The Novice Recall description, "The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay where left until called by the handler, and that the dog responds promptly to the handler's command or signal to come. Orders are "Leave your dog," "Call your dog," and "Finish." On order from the judge, the handler may give a command and/or signal to the dog to stay in the sit position. The handler will then walk forward to the other end of the ring, turn to face the dog, and stand with the arms and hands hanging naturally. On the judge's order or signal, the handler will either command or signal the dog to come. The dog must come directly, at a brisk trot or gallop and sit straight, centered in front of the handler. The dog must be close enough to its handler so that the handler could touch its head without excessive bending, stretching or moving either foot. On the judge's order, the handler will give a command or signal to finish. The dog must go smartly to heel position and sit. The manner in which the dog finishes will be optional provided it is prompt and that the dog sits straight at heel."

2) The above description sets the structure of the Recall and spells out what is required by the dog and handler for a basic recall as performed in the Novice class.

3) The first sentence states the "principal features" of this exercise. The principal features are the minimum requirements which must be met for a qualifying performance in an exercise.

4) In addition, the Finish is *first* addressed in the Novice Recall so this exercise becomes the foundation exercise for the Finish, too.

5) The Novice Recall scoring section (scoring sections follow the description sections) is where one learns what is required in regards to the scoring of the exercise for a qualifying score vs. a non-qualify score. **Note:** the Finish is not addressed in the NQ verbiage in the scoring section: "A dog must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score if it is given an additional command and/or signal to stay, if it fails to come on the first command or signal, if it moves from the place it was left before being called or signaled to come, or if it does not sit close enough to its handler so that the handler could touch its head without excessive bending, stretching or moving either foot." Errors in regards to the Finish are listed under the list of deductions, from substantial deductions to minor deductions. The Finish is not a "principal feature" of the Recall exercise; therefore, not required for a qualifying score. If the dog does not Finish and the principal features of the exercise were successfully performed the lack of a Finish is only points off.

6) Now let's build upon this Novice Recall as a foundation exercise and go to the next levels of our structure. Case in point, the Open Retrieve on Flat (ROF) is at the next level with an added retrieve skill element. This exercise now becomes the foundation exercise for all retrieves as the retrieve skill is *first* described in the ROF description. One way to look at retrieves in Open or Utility is they are basically two Novice Recalls with the added element of retrieving. The dog is performing a recall to the dumbbell (so-to-speak), retrieving (a new principal feature of this exercise), and then a recall back to the handler. In the scoring section of the ROF, it mentions applicable penalties from the Novice Recall apply.

These would be:

- a. Handler standing with arms and hands hanging naturally.
- b. Dog must come directly, at a brisk trot or gallop and sit straight, centered in front of the handler. This would also apply to going to the dumbbell – going directly, brisk trot or gallop.
- c. The dog must be close enough to its handler so that the handler could touch its head without excessive bending, stretching or moving either foot.
- d. On the judge's order, the handler will give a command or signal to finish. The dog must go smartly to heel position and sit. The manner in which the dog finishes will be optional, provided it is prompt and that the dog sits straight at heel.

Instead of repeating all the applicable penalties under each exercise the regulations merely refer back to the foundation exercise where they are listed in detail.

7) Next case in point, Scent Discrimination in Utility is the next advanced level of the Retrieve on Flat. The Novice Recall and the Retrieve on Flat are the foundation exercises, with a new added principal feature for Scent Discrimination; "The principal features of these exercises are the selection of the handler's article from among the other articles by scent alone and the prompt delivery of the correct article to the handler." Once again, the description of the exercise goes into detail for the performance and the scoring section details the scoring; which will reflect back to the foundation exercises with the verbiage, "All applicable penalties listed under the Heel Free, Novice Recall and the Retrieve on Flat will apply." The Heel Free applicable penalties would apply to the team during the "After a Sit" option where the handler and dog turn to face the articles. In reading the Novice Heel Free scoring section it will refer back to the foundation exercise which would be the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight. There one would find the most common penalties listed in detail that would apply to this exercise.

The Novice Recall also plays a role as a foundation exercise in many other non-retrieve exercises, such as the Drop on Recall, Broad Jump, Signal exercise, Moving Stand and Examination, Directed Jumping, plus any exercise with a Front and/or Finish. And this just covers the Regular classes. There are different variations of exercises in the Optional and Preferred titling classes which will also refer back to the Regular Novice and Open foundation exercises.

In reviewing the entire Novice exercises one can learn the basic foundation exercises for all other classes in obedience. Open is the next level of the *advanced* foundation exercises which will come into play for all Open and Utility exercises. The various scoring sections will always refer back to the applicable foundation exercises. Having this knowledge should provide the information needed in how an exercise (whatever level or optional track) is performed, judged and scored.

There are a few more factors in an exercise in regards to a qualifying score:

1) Chapter 2, Section 3, Qualifying Performance. "A qualifying score must never be awarded to a dog whose performance has not met the minimum requirements, to a dog that shows fear or resentment, or to a dog that relieves itself at any time while in the ring for judging. Handlers who carry or offer food in the ring or discipline or abuse their dogs in the ring must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score. In deciding whether a faulty performance of an exercise warrants a qualifying score, the judge will consider whether the awarding of an obedience title would be justified if all dogs in the class performed the exercise in a similar manner. The judge must not give a qualifying score for the exercise if they decide that it would be contrary to the best interests of the sport if all dogs in the class were to perform in the same way."

2) Chapter 2, Section 15, Qualifying Score. "A qualifying score means that the dog has earned more than 50 percent of the points for each exercise with a total score of at least 170 points. This score must be earned in a regular or optional titling class at a licensed or member obedience trial. There is no minimum number of dogs necessary in any class to earn a qualifying score toward a title."

3) Chapter 2, Section 24, Orders and Minimum Penalties. "The lists of faults are not intended to be complete, but minimum penalties are specified for most of the more common and serious faults. There is no maximum limit on penalties. A dog that makes none of the errors listed may still receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score for other reasons."

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Leashes, what kind and where and when used?



There have been a few tweaks in leash usage over the years, plus when they are to be clipped to the dog's collar or just slipped through the collar. So let's review the leashes and where, when and how they are to be used:

Regular, Optional and Preferred classes in general:

- 1) The leash is to be made of fabric or leather and only long enough to provide adequate slack during the Heel on Leash exercise, unless otherwise stated in the Regulations.
- 2) All dogs must be kept on a leash except when in the obedience ring, warm-up ring or exercise area and must be brought into and taken out of the ring on leash. Dogs must be kept on leash in the ring when brought in to receive awards and when waiting in the ring before and after the group exercise.
- 3) In regards to heeling with the leash, the leash may be held in either hand or both hands, but the hands must be held in a natural position. *Natural* is defined as: not artificial; free of affectation; what is customarily expected in the home or public places. The leash must be loose (provide adequate slack) before starting the heeling exercises with the leash clipped to the collar.

Beginner Novice A & B:

- 1) A **6-foot** leash is required for the Sit For Exam.
- 2) For the Recall, the leash may be placed in a pocket, draped around the handler's neck or held in one of their hands at their side.
- 3) Leashes must be clipped to the collar in these classes.

Novice A & B Group exercise:

- 1) A **6-foot** leash is required for the Novice Group Exercise.
- 2) Leashes must be clipped to the collar in these classes.

Open A, B and Graduate Novice Individual Exercises:

- 1) A slip leash may be used in these classes when coming in for the individual exercises.

The leash *clipped or slipped through the dog's collar*:

- 1) Leashes must be clipped to the collar for:
 - a. Classes requiring an on leash exercise.
 - b. *Group exercise.*
 - c. *Awards.*
- 2) In a class where a leash is not required for *all* the individual exercises, the dog may be brought into and taken out of the ring on a leash that slips through the dog's collar.

The classes with *all* the individual exercises not requiring a leash:

- 1) Graduate Novice
- 2) Open A & B
- 3) Preferred Open
- 4) Graduate Open
- 5) Utility A & B
- 6) Preferred Utility
- 7) Versatility Combinations, **V1, V3, V4, V5, V6, V8, V9, V10** and **V12**. The handler may use a slip leash as *all* the individual exercises are without a leash. Combinations, **V2, V7, and V11** have an individual exercise using the leash so the leash must be attached. The Judge is to post the Versatility combination used for the day 45 minutes before the start of the class. Double check to make sure if there will be an exercise using a leash, if so, the leash must be attached.

- 8) Run-Offs:
- a. Where the Heel Free is used for a tie-breaking exercise the slip leash may be used.
 - b. Beginner Novice ties would require a clipped leash as the tie-breaker is an on leash exercise.

If in question, use a leash which will clip to the dog's collar; you will be good to go for any situation or class!

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Understanding the revised Scent Discrimination exercise

From my understanding in reading the changes coming this December 1st, the Scent Discrimination (SD) revision will improve the structure and standardize the performance of the exercise for both the handler and judge, leading to more consistency in judging. Below is how I understand the changes in regards to the **timing** for scenting the article and giving scent to the dog.

Before the revisions the articles were being placed by the steward; keeping in mind this time frame is *between exercises* as no exercise has started. The handler has merely moved to the spot where SD will be to observe the articles being placed. As with any before, between or after exercise actions, Chapter 2, Section 22 applies. The new SD exercise is just the same as the older version in this regard. Petting, talking and praise are okay during the time of watching the group of articles being placed by the steward. Nothing has changed at this point.

PLACING THE ARTICLES:

Prior to December 1st the regulation stated, *“After the articles have been put out, the handler and dog will turn around and will remain facing away until the judge has given the order, ‘Send your dog.’* This gave the implication that the handler and dog were to remain watching ALL the articles being placed. Not that this was always done, but this is how the Regulations read. A more standardized procedure for judging was felt warranted as handlers wanted the option to turn around *early* and not watch every last article being placed.

After December 1st the regulation states, *“Handlers may choose to watch the articles being placed or face away. After the articles have been placed the handler and dog will remain facing away with the dog sitting in heel position until the judge has given the order ‘Send your dog.’* This change gives the handlers the option of watching all articles being placed or *they* may choose to turn away at any time.

SCENTING THE ARTICLE:

Prior to December 1st, scenting was actually *done between exercises* and it was the intent of the change to bring scenting *into* the exercise for scoring purposes (not between). In this version, any "scenting" scoring before the taking of the article ended up in Miscellaneous Penalties since the exercise had not started--the article had not been taken, which was the first order which started the exercise.

After December 1st the exercises will begin with a "new" **first order**, **"Take an article."** The judge will first ask, "Are you ready?" Remember, this is just a question and upon an affirmative answer the judge then gives the first order, "Take an article." The scoring of the exercise now begins per Chapter 2, Sec. 4. The handler leaves the dog sitting in heel position (HP) to take an article and returns to HP. **The Regulations do not require the handler to return behind their dog. The handler may talk to their dog only after returning to HP with the chosen article.** A dog moving or not remaining in the sit position will be scored, as will extra handler commands, but not NQed as this is not during the principle feature of the SD exercise. This really should not be an issue in *Utility* as the dog did pass three (3) Novice Stand for Examination where the handler left the dog and returned to HP, not to mention the Novice and Open Group exercises, too!

With the revision the exercise is underway and the scenting is being scored "during" the exercise. This change will allow the handler to talk to their dog during the time frame of scenting the article (after returning to HP), to the Judge taking the article as many like to communicate with their dog during this down time to stay connected. No touching the dog during the scenting of the article process is allowed, or at any other time after the exercise starts. Nothing really different here as there is no touching or petting during any other exercise. Talking is an acceptable form of praise now allowed during this exercise and during this time frame (scenting of the article) to keep the dog connected, which sometimes can take a considerable amount time, others not so much.

During the scenting of the article the Judge will ask the question as to how the dog is being sent. If the handler replies "....." both times, the Judge does not need to ask the question again, as was required before the revision. If the handler does not state "both times", or words to that affect, the Judge will ask the question again.

GIVING THE SCENT TO THE DOG:

After the scenting of the article the handler will present the article to the judge. The **taking of the article** is now the **second order** of the SD exercise. Talking to the dog now stops as the scenting of the *article* is now over. The Judge will proceed to place the scented article among the other articles. After doing that, the judge's **third order** will be, "**Send your dog;**" *at which time the handler then may give their scent to the dog by extending the palm of one hand in front of the dog's nose or gently touching the dog's nose, but the arm and hand must be returned to a natural position before they turn and face the articles.* Keep in mind, giving the scent to the dog while scenting the article or giving the scent to the dog while the judge is placing the article may result in a scorable handler error(s). The change standardizes (and clarifies) the timing of the giving the scent to the dog from team to team.

Keep in mind, SD is two *separate* independent exercises. So after the, "Exercise finished." on the first SD exercise the team is now once again between exercises and praise and petting are allowed as between any other exercises. For the second SD exercise, the team turns away from the group of articles once again and the above is repeated.

What to do with the first article? There are a couple of procedural options:

1. Handler hands the first article to the judge and the judge puts it on the chair while the handler and dog set up for the second article.
2. Handler puts the first article on the chair and then sets up for the second article.
3. Handler keeps the first article while they set up for the second article, still be allowed to pet and praise their dog without penalty, sets down the first article when ordered to "Take an article" for the second.

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**The Scent Discrimination Exercise Has
Four Timelines
To Be Aware of During The Performance**



by John Cox

1. Two (2) sets of articles are used and the handler chooses which two sets to bring to the ring (wood, leather or metal).
2. **TIMELINE 1:** The handler may, or may not, choose to watch the articles being placed. This timeframe is between exercises and petting and praise are permitted, as between any other exercise.
3. After the handler turns, having their back to the group of articles, the dog is to be sitting in heel position.
4. The Judge will then ask, "Are you ready?" After receiving an affirmative answer, the Judge will give the first order, "Take an article." The exercise and scoring has now begun as this is *the FIRST order of the exercise*.
5. The handler then leaves the dog on a sit-stay to select an article and returns to heel position.
6. **TIMELINE 2:** During the time after the **1st order** until the "taking of the article" (**2nd order**), the handler may talk to their dog, but only while in Heel Position. No touching the dog is permitted; that would result in a scorable fault.
7. As the handler is scenting the article the Judge will ask, "What method will you be using to send your dog?" The handler states the method and if they also say, "Both times," or words to that effect, the judge will not repeat the question for the second article.
8. **TIMELINE 3:** After the handler is done scenting the article, taking the article is the **2nd order (silent)** and talking to the dog stops. Also, giving scent to the dog at this time may result in a scorable handler error. As a judge cannot judge the handler's giving of the scent to the dog while taking the scented article out to the group of articles.
9. **TIMELINE 4:** After the scented article is placed the Judge will give the **3rd order**, "Send your dog." Now would be the time to give the scent to the dog, if you choose to do so.
10. The rest of the exercise is performed as before. After "Exercise finished," praise and petting may be done, once again as between any other exercise.
11. With the completion of the first article, the handler will then face away from the group of articles (while holding on to the retrieved article) and line up the dog in heel position.
12. The second scent discrimination exercise is performed as above. The handler takes the second article; the first is placed on the chair.



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Today's Random Little Tidbit – **A quick review of significant revisions of exercises coming December 1, 2015.**

Changes in eligibility requirements for a few classes will be covered in Random Little Tidbits #9

REGULAR CLASSES:



Novice A:

Walkthrough: “At the listed start time for the class, a walkthrough of up to 10 minutes will be allowed for handlers without their dogs and judging of the class will follow. The judge must be available in the ring during this period to brief the handlers and answer any questions they might have.” New language for a shorter walkthrough (was 15 minutes) and after the walkthrough, which sometimes can be short, the class will proceed to be judged. No longer will you see a start time for the walkthrough and another start time for the judging of the class.

Novice A & B: Out of date in regards to Group Exercises, see Tidbit #37 for updates. This Tidbit #5 is being saved for historical purposes of our past.

After the individual exercises: “Handlers of dogs that have qualified during the individual exercises will have the option of returning for the group exercise. Each handler is required to notify the table steward of their intention to return for the group exercise after the completion of the individual exercises.”

Group Exercises: The leash remains attached to the dog's collar and will be dropped or placed on the ground **between the dog and handler** with the armband weighted as necessary before the exercise begins. Judges have the option of deciding if a set of group exercises will be conducted after a specified number of dogs or if the group exercises will be conducted after the last individual team is judged. Once determined the judge must post this information at the ring.

Open A & B: Out of date in regards to Group Exercises, see Tidbit #46 for updates. This Tidbit #5 is being saved for historical purposes of our past.

After the individual exercises: The Novice group exercises are the *foundation exercises* for Open, therefore, “Each handler is required to notify the table steward of their intention to return for the group exercise after the completion of the individual exercises.”

Group Exercises: “These exercises are performed and scored in the same manner as in the Novice classes, except the leash will be removed and placed **behind** the dog with the armband weighted as necessary; and the handlers must cross to the opposite side of the ring then leave in a single file and go completely out of the dogs' sight.” Judges have the option of deciding if a set of group exercises will be conducted after a specified number of dogs or if the group exercises will be conducted after the last individual team is judged. Once determined the judge must post this information at the ring.

Utility A & B:

Scent Discrimination: See Random Little Tidbits #4 for expanded details. To obtain a copy of the detailed revision, step-by-step, request a copy by noting the Tidbit #4, dog-talk@comcast.net

Articles: “The articles will be provided by the handler and will consist of two (2) sets only. The handler will choose which two (2) sets are to be used, metal, leather or wood.”

Directed Retrieve: The designated glove is now required to be posted. No longer is a non-qualifying score (NQ) “required” for the direction not given simultaneously or immediately following, or lack of directness.

Moving Stand and Examination: “The exam will consist of the judge gently using both hands in a single smooth motion beginning at the sides of the dog's neck, proceeding along the body and ending at the dog's croup. The purpose of the revision is to make the examination consistent from judge to judge. In addition, the definition for croup will be added to the Glossary of Terms.

Preferred Optional Titling Classes, formerly Pre-Classes:

Preferred Novice, class renamed (formally Pre-Novice):

Eligibility: “The Preferred Novice class is an alternative titling class for dogs that have not won the CDX or PCDX title.”

Walkthrough: “At the listed start time for the class, a walkthrough of up to 10 minutes will be allowed for handlers without their dogs and judging of the class will follow. The judge must be available in the ring during this period to brief the handlers and answer any questions they might have.” New language for a shorter walkthrough (was 15 minutes) and

after the walkthrough, which sometimes can be short, the class will proceed to be judged. No longer will you see a start time for the walkthrough and another start time for the judging of the class.

Preferred Open, class renamed (formally Pre-Open):

Eligibility: The Preferred Open class is an alternative titling class for dogs that have won the CD or PCD or higher Regular or Preferred title.

Order of exercises (as in Open B): “Prior to the start of judging, the judge will decide the order of exercises to be performed in that class. This order will not be disclosed to exhibitors until it is posted at the ring, approximately 45 minutes before the start of the class. In future assignments, judges are required to alternate the six orders of exercises so that each will be used approximately the same number of times.”

Preferred Utility, class renamed (formally Pre-Utility):

Eligibility: “The Preferred Utility class is an alternative titling class for dogs that have won the CDX or PCDX or higher Regular or Preferred title.”

Order of exercises (as in Utility B): “Prior to the start of judging, the judge will decide the order of exercises to be performed in this class and the glove number. The order and glove number will not be disclosed to exhibitors until it is posted at the ring, approximately 45 minutes before the start of the class. In future assignments, judges are required to alternate the six orders of exercises and the designated glove number so that each will be used approximately the same number of times.”

Signal exercise: No verbal command during the signal portion.

Scent Discrimination: **10** articles, not eight. Since this exercise will be performed and scored the same as in the Utility Scent Discrimination in regards to the new procedure, articles, and Judge’s new orders, see the Utility A & B Scent Discrimination above.

Moving Stand and Examination: “The exam will consist of the judge gently using both hands in a single smooth motion beginning at the sides of the dog’s neck, proceeding along the body and ending at the dog’s croup. The purpose of the revision is to make the examination consistent from judge to judge. In addition, the definition for croup will be added to the Glossary of Terms.

Directed Retrieve: The designated glove is now required to be posted. No longer is a non-qualifying score (NQ) “required” for the direction not given simultaneously or immediately following, or lack of directness.

Other Optional Titling Classes:

Beginner Novice:

Walkthrough: “At the listed start time for the class, a walkthrough of up to 10 minutes will be allowed for handlers without their dogs and judging of the class will follow. The judge must be available in the ring during this period to brief the handlers and answer any questions they might have.” New language for a shorter walkthrough (was 15 minutes) and after the walkthrough, which sometimes can be short, the class will proceed to be judged. No longer will you see a start time for the walkthrough and another start time for the judging of the class.

Recall: “The handler’s arms and hands should hang naturally at the sides until the dog has sat in front.” The change was made to make consistent language as required in all exercises where the dog is coming to front. This will help new exhibitors learn correct and consistent handling from the beginning.

Run-Off Procedure: In case of a tie in the Beginner Novice class, the dog and handler will perform the Heel on Leash the same as it is performed in the Beginner Novice Heel on Leash exercise.

Graduate Novice: **Out of date in regards to Group Exercises, see Tidbit #46 for updates. This Tidbit #5 is being saved for historical purposes of our past.**

Heeling: “This exercise will be performed and scored in the same manner as the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise, except that the dog will be off leash.” All heeling is to be done off leash, no longer the Heel on Leash and the Figure Eight off leash.

Dumbbell Recall over High Jump: Instead of a Recall over the High Jump without a dumbbell, the dog is now to carry the dumbbell over the jump. “The principle feature of this exercise, in addition to those listed under the Dumbbell Recall, is that the dog return with the dumbbell over the jump.”

After the individual exercises: Keep in mind, since the Graduate Novice Group exercise is performed as in the Open Group exercise, and the Open Group exercise refers back to the foundation exercise of Novice; therefore, the following will also apply to the Graduate Novice groups: “Each handler is required to notify the table steward of their intention to return for the group exercise after the completion of the individual exercises.”

Group Exercise: “Prior to the start of judging, the judge will decide the Sit/Down position to be performed in this class. The position will not be disclosed to the exhibitors until it is posted at the ring, approximately 45 minutes before the start of the class. In future assignments, judges are required to alternate the Sit/Down position so that each will be used approximately the same number of times.” The Sit is a new added option for the Group. Judges have the option of deciding if a set of group exercises will be conducted after a specified number of dogs or if the group exercises will be conducted after the last individual team is judged. Once determined the judge must post this information at the ring.

Graduate Open:

Change the order of the exercises to:

1. Signal Exercise
2. Scent Discrimination
3. Go Out
4. Directed Jumping
5. Moving Stand and Exam
6. Directed Retrieve

Signal exercise: Changing from “10-20 feet” to “At least 10 feet” allows the handler to go further than 20’ should they choose to do so as they prepare for the Utility class. This is a positive change for the handler in preparing for the Utility Classes.

Scent Discrimination: Since this exercise will be performed and scored the same as in the Utility Scent Discrimination in regards to the new procedure, articles, and Judge’s new orders, see the Utility A & B Scent Discrimination above. Otherwise the exercise remains the same as before in regards to the handler facing the articles and four articles used.

Articles: “The articles will be provided by the handler and will consist of two (2) sets only. The handler will choose which two (2) sets are to be used, metal, leather or wood.”

Go Out: “The handler will stand with the dog sitting in the heel position facing the unobstructed end of the ring in the approximate center at any distance from about 20 feet beyond the jumps up to midway between the jumps.”

Moving Stand and Examination: “The exam will consist of the judge gently using both hands in a single smooth motion beginning at the sides of the dog’s neck, proceeding along the body and ending at the dog’s croup. The purpose of the revision is to make the examination consistent from judge to judge. In addition, the definition for croup will be added to the Glossary of Terms.

Directed Jumping: “Prior to the start of judging, the judge will decide which jump will be performed and which glove retrieved. This information will not be disclosed to exhibitors until it is posted at the ring, approximately 45 minutes before the start of the class. The judge will designate the same jump and glove for each handler. For each judging assignment, judges are required to alternate the jump and glove used.”

Non-Regular Classes removed from the Regulations:

- 1) Sub-Novice
- 2) International Class
- 3) Obedience Advanced Teamwork

Judges Exhibiting:

“Judges (including provisional) may not handle dogs that are not owned or co-owned by themselves or a family member **at obedience and/or rally trials**. It is not proper for a judge to co-own a dog solely to permit the judge to handle the dog. Tracking, agility, obedience, rally and conformation judges may enter the “A” classes, if otherwise eligible.” **Removes the restriction** on judges to allow them to handle dogs that are not owned or co-owned by themselves or a family member at events other than obedience or rally trials.

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Ways to avoid losing points before, between or after an exercise.

A team (dog and handler) are under judgment from the time they enter the ring until they leave the ring. Once the team passes through the ring entrance the scoring begins and does not stop until the team passes back through the ring entrance on the way out. Scoring is not to be viewed as just points off as scoring in the Judge's Book can also reflect perfection indicated by a "0" for no points off.

So what actions by the dog or handler would lead to withdrawals from "Your 200 Account?" Well, let's review a few sections of the Regulations and find some answers to this point-saving quandary.

Dog and Handler saving points:

How can praising your dog cost points?

"Section 22. Praise. Praise and petting are allowed between and after exercises, but points will be deducted from the total score for a dog that is not under reasonable control while being praised. There will be a **substantial penalty** for any dog that is picked up or carried at any time in the obedience ring while under judgment. **Note: A dog is under judgment until it leaves the ring.**" A tip for the handler is to know how one's dog reacts to praise beforehand and praise accordingly in the ring so the dog enjoys the praise but also maintains "reasonable control."

A handler may pick up their dog and carry it back into the ring for awards. I have not attempted this with my Saint Bernard yet, but may it try soon. Saints do love their cuddle time!

Review what class(es) you are showing in for the day.

- 1) Remember the class you are showing in as the Regulations can vary from class to class. For example: "**Chapter 2, Section 23. Handling Between Exercises.** In the Beginner Novice, Preferred-Novice, and Novice classes, the dog may be guided gently by the collar between exercises. No other physical guidance is permitted and, if used, must receive minor or substantial penalties, depending on the circumstances.
'In the Graduate Novice, Graduate Open, Preferred-Open, Open, Preferred-Utility, Utility or Versatility classes, there will be a substantial penalty for any dog that is physically guided *at any time* or not readily controllable. Minor penalties will be imposed for a dog that does not respond promptly to its handler's commands or signals *before or between exercises* in these classes."
A person takes the chance of ineligibility by entering both Novice B & Open and the possibility of earning an Open score on the same day. As soon as they earn a qualifying score in Open they are immediately ineligible for the Novice class, regardless of the closing date.

Chapter 2, Section 24. Orders and Minimum Penalties. "The lists of faults are not intended to be complete, but minimum penalties are specified for most of the more common and serious faults..." For example, sniffing in certain circumstances could lend itself to a scorable fault, but the words sniff or sniffing are not in the Regulations.

Dog saving points:

Chapter 2, Section 25. Misbehavior. A long section in the Regulations, but it contains a lot of "good stuff" in regards to saving points. "Dogs must be under control at all times when entering and exiting the ring. Any display of fear or nervousness by the dog or any uncontrolled behavior such as snapping, barking or running away from its handler must be penalized *according to the seriousness of the misbehavior* whether it occurs during or between an exercise or before or after judging. The judge may excuse the dog from further competition in the class."

'If the behavior occurs during an exercise, the penalty must first be applied to the score for that exercise. Should the penalty be greater than the value of the exercise, the additional points will be deducted from the total score under Miscellaneous Penalties. If such behavior occurs before or after the judging or between exercises, the entire penalty will be deducted from the total score. Any dog that relieves itself at any time while in the ring for judging **must** receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score and **may be excused** from the ring."

'The judge **must** disqualify any dog that attacks or attempts to attack any person in the ring. Any dog that attacks another dog or that appears dangerous to other dogs **must** be excused and not allowed back in the ring for the group exercise."

Let's address the barking misbehavior as one example of a scorable fault that sometimes is misunderstood in regards to scoring. In obedience, a bark is a bark and a scorable fault. This includes "happy barks." In Rally, a single bark is looked at differently; don't confuse the two venues. In obedience, before, during and after an exercise barking is definitely a scorable fault as it is classified in the above section (#25) as a form of misbehavior. During the time frame of the individual exercises there is more latitude for scoring barking than in the Group exercises. One bark or several barks before, between or after an exercise (or even during an exercise) will add up in deducted points. At some point, if the barking continues, the misbehavior may/will become a disturbing element and the Regulations do state, "The judge may excuse the dog from further competition in the class." These are judgment calls in regards to scoring or in the extreme case, excusal.

My philosophy in judging is if a dog barks it is subject to a penalty, which could be deemed a minor penalty (½ to 2½ points) during the individual exercises, depending on the circumstances. Ignoring and not scoring such misbehavior would in essence be penalizing *all the other dogs* who entered the ring and did no barking. The barking dog and non-barking dog were then scored the same (zero points off) if that were the case! Keep in mind: scoring is the way of separating the quality of performances, even if only a ½ of a point penalty was applied. This holds true for ALL scoring (if worth ½ point), as it is the judge's obligation to judge by the Regulations; as a result the judging is fair and consistent to all the exhibitors. There are those breeds that may have more of a tendency to bark than others but the Regulations also state in Chapter 2, Section 6, "The same methods and standards will be used for judging and scoring the A and B classes and in judging and scoring the work of dogs of different breeds, including dogs listed with AKC Canine Partners." There is a time and place for the dog to work quietly, and the obedience ring is one of those places. In my experience it is rare that barking in the ring would equate to a non-qualifying (NQ) score, but it can lead to a few deductions from your "200 account."

Lastly, Chapter 2, Section 7 should be reviewed. "Interference and Double Handling. A judge who is aware of any assistance, interference, or attempts to control a dog from outside the ring must act promptly to stop such double handling or interference and must penalize the dog substantially. If the judge feels the circumstances warrant, the dog will receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score for the exercise during which the aid was received."

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – [You're Next in the Ring! Is Your Game Plan in Order?](#) **Ready.** 

Upon arriving at the trial:

- 1) Make sure you have all the needed required equipment for the class(es) entered.
- 2) Check-in early if at all possible. If you have a conflict this should be discussed with the Judge/Steward *before the class is scheduled to start*. This courtesy will help the Judge in determining Group sizes, if applicable, and absentees. Keep attuned to the "white board, if available" for dogs moved out of catalog order as this information will allow your warm-up timing to be more on target.
- 3) Before your turn, watch the heeling pattern and where *each* exercise will take place. In being prepared one can keep their dog better focused while moving from one exercise to the next.
- 4) Know the correct height of the dog's withers if there are jumps in the class entered, and double-check to make sure the Stewards have the jumps set correctly *before* entering the ring.
- 5) If you are entered in **Beginner Novice, Novice A or Preferred-Novice**, plan to be ringside for the **10-minute walkthrough** prior to the start of the class. Have accommodations for the dog during the walkthrough.

When it is time to enter the ring keep in mind the following:

- 1) A team is being judged from the time they step *into* the ring until the time they *leave* the ring.
- 2) Make sure the leash is clipped going into the ring and leaving the ring. See **Chapter 2, Section 16** for exceptions.
- 3) Keep the dog under control *at all times* while in the ring. **Chapter 2, Sections 22 & 23**
- 4) Club clothing, AKC event clothing, or breed clothing may be worn by anyone exhibiting a dog or by ring stewards. Clothing may display the person's name, the dog's call name and/or the dog's picture. Titles may not be displayed. Writing or graphics on the clothing must not be in poor taste or contain profanity. Clothing must not display any information that would be in conflict with a sponsor of the trial. Effective 9/1/17.
- 5) Leashes must be made of fabric or leather and long enough to provide adequate slack during the Heel on Leash exercise. A six foot leash needed in BN and the Novice Group exercise. Nothing may be "hanging" from the collar.
Chapter 2, Sections 16 & 17

6) Handling Between Exercises, **Chapter 2, Section 23:**

- a. **Beginner Novice, Preferred-Novice or Novice A & B**, guided gently by the collar between exercises. NO other physical guidance is permitted and, if used, *must* receive minor or substantial penalties, depending on the circumstances.
 - b. **Graduate Novice, Graduate Open, Preferred-Open, Open, Preferred-Utility, Utility or Versatility** classes, there will be a substantial penalty for any dog that is physically guided at any time or is not readily controllable. Minor penalties will be imposed for a dog that does not respond promptly to its handler's commands or signals before or between exercises in these classes. Items **a. & b.** also pertain to the Group exercises, such as physical positioning the dog for the Sit or Down.
- 7) Before starting each exercise the judge is required to ask, "Are you ready?" Keep in mind this is JUST a question, NOT the start of the exercise. The judging of an exercise will not begin until the judge has given the first order. **Chapter 2, Section 4**
 - 8) Praise and petting are allowed between and after exercises, but points will be deducted from the total score for a dog that is not under reasonable control while being praised. **Chapter 2, Section 22**
 - 9) After the last class dog and before the awards: If you have been informed you Q'd, warm up your dog as you never know if there may be a runoff! Be prepared and ready if called back into the ring!
 - 10) Classes at or after 12:00 noon will be listed "to follow" and must be judged in the order and ring listed. No "to follow" class may start before 12:00 noon. **Chapter 1, Section 26**

A minor deduction is ½ point up to 2½ points. A substantial deduction is 3 or more points.

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Changes in a few exercises in regards to scoring faults (12-1-2015)

When the new Obedience Regulations come into effect, there will be a few changes to be aware of in order maintain your “200 scoring account” balance! **Note:** In the scoring sections of the various exercises it may state minor or substantial penalties; these are judgement calls for the seriousness of the action in question. The fault in question may be from an action by the dog OR handler. Next, there are areas where just a minor deduction is warranted and so stated, and the same holds true for the substantial deduction. In reviewing the changes slated for December 1st, let's peruse the exercises where an actual change in scoring is projected.

Beginner Novice Recall

- 1) As the dog is coming into the handler, the handler's arms and hands will be required to be hanging naturally at their sides, like in the Novice Recall (a foundation exercise). In the AKC's comments for changes it states, “Consistent language and required in all exercises where the dog is coming to front. This will help new exhibitors learn correct and consistent handling from the beginning.” Although the scoring section does not specifically address the amount of a penalty for a handler's hands not at their sides, it is clearly stated in Chapter 2, Section 19, “In any exercise that requires a dog to sit in front, the handler's arms and hands must hang naturally at the sides until the dog has sat in front. The handler must receive a substantial deduction for not doing so.”
- 2) “Substantial deductions will be made for a handler's extra command or signal to come or to sit.” This is a change from a *minor* or substantial to substantiate the importance of the dog coming when it is called.

Utility (the foundation exercise), Preferred Utility, plus Graduate Open & Versatility--where applicable

- 1) **Scent Discrimination:** With the revisions to this exercise there are now more faults possible, for example:
 - a. Dog moving or changing position as the handler is choosing an article.
 - b. Handler touching/petting the dog after the exercise has officially begun (new Judge's first order).
 - c. Talking to the dog is allowed only during a specific timeframe; if not in that timeframe it is scorable.
 - d. Giving the scent *to the dog* is allowed only during a specific timeframe; if not in that timeframe it is scorable.
 - e. For more detailed information on the revised scent discrimination please refer to **Random Little Tidbit #4**
- 2) **Directed Retrieve:** “Depending on the extent, a substantial deduction up to and including a non-qualifying (NQ) score will be made for a handler who does not turn in place, does not face the designated glove, does not give the verbal command to retrieve simultaneously or immediately after giving the direction to retrieve, or for a dog that does not go directly to the designated glove. All applicable penalties listed under the Heel Free, Novice Recall and the Retrieve on Flat will apply.” The scoring changes made will be: “Substantial penalty (currently NQ) for the direction not given simultaneously or immediately following. Plus, substantial penalty for lack of directness, in *extreme* cases of lack of directness scoring may still result in a NQ.”

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – [New Eligibility Requirements For Alternative and Optional Titling Classes.](#)

For a quick review of other significant revisions coming December 1, 2015 see Random Little Tidbits #5

Mark your calendar! On December 1st there will be several optional titling classes in which the eligibility requirements are being changed! Beware of the new eligibility requirements before entering any shows which will take place after November 30th to insure your qualifying scores will be credited. **If you have Qs now in the optional titling classes and the December changes may affect the title you are working on, now would be the time to finish up the title before the changes take place.** Below is a quick review of the coming changes:

Beginner Novice A

"The Beginner Novice A class shall be for dogs that have not won the **BN** title. A handler must own the dog entered, or be a member of the owner's household or immediate family, and may not have previously handled any dog that has earned any AKC Obedience title. Owners may enter more than one dog in this class. No dog may be entered in both Beginner Novice A and Beginner Novice B at any trial." The reason stated for the change: "This class is for inexperienced dogs. By limiting which dogs can be entered we address the problem of advanced dogs entering."

Beginner Novice B

"The owner or any other person may handle dogs in this class to earn a **BN** title. Owners may enter more than one dog in this class. No dog may be entered in both Beginner Novice A and Beginner Novice B at any trial. This class is for dogs without an obedience title, or who may have earned a **BN, CD, or PCD** title." The reasoning, "This class is for inexperienced dogs. By limiting which dogs can be entered we address the problem of advanced dogs entering."

