



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 – Judging Procedures from the Regulations!

When the AKC Obedience Regulations were published, many **Judging Procedures** from the Obedience Judge's Guidelines (**OJG**), plus new judging procedures, were moved (and expanded) to the specific corresponding exercise(s) for easy viewing and reviewing. This improvement now provides the Judge *and* exhibitor (new *and* experienced) a better understanding of suggested judge's positions during an exercise, plus other vital information not covered in the descriptions or scoring sections.

**Random Little Tidbits #49** will list all the **Regular** exercises \*procedures only\* in this one article. The Regular exercises are the foundation exercises for the Alternative titling and Optional titling classes; therefore, one will not find Judging Procedures listed in those sections of the Regulations. The point of this article is for a *quick easy review tool* for Judges *and* exhibitors to pay attention to the **exercise procedures**. They are an important part of the Obedience Regulations and not to be glossed over. Continue to check the Obedience Judge's Guidelines (**OJG**) as other pertinent general information will still be found. This article **combines** the Judging Procedures and pertinent Guidelines per exercise, plus I will underline words to pay particular attention to.

**Judging Position (OJG):** "Positioning is important for two reasons: first, to establish consistency of judging in the minds of exhibitors and spectators and, second, to properly evaluate the dog and handler the entire time they are in the ring. In determining a position for each exercise choose one that allows you to see both dog and handler without having to turn away to see one or the other. Being in the right position to observe a dog's performance is essential. There is no perfect position, but this does not mean that some positions are not better than others. All dogs shall be viewed from the same relative position. When viewing the dog and handler from the side, try to observe from the dog's side without the handler between you and the dog. Fronts and finishes are to be judged from a position in front of the handler."

### **Novice**

**Heel on Leash and Figure Eight: Judging Procedures:** "In scoring this exercise, judges shall accompany the handler at a discreet distance so that they can observe any signals or commands given by the handler to the dog. The judge must do so without interfering with either dog or handler. The judge should attempt to be in a position during the course of the exercise so that the dog and the handler may be observed from the rear, front, and side. Dogs receiving an extra command or signal during heeling can still qualify, although a deduction must be made for the extra command or signal. Subsequent additional commands or signals could indicate the dog is not under control and is not working with the handler as a team. The judge must determine whether the dog should receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score for heeling based on the overall performance of the dog and handler during the entire exercise."

### **Stand For Examination:**

**Judging Procedures:** "The dog need not be sitting at the start of this exercise. The judge must be alert to keep handlers from going more or less than about 6 feet and must penalize, even to the point of non-qualifying, the dog whose handler backs away when leaving. The examination is complete when the judge lifts their fingers and palm from the dog's hindquarters. Judges should not expose themselves needlessly to the danger of being bitten. Should a dog in the ring give warning that it may bite if you proceed with the examination, you should excuse the dog from the ring and mark the judge's book "Excused – Unable to Examine." If a dog attempts to attack or bites any person in the ring, the judge must disqualify the dog, mark the judge's book "Disqualified – Attack" and fill out the "Disqualification for Attacking" form (AEDSQ1)."

**Heel Free:** Refer to the foundation exercise: **Heel on Leash and Figure Eight.**

**Recall: (OJG): "Recall Exercises.** To have both dog and handler under constant observation in these exercises, a judge should take a position in line and slightly to the rear of the dog, facing the handler but at an adequate distance to one side. This is a foundation exercise and governs the faults and behavior of a dog in all exercises where the dog is moving toward the handler. Finishes are required to be executed promptly, smartly, and straight. This applies to faults in all exercises where the dog returns to heel position. The finish is not a principal part of any exercise. Therefore, failure to finish or extra commands or signals to finish do not require a non-qualifying (NQ) score for any exercise. The judge should never ask the handler to touch the dog or otherwise assist the judge in making a decision. If, in the judge's opinion, the dog is not close enough to the handler, it must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score."

**Sit Stay – Get Your Leash: Judging Procedures:** "The judge will instruct the steward to place the leash at the designated location after the Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise. The handler and dog will be positioned at least 30 feet from and facing the direction of the gate entrance. The judge must be in position to watch the dog and handler throughout the exercise including exiting the ring."

