



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...

***Saving Withdrawals from Your 200 Account***

**NEW EXERCISE**

**Today's Random Little Tidbit – One of The Two New Regular Open (A & B) & Preferred Open Exercises - Command Discrimination - See Page 4 For Clarifications Effective January 1, 2019**

The Regular Open Group exercises of the 3-minute Long Sit and 5-minute Long Down are now a thing of our past. Just as the old Utility Group Stand was replaced in 1988 with the Moving Stand and Examination, the old Regular Open Group exercises have been replaced with two new Open exercises (and challenges) for the Regular Open (A & B) exhibitors. These two new exercises are also being incorporated into the Preferred Open to keep the Open classes identical, except for the minimum jump height requirements.

**See Tidbit #39 for the other exercise details.**

**Section 1 in Open A & B & Preferred Open Classes:**

Prior to the start of judging, the judge will decide where the leash will be placed and post this information at the ring approximately 45 minutes or earlier before the start of the class.

**Section 3. Open A Exercises and Scores:** The exercises and maximum score in the Open A class:

1. Heel Free and Figure Eight	40 points
<b>2. Command Discrimination (Stand, Down, Sit)</b>	<b>30 points</b>
3. Drop on Recall	30 points
4. Retrieve on Flat	20 points
5. Retrieve over High Jump	30 points
6. Broad Jump	20 points
<b>7. Stay - Get Your Leash (Sit, Down)</b>	<b>30 points</b>
Maximum Total Score	200 points

**The suggested judging rate is eight (8) dogs per hour.**

**Section 4. Open B (& Preferred Open) Exercises and Scores:** The various orders of exercises in the Open B class (points and total scores are the same as in Open A):

<b>OPEN I</b>	<b>OPEN II</b>
1. Heel Free and Figure Eight	1. Broad Jump
<b>2. Command Discrimination (Stand, Down, Sit)</b>	2. Retrieve over High Jump
3. Drop on Recall	3. Retrieve on Flat
4. Retrieve on Flat	4. Drop on Recall
5. Retrieve over High Jump	<b>5. Command Discrimination (Down, Sit, Stand)</b>
6. Broad Jump	6. Figure Eight and Heel Free
<b>7. Stay - Get Your Leash (Sit, Down)</b>	<b>7. Stay - Get Your Leash (Down, Sit)</b>
<b>OPEN III</b>	<b>OPEN IV</b>
1. Retrieve on Flat	1. Drop on Recall
2. Drop on Recall	2. Heel Free and Figure Eight
3. Retrieve over High Jump	3. Retrieve over High Jump
4. Broad Jump	<b>4. Command Discrimination (Down, Stand, Sit)</b>
5. Figure Eight and Heel Free	5. Broad Jump
<b>6. Command Discrimination (Stand, Sit, Down)</b>	6. Retrieve on Flat
<b>7. Stay - Get Your Leash (Sit, Down)</b>	<b>7. Stay - Get Your Leash (Down, Sit)</b>
<b>OPEN V</b>	<b>OPEN VI</b>
1. Retrieve over High Jump	<b>1. Command Discrimination (Down, Stand, Sit)</b>
2. Drop on Recall	2. Broad Jump
<b>3. Command Discrimination (Stand, Sit, Down)</b>	3. Figure Eight and Heel Free
4. Figure Eight and Heel Free	4. Drop on Recall
5. Retrieve on Flat	5. Retrieve over High Jump
6. Broad Jump	6. Retrieve on Flat

	<b>Of the 6 Exercise orders, only 4 CD changes are different</b>
	<b>Open A (I) is always the same – as in Utility - Stand, Down, Sit</b>
	<b>III &amp; V are the same order &amp; IV &amp; VI are the same order</b>
<b>Start</b>	<b>Three orders start with the Stand &amp; three start with the Down</b>
<b>15 feet</b>	<b>The Stand is the Second position twice – orders IV, VI</b>
<b>15 feet</b>	<b>The Down is the Second position only once – Open A, order I</b>
<b>15 feet</b>	<b>The Sit is the Second position three times – orders II, III, V</b>
<b>30 feet</b>	<b>The Stand is the Third position only once – order II</b>
<b>30 feet</b>	<b>The Down is the Third position twice – orders III, V</b>
<b>30 feet</b>	<b>The Sit is the Third position three times – orders I, IV, VI</b>

**Chapter 4, Section 7. 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.

**Judge's Orders:** The orders are: "Leave your dog" and "Back to your dog." The judge must use signals for directing the handler to command **and/or** signal the dog to change position except for the first position and that order is: "Stand your dog" or "Down your dog."