Graduate Novice

This class is for all dogs. Removed eligibility; this is addressed in the first sentence and again in Chapter 1, Section 16 regarding when titles are won.

Graduate Open

This class is open to all dogs.

The Pre-Novice class converts to Preferred Novice

The Preferred Novice class is an *alternative* titling class for dogs that have not won the **CDX** or **PCDX** title.

The Pre-Open class converts to Preferred Open

The Preferred Open class is an *alternative* titling class for dogs that have won the **CD** or **PCD** or higher Regular or Preferred title.

The Pre-Utility class converts to Preferred Utility

The Preferred Utility class is an *alternative* titling class for dogs that have won the **CDX** or **PCDX** or higher Regular or Preferred title.

Versatility

No changes in eligibility, plus continued showing in this class is addressed in Chapter 1, Section 16 where all other class eligibility is addressed.

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RANDOM LITTLE TIDBITS (#10)

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Tidbits to keep in mind for the revised Group exercises.

Out of date in regards to Group Exercises, see Tidbits #37 & #39 for updates. This Tidbit #10 is being saved for historical purposes of our past.

In General

- ✓ Any dog or handler, regardless of qualifying/non-qualifying, that has been excused from the ring may not return for the group exercises.
- ✓ Handlers of dogs that have qualified have the option of returning for the group exercises. If the dog is not returning to perform the group exercises it will be marked “absent” from those exercises, same as the current procedure, and a NQ is carried down.
- ✓ Dogs that have **non-qualified**: If the judge has *released* the team from performing the group exercises, the dog may not return for groups. Otherwise, those handlers have the option of returning for the group exercise.
- ✓ Each eligible handler is required to notify the table steward of their intention to return for the group exercise after the completion of the individual exercises.
- ✓ Judges have the option of deciding if a set of group exercises will be conducted after a specified number of dogs or if the group exercises will be conducted after the last individual team is judged. Once determined, the judge must post this information at the ring.
- ✓ Leashes are to be attached to the dog's collar (no slip leads) when coming into the ring for the group exercises or awards.

Novice A & B Classes

The leash remains attached to the dog's collar and will be dropped or placed on the ground **alongside the dog and handler** with the armband weighted as necessary before the exercise begins. If the armband needs to be weighted, Ms. May (Saint Bernard) & Ms. Gemma (Pembroke Welsh Corgi) are demonstrating one way. You may want to enlarge the pdf for a better view of the leash



passing through between the armband and leash. Oh, and *will someone inform that Corgi handler the tag “hanging” from the collar needs to be dealt with and there is less than 4-feet between the dogs! Good grief, this is not the time to snuggle up to the Saint looking to be “rescued” for not maintaining the Long Sit! ☺*

Open A & B & Graduate Novice

The leash will be removed and placed **behind** the dog with the armband weighted as necessary.

Chapter 2, Section 15, Catalog Order & Chapter 3, Section 12, Group Exercises.

When bringing the Groups back into the ring there has been a tweak which may/will affect the classes using jumps. Let's first look at what the two different sections will now state:

Chapter 2, Section 15, Catalog Order, “...Dogs should be judged in the judging program order listed for each day if it is practical to do so without holding up any judging *in any ring*. Group exercises will be judged in judging program order.”

Chapter 2, Section 12, Group Exercises, “...The dogs that are in the ring will be lined up in judging program order along one of the four sides of the ring....”

When it was allowed for catalog order to be assigned by jump height order (and then allowed clubs to state the order the dogs would be run *each day* without having to restate the full catalog order for *each day*) confusion was created. The catalog & Regulations said one thing (Catalog order), the Judges Book states otherwise, and depending on how the running order goes it was challenging/time consuming paperwork to keep it straight. In addition, with the new options of

returning or not returning for groups, judges now being allowed to do the groups at the end of the class in [judging program order](#) also simplified it.

For more information on judging, examining the exercises and saving other withdrawals from your "200" account, check out and download all the...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit-

With the new Obedience Regulations being published from time to time, let's look back to the past.

--- The History of AKC Obedience - The First set of Regulations - The First Obedience Trial ---

AKC BOD adopted the Obedience Regulations on March 10, 1936.

(Reprinted with permission from the **November 1973 AKC Gazette**)

During the years 1933 and 1934 four "obedience tests" were held in the United States. The first was held in Mt Kisco, N. Y. on the estate of Henry J. Whitehouse and was witnessed by over 150 spectators. These tests aroused tremendous interest in training on the part of spectators, kennel owners, dog owners and dog clubs, and were a favorable topic of dog writers. The four tests were brought into existence largely due to the efforts of Mrs. Helene Whitehouse Walker who brought all-breed Obedience tests to the states from England, and Miss Blanche Saunders, her kennel maid at that time.

As interest in Obedience tests increased Mrs. Walker was besieged with inquiries from people wanting information on dog training, what was expected of the dogs and how one would arrange holding a test. In response to an inquiry from a dog columnist, Mrs. Walker writes:

"There has been no effort that I know of to organize anybody (club) to standardize these tests. I think it would be a most excellent idea. The best way would be to have the American Kennel Club recognize them as they do field trials, Also, to have certificates of merit and a title after a dog's name. Up to the present I have been pushing this alone and it is so satisfactory to feel that interest is at last aroused."

Mrs. Walker wanted Obedience in as many shows as possible as she felt this would be a selling point in persuading the AKC to take over the responsibility of the tests and officially recognize them. During an early visit to the offices of the AKC Mrs. Walker discussed with Charles T. Inglee, Executive Vice President, the importance of training, pointing out that Obedience was not a passing fad but something to be taken seriously. To support her arguments she displayed newspaper clippings and correspondence she had from all parts of the country and showed that the success of the tests already spoke for themselves.

In **1935** Mrs. Helene Whitehouse Walker wrote the first set of regulations for Obedience which she published in a booklet called "Obedience Tests". The cover page consisted of a notice that the pamphlet, as written, had been submitted to the AKC and that there was every possibility that the rules as outlined or slightly changed would eventually be adopted by the governing body and be incorporated into the rules of the AKC concerning dog shows. The 22-page pamphlet (including six illustrative photos) outlined procedures for judges, handlers and show-giving clubs. In January 1936 Mr. Inglee acknowledged receipt of the regulations by writing Mrs. Walker:

"The typewritten manuscript which you sent me is now in the hands of our council to put in proper form for insertion in the rules."

Approximately 2 months later, on **March 10, 1936, the AKC's Board of Directors approved the first set of "Regulations and Standards of Obedience Test Field Trials"**

The basic exercises, the procedures for judges and handlers, remained unchanged. Mrs. Walker, Miss Saunders and Josef Weber (a well-known dog trainer) submitted refinements to the AKC which were incorporated in the final A-page leaflet originally published in the April 1936 issue of the Gazette, and the forerunner of today's "Obedience Regulations".

The foresight of those three individuals, especially Mrs. Walker, in selecting and describing the exercises used in the 1936 Obedience regulations is amazing. The exercises for the Novice and Open classes exist today virtually unchanged with only minor refinements. The Obedience titles, originated almost 40 years ago, remain unchanged except that the "Tracking Dog" has been added.

On June 13, 1936, the N. Westchester Kennel Club held the first AKC licensed Obedience test at Mt Kisko, N. Y. It consisted of one class, Novice, and was judged by Mrs. Wheeler H Page. Miss Marie Leary and Ward C Green stewarded. This test drew a total of 12 entries all of which competed, placing as follows:

1. Ch. Cadeau De Noet - Poodte-j owned by Mrs. M Erlanger
2. Carillon Epreuve - Poodle - owned by Carillon Kennels (Mrs. Walker)
3. Tango of Piperscroft - Poodle - owned by Carillon Kennels
4. Shaw's Little Pepper - Miniature Schnauzer - owned by Mrs. L. Shaw

Also qualifying were Lydbrook Coco (Poodle) owned by Mrs V Vanderlined; Nansoe Skagin of Carillon (Poodle) owned by Henry J Whitehouse; Schwarzpeltz von Mardex (GSD) owned by Walker Peisser; Misty Isles Schandel of Piperscroft (Poodle) owned by Mrs. Miriam Hall.

On that day in 1936 this small historical event occurred that was to grow into the national participant sport of today. Since first recognizing Obedience tests, AKC has worked consistently to standardize the regulations so that Obedience tests would be uniformly held in all parts of the country. Eight months after approving the first set of regulations the Board of Directors of AKC approved a revised version. A third version was approved a year and a half later, and the fourth a year after that. This system of review, clarification and correction continued on a yearly basis for 35 years.

As early as 1939 AKC realized the need of being informed of the problems and trends of Obedience around the country. The extraordinary rapid growth of Obedience work in this country fostered organization of a committee of individuals from various parts of the country to have round table conferences whenever necessary and to discuss in detail the various phases of Obedience, making recommendations to the AKC Board of changes or additions for the betterment of the sport. In **June 1939 the first Obedience Advisory Committee convened** chaired by Donald Fordyce of AKC. The other 9 members were Mrs. Radcliff Farley (PA), Miss Aurelie Tremaine (MA), Mrs. Bryant Godsell (CA), Mrs. W L McCannon (MA), Mrs. Whitehouse Walker (NY), Geo. Foley (PA), Josef Weber (NJ) Samuel Blick (MD), Frank O Grant (OH). The major contribution of this early committee was to further standardize judging procedures and refine the Utility exercises.

The advent of World War II forced a change in emphasis of dog training and every canine enthusiast spoke of "dogs for defense." With the resources and energies of the country diverted, competitive sports involving dogs saw a temporary decline. Immediately following the war, with "leisure time" for Americans reaching unparalleled levels, interest in Obedience trials soared. In 1946 the AKC called another Obedience advisory committee consisting of John C. Neff, Chairman, John Brownell, Howard P. Calussen, Elliott Blackiston, L. Wilson Davis, Clyde Henderon, Clarence Pfaffenberger, Oscar Franzen, and Miss Blanche Saunders.

Through the efforts of this committee emerged a book of regulations that helped to standardize judging procedures more than at any time before. The most significant addition was that of definitions for *the principal part of each exercise* and the development of a separate title for those dogs certified to be a "Tracking Dog"

Through the years, the Obedience Advisory Committee has been the guardian of the sport. They have expanded the Obedience regulations from a 4-page leaflet to a 43-page detailed booklet with carefully planned descriptions and explanations of every facet of the sport.

In its efforts to keep pace with the needs of Obedience enthusiast and the sport in general, AKC has recently taken two important steps. The first was **the formation in 1971 of an Obedience Department** directed by the well-known judge Richard H. D'Ambrisi. In June 1973 the direction of Obedience activities was assumed by James E. Dearing following Mr. D'Ambrisi's death earlier in the year. The formation of this department has established constant full-time review of all facets of the sport and a place to go for advice, suggestions, or with complaints.

The second important step taken by AKC is the formation of another Obedience Advisory Committee. This committee is chaired by Mr. Dearing and has two special consultants, L Wilson Davis, Special Consultant in Tracking, and the Rev. Thomas O'Connor, Special Consultant on Handicapped Handlers. The members of this committee are Thomas Knott (MD), Wm. Phillips (CA), Jack Ward (VA), Lucy Neeb (LA), James Falkner (TX), Robert Self (IL), Mary Lee Whiting (MN), Edward Anderson (PA).

In 1939 the first Obedience Advisory Committee met with the purpose of holding meetings when necessary and to discuss in detail various phases of Obedience, making recommendations for changes and additions to existing rules. Then, as now, many recommendations and changes were presented for consideration. The **September 1973** Obedience Advisory Committee considered and discussed Handicapped Handlers, Protection Dog Training, Advanced Tracking and the official recognition and designation of the Highest Scoring Dog in Trial". The committee also completely reviewed the Obedience Regulations and Guidelines for Obedience Judges. Many other recommendations were enthusiastically proposed and considered by this Committee.

The Obedience Advisory Committee of 1973 by cheerfully volunteering the time and energy can assure the fancy that our sport will continue to be as efficient and exciting as we desire it to be.

AKC wants to do everything possible to promote and encourage the sport of Obedience. The formations of the Obedience Department and the new Obedience Advisory Committee have already proved their value. Anticipated future programs are expected to further the rapport between AKC and Obedience enthusiasts so that every possible assistance will be provided.

[The following pages have a copy of the very FIRST AKC Obedience Regulations](#)



If you print out the last two pages of this document you can then cut and assemble a copy of the 1936 AKC Obedience Regulations for your library.

AKC Blog Address: <https://akcobedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/about/> Sign up to receive updates.

John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net

**Regulations and Standard
for Obedience Test
Field Trials**



Approved 1936 by
The American Kennel Club



The American Kennel Club
221 Fourth Avenue New York City

OBEDIENCE TEST FIELD TRIALS

**Special Regulations and Awards Applying to Dogs
Competing in Obedience Tests.**

SECTION 1. A club or association which has been granted permission to hold a dog show may give any or all of the classes defined in this Chapter as part of and in connection with its dog show. A club or association with the permission of The American Kennel Club may hold obedience test field trials apart from and not in connection with any dog show.

SECTION 2. The Obedience Test Novice Class shall be for all dogs of any breed and of either sex which have not won more than one first prize in an Obedience Test Class. One dog only can be shown in this class by any one exhibitor and no professional handler or trainer shall be allowed to compete as exhibitor or otherwise.

SECTION 3. The tests in the Obedience Test Novice Class for each dog shall be:

1. To heel on leash.
2. To heel free.
3. To come when called.
4. To sit for a period of one minute away from handler.
5. To lie down for a period of three minutes away from handler.

SECTION 4. The score of points for a perfect performance of each of these tests in the Obedience Test Novice Class shall be:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. For heeling on leash | 20 points |
| 2. For heeling free | 25 points |
| 3. For coming to handler when called.... | 20 points |
| 4. For sitting one minute | 15 points |
| 5. For lying down three minutes | 20 points |
| Total | 100 points |

SECTION 9. The American Kennel Club will permit the use of the letters "C. D. X.", signifying "Companion Dog Excellent", to be used in connection with and after the name of each dog, which shall be certified by Judges of Obedience Tests to The American Kennel Club to have received twice a score of 200 or more points in Obedience Test Open Classes in which four or more dogs were competing.

SECTION 10. The Obedience Test Utility Class shall be for all dogs of any breed and of either sex which shall have won the title of "Companion Dog Excellent" in Obedience Test Open Classes. One dog only can be shown in this class by any one exhibitor and the employment of a professional handler or trainer is permitted.

SECTION 11. The tests in the Obedience Test Utility Class for each dog shall be:

1. To track.
2. To exercise scent discrimination.
3. To seek back for lost articles.
4. To retrieve dumbbell over an obstacle.

SECTION 12. The score of points for a perfect performance of each of these tests in the Obedience Test Utility Class shall be:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. For tracking | 225 points |
| 2. For exercising scent discrimination .. | 75 points |
| 3. For seeking back | 60 points |
| 4. For retrieving dumbbell over an obstacle | 40 points |
| Total | 400 points |

SECTION 13. The American Kennel Club will permit the use of the letters "U. D.", signifying "Utility Dog" to be used in connection with and after the name of each dog which shall be certified by Judges of Obedience Tests to The American Kennel Club to have received twice a score of 280 or more points in Obedience Test Utility Classes in which three or more dogs were competing.

SECTION 5. The American Kennel Club will permit the use of the letters C. D., signifying "Companion Dog", to be used in connection with and after the name of each dog which shall be certified by Judges of Obedience Tests to The American Kennel Club to have received twice a score of eighty or more points in Obedience Test Novice Classes in which six or more dogs were competing.

SECTION 6. The Obedience Test Open Class shall be for all dogs of any breed and of either sex which shall have won the title of "Companion Dog" in Obedience Test Novice Classes. One dog only can be shown in this class by any one exhibitor and no professional handler or trainer shall be allowed to compete as exhibitor or otherwise.

SECTION 7. The tests in the Obedience Test Open Class for each dog shall be:

1. To heel on leash.
2. To heel free.
3. To come when called.
4. To retrieve dumbbell on the flat.
5. To speak on command.
6. To make a long jump.
7. To sit for a period of three minutes.
8. To lie down for a period of five minutes.

SECTION 8. The score of points for a perfect performance of each of these tests in the Obedience Test Open Class shall be:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. For heeling on leash | 40 points |
| 2. For heeling free | 50 points |
| 3. For coming to handler when called.... | 25 points |
| 4. For retrieving dumbbell on the flat.... | 25 points |
| 5. For speaking on command | 20 points |
| 6. For long jump | 30 points |
| 7. For sitting three minutes | 25 points |
| 8. For lying down five minutes | 35 points |
| Total | 250 points |

SECTION 14. The following colors shall be used for prize ribbons in all classes.

- First Prize, Rose.
- Second Prize, Brown.
- Third Prize, Light Green.
- Fourth Prize, Gray.

SECTION 15. The Judge of an Obedience Test must remove from competition any dog which does not obey its handler, any handler who interferes wilfully with another competitor or his dog, and bitches in heat, and may exclude from competition any dog which he considers unfit to compete.

SECTION 16. The owner or agent entering a dog in an Obedience Test does so at his own risk, and agrees to abide by the rules of The American Kennel Club.

SECTION 17. The decisions of the Bench Show or Obedience Test Committee present shall be conclusive in all matters arising at the Test and shall bind all parties subject however to the Rules of The American Kennel Club.

STANDARD FOR OBEDIENCE TESTS.

1. The idea of Obedience Tests is to demonstrate the usefulness of the pure bred dog as the companion and guardian of man and not the ability of the dog to acquire facility in the performance of mere tricks. The classification which has been adopted is progressive with the thought in mind that a dog which can be termed a utility dog has demonstrated his fitness to a place in our modern scheme of living. It is doubtful if the added tests required of contestants in the Open Class successfully can be demonstrated at a show held indoors. Certainly the tests required for a dog to acquire the title of "Utility Dog" can be made only in the open.

2. If the tests take place at an indoor show the ring should be large and the floor covered with matting in order to prevent the dogs from slipping. If the tests take place out of doors the ground should be level and the grass if any should be cut short.

3. Dogs are to be judged only on their ability to perform the tests set for them and not upon appearance or conformation. The responsibility for making the Tests interesting to the spectators and worth while to the exhibitor is left to the Judge who must not permit the judging to drag, whereby the handlers and those watching become bored and the competing dogs tire.

4. In the Novice and Open Classes the handler should enter the ring with his dog on loose leash, stand still with dog sitting at heel at the handler's side until the Judge asks if the handler is ready and then gives the order "Forward", at which command the handler will attract his dog's attention by saying his name and then give the order "Heel" and at the same time start walking briskly with the dog on loose leash. At the command "Heel" the dog should follow as closely as possible to the knee of the handler. At each order to "Halt" the handler will stop and his dog immediately should sit at heel and not move until ordered to do so. It is permissible after each halt before moving again, for the handler to give the order "Heel" to his dog. Any tightening or jerking of the leash, or any act, signal or command, which in the opinion of the judge gives the dog unnecessary or unfair assistance shall be penalized. The judge will give the orders "Left turn", "Right turn", "About turn", "Slow" and "Double", which last order signifies that the handler must run. The judge will order the handler to execute the "Figure Eight", which signifies that the handler must walk around and in between the judge and his steward.

5. Heel free should be executed in the same manner as heel on leash except that the dog is off the lead.

6. To execute the recall to handler the dog is ordered to and must be made to stay in the "Down" or sitting position at one end of the ring while his handler moves to the other end and when the judge gives the order "Do the Recall", the handler calls his dog which in the Novice Class must come straight in to its handler at a smart pace and when it reaches a point immediately in front of the handler, first sit, and next at command or signal go smartly to heel. In the Open Class the dog is told to and at command drops as it is coming in and then on command rises and continues on its way to heel position.

7. In the sitting one minute test, the handler goes to the end of the ring opposite to that end where the dog has been left in the sitting position and when the time

limit has expired returns to his dog which must not move from the sitting position until spoken to and permission has been given by its handler. The order is "Sit Stay." In the sitting three minutes test all handlers leave the ring and remain out of sight of their dogs until the time limit has expired.

8. In the "Down" three or five minutes test, the same conditions prevail as in the Sitting Tests, except that the dog must remain in a lying down position. The order is "Down-Stay". In the five minutes test all handlers leave the ring and remain out of sight of their dogs until the time limit has expired.

9. All the competing dogs take the "Sit" and "Down" tests in the ring together.

10. In retrieving dumbbell on the flat the dog should not move forward to retrieve nor deliver to hand on return, until ordered by the handler. The retrieve should be executed at a fast trot or gallop without mouthing or playing with the object. After delivering the object the dog goes to heel. The size of the dumbbell may vary in proportion to the size of the dog. The usual weight is not less than twelve ounces. The orders given by the judge in this test should be "Throw it" whereupon the handler throws the dumbbell, "Send him", whereupon the handler sends his dog to retrieve, "Take it", whereupon the handler takes the dumbbell from dog, "Finish", whereupon the handler gives the order to heel.

11. In retrieving dumbbell over an obstacle the dog must climb the obstacle both going and returning. The height of the obstacle should vary in proportion to the size of the dog, but in no event should be more than three feet and six inches in height.

12. The height and breadth of jumps should vary in proportion to the size of the dog, but in no event should be more than six feet in width.

13. Tracking must be performed with dog on leash, the distance to be covered to be not less than one quarter mile long, the scent to be at least one half hour old and that of a stranger who will leave the article to be found at the end of the track. The tracks should be plotted on the ground by the stewards on the day previous to the Obedience Test Meeting when possible. The Tracklayers shall then follow the plotted tracks, deposit the article to be found at the end of the track, and return over the track,

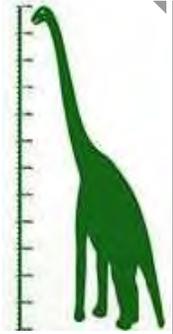
collecting the marked pegs on the return journey, one peg not more than 30 yards from the commencement of the track to be left in, to indicate the direction of the track.

14. Scent discrimination should be exercised on three articles belonging to handler. This test should be repeated three times, testing a different article belonging to the handler each time, which shall be placed amongst (but not covered by) several other articles. One article used to be a metal object. Handkerchiefs must not be used. The stranger's article put down for this exercise should resemble the handler's article.

15. Seeking back for lost article. The article used must be approved by the judge and must not be a conspicuous one nor white in color. The article used shall be dropped surreptitiously by the handler as he is walking with his dog at heel. After the handler has proceeded at least thirty paces from the place where the article was dropped, the dog shall be given the order to "seek back" and must return at fast gallop for the article which has been dropped, retrieve it and bring it to the handler.

16. Speaking on command. The dog when at a sitting position shall bark at command of its handler.

17. A word of praise is allowed between tests but no offering of any kind of food must be given in the ring. At the end of each test the judge should say "Exercise Finished" in order to give the handler this opportunity.



Below is the next installment of Random Little Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – **Dinosaurs, & now measuring is one step closer to total extinction!**

As for the Dinosaurs... “The causes of the end-Cretaceous extinction are still being debated by paleontologists. Researchers agree that a major factor was an asteroid about 10 kilometers in diameter that struck what is now the Yucatán peninsula in Mexico. The effects of the impact were catastrophic, probably including global forest fires, possibly a period of cold weather due to sunlight-blocking dust and smoke, and a subsequent period of hot climate caused by the high levels of CO₂ released into the atmosphere by the impact.”

As for measuring dogs in obedience... The causes of the end of all judges measuring jump heights are also still being debated by paleontologists. Researchers agree that a major factor was a change in the 2000 Obedience Regulations that struck what is now the AKC Headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina. The effects of the impact were *hardly* catastrophic, probably did **not** include global forest fires, or possibly a period of cold weather due to sunlight-blocking dust and smoke, and a subsequent period of hot climate caused by the high levels of CO₂ released into the atmosphere by the impact.” ☺

I am not sure if the 1999 Obedience Advisory Committee (OAC) made the change or if it was an “in-house revision”; but the decades-long wording in regards to measuring dogs was changed in 2000 with the added verbiage, “Judges may, at their discretion, verify the height of any dog at the withers.” From that point on, judges who measured all dogs to verify jump heights started to become extinct.



I resisted extinction for the following reasons:

As judges we check and verify other items to make certain they conform with the Obedience Regulations and meet the minimum standards, such as:

- 1) the dumbbell
- 2) the gloves
- 3) the scent articles
- 4) the collar
- 5) the leash
- 6) no identifying items on handler or dog
- 7) the jumps themselves before judging commences
- 8) the ring size
- 9) length of grass or surface of the floor
- 10) and the list goes on and on....

Checking the dog for the correct *minimum* height is just another part of my job in making sure **minimum** requirements are met before the team competes, so I believed.

Do I trust the exhibitors? Well of course I do! I also know there is confusion amongst some, such as:

- 1) Where the withers actually are on a dog and where the highpoint is on the withers.
- 2) Confusion between Obedience jump heights and Rally jump heights.
- 3) Confusion with one's **measured** jump height agility card and obedience jump heights.
- 4) Confusion between countries (I am close to Canada); requirements can be different.
- 5) Stewards can error on occasion and have the jumps set for the wrong dog entering the ring; measuring verifies the correct height for the team entering the ring. At breed specialties jumps can look the same for a particular breed and still be incorrectly set for the individual dog.
- 6) Of the over 50 breeds jumping 3/4ths of their height, it is almost impossible to know the correct jump height by just looking at the dog.
- 7) In the Preferred-classes, all dogs jump ½ their height at the withers, unless the handler opts for higher jumps.
- 8) Verifying also makes sure the jumps are set higher if that is the handler's request.

As time marches on, opinions about different ways of showing, training and judging a dog also change with the times. Over the years there have been many tweaks in various exercises, plus verbiage being adjusted to meet the changing times in our sport. In particular, it has become apparent that with the 2000 additional wording allowing a judge an option to measure, few judges measure all dogs today. The ones who do measure seem to be viewed in somewhat of a negative persona in the eyes of many in our sport. My guess would be this is partly due to trainers and their students who rarely train their dogs to accept measurement (as in the past) since so few judges now measure due to the verbiage change. I have been one of the few “dinosaur judges” who continued to measure all dogs for the last 15 years after the

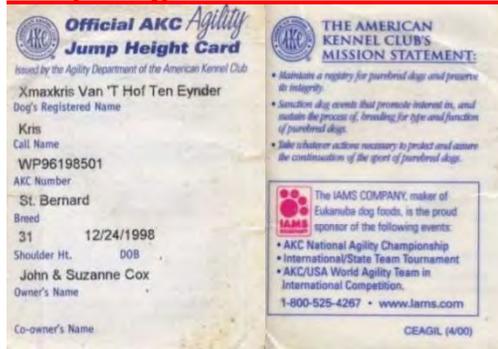
change based on the two outlines above. Measuring was done quickly and 99% of the dogs did not react to my measuring.

Come December 1, 2015, "slip" leashes (a leash not physically attached with the clasp) will be better defined in regards to their usage, and will be allowed only in a class where *all* the individual exercises are off leash. They may *not* be used when coming back into the ring for Groups or Awards. A leash must then be "attached" to the dog's collar with the clasp. In the past, slip leashes were used but no words defined how or when they were to be used. This led to some confusion amongst handlers and judges in regards to the leash being attached to the collar, or not. The recent OAC suggested a change in wording based upon input from the fancy and the AKC Board of Directors (BOD) went along with the suggestion and implemented the change. My reasoning for the change would be that the handlers of today in the advanced classes wish to enter the ring, slip the leash out from under the collar, and go directly to the starting point of the first exercise in one flowing motion without interruption, staying engaged with their dog. Stopping to have a dog measured by the judge would, now in a way, negate the handler's choice of leash usage to go directly to the first exercise. Training and showing today is different from the past in many ways. The now *defined* usage of a slip leash indicates one such desired change in showing dogs today.

With this enhanced leash regulation verbiage being *clearly* defined to reflect a desired change in showing and with so few judges now measuring dogs, measuring takes on more negative connotations than in the past. I see the measuring of all dogs in obedience *when entering the ring* as not in the wave of the future. This procedure has now morphed itself into an "exercise" of our past and I am okay with that as times and concepts are continually changing. Therefore, I will stop measuring *all* dogs on December 1, 2015 (as will my wife Suzanne Cox) when all the new Obedience Regulations come into effect. However, as with all judges, we still have the option to measure a dog that may appear not to be meeting the *minimum* standards in regards to jump heights. *If requested by a handler* I will comply and measure their dog. There have been times in the past where I have lowered the jumps since the handler was not sure of the actual *minimum* required height for their dog.

With that all said, let's move on to another subject. A dog's jump height *should be confirmed at some point* for the sake of assuring minimum standards are met as required by the Obedience Regulations for earning a qualifying score.

Jump Height Cards for Obedience/Rally need to be implemented on one card! It is now time!



I am still of the opinion we need to take another good look into having jump height cards for our sport. A precedent has been set as Agility requires such cards and their jump heights are in **4-inch** increments. Obedience jump heights are in **2-inch** increments for seven (7) classes requiring full wither height; 50+ breeds with $\frac{3}{4}$ withers height requirements, plus two (2) classes with $\frac{1}{2}$ withers height requirements!

From my understanding, in the past IAMS sponsored the Agility jump cards and had their name on the cards as a form of advertising. Since I am no longer competing in Agility I am not sure how the program is now supported, corporate or AKC. If sponsors are needed to get the ball rolling for obedience jump height cards, we surely can find a dog food company or obedience equipment supplier to step up to the plate, don't you think? I see no reason we cannot adopt, tweak, and implement such a system to work for Obedience. It is overdue for our sport with so many classes and breeds with different jump height requirements for meeting the minimum standards outlined in our regulations.

Links to how the Agility Jump Height Card system works:

<http://www.akc.org/events/agility/jump-height-card/>

<http://images.akc.org/pdf/MassMeasurementRequest.pdf>

AKC Blog Address: <https://akcbedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/about/> Sign up to receive updates.

John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



Below is the next installment of Random Little Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit - 
Added new words to the Glossary of Terms + new Judge's Book procedures.

Check out the **six (6) new words** added to the Glossary of Terms (**red**). Also check out the complete glossary which may help you better understand the full meaning of specific words used in the Regulations. These twenty-eight (28) defined words describe what a judge is looking for in the performance and knowing them well might be of assistance in your training.

AKC Canine Partners — an American Kennel Club program that is available to spayed/neutered dogs that are not currently eligible for AKC registration, AKC Foundation Stock Service (FSS) enrollment, or an AKC Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL) number

Brisk, briskly — keenly alive, alert, energetic

Command — verbal order from handler to dog

Croup — the dog's top rump area

Crowding — a dog so close to the handler as to interfere with the handler's freedom of motion

Directly — immediately, without deviation or hesitation

Down — the dog's body is on the ground; the dog's weight is off the feet & legs

Drop completely — a down position that would be acceptable for a Long Down exercise

Excused — A dog must be excused any time there is aggressive behavior toward another dog, a dog that is lame, unfit to compete, if there is anything attached to it for medical or corrective purposes, bitch in season, dog is not under its handler's control, handler who willfully interferes with another competitor/dog, a handler training/disciplining a dog in the ring, or a dog that is unable to be examined.

Finish — the dog goes from a position in front of the handler to the heel position

Gently — with kindness, without harshness or roughness

Guiding gently by the collar — control of the dog by holding any part of the collar with minimal pressure on the dog's neck

Lame — irregularity or impairment of the function of locomotion, irrespective of the cause or how slight or severe

Minor deduction — 1/2 point to 2 1/2 points

Mouthing — when a dog chews or rolls the dumbbell in its mouth unnecessarily

Natural — not artificial; free of affectation; what is customarily expected in the home or public places

Order — direction from judge to handler, either verbal or nonverbal

Prompt response — without hesitation, immediate, quick

Regularly trained or instructed — where a dog and/or handler meet on a regular basis for instruction. A regular basis is considered a set pattern of dates, such as monthly or more often.

Released — A dog **will** be released from the group exercise if it has non-qualified in the individual exercises, a dog may be released from further competition in the class for misbehavior, in extreme cases a dog that must be repositioned in the group exercise by its handler may be released. A dog must be released from the group exercise for displaying uncontrolled behavior, if it interferes with another dog or does not remain sitting during the first part of the group exercise.

Resentment — resistance, unwillingness

Signal — nonverbal direction from the handler to dog, as described in chapter 2, section 20

Sit — the dog has its rear and/or hocks on the ground

Smartly — quickly, vigorously

Substantial deduction — 3 points or more

Training — as related to where a student-handler/teacher-judge relationship is established, with or without compensation.

Turn in place — turning in the circle that was occupied by the handler before they started to turn

Withers — highest point of the dog's shoulder

New procedures and abbreviations to follow when marking the Judge's Book:

- In the Open B, Utility B, Preferred Open and Preferred Utility classes the exercises will not be listed; write them in.
- If a dog has non-qualified and is "Released" write "NQ-R" ("Non-Qualifying Released") then carry down an "NQ" in the "Total Score" box.
- If a handler leaves the ring before completing the exercises, write "HLR" (Handler Left Ring) then carry down an "NQ" in the "Total Score" box.
- Verify that all the Group Exercise boxes have been marked accordingly, including a zero for no points off.
- Verify that all **Miscellaneous Penalty boxes** have been marked accordingly, **including a zero for no points off.**
- Verify all absentees have been marked accordingly.

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John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Reviewing the newly published AKC Obedience Regulations

The new AKC Obedience Regulations has been published and is now on line for viewing.

<http://www.akc.org/pdfs/rulebooks/RO2999.pdf>

From my initial observations I applaud the finished product, which will provide us with a more user-friendly set of Regulations from those in the past. The new book reads with enhanced clarity, which provides consistency in understanding the requirements for the exhibitors and judges alike. In addition, there are more detailed descriptions for all of the exercises and performances in *all* the classes, chapters and sections. Good job AKC!

Since the first year of the Obedience Regulations (1936), our ever-changing sport will always be in need of tweaking, plus adding improvements to keep up with the times and projecting trends for the future. As with all changes in life, we adjust; but *as a whole*, I feel the changes made are excellent when considering they need to be applied to a nation as a whole and not one region or an individual's likes or dislikes. There will most likely be more tweaks and improvements in the future as change is always inevitable, but for now, here is where we are at.

Ten (10) Positive Improvements that put a smile on my face:

- 1) A few sections have been moved into a more appropriate chapter.
- 2) The **Preferred** titling classes are now referred to as "Alternative Titling Classes," They are still optional classes but this sets them apart from the **Optional** titling classes (BN, GN, GO, VER) for clarity. The eligibility requirements in the new Alternative Titling Classes changed when the Pre-classes became the Preferred classes, bringing them more in line with the Regular classes (the foundation classes of obedience).
- 3) Many parts of the previously published Judge's Guidelines have been moved forward into the appropriate chapters and sections where they best apply. This now makes it easier for the exhibitor and judge to review what is required and what is expected in regards to the performance. I have always felt the Judge's Guidelines were overlooked by the reader (and sometimes judges) in the past and there is a lot of pertinent information which was then overlooked, too!
- 4) Chapter 2, Section 20 had the words rearranged for a better flow and understanding. It now addresses commands first, signals second, followed by commands and/or signals--in that order. Reading this section in the past (which was a mumble/jumble) had an effect on me like melatonin! ☺
- 5) Each exercise now has "Judging Procedures" spelled out for a better understanding.
- 6) The Alternative and Optional Titling Classes now have descriptions for all the exercises, or a referral back the appropriate Regular class. The Regular classes have judging procedures referred back to the Judge's Guidelines if a *more complete* description and understanding is needed.
- 7) The Glossary of Terms has six (6) new words added and one (1) taken out. "Crooked" was defined in the Glossary of Terms in the past but the word itself was nowhere to be found in the Regulations.
- 8) Filling out the Judge's Book is now better covered than in the past with new points for a Judge to be aware of when entering data in the book, plus two (2) new abbreviations have been introduced for writing in cramped space.
 - a. "Released" write "**NQ-R**" ("**Non-Qualifying Released**")
 - b. "Handler Left Ring" write "**HLR**"
- 9) The Steward in Obedience chapter has been updated to reflect the appropriate changes.
- 10) New additions are underlined to bring to the reader's attention a change from the past Regulations.

It is my belief, the changes which were adopted from the Obedience Advisory Committee's many suggestions will provide a "little something" for everyone. Not an easy task when considering all the variables involved.

Hopefully, we can now move forward with a more positive attitude. We need to work on that objective along with the few training adjustments (**see prior Random Little Tidbits**). That ball is now in your court. Keep it in perspective; the Obedience Regulations are written for a DOG SHOW event. Obedience is a performance SPORT for those up for a challenge and long-term fun. A political election or world peace does not hang in the balance with this new book; enjoy the challenges this sport provides us, and above all enjoy your dog and yourself in meeting those challenges. "Exercise finished!" Good Sportsmanship RULES!