**Group Exercise - Sit and Down Stay: Judging Procedures:** "If a judge observes any signs of aggression or potential problems when the dogs are being assembled outside the ring for the group exercise or once the dogs are brought into the ring, the judge must excuse the dog and mark the judge's book "Excused" and state the reason. Any handlers who physically correct their dogs before or after the group exercise or while leaving the ring must be penalized under Miscellaneous Penalties. Judges must stand with their full attention on the dogs and handlers during the group exercise and remain alert to any potential problems. To have both dog and handler under constant observation in this exercise, a judge should take a position slightly to the rear of the dogs at one end of the row(s) of dogs."

## Open

**Heel Free and Figure Eight:** Refer to the foundation exercise: **Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight.**

**Command Discrimination: Judging Procedures:** *“This exercise must 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.”*

**Drop on Recall:** Refer to the **Novice Recall** foundation exercise for the Recall parts of this exercise.

*In addition (OJG):* **Drop on Recall.** A perfect drop has three characteristics:

1. The dog’s prompt response to the handler’s command or signal to drop
2. No delay or slowness to down
3. The dog must drop completely to a down position”

**Retrieve on Flat:** Refer to the **Novice Recall** foundation exercise for the Recall parts of this exercise.

**Judging Procedures:** *“A judge should not place a dumbbell that is improperly thrown but should require the handler to throw the dumbbell again. A judge will not ask the handler’s opinion when deciding whether a dumbbell is to be thrown again or not; it is the judge’s sole responsibility to make this decision. Once the decision is made, the judge or steward will retrieve the dumbbell. Under no circumstances should the handler be penalized for a bad throw. Requiring the handler to re-throw the dumbbell signifies that the exercise is being restarted; therefore, the handler may pet, praise, and reposition the dog without penalty before the exercise is begun again. The retrieve, including the pickup, must be brisk and without hesitation. Once the exercise begins, the handler may not adjust their feet or position.”*

**Retrieve Over High Jump:** Refer to the foundation exercises: **Novice Recall and Retrieve on Flat.**

**Judging Procedures:** *“High Jump The judge must make certain that the handler throws the dumbbell at least 8 feet beyond the jump. Reference the Obedience Judges’ Guidelines, Chapter 3.”*

*In addition (OJG):* “In the Retrieve over High Jump exercise the handler, with the dog sitting in heel position, must be at least 8 feet in front of the jump or any reasonable distance beyond 8 feet. It is the judge’s responsibility to see that the handler complies before the exercise begins. During this exercise a judge must stand clear of both the handler and the dog in order to prevent any interference with the dog’s performance. The judge should be positioned so that both the dog and handler are under continuous observation during the entire exercise.”

**Broad Jump:** Refer to the foundation exercise: **Novice Recall.**

**Judging Procedures:** *“A handler standing too close or too far from the side of the jump shall be required to move to the proper position. Reference the Obedience Judges’ Guidelines Chapter 3.”*

*In addition (OJG):* “In setting up the broad jump, the judge should make every effort to avoid having the dog jump toward the open gate or close to the table, and ensure that adequate room is allowed from all sides of the jump for the take-off, jumping and on the far side for landing and turning. The hurdles are to be positioned so the dog will be turning away from the ring barrier after landing. The dog and handler must be at least 8 feet in front of the first edge of the jump. It is the judge’s responsibility to see that the handler complies before the exercise begins. During the exercise, the judge must stand clear of the handler and the dog in order to prevent any interference with the dog’s performance. The judge must be positioned so that both the dog and the handler are under continuous observation during the entire exercise. This exercise is a Novice Recall, except for the jump and the position of the handler.”

**Placement of Jumps.** The judge will place the jumps in the ring giving special attention to lighting and ring enclosures, and make an observation from a dog’s line of sight.”

**Jump Faults.** All jumps are to be judged the same way. There are four faults associated with jumps:

1. Failure to clear the jump or the height of the jump; knocking the bar off the uprights
2. Using the jump for aid in going over
3. Touching the jump
4. Hesitation or reluctance to jump”

**Stand Stay – Get Your Leash: Judging Procedures:** *“Prior to the start of judging, the judge will decide where the leash will be placed outside the ring on a chair or similar leash holder. The leash will be placed outside the ring by the steward after the dog and handler have entered the ring for judging. When positioning the dog and handler for this exercise, the judge should ensure that such positioning will permit the dog to keep the handler in its direct line of vision as the handler leaves and returns to the ring, and that the handler, when reentering the ring, is at least 15 feet away from the dog until ordered to return. During this exercise the judge must be in position to watch the dog and see the handler leave and return to the ring. Once the exercise is finished, the judge must watch the dog and handler exit the ring together.”*