**Exercise Description:** The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position in a place designated by the judge. The judge will ask "Are you ready?" before giving the first order to "Stand your dog" or "Down your dog." The handler will give a command **and/or** signal for the dog to change position. On further order to "Leave your dog," the handler may give a command **and/or** signal to stay and will immediately walk forward 15 feet, turn, and face the dog. On the judge's signal, the handler will give a command **and/or** signal for the dog to change to the second position. The judge will then order "Leave your dog." The handler may give a command **and/or** signal to stay and will immediately turn around and walk forward an additional 15 feet, turn, and face the dog. On the judge's signal, the handler will give a command **and/or** signal for the dog to change to the third position. The judge will then order "Back to your dog." The handler may give a command and/or signal to stay, and then must return directly, walking around and in back of the dog to heel position. The dog must stay in position without additional commands or signals until the handler has returned to heel position.

**Judging Procedures:** This exercise must be performed on a long dimension of the ring. **The 15 foot distances must be clearly marked.** The judge must be positioned so that both the dog and handler are under continuous observation during the entire exercise. An excellent position for judging this exercise is at an adequate distance to the side and slightly to the rear of the dog.

**Section 8. Command Discrimination, Scoring:** A dog that fails to obey the handler's first command **and/or** signal for each position or that does not stay until the handler returns to heel position **must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score.**

**Substantial deductions** will be made for a dog that changes position after the handler has returned to heel position and before the judge has said "Exercise Finished."

**Minor or substantial deductions**, up to a non-qualifying (NQ) score, will be made for a dog that walks forward.

As with any exercise it is always best to know the principal features and non-principal parts. The principal feature of an exercise must be met to earn a qualifying score in that exercise.

**Principal features vs. non-principal parts of this exercise:**

- \* 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 part** and scoring takes hold for the short time in which the handler is standing in heel position until the Judge orders "Exercise finished."
- \* Keep in mind, there may also be other penalties (Chapter 2, Section 24) which are not listed. For example, the handler who is not in the proper heel position after returning to their dog.

----- **Learning the nuances of Command Discrimination, from the AKC Blog** -----

1. **The first change of position is the down. What if the dog stands and then downs?**
  - If the dog clearly stands and then downs he has added a position change that is not according to the Regulations and this should be penalized as an NQ. The dog is required to stand or down from the sit position.
  - This doesn't mean the dog has to go down in a certain "style". Many dogs raise their hindquarters from a sit to a down and this is considered acceptable without penalty. If the movement is continuous and it is clearly not an added position the dog should not be penalized.
2. **Is the dog required to be in perfect heel position after it changes position?**
  - **No.** A dog changing position (i.e. sit to stand, sit to down), while remaining in place, may end up somewhat out of heel position. The Regulations do not require the dog to remain in heel position.
3. **Is the handler required to move into heel position before leaving the dog?**
  - **No.** The Regulations do not require the handler to be in heel position to leave the dog.
  - If the dog walked forward, the dog will be penalized for walking forward.
4. **What if, when the dog changes position and it's not in heel position, the handler moves to heel position prior to leaving the dog, should the handler be penalized?**
  - If the handler moves prior to the judge ordering "Leave your dog," a penalty need not be assessed.
  - If the handler moves and then stops in heel position after the judge orders "Leave your dog," and then leaves the dog, the judge may consider this an additional command/signal to stay which would result in an NQ.
5. **Can a handler cross their arms, without penalty, when they command the dog to stay after each position change for the Command Discrimination?**

**Answer:** The *Obedience Regulations* (Chapter 4, Section 7) states the handler may give a command and/or signal to stay. Crossing of the arms is not specifically addressed in the description or scoring section for the Command Discrimination exercise.

- However, movement of hands and arms is addressed in Chapter 2, Sections 20 and 21. Chapter 2, Section 20, states that when a signal is permitted, it must be a single gesture with one arm and hand only, and the arm and hand must immediately be returned to a natural position.
- Additionally, position of the arms and hands, and movements of the head and/or body that aid the dog, will be considered additional signals.
- If in the opinion of the judge, the movement and/or the position was considered to “aid” the dog, it would be considered an additional signal. If a handler gives an additional signal for a principal feature it would be a non-qualifying (NQ) score.
- Folding of the arms is not a single motion of one arm and hand, and must be penalized as a handler error. The degree of penalty may depend on when and how the arms are crossed and/or returned to a natural position.

The following is a summary to help both judges and exhibitors avoid errors and penalties.