Good luck to you in achieving your future goals. And please don't forget to help celebrate another's goals. Be there at the correct time and place for when comfort may be needed if there is a hiccup. That is true **Sportsmanship!**

I would also like to suggest *making time* to hang out around the Beginner Novice and Novice A rings in particular and offer encouragement to those individuals. They are the future of our sport! Remember back to the times when you were walking in their shoes and what an encouraging word meant to you at that time, and probably still does.

And that, my friends, is the **Standard of Perfection** which will reflect the best on the sport we love in order to help make it grow.

AKC Blog Address: <https://akcobedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/about/> Sign up to receive updates.

John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



Below is the next installment of Random Little Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – It is “always a good time” to give back to the Sport!

A few items to consider for giving back to *your* sport:

I. If you find yourself between dogs, training for the next level, taking a break, etc., have you contacted a club (that you are NOT a member of) and offered to steward for obedience and donate your time? Stewarding is great fun and a hands-on experience in learning what all is required for running the ring in an efficient manner. Many clubs will offer remuneration for your time and parking, plus a lunch. I have is a packet I have assembled to get you going, see email address below to request a packet!

II. If you feel a club is a little lax in providing a good venue for an obedience trial, what do you do about it? Do you stop and think the club might need a new member (like you) who will help and give positive guidance and involvement? Have you joined a club and become involved? Are you involved in a club and help host a trial ONCE a year for *others* to enjoy? Or, are you on the taking end *all or most* of the time?

III. Express your appreciation to an event chairman, ring steward, or drop a note to a club stating that you LIKED what they offered for obedience?

IV. Clubs and private trainers also need to encourage their members and students to take a *more active role* and become involved with the process of running a trial. If we continue to lose trials, we lose one of the reasons we train our dogs. Surely, you can find the time to help out at ONE trial a year.

V. People who are short on time can contribute to the trophy fund. Every year make sure to donate \$\$ to several of the local all-breed clubs that they can use for obedience awards. In many ways it's even more important that we support the all-breed clubs. Even better, become an annual donor/trophy sponsor.

VI. For those of you who show in AKC Obedience, I thought I would give you some insight into a Judge's duties and what they do **before** you step into the ring as an exhibitor. The link below is what I send to an aspiring judge who wishes to apprentice under me. There is also an article in the link about stepping into the shoes of an obedience judge. It is my sincere hope there may be a few of you who might consider stepping into those shoes and becoming a judge down the line. The sport always is in need of new and upcoming judges. All I ask is to give it some serious thought.

Obedience is always in need of *your* talents and positive energy. Remember back to what attracted you into obedience, the fun you have had and the folks you have met. You have the power to now repeat what were the “good old days” in your mind. You can be a part of and make “new” good old days for the future participants to talk about.

For more information on judging, examining the obedience exercises and saving other withdrawals from your “200” account, check out and download all the...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Bullets In The Boat or Winds In The Sails???



Below is an analogy I would like you to ponder for a bit. In reading only a few of the obedience internet lists which I am on, it stuns me when I read negative comments aimed at the AKC, and our sport in general, from time-to-time. "Constructive" suggestions are good, but there are times when the negative comments go way over the top, IMO. Such shoot-from-the-hip comments (many times without FACTS) are hurting our sport. We need to be more thoughtful of the posts we make, or comments made to the general public. If we are not careful we will be turning off many who may be future participants and our future new friends. As stated so many times before, the future of our sport is in the hands of the novice.

As an analogy, think of our sport as a sailing ship on the high seas, if you will. With each cannon shot (negative comment) we aim and fire at the hull of our ship may result in sinking the ship. Choose your comments wisely so our ship and crew will sail into the future and not end up at the bottom of a negative sea. As I was taught in the service (USCG), "Loose lips sink ships!"

Let me suggest installing a longer fuse in the negative cannon, cease fire, and work to "enlist" new "sailors" on our ship. Becoming involved in saving and maintaining our ship is like polishing the ship's brass. It can be work at times, but ever so rewarding when it shines in the sun. It is time for us to concentrate a little more on saluting our ship and welcoming new "sailors" aboard!

Our ship has been sailing the seas since its launch in 1936. There have been times over the years when she goes back into dry-dock to be updated, but when she returns to the high seas there are always those who love taking shots at her once again, and then run off to board another ship. Keep in mind, our ship is the next to the oldest ship on the high seas, only surpassed by the ship of Conformation. Let's take care of her, treat her with respect, and keep her brass polished and shining in the sun!

WELCOME Aboard and smooth sailing into the future!

AKC Blog Address: <https://akcbedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/about/> Sign up to receive updates.

John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



Tidbits 17, 18 & 19 - Insights Into Judging Obedience

Give back to our Sport through judging – Yes, YOU!

Below is the next installment of Random Little Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit Series -

#17 >Take a Moment And Step Into The Shoes of an Obedience Judge<

#18 >>Items to Observe and Make Notes of While Apprenticing<<

#19 >>>Ringside Observations<<<



Take a moment and consider yourself as one applying to judge in the sport of Obedience and look to what it takes to fill the shoes of such a judge. We are all quite opinionated when it comes to the question of what makes an excellent Obedience judge and opinions will vary as to what it takes to fill the shoes of an obedience judge. What kind of judge would YOU make and how would YOU go about judging? As in every field there are variations (some good and some that could use improvement) in how an individual accomplishes a task so consider the options in meeting your ideals of an EXCELLENT judge. Take a close look at some of the aspects and decision-making involved in judging with you stepping into the ring as the judge.

You have decided that you want to judge obedience trials so now what are the steps required to meet this goal? One starts by applying first for Novice - Open and Utility are applied for separately at a later time. Before prematurely applying to judge Novice Obedience Classes at American Kennel Club member or licensed trials, the AKC has certain requirements that must be met. Failure to meet any requirement will result in the application being returned. Exemptions from some requirements may be made for applicants from Alaska, Hawaii or Puerto Rico.

To qualify as an applicant – you must have:

1. Personally owned, trained and titled a dog to an AKC Utility Dog (UD) title and at least one other dog to an AKC Companion Dog (CD) title;
2. Been active in the sport a minimum of six (6) consecutive years;
3. Acted as a steward in Novice/Open/Utility class (depending upon class applying for) at AKC member or licensed trials a minimum of ten (10) times;
4. Have judged at AKC sanctioned obedience A or B matches a minimum of five (5) times. Judging a non-regular class at an AKC trial with a minimum of ten (10) dogs competing may substitute on a one to one basis to replace the match requirement. Apprentice assignments beyond the three (3) required may be used on a one to one basis to replace the match requirement. Apprentice judged under three (3) judges with a minimum of ten (10) dogs in each class. **Apprenticing is for prospective judges only and is to be done at the level they are eligible to apply for.**
5. Actively participated as an assistant trainer or as a trainer in a dog training club or similar organization;
6. Attended an AKC obedience seminar within the last three (3) years.

Check out the AKC web page for further details: http://www.akc.org/events/obedience/judging_requirements.cfm

As a judge you are to:

1. Qualify the dogs that meet the minimum requirements in the Obedience Regulations
2. Non-qualify the dogs that do not meet the minimum requirements
3. Separate and place the top four dogs and handlers in the class

A good knowledge of the Obedience Regulations and Guidelines For Obedience judges is only part of judging - one has to have the fortitude to carry out the correct decisions. All decisions are not going to be clear-cut and scoring faults is not going to be easy. Every infraction from perfection (providing it is worth at least one-half point) should be scored. This may sound like nit-picking but consider the following: If the dog and handler in the ring make a minor or substantial error and it

is not scored, is this fair to the next dog and handler when they perform the exercise (or between exercise) perfectly? In theory, you would be giving the same score for different qualities of work.

While studying judges, keep notes on both the good points observed and points you feel might be improved upon. Pay particular attention to the following:

1. Is the judge giving the impression of being the one in charge of the ring and meeting his/her judge's responsibilities?
2. How does the judge set up and run their ring?
3. What instructions are given to the stewards?
4. What kind of heeling pattern is used? Is it a good one and does it appear to have been thought out?
5. What position is the judge in for observing and scoring the performance of the dog and handler in the ring?
6. The scoring of a performance.
7. How are the ribbon prizes presented?

1. Is the Judge giving the impression of being the one in charge of the ring and meeting the Judge's responsibilities?

The Guidelines For Obedience judges addresses the duties of a judge in the areas of judge's responsibilities, appearance, impartiality, knowledge, and responsibilities to exhibitors, spectators and to the sport of purebred dogs.

JUDGE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

It is vitally important for all judges to understand their responsibilities to the sport. Obedience judges symbolize the entire sport of obedience training. While presiding over a ring they represent The American Kennel Club, an organization devoted to impartial administration of every rule and regulation adopted to promote and protect the interest of purebred dogs, their breeding and their exhibiting in shows, obedience trials, tracking tests, and field trials.

IMPARTIALITY

Judges should be friendly and courteous, but above all they must be impartial and firm. It is fine to have a sympathetic attitude toward some unexpected failure provided the decision and scoring are not affected. Competent judges are aware that they cannot make concessions to one exhibitor without doing a disfavor to all other exhibitors. First, consideration must be given to those who enter the ring prepared to perform the exercises as required by the Regulations, without any special treatment.

RESPONSIBILITY TO THE EXHIBITORS

A judge must remember at all times that every exhibitor is an important participant in the sport. Without exhibitors there would be no trials. It must also be remembered that for every experienced exhibitor, there are hundreds of newcomers. The alienation of newcomers may eventually cause them to lose interest, stop training and quit the sport. The sport needs the novice, because the future of the sport is in the hands of the novice.

2. How does a Judge set up their ring?

The way the obedience ring is set up WILL affect the dog's performance. To be sure the ring is going to be the way YOU want it is one reason to be at ringside at least 45-minutes before the scheduled starting time of the class. This will allow time to set up the ring, check the equipment, make changes if necessary and instruct the stewards on how YOU want the ring to run. A good judge will plan the ring set-up so every dog and handler can move between exercises and perform each exercise to the best advantage. While you are observing judges, see how they check the following:

RING SIZE

The ring should be paced off to make sure it meets the requirements in Chapter 1, Section 32 of the Obedience Regulations. If the ring does not meet the specifications, you are going to need to take action.

FLOOR AND GROUND CONDITIONS

It is your responsibility to see that every handler and dog have a fair shot at a good clean performance; this is first accomplished by having good ring conditions as per the Regulations. If you don't deal with these deficiencies, how are you going to deal with the scoring of a dog/handler when they are affected by such conditions?

If indoors, the floor shall have surface or covering that provides footing for the largest dogs. Rubber or similar non-slip material totaling at least four feet in width must be laid for the takeoff and landing at all jumps unless the surface, in the judge's opinion, is such as to not require it.

If outdoors, "The ground shall be clean and level, and the grass, if any, shall be cut short." Short means SHORT! Keep in mind the small dog trying to retrieve a dumbbell, scent articles or accomplishing a Long Down in long grass. Blades of grass and weeds will be sticking the dog in the face and unfairly affecting its performance as compared to the Saint Bernard whose face is a good thirty inches from the ground. Of course, a Saint Bernard will not look kindly to having long blades of grass going up his nostrils as he bends down in the course of picking up a dumbbell! Level ground means level!

The handler and dog, not to mention the judge, should not have to concern themselves with trying to maintain their balance when walking in the ring.

EQUIPMENT

You now have the ring all squared (actually rectangular) away and it is time to check out the equipment. If indoors, and matting is to be used, there are a few things to keep in mind. If your ring is fully matted - you've got it made! You, the handler and dog have ideal conditions. If not fully matted, matting for jumping must be four feet wide and laid for the takeoff and landing at all jumps. If the mats you are supplied with are only three feet wide, two will have to be used to make the required four-foot width for jumping. Length of mat is now also a concern. A dog must be positioned at least eight feet (in Open) in front of the High Jump and Broad Jump. Also, the dumbbell must be thrown at least eight feet beyond the High Jump. This means there should be AT LEAST sixteen feet of matting to be fair to all breeds of dogs for takeoff and landing.

The Jumps are regulated and the required measurements are in Chapter 4, Sections 11 and 13, and Chapter 5, Section 14. These sections also deal with the painting and numbering of the jumps. There are all types of jumps that one will encounter. Beside the wood jumps we now have PVC (plastic) styles. These jumps must have the same properties of the wood jumps. For example, the boards in the High Jump must be rigid and not able to bend and fall out of the upright standards. The Bar must be weighted and have the integrity of a wood bar. It is up to the judge to measure the jumps and have corrections made if needed.

DEALING WITH RING AND EQUIPMENT DEFICIENCIES

The judge should take immediate action to correct the deficiencies in the ring or equipment by bringing them to the attention of the Trial Secretary or Superintendent. If there are undesirable ring conditions they must be reported to the American Kennel Club if the deficiencies have not been promptly corrected at the judge's request per Chapter 1, Section 34. The judge reports to the AKC by writing up the uncorrected problem inside the judge's Book cover. Also, a letter (or email) should be sent to the Obedience Department as a follow-up. Had the judge reported incorrect equipment at the club's prior show, it would have been corrected and you would not be dealing with such problems. Don't hesitate to take action - you owe it to the sport and exhibitors!

GIVE ATTENTION TO LIGHTING

Be aware of lighting if indoors or out. Pay attention to the dog's line of sight for jumping and signals, and consider where the Group Exercise will take place in the ring. For example, the sun would be better on the dogs back than in its face. Lighting might affect where you want the gate and table in relation to the heeling pattern, plus the position of the jumps may need to be thought out.

WHERE DO YOU WANT THE GATE?

Where the ring gate goes in relation to the ring is YOUR choice. If you don't care for the location of the gate when arriving at the ring, change it! It is best to be comfortable with the gate in relation to your heeling pattern and set-up of the ring. The end result will be a better job of judging.

WHERE DO YOU WANT THE JUDGE' S TABLE?

Give some real consideration as to where YOU want the judge's table. At the AKC Obedience Judging Seminars it is suggested that the table be OUTSIDE the ring. Their reasons make good common sense:

The ring is for the use of the dog, handler and judge.

- If stewards are on the outside of the ring their attention is more likely to be focused on the ring activities, and they will be ready when needed.
- If there is food on the table for the judge or stewards, it is now outside the ring.
- The dog and handler have a better opportunity to perform with the elimination of the commotion around the judge's table. It also frees up more space for better use of the ring.

MARKING THE RING FOR THE DIFFERENT EXERCISES

One thing a judge should strive for is to be consistent. Every dog and handler deserves the same opportunity when entering the ring. One way to help achieve consistency is to mark the ring for the DIFFERENT exercises as needed. For example, mark where you want the stewards to stand for the Figure Eight. This makes sure the stewards are always the eight feet apart that is required. If not marked, you will notice the stewards unconsciously standing farther apart for larger dogs and closer for smaller dogs. Also be aware of the other "required" marks for the advanced and Preferred classes.

RIBBONS AND PRIZES

Before starting the class, make sure you have all the ribbons and prizes required for that class. This will help your efficiency in being able to present the ribbons and awards after marking the placements in your judge's Book.

3. What instructions will be given to the Stewards?

In the Obedience ring a steward CAN make a big difference in how efficiently a ring functions. Their actions can also have an affect on the performance of the dog in the ring. The judge is in sole charge of the way they want the ring conducted, but if this is NOT conveyed to the stewards the first several handlers may be entering a "zoo" instead of an Obedience ring. A helpful suggestion: Have typed steward instructions with your judging equipment. Having your detailed instructions at hand ensures you won't overlook anything and have them available for the stewards' reference during the class.

4. What type of heeling pattern is used? Is it a good one and appear to have been thought out for your ring?

When you are invited to judge at a trial, there is an important Chapter and Section to keep in mind. CHAPTER 2, SECTION 6 – JUDGING OF CLASSES AND DIFFERENT BREEDS: "The same methods and standards will be used for judging and scoring the regular, preferred, optional titling and non-regular classes and in judging and scoring the work of dogs of different breeds, including dogs listed with AKC Canine Partners." The time to be aware of this regulation is BEFORE you set up your ring and plot out the heeling pattern and the areas for the different exercises. Large breeds (and super-fast dogs) require a considerable amount of room to maneuver. If this is not factored in beforehand, then the dog's performance could be compromised. All breeds need be given ample space so they have the opportunity to work towards perfection. Also, heeling patterns should be smooth and not choppy. Choppy patterns (explained below) seem to be more of a hindrance to the larger and faster working teams. The next time you go to a trial, notice how the judge has set up their ring. **PAY ATTENTION** to how the space is used for the different exercises. Make note of the heeling pattern. Also observe how far a dog travels before a halt or a turn and how much space is used for the dog and handler to execute the Fast or Slow. There is NO perfect way to set up a ring or a perfect heeling pattern for all breeds, but some judges make better use of the ring space. When judging at an all-breed trial, you have to be ready for whatever breed comes into the ring -- be it a Chihuahua or an Irish Wolfhound. It is imperative that all breeds be given an equal chance to earn a perfect score if you wish to be a fair judge.

HEELING PATTERNS

Heeling is in every AKC obedience class. In choosing a pattern that works for you, also consider the handler and dog. You must give ALL handlers and dogs an EQUAL opportunity to do the principal part of heeling -- the ability of the dog and handler working as a team. Teamwork is best performed when a heeling pattern is smooth. One way to accomplish this objective is to have only one heeling function per leg of the pattern. This provides ALL teams a chance for a smooth performance but when two heeling functions are on one leg of a pattern it becomes choppy and the teamwork starts to suffer. For example, a Fast, Normal, and Halt on one leg would be choppy. Picture an Irish Wolfhound doing this pattern smoothly. Another example...heeling down the center of the ring and making a Right or Left turn and then Slow, using half the ring, before turning again. The choppy pattern will unfairly affect the performance of the larger and/or faster breeds. There is just less room and time to respond if too much is going on during one leg of the heeling pattern. Remember, you are going to be judging these actions. The faults you observe MAY have been caused by YOU by not giving thought to the heeling pattern. The small breeds will start to gain an advantage and you, as a judge, will find your goals of fairness and consistency going down the tubes. A pattern does not have to be long to achieve the smooth objective. The simple "L" pattern (although minimal) lends itself to a smooth performance if you give some thought to where different heeling functions will take place. The "Forward" followed by a few steps and then a "Halt" is another example of unfairness to large breeds, plus it is also choppy. Picture the extremes. A Chihuahua and handler start to heel and the handler walks forward two or three steps and halts on the judge's order. This small breed has had a chance to get up and walk a fair distance before going into a sit. The next dog in the ring is an Irish Wolfhound. The handler starts to heel and walks two or three steps and halts on the judge's order. The Irish Wolfhound starts to move forward in heel position, and maybe just moved one-half or one body length, and now has to go into a sit. Did this breed have the same opportunity to have a smooth performance? The handler of the Irish Wolfhound had no choice but to stop on the judge's order or be penalized for delay in following a judge's order. The judge was consistent and stopped both dogs in the same spot, but lacked good judgment in setting up a heeling pattern that was fair to all breeds. Had the judge halted each dog further away from the Forward, both breeds would have had an equal opportunity for a smooth performance.

FIGURE EIGHT

When planning the area for the Figure Eight think about the ring barriers and, in Open, also consider the jumps. You want to provide ALL dogs the opportunity to go around the outside post and not have to concern them with the possibility of running into an object. Figure Eight posts that are in the corners of a ring or too close to a jump jeopardize the performance of the larger breeds. This type of set up is also too restrictive for the disabled handlers and their dogs. If you are judging indoors and using mats on slick floors, use THREE mats if possible. Large breeds should have mats under them at all times during the Figure Eight if that is the case for the smaller breeds.

INDIVIDUAL EXERCISES

As you set up for the different individual exercises ask yourself, "Is this exercise going to be fair to ALL breeds and handlers when they enter my ring?" Another point to keep in mind is the disabled handlers and their space requirements. Make a mental picture of an Irish Wolfhound being handled by a person in a wheelchair. With this in mind you should have no problem in setting up the ring that is fair to all who enter.

5. What position is the Judge in for observing and scoring the performance of the dog and handler in the ring?

It is absolutely essential to develop skills in observing dogs and handlers and being able to evaluate their performance fairly and consistently. To help accomplish this goal, give considerable thought as to where the best positions are to observe without interfering with the performance of an individual exercise (or between exercises). Where you stand determines what you can see. It also gives the impression to the spectators outside the ring as to whether or not you know what you're doing! Every judge should want to give the appearance of being professional and precise. There is no perfect position but there are positions that will help the judge better fulfill their responsibilities to the sport. A judge should know what position to be in and why. Sometimes when you are observing from one angle you may be "giving up" being in another position to see other errors that may be occurring. The good judge will recognize what they are giving up," knowing that these errors are less common and of lesser significance than errors observed from their chosen position. When you think through the Regulations, most of the exercises have two common denominators - heel position and the recall. The majority of exercises will refer back to these two items. A few examples of judging positions taken from the Guidelines and AKC Obedience Judging Seminar notes -- are as follows:

HEEL POSITIONS

Heeling Exercises

After planning your heeling pattern, the next step is to plan YOUR positions during the course of the pattern. Judges should attempt to position themselves so the dog and handler will be observed from the rear, front and sides, and the judge's movements during the heeling pattern should be consistent from dog to dog. Knowing where heel position is located is of paramount importance during the course of judging. The five faults of heeling in regards to the dog are forging, lagging, wide, crowding and not being straight in line with the direction of the handler. When starting the heeling pattern, be in position to check for the handler and dog moving out together on the "Forward." This is an area where lagging and forging can occur and you will want to be in a good location to watch and score if needed. Being on the dog's side in line with the handler is preferable. During the Utility Signal Exercise, this position will also be important at the end of heeling; the judge will have a better view of the dog stopping and standing in heel position. It is a scorable fault if the dog is not in heel position at this point. You have to be there to see it!

A good position for judging a Sit is from the front or back of the dog and handler. For example, consider a dog making a SLIGHT error on the Sit; from this location the judge can observe sitting wide, crowding or not straight in line with the handler - three of the more common faults. If judging from the side, two faults could best be observed - forge and lag. This is a good example in choosing a position to see MOST of the errors from one location. A spectator sitting in the bleachers outside the ring can observe a dog sitting a foot in front or behind a handler on a halt. YOU want to be in the BEST position to observe most of the minor errors, if any. This is part of judging fair and consistently.

Planning a heeling pattern that allows you to judge from the dog's side most of the time is preferable to being on the side of the handler. Two key elements in the heeling exercise are the Fast and Slow. The judge needs to watch the transition from Normal to Fast or Slow and back to Normal and evaluate heel position. The "Fast" signifies that the handler must run, handler and dog moving forward at NOTICEABLY ACCELERATED speed. "Slow" signifies the handler and dog must NOTICEABLY DECELERATE from a brisk walk. Judging on the dog's side is a favorable place to see if the dog is maintaining heel position or making any of the five heeling errors. Judging from the handler's side obscures the view of the dog's position. Also, momentarily stepping behind the dog and handler on the Fast or Slow will give an excellent observation point for judging straight in line with the handler.

Other Areas of Heel Positions:

A dog is in heel position at some point during EVERY exercise. A good judge will study the different exercises in various classes and see when the dog or handler is required to be in heel position. Then studying Chapter 2, Section 18 (Heel Position) and see how it relates to all the different exercises. To observe a fault you first have to recognize that fault. Let's look at two exercises and notice the importance of the judge's location for judging heel position.

NOVICE - STAND FOR EXAMINATION (Chapter 3, Sections 7 and 8)

The handler is to be in heel position before leaving and after returning to the dog. In this exercise the handler is the one to assume heel position. To start the exercise it is suggested that the judge be in front of and to the left of the dog. This allows the judge to observe the handler's movements and watch if the handler assumes heel position before leaving the dog. The key elements to view are the five errors of heel position as listed above. This position is excellent to observe if the dog is straight in line with the handler as the handler leaves. After performing the examination, the judge steps back

away but in line with the dog's left shoulder. From here one can view if the handler returns to the heel position. The most common faults are the handler returning to a forged or lag position and it is best observed from this location.

NOVICE - GROUP EXERCISE (Chapter 3, Sections 14 &15).

The judge must be in a good location to watch all the handlers return to heel position. If a dog breaks the Long Sit or Long Down as the handler is returning to heel position, the judge will have to determine if the handler was in heel position when the dog broke. Knowing heel position and being able to observe it has a great impact on this exercise - the end result in scoring is a pass or fail depending on the judge's decision!

RECALLS

Anytime the dog is coming into the handler, the Recall exercise is involved. The judge needs to be in a good position to observe the dog and handler fulfilling the key elements of the Recall: The giving of the command or signal, dog's prompt response to handler's command or signal, dog moving directly to the handler, moving at a brisk trot or gallop and returning close enough to the handler. Recalls are referred to in many of the exercises in the Regulations so let's again look at a couple of different exercises and notice the importance of the judge's position as it relates to the Recall.

NOVICE - RECALL (Chapter 3, Sections 10 and 11)

The suggested location for a judge is off to the side of the dog and handler and slightly behind. A narrow angle gives a better view of the team and being on the side of the dog gives a less obstructed view. As the handler leaves the dog, both can be observed. When the dog is called or signaled the judge can move in (at a distance) and follow the dog. If the path of the dog is followed the judge will "give up" a good view of noticing if the dog sat out too far or came in too close. Walking in at the angle will afford a better view of the Front, and then the judge can step behind the dog to judge the Front and Finish.

OPEN - RETRIEVE ON THE FLAT (Chapter 4, Sections 9 and 10)

When the handler sends the dog to retrieve the judge is basically observing two Recalls plus the retrieving parts of the exercise. The dog must go out directly, at a brisk trot or gallop, retrieve promptly, at the end of the ring with the team or at the far end of the ring in front of and off to the side of the team. Both locations give the judge a constant view of the dog and handler at the same time. A judge who stands in the middle of the ring can only watch the dog OR handler - not BOTH at the same time. The same holds true for the Retrieve Over High Jump and Scent Discrimination. If you compromise your viewing of an exercise you also compromise your judging of an exercise!

6. The scoring of a performance.

Judgment is based on knowledge and experience and as a judge scores a performance they will be drawing from these resources. Having a good knowledge of Obedience before you start judging is important, but one's knowledge and understanding will grow with experience. In Chapter 2 of the Obedience Regulations, Sections 1, 5 and 24 need to be reviewed. Before stepping into the ring to judge you will need to be aware of the various faults and have an understanding of what penalties are to be applied to said faults. From reading the Regulations one will obtain an idea of what constitutes a minor or substantial penalty. The Glossary of Terms defines a minor penalty as 2 1/2 points or LESS and a substantial as 3 or MORE points. The Regulations also mention some of the more common faults and state whether to apply a substantial or minor penalty. They also give the latitude of applying a minor or substantial penalty. Sounds simple, but good judging comes from knowing when to apply which penalty and the assessment of points to be taken off.

The heeling exercises are among the most challenging to judge. The scoring is not all clear-cut. For example, what point value will YOU apply to a dog that does NOT sit as the handler comes to a halt? The Regulations list some of the faults associated with heeling and the scoring in Chapter 3, Section 6: "Substantial or minor deductions shall be made for such things as lagging, heeling wide, forging, crowding, poor sits, failure to sit, handler failing to walk at a brisk pace, occasional guidance with leash and other imperfections of heeling." These are imperfections in heeling, as the dog is not performing the exercise to perfection as described in Chapter 3, Section 5. YOU now have to determine if this is a minor or substantial penalty and then what point value to deduct.

Let's say you had three different dogs come into YOUR ring and on the first halt during the heeling exercise each dog failed to sit. As you penalize the no sit do YOU have a preset value of points to assess? For example, do you feel a no sit is a substantial penalty and therefore subject to a three or more point deduction? Or, are you going to consider the different actions that took place as the handler halted before making your decision?

To help make up your mind, consider a few of the variables in regards to the three dogs not sitting:

- A. The handler halts and the dog stands in perfect heel position.
- B. The handler halts and the dog stands on the handler's left side but out at a 45 degree angle to the direction in which the handler is facing.
- C. The handler halts and the dog forges ahead and then comes back and stands in front of and facing the handler.

Each dog made the error of not sitting but the degree of error differed from dog A to C. Are you still going to deduct a set number of points for a no sit or develop a scoring system that might be a little more flexible as to the seriousness of the error? Keep in mind, one of your responsibilities is to separate the top four dogs and handlers in the class. What if dogs A, B and C only had that one error. Will you have a three-way runoff, or will you have separated their work by scoring the differences in their work? These are some of the tough decisions YOU are going to have to make!

In all exercises the first thing to keep in mind is the principle part of the exercise and did the dog and/or handler meet the requirements. If in question, refer to the Regulations for that exercise and if still in doubt read the first sentence of Chapter 2, Section 3, QUALIFYING PERFORMANCE. In the scoring of a performance, another area to consider is the penalizing of SEVERAL serious faults during an exercise. The Regulations may state when a substantial deduction is to be applied but the judge must also keep in mind if the dog and/or handler are fulfilling the minimum requirements of that exercise and if the performance warrants a qualifying score.

For example, the Retrieve On Flat is a twenty-point exercise. In order for a dog and handler to have a qualifying performance in AN exercise, they must earn OVER 50% of the points available in that exercise. In this case they must earn at least ten and one-half points. Now, let's look at a dog's performance on the Retrieve On The Flat.

- A. The dog SAUNTERS out to retrieve the dumbbell on command.
- B. The dumbbell is picked up, then dropped and again picked up.
- C. The dog SAUNTERS back to the handler and performs a perfect Front.
- D. The dog SAUNTERS into a Finish (on command) and has a poor sit.

The errors listed in A, B and C are substantial deductions, depending on the extent, as per Chapter 4, Section 9. Are YOU going to deduct the minimum points (three) for a substantial deduction for EACH occurrence in A, B and C? Then are YOU going to score the lack of being prompt and smart in the performance of the Finish along with the poor sit? Let's say you take JUST a half-point off for the Finish and another half-point off for the poor sit. Look at your total deductions. You may have taken off ten points from a twenty-point exercise. That is NOT MORE THAN 50%. Are YOU going to fail the dog? Or, will it be your philosophy of judging to score harder during the first several major faults and ease off as long as the work is still qualifying in your mind? The dog did perform the exercise by responding promptly to the handler's "Fetch" command and completed the exercise as per the requirements in Chapter 4, Section 8. These are just a FEW examples of things to THINK of when you step into the judge's shoes. Who said judging Obedience was easy!? It is a challenge and very rewarding when you leave the trial knowing you did your best for the sport.

7. How are the ribbon prizes presented?

After the last dog in the class has been judged, the scores are recorded and the judge calls the qualifying teams back into the ring for presenting the prizes and awards.

The American Kennel Club wants like the presenting of ribbon prizes to be a bit of a ceremony. Winning the blue through white ribbons is a big deal and the judge should present the winners to the spectators, who are on the outside of the ring. A good judge will first address the onlookers and briefly state what constitutes a perfect score, and may go into detail describing a qualifying score. The judge should keep their comments to a minimum during the awards ceremony and then announce the prize winning dog and handler. It is suggested to mention the score BEFORE the armband number. If armband number is announced first the spectators will clap and cheer and miss hearing the score.

As a judge you will want to "present" the first four prizewinners and separate the four teams away from the rest of the qualifiers in the class. This way the spectators can observe and take note as to who won. Have the winners come forward to receive the ribbon prize and ask them to remain in front of the group. Then do the same for second through fourth. Also, keep in mind to speak up when awarding the four placements so people in the second row outside the ring can hear. After the placements are concluded the judge then goes to each handler and tells them their score. You then conclude the awards and turn in the Judge's Book. If time permits after turning in the Book you may speak with exhibitors about their scores. The judge is encouraged, but not required, to discuss the scoring, but a judge need not enter into any discussion with any contestant who appears to be dissatisfied. This sport is based on good sportsmanship and that is the image to project.

When speaking with exhibitors use the same words that appear in the Regulations. For example, don't tell the handler the dog lost points for bumping during the heeling. "Bumping" is NOT a word used in the Regulations. The judge should have chosen words such as crowding or not allowing the handler freedom of motion at all times, rather than commonly used obedience lingo. Using terms other than those found in the Regulations might be misleading and confusing, creating some doubts as to the knowledge of the judge. Judges bear the responsibility of educating exhibitors -- new and "old."

Summary

If you are considering applying to judge Obedience in the future, keep a good perspective...judging should be taken seriously but not to the point where the fun and common sense are lost. At the same time don't overlook the dedicated, experienced exhibitors who have invested countless time and work into the sport, or the Novices just starting out. They deserve and demand good, fair, consistent judging and it will be up to YOU to meet these demands. Don't let the title of judge go to your head, or form the opinion that you "know it all" and "have seen it all." NO ONE has a 200 in that department - so keep mentally fit by attending AKC Obedience Judging Seminars, training dogs, and observing other judges. Obtaining approval to judge is JUST the beginning!

This article only provides you with a LITTLE idea of what it takes to step into the shoes of an Obedience judge. If you plan to walk in these shoes always put the sport of dogs first in your thinking. We have a fun sport and it requires responsible people to keep it sound. Judges in Conformation, Tracking, Field, Obedience and other Performance Events have a BIG responsibility in protecting the integrity of the Sport of Purebred Dogs.

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John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



Tidbits 17, 18 & 19 - Insights Into Judging Obedience

Give back to our Sport through judging – Yes, YOU!

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Today's Random Little Tidbit Series -

#17 >Take a Moment And Step Into The Shoes of an Obedience Judge<

#18 >>Items to Observe and Make Notes of While Apprenticing<<

#19 >>>Ringside Observations<<<



To assist you in your apprenticing for becoming an obedience judge, observe how a Judge sets up and marks their ring for the different classes, plus judging position(s) during the various exercises. Take notes go over them with the Judge if time permits.

Note:

- 1) Size of the ring for the class(es) being judged for the day.
- 2) The marks put out in the ring when setting up for the different classes.
- 3) Placement of the judge's table.
- 4) Ring gate as it relates to heeling pattern and the different exercises.
- 5) Placement of jumps and checking the equipment.
- 6) Heeling pattern(s)--Is your pattern fair to all breeds and handlers? Is it choppy?
- 7) Are the Fast, Slow and Halts adequate and fair to all breeds?
- 8) *Positions and movements* during the heeling pattern--observing the most possible!
- 9) Position during the different exercises- is a reason for *where* the Judge *stands*.
- 10) Calling of Judge's orders--correct orders, timing the giving of the order.
- 11) Instructions to the stewards.
- 12) Posted materials at ringside.
- 13) Worksheets and charts to assist in making quick notes for scoring and feedback.
- 14) Group exercises:
 - a.) Group worksheet for scoring and notations for qualifiers and non-qualifiers.
 - b.) Handling group issues.
 - c.) Instructions to handlers and stewards.
- 15) Note handler and dog errors *between* exercises that are scorable (also during Group).
- 16) Checking the items the handler presents for the different classes and when to check.
- 17) Observing the dog and handler while in the ring at ALL times from entering to exiting.
- 18) Judge's Book--filling out the Book, who to give it to and when to turn it in.
- 19) Announcements, Awards and presenting the placements to the audience.
- 20) What's in the briefcase? "Tools of the trade" so you are prepared.

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Take the time to sit at ringside and watch judging taking place at as many shows as possible. It is a wonderful learning experience all by itself.

To assist you in your learning observations:

- ✓ **Setting up the ring, (Review Chapter 1)**
 - ✓ Check ring size, location of gate and table (move if needed).
 - ✓ Double-check jumps by measuring. ½ inch deviation is okay.
 - ✓ Material of jumps, flat white, weight of wood, check the bar for weight for wood.
 - ✓ Placement of jumps, pay attention to lighting and ring enclosures from the DOG's line of sight. If mats are necessary they must be at least 4' width under the jumps.
 - ✓ Mark the ring for all your classes prior to the start of the first class--saves time.
 - ✓ If deficiencies cannot be corrected, note in Judge's Book.
- ✓ **Managing the ring - Heeling pattern(s) & Postings.**
 - ✓ Is your pattern choppy or does it have a smooth flow for ALL breeds?
 - ✓ Is the heeling away from the ring gate and table, if possible?
 - ✓ Is the Figure Eight out and away from obstructions (gates – jumps)?
 - ✓ Have you preplanned adequate space for the physically challenged handlers?
 - ✓ How do you plan to inform the exhibitors of your heeling pattern (tell, show, post)?
 - ✓ Post required information for the class(es) to judge 45-minutes ahead of start time.
- ✓ **Steward's instructions.**
 - ✓ Thank your stewards for volunteering their time.
 - ✓ Review their duties and make sure they are understood before the class starts.
 - ✓ Having printed instructions works best as you will then not forget items to cover, plus they will then have a hard copy to refer back to, if needed.
 - ✓ Instructions for how you want the Group exercise handled.
- ✓ **Judging positions - for all exercises.**
 - ✓ Give *serious* thought to the best positions for each exercise for observing the team in action. Keep your distance; be aware of *your* movements so as not to interfere.
 - ✓ Stay on the dog's side as much time as possible, especially for the Fast and Slow during the heeling exercise.
- ✓ **Watching dogs, handlers and scoring (Create habits).**
 - ✓ In a class with jumps, *first* look at the jumps to make sure they are set correctly *before* the team enters the ring. Then look at the dog entering the ring to make sure (in your mind) the jumps are set for at least the minimum standard height and/or distances for that breed. Know how to measure to verify height.
 - ✓ Bring the team into the ring **ONLY** when you are ready to proceed.
 - ✓ As the team enters the ring, do a quick visual check of the collar, leash and for forms of identification, making sure all items conform to the Regulations.
 - ✓ Check the armband; first to make sure there is one and it matches your worksheet.
 - ✓ Keep your eyes on the team once they enter the ring and until they leave the ring.
 - ✓ Exercises where the handler leaves the dog, keep the DOG in your vision and the handler in your peripheral vision until the handler reaches where they are going. If any scoring is to take place during this timeframe it most likely will be the DOG.