## **Utility**

**Signal Exercise:** Refer above to the foundation exercise: **Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight.**

*In addition (OJG):* “Judges should note that heeling is considered a principal part of this exercise; all penalties listed under the heeling exercises apply. A dog may non-qualify in the heeling portion using the same standards as in the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight. In the Utility classes, a judge should bear in mind that only during the stand, drop, sit, and come parts of this exercise is it required to non-qualify (NQ) a dog for receiving a command or audible signal. Although penalized substantially, it is possible for the dog to receive a passing score if given a command or audible signal during other parts of the exercise. The *Obedience Regulations* Chapter 5, Section 6, requires the judge to have the handler leave the dog at one end of the ring on the stand and then proceed on the judge’s order to the other end of the ring. This should place the handler about 3 to 4 feet from the opposite end of the ring. An excellent position for judging the stand, drop, sit, and come parts of this exercise is at an adequate distance to the side and slightly to the rear of the dog when the dog is in the stand-stay position.”

**“This exercise is composed of three principal parts:**

1. Heeling portion
2. Signal portion
3. Recall portion”

**Scent Discrimination:** Refer to the foundation exercises: **Heel Free, Novice Recall and Retrieve on Flat.**

*In addition (OJG):* “The judge should be certain that the handler and dog are in position to observe the placement of the articles should they choose to do so. The judge must take the necessary precautions to ensure the articles to be used by the handler are not fouled by the judge or any other scent.”

**Directed Retrieve:** Refer to the foundation exercises: **Heel Free, Novice Recall and Retrieve on Flat.**

**Judging Procedures:** “*The judge should be certain the gloves are visible to the smallest and largest dogs. The judge may point to the designated glove at the same time they give the order. The direction the handler turns is at the option of the handler, no matter which glove is designated, but the dog should maintain heel position throughout the turn and sit at heel when the turn is completed. Giving the direction to the dog must be done with a single motion. When the motion stops, the direction is completed.*”

**Moving Stand and Examination:** Refer to the foundation exercises: **Heel Free, Novice Stand for Examination and Recall.**

**Judging Procedures:** “This exercise may be judged from the side while the dog and handler are heeling and until the dog is to be examined.”

**Directed Jumping:** Refer to the foundation exercise: **Novice Recall.**

**Judging Procedures:** “*The judge should determine the 10-foot distance before beginning the class. The same sequence of jumps should be used for each dog. Reference the Obedience Judges’ Guidelines Chapter 3.*”

*In addition (OJG):* “In the Directed Jumping exercise, the dog is not required to go to the other end of the ring, only to a point about 20 feet beyond the jumps and in the approximate center. If the dog stops on command and remains at this point, it should not be penalized for not having gone out far enough. An excellent position for judging this exercise is on the side of the ring of the designated jump, parallel to and slightly to the rear of the handler and dog.”

**“There are several key points that require your attention:**

- 1.The dog must move at a brisk trot or gallop until commanded to sit.
- 2.The dog must go out about 20 feet beyond the jumps.
- 3.The handler should give the command to sit when the dog is about 20 feet beyond the jumps.
- 4.The dog must stop and sit promptly on command.”

“The judge should not place a mark 20 feet beyond the jumps. The reference to 20 feet beyond the jumps is to require the sit command be given prior to the dog reaching the ring barrier so that the dog may be evaluated on its ability to stop and sit on command.”

**General (OJG) on procedures in the ring** **“Judging the Dogs:** The judge has absolute control and unquestioned authority over all persons and dogs in the ring. With this authority comes the responsibility to be courteous and considerate. Be as systematic in your ring procedure from dog to dog as conditions permit. Judges are required to make their own decisions and to accept the responsibility this implies.”

“A judge’s comments, other than orders to the handler of a dog, shall be limited to a brief greeting, instructions on positioning the dog, and instructions covering the group exercise. A judge will never ask handlers about club affiliations, their opinions or about their dogs’ past performances.”

“The actual judging procedure may vary from judge to judge, but performance requirements must remain the same.”

“Proper Dress. All judges shall wear business attire (weather permitting). It is important for a judge to maintain a proper and professional appearance. The judge is in the ring to do a job, not to be the center of attention because of outlandish dress or bizarre behavior.”

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