



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...

Saving Withdrawals from Your 200 Account ©



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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