- ✓ After the last exercise (individual in particular) refrain from too much conversation with the handler. Let them concentrate on getting the leash on their dog and exiting under control. Do not **be a distraction to** the team which could end up causing a scorable fault for which YOU may have been the cause.
- ✓ Watch the team exiting the ring before you enter data in the Judge's Book.
- ✓ Make sure the leash is attached or slipped through the collar as the team exits; otherwise a scorable fault is warranted under Miscellaneous Penalties.
- ✓ **Use the WORDS in the Obedience Regulations.**
 - ✓ Know and use the correct words in the Regulations if you are giving information or feedback to the handler. For example, do NOT inform the handler the dog "bumped." The dog "crowded" and did not allow the handler "freedom of motion at all times." The handler should be able to go to the Regulations and *find* exactly what your comment was all about.
- ✓ **Awards ceremony.**
 - ✓ The AKC considers this a BIG deal, so practice in getting procedure down.
 - ✓ Make sure your ribbons are at ringside well before the end of the class and double-check to be sure they conform to the Regulations (Chapter 1, Section 18).
 - ✓ Bring all the qualifying handlers (Regular, Alternative or Optional titling classes) back into the ring.
 - ✓ You are required to inform the spectators that a perfect score is 200 points.
 - ✓ You have the choice to present the placement ribbons in the order of 1st > 4th or 4th > 1st.
 - ✓ As you announce the placement and score, bring that team forward and have them STAY forward. Speak UP so the spectators OUTSIDE the ring can hear you!
 - ✓ Bring the next placement forward (etc.) and line them up next to the team previously brought forward. The objective is to present to the spectators the placements and separate them from the other qualifiers in the ring.
 - ✓ After the placements are presented, next go down the line of qualifiers and YOU hand them the Qualifying Score ribbon and announce to them their score.
- ✓ **Judge's Book entries.**
 - ✓ Know how to fill out a Judge's Book. Refer to the Judge's Guidelines (Chapter 5) for samples.
 - ✓ When you go to the table to enter data in the Judge's Book do it efficiently and move on to your next team. Precious time can be lost at the table resulting in running late.
 - ✓ Write neat and be precise, plus double-check your addition.
 - ✓ Keep in mind, there are *new* abbreviations to be used (NQ-R & HLR).
 - ✓ When writing in the book know the differences between "Excused" and "Released" and when to use the correct word in your entry.
 - ✓ Make SURE all the boxes are filled in, including absentees, Miscellaneous Penalties; write in the Regular Open B/Utility B and Preferred Open/Utility exercises and the Roman numeral for the chosen exercise order.
 - ✓ If you made a correction in the book *make sure* it is initialed.
 - ✓ Double-check to see you have the times started and stop entered in the book.
 - ✓ Double-check to see the placements, scores and catalog numbers are recorded.
 - ✓ Double-check to see all information is carried down to the Total Score and Final Qualifying Score boxes.
 - ✓ If there was a run-off did you add in the plus (+) sign(s) to indicate the winner(s)?
 - ✓ If there were discrepancies or explanations needed, write those in on the inside cover of the Judge's Book. Carry a piece of carbon paper in your briefcase so you can make a copy of what you wrote on the cover for your records.
 - ✓ Sign the book!
 - ✓ If a dog was disqualified or a dog-on-dog attack, complete those forms and make sure they are also turned in.
 - ✓ If you hand off the book to be turned in, give the book ONLY to the Obedience Chairman, Superintendent or Show Secretary.
Your "worksheets" are not to be given out, that would include photographing.

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Stewarding --- The Little Things Can Make A Difference



A Steward is an integral part of a dog show's success. Most of these folks volunteer their time to the sport and without them the show would grind to a "Halt." In the Obedience ring a Steward CAN make a big difference in how efficiently a ring functions. Their actions can also have an effect on the performance of the dog in the ring. Stewards are mentioned in the Obedience Regulations in **Chapter 1, Section 31**, plus a **full chapter** at the end of the Obedience Regulations to review duties (pages 127-132). Section 31 in the 1st chapter reads: "Judges are in sole charge of their rings until their assignments are completed. Stewards are provided to assist but may act only on the judge's instructions. They must not give information or instructions to owners and handlers except when the judge asks them to do so." The judge shall review with the stewards their duties and the manner in which they are to be performed. Any request from an exhibitor for special consideration must be directed to the judge.

This is all fine and dandy IF the Judge gives instructions. I have stewarded at trials where the Judge just introduces himself and THAT IS IT for the instructions. Or, the instructions are SO FEW one is still left in the dark as to what the Judge is expecting. In such a case, **ASK QUESTIONS** before the class starts. Such a Judge should be put on the spot as to what will be required of the Stewards. The exhibitors are the ones to be kept in mind, as they will benefit from a knowledgeable Steward. Let's not forget, the handlers and the dogs are the IMPORTANT ones for the day. A few things a Steward will need to know **BEFORE** the class starts are:

Novice A & B & Preferred Novice (No group exercise in Preferred Novice)

1. How does the Judge want to handle conflicts?
2. About how many dogs in each Group?
3. Where are handlers and dogs to be brought into the ring?
4. Where is the Figure Eight to be performed and how and where are the Stewards to stand?
5. Who takes the leash and where is it to be placed?
6. Does the Judge need the clipboard held during the Stand for Examination?
7. Where are the Stewards to stand during the Group exercise?
8. What instructions, if any, are to be given by the Stewards to the handlers?

Graduate Novice, Open A & B & Preferred Open

1. The above Novice items 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 again apply.
2. What is the Steward to do with the dumbbell before and after the retrieves?
3. Where are the extra boards from the High Jump and extra Broad Jump hurdles to be placed when not being used by some dogs?

Graduate Open, Utility & Preferred Utility

The above Novice items 1, 3, 5, and 8 again apply (The above Open item 3 applies in regards to the High Jump).

1. How are the scent articles to be handled when the handler brings them to the table?
2. Where are the scent articles to be placed in the ring and how does the Judge want them arranged.
3. What instructions are given in placing the gloves and picking up the remaining gloves?
4. What is the Steward to do during the Moving Stand and Examination?

The Judge is in sole charge of the way they want the ring conducted, but if this is NOT conveyed to the Stewards the first

several handlers may be entering a "zoo" instead of an Obedience ring. If the Judge does not give instructions or if they are vague -- **ASK QUESTIONS BEFORE the first team enters the ring.**

A few things in mind and you will be much appreciated by the handlers and Judge:

1. Be knowledgeable of the class one is asked to steward.
2. Arrive **at least one-half hour before** the start of judging to assist in setting up the ring and receiving instructions.
3. **Pay attention to the dog in the ring.** Be ready when the Judge and handler need the Steward's assistance. For example, know the heeling pattern ends. This way one will be ready to immediately respond for the next exercise, if needed. When a dog and handler have to wait for Stewards, it breaks up their pace and can affect their performance. Being ready when needed will save a considerable amount of time during the day, plus the handlers like the opportunity to get in and out of the ring in an efficient manner. Try to give total attention to the dog and handler in the ring, and if other handlers have questions they can be answered in "off" time. **The dog and handler in the ring come first.**
4. During the Figure Eight exercise, don't stare at the dog. Some dogs may interpret this wrong and thus affect their performance. Be consistent for all dogs in how hands and arms are to be held.
5. In a class with a dumbbell, if asked to bring the dumbbell to the handler, carry the dumbbell in a way in which not to excite the dog. Many dogs love to retrieve and if a Steward swings the dumbbell around while walking out to the handler, the dog could lose control and thus be subject to a penalty.
6. In Utility, **MAKE SURE** the dog is watching **BEFORE PLACING** out and arranging the scent articles.
7. When placing the articles, just handle them enough to arrange them per the Judge's instructions. The Regulations call for the Steward or Judge to **HANDLE** each of the remaining articles -- this does **NOT** imply to "SCENT" the articles. Also, the Steward placing the articles should **beware of a foreign scent on their hands** such as cigarette smoke or food. The scent given when handling the articles should be consistent for all dogs.
8. Concentrate on placing the gloves correctly. Make sure they are on the Judge's mark. If no mark or instructions are given, the center glove is to be centered between dog and handler and about 3 feet from the side of the ring. The corner gloves are to be placed about 3 feet from each side of the ring in the corner. The Directed Retrieve is done in the unobstructed end of the ring, and the **gloves are only to be placed while the dog and handler are facing away.** No table or chair is to be at this end of the ring.
9. Dress appropriately, for weather outside or varying temperatures indoors.

The job of a Steward is not one to take lightly. Know what the Judge requires--think ahead and be ready when needed to save time. The Judge and, most important, the handlers will appreciate the effort.



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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Drum roll please.....

I am no great trainer by the stretch of anyone's imagination so let's make that point crystal clear right now. One thing that I have learned from my trainer (and from judging) is to know when to step up to the plate and ACT, if necessary. It can be difficult but there will be times to just "suck it up buttercup" and put on the best Oscar performance for your dog when in the ring.

Specifically, I am speaking when showing your dog in the performance rings. We spend great amounts of time bonding with and training our dogs (some more than others ☺) and then enter a show expecting things will go well. Or, we are at least of the opinion it is worth a try when mailing in the entry.

Then comes the day of the show and it is Showtime! As we enter the ring with our teammate we are happy, full of expectations with set goals in our mind; furthermore, we are proud we have reached the point to enter the ring. Once in that ring, one needs to also keep in mind to apply the BEST acting skills you have until you step out of the ring. For the most part these skills will work well and come naturally as long as all is going according to plans. But if the dog makes an error (or the handler errors) that is when the BEST Oscar performance for the day needs to take place. Don't let the dog see any disappointment in your attitude if it made an error.

So the dog has made a mistake! Sometimes that is all it is, a mistake. Big deal. Remember it is a **dog** you are working with, and when were you perfect all the time during your learning processes? Other times an error is a result of Murphy's Law, but most often it can be a result of a lack of proofing, showing too soon, not fully training for the task at hand, communication, or good preparation on your part. It's a hard pill to swallow for some as it is always easier to blame someone or something.

The **moment** the performance goes awry REMEMBER from that point on you are working on the next time you are to enter the ring. All is not lost for your remaining ring time. Keep the **entire** ring time positive for your dog. That may require digging deep into your mental toolbox and coming up with your best acting skills. *Don't dwell on the error(s) in the ring as your disappointment may be the memory the dog takes out of the ring.* Entering the ring once again in the future could bring back that past memory of a negative experience. Then history repeats itself.

As an obedience judge there are times I witness a handler showing disappointment to their dog when an error is made. This comes in the forms of spoken language, tone of voice and/or body English. The dog then shuts down and it goes downhill from there. The day then ends being a total loss with nothing gained. Success in training is not all about a green ribbon; it is also about building attitude, so use your ring time wisely and to your dog's benefit, not detriment.

Next time you are at a dog show sit outside the obedience or rally rings and watch the Oscar Performances going on. The contenders for the best actor/actress Oscars will be the handler(s) who always keeps the dog "up" and happy. They will be ones interacting with the dog between exercises keeping the dog engaged and focused. When and if there is a mistake, observe and learn the skills of the best performing actors. The Oscar winners will reap many rewards in future performances and those dogs will enjoy the sport the most, plus look forward to going into the ring once again to please their handler!

There is a time and place for everything. Think of the dog show ring as a stage where you are the main performing actor for the day. Will it be Oscar worthy? Training and fixing issues/mistakes is for another place and another time.

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Carrying Your Dog in the Ring!

I have noticed a little bit of confusion with the Regulation change where a dog may now be carried while in the ring. Yes, there was a change on December 1, 2015 in this regard, but there are stipulations when it may or may not take place. So, if you choose to pick up your dog and/or carry it into or out of the ring make sure when it is acceptable, otherwise a substantial deduction may be in order. And remember a substantial deduction is three (3) OR more points; that deduction alone may cost a placement in the final score standings! Let's take a quick review of the *new* Regulations and the Chapter and Sections which pertain to the change in verbiage.

Chapter 2, Section 11, Notification and Announcement of Scores.

"After all the scores are recorded for the class or division of the class, the judge will call the qualifying handlers back into the ring. **For the awards ceremony, dogs may be picked up and carried into the ring if the handler desires.** Before awarding the placements, the judge will inform the spectators of the maximum number of points required for a perfect score. After scores of each placement have been announced the judge will tell the other qualifying handlers their scores."

Chapter 2, Section 22, Praise.

"Praise and petting are allowed between and after exercises, but points will be deducted from the total score for a dog that is not under reasonable control while being praised. **There will be a substantial penalty for any dog that is picked up or carried at any time in the obedience ring while under judgment.** Note: A dog is under judgment from the time it enters the ring until it leaves the ring."

Glossary of Terms, Substantial deduction — 3 points or more

There you have it. When one is in the ring for the individual exercises (or the Novice Group exercise) they **are being judged** from the time they enter the ring until they pass through the exit on the way out. When one comes into the ring for awards, *they are **not** being judged*---there lies the difference.

For me, I will continue to walk with my Saint Bernards into the ring for awards. If I change my mind I will need to go to the gym first to make sure I can lift 180 pounds and hold it for at least 5+++ minutes. 😊

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Below is the next in a series of Random Little Tidbits of information.

Today's Random Little Tidbit – [AKC Freestyle Teamwork – Test Phase #1](#)



The American Kennel Club is interested in promoting the enthusiasm we shared when we watched a small and very talented group of obedience exhibitors with their dogs perform personally designed creative routines at Westminster in February 2015. The Companion Events Department received an overwhelming positive response and numerous requests to pursue creating a format that would encourage others to be able to participate in the fun.

Please see the attached document (following pages) explaining the details of *AKC Freestyle Teamwork - TEST PHASE #1*.

We hope you will share our enthusiasm and assist us with exploring this new format together.

After reading the attached document, if you have any questions please email them to freestyleteamwork@akc.org

[Details in the following pages of this document...](#)

AKC Blog Address: <https://akcobedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/about/> Sign up to receive updates.

John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



Freestyle Teamwork Level I, Level II, Level III – TEST PHASE # 1

Purpose: Freestyle Teamwork is a sport where the handler creates a performance routine to showcase the essence of teamwork between a handler and their dog. Each routine should create a visually appealing presentation, which demonstrates the joy of the handler/dog relationship and is entertaining for spectators to watch.

Club/School –Event Host Information:

1. Clubs/schools may offer this event with other events or as stand-alone events.
2. The ring size must be stated in all event publications. The ring shall be between 2,000 and 3,000 square feet with a minimum width of 30 feet. If a club/school is aware of which sides of the ring will have spectators this information should be published in the event flyer.
3. Three standard obedience and/or rally jumps will be available: High, Broad and Bar.
4. Music may be allowed but is optional. The club/school must state in event flyers/premiums if music will or will not be allowed. When deciding to allow music or not, consider the timing of the event, the proximity of the ring to other rings and if music would be a distraction to any other events. If music is allowed the music and the sound machine must be supplied by the exhibitor. The sound machine must be battery powered.
5. A timing device will be used for set up and performance. The device may either be visible to the judge and handler or a person will be designated to alert the handler and judge at the “30 seconds” remaining point.
6. Two stewards should be available to assist the judge as needed.
7. **JUDGE’S BOOKS** are available by emailing freestyleteamwork@akc.org

General Information/Requirements:

1. The routine must start, continue, and finish within the confines of the ring area.
2. A maximum of two minutes set-up time will be allowed.
3. All levels will be performed off-leash.
4. Food is not allowed in the ring.
5. No special training collars such as electronic or prong collars will be permitted.
6. Props, including jumps may be provided by the handler. Props, including any costumes may not make noise or require clean up between teams. No live animal props will be allowed.
7. Exhibitors may use any type of prop (including themselves) to demonstrate the dogs jumping ability.
8. Props may be stationary or movable. Dog and/or handlers may carry or retrieve stationary or tossed props.
9. The dog(s) and handler(s) should cover as much of the total ring area as possible, presenting moves in various areas of the ring and balancing the routine throughout the ring space.
10. Any move is allowed, as long as it does not endanger the dog or handler.
11. Distance work, weaves, jumps, send-outs, and/or innovative new moves are encouraged.
12. Moves may be performed from any position.
13. Routines, performances, props, music and lyrics should conform to generally accepted rules of decorum and not be offensive or sexually suggestive in language or presentation.
14. Any type of item may be used for retrieves. Retrieve objects must not make noise or be disruptive to other rings.
15. Exhibitors may use their own assistants in setting up the ring and throughout the performance but the exhibitor must be the only person to handle the dog throughout the performance and the assistants should not detract from the overall performance.
16. Required elements may be combined with each other and blended into the overall performance.
17. Handlers may talk throughout the performance and use their hands/body in whatever manner.
18. Touching of the dog is allowed without penalty unless otherwise noted.
19. Applause during and throughout the performance is encouraged and exhibitors should be prepared for it.
20. With each higher level of competition, the team will be expected to perform a higher quality / level of interpretive movements in their routine.
21. As this is a creative sport, subjective judging will apply.

Heelwork is defined as any position between the handler and the dog within 360 degrees radius and includes, but is not limited to: right heel; left heel; face-to-face; face-to-back; back-to-back; back-to-face; and all angled positions between handler and dog within 360 degrees.

Jump is defined as purposely propelling the body rapidly upward such that the momentum causes the body to become momentarily airborne with the feet leaving the floor.

Judging and Scoring:

- The judge must use a score sheet. The required elements should be listed on the score sheet in order for the judge to check them off as they are performed. Additionally there should be a scoring section for miscellaneous penalties and a comments section. **SCORE SHEETS** are available by emailing freestyleteamwork@akc.org
- The Judge does not call any orders. The handler enters the ring, sets up to begin the performance, indicates to the judge they are ready, and the judge acknowledges with “You may begin.”
- Timing of the performance begins at this time.
- During the testing phase any AKC non-regular or regular obedience or rally judge may act as a judge for this event. Other qualified individuals interested in judging should contact AKC at freestyleteamwork@akc.org

Scoring: Points are awarded in each category with 25 points available in each.

The teams will be evaluated on the following categories:

1. **Teamwork** - the shared appearance of connection and togetherness throughout the performance including when the dog and handler are working away from each other; the handler’s performance choices create a clear spirit of cooperation, connection and harmony.
 2. **Willingness & Enjoyment** – the dogs responsiveness to its handler, honor and trust; the teams display of joy and harmony.
 3. **Technical Execution** –the manner and style of the performance, accuracy, flow, smoothness, coordinated effort and ability.
 4. **Performance Originality & Presentation** – the overall performance impression and presentation.
- The total maximum score is 100 points. Total scores will be posted at the conclusion of each level.
 - Penalties:
 - 🐾 1-point penalty will be assessed for each second over the allotted two-minute set-up time
 - 🐾 1-point penalty for each second over the allotted maximum performance time for each level
 - 🐾 2 point penalty will be assessed for failure to perform/complete a required element
 - 🐾 2 point penalty for excessive barking
 - 🐾 2 point penalty will be assessed for any error listed under general information/requirements

The purpose of the test phase is to vet this initial concept and to provide AKC information from a club’s, judge’s and exhibitor’s perspective. During “TEST PHASE # 1” placements and/or awards are discouraged.

Any club, school, instructor or interested party that would like to assist AKC during the TEST PHASE is encouraged to write to freestyleteamwork@akc.org .

Clubs/schools who wish to host a test event please submit your request using this form:

<https://www.tfaforms.com/430440>

AFTER the test event please provide feedback by completing the form at: <https://www.tfaforms.com/431396>

Clubs/Schools-Event Hosts – Please submit copies of the **Judge’s Books** to freestyleteamwork@akc.org

Here is a link to a **FLYER** <http://images.akc.org/pdf/events/obedience/freestyle/AKCFreestyleFlyer.pdf>

CLUBS/SCHOOLS Please print and distribute to exhibitors at the events in order for them to provide us feedback.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Level I: <u>Two (2) minute</u> maximum performance time limit allowed. | Level II: <u>Three (3) minute</u> maximum performance time limit allowed. | Level III: <u>Four (4) minute</u> maximum performance time limit allowed. |
| Elements may be performed in any order or sequence. | Elements may be performed in any order or sequence. | Elements may be performed in any order or sequence. |
| | | |
| REQUIRED ELEMENTS | REQUIRED ELEMENTS | REQUIRED ELEMENTS |
| Heelwork: The dog must demonstrate the ability to do <u>heelwork on two sides</u> of the handler. At least <u>two changes of direction</u> and <u>one change of speed</u> is required. | Heelwork: The dog must demonstrate the ability to do <u>heelwork on three sides</u> of the handler. At least <u>four changes of direction</u> and <u>two changes of speed</u> are required. | Heelwork: The dog must demonstrate the ability to do <u>heelwork on four sides</u> of the handler. At least <u>four changes of direction</u> and <u>two changes of speed</u> are required. |
| Response work: The dog is required to perform at least <u>three different body position changes</u> and/or moving behaviors on command and/or signal. (Traditional obedience sit, down, stand, come, finish or backups, spins in either direction, crawl, weaves, and so on.) | Distance work: The handler may leave the dog in any position. The dog must demonstrate the <u>ability to stay</u> while the handler walks away. The dog is required to perform at least <u>three different body position changes</u> and/or moving behaviors on command and/or signal from a distance. | Distance work: The handler may leave the dog in any position. The dog must demonstrate the <u>ability to stay</u> while the handler walks away. The dog is required to perform at least <u>four different body position changes</u> and/or moving behaviors on command and/or signal from a distance. |
| | Recall: The handler may leave the dog in any position. The dog must demonstrate the ability to stay while the handler walks away. The dog must come on the handlers command and/or signal. (Front and Finish not required) | Go Away: The dog must demonstrate the ability to go away from the handler (forward/backward/sideways) and stop in whatever position the handler chooses. The handler may return to the dog or command the dog to perform other additional behaviors. |
| Retrieve: The dog must demonstrate the ability to deliver an object to the handler's hands. The object may be dropped, placed or tossed by the handler or the handler's assistant. <u>The handler may gently restrain the dog prior to sending the dog to retrieve while taking into consideration the overall impression.</u> The object may be anything that does not make noise. | Retrieve: The dog must demonstrate the ability to deliver an object to the handler's hands. The object may be dropped, placed or tossed by the handler or the handler's assistant. The object may be anything that does not make noise. <u>The handler may not physically restrain the dog.</u> | Retrieve: After the object is dropped, placed or tossed by the handler or the handler's assistant <u>the team must heel past the object before the handler sends the dog to retrieve.</u> The dog must deliver the object to the handler's hands. <u>The handler may not physically restrain the dog.</u> |
| Jump: The dog must jump <u>once</u> . It is up to the handler how best to demonstrate the dogs jumping ability. | Jump: The dog must jump <u>twice</u> . It is up to the handler how best to demonstrate the dogs jumping ability. | Jump: The dog must jump <u>twice</u> . It is up to the handler how best to demonstrate the dogs jumping ability. |



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Today's Random Little Tidbit – [AKC's Obedience & Rally Judge's Blog](https://akcobedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/)

This may be old news for some, but in case you have not heard, the American Kennel Club has a judge's blog for Obedience and Rally on the web ([link above under title](#))! The blog is a very useful tool for covering specifics in the Regulations, plus helpful for keeping up on current topics.

Pamela Manathon, Director of Obedience, Rally & Tracking writes, "We are replacing our traditional newsletters that were formatted in PDF documents and emailed out to each of you. Now we will be posting topics of interest by use of the AKC Obedience & Rally Judge's blog. In doing so, we will be able to provide more timely write-ups and take full advantage of the blog's Search and Category functions. This will make it easier for you to quickly research and access past information.

You will be able to sign up to get a notice each time something new is posted. If you misplace the link you will be able to locate it on the AKC website under "Judges Newsletter" just as you do now.

Our goal is to keep you as up to date as possible and give you the tools you need to be the best AKC Obedience & Rally Judge you can be. We can't do it without you!"

Sincerely,

Pamela Manaton, Director of Obedience, Rally & Tracking

One can follow the Blog via email, if you wish. Under the red "Search" box, there is another box to enter your email address to receive notifications of new posts. Plus, there is an Archive which has links to older Judge's Newsletters of the past. I really like this blog and I think you will too!

AKC Blog Address: <https://akcobedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/about/> Sign up to receive updates.

John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Release or Excuse – Understanding the Difference

This may be old news for some, but in case you have not heard, the American Kennel Club has a judge's blog for Obedience and Rally on the web (<https://akcobedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/about/>)! The blog is a very useful tool for covering specifics in the Regulations, plus helpful for keeping up on current topics. Case in point..

MAY BE RELEASED:

- For misbehavior.
- Dog that must be repositioned in the group exercise.

MUST BE RELEASED:

- A dog from the group exercise if it has non-qualified in the individual exercises.
- A dog that does not remain sitting during the first part of the Novice Group exercise must be released from participating in the second part.
- A dog must be released from the group exercise for displaying uncontrolled behavior, if it interferes with another dog or leaves the place where it was left during the first group exercise.
- If the dog has been released write "NQ-R" (Non-Qualifying Released) then carry down an "NQ" in the "Total Score" box.
- "NQ-R" does not require the judge to state a reason.

MAY EXCUSE:

- Dog relieves itself while in the ring for judging.
- Handler carries or offers food in the ring.
- Dog's performance has not met the minimum requirements.
- Training in the ring.

MUST EXCUSE:

- A dog that is out of control.
- Unable to Examine.
- Any dog unfit to compete – sick.
- Any dog lame, bandaged or stitched.
- Bitch in season (attractive/disturbing).
- A dog that appears dangerous to other dogs (including when lining up {group} outside the ring).
- Handler who abuses their dog or who disciplines their dog in the ring.
- Handler who willfully interferes with another competitor or competitor's dog.

Any dog that appears dangerous or aggressive MUST BE EXCUSED

The Judging Procedure for the Judge's Book for Excused dogs has not changed! All "Excused" dogs require the judge to state a reason in the judge's book. DO NOT carry down an "NQ" to the Total Score box.

If a dog is "**out of control**", it is to be **EXCUSED**; *versus* a dog that "**demonstrates uncontrolled behavior**", that dog must be **Released** from returning to the Group Exercises. Likewise, any "**misbehavior**" that is disruptive enough to remove the dog from the ring, as long as that dog is not considered dangerous would be "**released**".

For additional information regarding marking the judge's book please see page 119 of the Obedience Judge's Guidelines.



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Today's Random Little Tidbit – What to do with your arms and hands while in the ring?

Before entering the obedience ring serious thought should be given to the exercises you (*not your dog*) will be performing, and where your arms and hands will need to be during a particular exercise. The correct arm and hand positions can save some BIG points in your Final Score if done correctly. So what are the correct positions of the arms and hands during the different exercises? Where can one find out this information? Since we are playing the game of Obedience with our best friend in this “team” sport, let's look into the “Rule Book” (official name, AKC Obedience Regulations). This book can also be amongst a list of one's best friends! Just like any other sport, it is best to know the rules and regulations for what is to be expected. Knowledge gives one the power to up their game plan beforehand. Experience and mistakes will factor in (such is life), but if mistakes can be avoided from the start of the game the outcome will be more positive in meeting and obtaining goals.

Depending on the class entered and the exercises performed in that class, arm and hand positions do vary. Let's have a quick review the Obedience Regulations and try to get a handle on this subject. The following are from the Regulations, but sometimes it helps to just pull out one topic and study it all in one place. It may seem complicated when reading, but an instructor or one who has been in the sport can demonstrate giving visuals. Practice also helps to a better understanding of excellent arm and hand positions during exercises.

I. Purpose

A handler is to be **smooth** and **natural**. Keep these words in the back of your mind. The Glossary of Obedience Terms defines **natural**: "not artificial; free of affectation; what is customarily expected in the home or public places."

II. Chapter 2, Section 2. Standard of Perfection

A handler is to also show **gentleness**. Use the arms and hands with a look of gentleness.

III. Chapter 2, Section 19

In all exercises where the dog is required to heel free, **one** of these options should be followed:

- * **(1)** When the handler is in motion, the **arms and hands must move naturally at the sides and must hang naturally at the sides when stopped.**
- * **(2)** The ***right hand*** and arm **must move naturally** at the side, while the ***left hand*** **must** be held **against the front of the body**, **centered** in the area of the waist, with the **left forearm carried against the body**. *Editor's note: As opposed to the elbow sticking straight out from the handler's side looking like a Colonel Sander's chicken wing. Aren't visuals 🍗 wonderful to make a point! 😊*
- * In either of the above situations, the **arms and hands may be adjusted during the fast** portion of an exercise in order to maintain balance.
- * There **will be a substantial deduction** if the arms and hands are not carried in one of the positions stated above. A substantial is defined as a deduction of **3 or more** points.
- * In **any** exercise that requires a dog to **sit in front**, the handler's arms and hands **must hang naturally** at the sides **until** the dog has sat in front. *Hands pressed against one's sides like a soldier at attention, or hands held together in front or behind are subject to a substantial penalty. And saluting the Judge during an exercise will not be of any benefit to your Final Score, IMO. 😊*

Read every exercise **Description** for details for the class(es) entered, and remember Chapter 2, Section 19. If the dog is to **sit in front** be aware of the position of the arms and hands, and where they will need to be when setting up for the exercise. During the exercise the handler **must** receive a **substantial deduction** for arms and hands not being correct.



* This now includes Beginner Novice.

* **Any** movement of the handler's arms or hands **from the time** the dog sits in front **and prior** to the dog returning to the heel position **will be considered** an additional signal or command and will be penalized **unless** such movement is otherwise permitted by these regulations.

* *The Utility Moving Stand and Examination does not require the handler's arms and hands hang from their sides as the dog is not required to **sit in front**, but to go **directly to the heel position**. If the handler were to give a signal (when calling their dog) with the arm and hand returning to the waist, as in a heel free hand position, this action would not be subject to a penalty.*

IV. Chapter 2, Section 20

If a signal is used by the handler:

* When a signal is permitted, it **must be a single gesture with one arm and hand only**, and the **arm and hand must immediately be returned to a natural position**. A handler may bend their body and knees to bring their hand level with the dog's eyes while giving a signal to a dog in heel position.

* **Signals must be inaudible**, and the handler must not touch the dog.

* **Any unusual noise or motion may be considered to be a signal. Position of the arms and hands and movements of the head and/or body that aid the dog** will be considered additional signals.

* Signaling a correction to a dog is forbidden and will be penalized.

* If an exercise states the handler may use a command and/or signal, the command and signal must be given **simultaneously**.

V. Chapter 3, Section 5

Heel on Leash and Figure Eight:

* The leash may be **held in either hand or in both hands**, but the hands must be held in a natural position.

VI. Exercises where the dog is required to sit in front the arms and hands must hang naturally at the sides until the dog has sat in front:

* **Regular classes** - the foundation classes for the alternative and optional titling classes.

* **Novice** - Recall

* **Open** - Drop on Recall, Retrieve on Flat, Retrieve Over High Jump, Broad Jump

* **Utility** - Signal Exercise, Scent Discrimination, Directed Retrieve, Directed Jumping

VII. Exercises where arms and hands are not required to be hanging naturally at the sides:

* **Regular classes** – the foundation classes for the alternative and optional titling classes.

* **Novice** - Heel on leash & Figure Eight, Heel Free (**see above, III.**), Stand for Examination and Group.

* **Open** - Heel Free (**see above, III.**)

* **Utility** - Moving Stand and Examination (To Finish a dog *in this exercise*, a command **and/or** signal is given. If the handler were to use a signal, then the arm and hand may be brought up to the waist **or** left hanging naturally without a penalty.)

VIII. The Finish (a non-principal feature of an exercise)

The finish is not a principal feature of any exercise. Therefore, failure to finish or extra commands or signals to finish do not require a non-qualifying (NQ) score for any exercise. Keep in mind to finish a dog a command **OR** signal may be used, not both (*only exception is the Utility Moving Stand and Examination*). If a verbal command is used and the handler proceeds to bring their arm or hand up to their waist (as in the heel free), a penalty will occur. That motion is judged as an additional signal to the given verbal command. If the handler were to use a signal only, then the arm and hand may be brought up to the waist or left hanging naturally without a penalty.

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Today's Random Little Tidbit - Principal features & Non-principal features of an exercise.

Most all of the AKC Obedience exercises have Principal features **and** Non-principal features (there are a couple of exceptions which I will cover later), and both of these features factor into the scoring. Knowing how an exercise is scored factors into these two features and can and make the difference between points off to a non-qualifying (NQ) performance.

In reading the Regulations for each exercise in a Regular, Alternative or Optional titling class, the **Description** lists the principal feature of that exercise in detail. The **Judge's Guidelines** will also expand the details of a few exercises. The **Scoring** section of each exercise then lists, in detail, non-qualifying (NQ), substantial and minor deductions. The **Glossary of Terms** lists point values of substantial or minor deductions, plus definitions of words used in the Regulations.

I. What is a Qualifying Score?

According to Chapter 1, Section 15, **Qualifying score:** "A qualifying score means that the dog has earned more than 50 percent of the points for each exercise with a total score of at least 170 points. This score must be earned in a regular, alternative, or optional titling class at a licensed or member obedience trial."

In addition:

- * "A qualifying score in the judge's book is certification that the dog has performed all the required exercises according to these regulations and justifies the awarding of the obedience title associated with the particular class."
- * "In deciding whether a faulty performance of an exercise warrants a qualifying score, the judge will consider whether the awarding of an obedience title would be justified if all dogs in the class performed the exercise in a similar manner. The judge must not give a qualifying score for the exercise if they decide that it would be contrary to the best interests of the sport if all dogs in the class were to perform in the same way."
- * "A qualifying score must never be awarded to a dog whose performance has not met the minimum requirements."

II. Principal features

The principal feature of an exercise must be met to earn a qualifying score in that exercise. In the **advanced** classes (beyond Novice) there can be more than one principal feature. The principal features of an advanced exercise will also include all the applicable principal and non-principal features of the listed **foundation** exercises, which must also be met to earn a qualifying score. A foundation exercise is an exercise where a particular performance element is first defined in the Regulations. For example, the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight is a foundation exercise. All other exercises in all of the other classes which have elements of heeling will refer back to this exercise for full details and applicable scoring guidance.

Different exercises can be challenging in learning the principal feature from a non-principal feature. There are a few exercises which switch back and forth from one to the other. It can be a brain twister until sorted out. Case in point:

III. Novice Stand For Examination (foundation exercise)

- * This exercise starts with **non-principal scoring to principal scoring** and then back to non-principal scoring.
- * After the Judge asks, "Are you ready?", the Judge's first order is, "Stand your dog and leave when you are ready." The **non-principal** feature and scoring of *this* exercise is at the beginning of the exercise where the handler stands the dog in position. Scoring has started on the Judge's first order (Chapter 2, Section 4), but only for such things as rough treatment by the handler or active resistance by the dog to its handler's attempts to have it stand.
- * The **principal feature** and scoring starts when the *handler* gives the command/or signal to Stay, or just leaves the dog. Keep in mind, neither a command or signal are *required* to be given as the description reads "may give." The scoring of the principal feature starts at this point and continues until the Judge lifts their hand off the dog's hindquarters.
- * Once the Judge's hand is lifted the **non-principal** scoring takes hold once again as the handler returns to heel position and until the Judge then orders, "Exercise finished."

IV. Group Exercise - Novice A & B

- * The Novice Group exercise is yet another example of scoring from **non-principal to principal and then back to non-principal**.
- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is, "Sit (or Down) your dogs." The **non-principal** scoring is at the first and second parts of the exercise for such things as rough treatment of a dog by its handler or resistance by a dog to its handler's attempts to make it sit or lie down, which starts with the first order.
- * The **principal feature** (scoring and timing) starts with the Judge's second order, "Leave your dogs." This feature continues on until the handlers have returned to heel position.
- * The **non-principal** scoring takes hold once again for the short time in which all the handlers are standing in heel position until the Judge's orders, "Exercise finished."

