

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 - **Excuses or Results – You Can't Have Both!**

In any performance event making excuses for what went wrong is *not* a good thing. It can distract the handler from the real issue, a training issue. ***Read the Tidbit title again!*** When a dog (or handler) makes an error, look at it as needed feedback to analyze for a better performance next time in the ring. That is the positive approach; covering up errors with excuses serves little purpose in solving an issue. Doing so can become a habit we may fall into, especially when new to a sport. Avoid getting caught up in using excuses, instead focus on what needs to be tweaked, fixed or overhauled.

Putting the excuses aside, take a long hard honest look at the performance as a valuable feedback resource and ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is more training needed overall in attention, before, during, or after an exercise?
2. Is more training needed because the dog is just not ready for primetime, entered too early?
3. Is more training needed on avoiding ring distractions? Are the distractions more interesting than YOU?
4. Is more training needed on a particular exercise, or only on a part of an exercise?
5. Look at the things that were correct! Are there any tweaks needed to make it even better?
6. Was the “oops” caused by you (the handler) not doing your job as a team member?
7. Was there a way to have averted the NQ error and still qualify?
8. Was there a breakdown in communication? Do you even communicate?
9. Was valuable information given to the dog that was understood? Did you chatter away in sentences using non-helpful words? Remember, a dog is with a different species. 🗣️
10. Would a Fix 'n Go have been a good option to use? **See Random Little Tidbit #67**
11. Do you (the handler) have good knowledge of the exercise(s)?
12. Have you read and reread the Regulations. Not only the Chapter for the class(es) you entered, but in addition Chapter 2? **See Random Little Tidbit #73**
13. If you have questions did you ask a qualified source for guidance?
14. Did you ask the Judge (their ring time permitting) for feedback? There may have been scoring issues you were not aware of.
15. Did you turn in an Oscar Performance as a handler? **See Random Little Tidbit #21**
16. Was a video taken so you could study it in detail and watch both YOU and the dog's performance?
17. Did you do *your part* in your pre-performance duties? **See Random Little Tidbit #72**
18. Review common handler errors. Knowledge may save the exercise. **See Random Little Tidbits #55, 56 & 57**
19. What to do with your arms and hands in the ring. **See Random Little Tidbit #26**
20. Make a list of your new game plan and check it off to see if you are indeed ready for the next time.



Consider printing this Tidbit to take to your next show and review after your performance while it's fresh.

The Sport of Obedience is a journey, not an instant gratification sport. Remember going to grade school (1-12) was a journey that most likely took 12-years. This will not. 😊 Look at this sport as a challenge that comes in many stages. There is something in it for everyone. Personally, I do not aim for absolute perfection as I do not have the time, or will, that it takes. I do aim for decent work in the ring and consistency in qualifying. I do not have an issue earning a 170 (if that were the case) as the AKC considers it an admirable score, and so should you. I train for about 15-minutes; almost every day when I have goals in mind. Finding 15-minutes in your day is not difficult to have some fun with your best friend in learning new things. If we want something we **WILL** find the time for it. What works for me are shorter sessions that keeps the attention and fun during the training time. Also keep in mind to be consistent with your training methods in the times you are not training.

Remember the saying about how Rome was built, but keep focus on the goals you set.

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