



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 – 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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