V. Utility Signal Exercise – Knowing the principal features, plus the nuances of an exercise for scoring.

- * "The **principal features** of this exercise are the **ability of the dog and handler to work as a team while heeling** and the dog's correct response to the signals to **stand, down, sit and come.**"
- * The heeling is judged and scored as in the **foundation** exercise (**Heel on Leash and Figure Eight**).
- * If there is no teamwork between the dog and handler while heeling, this will result in a non-qualifying (NQ) performance. This occurs before the other principal features, the signals! Other exercises will also have additional principal features to be aware of in the applicable foundation exercises listed in their scoring section.
- * One also needs to read and understand *which signals* are addressed in the **principle features** of the signal exercise *and which are not*. There is no mention in the principal features of the Signal exercise *for a dog's correct response to the signal* to start the heeling. Why? A handler is not required to give a signal to start heeling. The foundation exercise states "may". In Chapter 2, Section 20 it also states, "Moving forward at the heel without any command or signal other than the natural forward movement of the handler's body will not be considered anticipation." Furthermore, in the **Scoring** section in this advanced "signal" exercise, it states a substantial deduction will be made for any audible command during the heeling or finish portions of the exercise. The finish portions of the Signal exercise are a non-principal feature, which is defined in another foundation exercise (**Novice Recall**). An example of what was mentioned above; *The principal features of an advanced exercise will also include all the applicable principal and non-principal features of the listed foundation exercises, which must also be met to earn a qualifying score. A foundation exercise is an exercise where a particular performance element is first defined in the Regulations.*

VI. The Finish

- * The Finish is not a principal feature of any exercise. Therefore, failure to finish or extra commands or signals to finish do not require a non-qualifying (NQ) score for any exercise. However, if during the principal features the scoring was at the line of non-qualifying, additional scoring of the finish may factor in to a NQ. See Qualifying Score "*" above.
- * An extra command and/or signal in any non-principal part of an exercise does not constitute a failing score for that exercise.

VII. Heel on Leash and Figure Eight (foundation exercise) + Heel Free exercises:

There are only principal parts to these two (2) exercises.

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John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Are the Jumps Set Correctly? Who Is Responsible?

History:

I am not sure if the 1999 Obedience Advisory Committee (OAC) made the change or if it was an “in-house revision”, but the decades-long wording in regards to measuring dogs was changed in 2000 with the added verbiage, “Judges may, at their discretion, verify the height of any dog at the withers.” Checking the dog for the correct *minimum* height was just another part of a Judge’s job in making sure *minimum* requirements and equipment were met before the team competed in the ring. From that point on, judges who measured all dogs to *verify* jump heights started to become almost totally extinct.

So nowadays a team enters the ring and they are off and running, no measuring is taking place, for the most part. Let’s all hope the jumps are set correctly for this team who is entering the ring. If not, who is responsible for verifying if they are set correctly?

The Regulations state:

The **Judge is responsible** to *make sure* the jumps are set correctly for the dog entering the ring. The Judges are the ones who are to make sure the minimum standards for an exercise are met in order to award a qualifying score. In Chapter 4, Section 11 (Retrieve Over High Jump, page 47) it states, “The stewards, based on the jump height listed, will pre-set the jumps. The judge **will make certain** the jump is **at least** the minimum required height for each dog and **must also be aware that the jump may be set at a higher height** if requested by the handler. Judges may, at their discretion, verify the height of any dog at the withers.”

Judges can and do become lax in looking at the jump(s) before the team enters the ring and then in viewing the dog to double-check the withers, making sure everything is in order. Looking at how the jumps are set in a preferred class can be a brain teaser, for sure, making certain the minimums are at ½ heights or for breeds that jump 3/4th wither’s height in the other regular and optional titling classes.

How do we make sure the jump(s) are set correctly before entering the ring?

1. **Judges** maybe should always look at the jumps first, then repeat the jump height numbers to the Stewards and the handler as they enter to help verify, since many don’t measure any more.
2. It is even a good idea to check the BJ as far as the number of hurdles. For example, if the high jump is set at 24” make sure there are 4 hurdles for the BJ. Different stewards can be setting different jumps.
3. **Judges** may still question a jump height and want to verify. If one has a dog at a “borderline” wither height, training for measurement might be a good plan, just in case. It really is no big deal compared to all the other exercises one trains for in a class with jumps!
4. **Stewards** may get jumps set wrong in dealing with conflicts and switching dogs around from the judging order.
5. **Handlers** should be looking at the jumps also and bring to the attention of the Stewards any issue with the height **before** entering the ring. This too can avoid errors when entering the ring, and far better then to find the jump(s) are set incorrectly and throwing off one’s game plan.

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – [Tweaks that are now in effect to the Regulations](#)

There have been a few tweaks and clarifications in scoring to the AKC Obedience Regulations which have been noted on the AKC Obedience Blog. The relevant changes will be printed in the next printing of the Regulations, but are in effect now! Are you aware of them? To “keep up” and to be notified now may be a good time to sign up to the Blog. <https://akcbedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/>

Three examples:

I. Identification

Articles and the article carrying case must comply with the Regulations Chapter 1, Section 10, Identification. Club clothing, AKC event clothing, or breed clothing may be worn by anyone exhibiting a dog or by ring stewards. Clothing may display the person's name, the dog's call name and/or the dog's picture. Titles may not be displayed. Writing or graphics on the clothing must not be in poor taste or contain profanity. Clothing must not display any information that would be in conflict with a sponsor of the trial. Effective 9/1/17.

II. Chapter 18, Graduate Open Scent Discrimination Exercise, Performance and Scoring Clarification

The dog and handler are required to begin this exercise facing the articles and remain facing the articles throughout the exercise. When the judge orders, “Take an article”, the handler and dog may move together to take an article without penalty.

III. Chapter 18, Graduate Open – Go Out

In an effort to clarify scoring of the dog that changes position or moves before the handler has returned to heel position the following sentence will be added to **Section 8, Go Out Scoring:** Substantial deductions will be made for a dog that changes position after sitting or moves even a short distance after stopping.

Section 8, Go Out, Scoring. A dog will receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score if it: anticipates the handler's command and/or signal to go out; fails to leave the handler; does not go out between the jumps; does not stop and remain at least 10 feet past the jumps without an additional command. Substantial deductions will be made for a dog that changes position after sitting or moves even a short distance after stopping.

Minor or substantial deductions will be made for a dog that does not stop on command, that does not stop in the approximate center of the ring about 20 feet past the jumps, that does not sit, that receives an additional command to sit after the dog has stopped, or that anticipates the handler's command to sit. Depending on the extent, minor or substantial deductions will be made for slowness in going out.

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – [Detailed Articles by the exercises, Novice, Open & Utility](#)

The **Random Little Tidbits** articles cover many general and specific topics in a random order, consequently the name. In case you would like to view all the different elements of the exercises in a Regular class (the foundation exercises), there are three (3) sets of **Dog-Talk** articles in which do this. Each set lists all the exercises at each class level (Novice, Open & Utility), showing what Judges look for in the performance of the **dog and handler** in detail. Also, there are three (3) quizzes for each level to test your knowledge. It is to your advantage to know how the exercises are judged and what is to be expected when showing in the ring for "Saving Withdrawals From Your '200' account." With such knowledge one's training can be better focused for the dog and handler to work towards achieving success for the goals set. Keep in mind that both the dog and handler are judged as a team, each with *specific* duties to its team member.



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John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net

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Principal
Toolkit

Today's Random Little Tidbit - Principal features & non-principal features of the Novice exercises.

Random Little Tidbits #27 touched on this topic in general and covers what constitutes a qualifying score. Let's now look into the different exercises (one by one) in the Regular classes, starting with Novice. This is the class where many of the foundation exercises are located and referred back to in the advanced classes. There will be future Random Little Tidbits articles covering the exercises in Open (#32) & Utility (#33).

Most of the AKC Obedience exercises have principal features **and** non-principal features (there are a couple of exceptions), and both of these features factor differently into the scoring. Knowing how an exercise is scored in regards to these two features can make the difference between points off to a non-qualifying (NQ) performance.

In reading the AKC Obedience Regulations for each of the exercises in a Regular, Alternative, Optional and Non-Regular classes, the **description** lists the principal feature of that exercise in detail. The **Judge's Guidelines** will also expand the details of a few exercises. The **Scoring** section of each exercise then lists, in detail, non-qualifying (NQ), substantial and minor deductions. The **Glossary of Terms** lists point values of substantial or minor deductions, plus definitions of words used in the Regulations.

Principal features of an exercise.

The principal feature of an exercise must be met to earn a qualifying score in that exercise. In the **advanced** classes (beyond Novice) there can be more than one principal feature. The principal features of an advanced exercise will also include all the applicable principal features of the **foundation** exercises, which must also be met to earn a qualifying score. A foundation exercise is an exercise where a particular performance element is first defined in the Regulations. For example, the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight is a foundation exercise. All other exercises in all of the other classes which have elements of heeling will refer back to this exercise for full details and applicable scoring guidance. Mastering the foundation exercises will assist one in knowing how exercises are also to be judged.

Different exercises can be challenging in learning the principal feature from a non-principal feature. There are a few exercises which switch back and forth from one to the other. It can be a brain twister until sorted out. So let's start to sort out the differences.

I. Novice Heel On Leash & Figure Eight (foundation exercise) Note: Other exercises will refer back to this exercise.

"The principal feature of this exercise is the ability of the dog and handler to work as a team. The orders are: 'Forward,' 'Halt,' 'Right turn,' 'Left turn,' 'About turn,' 'Slow,' 'Normal' and 'Fast'."

There is only one principal feature to this exercise. No **non-principal** features. The exercise starts with the first Judge's order "Forward", and continues on to the completion of the exercise where the Judge orders "Exercise finished." The scoring section of this exercise gives details on what constitutes a qualifying score from a non-qualifying score.

II. Novice Stand For Examination (foundation exercise) Note: Other classes will refer back to this exercise.

"The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog stand in position before and during the examination without displaying resentment."

* **This exercise starts with non-principal scoring to principal scoring and then back to non-principal scoring.**

* After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Stand your dog and leave when you are ready." The **non-principal** feature and scoring of *this* exercise is at the beginning of the exercise where the handler poses the dog in position. Scoring has started on the Judge's first order (Chapter 2, Section 4), but only for such things as rough treatment by the handler or active resistance by the dog to its handler's attempts to have it stand.

* The **principal feature** and scoring starts when the *handler* gives the command/or signal to stay, or just leaves the dog. Keep in mind, neither a command or signal are *required* to be given as the description reads "may give". The scoring of the **principal feature** starts at this point and continues until the Judge lifts their hand off the dog's hindquarters. The examination (the principal feature) of the exercise is finished with this action.

* Once the Judge's hand is lifted the **non-principal** feature and scoring takes hold once again as the handler returns to heel position and until the Judge orders "Exercise finished."



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Principal
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Today's Random Little Tidbit - Principal features & non-principal features of the Open exercises.

Random Little Tidbits #27 touched on this topic in general and covers what constitutes a qualifying score. Random Little Tidbits #31 covered Novice in detail. Let's now look into the different exercises (one by one) in the Open Regular classes. The Open class will have new foundation exercises introduced, plus many of the Novice foundation exercises are referred back to in the Open **Scoring** sections. There will be a future Random Little Tidbits article (#33) covering the exercises in Utility.

Most of the AKC Obedience exercises have principal features **and** non-principal features (there are a couple of exceptions), and both of these features can factor differently into the scoring. Knowing how an exercise is scored in regards to these two features can make the difference between points off to a non-qualifying (NQ) performance.

In reading the Regulations for each of the exercises in a Regular, Alternative, Optional and Non-Regular classes, the **description** lists the principal feature of that exercise in detail. The **Judge's Guidelines** will also expand the details of a few exercises. The **Scoring** section of each exercise then lists, in detail, non-qualifying (NQ), substantial and minor deductions. The **Glossary of Terms** lists point values of substantial or minor deductions, plus definitions of words used in the Regulations.

Principal features of an exercise.

The principal feature of an exercise must be met to earn a qualifying score in that exercise. In the **advanced** classes (beyond Novice) there can be more than one principal feature. The principal features of an advanced exercise will also include all the applicable principal features of the **foundation** exercises, which must also be met to earn a qualifying score. A foundation exercise is an exercise where a particular performance element is first defined in the Regulations. For example, the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight is a foundation exercise. All other exercises in all of the other classes which have elements of heeling will refer back to this exercise for full details and applicable scoring guidance. Mastering the foundation exercises will assist one in knowing how exercises are also to be judged.

Different exercises can be challenging in learning the principal feature from a non-principal feature. There are a few exercises which switch back and forth from one to the other. It can be a brain twister until sorted out. So let's start to sort out the differences.

I. Heel Free and Figure Eight Note: The new element is the Figure Eight is included without the leash.

Here is the first example in an advanced class exercise in which the description and scoring is not repeated, but refers the reader back to the Foundation exercise, the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight for judging and scoring procedures. "This exercise will be performed in the same manner as the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise except that the dog will be off leash. Orders and scoring are the same as in Heel on Leash and Figure Eight."

II. Command Discrimination

"The principal features of this exercise are the dog's correct response to the handler's commands and/or signals and that the dog stays until the handler returns to heel position."

- * This exercise starts with the **principal scoring** and ends with **non-principal scoring**.
- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Stand your dog" or "Down your dog," depending on the posted order. The **principal** scoring of *this* exercise is at the beginning of the exercise with the first order and the dog's correct response to the handler's command **and/or** signal.
- * The **principal features** continue until the handler has returned to heel position.
- * The **non-principal** feature and scoring takes hold for the short time in which all the handler is standing in heel position until the Judge's orders "Exercise finished."

III. Drop On Recall (foundation exercise is the Novice Recall) Note: The new principal feature element is the Drop. *"The principal features of this exercise, in addition to those listed under the Novice Recall, are the dog's prompt response to the handler's command or signal to drop and the dog's remaining in the down position until again called or signaled to come."*

- * This exercise starts with the **principal scoring** and ends with **non-principal scoring**.
- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Leave your dog." The **principal features** of this exercise starts and the dog is to stay where left until called by the handler and that the dog responds promptly to the handler's command or signal to Drop and then to come once again when commanded or signaled.
- * The **Scoring** section states, "A non-qualifying (NQ) score must be given to any dog that does not drop completely to the down position on a single command or signal or to a dog that does not remain down until called or signaled."
- * Then goes on to state, "All applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall shall apply."
- * Once the dog is within reach of the handler the Judge will order "Finish."
- * The **non-principal** feature of this exercise is the Finish.

IV. Retrieve on Flat (foundation exercise is the Novice Recall) Note: The new principal feature element is the retrieve. *"The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog retrieve promptly."* This new principal feature now becomes a **Foundation** exercise for other retrieving exercises.

- * This exercise starts with the **principal scoring** and ends with **non-principal scoring**.
- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Throw it." The **principal features** of this exercise starts.
- * The **Scoring** section states, "A dog must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score if it fails to go out on the first command or signal, goes to retrieve before the command or signal is given, fails to retrieve, or does not return with the dumbbell sufficiently close that the handler can easily take the dumbbell as described above."
- * Then goes on to state, "All applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall shall apply."
- * Once the dog is within reach of the handler the Judge will order "Finish".
- * The **non-principal** feature of this exercise is the Finish.

V. Retrieve Over High Jump (foundation exercises are the Novice Recall & Retrieve on Flat) Note: The new principal feature element is the jump. This new principal feature now becomes a **foundation** exercise for other exercises that may have a High or Bar jump *in regards to the dog performing the jumping.* *"The principal features of this exercise are that the dog go out over the jump, pick up the dumbbell and promptly return with it over the jump."*

- * This exercise starts with the **principal scoring** and ends with **non-principal scoring**.
- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Throw it." The **principal features** of this exercise starts.
- * The **Scoring** section states, "A dog that fails to go over the full height of the jump in either direction, that uses the jump for any aid in going over, or that returns over the jump without the dumbbell must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score."
- * Then goes on to state, "All other penalties listed under the Retrieve on Flat shall apply."
- * When referring back to the scoring in the Retrieve on Flat it refers back to the applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall that shall apply. Notice how this all works in understanding how an exercise is scored.
- * Once the dog is within reach of the handler the Judge will order "Finish".
- * The **non-principal** feature of this exercise is the Finish.

V. Broad Jump (foundation exercises are the Novice Recall)

"The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay where left until directed to jump, that the dog clear the jump on a single command or signal, and that the dog return to its handler after it has jumped."

- * This exercise starts with the **principal scoring** and ends with **non-principal scoring**.
- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Leave your dog." The **principal features** of this exercise starts.
- * The **Scoring** section states, "A dog that fails to stay until directed to jump, refuses the jump on the first command or signal, *or steps on or between the hurdles* must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score." *Different wording is used in regards to the dog clearing the Broad Jump from the High Jump Foundation exercise. This wording now becomes the foundation wording for other classes using the Broad Jump exercise.*
- * Then goes on to state, "All applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall shall apply."
- * Once the dog is within reach of the handler the Judge will order "Finish".
- * The **non-principal** feature of this exercise is the Finish.

VII Stay - Get Your Leash (2 Part exercise)

*"The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in the sitting **or** down position, whichever is required at the time."*

- * This exercise is another example of scoring starting with a **non-principal feature to a principal feature and then back to a non-principal feature**.
- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Sit your dog." **or** Down your dog." The **non-principal** scoring of *this exercise* is at the beginning of the exercise (Part 1 & 2) for such things as rough treatment of a dog by its handler or resistance by a dog to its handler's attempts to make it sit or down, which starts with the first order.
- * The **principal feature** starts with the Judge's second order, "Leave your dog." or "Leave your dog to get your leash." This feature continues until the handler has returned to heel position.
- * The **non-principal** feature and scoring takes hold once again for the short time in which all the handler is standing in heel position until the Judge's orders "Exercise finished."

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Principal
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Today's Random Little Tidbit - Principal features & non-principal features of the Utility exercises.

Random Little Tidbits #27 touched on this topic in general and covers what constitutes a qualifying score. Random Little Tidbits #31 & #32 covered the Novice and Open exercises in detail. Let's now look into the different exercises (one by one) in the Regular Utility classes. The Utility class will have new foundation exercises introduced, plus many of the Novice and Open Foundation exercises are referred back to in the Utility **Scoring** sections.

Most of the AKC Obedience exercises have principal features **and** non-principal features (there are a couple of exceptions), and both of these features can factor differently into the scoring. Knowing how an exercise is scored in regards to these two features can make the difference between points off to a non-qualifying (NQ) performance.

In reading the Regulations for each of the exercises in a Regular, Alternative, Optional and Non-Regular classes, the **description** lists the principal feature of that exercise in detail. The **Judge's Guidelines** will also expand the details of a few exercises. The **Scoring** section of each exercise then lists, in detail, non-qualifying (NQ), substantial and minor deductions. The **Glossary of Terms** lists point values of substantial or minor deductions, plus definitions of words used in the Regulations.

Principal features of an exercise.

The principal feature of an exercise must be met to earn a qualifying score in that exercise. In the **advanced** classes (beyond Novice) there can be more than one principal feature. The principal features of an advanced exercise will also include all the applicable principal features of the **foundation** exercises, which must also be met to earn a qualifying score. A foundation exercise is an exercise where a particular performance element is first defined in the Regulations. For example, the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight is a foundation exercise. All other exercises in all of the other classes which have elements of heeling will refer back to this exercise for full details and applicable scoring guidance. Mastering the foundation exercises will assist one in knowing how exercises are also to be judged.

Different exercises can be challenging in learning the principal feature from a non-principal feature. There are a few exercises which switch back and forth from one to the other. It can be a brain twister until sorted out. So let's start to sort out the differences.

I. Signal Exercise (foundation exercises are Novice Heel on Leash & Novice Recall) Note: The new principal feature element are the signals as outlined.

*"The principal features of this exercise are the ability of dog and handler to work as a team while heeling and the dog's correct response to the signals to **stand, stay, down, sit and come.**"*

- * This exercise starts with **principal scoring** and ends with **non-principal scoring**.
- * This is another example in an advanced class exercise in which a detailed description and scoring is not repeated, but refers the reader back to the foundation exercises, the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight for judging and scoring procedures in regards to the heeling portions. The added Recall in this heeling exercise brings in another foundation exercise for scoring--the Novice Recall.
- * The **Scoring** section states, "All applicable penalties listed under the Heel on Leash and the Novice Recall (after the dog has been signaled to come) exercises will apply."
- * Once the dog is within reach of the handler the Judge will order "Finish".
- * The **non-principal** feature of this exercise is the Finish.

II. Scent Discrimination (foundation exercises are the Heel Free & Novice Recall & Retrieve on Flat) Note: The new principal feature element is scenting.

"The principal features of these exercises are the selection of the handler's article from among the other articles by scent alone and the prompt delivery of the correct article to the handler. In each of these two exercises, the dog must select and retrieve an article that has been handled by its handler. The dog must make this selection based on scent alone."

- * **This exercise starts with non-principal scoring to principal scoring and then back to non-principal scoring.**
- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's orders are "Take an article" "The taking of the article from the handler" "Send your dog" "Take it" and "Finish."

- * The **non-principal** feature and scoring of *this* exercise is at the beginning of the exercise where the handler leaves the dog to take an article and then returns to heel position for the scenting of the article.
- * The **principal features** of this exercise starts with the Judge's second order (a silent one), the taking of the article from the handler. The scoring of the **principal features** is now in effect until the dog has returned within reach of the handler.
- * In addition to the detailed scoring of the Scent Discrimination noted in the **Scoring** section, it goes on to state, "All applicable penalties listed under the Heel Free, Novice Recall and the Retrieve on Flat will apply." So we have the new element (scenting) defined in this section, plus referring back to three (3) other exercises for detailed **Descriptions** and **Scoring** and repeated here.
- * Once the dog is within reach of the handler the Judge will order "Finish".
- * The second **non-principal** feature of this exercise is the Finish.

III. Directed Retrieve (foundation exercises are the Heel Free & Novice Recall & Retrieve on Flat) Note: A basic Retrieve on Flat exercise but to a *designated* glove, the new element in this exercise.

"The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay until directed to retrieve and that it complete the retrieve of the designated glove."

- * This exercise starts with the **principal scoring** and ends with **non-principal scoring**.
- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "One, or Two, or Three." The **principal features** of this exercise starts. The chosen Judge's order depends on the designated glove for the class.
- * In addition to the detailed scoring of the Directed Retrieve noted in the **Scoring** section, it goes on to state, "All applicable penalties listed under the Heel Free, Novice Recall and the Retrieve on Flat will apply." Once again, the new elements (giving the direction) are defined in this section, plus referring back to three (3) other exercise description and scoring sections in prior chapters for more detailed information.
- * Once the dog is within reach of the handler the Judge will order "Finish".
- * The **non-principal** feature of this exercise is the Finish.

IV. Moving Stand and Examination (foundation exercises are Novice Heel Free & Novice Stand for Examination & Novice Recall) Note: The new element is the handler heeling and then leaving the dog in a standing position for examination on the Judge's order.

"The principal features of the exercise are that the dog heel, stand and stay as the handler moves away; accept the examination without shyness or resentment; and return to the handler on command."

- * This exercise starts with the **principal scoring** and ends with **non-principal scoring**.
- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Forward"; the handler *may* command or signal the dog to heel. The **principal features** of this exercise starts.
- * In addition to the detailed scoring of the Moving Stand and Examination noted in the **Scoring** section, "All applicable penalties of the Novice Heel Free, Stand for Examination and Recall exercises will apply."
- * In a nutshell, this exercise is three (3) exercises in one; Heeling, Standing for Examination and the Recall, all referring back to those exercises in prior chapters to fill in the reader on the complete procedures and scoring for this exercise.
- * The principal features of scoring are in effect until the dog is within reach of the handler when going to finish.
- * The **non-principal** feature of this exercise is the Finish.

V. Directed Jumping (foundation exercises are the Novice Recall & Retrieve Over High Jump {the wording addressing jumping}) Note: The new element in this exercise is the dog leaving the handler and stopping on command at about 20 feet beyond the jumps.

"The principal features of this exercise are that the dog goes away from the handler to the opposite end of the ring, stop, jump as directed, and return as in the Novice Recall."

- * This exercise starts with the **principal scoring** and ends with **non-principal scoring**.
- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Send your dog." The **principal features** of this exercise starts. The handler will command or signal the dog to go forward about 20 feet past the jumps.
- * In addition to the detailed scoring of the Directed Jumping noted in the **Scoring** section, "All applicable penalties of the Novice Recall exercises will apply."
- * *Since there are jumps in this exercise the Retrieve Over High Jump exercise goes into the needed details on how the jump(s) and jumping are to be performed by the dog.*
- * Once the dog is within reach of the handler the Judge will order "Finish".
- * The **non-principal** features of this exercise is the Finish.

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Today's Random Little Tidbit - [Streamlining the Postings of Required Materials at Ringside.](#)

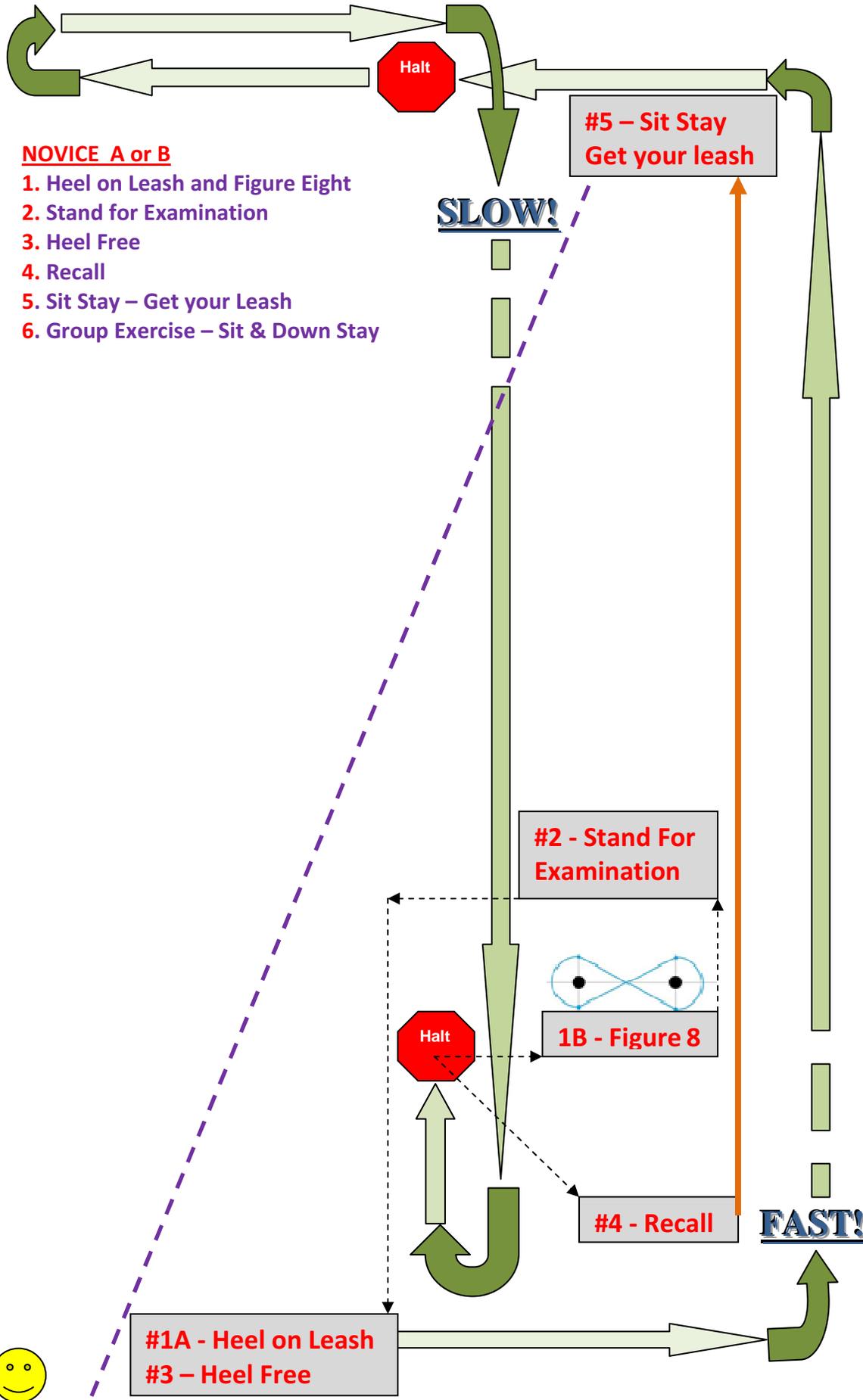
There are a variety of options (chosen by the Judge) in many of the titling obedience classes; therefore, the Judge is *required* to post the chosen options to inform the exhibitors approximately 45-minutes before the class starts. Depending on the number of classes to be judged, that can lead to a large number of postings, and the "white board" (if you are lucky to have one) can end up looking like a cluttered mess. Furthermore, there is not always a lot of real estate near the ring entrance to provide visibility for displaying many of the *required* postings if not condensed in some way. My goal was to have all the required postings visible and easy to find, and all in one spot for a particular class. For example, depending on what classes are to be judged, my new condensed postings will show:

- 1. Required posting**...Heeling pattern (all classes), I post my patterns. Other options are demonstrating or verbally informing the exhibitor. For those at ringside at the start of the class, I will also have a Steward walk the pattern and I will move along to show my observation positions during the pattern. As a handler I do like a posted visual, especially if I am not at the ring at the start time due to a breed conflict or due in another obedience class.
- 2. Required posting**...The chosen exercise order from among the 6 Regular, 6 Preferred **Open/Utility** classes, plus 12 exercise order options in **Versatility**.
- 3. Not required**...but I inform the exhibitor where each exercise will be performed and a suggested path from one exercise to the other. This information helps the exhibitor know where the next exercise will start so they may easily proceed to "set up".
- 4. Not required**...I post my chosen method of handling the *second* scent article in **Regular/Preferred Utility and Versatility** classes. That's good information for the exhibitor to know ahead of time for their game plan.
- 5. Required posting**...The designated glove for the **Regular/Preferred Utility, Graduate Open & Versatility** classes. I place a sticky star on the posting indicating the chosen glove. It is easy to change IF the designated glove needed to be changed before the class starts.
- 6. Required posting**...The designated jump in **Graduate Open**. I place a sticky star on the posting indicating the chosen jump. It is easy to change IF the designated jump needed to be changed before the class starts.
- 7. Required posting**...The designated Sit or Down for the **Preferred Novice**. A sticky star is used once again.
- 8. Not required**...the last exercise is noted for the Stewards. This will enable them to track where the handler will be ending the last exercise. The location can change from class to class so this posting helps the Steward stay on top of things, too.
- 9. Required posting**...**Novice Group Exercise**...“Judges have the option of deciding if a set of group exercises will be conducted after a specified number of dogs **or** if the group exercise will be conducted after the last individual team is judged. As determined, the judge must post this information at the ring”.

[The following pages in this pdf file have a few of the examples I am working on.](#)

I created the charts using MS Word, then printed out the charts and placed two of them back-to-back before laminating (saves laminating costs and bulk). For example, Preferred Utility exercise orders 1 & 2 are back-to-back. Come the day of the trial I only take the charts needed for that day. I tried out a couple of these charts at a recent show I judged and they were well received. The 12 Versatility charts will be created on an as needed basis for the *required* rotation of exercise orders when asked to judge that class.

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NOVICE A or B

1. Heel on Leash and Figure Eight
2. Stand for Examination
3. Heel Free
4. Recall
5. Sit Stay – Get your Leash
6. Group Exercise – Sit & Down Stay

#1A - Heel on Leash
#3 – Heel Free

#2 - Stand For Examination

1B - Figure 8

#4 - Recall

#5 – Sit Stay
Get your leash

Halt

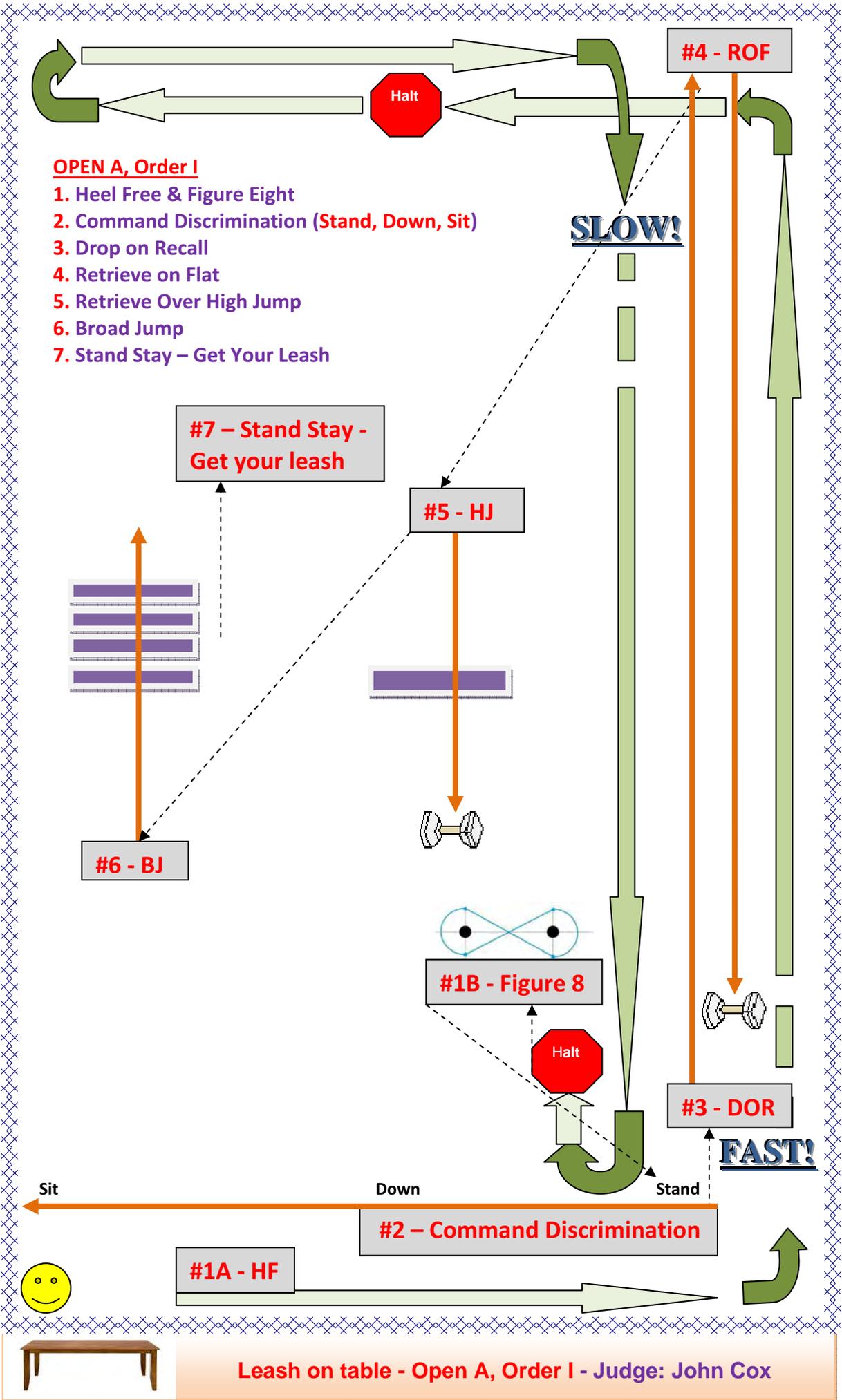
SLOW!

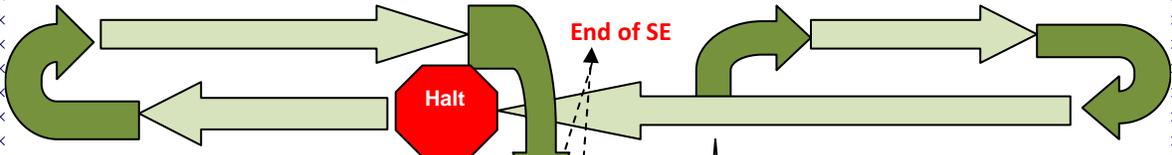
FAST!



Leash on table

Novice A or B - Judge: John Cox

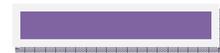
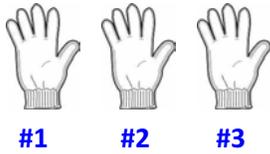




★ Designated Glove

UTILITY!

1. Signal Exercise
2. Scent Discrimination # 1
3. Scent Discrimination # 2
4. Directed Retrieve
5. Moving Stand & Examination
6. Directed Jumping



#2 & #3 - SD

#4 - DR

#5 - MS&E

Handler keeps the first article while they set up for the second article, still be allowed to pet and praise their dog without penalty, sets down the first article when ordered to "Take an article" for the second.

Stand

FAST!

#1 - SE

Leash

#6 - DJ





RANDOM
LITTLE
TIDBITS (#35)

Below is the next in a series of Random Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Ask Questions Beforehand And Then Get It In Writing!

The letter comes in from the American Kennel Club approving you as a new Obedience and/or Rally Judge. Congratulations! You have met all the qualifications, read the Obedience/Rally Regulations, taken the test(s), had a ringside interview, and now all you are waiting for that first invitation to come your way. *Have you given any thought to how you will respond and what questions to ask when that phone call or email happens?* OMG, this is not covered in the Regulations, BUT there are some suggestions for guidance in the Obedience Guidelines.

