



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 Judge Is Waiting For You To Enter!**

Your turn is next! The  light has been given to you by the steward or judge to enter the ring. **Showtime!** Translation = It is NOW TIME for you to enter the ring. You and your teammate need be ready to *enter* at this point in time without any delay. The judge and/or steward expect a prompt response from you.

The  is **not** a signal to toss that last piece of food, wait for it to be swallowed, do that last touch, spin, heel and halt, etc. All that should have been done in the warm-up ring (if one was available), or in the area outside and away from the ring just prior to the team in the ring finishing up. Being prompt is a common courtesy to the judge, stewards and your fellow exhibitors.

Please keep these ten (10) points in mind:

1. The judge has been at the ring approximately 45-minutes before the start of their first class. The ring was setup and arranged to run efficiently, plus the stewards were instructed in how to follow the judge's plans for a particular class. It should be paramount in your consideration for being ready and to enter the ring when called, thus contributing your part in the efficient flow of that class. *Being ready and entering the ring when called sets a wonderful first impression! Remember, a First Impression happens only once, don't waste it.*
2. Dogs are scheduled by a specific number of dogs per hour, as stated in **Chapter 1, Section 26**. Keep in mind, a judge needs to stay on schedule the best they can. Delays in judging may/can occur for a multitude of reasons, *but waiting for a handler who delays entering the ring when called is not one of them.* It is a handler's responsibility to be ready to enter when called. Review **Chapter 2, Section 15**. The judge, stewards and fellow exhibitors are counting on each handler to do their part in helping the trial run on schedule.
3. Pay particular attention to the teams before you (providing you are not first) and note where the starting point is for the first exercise. In addition, gain knowledge of where and when to move from exercise to exercise in an efficient manner. This will set up a game plan in your mind which will help with the overall performance. Your attention can now be focused on your teammate as you move about without having to stop to focus on what is next, or where that next exercise begins. If you do lose focus the judge is there to help and guide you to the next exercise, if needed. In a class which contains a mixed exercise order, a savvy judge will say something like, "The High Jump is next", after finishing the prior exercise. This will help the handler remember the order and move efficiently without unnecessary delay.
4. Once you and your teammate enter the ring the judging and scoring starts. Yes, even before, between, or after an exercise, review **Chapter 2, Section 23**. If an error were to occur (handler or dog) the deduction will show up under Miscellaneous Penalties in the Judge's Book.
5. When navigating in the ring before, between, or after an exercise, you can praise and pet your dog; review **Chapter 2, Section 22**. BUT, there is always a but 😊, points will be deducted from the total score for a dog that is not under reasonable control while being praised. Know your dog well and learn how much or how little praise is needed to keep your dog's focus while maintaining reasonable control.

6. As a team moves from one exercise to the next it should be accomplished in an efficient manner without delays. Extreme delays (a judgement call as to what is extreme) such as *numerable* spins, jump and touch, or other play-games may be penalized. Such actions may be exhibiting to the judge the dog is not under reasonable control. In addition, if the handler is using excessive verbal commands this too could indicate the dog is not under control and is not working with the handler willingly. Review **Chapter 2, Section 27**. If a penalty is to be assessed that deduction will show up under Miscellaneous Penalties in the Judge's Book.

7. The point being made in this Tidbit is to do your best in being efficient and not delay judging, plus to earn the best points possible by having a good understanding of the Regulations and scoring. One of your goals should be to focus for a perfect score under Miscellaneous Penalties. Work for a ZERO (0) in that box in the Judge's Book, which indicates a perfect score. A penalty showing up in that box could throw your team out of a class placement! Many times class placements (1st – 4th) vary by only ½ point differences. **Judges:** if there are no Miscellaneous Penalties FILL IN the box with a zero (perfect score), do not leave it blank. Review the **Judge's Guidelines** in regards to examples of the Judge's Book, note the zeros.

Do not overlook the fact being on time AND READY to proceed when it is your turn gives a good first impression that you and your teammate are ready to rumble.

8. One would be surprised in what may seem like a minor delay to them (if they even considered that thought!), becomes a major time delay for all exhibitors. Being considerate and other handlers doing the same can offset a lot of needless lost time. Unnecessary lost time from the scheduled judging program can lead to other consequences such as creating future conflicts, missing another class in another ring, or runoff in another ring, for you or your fellow exhibitors.

9. When training work on being ready when called. Have a fellow trainer try and catch you off guard and see what works best for you to be ready when called. With the Fix 'n Go, conflicts, absentees and possible runoffs, you may be called into the ring before you had planned. How are **you** going to be best prepared for when this happens, and it will happen (Murphy's Law?). Something to think about and plan for, plus having a game plan set for when you are in the ring. Don't let your teammate down and end up with something other than a **zero** in that Miscellaneous Penalties box. You can do this, but you need to now plan and train for this *ahead of time*.

10. Consider assisting another exhibitor during your "down time" watching for when their turn may be coming up. This helps all of us at the trial for a good efficiently flow to stay on time. Win win, we all can make it to dinner in time for that glass of wine to celebrate all the things that went well.



Semper Paratus = Always ready! A U.S. Coast Guard Latin slogan you can apply to your training and ring prep.

