



RANDOM LITTLE TIDBITS (#32 Part II of III)

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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Principal
Toolkit

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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