Okay, let's take a look at the first step; as quoted from the Guidelines:

ACCEPTING ASSIGNMENTS...

Written Invitations Only. Require all clubs to send you written invitations for assignments. Their requests should clearly specify the class(es) you are being asked to judge. Promptly acknowledge all invitations, again in writing, and keep accurate records of assignments you accept.

Avoid Conflicts. It's your responsibility to acknowledge judging invitations promptly. Careful record keeping and prompt acceptance (or refusal) of invitations helps eliminate unnecessary confusion and conflicts for both judges and trial-giving clubs.

Assignment Limitations. A judge will not be approved to judge the same regular, preferred, or optional titling class at all-breed events within 30 days and 100 straight line miles of each other with the following exceptions:

- A judge may accept assignments to judge the same classes for two obedience trials that fall on the same day at the same site.
- A judge may accept assignments to judge the same classes at two obedience trials over the course of a cluster of no more than five (5) consecutive days at the same site or within a local geographical area as determined by the AKC.
- A judge may accept an assignment within 30 days and 100 straight line miles of another assignment only on an emergency basis. An emergency basis is defined as an advertised judge notifying a club within 72 hours of an approved trial that they cannot fulfill their assignment.

There are no such restrictions on non-regular classes. Assignments to judge the same class or classes at two different breed specialty or group obedience trials are not considered to be a conflict. Breed specialty obedience assignments or group shows are not in conflict with an assignment to judge the same class(es) at an all-breed obedience trial.

Travel Between Assignments. Judges cannot do their best work if they are tired from travel. They should **not** accept assignments on succeeding days where more than a few hours' travel by ground transportation is involved. Judges should understand that upon acceptance of an invitation, they are committing themselves to the trial-giving club for the entire day. Their travel plans should not be predicated on arriving late or on leaving early to get transportation home or to another show. Judges should not ask clubs or superintendents to arrange judging programs to accommodate their travel plans. Judges should not travel to or from trials or stay with anyone who is likely to be exhibiting or handling under them.

Expenses. When you accept an invitation, clearly inform club officials what your expenses and fee, if any, will be, so they will not be surprised by a larger than anticipated bill on the day of the trial. **This is a contract between you and the club.** The more specific details you and the club include in the contract, the less the potential for misunderstanding. This is an important consideration and a courtesy to clubs. **If you sign a contract provided by the club, you and the club are responsible for abiding by its conditions.**

Now let's take a look at the second step:...

The Guidelines do help in getting one started but there is a lot more to know, most of which is learned through the schools of experience and hard knocks. Where are these schools? I queried obedience judges on our judge's email list on helpful hints to be passed along to a new judge, what items to keep in mind and questions to ask. Another thing to keep in mind is the one doing the inviting may also be new at their job. 😊 To start with, make a list and have it by the phone(s) (or computer), which covers the topics needed to be discussed so you won't forget or leave out an important topic. Such items as:

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Contact Date: | Trial Date: | Person's name calling: | Phone #: | Club: |
| Location: | Airport to fly into: | Class(es): | All-Breed Show: | Specialty Show: |
| Single Breed: | All-Breed Specialty: | Group show: | Restrictions, other than AKC's: | |
| Agreed Expenses: | | | | |
| Roundtrip Airfare: | Meals: | Lodging: | Number of nights: | Transportation @ cents per mile |
| Airport Parking: | Car Rental/Shuttle: | Other: | Fee: Plus Expenses: | Flat Fee: |
| Definite: | Expect Contract by: | Availability Inquiry: | Hold Date Until: | Other Information: |
| Judging with: | Indoors: | Outdoors: | | |

On to a third step and input from Judges who responded:

I. Geography:

There are regional differences in our sport so this may play a role in one's responses, depending where one lives when contacted. Consider that location. Are there a plethora of shows and the opportunity to judge is abundant in your areas of the country, or are you "out in the sticks" with shows far and few? The answer may factor into judging fees (or not) and travel expenses to be charged, especially when starting out with only a Novice provisional approval.

II. Fee Responses From Judges For Ideas:

1. When I first became a Novice Judge, I only charged for expenses (travel/tolls). I was also an approved rally judge at the time, so if I was given a Novice and/or Beginner Novice judging assignment along with Rally, I would also not charge for Rally. As I progressed through the levels, I would only charge if asked to judge a level where I was fully approved, not provisional.
2. If a club is small or generally has very limited entries (say a specialty club), I will work with them and not charge a flat fee. I may instead tell them that I will charge a fee per entry (say \$3.00 per dog).
3. Daily fee (with surcharge if "2 trials in 1 day"), lodging, meals during the weekend and *in route* if driving, IRS mileage rates at time of travel round trip, I give the Google Maps distance. If plane travel: IRS mileage to/from airport, parking per day, Airfare and, if I remember, I ask whether the club will reimburse plane tickets in advance of the trial. Tolls, parking, etc., transport to/from airport to hotel, if any.
4. I state my basic rate. If I decide to give a club a break, or a donation, etc. it's up to me.
5. I have a fee to judge one type of competition one time a day. If I am to judge the same type of competition (two trials in a day) or two kinds of competition (obedience and rally) I add \$25.00 to cover the extra preparation costs. I give single breed specialties a small discount.
6. I would first ask a judge if they were willing to give up part of their weekend assignment. Perhaps give up Novice B and Beginner Novice or Open A and Preferred Open, for example. They almost always said yes. They were helping out a new judge and reducing their work load; nothing to lose really. Once I received the judge's okay I would contact the club, explain that this judge was willing to give up said classes and that I was willing to take those classes at no expense to the club. The club also had nothing to lose and was helping a new judge as well. This method worked great and I really flew from Novice through Utility. In any event, this proactive approach can literally take years off the process.
7. When I was in Novice, I did not charge a fee at all unless I was also doing Rally (for which I was fully approved). I did take expenses in terms of mileage and a hotel if needed. When I got to Open, I started to charge a modest fee and the customary expenses. I don't charge for any of the paperwork since I consider it to be a part of my fee.
8. Don't feel guilty for charging a fee, ever. We have judges who cannot charge a fee (delegates), and there are a few judges who don't charge a fee, either because they don't need the money or they feel it's their way to give something back to the sport. But ultimately judging is a business, and it is one that carries a tremendous amount of responsibility. We go through a lengthy process in order to apply for each level, and a lot of work to be approved at each level.
9. If I'm a member of a club, no fee is charged, just out-of-pocket expenses. But that's up to the individual judge, unless the club has adopted a policy prohibiting members charging a fee. In this instance, the judge is hired in their professional capacity and not being paid to do club work.
10. Each judge has to decide for themselves if they are willing to accept these offers. Typically expenses include travel to and from the event, food and lodging. As for an invoice, judges make up their own as a word document.

III. Contract Responses From Judges:

1. Get a SIGNED, PAPER contract (or a contract to print, sign, scan and return.) I am dealing with one club right now that doesn't seem to "get it." I still don't have a contract though I sent those two signed copies of a paper contract, and a SASE...still nothing.

2. I confirm the date carefully and check carefully for conflicts. I confirm the assignment as it directs the fee.
3. Fee per day, expenses, number of nights necessary in a hotel. Check carefully that assignments don't conflict. SAVE all communications until the assignment is over. I had one local club book me, then another local club wanted to book me for different classes two weeks before the first assignment I had accepted. I contacted Club 1 to make sure it was okay with them. Club 2 sent paperwork into the AKC first. Then Club 1 contacted me to say AKC wouldn't approve me as there was a conflict. When I checked, I noticed that Club 1 had changed the classes I was to judge (different from contract, that's why there was a conflict.) I forwarded a copy of our email discussion noting classes for each club back to Club 1, which really kept me out of hot water. Yes, sometimes they change the classes from what was agreed upon in the contract. That I had checked with Club 1 before accepting Club 2, and kept that communication, saved me.
4. Contracts are between the Judge and the club. AKC **does not get involved** in contract negotiations between judges and clubs.
5. Dates, location, transportation requirements (since sometimes you fly and need to rent a car), fee, what expenses are covered and if they have limits, who is/are my contacts.

IV. Helpful Hints Responses From Judges:

1. Check in your area to see if there is a Judges Group/Association. I know of two on the west coast. Judges meet and discuss all sorts of issues. At these meetings they may discuss new rules and regulations, putting on AKC judges seminar (due every 3 years), what one needs in their briefcase/judges bag, fees, how to organize your calendar for future trials. One group even has workshops where all levels of judges do a mock trial. One Utility, one Open, and four Novice judges and this opportunity was treated like a real trial with the measuring of rings, equipment, steward instructions, etc. There are two mentor judges observing each judge. One would score alongside and the other would view positioning and procedural views. Then each judge would listen to the critiques by those mentors. Most members helped in some way to make it successful!
2. Don't take the last plane out the night before the show. If anything happens, you're sunk as far as trying to get there on time. Think of your health and sanity when trying to save the club a few dollars. I've always tried to fly out the last day of the show rather than charge for an extra night in a hotel, but am starting to re-think that, especially traveling coast to coast. It's also not good to drive home in the mountains at midnight or later after a long weekend of judging and travel.
3. If time permits after apprenticing, a perspective judge might query the judge on how they handle such issues in dealing with clubs and contracts.
4. Take your own "office" supplies. Not only will you know how to work them you can/ should be confident they will work.
5. People who work for their local clubs have better opportunities for assignments; get in there and help with every job. Follow through on your commitments to your club(s). Choose good mentors who can help answer questions along the way. Don't take yourself too seriously, everyone makes mistakes sometimes. Make changes with your ring procedures if you find something isn't working correctly. It is better to get in the habit of running your ring correctly to establish consistency. Have fun and your exhibitors will too!

More Random Little Tidbit articles aimed to give guidance to the new Judge in regards to procedures:

1. Random Little Tidbit #17, Insights Into Judging Obedience.
2. Random Little Tidbit #18, Insights Into Judging Obedience.
3. Random Little Tidbit #19, Insights Into Judging Obedience.

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NEW EXERCISE

Today's Random Little Tidbit - **One of The Two New Regular Novice (A & B) Exercises Sit Stay – Get Your Leash**

This exercise will be added to the Preferred Novice, Brace, Veterans and Team classes.

The Novice Group exercises of the 1-minute Long Sit and 3-minute Long Down are now a thing of our past. Just as the old Utility Group Stand was replaced in 1988 with the Moving Stand and Examination, the old Novice Group exercises have been replaced with two new Novice exercises (and challenges) for the Regular Novice (A & B) exhibitors, plus the new exercise (below) will also be added to the Preferred Novice class. The other Novice replacement exercise is the **Group Sit & Down Stay** (a new single exercise with two parts). **See Tidbit #37 for those details.**

Section 3. Novice Exercises and Scores. The exercises and maximum scores in the Novice classes:

| | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Heel on Leash and Figure Eight | 40 points |
| 2. Stand for Examination | 30 points |
| 3. Heel Free | 40 points |
| 4. Recall | 30 points |
| 5. Sit Stay – Get Your Leash | 30 points |
| 6. Group Exercise – Sit & Down Stay | 30 points |
| Maximum Total Score | 200 points |

The maximum judging rate is nine (9) dogs per hour.

Chapter 3, Section 12. Sit Stay – Get your Leash: The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in the sit position.

Judge's Orders: The orders are: "Sit your dog," "Leave your dog to get your leash," and "Back to your dog."

Exercise Description: The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position in a place designated by the judge. The judge will ask "Are you ready?" before giving the first order. On the judge's order the handler may command **and/or** signal the dog to sit without touching either the dog or the dog's collar. On further order to "Leave your dog to get your leash," the handler may give a command **and/or** signal to stay and will walk forward immediately to the place designated by the judge for the leash, pick up the leash, turn, and face the dog. The judge will give the order "Back to your dog." The handler must return directly, walking around and in back of the dog to heel position. The dog must not move from the sitting position until after the judge has said "Exercise finished." The judge will tell the handler "Clip your leash to the collar and maintain control of your dog." The handler is required to exit the ring with the dog under control and without jumping, pulling or tugging on the leash.

Judging Procedures: The judge will instruct the steward to place the leash at the designated location after the Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise. The handler and dog will be positioned at least 30 feet from and facing the direction of the gate entrance. The judge must be in position to watch the dog and handler throughout the exercise including exiting the ring.

Chapter 3, Section 13. Sit Stay – Get your Leash, Scoring:

A non-qualifying score (NQ) is required for the following: The dog moving a substantial distance away from the place where it was left any time during the exercise, not remaining in the sit position until the handler has returned to heel position, and **repeatedly** barking or whining.

Scoring of the exercise for such things as rough treatment of a dog by its handler or resistance by a dog to its handler's attempts to make it sit starts with the first order, "Sit your dog." These **will be penalized substantially** and in extreme cases the dog may be released.

Substantial deductions will be made for a dog that moves even a short distance from where it was left, that barks or whines **only once or twice**, or that changes from the sit position after the handler has returned to the heel position and before the judge has said, "Exercise finished." **A substantial deduction, under Miscellaneous Penalties, must be made for a dog that does not remain under control while leaving the ring.**



This = 3 or more points off your score....OR....leave the ring like this and save points!



*** Note in the Scoring, all penalties listed** in this exercise are Substantial which is defined as 3 or more points. Keep in mind, there may also be other penalties (Chapter 2, Section 24) which are not listed. For example, the handler who is not in the proper heel position after returning to their dog.

As with any exercise, it is always best to know the principal parts and non-principal parts. The principal feature of an exercise must be met to earn a qualifying score in that exercise.

Principal features vs. non-principal parts of this exercise: This exercise is another example of scoring starting with a **non-principal feature to a principal feature and then back to a non-principal feature.**

* After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Sit your dog." The **non-principal** scoring of *this* exercise is at the beginning of the exercise for such things as rough treatment of a dog by its handler or resistance by a dog to its handler's attempts to make it sit, which starts with the first order.

* The **principal feature** starts with the Judge's second order, "Leave your dog to get your leash." This feature continues until the handler has returned to heel position.

* The **non-principal** feature and scoring takes hold once again for the short time in which the handler is standing in heel position until the Judge orders "Exercise finished."

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John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



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NEW EXERCISE

Today's Random Little Tidbit - **One of The Two New Regular Novice (A & B) Exercises**
Group Exercise – Sit and Down Stay (a two part exercise)

This exercise will also replace the Group exercises in Brace, Veterans and Team classes.

The Novice Group exercises with the 1-minute Long Sit and 3-minute Long Down are now a thing of our past. Just as the old Utility Group Stand was replaced in 1988 with the Moving Stand and Examination, the Novice Group exercises will be replaced with two new Novice exercises (and challenges) for the Regular Novice (A & B) exhibitors, effective March 1, 2018. The other Novice replacement exercise is the **Sit Stay – Get Your Leash**. See Tidbit #36 for those details.

Section 3. Novice Exercises and Scores. The exercises and maximum scores in the Novice classes:

| | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Heel on Leash and Figure Eight | 40 points |
| 2. Stand for Examination | 30 points |
| 3. Heel Free | 40 points |
| 4. Recall | 30 points |
| 5. Sit Stay – Get Your Leash | 30 points |
| 6. Group Exercise – Sit & Down Stay | 30 points |
| Maximum Total Score | 200 points |

Section 14. Group Exercise – Sit and Down Stay: The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in a sitting or down position, whichever is required at the time.

Judge's Orders: The orders are: "Sit your dogs" or "Down your dogs," "Leave your dogs," and "Back to your dogs."

Judging Procedures: If a judge observes any signs of aggression or potential problems when the dogs are being assembled outside the ring for the group exercise or once the dogs are brought into the ring, the judge **must excuse** the dog and mark the judge's book "Excused" and state the reason.

Any handlers who physically correct their dogs before or after the group exercise or while leaving the ring **must be penalized** under Miscellaneous Penalties.

Judges must stand with their full attention on the dogs and handlers during the group exercise and remain alert to any potential problems. To have both dog and handler under constant observation in this exercise, a judge should take a position slightly to the rear of the dogs at one end of the row(s) of dogs.

Exercise Description: **If a dog has non-qualified (NQ) in an individual exercise the judge must release the dog from performing the group exercise.** A dog that **does not remain sitting during the first part of this exercise must be released** from participating in the second part.

Handlers of dogs that have qualified during the individual exercises will have the option of returning for the group exercise. After completion of the last individual exercise, if the dog has qualified, **the judge will ask if the handler will be returning** for the group exercise. Once handlers have notified the judge of their decision not to return for the group exercise they may not change their minds.

Dogs that have been released or excused and handlers who have left the ring during the individual exercises may not return for the group exercise. See Judges' Guidelines, Judge's Book.

Dogs must be spaced with a **minimum of six (6) feet between each dog** and a **minimum of four (4) feet from the ring barriers**. Judges **will position the dogs in the approximate center of the ring** in one row **or** back-to-back in two rows with a **minimum of six (6) feet between the rows**. **If the back-to-back formation is used**, it must be used for all groups in the class. On a 50' side of the ring the maximum # of dogs allowed in a single row would be six (6) and in a back-to-back row twelve (12) dogs (see table):

| Ring Length | Maximum # of Dogs Single Row | Maximum # of Dogs Back-to-Back Row |
|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 50' | 6 | 12 |
| 45' | 5 | 10 |
| 40' | 4 | 8 |
| 35' | 4 | 8 |
| 30' | 3 | 6 |

If two classes in the same classification have different judges, each judge must judge the group exercise separately. A judge with only a single dog competing in a class would be required to have the dog perform the group exercise alone. If the same judge is judging both Novice A and B classes (in the same classification) and the combined total of the dogs returning for the group exercise can be judged in only one group without exceeding the limit of dogs based on the size of the ring, the judge may combine the two classes for the group exercise.

This exercise must be performed with the dog on a 6-foot leash. The leash will remain clipped to the dog's collar and the handler will hold onto the leash throughout the entire exercise. The armband will remain on the handler's left arm. The dogs will be lined up in judging program order. **Prior to beginning the exercise, the judge will instruct the handlers** to remove their dog if it starts to move out of position. The judge will ask "Are you ready?" before giving the first order. On the judge's order, the handlers will command **and/or** signal their dogs to sit without touching either the dog or the dog's collar. On further order to "Leave your dogs," the handlers may give a command and/or signal to stay and will walk forward immediately to the end of the leash, without jerking or tightening the leash, turn, and face their dogs. **The leash must remain loose with slack throughout the entire exercise.**

After one minute from the time the judge ordered the handlers to leave their dogs, the judge will give the order "Back to your dogs." The handlers must return directly, walking around and in back of their own dog to heel position. The dogs must not move from the sitting position until after the judge has said "Exercise finished." This order will not be given until the handlers are back in heel position. The dogs must remain under control between this two-part exercise.

Before starting the Down Stay portion of this exercise, the judge will ask "Are you ready?" On the judge's order, the handlers will command **and/or** signal their dog to down without touching either the dog or the dog's collar. On further order to "Leave your dogs," the handlers may give a command and/or signal to stay and will walk forward immediately to the end of the leash, without jerking or tightening the leash, turn, and face their dogs. **The leash must remain loose with slack throughout the entire exercise.**

After one minute from the time the judge ordered the handlers to leave their dogs, the judge will give the order, "Back to your dogs." The handlers must return directly, walking around and in back of their own dog to heel position. The dogs must not move from the down position until after the judge has said "Exercise finished." This order will not be given until the handlers are back in heel position. The judge will tell the exhibitors "Maintain control of your dogs." **The handlers are required** to exit the ring with their dogs under control and without jumping, pulling or tugging on the leash.

Section 15. Group Exercise – Sit and Down Stay, Scoring: A non-qualifying score (NQ) is required for the following: The dog moving a substantial distance away from the place where it was left any time during the exercise, not remaining in the required position until the handler has returned to heel position, and repeatedly barking or whining.

Substantial deductions will be made for the following: A dog that must be repositioned by its handler if it is out of position enough to interfere with an adjacent dog (in extreme cases the dog may be released), that moves even a short distance from where it was left, that **barks or whines only once or twice**, or that changes position after the handler has returned to heel position and before the judge has said, "Exercise finished." **A substantial deduction will be made** for jerking or tightening of the leash before the judge has said "Exercise finished"; depending on the extent, the deduction may include a non-qualifying (NQ) score. **A substantial deduction, under Miscellaneous Penalties, must be made** for a dog that does not remain under control while leaving the ring.



This = 3 or more points off your score....OR....leave the ring like this and save points!



Minor or substantial deductions, depending on the circumstances, will be made for touching the dog or its collar while getting the dog into the down position.

Scoring of the exercise for such things as rough treatment of a dog by its handler or resistance by a dog to its handler's attempts to make it sit or lie down starts with the first order, sit or down your dogs. **These will be penalized substantially** and in extreme cases the dog may be **released**.

The timing of each stay exercise begins on the judge's order, "Leave your dogs."

* Keep in mind, there may also be other penalties (Chapter 2, Section 24) which are not listed. For example, the handler who is not in the proper heel position after returning to their dog.

As with any exercise it is always best to know the principal parts and non-principal parts. The principal feature of an exercise must be met to earn a qualifying score in that exercise.

Principal features vs. non-principal parts of these exercises: These exercises are another example of scoring starting with a **non-principal feature to a principal feature and then back to a non-principal feature**.

- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Sit your dog." or "Down your dog." The **non-principal** scoring of *this* exercise is at the beginning of the exercise for such things as rough treatment of a dog by its handler or resistance by a dog to its handler's attempts to make it sit, which starts with the first order.
- * The **principal feature** starts with the Judge's second order, "Leave your dog." This feature continues until the handler has returned to heel position.
- * The **non-principal** feature and scoring takes hold once again for the short time in which all the handler is standing in heel position until the Judge's orders "Exercise finished."

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John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



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Saving Withdrawals from Your 200 Account

NEW EXERCISE

Today's Random Little Tidbit – One of The Two New Regular Open (A & B) & Preferred Open Exercises - Command Discrimination - See Page 4 For Clarifications Effective January 1, 2019

The Regular Open Group exercises of the 3-minute Long Sit and 5-minute Long Down are now a thing of our past. Just as the old Utility Group Stand was replaced in 1988 with the Moving Stand and Examination, the old Regular Open Group exercises have been replaced with two new Open exercises (and challenges) for the Regular Open (A & B) exhibitors. These two new exercises are also being incorporated into the Preferred Open to keep the Open classes identical, except for the minimum jump height requirements. **See Tidbit #39 for the other exercise details.**

Section 1 in Open A & B & Preferred Open Classes:

Prior to the start of judging, the judge will decide where the leash will be placed and post this information at the ring approximately 45 minutes or earlier before the start of the class.

Section 3. Open A Exercises and Scores: The exercises and maximum score in the Open A class:

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Heel Free and Figure Eight | 40 points |
| 2. Command Discrimination (Stand, Down, Sit) | 30 points |
| 3. Drop on Recall | 30 points |
| 4. Retrieve on Flat | 20 points |
| 5. Retrieve over High Jump | 30 points |
| 6. Broad Jump | 20 points |
| 7. Stay - Get Your Leash (Sit, Down) | 30 points |
| Maximum Total Score | 200 points |

The suggested judging rate is eight (8) dogs per hour.

Section 4. Open B (& Preferred Open) Exercises and Scores: The various orders of exercises in the Open B class (points and total scores are the same as in Open A):

| OPEN I | OPEN II |
|---|---|
| 1. Heel Free and Figure Eight | 1. Broad Jump |
| 2. Command Discrimination (Stand, Down, Sit) | 2. Retrieve over High Jump |
| 3. Drop on Recall | 3. Retrieve on Flat |
| 4. Retrieve on Flat | 4. Drop on Recall |
| 5. Retrieve over High Jump | 5. Command Discrimination (Down, Sit, Stand) |
| 6. Broad Jump | 6. Figure Eight and Heel Free |
| 7. Stay - Get Your Leash (Sit, Down) | 7. Stay - Get Your Leash (Down, Sit) |
| OPEN III | OPEN IV |
| 1. Retrieve on Flat | 1. Drop on Recall |
| 2. Drop on Recall | 2. Heel Free and Figure Eight |
| 3. Retrieve over High Jump | 3. Retrieve over High Jump |
| 4. Broad Jump | 4. Command Discrimination (Down, Stand, Sit) |
| 5. Figure Eight and Heel Free | 5. Broad Jump |
| 6. Command Discrimination (Stand, Sit, Down) | 6. Retrieve on Flat |
| 7. Stay - Get Your Leash (Sit, Down) | 7. Stay - Get Your Leash (Down, Sit) |
| OPEN V | OPEN VI |
| 1. Retrieve over High Jump | 1. Command Discrimination (Down, Stand, Sit) |
| 2. Drop on Recall | 2. Broad Jump |
| 3. Command Discrimination (Stand, Sit, Down) | 3. Figure Eight and Heel Free |
| 4. Figure Eight and Heel Free | 4. Drop on Recall |
| 5. Retrieve on Flat | 5. Retrieve over High Jump |
| 6. Broad Jump | 6. Retrieve on Flat |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| | Of the 6 Exercise orders, only 4 CD changes are different |
| | Open A (I) is always the same – as in Utility - Stand, Down, Sit |
| | III & V are the same order & IV & VI are the same order |
| Start | Three orders start with the Stand & three start with the Down |
| 15 feet | The Stand is the Second position twice – orders IV, VI |
| 15 feet | The Down is the Second position only once – Open A, order I |
| 15 feet | The Sit is the Second position three times – orders II, III, V |
| 30 feet | The Stand is the Third position only once – order II |
| 30 feet | The Down is the Third position twice – orders III, V |
| 30 feet | The Sit is the Third position three times – orders I, IV, VI |

Chapter 4, Section 7. Command Discrimination: The principal features of this exercise are the dog's correct response to the handler's commands and/or signals and that the dog stays until the handler returns to heel position.

Judge's Orders: The orders are: "Leave your dog" and "Back to your dog." The judge must use signals for directing the handler to command and/or signal the dog to change position except for the first position and that order is: "Stand your dog" or "Down your dog."

Exercise Description: The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position in a place designated by the judge. The judge will ask "Are you ready?" before giving the first order to "Stand your dog" or "Down your dog." The handler will give a command **and/or** signal for the dog to change position. On further order to "Leave your dog," the handler may give a command **and/or** signal to stay and will immediately walk forward 15 feet, turn, and face the dog. On the judge's signal, the handler will give a command **and/or** signal for the dog to change to the second position. The judge will then order "Leave your dog." The handler may give a command **and/or** signal to stay and will immediately turn around and walk forward an additional 15 feet, turn, and face the dog. On the judge's signal, the handler will give a command **and/or** signal for the dog to change to the third position. The judge will then order "Back to your dog." The handler may give a command and/or signal to stay, and then must return directly, walking around and in back of the dog to heel position. The dog must stay in position without additional commands or signals until the handler has returned to heel position.

Judging Procedures: This exercise must be performed on a long dimension of the ring. **The 15 foot distances must be clearly marked.** The judge must be positioned so that both the dog and handler **are** under continuous observation during the entire exercise. An excellent position for judging this exercise is at an adequate distance to the side and slightly to the rear of the dog.

Section 8. Command Discrimination, Scoring: A dog that fails to obey the handler's first command **and/or** signal for each position or that does not stay until the handler returns to heel position **must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score.**

Substantial deductions will be made for a dog that changes position after the handler has returned to heel position and before the judge has said "Exercise Finished."

Minor or substantial deductions, up to a non-qualifying (NQ) score, will be made for a dog that walks forward.

As with any exercise it is always best to know the principal features and non-principal parts. The principal feature of an exercise must be met to earn a qualifying score in that exercise.

Principal features vs. non-principal parts of this exercise:

- * After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Stand your dog" or "Down your dog," depending the posted order. The **principal** scoring of *this* exercise is at the beginning of the exercise with the first order and the dog's correct response to the handler's command **and/or** signal.
- * The **principal features** continue until the handler has returned to heel position.
- * The **non-principal part** and scoring takes hold for the short time in which the handler is standing in heel position until the Judge orders "Exercise finished."
- * Keep in mind, there may also be other penalties (Chapter 2, Section 24) which are not listed. For example, the handler who is not in the proper heel position after returning to their dog.

----- **Learning the nuances of Command Discrimination, from the AKC Blog** -----

1. **The first change of position is the down. What if the dog stands and then downs?**
 - If the dog clearly stands and then downs he has added a position change that is not according to the Regulations and this should be penalized as an NQ. The dog is required to stand or down from the sit position.
 - This doesn't mean the dog has to go down in a certain "style". Many dogs raise their hindquarters from a sit to a down and this is considered acceptable without penalty. If the movement is continuous and it is clearly not an added position the dog should not be penalized.
2. **Is the dog required to be in perfect heel position after it changes position?**
 - **No.** A dog changing position (i.e. sit to stand, sit to down), while remaining in place, may end up somewhat out of heel position. The Regulations do not require the dog to remain in heel position.
3. **Is the handler required to move into heel position before leaving the dog?**
 - **No.** The Regulations do not require the handler to be in heel position to leave the dog.
 - If the dog walked forward, the dog will be penalized for walking forward.
4. **What if, when the dog changes position and it's not in heel position, the handler moves to heel position prior to leaving the dog, should the handler be penalized?**
 - If the handler moves prior to the judge ordering "Leave your dog," a penalty need not be assessed.
 - If the handler moves and then stops in heel position after the judge orders "Leave your dog," and then leaves the dog, the judge may consider this an additional command/signal to stay which would result in an NQ.
5. **Can a handler cross their arms, without penalty, when they command the dog to stay after each position change for the Command Discrimination?**

Answer: The *Obedience Regulations* (Chapter 4, Section 7) states the handler may give a command and/or signal to stay. Crossing of the arms is not specifically addressed in the description or scoring section for the Command Discrimination

exercise.

- However, movement of hands and arms is addressed in Chapter 2, Sections 20 and 21. Chapter 2, Section 20, states that when a signal is permitted, it must be a single gesture with one arm and hand only, and the arm and hand must immediately be returned to a natural position.
- Additionally, position of the arms and hands, and movements of the head and/or body that aid the dog, will be considered additional signals.
- If in the opinion of the judge, the movement and/or the position was considered to “aid” the dog, it would be considered an additional signal. If a handler gives an additional signal for a principal feature it would be a non-qualifying (NQ) score.
- Folding of the arms is not a single motion of one arm and hand, and must be penalized as a handler error. The degree of penalty may depend on when and how the arms are crossed and/or returned to a natural position.

The following is a summary to help both judges and exhibitors avoid errors and penalties.

HANDLER – To avoid deductions when using a Signal:

If using a signal, *with or without a command*, the following applies to all exercises:

1. Signal is a single gesture with one arm and hand only
2. The arm and hand must be immediately returned to a natural position
3. Handler may bend their body and knees to bring their hand level with the dog’s eye when giving a signal to a dog in heel position
4. Signals must be inaudible
5. The handler must not touch the dog
6. Any unusual noise may be considered a signal
7. Any unusual motion may be considered a signal
8. Position of arms and hands and movements of the head and/or body that aid the dog will be considered additional signals
9. Handler may not signal a correction
10. Don’t delay in following a judge’s order

HANDLER – To avoid deductions when using a Command:

1. Use a normal tone of voice
2. Don’t delay in following a judge’s order

HANDLER – To avoid deductions when using both a command and signal:

1. **The command and signal must be given simultaneously**, which means, “at the same time”; if there is space between the two, that is not simultaneously

HANDLER – To avoid deductions when using the dog’s name:

1. Use name once **immediately** before a command or command and/or signal, which means without time or space between the name and the command.
2. Do not use the dog’s name when using only a signal

DOG – To avoid deductions:

1. Dog must wait; no anticipation
2. Dog must respond promptly

Dog’s Names and Commands

Judges are not required to know the dog’s name, or the commands each exhibitor will use. According to the Regulations, a judge determines if a dog responds to its name, anticipates a command/signal or if additional commands/signals are being used based on time and space between words or words and signals.

Exhibitors must remember the importance of time and space when choosing verbal commands. When words are all lumped together, “StanBackStand”, there is no time or space between words. When words have time and space between them, “Stan Back Stand”, the use of the dog’s name and the commands are not in accordance to the Regulations as outlined above, and will be penalized.

How many words can an exhibitor use? The Regulations don’t specify the number of words that constitute a single command. The judge must determine when commands become excessive and worthy of a deduction.

Synopsis:

Sounds relatively simple, right? The handler is ordered to leave the dog in a particular position and walks forward 15 feet, turns and faces the dog, then gives a command **and/or** signal for the dog to change to another position. The handler then turns around and walks forward 15 more feet, turns to face the dog, and gives another command **and/or** signal for dog to change to a third position. Once that is accomplished the handler returns to heel position, all done on the Judge’s orders, of course. Exercise finished! This new exercise is very similar to the Utility Signal exercise we are all used to but the handler in this exercise has the option of using a command **and/or** signal. Plus, the dog is changing positions once in heel position, once again with the handler 15 feet away, and another position change with the handler 30 feet away.

Obedience – Clarifications to the Open Class, Command Discrimination Exercise Effective 01/01/2019

The following clarifications were approved for the *Obedience Regulations* by the AKC Board of Directors at the October meeting, with an effective date of January 1, 2019.

Obedience Regulations – Chapter 4 will be amended as follows:

Section 7. Command Discrimination. The principal features of this exercise are the dog's correct response to the handler's commands and/or signals and that the dog stays until the handler returns to heel position.

The orders are: "Leave your dog" and "Back to your dog." The judge must use signals for directing the handler to command and/or signal the dog to change position except for the first position and that order is: "Stand your dog" or "Down your dog."

The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position in a place designated by the judge. The judge will ask "Are you ready?" before giving the first order to "Stand your dog" or "Down your dog." The handler will give a command and/or signal for the dog to change position. On further order to "Leave your dog," the handler may give a command and/or signal to stay and will immediately walk forward 15 feet, turn, and face the dog. On the judge's signal, the handler will give a command and/or signal for the dog to change to the second position. The judge will then order "Leave your dog." The handler may give a command and/or signal to stay and will immediately turn around and walk forward an additional 15 feet, turn, and face the dog. On the judge's signal, the handler will give a command and/or signal for the dog to change to the third position. The judge will then order "Back to your dog." The handler may give a command and/or signal to stay, and then must return directly, walking around and in back of the dog to heel position. The dog must stay in position without additional commands or signals until the handler has returned to heel position. The handler's hands and arms must hang naturally at the handler's side.

Judging Procedure: *This exercise may be performed in any area of the ring that is at least 40 feet in length. The 15-foot distances must be clearly marked. The judge must be positioned so that both the dog and handler are under continuous observation during the entire exercise. An excellent position for judging this exercise is at an adequate distance to the side and slightly to the rear of the dog.*

Section 8. Command Discrimination, Scoring. A dog that fails to obey the handler's first command and/or signal for each position or that does not stay until the handler returns to heel position must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score.

Substantial deductions will be made for a dog that changes position after the handler has returned to heel position and before the judge has said "Exercise finished."

Minor or substantial deductions, up to a non-qualifying (NQ) score, will be made for the handler's hands and arms not hanging naturally at the handler's side. Depending on the extent, minor or substantial deductions, up to a non-qualifying (NQ) score, will be made for a dog that walks forward.

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NEW EXERCISE

Today's Random Little Tidbit – One of The Two New Regular Open (A & B), Preferred Open & Graduate Novice Exercises - Stay – Get Your Leash

Out of date in regards to Open, see Tidbits #46 for updates. This Tidbit #39 is being saved for historical purposes of our past.

The Regular Open Group exercises of the 3-minute Long Sit and 5-minute Long Down are now a thing of our past. Just as the old Utility Group Stand was replaced in 1988 with the Moving Stand and Examination, the long-standing Regular Open Group exercises have been replaced with two new Open exercises (and challenges) for the **Regular Open (A & B) and Preferred Open** exhibitors. **See Tidbit #38 for the other exercise details.** This particular exercise (only) Stay – Get Your Leash, will also replace the single Group exercise in Graduate Novice.

Additional Wording in Open A (Section 1) & Open B (Section 2): Prior to the start of judging, **the judge will decide where the leash will be placed and post this information at the ring approximately 45 minutes or earlier before the start of the class.**

Section 17. Sit and Down Stay – Get Your Leash: The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in the sitting or down position, whichever is required at the time.

Judge's Orders: The orders are: "Sit your dog," or "Down your dog," "Leave your dog," "Leave your dog to get your leash" and "Back to your dog."

Exercise Description: For the first part of this exercise, the handler will stand with the dog in a place designated by the judge. The judge will ask "Are you ready?" before giving the first order. On the judge's order the handler may command **and/or** signal the dog to sit or down without touching the dog or the dog's collar. On further order to "Leave your dog," the handler may give a command **and/or** signal to stay and will walk forward immediately to a place designated by the judge, turn, and face the dog.

After one minute from the time the judge ordered the handler to leave the dog, the judge will give the order "Back to your dog." The handler must return directly, walking around and in back of the dog to heel position. The dog must not move from the required position until after the judge has said "Exercise finished."