**HANDLER – To avoid deductions when using a Signal:**

If using a signal, *with or without a command*, the following applies to all exercises:

1. Signal is a single gesture with one arm and hand only
2. The arm and hand must be immediately returned to a natural position
3. Handler may bend their body and knees to bring their hand level with the dog’s eye when giving a signal to a dog in heel position
4. Signals must be inaudible
5. The handler must not touch the dog
6. Any unusual noise may be considered a signal
7. Any unusual motion may be considered a signal
8. Position of arms and hands and movements of the head and/or body that aid the dog will be considered additional signals
9. Handler may not signal a correction
10. Don’t delay in following a judge’s order

**HANDLER – To avoid deductions when using a Command:**

1. Use a normal tone of voice
2. Don’t delay in following a judge’s order

**HANDLER – To avoid deductions when using both a command and signal:**

1. **The command and signal must be given simultaneously**, which means, “at the same time”; if there is space between the two, that is not simultaneously

**HANDLER – To avoid deductions when using the dog’s name:**

1. Use name once **immediately** before a command or command and/or signal, which means without time or space between the name and the command.
2. Do not use the dog’s name when using only a signal

**DOG – To avoid deductions:**

1. Dog must wait; no anticipation
2. Dog must respond promptly

**Dog’s Names and Commands**

Judges are not required to know the dog’s name, or the commands each exhibitor will use. According to the Regulations, a judge determines if a dog responds to its name, anticipates a command/signal or if additional commands/signals are being used based on time and space between words or words and signals.

Exhibitors must remember the importance of time and space when choosing verbal commands. When words are all lumped together, “StanBackStand”, there is no time or space between words. When words have time and space between them, “Stan Back Stand”, the use of the dog’s name and the commands are not in accordance to the Regulations as outlined above, and will be penalized.

How many words can an exhibitor use? The Regulations don’t specify the number of words that constitute a single command. The judge must determine when commands become excessive and worthy of a deduction.

**Synopsis:**

Sounds relatively simple, right? The handler is ordered to leave the dog in a particular position and walks forward 15 feet, turns and faces the dog, then gives a command **and/or** signal for the dog to change to another position. The handler then turns around and walks forward 15 more feet, turns to face the dog, and gives another command **and/or** signal for dog to change to a third position. Once that is accomplished the handler returns to heel position, all done on the Judge’s orders, of course. Exercise finished! This new exercise is very similar to the Utility Signal exercise we all used to but the handler in this exercise has the option of using a

command **and/or** signal. Plus, the dog is changing positions once in heel position, once again with the handler 15 feet away, and another position change with the handler 30 feet away.

## **Obedience – Clarifications to the Open Class, Command Discrimination Exercise Effective 01/01/2019**

The following clarifications were approved for the *Obedience Regulations* by the AKC Board of Directors at the October meeting, with an effective date of January 1, 2019.

### *Obedience Regulations – Chapter 4 will be amended as follows:*

**Section 7. 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.

The orders are: "Leave your dog" and "Back to your dog." The judge must use signals for directing the handler to command and/or signal the dog to change position except for the first position and that order is: "Stand your dog" or "Down your dog."

The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position in a place designated by the judge. The judge will ask "Are you ready?" before giving the first order to "Stand your dog" or "Down your dog." The handler will give a command and/or signal for the dog to change position. On further order to "Leave your dog," the handler may give a command and/or signal to stay and will immediately walk forward 15 feet, turn, and face the dog. On the judge's signal, the handler will give a command and/or signal for the dog to change to the second position. The judge will then order "Leave your dog." The handler may give a command and/or signal to stay and will immediately turn around and walk forward an additional 15 feet, turn, and face the dog. On the judge's signal, the handler will give a command and/or signal for the dog to change to the third position. The judge will then order "Back to your dog." The handler may give a command and/or signal to stay, and then must return directly, walking around and in back of the dog to heel position. The dog must stay in position without additional commands or signals until the handler has returned to heel position. The handler's hands and arms must hang naturally at the handler's side.

**Judging Procedure:** *This exercise may be performed in any area of the ring that is at least 40 feet in length. The 15-foot distances must be clearly marked. The judge must be positioned so that both the dog and handler are under continuous observation during the entire exercise. An excellent position for judging this exercise is at an adequate distance to the side and slightly to the rear of the dog.*

**Section 8. Command Discrimination, Scoring.** A dog that fails to obey the handler's first command and/or signal for each position or that does not stay until the handler returns to heel position must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score.

Substantial deductions will be made for a dog that changes position after the handler has returned to heel position and before the judge has said "Exercise finished."

Minor or substantial deductions, up to a non-qualifying (NQ) score, will be made for the handler's hands and arms not hanging naturally at the handler's side. Depending on the extent, minor or substantial deductions, up to a non-qualifying (NQ) score, will be made for a dog that walks forward.

**AKC Blog Address:** <https://akcobedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/about/> Sign up to receive updates.

John Cox, AKC obedience judge, [dog-talk@comcast.net](mailto:dog-talk@comcast.net)