

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 III - The AKC Utility 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.

Signal Exercise, Chapter 5, Sections 6 & 7 (not in any order):

1. Always learn to read and refer back to the <u>foundation exercise(s)</u> of an exercise. In this case, read the description and scoring sections of the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight & Novice Recall. The advanced exercises (beyond Novice) will refer you back to the appropriate sections.	2. Read Chapter 2, Section 19 for what is allowed for hand positions during the <u>Heel Free</u> exercise.	3. Extra commands when not necessary on the heeling portion. 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.
4. Not naturally moving arms at sides. For example, holding arms and hands tight against legs while heeling.	5. Hands not hanging naturally at handler's side as dog is coming in on the Recall portion to Sit in front. Chapter 2, Section 19.	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 & 21
7. Holding signals and/or excessive body language with head and/or shoulder while giving signals. Chapter 2, Section 20	8. 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	9. Stepping into the dog during, or after a Halt.

Scent Discrimination, Chapter 5, Sections 8 & 9 (not in any order):

1. Talking to the dog as you are on the way to pick up the article.	2. Applying scent to the article not using only the hands.	3. Not returning the hand to a natural position after giving the scent to the dog and before sending the dog.
4. Not <i>turning in place</i> when turning to face the articles.	5. Petting the dog while scenting the article.	6. Talking to the dog <i>after</i> the judge has taken the article.
7. Excessive motions of the body while turning to face the articles.	8. Bringing left hand up <i>after</i> giving signal with right hand to finish. (error on all finishes) Considered an extra signal. Chapter 2, Section 20	Always learn to read and refer back to the <u>foundation exercise(s)</u> of an exercise. In this case, Heel Free, Retrieve on Flat & Novice Recall.

Directed Retrieve, Chapter 5, Sections 10 & 11 (not in any order):

1. Not <i>turning in place</i> when turning to face the glove.	2. Not giving the verbal command (verbal MUST be given for the glove retrieve, if not = NQ).	3. Not returning the hand to a natural position after giving the <i>direction</i> to the dog.
4. Excessive motions of the body while turning to face the designated glove.	5. Handler giving an extra command to the dog to reposition it. If this happens <u>after the turn</u> , it is a NQ.	6. The <i>direction</i> to the designated glove must be with a single motion of the <i>left</i> hand and arm along the <i>right</i> side of the dog.
7. The giving of the direction and the verbal	8. Bringing left hand up <i>after</i> giving signal with	Always learn to read and refer back to the

command to retrieve is either simultaneously or immediately following giving the direction.	right hand to Finish. (error on all finishes) Considered an extra signal. Chapter 2, Sections 20 & 21	<i>foundation exercise(s) of an exercise.</i> In this case, Heel Free, Retrieve on Flat & Novice Recall.
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Moving Stand and Examination, Chapter 5, Sections 12 & 13 (not in any order):

1. Not going 10-12 feet past the dog when leaving the dog on the Stand.	2. If a verbal command <u>and</u> signal to the dog to Stand must be simultaneously.	3. Not returning the hand and arm to a natural position after giving the signal to the dog.
7. Handler who hesitates while giving the command and/or signal to Stand. Graduate Open is the exception (Chapter 18, Section 11).	Always learn to read and refer back to the <i>foundation exercise(s) of an exercise.</i> In this case, Heel Free, Novice Stand For Examination & Novice Recall.	

Directed Jumping, Chapter 5, Sections 14 & 15 (not in any order):

1. Not going giving the command to Sit at <i>about</i> 20-feet past the jumps. As a rule of thumb, 5-feet in from the barrier is about 20-feet past the jumps.	2. Not giving a verbal command to the dog to Sit.	3. Not returning the hand to a natural position after giving the signal to the dog to Go Out.
4. Excessive motions of the body and/or head while giving a signal to the designated jump.	5. Not turning while the dog is in <u>midair</u> over the designated jump, if that is the option taken.	6. Commands that are excessively loud. Chapter 2, Section 20
7. 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 & 21	8. After the exercise if finished, (<i>maybe a different exercise in UB order of exercises</i>) not maintaining control of the dog when leaving the ring. Chapter 2, Section 25	Always learn to read and refer back to the <i>foundation exercise(s) of an exercise.</i> In this case, Novice Recall.

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 See #1		

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

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

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