Before starting the second part of this exercise the judge will ask "Are you ready?" On the judge's order, the handler may command **and/or** signal the dog to sit or down without touching either the dog or the dog's collar. On further order to "Leave your dog to get your leash," the handler may give a command **and/or** signal to stay and will walk forward directly to the place outside the gate entrance designated by the judge for the leash. The handler will pick up the leash, re-enter the ring, **stop at the gate entrance facing the dog**, and wait for the judges' order "Back to your dog." The handler must return directly, walking around and in back of the dog to heel position. The dog must not move from the required position until after the judge has said "Exercise finished." The judge will tell the handler "Attach your leash to the collar and maintain control of your dog." **The handler is required** to exit the ring with the dog under control and without jumping, pulling or tugging on the leash.

Judging Procedures: **Prior to the start of judging**, the judge will decide where the leash will be placed, either on the judges' table or tableside chair. **The leash will be placed outside the ring by the steward after the dog and handler have entered the ring for judging.** For **both parts** of this exercise, the handler must remain at least 30 feet away from the dog until ordered to return to the dog. When positioning dogs for the second part of this exercise, judges should ensure that such positioning will permit the dog to keep the handler in its direct line of vision as the handler leaves and returns to the ring. During this exercise the judge must be in position to watch the dog and see the handler leave and return to the ring. Once the exercise is finished, the judge must watch the dog and handler exit the ring together.

Section 18. Sit and Down Stay – Get your Leash. Scoring: **A non-qualifying score (NQ) is required** for the following: The dog moving a substantial distance away from the place where it was left any time during either part of the exercise, not remaining in the required position until the handler has returned to heel position, and repeatedly barking or whining.

Scoring of the exercise for such things as rough treatment of a dog by its handler or resistance by a dog to sit or down starts with the first order, "Sit (or Down) your dog." These will be **penalized substantially** and in extreme cases the dog may be released.

Substantial deductions will be made for a dog that moves even a short distance from where it was left, that barks or whines only once or twice, or that changes from the required position after the handler has returned to heel position and before the judge has said, "Exercise finished." **A substantial deduction, under Miscellaneous Penalties, must be made for a dog that does not remain under control while leaving the ring.**



This = 3 or more points off your score....OR....leave the ring like this and save points!

*** Note in the Scoring, all penalties listed in this exercise are Substantial, which is defined as 3 or more points.**



Keep in mind, there may also be other penalties (Chapter 2, Section 24) which are not listed. For example, the handler who is not in the proper heel position after returning to their dog.

As with any exercise, it is always best to know the principal parts and non-principal parts. The principal feature of an exercise must be met to earn a qualifying score in that exercise.

Principal features vs. non-principal parts of this exercise: This exercise is another example of scoring starting with a **non-principal feature to a principal feature and then back to a non-principal feature.**

* After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Sit your dog." or "Down your dog." The **non-principal** scoring of *this* exercise is at the beginning of the exercise for such things as rough treatment of a dog by its handler or resistance by a dog to its handler's attempts to make it sit, which starts with the first order.

* The **principal feature** starts with the Judge's second order, "Leave your dog to get your leash." This feature (Parts 1 & 2) continues until the handler has returned to heel position.

* The **non-principal** feature and scoring takes hold once again for the short time when the handler is standing in heel position (Parts 1 & 2) until the Judge orders "Exercise finished."

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NEW EXERCISE

Today's Random Little Tidbit – [New Exercise For Graduate Novice to Replace The Single Group Exercise Stay – Get Your Leash](#)

The Regular Open Group exercises of the 3-minute Long Sit and 5-minute Long Down are now a thing of our past. Just as the old Utility Group Stand was replaced in 1988 with the Moving Stand and Examination, the previous Graduate Novice Group exercise has been replaced with an **Open exercise** (and challenge) for the Graduate Novice exhibitors.

[Additional Wording in Section 1:](#) Prior to the start of judging, **the judge will decide where the leash will be placed and post this information at the ring approximately 45 minutes or earlier before the start of the class.**

[Section 2. Graduate Novice Exercises and Scoring:](#)

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Heel Free and Figure Eight | 40 points |
| 2. Drop on Recall | 40 points |
| 3 Dumbbell Recall | 30 points |
| 4. Dumbbell Recall over High Jump | 30 points |
| 5. Recall over Broad Jump | 30 points |
| 6. Stay - Get Your Leash (Sit, Down) | 30 points |
| Maximum Total Score | 200 points |

[Sit and Down Stay – Get Your Leash:](#) The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in the sitting **or** down position, whichever is required at the time.

[Judge's Orders:](#) The orders are: "Sit your dog," or "Down your dog," "Leave your dog," "Leave your dog to get your leash" and "Back to your dog."

[Exercise Description:](#) For the first part of this exercise, the handler will stand with the dog in a place designated by the judge. The judge will ask "Are you ready?" before giving the first order. On the judge's order the handler may command **and/or** signal the dog to sit or down without touching the dog or the dog's collar. On further order to "Leave your dog," the handler may give a command **and/or** signal to stay and will walk forward immediately to a place designated by the judge, turn, and face the dog.

After one minute from the time the judge ordered the handler to leave the dog, the judge will give the order "Back to your dog." The handler must return directly, walking around and in back of the dog to heel position. The dog must not move from the required position until after the judge has said "Exercise finished."

Before starting the second part of this exercise the judge will ask "Are you ready?" On the judge's order, the handler may command **and/or** signal the dog to sit or down without touching either the dog or the dog's collar. On further order to "Leave your dog to get your leash," the handler may give a command **and/or** signal to stay and will walk forward directly to the place outside the gate entrance designated by the judge for the leash. The handler will pick up the leash, re-enter the ring, **stop at the gate entrance facing the dog,** and wait for the judges' order "Back to your dog." The handler must return directly, walking around and in back of the dog to heel position. The dog must not move from the required position until after the judge has said "Exercise finished." The judge will tell the handler "Attach your leash to the collar and maintain control of your dog." **The handler is required** to exit the ring with the dog under control and without jumping, pulling or tugging on the leash.

[Judging Procedures:](#) **Prior to the start of judging,** the judge will decide where the leash will be placed, either on the judges' table or tableside chair. **The leash will be placed outside the ring by the steward after the dog and handler have entered the ring for judging.** For both parts of this exercise, the handler must remain at least 30 feet away from the dog until ordered to return to the dog. When positioning dogs for the second part of this exercise, judges should ensure that such positioning will permit the dog to keep the handler in its direct line of vision as the handler leaves and returns to the ring. During this exercise the judge must be in position to watch the dog and see the handler leave and return to the ring. Once the exercise is finished, the judge must watch the dog and handler exit the ring together.

[Section 16. Sit and Down Stay – Get your Leash, Scoring:](#) **A non-qualifying score (NQ) is required** for the following: The dog moving a substantial distance away from the place where it was left any time during either part of the exercise, not remaining in the required position until the handler has returned to heel position, and repeatedly barking or whining.

Scoring of the exercise for such things as rough treatment of a dog by its handler or resistance by a dog to sit or down starts with the first order, "Sit (or Down) your dog." These will be **penalized substantially** and in extreme cases the dog may be released.

Substantial deductions will be made for a dog that moves even a short distance from where it was left, that barks or whines only once or twice, or that changes from the required position after the handler has returned to heel position and before the judge has said, "Exercise finished." A **substantial deduction**, under Miscellaneous Penalties, **must be made** for a dog that does not remain under control while leaving the ring.



This = 3 or more points off your score....OR....leave the ring like this and save points!



* **Note in the Scoring**, all penalties listed in this exercise are Substantial which is defined as 3 or more points. Keep in mind, there may also be other penalties (Chapter 2, Section 24) which are not listed. For example, the handler who is not in the proper heel position after returning to their dog.

As with any exercise it is always best to know the principal parts and non-principal parts. The principal feature of an exercise must be met to earn a qualifying score in that exercise.

Principal features vs. non-principal parts of this exercise: This exercise is another example of scoring starting with a **non-principal feature to a principal feature and then back to a non-principal feature**.

* After the Judge asks "Are you ready?" the Judge's first order is "Sit your dog." or Down your dog." The **non-principal** scoring of *this* exercises is at the beginning of the exercise for such things as rough treatment of a dog by its handler or resistance by a dog to its handler's attempts to make it sit, which starts with the first order.

* The **principal feature** starts with the Judge's second order, "Leave your dog to get your leash." This feature continues until the handler has returned to heel position.

* The **non-principal** feature and scoring takes hold once again for the short time in which all the handler is standing in heel position until the Judge's orders "Exercise finished."

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John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



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NEW EXERCISE

Today's Random Little Tidbit - [Two New Exercises For The Brace, Veterans & Team Classes](#)
[Sit Stay – Get Your Leash](#) & [Group Exercise – Sit & Down Stay](#)

The Novice Group exercises of the 1-minute Long Sit and 3-minute Long Down are now a thing of our past. Just as the old Utility Group Stand was replaced in 1988 with the Moving Stand and Examination, the long-standing Novice Group exercises have been replaced with two new Novice exercises (and challenges) for the Regular Novice (A & B) exhibitors. Remember, **The Regulations state the Brace and Veterans will be performed and judged as in the Novice classes.**

Exercises and Scores For Brace & Veterans: The exercises and maximum scores in the Novice classes:

| | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Heel on Leash and Figure Eight | 40 points |
| 2. Stand for Examination | 30 points |
| 3. Heel Free | 40 points |
| 4. Recall | 30 points |
| 5. Sit Stay – Get Your Leash | 30 points |
| 6. Group Exercise – Sit & Down Stay | 30 points |
| Maximum Total Score | 200 points |

The maximum judging rate is nine (9) dogs per hour.

Exercises and Scores For Team:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Heel on Leash and Figure Eight | 160 points |
| 2. Stand for Examination | 120 points |
| 3. Heel Free | 160 points |
| 4. Drop on Recall | 120 points |
| 5. Sit Stay – Get Your Leash | 120 points |
| 6. Group Exercise – Sit & Down Stay | 120 points |
| Maximum Total Score | 800 points |

For complete details on these new exercises please refer to Random Little Tidbits:

#36 Sit Stay – Get Your Leash

#37 Group Exercise – Sit & Down Stay

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – [The AKC Obedience Judge's Book](#)

This article is directed towards Judges and perspective Judges for review. Just how well are you doing in filling in **ALL** those many boxes and columns in the Obedience Judge's Book? Exhibitors and observers may also find this article helpful when they observe the Judge's Book's "tear sheets" which are posted after a class is finished. It is always wise for the exhibitor to check the finished sheets as it pertains to them to make sure there are no mistakes with their score. If there are errors, the time to seek an explanation, or bring it to the attention of the Judge, is at the trial where it can be dealt with promptly. Also the AKC Records Department needs to make sense from the Judge's Books to do their job in recording the data correctly. If the books are filled out incorrectly (boxes/columns not completed, information lacking) it can become a headache for all involved. So where does one go to learn how to fill out the Judge's Book correctly?

For starters, turn to **page 117** ([AKC Obedience Regulations Guidelines](#)) and the information is there for the reading. There are even visual examples of how to mark the Judge's Books on **pages 120, 121 & 122**. These pages are also posted in the following pages of this article along with blank sheets which may be printed out to practice on, hint, hint.

Here is what the Obedience Guidelines state for those who do not have a copy of the Regulations (also on line):

http://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RO2999_0318.pdf

Judges' Book

"The judge alone is responsible for the judge's book. The trial secretary or superintendent may correct an error or omission that has been made in preparing the book for the judge. No one except the judge may enter any other notation in the judge's book. Following the judging of each class, the judge must immediately deliver the judge's book to the superintendent, obedience chairperson, or trial secretary. No other person may be entrusted with the judge's book."

Marking the Judge's Book

"Chapter 2, Section 10, of the *Obedience Regulations* instructs judges how to correctly mark the book. Judges must be thorough, neat and precise in marking their books. The awarding of obedience titles based on a dog's performance at obedience trials is valueless if the scores are not accurate. Judges must double-check the accuracy of score totals.

"When all dogs have been judged and the four official placements determined, then ribbon prizes can be awarded: blue, red, yellow, and white or white, yellow, red, and blue. Where ribbons or prizes for additional places are offered, the awards for these should be made after the awarding of the four official placements. The judge must sign the book, mark the time finished, and then return the book for the completed class promptly to the trial secretary, obedience chairperson, or superintendent. When the judge returns the book, the trial secretary, obedience chairperson or superintendent should briefly scan the book for obvious omissions or oversights that can be corrected immediately.

"The superintendent, trial secretary, or obedience chairperson will ensure the judges get a copy of their judge's book(s) at the end of their judging assignment. Judges must retain their judging records for at least six months. If such records are required to provide information relative to the judging of a particular class, the information will be readily available to the AKC.

"On the following pages are samples of Novice, Open B and Utility A sheets that show the proper procedure for marking the judge's book. This procedure is applicable for all classes."

PROCEDURES FOR JUDGES TO FOLLOW IN MARKING THE JUDGE'S BOOK (from the Obedience Guidelines)

- 1) Indicate the class.
- 2) In the **Open B, Utility B, Preferred Open, Preferred Utility and Versatility** classes the exercises will not be listed; write them in. (all pages in the Book)
- 3) To correct an error after marking a score under a wrong catalog number, cross out the error, write the correction, and initial the change.
- 4) Non-qualifying scores should be indicated in the relevant exercise box **then** carry down an "**NQ**" in the "**Total Score**" box.

- 5) If a dog has non-qualified and is “Released” write “**NQ-R**” (“Non- Qualifying Released”) then carry down an “**NQ**” in the “**Total Score**” box.
- 6) If a handler leaves the ring before completing the exercises, write “**HLR**” (**Handler Left Ring**) then carry down an “**NQ**” in the “**Total Score**” box.
- 7) Verify that all the **Group Exercise boxes** have been marked accordingly, including a zero for no points off.
- 8) Verify that all **Miscellaneous Penalty boxes** have been marked accordingly, including a zero for no points off.
- 9) Verify all absentees have been marked accordingly.
- 10) **Carry only** qualifying scores down to the “**Final Qualifying Score**” box.
- 11) Mark the catalog number, the score of the four official placements, the time started, and the time finished. This should be on the first sheet for the class only.
- 12) Where run-offs of ties have taken place for any of the four official placements, **indicate the winner of the tie by placing a plus sign (+) after the winner’s score.** In case of a three-way tie, use a double plus (++) for the winner and a single plus (+) for the dog placing second out of the three, etc.
- 13) In the case of a dog that is “**Disqualified,**” **state the reason** in the judge’s book and bring it to the attention of the superintendent or trial secretary. **In addition**, if a dog is disqualified for attacking a person in the ring, complete the form available from the superintendent or trial secretary. This completed form **must** be turned into the superintendent or secretary.
If any dog or handler is excused, **state the reason.**

SIGN THE BOOK

NOTE: Judges should use the inside cover of the book for any comments or explanations required. If additional information is deemed necessary by the judge, comments or explanations should be forwarded to the Event Operations Department, or emailed to Obedience@akc.org

I judge, too, and fill out the Judge’s Books and make my share of mistakes as we are all human and we do/will make mistakes. As an Obedience Contractor Field Representative I have been observing some common and frequent errors occurring in Judge’s Books which I would like to bring to your attention.

- ❖ Miscellaneous Penalty boxes are being left blank. They need to be filled in. If no penalty occurred, place a zero (0) in the box, not a line or some other hieroglyphic symbol, please. **(see example)**
- ❖ I am seeing when there is to be a total qualifying score (numerical digits) the Total Score box is left blank and only carried down to the Final Qualifying Score box. The Q score is to be in both boxes. The Total Score box should have either a score or NQ filled in. The only exception being left blank would be where a dog was excused, disqualified, absent from the class (not to be confused with absent from the Groups, in which case a NQ would be filled in.) **(see example)**
- ❖ NQ-R is not being placed in both the “Group boxes” when a dog is released and not coming back to the Groups. **(see example)**
- ❖ When a dog is released from the first Group exercise “Released” is not written in the second Group exercise box. **(see example)**
- ❖ Writing Excused **instead of HLR** when the handler chooses to leave the ring.
- ❖ If a handler chooses to leave the ring during the individual exercises, **or** does not return for the groups due to conflicts or other reasons, write “Absent” in the Group exercise boxes. **(see example)** Or AB per the blog.
- ❖ In **PO, OB, PU, UB** and **Versatility** place the Exercise Order Roman Numeral somewhere at the top of the sheet if there is not a place for it. **(see example)**
- ❖ In **PN & GN** indicate if it was a Sit or Down

We as Judges and perspective Judges spend a lot of our time in going over the Obedience Regulations to get them right in our heads to do a good job, but we (I include myself) sometimes fall short when it comes to our knowledge/procedure in filling out the Judge’s Book correctly. Let us all work on that so we can earn a 200 in that category! 😊

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TOP LEFT CLUB _____ TOP EVENT NO _____ DAY., 00/00/00 _____ TOP JUDGE _____
 Name of Kennel Club _____ Event Number _____ Date _____ Judge _____

CLASS: OPEN CLASS B

Ring 00 - 0:00 AM

OPEN CLASS B - MAXIMUM TOTAL SCORE - 200 Points
 ENTER POINTS OFF FOR EACH EXERCISE UNDER APPROPRIATE ARMBAND NUMBER

ORDER OF EXERCISES: I-VI _____

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|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| DOG NUMBER | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stay-Get Your Leash (30 points) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Miscellaneous Penalties | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maximum Score (200) | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| POINTS OFF (Subtract) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL SCORE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| FINAL QUALIFYING SCORE | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| AWARDS | 1st Place | 2nd Place | 3rd Place | 4th Place |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Armband # | | | | |
| Score | | | | |

TIME: START _____ FINISH _____

(PLEASE USE BALL POINT PEN)

TOP LEFT CLUB _____ TOP EVENT NO _____ DAY., 00/00/00 _____ TOP JUDGE _____
 Name of Kennel Club _____ Event Number _____ Date _____ Judge _____

CLASS: **UTILITY CLASS B**

Ring 00 - 0:00 AM

UTILITY CLASS B - MAXIMUM TOTAL SCORE - 200 Points
 ENTER POINTS OFF FOR EACH EXERCISE UNDER APPROPRIATE ARMBAND NUMBER

ORDER OF EXERCISES: I-VI _____

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|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| DOG NUMBER | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Miscellaneous Penalties | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maximum Score (200) | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| POINTS OFF (Subtract) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL SCORE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| FINAL QUALIFYING SCORE | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Signal Exercise=40 Scent Discrimination (Article 1)=30 Scent Discrimination (Article 2)=30
 Directed Retrieve=30 Moving Stand & Examination=30 Directed Jumping=40

| AWARDS | 1st Place | 2nd Place | 3rd Place | 4th Place |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Armband # | | | | |
| Score | | | | |

TIME: START _____ FINISH _____

(PLEASE USE BALL POINT PEN)

TOP LEFT CLUB _____ TOP EVENT NO _____ DAY., 00/00/00 _____ TOP JUDGE _____
 Name of Kennel Club _____ Event Number _____ Date _____ Judge _____

CLASS: **PREFERRED OPEN**

Ring 00 - 0:00 AM

PREFERRED OPEN - MAXIMUM TOTAL SCORE - 200 Points

ENTER POINTS OFF FOR EACH EXERCISE UNDER APPROPRIATE ARMBAND NUMBER

ORDER OF EXERCISES: I-VI _____

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|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| DOG NUMBER | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stay-Get Your Leash (30 points) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Miscellaneous Penalties | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maximum Score (200) | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| POINTS OFF (Subtract) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL SCORE | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| FINAL QUALIFYING SCORE | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| AWARDS | 1st Place | 2nd Place | 3rd Place | 4th Place |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Armband # | | | | |
| Score | | | | |

TIME: START _____ FINISH _____

(PLEASE USE BALL POINT PEN)

TOP LEFT CLUB _____ TOP EVENT NO _____ DAY., 00/00/00 _____ TOP JUDGE _____
 Name of Kennel Club _____ Event Number _____ Date _____ Judge _____

CLASS: PREFERRED UTILITY

Ring 00 - 0:00 AM

PREFERRED UTILITY - MAXIMUM TOTAL SCORE - 200 Points
 ENTER POINTS OFF FOR EACH EXERCISE UNDER APPROPRIATE ARMBAND NUMBER

ORDER OF EXERCISES: I-VI _____

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| DOG NUMBER | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Miscellaneous Penalties | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maximum Score (200) | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| POINTS OFF (Subtract) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL SCORE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| FINAL QUALIFYING SCORE | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| AWARDS | 1st Place | 2nd Place | 3rd Place | 4th Place |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Armband # | | | | |
| Score | | | | |

TIME: START _____ FINISH _____

(PLEASE USE BALL POINT PEN)

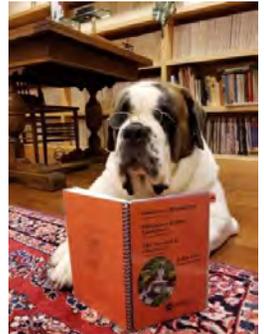


Below is the next in a series of Random Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Reviewing the Requirements for the Perfect Signal, or NOT!

Giving the correct signal to the dog in the obedience ring becomes an integral part in obtaining a perfect performance or, in some cases, a qualifying performance. Executing a signal incorrectly will lead to a **minor, substantial** or **non-qualifying** penalty. So how can one save withdrawals from their 200 account when it comes to **signals**? To answer the above we need to **open and read** the AKC Obedience Regulations (I know, what a concept) to learn just *what a correct signal is and how it is defined*. Xavier is doing just that, follow his lead. ☺ Next, read the exercise(s) and description(s) of the exercises to be performed in the class you are showing, and know the requirements in regards to a **signal** and if a **signal** may be used in a particular exercise. Then study the **principal** features and **non-principal** parts of the exercises to be performed to learn the severity of the scoring of an incorrect signal.



Definition of a Signal - Good Ole Chapter 2, Section 20, Commands And Signals. Let it soak in. Refer back to this Chapter and Section for ALL exercises for help and guidance, especially the new May 2018 exercises. The intent of this Random Little Tidbits article is to spotlight **signals alone**; therefore, I will quote only the parts of Chapter 2, Sections 20 & 21 which have to do with the **signal**. It would behoove you to read the sections in their entirety.

You may need to read this section several times to sort it all out, but remember the devil is in the details. First, let's look at the definition of a **signal**, where it is to be administered and how it is to be performed, quoting from the Regulations.

"...The dog's name may be used *once* immediately before any verbal command **or** before a verbal **command and signal** when these regulations permit **command and/or signal**.

"When a **signal** is permitted, it must be a **single gesture with one arm and hand only**, and the arm and hand *must immediately be returned to a natural position*. A handler may bend their body and knees to bring their hand level with the dog's eyes while giving a **signal** to a dog **in heel position**. **Signals** must be inaudible, and the handler must not touch the dog. *Any unusual noise or motion may be considered to be a signal*. Position of the arms and hands and movements of the head and/or body that aid the dog will be considered additional **signals**. Signaling a correction to a dog is forbidden and will be penalized.

"When these regulations mention a **command or signal**, *only a single command or signal* may be given. When these regulations specify **command and/or signal**, *the handler may give either one or the other or both command and signal simultaneously*. The name will not be used with any signal not given simultaneously with a verbal command. Any extra commands **or** signals must be penalized. An extra command **and/or** signal in any **non-principal** part of an exercise does not constitute a failing score for that exercise.

"The dog should never anticipate the handler's directions but will wait for the appropriate **commands and/or signals**. Moving forward at the heel without any command or signal other than the natural forward movement of the handler's body will not be considered anticipation. Lack of prompt response by the dog to a **command or signal** is subject to a penalty. Delay in following a judge's order to give a **command or signal** must be penalized, unless the judge directs the delay..."

"**Section 21. Additional Commands or Signals.** If a handler gives an additional **command or signal** not permitted by these regulations the dog shall be scored as though it had failed to perform that particular part of the exercise. This includes giving a **signal** or command when none is permitted or using the dog's name with a permitted **signal** but without a permitted command."

I. The Signal During a Principal Features of an Exercise vs. a Non-principal Part:

A. The Principal feature of an exercise:

Just what is a **principal** feature of an exercise? In most cases, *but not in all exercises*, it is the part(s) of a particular exercise to be performed *per the description* of the exercise in order to qualify in that exercise. Each exercise lists the principal features in the first sentence of the description. The dog is to perform the defined **principal** features, PLUS the handler is to also perform their actions in accordance with the Regulations. Not only what is stated in the exercise description, but in other Chapters and Sections (**1 and 2**), as well.

B. Signals during a Principal feature of an exercise:

1. Regardless of when a signal is used (principal feature or not) if the signal doesn't comply with **Chapter 2, Section 20** it is subject to penalty. The degree of the handler error will determine the degree of the penalty.
2. Examples of how an incorrect Signal **may/could** lead to a non-qualifying performance. Make note, a Judge's discretion may factor in the examples noted as all may not be black and white during the actual performance of an exercise.
 - a. The dog's name being used before a **signal** when these regulations permit **signal ONLY**.
 - b. When a **signal** is NOT permitted for an exercise.
 - c. When a **signal** is NOT a **single gesture with one arm and hand only**.
 - d. **Signals** which are not a single gesture. Depending on the "nano seconds" lacking of a single gesture this could lead to a NQ during a **principal** features of an exercise.
 - e. Arm and hand NOT **immediately** being returned to a *natural position (hanging naturally* at the handler's sides) after giving the **signal**.
 - f. A handler may bend their body and knees to bring their hand level with the dog's eyes ONLY while giving a **signal** to a dog **in heel position**. **Turning** and bending over the dog may be considered an aid.
 - g. If a **signal** is allowed to be used with a command it MUST be given **simultaneously**, otherwise it is two actions, not one, which results in a NQ.
 - h. **Signals** that touch the dog or are audible may result in a non-qualifying performance.
 - i. Position of the arms and hands and movements of the head and/or body that aid the dog will be considered **additional signals** and can (depending on the extent) result in a NQ during the **principal** features.
 - j. Delay in following a judge's order to give a **command or signal** must be penalized, unless the judge directs the delay. This could lead to a NQ, depending on the extent.
 - k. Signaling a correction to a dog is forbidden and will be penalized.
3. An extra command **and/or signal** in any **non-principal** part of an exercise does not lead to a failing score for that exercise. Learn the **principal** features from the **non-principal** parts of each exercise. For example, the Finish is a **non-principal** part of all exercises.
4. Do not confuse a **signal** with the giving of **direction** for the Directed Retrieve exercise. The *giving of direction* during that exercise is just that; therefore, it is not defined as a **signal**. The definition of a **signal** (see **d and e** above) does NOT apply in that exercise as no "**signal**" is given to retrieve. A "**direction**" (a held action) is given along with a required verbal command simultaneously or immediately following the giving of direction.

II. Areas Where Scorable Signals May Occur During the Principal Features of an Exercise.

- A. Handler gives a command to heel (Heel Free) and then brings their arm up to the waist *during* the heeling. This is scored as an additional **signal**. If one chooses to heel with the hand at the waist, bring it to that position BEFORE the judge's first order ("Forward."), not after.
- B. If a handler chooses to give a **signal** to the dog to Stay, it must Immediately be returned to a natural position. **Review above letters c-f, & h-j as it pertains to Chapter 2, Sections 20 and 21.**
- C. In the **Signal** exercise in Utility when giving the **signals** to Stand, Down, Sit & Come. **Review above letters c-f & h-k as it pertains to Chapter 2, Sections 20 and 21.**
- D. If a **signal** is given to drop the dog in the Open Drop on Recall exercise, **Review above letters c-f, & i-j as it pertains to Chapter 2, Sections 20 and 21.**
- E. **Command Discrimination**. The **principal** features of this new exercise starts on the Judge's FIRST order for a position change. If a **signal** is used (an option) when giving the **signals** to Stand, Down, Sit & Stay **review above letters c-k as it pertains to Chapter 2, Sections 20 and 21**. Also, keep in mind, ONLY when the handler is in heel position may the handler's body be bent as mentioned above in **f**, not at the 15' or 30' positions of the handler. The handler is then in front of the dog and not in heel position. The ONLY **non-principal** part of this exercise is when the handler returns to heel position and before the Judge orders "Exercise finished." *Let that soak in*. This exercise's **principal** features are at the start of this exercise so a **signal** not immediately returned to a natural position (if used) to Down (or Stand) when the dog is in **heel position** could result in a NQ as it is not in accordance with **letters c-j above, as it pertains to Chapter 2, Sections 20 and 21**. Compare that to the **Group** exercise where a signal not immediately returned to a natural position to Down (or Sit) the dog is in a **non-principal** part (before the Judge's 2nd order) where the penalty is less severe.

III. Areas Where Scorable Signals May Occur In Non-principal Parts of an Exercise.

An extra command and/or **signal** in any **non-principal** part of an exercise does not constitute a failing (NQ) score for that exercise. Learn the **principal** features from the **non-principal** parts of each exercise.

- A. The Finish is a **non-principal** part of all exercises.
- B. If a **signal** is given to Down (or Sit) the dog during a **Group** exercise, **review above letters c-f and h-j as it pertains to Chapter 2, Sections 20 and 21**. The **non-principal** parts are at the beginning and end of this exercise. The **principal** feature of this exercise starts on the Judge's second order, "Leave your dogs" and continues until the handler has returned to heel position. When the handler has returned to heel position and before the Judge orders "Exercise finished," the **non-principal** parts apply once again.
- C. **Novice Sit Stay – Get Your Leash**. The **non-principal** part of this exercise is the timeframe from the first Judge's order to the second Judge's order. The **principal** feature of this exercise starts on the Judge's second order, "Leave your dog to get your leash" and continues until the handler has returned to heel position. When then handler has returned to heel position and before the Judge orders "Exercise finished," the **non-principal** parts apply once again. Refer to **I. B. 3.** above.
- D. **Open Stand Stay Get Your Leash**. The **principal** feature of this exercise starts on the Judge's first order, "Stand your dog" and continues until the handler has returned to heel position. When the handler has returned to heel position and before the Judge orders "Exercise finished," the **non-principal** parts apply once again. Refer to **I. B. 3.** above.

There are many areas in the Obedience Regulations where a **signal** is required **or** it is an option. Plus, there are other areas where a **signal** *may or may not be used* with a verbal command. Study the descriptions of the exercises to be performed in the ring and learn the handler's performance in that exercise. Learn the correct use of a **signal** and the definition of a **signal**. Also, be aware of the **Principal features vs. non-principal parts** of an exercise to know the possible consequences (Q or NQ) in giving an incorrect **signal**. One last thing to keep in mind: when executing a **signal** remember the handler is also being judged on Smoothness, Naturalness and Gentleness (Chapter 2, Section 2). Abiding by the Regulations in regards to the giving of a **signal** can save many withdrawals from your 200 Account. That's advice you can bank on!

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Below is the next in a series of Random Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – [Tips on Saving Time and Managing a Ring.](#)

Planning on becoming a Judge down the line? Are you now a Judge planning on advancing to the next level? Do you have all levels? Not a Judge but participates in judging matches or practice sessions? Regardless of your answer, it never hurts to review your time and ring management skills to insure a peak performance with the utmost in efficiency. A good way to begin is video tape *your* performance *now* while judging. Take a good hard look at that video (with an open mind) observing the ring and time management skills, or lack of. Another suggestion is to sit outside a ring and watch other Judges. There are lessons to be learned during those observations, good ideas (and maybe some not so good) which may help you in the process of honing your own skills.

[Listed below are a variety of tips to help in saving time with ring management:](#)

Novice Classes:

- ✓ *Make it a point* to be at your ring 45-minutes before the class is to start to check your ring, make modifications (if needed), plus posting the required materials and placing marks in your ring. You may need to *plan ahead* back at the hotel to arrange the needed transportation to accomplish this task.
- ✓ Provide good instructions to your stewards covering all points for their duties; they are there to assist but need your guidance.
- ✓ Have laminated written instructions for your stewards so no points will be overlooked, plus they can refer to them later, if needed.
- ✓ Is the gate & table (outside the ring) where you want it? Can it be changed easily to suit you in regards to your heeling pattern(s) and ring flow?
- ✓ Is the Figure Eight at the end of the ring (entrance end), saving steps and time for the stewards entering and exiting?
- ✓ Avoid long conversations with the exhibitor when they enter the ring or when leaving after the last exercise. Be friendly but brief.
- ✓ Show the heeling pattern prior to the start of the class, start judging on time with the first exhibitor entering the ring.
- ✓ Have some marks to indicate where the handler should set up for heeling and/or the Recall. This will prevent having to reposition handlers, which ends up wasting time.
- ✓ As the handler is lined up for an exercise there is NO need to tell them what exercise is about to commence. For example, as they are standing midway between two stewards why mention, "This is the Figure Eight exercise." HELLO, what else is it? Consider the ramifications. Doing this type of announcement before each exercise (5 *individual* exercises in Novice) in a class of forty, as an example, equals **two-hundred** needless time-wasting announcements! This is not helping the handler; but it creates dead time between exercises. Also, there is no need to tell them they may go in either direction.
- ✓ Plan to have the next exercise start near the area where the previous exercise ended.
- ✓ When returning to the table to record scores in the Judge's Book, do it without interruptions thus avoiding mistakes in the judge's book.
- ✓ Make conversations at the table with stewards or exhibitors brief so you can get on with judging the next dog that is waiting ringside.
- ✓ Avoid sitting down to enter scores in the Judge's Book, or having the book in an area where you would need to do extra walking.
- ✓ Just prior to the last team entering the ring, remind stewards to have the Group sheet ready and start lining up the qualifying dogs for the Group exercise. The steward can also remind the handlers to have a **6-foot leash** which must be clipped to the collar.
- ✓ Have your Group timing device out of your case, set and ready, preferably before the class has started to save time.
- ✓ Have the Table steward make sure the needed ribbons and awards are at the table and ready to go.
- ✓ During the awards ceremony, be brief while congratulating, and avoid teams lingering in the ring when the awards are concluded. They can do their chatting outside the ring while you are getting ready for the next class, if there is one. The next class will appreciate your efficiency for being on time.



Open Classes:

- ✓ **All applicable check marks above in Novice will also apply for the Open classes.**
- ✓ Check the jumps and make sure all boards are available for the High Jump, and all hurdles for the Broad Jump, so the class can start on time.
- ✓ The extra boards and hurdles *not being used keep* close to the proximity of the jump(s), but well out of the way of the jumps. Make use of a chair to hold the extra boards and hurdles just outside making it faster and easier on the stewards to change the jumps.
- ✓ Have a stopwatch (or another way of keeping time) with you so when the last exercise is finished right before the Stay-Get Your Leash, you will be ready to continue without having to return to the table to retrieve it.
- ✓ Develop an efficient routine with the stewards for dumbbell duties, plus check the dumbbell before the handler enters the ring. If a dumbbell does not conform to the Regulations, it can be then corrected before the handler enters, thus saving time.
- ✓ Designate a place for the leash outside, but near, the ring entrance.
- ✓ As a dog is about to enter the ring, look at the dog *then* the jumps to confirm if set correctly before they enter.



Utility Classes:

- ✓ **All applicable check marks above in Novice and Open will also apply for the Utility classes.**
- ✓ Check the Bar to make sure it has the weight of wood; if not, get it corrected *before* the starting time of the class.
- ✓ Develop an efficient routine with the stewards for Scent Discrimination, Directed Retrieve and Moving Stand and Examination duties, plus develop a routine to check the articles and gloves before the handler enters the ring. If either does not conform to the Regulations, or items are missing, it can be then corrected before the handler enters.
- ✓ Inform the steward to be aware of the last exercise in the class so they can have the leash ready.



A few helpful charts to help your stewards save time and be accurate can be requested at the email address below:

Summary:

Giving advanced forethought to running your ring in an efficient manner will save you, the stewards and exhibitors valuable time. Plus, the day will move along at a good pace making your job more pleasant. I suggest you now get busy as there are a lot of classes and variations in each class to be prepared for when it is **SHOWTIME!** Examples of class variations to ponder:

- 1 Novice
- 1 Preferred Novice
- 1 Graduate Novice
- 1 Graduate Open
- 6 Open and 6 Preferred Open class variations
- 6 Utility and 6 Preferred Utility class variations
- 12 Versatility class variations, remember in this class you can arrange your order of exercises for flow. It does *not* have to be 2 Novice followed by 2 Open and then 2 Utility exercises, in that order.

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Below is the next in a series of Random Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit – PVC Leash Holders – Now, a point to ponder.

With the new Obedience Regulations *now in effect* and the Judge required to designate a place for the placement of the leash in a few revised classes; clubs, give some thought to the idea of having leash holders available for all rings. They work well for the handler, stewards and Judge. These holders are easy to move as the **Regular Novice, Preferred Novice, Veterans, Brace, and Team** require the leash **inside** the ring and the **Regular Open, Preferred Open and Graduate Novice** require the leash **outside** the ring. A simple project to assemble, inexpensive and easy to store for upcoming trials. The leash holder eliminates the use an extra chair to hold the leash or having to make limited table space available. Hanging the leash on a ring barrier (all barriers are not created equal) is not a good idea as the leash may become tangled which could lead to other catastrophes we don't want to think about. Leash holders have an added side bonus for ALL classes - the ring runs more efficiently for all which is a good thing! For those who have attended the AKC National Obedience Championship (NOC) or Classic these leash holders (pictured) have been in use at those events. Follow AKC's lead.



