



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 – Common Handler Errors to Avoid in The Obedience Ring

**Part II - The AKC Open Obedience Ring...**

We all have different goals in obedience, but the most common goal I would venture to say is to qualify and do the best we can for those few minutes we have in the ring. A handler puts a fair amount of time into training a dog for an obedience title. When that point in training is reached and the dog has demonstrated success the handler is now ready to show, or *so they may think*. Yes, the dog may be ready but what about the handler? Have they trained themselves? Have they opened the **AKC Obedience Regulations** to even grasp what is expected in regards to *their job* in the ring? Knowledge is power and such knowledge may save the day. The Regulations do provide a wide range of "wiggle room" for the dog and handler to qualify, and knowing those parameters can and will work in one's favor.

This series of articles (**Part I Novice, Part II Open & Part III Utility**) will point out some of the *more common* handler errors which lead to points being deducted, and in some cases all of the available points of an exercise being deducted equaling a non-qualifying (NQ) score. The listings below (and the other parts in this series) were compiled from lists submitted from a number of AKC Judges from around the country. No way is the list complete, or intended to be, but maybe it will help you be aware of ways boost your final performance while ***Saving Withdrawals from Your 200 Account***.

Whether you play cards, games, or compete in any sport, it is to your benefit to know the rules. In Obedience we have a set of Obedience Regulations. They are available for FREE on the AKC webpage in a pdf format that can be downloaded to your computer or phone. <http://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RO2999.pdf> Or you may also order a paper copy at a minimal cost.

**Heel Free, Chapter 4, Section 6 (not in any order):**

<p>1. <b>Always learn to read and refer back to the <u>foundation exercise(s)</u> of an exercise.</b> In this case, read the description and scoring sections of the <u>Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight</u>. The advanced exercises (beyond Novice) will refer you back to the appropriate sections.</p>	<p>2. Read Chapter 2, Section 19 for what is allowed for arm and hand positions during the <u>Heel Free</u> exercise.</p>	<p>3. Extra commands when not necessary. Or being savvy to give <i>one</i> extra command to maybe save the exercise, if necessary. Just points off in this case but better than a possible NQ if it gets the dog back to teamwork. Use the extra command wisely and know when to use it.</p>
<p>4. Not naturally moving arms at sides. For example, holding arms and hands tight against legs.</p>	<p>5. Excessively loud commands, or signals touching the dog. Chapter 2, Section 20</p>	

**Command Discrimination, Chapter 4, Sections 7 & 8 (not in any order):**

<p>1. Leaving or returning to the dog before the judge's order is given. Chapter 2, Section 20</p>	<p>2. Holding signals (if given). Chapter 2, Section 20</p>	<p>3. Not returning the hand and arm to a natural position after giving a signal. For example, holding the hand and arm stiff and out from the body at the end of a given signal. Chapter 2, Section 20</p>
<p>4. Not returning to Heel Position. Chapter 2, Section 18 defines Heel Position.</p>	<p>5. Folding arms before and after walking away from the dog. AKC Blog for details</p>	<p>6. Excessively loud commands. Chapter 2, Section 20</p>
<p>7. Head and body "bends" forward. Chapter 2, Section 20</p>	<p>Before <i>leaving</i> the dog, moving to Heel Position <i>after</i> the judge has ordered "Leave your dog".</p>	

**Drop On Recall, Chapter 4, Sections 9 & 10 (not in any order):**

<p>1. Leaving the dog before the judge's order is given. Chapter 2, Section 20</p>	<p>2. Holding signals (if given). Chapter 2, Section 20</p>	<p>3. Not returning the hand and arm to a natural position after giving a signal. For example, holding the hand and arm stiff and out from the body. Chapter 2, Section 20</p>
<p>4. Excessively loud commands. Chapter 2, Section 20</p>	<p>5. Pausing too long before giving the Drop signal or command. Chapter 2, Section 20</p>	<p>6. Bringing left hand up <i>after</i> giving signal with right hand to finish. (error on all finishes) Considered an extra signal. Chapter 2, Sections 20 &amp; 21</p>
<p>7. Head and body "bends" forward. Chapter 2, Section 20</p>	<p>8. Hands not at handler's side as the dog is coming in to Sit in front. Chapter 2, Section 19.</p>	<p><b>Always learn to read and refer back to the <u>foundation exercise(s)</u> of an exercise.</b> In this case, <u>Novice Recall</u>.</p>

