



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-

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.

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**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.