Most national hardware chains (Ace, Home Depot, Lowes, or online <https://www.pvcfittingsonline.com>) will have PVC piping, pipe fittings and/or "furniture" joints and caps. Along with a hacksaw, PVC glue and, WALLAH, you have leash holders. Adding some colored duct tape as striping bands adds to the visibility. Clubs can use their colors to carry their theme or Superintendents may want to use their name or logo. For outdoor use on grass or dirt, metal "U" clips or small sandbags will hold the stands upright.

Pictured below is a parts inventory of 1-inch PVC stock to illustrate assembly. Cut pipe accordingly making sure the base provides good balance and pay attention to height so a handler in a wheelchair may be able to reach their leash with ease:

- 6 end caps** – (2) pictured at the top view & (4) at the bottom view
- 2 elbows** – pictured at the top view
- 1 tee** – pictured at the top view
- 1 5-way furniture fitting** – pictured at the bottom view, this may be the difficult one to find locally (phone ahead).
- 1 section of pipe** – cut accordingly.



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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Revisions to the **Open Stay - Get Your Leash**
Effective January 1, 2019

Now here is just one more reason *you* need to sign up to **AKC's Obedience/Rally Blog** to keep up-to-date! Were you aware that the **Open Stay – Get Your Leash** exercise has just been revised? Had you signed up for the Blog and filled in the box for automatic notifications you would have been notified immediately via email. NOW IS THE TIME to get (and keep) in the know by signing up to the Blog. It is open to EVERYONE interested in our Sports. **Note:** Hard for me to believe there are still some of you Judges who need to get with the program and sign up to the Blog! <https://akcobedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/about/>

For those who have not signed up, below is the post in regards to the revisions of the **Open Stay – Get Your Leash** exercise. This will affect the classes of **Open A, Open B, Preferred Open and Graduate Novice**. The **Novice A & B, Preferred Novice, Brace, Veterans and Team** classes remain unchanged with the **Novice Sit Stay – Get Your Leash** exercise.

Obedience – Amendment to the Open Class, Stay-Get Your Leash Exercise – Effective 01/01/2019

Currently (until December 31, 2018), in the Open class, the “Stay – Get Your Leash exercise is made up of two-parts. First the handler must leave the dog in either the sit or down position when commanded to do so by the judge for a period of one-minute, then after one-minute, the judge orders the handler to return to the dog, and then to leave the dog again to go get the leash, which is outside the ring. The handler picks up the leash, re-enters the ring, stops at the ring gate entrance facing the dog, and waits for the judge's order to return to the dog.

The AKC Board of Directors approved a change to this exercise to make this a single-part exercise with a “Stand” Stay – Get Your Leash. Changing the exercise to a single-part exercise will save time over the course of the Open judge's assignment. It is important that the exercise demonstrate the dog's ability to control its impulses and maintain the worthiness of this practical exercise.

Obedience Regulations – Chapter 4 will be amended as follows:

Section 3. Open A Exercises and Scores.

The exercises and maximum score in the Open A class:

Heel Free and Figure Eight - 40 points

Command Discrimination (Stand, Down, Sit) - 30 points

Drop on Recall - 30 points

Retrieve on Flat - 20 points

Retrieve over High Jump - 30 points

Broad Jump - 20 points

Stand Stay - Get Your Leash - 30 points

Maximum Total Score 200 points

Section 4. Open B Exercises and Scores. The various orders of exercises in the Open B class:

OPEN I-VI

Stand Stay – Get Your Leash

Section 17. Stand Stay – Get Your Leash. The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog stand and stay in position until the handler has returned to heel position.

The orders are: “Stand your dog,” Leave your dog to get your leash,” and “Back to your dog.”

The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position in a place designated by the judge, approximately 15 feet from the ring gate. The judge will ask "Are you ready?" before giving the first order. On the judge's order, the handler will command and/or signal the dog to stand without touching the dog or the dog's collar. The dog must stand but need not stand in heel position.

On further order to "Leave your dog to get your leash," the handler may give a command and/or signal to stay and will walk forward directly to the place outside the ring gate designated by the judge for the leash. The handler will pick up the leash, re-enter the ring, stop and wait for the judge's order "Back to your dog." The handler must return directly, walking around and in back of the dog to heel position. The dog must remain standing until the judge has said "Exercise finished." The judge will tell the handler "Attach your leash to the collar and maintain control of your dog." The handler is required to exit the ring gate with the dog under control and without jumping, pulling or tugging on the leash.

Judging Procedures: *Prior to the start of judging, the judge will decide where the leash will be placed outside the ring on a chair or similar leash holder.*

The leash will be placed outside the ring by the steward after the dog and handler have entered the ring for judging. When positioning the dog and handler for this exercise, the judge should ensure that such positioning will permit the dog to keep the handler in its direct line of vision as the handler leaves and returns to the ring, and that the handler, when reentering the ring, is at least 15 feet away from the dog until ordered to return. During this exercise the judge must be in position to watch the dog and see the handler leave and return to the ring. Once the exercise is finished, the judge must watch the dog and handler exit the ring together.

Section 18. Stay – Get Your Leash, Scoring. A non-qualifying score (NQ) is required for a dog that does any of the following: Fails to stand on the first command and/or signal, moves a substantial distance away from the place it was where it was left, sits or lies down before the handler has returned to heel position, or repeatedly barks or whines.

Substantial deductions will be made for a dog that sits or lies down after the handler has returned to heel position and before the judge has said, "Exercise finished."

Depending on the circumstances, minor or substantial deductions will be made for the dog that moves a short distance from where it was left, or that moves its feet repeatedly while remaining in place.

A substantial deduction, under Miscellaneous Penalties, must be made for a dog that does not remain under control while leaving the ring.

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John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



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Today's Random Little Tidbit – [A Triple Q Ribbon for Obedience? Why Not!](#)

Rally and Agility trials offer “Triple Q” ribbons (usually a fancy rosette) awarded to the team earning three (3) qualifying scores in three (3) different classes, referred to as a Triple Q win. But where is the one for Obedience? Well, there is none, **BUT** that does not mean a club cannot offer one! Obedience has a different class structure with the Regular, Alternative and Optional titling classes, all with different jump height requirements which can make it challenging compared to the Highest Combined (Open B & Utility or Preferred Open/Utility) score award. Plus, a club does not need to be faced with another burden *requiring* them to provide such a ribbon at an additional expense where a particular class may have a history of few entries. You may have noticed National clubs sometimes offer *special* ribbons/rosettes at their national shows such as Highest Scoring Champion, etc. So let's look at the Obedience Regulations and think outside the box for a moment and see how a club can offer a Triple Q ribbon/rosette in Obedience.



Chapter 1, Section 21. Ribbons and Prizes:

- * ...”Prizes for which dogs in one class compete against dogs in one or more other classes at licensed or member trials or at sanctioned matches will be awarded only to dogs that earn qualifying scores. Prizes at a licensed or member obedience trial must be offered to be won outright...”
- * ...”Prizes offered only to members of certain clubs or organizations will not be approved for publication in premium lists...”
- * ...”If an award in any of the regular, preferred, or optional titling classes is cancelled, the next highest scoring dog within that class will receive that award. If there is no dog to move up, the award will be void. If the AKC cancels a dog's win, the dog's owner must return all ribbons and prizes to the show-giving club within 10 days of receiving the AKC's cancellation notice...”
- * ...”Optional titling classes are not considered to be regular or preferred classes...”
- * **Read the whole section** for other details and/or options on Ribbons and Prizes.
- * Any ribbon/rosette requiring different qualifications (other than the ones listed in Chapter 1) must be spelled out in the Premium List.
- * Also, keep in mind [Chapter, 1 Section 19](#) for the wording and *minimum* size requirements.

For example, one such Triple Q rosette ribbon could be offered to the dog with the Highest Qualifying Scores in Open B, Utility and Versatility. These classes require the same minimum jump heights, if that is a concern. Or, a rosette ribbon could also be offered for Preferred Open, Preferred Utility and Versatility, keeping in mind the minimum jump heights will differ from the Preferred Classes (PO & PU) vs. Versatility, if that is a concern. Such an offering may help boost entries, especially in Versatility if it were to be offered, plus add prestige, goals and bragging rights to the winners of such awards. It is definitely worth a try with the only additional cost being the rosette ribbon, which may well be offset by additional entries in the combination of the three classes! Another option to consider might be to offer a Highest Combined Score in Graduate Novice and Graduate Open to maybe boost those entries.

In the current Obedience Regulations there is no longer, as in the past (1972), a stipulation as to the color of a special ribbon. Then such ribbons were defined as *special ribbons* and were to be green in color. It appears to me that a club may now offer such a rosette/ribbon in a different color other than solid green. Club colors would be an option to consider. If you belong to a club offering such a ribbon, be sure to advertise well before entries close.

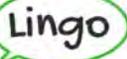
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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Standardized Judging and That Includes the...



Judges, Trainers, Handlers... Let's refresh our memory on **Chapter 2, Sections 1 & 4** of the AKC Obedience Regulations.

Standardized Judging, Section 2.

"The Obedience Regulations are the basic guide to judging but do not contain explicit directions for every possible situation and only list the more common and serious faults. They clearly define the exercises, their order and the standards by which they are to be judged. If a decision depends on the exact wording of the Obedience Regulations, the judge is expected to look up the specific regulation prior to making the decision.

Standardized judging is of paramount importance. Judges are **not** permitted to **inject their own variations** into the exercise but will see that each handler and dog perform the various exercises exactly as described in these regulations. **A handler who is familiar with these regulations should be able to enter the ring** under any judge without having to inquire how that particular judge wishes to have an exercise performed and **without being confronted with any unexpected requirements.**"

Judge's Directions, Section 4. The judge's orders and signals should be given to the handlers in a clear and understandable manner but in such a way that the work of the dogs is not disturbed. Before starting each exercise, the judge will ask, "Are you ready?" At the end of each exercise the judge will say, "Exercise finished." Each dog will be worked and judged separately, except for during the group exercise. The judging of an exercise will not begin until the judge has given the first order.

So why the purple highlights on the wording above? Part of carrying out Standardized Judging is for the Judge to use the correct Judge's Orders (verbiage) which is specific for each exercise **and is in "_____"**. A Judge is **not** to inject their own words into the Judge's Orders **or** abbreviate the words which are in quotes!

Our AKC Judge's Blog also addresses this issue:

Judge's Directions [July 1, 2010](#)

"Several judges have been observed using only one word for an order that requires more than one word to be used. Example: "left" for "left turn", "about" for "about turn", "send" for "send your [...]" In my ringside observations there are more than "several", thus the purpose and goal of this Tidbit article.

Handlers enter the ring expecting to hear specific orders coming from our judges. It does a disservice to the handler and the sport when a judge does not do their part in following the Regulations. For example, I have heard judges use only *one* of three words in a quote as mentioned above [Send]. The Regulations require all three (3) words be used, "Send your dog". Some may think this is all a bit anal, but shortening the verbiage is not only against the Regulations, it may lead a handler to misunderstand the order, or not hear it correctly in a noisy building. Using the *full correct verbiage* is what handlers expect from the judge. **Just do it!** Learn all the orders and USE them *as quoted* in the Regulations! If one is having difficulty implementing all of the specific quoted orders into their memory, maybe having them printed out on your worksheets to refer to when out in the ring might help.

For those of you who instruct or train with others you might also want to learn the correct judge's orders when putting your students or buddies through their paces. It will not only help them prepare for what will take place in the ring, it will help you to play out the correct role as a judge in their learning process.

While on the subject, just prior to the official quoted order the judge [you] will ask the question, "Are you ready?" There is no place in the Regulations where a judge is required to tell the handler what exercise is about to take place, or to ask if they have any questions. As a team is lined up ready to go in front of the Broad Jump (as an example) the judge is not required to state, "This is the Broad Jump exercise." **Hello!!!** What else could it be??? ☺ Doing that is a time-waster; however, a judge can provide customer service as one exercise has ended to mention, "let's go over here for the Broad Jump". In the mixed exercise order classes (Open, Utility & Versatility) this not only helps the seasoned handler for ring flow and efficiency, it helps the novice handler learning the ropes without wasting time.

Let's learn the correct orders...on page 2

The Correct Judge's Orders per the AKC Obedience Regulations

The Judge will ask before the exercise starts... "Are you ready?" At the end of the exercise will say, "Exercise finished"

Regular Novice:

Heel on Leash and Figure Eight...Forward, Left turn, Right turn, Fast, Normal, Slow, About Turn

Stand for Examination...Stand your dog and leave when **you are** ready, Back to your dog

Recall...Leave your dog, Call your dog, Finish

Sit Stay Get Your Leash...Sit your dog, Leave your dog to get your leash, Back to your dog

Group Exercise...Sit your Dogs, Down your dogs, Leave your dogs, Back to your dogs

Regular Open:

Heel Free...See Regular Novice foundation exercise above. Orders are the same.

Command Discrimination...Leave your dog, Back to your dog. Judge must use signals for directing the handler to command and/or signal the dog to change position **except for the first position** and that order is, Stand your dog or Down your dog.

Drop on Recall...Leave your dog, Call your dog, then give a clear signal to drop the dog, followed by, Call your dog, Finish

Retrieve on Flat...Throw it, Send your dog, Take it, Finish

Retrieve Over High Jump...Throw it, Send your dog, Take it, Finish

Broad Jump...Leave your dog, Send your dog, Finish

Stand Stay Get Your Leash...Stand your dog, Leave your dog to get your leash, Back to your dog

Regular Utility:

Signal Exercise...Orders the same as Regular Novice Heel on Leash, except for the order to, Stand your dog, signals for the Down, Sit, Come, Finish

Scent Discrimination...Take an article, the taking of the article (from the handler, is a silent order), Send your dog, Take it, Finish

Directed Retrieve...One, Two, Three, (it is that simple, note the word Glove is not in the order), Take it, Finish

Moving Stand and Examination...Forward, Stand your dog, Call your dog to heel.

Directed Jumping...Send your dog, Bar, High (note the word Jump *is not in the order*), Finish

Preferred Novice:

See Regular Novice foundation exercises above. Orders are the same.

Stay – Sit or Down – Handler walk around the ring...Sit your dog, or Down your dog, Leave your dog.

Preferred Open:

See Regular Open foundation exercises above. Orders are the same.

Preferred Utility:

See Regular Utility foundation exercises above. Orders are the same.

Beginner Novice:

Heel on Leash...See Regular Novice foundation exercise above. Orders are the same BUT are stated on signs placed around the ring.

Figure Eight...Forward, Halt. Verbal orders from the Judge

Stand for Examination...Sit your dog and leave when **you are** ready, Back to your dog

Sit Stay - Handler walk around the ring...Sit your dog, Leave your dog

Recall...Leave your dog, Call your dog (no Finish in this class)

Graduate Novice:

Heel Free and Figure Eight...See Regular Novice foundation exercise above. Orders are the same.

Drop on Recall...See Regular Open foundation exercise above. Orders are the same.

Dumbbell Recall...Give your dog the dumbbell, Leave your dog, Call your dog, Take it, Finish

Dumbbell Recall over High Jump...Give your dog the dumbbell, Leave your dog, Call your dog, Take it, Finish

Recall over Broad Jump...See Regular Open foundation exercise above. Orders are the same.

Stand Stay Get Your Leash...See Regular Open foundation exercise above. Orders are the same.

Graduate Open:

Signal Exercise...See Regular Utility foundation exercise above. Orders are the same.

Scent Discrimination...See Regular Utility foundation exercise above. Orders are the same.

Go Out...Send your dog, Back to your dog

Directed Jumping...Leave your dog, Bar, High (note the word Jump *is not in the order*), Finish

Moving Stand and Examination...See Regular Utility foundation exercise above. Orders are the same.

Directed Retrieve...See Regular Utility foundation exercise above. Orders are the same.

Versatility:

See the Regular Novice, Open and Utility foundation exercises above. Orders are the same.

Note: In Novice the Judge will tell the handler to, **Clip** your leash to the collar and maintain control of your dog, after returning to the dog with the leash.

In Open and Graduate Novice the Judge will tell the handler to, **Attach** your leash to the collar and maintain control of your dog, after returning to the dog with the leash.

In ALL classes the handler *is required* to exit the ring with the dog under control and without jumping, pulling or tugging on the leash.

Judges: Print/laminate this page to have on your judging clip board, if needed. **Instructors:** Post in your training building for your students to learn the lingo.

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John Cox, AKC obedience judge, dog-talk@comcast.net



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Today's Random Little Tidbit – Judging Procedures from the Regulations!

When the AKC Obedience Regulations were published, many **Judging Procedures** from the Obedience Judge's Guidelines (**OJG**), plus new judging procedures, were moved (and expanded) to the specific corresponding exercise(s) for easy viewing and reviewing. This improvement now provides the Judge *and* exhibitor (new *and* experienced) a better understanding of suggested judge's positions during an exercise, plus other vital information not covered in the descriptions or scoring sections.

Random Little Tidbits #49 will list all the **Regular** exercises *procedures only* in this one article. The Regular exercises are the foundation exercises for the Alternative titling and Optional titling classes; therefore, one will not find Judging Procedures listed in those sections of the Regulations. The point of this article is for a *quick easy review tool* for Judges *and* exhibitors to pay attention to the **exercise procedures**. They are an important part of the Obedience Regulations and not to be glossed over. Continue to check the Obedience Judge's Guidelines (**OJG**) as other pertinent general information will still be found. This article **combines** the Judging Procedures and pertinent Guidelines per exercise, plus I will underline words to pay particular attention to.

Judging Position (OJG): "Positioning is important for two reasons: first, to establish consistency of judging in the minds of exhibitors and spectators and, second, to properly evaluate the dog and handler the entire time they are in the ring. In determining a position for each exercise choose one that allows you to see both dog and handler without having to turn away to see one or the other. Being in the right position to observe a dog's performance is essential. There is no perfect position, but this does not mean that some positions are not better than others. All dogs shall be viewed from the same relative position. When viewing the dog and handler from the side, try to observe from the dog's side without the handler between you and the dog. Fronts and finishes are to be judged from a position in front of the handler."

Novice

Heel on Leash and Figure Eight: Judging Procedures: "In scoring this exercise, judges shall accompany the handler at a discreet distance so that they can observe any signals or commands given by the handler to the dog. The judge must do so without interfering with either dog or handler. The judge should attempt to be in a position during the course of the exercise so that the dog and the handler may be observed from the rear, front, and side. Dogs receiving an extra command or signal during heeling can still qualify, although a deduction must be made for the extra command or signal. Subsequent additional commands or signals could indicate the dog is not under control and is not working with the handler as a team. The judge must determine whether the dog should receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score for heeling based on the overall performance of the dog and handler during the entire exercise."

Stand For Examination:

Judging Procedures: "The dog need not be sitting at the start of this exercise. The judge must be alert to keep handlers from going more or less than about 6 feet and must penalize, even to the point of non-qualifying, the dog whose handler backs away when leaving. The examination is complete when the judge lifts their fingers and palm from the dog's hindquarters. Judges should not expose themselves needlessly to the danger of being bitten. Should a dog in the ring give warning that it may bite if you proceed with the examination, you should excuse the dog from the ring and mark the judge's book "Excused – Unable to Examine." If a dog attempts to attack or bites any person in the ring, the judge must disqualify the dog, mark the judge's book "Disqualified – Attack" and fill out the "Disqualification for Attacking" form (AEDSQ1)."

Heel Free: Refer to the foundation exercise: **Heel on Leash and Figure Eight.**

Recall: (OJG): "Recall Exercises. To have both dog and handler under constant observation in these exercises, a judge should take a position in line and slightly to the rear of the dog, facing the handler but at an adequate distance to one side. This is a foundation exercise and governs the faults and behavior of a dog in all exercises where the dog is moving toward the handler. Finishes are required to be executed promptly, smartly, and straight. This applies to faults in all exercises where the dog returns to heel position. The finish is not a principal part of any exercise. Therefore, failure to finish or extra commands or signals to finish do not require a non-qualifying (NQ) score for any exercise. The judge should never ask the handler to touch the dog or otherwise assist the judge in making a decision. If, in the judge's opinion, the dog is not close enough to the handler, it must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score."

Sit Stay – Get Your Leash: Judging Procedures: "The judge will instruct the steward to place the leash at the designated location after the Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise. The handler and dog will be positioned at least 30 feet from and facing the direction of the gate entrance. The judge must be in position to watch the dog and handler throughout the exercise including exiting the ring."

Group Exercise - Sit and Down Stay: Judging Procedures: "If a judge observes any signs of aggression or potential problems when the dogs are being assembled outside the ring for the group exercise or once the dogs are brought into the ring, the judge must excuse the dog and mark the judge's book "Excused" and state the reason. Any handlers who physically correct their dogs before or after the group exercise or while leaving the ring must be penalized under Miscellaneous Penalties. Judges must stand with their full attention on the dogs and handlers during the group exercise and remain alert to any potential problems. To have both dog and handler under constant observation in this exercise, a judge should take a position slightly to the rear of the dogs at one end of the row(s) of dogs."

Open

Heel Free and Figure Eight: Refer to the foundation exercise: **Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight.**

Command Discrimination: Judging Procedures: *“This exercise must be performed in any area of the ring that is at least 40 feet in length. The 15 foot distances must be clearly marked. The judge must be positioned so that both the dog and handler are under continuous observation during the entire exercise. An excellent position for judging this exercise is at an adequate distance to the side and slightly to the rear of the dog.”*

Drop on Recall: Refer to the **Novice Recall** foundation exercise for the Recall parts of this exercise.

In addition (OJG): **Drop on Recall.** A perfect drop has three characteristics:

1. The dog’s prompt response to the handler’s command or signal to drop
2. No delay or slowness to down
3. The dog must drop completely to a down position”

Retrieve on Flat: Refer to the **Novice Recall** foundation exercise for the Recall parts of this exercise.

Judging Procedures: *“A judge should not place a dumbbell that is improperly thrown but should require the handler to throw the dumbbell again. A judge will not ask the handler’s opinion when deciding whether a dumbbell is to be thrown again or not; it is the judge’s sole responsibility to make this decision. Once the decision is made, the judge or steward will retrieve the dumbbell. Under no circumstances should the handler be penalized for a bad throw. Requiring the handler to re-throw the dumbbell signifies that the exercise is being restarted; therefore, the handler may pet, praise, and reposition the dog without penalty before the exercise is begun again. The retrieve, including the pickup, must be brisk and without hesitation. Once the exercise begins, the handler may not adjust their feet or position.”*

Retrieve Over High Jump: Refer to the foundation exercises: **Novice Recall and Retrieve on Flat.**

Judging Procedures: **High Jump** *The judge must make certain that the handler throws the dumbbell at least 8 feet beyond the jump. Reference the Obedience Judges’ Guidelines, Chapter 3.”*

In addition (OJG): *“In the Retrieve over High Jump exercise the handler, with the dog sitting in heel position, must be at least 8 feet in front of the jump or any reasonable distance beyond 8 feet. It is the judge’s responsibility to see that the handler complies before the exercise begins. During this exercise a judge must stand clear of both the handler and the dog in order to prevent any interference with the dog’s performance. The judge should be positioned so that both the dog and handler are under continuous observation during the entire exercise.”*

Broad Jump: Refer to the foundation exercise: **Novice Recall.**

Judging Procedures: *“A handler standing too close or too far from the side of the jump shall be required to move to the proper position. Reference the Obedience Judges’ Guidelines Chapter 3.”*

In addition (OJG): *“In setting up the broad jump, the judge should make every effort to avoid having the dog jump toward the open gate or close to the table, and ensure that adequate room is allowed from all sides of the jump for the take-off, jumping and on the far side for landing and turning. The hurdles are to be positioned so the dog will be turning away from the ring barrier after landing. The dog and handler must be at least 8 feet in front of the first edge of the jump. It is the judge’s responsibility to see that the handler complies before the exercise begins. During the exercise, the judge must stand clear of the handler and the dog in order to prevent any interference with the dog’s performance. The judge must be positioned so that both the dog and the handler are under continuous observation during the entire exercise. This exercise is a Novice Recall, except for the jump and the position of the handler.”*

Placement of Jumps. The judge will place the jumps in the ring giving special attention to lighting and ring enclosures, and make an observation from a dog’s line of sight.”

Jump Faults. All jumps are to be judged the same way. There are four faults associated with jumps:

1. Failure to clear the jump or the height of the jump; knocking the bar off the uprights
2. Using the jump for aid in going over
3. Touching the jump
4. Hesitation or reluctance to jump”

Stand Stay – Get Your Leash: Judging Procedures: *“Prior to the start of judging, the judge will decide where the leash will be placed outside the ring on a chair or similar leash holder. The leash will be placed outside the ring by the steward after the dog and handler have entered the ring for judging. When positioning the dog and handler for this exercise, the judge should ensure that such positioning will permit the dog to keep the handler in its direct line of vision as the handler leaves and returns to the ring, and that the handler, when reentering the ring, is at least 15 feet away from the dog until ordered to return. During this exercise the judge must be in position to watch the dog and see the handler leave and return to the ring. Once the exercise is finished, the judge must watch the dog and handler exit the ring together.”*

Utility

Signal Exercise: Refer above to the foundation exercise: **Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight.**

In addition (OJG): “Judges should note that heeling is considered a principal part of this exercise; all penalties listed under the heeling exercises apply. A dog may non-qualify in the heeling portion using the same standards as in the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight. In the Utility classes, a judge should bear in mind that only during the stand, drop, sit, and come parts of this exercise is it required to non-qualify (NQ) a dog for receiving a command or audible signal. Although penalized substantially, it is possible for the dog to receive a passing score if given a command or audible signal during other parts of the exercise. The *Obedience Regulations* Chapter 5, Section 6, requires the judge to have the handler leave the dog at one end of the ring on the stand and then proceed on the judge’s order to the other end of the ring. This should place the handler about 3 to 4 feet from the opposite end of the ring. An excellent position for judging the stand, drop, sit, and come parts of this exercise is at an adequate distance to the side and slightly to the rear of the dog when the dog is in the stand-stay position.”

“This exercise is composed of three principal parts:

1. Heeling portion
2. Signal portion
3. Recall portion”

Scent Discrimination: Refer to the foundation exercises: **Heel Free, Novice Recall and Retrieve on Flat.**

In addition (OJG): “The judge should be certain that the handler and dog are in position to observe the placement of the articles should they choose to do so. The judge must take the necessary precautions to ensure the articles to be used by the handler are not fouled by the judge or any other scent.”

Directed Retrieve: Refer to the foundation exercises: **Heel Free, Novice Recall and Retrieve on Flat.**

Judging Procedures: “*The judge should be certain the gloves are visible to the smallest and largest dogs. The judge may point to the designated glove at the same time they give the order. The direction the handler turns is at the option of the handler, no matter which glove is designated, but the dog should maintain heel position throughout the turn and sit at heel when the turn is completed. Giving the direction to the dog must be done with a single motion. When the motion stops, the direction is completed.*”

Moving Stand and Examination: Refer to the foundation exercises: **Heel Free, Novice Stand for Examination and Recall.**

Judging Procedures: “This exercise may be judged from the side while the dog and handler are heeling and until the dog is to be examined.”

Directed Jumping: Refer to the foundation exercise: **Novice Recall.**

Judging Procedures: “*The judge should determine the 10-foot distance before beginning the class. The same sequence of jumps should be used for each dog. Reference the Obedience Judges’ Guidelines Chapter 3.*”

In addition (OJG): “In the Directed Jumping exercise, the dog is not required to go to the other end of the ring, only to a point about 20 feet beyond the jumps and in the approximate center. If the dog stops on command and remains at this point, it should not be penalized for not having gone out far enough. An excellent position for judging this exercise is on the side of the ring of the designated jump, parallel to and slightly to the rear of the handler and dog.”

“There are several key points that require your attention:

- 1.The dog must move at a brisk trot or gallop until commanded to sit.
- 2.The dog must go out about 20 feet beyond the jumps.
- 3.The handler should give the command to sit when the dog is about 20 feet beyond the jumps.
- 4.The dog must stop and sit promptly on command.”

“The judge should not place a mark 20 feet beyond the jumps. The reference to 20 feet beyond the jumps is to require the sit command be given prior to the dog reaching the ring barrier so that the dog may be evaluated on its ability to stop and sit on command.”

General (OJG) on procedures in the ring **“Judging the Dogs:** The judge has absolute control and unquestioned authority over all persons and dogs in the ring. With this authority comes the responsibility to be courteous and considerate. Be as systematic in your ring procedure from dog to dog as conditions permit. Judges are required to make their own decisions and to accept the responsibility this implies.”

“A judge’s comments, other than orders to the handler of a dog, shall be limited to a brief greeting, instructions on positioning the dog, and instructions covering the group exercise. A judge will never ask handlers about club affiliations, their opinions or about their dogs’ past performances.”

“The actual judging procedure may vary from judge to judge, but performance requirements must remain the same.”

“Proper Dress. All judges shall wear business attire (weather permitting). It is important for a judge to maintain a proper and professional appearance. The judge is in the ring to do a job, not to be the center of attention because of outlandish dress or bizarre behavior.”

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Below is the next in a series of Random Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

Saving Withdrawals from Your 200 Account ©

Back in April of 2015 I came up with the idea of a series of articles to supplement the Dog-Talk articles. The Dog-Talk series delved into the intricate scoring details of an exercise at the three levels, Novice, Open and Utility. The Random Little Tidbits articles are designed to focus on a particular subject matter in the AKC Obedience Regulations to maybe provide a better understanding. At the time I had NO idea there would be 50 Tidbits, a milestone for sure.

Today's Random Little Tidbit – Does Your Equipment Get the Green Light to Enter the Ring?

You have trained your dog and have now entered a show. You are ready to go, **or are you?** Have you taken the time to check the equipment you will be using to see if it conforms to the AKC Obedience Regulations? It would not be a good thing to get to the ring and find out the equipment you planned to use does not conform to the Regulations. Let's take a close look at the Regulations in regards to the equipment used in the various classes (+ Chapters 1 & 2).

What does it take to get the green light and past the ring gate?

Chapter 1, Section 10 "Identification. Club clothing, AKC event clothing, or breed clothing may be worn by anyone exhibiting a dog or by ring stewards. Clothing may display the person's name, the dog's call name and/or the dog's picture. Titles may not be displayed. Writing or graphics on the clothing must not be in poor taste or contain profanity. Clothing must not display any information that would be in conflict with a sponsor of the trial."

Chapter 1, Section 17 "Disqualification, Ineligibility, Excusal and Change in Appearance of Dogs. No dog will be eligible to compete if it appears to have been dyed or colored in any way, if its coat shows evidence of chalk or powder, or if the dog has anything attached to it for protection or adornment. Such a dog may be judged later if the condition has been corrected and if the judge desires to do so."

Chapter 2, Section 3 "Qualifying Performance. Handlers who carry or offer food in the ring or discipline or abuse their dogs in the ring must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score. Handlers are not permitted to wear such things as waist packs/pouches or any item that, in the judge's opinion, appears to be a training device or aid."

Chapter 2, Section 16 "Use of Leash. All dogs must be kept on a leash except when in the obedience ring, warm-up ring or exercise area and must be brought into and taken out of the ring on leash. Leashes must be clipped to the collar when dogs are brought in for classes requiring an on-leash exercise, a group exercise and awards. In a class where a leash is not required for the performance of the individual exercises, the dog may be brought into and taken out of the ring on a leash that slips/attaches through the dog's collar. The leash must be made of fabric or leather and need only be long enough to provide adequate slack during the Heel on Leash exercise, unless stated otherwise in these regulations. The Novice Group Exercise – Sit and Down Stay, and the Beginner Novice Sit for Exam must be performed with the dog on a 6-foot leash."

Chapter 2, Section 17 "Collars. All dogs in the obedience ring must wear a properly fitted collar approved by the judge. No dog may enter the ring, either for judging or for awards, with unacceptable equipment. No special training collars, such as electronic collars or prong collars, will be permitted. Nothing may be hanging from the dog's collar."

NOVICE:

Beginner Novice A & B; Novice A & B; Preferred Novice; Veterans; Brace; Wild Card Novice & Team

Chapter 1, Sections 10 & 17; Chapter 2, Sections 3, 16 & 17 apply.

1. In regards to the leash in the Beginner Novice Heel on Leash exercise, the Regulations do not state a 6-foot leash is required for this exercise. The handler *may* choose to use a shorter leash during the Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise. For example, a handler with a GIANT breed may not want to use a 6-foot leash all wadded up in their hands during the heeling portion; instead, use a shorter leash which provides adequate slack as stated in Chapter 2, Section 16. However, the leash would need to be swapped out for a 6-foot leash for the other exercise which requires a 6-foot leash, the Sit for Examination. Keep in mind, if this is a chosen option, have the 6-foot leash on you for a quick swap and to avoid holding up judging.

2. In the Regular Novice classes any leash may be used which provides adequate slack during the Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise. The required 6-foot leash is only required for the Group exercise. Unlike Beginner Novice, the handler will be leaving the ring after the Sit - Stay Get Your Leash exercise and will be able to swap leashes outside the ring before reentering for the Group exercise, providing one has qualified during the individual exercises, chosen to return, or was not released or excused for other reasons.

OPEN:

Open A & B; Preferred Open; Graduate Novice & Wild Card Open

Chapter 1, Sections 10 & 17; Chapter 2, Sections 3, 16 & 17 apply.

*In addition, **Chapter 4, Sections 11.*** “The dumbbell, which must be approved by the judge, will be made of one or more solid pieces of wood or non-wooden material similar in size, shape and weight to a wooden dumbbell. Metal dumbbells are not permitted. Dumbbells will not be hollowed out. They may be unfinished, coated with a clear finish or may be any color. They may not have decorations or attachments but may bear an inconspicuous mark for identification. The size of the dumbbell will be proportionate to the size of the dog.”

In addition, (AKC Blog), “What constitutes a correct dumbbell?

Merriam-Webster defines a dumbbell as ‘two weights connected by a short bar that serves as a handle.’ The dumbbell should only have ONE bar connecting the two ends. Two bars (similar to some scent articles) are not acceptable for the dumbbell used in the Open exercises.”

UTILITY:

Utility A & B; Preferred Utility; Graduate Open & Wild Card Utility

Chapter 1, Sections 10 & 17; Chapter 2, Sections 3, 16 & 17 apply.

*In addition, **Chapter 5, Section 8.*** “The articles will be provided by the handler and will consist of two (2) sets only. The handler will choose which two (2) sets are to be used, metal, leather or wood. Each set of articles will be comprised of five identical objects which may be items of everyday use. The size of the articles will be proportionate to the size of the dog. The metal set must be made entirely of rigid metal. The leather set must be made of leather. The wood set must be made of one or more solid pieces of wood. The articles may be unfinished, stained or dyed and must be designed so that only a minimum amount of fastening material is visible. The articles in each set will be legibly numbered with a different number and must be approved by the judge.” [Graduate Open Requires four articles]

In addition, (AKC Blog) “Articles may be of any shape and size as long as the size is proportionate to the size of the dog.

Identification: Articles and the article carrying case must comply with the Regulations Chapter 1, Section 10, Identification.

The articles may be items of everyday use:

1. The metal set must be made entirely of rigid metal.
2. The leather set must be made of leather.
3. The wood set must be made of one or more solid pieces of wood.

Wooden Articles:

1. The wooden set of articles must be made of one or more solid pieces of wood.
2. The articles may be unfinished, stained or dyed.
3. Must be designed so that only a minimum amount of fastening material is visible.
4. The articles will be legibly numbered with a different number.
5. Must be approved by the judge.

Summary:

1. Any color or any shape is fine for articles.
2. Articles may be finished with dye, stain, polyurethane, shellac, or varnish.
3. Articles may be completely unfinished.
4. Paint is not allowed on articles.

Stain: – *As the name suggests, **stains** are coloring agents that are used to change the color or shade of the wood.”*

*In addition, **Chapter 5, Section 10.*** “In this exercise the handler will provide three gloves that are predominately white. They must be open and must be approved by the judge.” [Two gloves are required for Graduate Open]

VERSATILITY:

Chapter 1, Sections 10 & 17; Chapter 2, Sections 3, 16 & 17 apply.

Versatility is comprised of two Novice, two Open and two Utility exercises, a total of six exercises for the class. The combination and order will be posted at ringside at least 45-minutes prior to the start of the class as to which exercises will be used on that particular day. Check the equipment needed for those exercises and make sure they conform to the descriptions defined in the Regular Novice, Open and Utility classes.

****JUDGES:** It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to check all the handler’s and dog’s equipment coming into the ring.**
It will behoove you to do this before the team enters the ring, if there is an issue it can be corrected then, not later.

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RANDOM LITTLE TIDBITS

Exercise Finished!