



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 – The Awards Ceremony – What to Expect.

The judging has just concluded in your ring, run-offs (if any) were performed, and the Final scores are now all tallied in the Judge's Book. The judge (or steward) will then make an announcement for all the qualifying teams to come back into the ring. The excitement starts to build once again; you did well and now it is time to collect your green qualifying score ribbon, and maybe a placement prize ribbon to go along with it. Let's take a look at what all should take place during the ceremony and who all is involved.

The American Kennel Club considers the Awards Ceremony as a **BIG DEAL!** The participants are:

1. The exhibitor - what to expect and do during the awards.
2. The judge - their duties in presenting the awards (stewards may be asked to assist).
3. The spectators - gathered around seeking the results and cheering for everyone.

The Exhibitor - what to expect and do during the awards:

1. As you enter the ring (keep in mind) you are now entering with a group of dogs and handlers who are also anxious to enter. **Now** is the time to practice "social **dog** distancing" allowing everyone to proceed through the rather limited space of the ring entrance in an organized fashion. Keep it safe for everyone and keep the moment a pleasant one.
2. For the awards ceremony, dogs may be picked up and carried into the ring if the handler desires. (Chapter 2, Section 11)
3. Handlers are not permitted to wear such things as waist packs/pouches or any item that, in the judge's opinion, appears to be a training device or aid. (Chapter 2, Section 3) This also applies when in the ring for awards.
4. "Leashes must be **clipped** to the collar when dogs are brought in for classes requiring an on-leash exercise, a group exercise and awards." (Chapter 2, Section 16)
5. All dogs in the obedience ring must wear a properly fitted collar approved by the judge. No dog may enter the ring, either for judging or for awards, *with unacceptable equipment*. No special training collars, such as electronic collars or prong collars will be permitted. Nothing may be hanging from the dog's collar. (Chapter 2, Section 17) Dog bibs or other such similar equipment (waist packs/pouches) would fall under unacceptable equipment.
6. KISS (Keep It Simple and Straightforward). When going into the ring for awards, enter the ring as you would with your dog for judging. The exception for awards is you may carry your dog into the ring before, during and after the ceremony.
7. If you are one of the placements prize winners announced, the judge will bring you forward from the others to present you with the placement prize ribbon. You then should **STAY THERE** and not fade back with the other qualifiers! This is you and your dog's time to shine and be acknowledged for your accomplishment. The objective is to also present all the placement prize winners to the spectators at ring side so they too may observe all of the winners at one time and in the order of their prizes.
8. When the ceremony has concluded remember to keep an eye on your dog and maintain "social **dog** distancing" when exiting the ring. Once again, keep it safe for everyone and keep the moment a pleasant one.



9. Remember, the dogs don't have to be brought back in for awards and those with super excitable dogs, ones that respond silly to clapping might want to leave the dog in its crate.
10. Don't bring food into the ring during awards, even though you aren't being judged at that time it's the good sportsmanship concept of leaving no crumbs etc. The same goes for toys, to avoid other dogs wanting a toy you may have brought into the ring.
11. If for some reason you cannot make it back in time for the awards ceremony, have a friend take your place with your armband number in hand. If that is not possible, inform the steward.

The Judge - their duties in presenting the awards - stewards may be asked to assist:

1. Before you call the dogs into the ring be mindful of what is going on in adjacent rings and shift the awards away from the ring.
2. "After all the scores are recorded for the class or division of the class, the judge will call the qualifying handlers back into the ring for the awards ceremony. The awards ceremony for each class and division must be conducted separately." (Chapter 2, Section 11)
3. "Before awarding the placements, the judge will inform the spectators of the maximum number of points required for a perfect score. After scores for each placement have been announced the judge will tell the other qualifying handlers their scores." (Chapter 2, Section 11) This is the requirement, but judges could expand their announcement (if they so wish) to ask, for example, "What leg was earned today?" etc. If another class is to follow in your ring the judge will have to keep things moving along for those waiting for the next class to start.
4. "When all the dogs have been judged and the four official placements determined, then ribbon prizes can be awarded: blue, red, yellow and white **or** white, yellow, red and blue." (Obedience Judge's Guidelines, Chapter 5)
5. "Where ribbons or prizes for additional places are offered, the awards for these should be made after the awarding for the four official placements." (Obedience Judge's Guidelines, Chapter 5)
6. Depending on the number of qualifiers, the judge needs to also keep in mind the spectators at ringside. They too want to be part of the ceremony but can only do so if the qualifying teams are not "deep" into the ring. When that happens, the spectators are in a quandary and cannot hear the announcements of the placements and their scores.
7. If toys are awarded in the ring, the judge and handler both need to be aware of the surrounding dogs and their possible reactions to toys. A judge (or steward, if asked to assist) might want to consider handing the toy to the handler to possibly avoid a dog grabbing or snapping for the toy, if it were presented to the dog. The handler needs to also be aware of how their dog may react when seeing toys and take precautions. Again, keep it safe for everyone and keep the moment a pleasant one for all. That is Good Sportsmanship-being considerate of your fellow exhibitors.

The Spectators - gathered around seeking the results and cheering for everyone:

1. Spectators are a **BIG** part of the dog show experience, and another reason for the *importance* of the awards ceremony.
2. Those of us in this sport of obedience need to always work on bringing others into this venue. It is the venue of training a dog good manners (a foundation venue). We need to share this and take the time to talk to the spectators.
3. While receiving your ribbon(s), keep in mind the spectators standing around the rings. What do you think they are observing and learning? Are they witnessing a great group of folks enjoying their dogs and showing good sportsmanship? Are they seeing us support each other?
4. Are we (as exhibitors) going over to the Novice rings and also being spectators in supporting the "newbies" to our sport? Are we welcoming them to come over to the other rings and learn more?

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