### Retrieve on Flat, Chapter 4, Sections 11 & 12 (not in any order):

1. Touching the dog with the hand on the Stay signal, if given. Chapter 2, Section 20	2. Not staying in position. For example, moving/adjusting feet as the dog is coming in. Chapter 4, Section 11. Also mentioned in Judging Procedures.	3. Giving a signal with the arm and hand holding the dumbbell. Chapter 4, Section 11
4. Hands not at handler's side as the dog is coming in to Sit in front. Chapter 2, Section 19.	<b>Always learn to read and refer back to the <u>foundation exercise(s)</u> of an exercise.</b> In this case, <b>Novice Recall.</b>	

### Retrieve Over High Jump, Chapter 4, Sections 13 & 14 (not in any order):

1. Touching the dog with the hand on the Stay signal, if given. Chapter 2, Section 20	2. Not staying in position. For example, moving feet as the dog is coming in. Chapter 4, Section 11. Also mentioned in Judging Procedures.	3. Giving a signal with the arm and hand holding the dumbbell. Chapter 4, Section 11
4. Hands not at handler's side as the dog is coming in to Sit in front. Chapter 2, Section 19.	<b>Always learn to read and refer back to the <u>foundation exercise(s)</u> of an exercise.</b> In this case, <b>Novice Recall &amp; Retrieve On Flat.</b>	

### Broad Jump, Chapter 4, Sections 15 & 16 (not in any order):

1. Touching the dog with the hand on the Stay signal, if given. Chapter 2, Section 20	2. Know where "about" 2-feet from the sides hurdles are when going out to the Broad Jump after leaving your dog. If a Judge asks you to move forward or back, it is scorable as the exercise has begun when you left the dog. Judging Procedures in regards to the BJ.	3. Not pivoting when the dog is in <u>midair</u> . Hands not at handler's side as the dog is coming in to Sit in front. Chapter 2, Section 19.
4. Not making a 90-degree pivot.	5. Body/head bending with command or signal for the dog to jump.	<b>Always learn to read and refer back to the <u>foundation exercise(s)</u> of an exercise.</b> In this case, <b>Novice Recall.</b>

### Stand Stay – Get Your Leash, Chapter 4, Sections 17 & 18 (not in any order):

1. Leaving the dog before the Judge's order is given.	2. Returning to the dog before the Judge's order is given.	3. Not returning to Heel Position. Chapter 2, Section 18 defines Heel Position.
4. Touching the dogs' rear in setting up at the start of the exercise. Chapter 2, Section 23	5. Touching the dog with hand on the Stay signal, if given.	6. Holding the Stand signal, if given. Chapter 2, Section 20
7. After the exercise if finished, not maintaining control of the dog when leaving the ring. Chapter 2, Section 25	8. Not stepping back <u>into the ring</u> after picking up the leash from outside the ring.	

### Before, Between and After Exercises (not in any order):

1. Physically positioning the dog. Chapter 2, Section 23	2. Guiding by the collar in classes <u>other than</u> Beginner Novice, Preferred Novice and Novice classes. Chapter 2, Section 23	3. Not " <u>gently</u> " guiding the dog by the collar in the classes of Beginner Novice, Preferred Novice and Novice classes.
4. Praising the dog where it is NOT under <u>reasonable</u> control while being praised. Chapter 2, Section 22	5. Leaving the ring without the dog under control. Chapter 2, Section 25	6. Inability to get the dog set up in heel position at the start of exercises <i>to the extent</i> that points are deducted. Chapter 2, Section 25
7. Multiple firm taps on the head, used to cause the dog to look at the handler when setting up for an exercise. Chapter 2, Section 23 <a href="#">See #1</a>		

### Other Random Little Tidbits articles which may also help save handler errors:

Tidbits #1, #6, #7, #22, #26 <https://saintbernardarchive.com/library/>

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