

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 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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