



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 - Principal Features @ a Glance!



I was doing a ringside observation recently for an Open provisional obedience judge, and during our discussions, I mentioned that I have a 8½ x 11 sheet of paper (laminated, back-to-back) listing all the "principal features" of the various obedience exercises. This laminated sheet is placed on my clipboard with my scoresheets on top.

There are two (2) sets of "clipboard" guides:

- (1) Principal Features of the Regular and Preferred classes (back-to-back).
- (2) Principal Features of the Optional Titling classes, when judging those classes.

There are those times when out in the ring judging weird events can and will happen. Sometimes so weird one needs to ponder how to score the exercise. Is it a non-qualifying (NQ) score, or not?

What may help in making such a decision is to first refer back to the principle feature(s) of the exercise in question. Were the principal requirements of that particular exercise met, or not? For a new judge, it can be challenging trying to remember all the exact words in the Regulations on which to base that decision on. For the "long in tooth judge" 😊, the enclosed guides may also help! One cannot *always* remember "everything" in a time of need for making a quick decision.

To help *assist* with making that correct decision (and not having to go to the Judge's table to flip through the Regulations), a judge using these guides can now take a quick glance at the principle features of an exercise right on their clipboard. **Always**, if in doubt, do take the time to double-check the Obedience Regulations and read the full content of that exercise in question to make the correct decision. You owe that to the team.

These guides may also be beneficial for exhibitors, trainers and instructors to have at their side for a quick reference of the principal requirements of each exercise, or to post in a training center or club newsletter.



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The *Principal Features* of the Regular and Preferred Exercises



Classes	Exercise	Principal Feature(s)	Chapter	Section	Reference
Novice	Heel on Leash & Figure Eight	The principal feature of this exercise is the ability of the dog and handler to work as a team.	3	5	Foundation Exercise
	Stand For Examination	The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog stand in position before and during the examination without displaying resentment.	3	7	Foundation Exercise
	Heel Free	This exercise will be performed as in the Heel on Leash but without either the leash or the Figure Eight. The scoring and orders will be the same.	3	9	Foundation Exercise
	Recall	The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay where left until called by the handler, and that the dog responds promptly to the handler's command or signal to come.	3	10	Foundation Exercise
	Sit Stay – Get Your Leash	The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in the sit position.	3	12	Foundation Exercise
	Group	The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in the sitting or down position, whichever is required at the time.	3	14	Foundation Exercise
Open	Heel Free	This exercise will be performed as in the Heel on Leash but without either the leash or the Figure Eight. The scoring and orders will be the same.	4	6	This exercise will be performed in the same manner as the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise except that the dog will be off leash.
	Command Discrimination	The principal features of this exercise are the dog's correct response to the handler's first commands and/or signals and that the dog stays until the handler returns to heel position.	4	7	Foundation Exercise
	Drop On Recall	The principal features of this exercise, in addition to those listed under the Novice Recall, are the dog's prompt response to the handler's command or signal to drop and the dog's remaining in the down position until again called or signaled to come. The dog will be judged on the promptness of its response to the command or signal.	4	9	All applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall shall apply.
	Retrieve on Flat	The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog retrieve promptly..	4	11	Foundation Exercise
	Retrieve Over High Jump	The principal features of this exercise are that the dog go out over the jump, pick up the dumbbell and promptly return with it over the jump.	4	13	All applicable penalties listed under the Retrieve on Flat apply. Appendix B
	Broad Jump	The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay where left until directed to jump, that the dog clear the jump on a single command or signal, and that the dog return to its handler after it has jumped..	4	15	All applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall shall apply.
	Stand Stay – Get Your Leash	The principal features of this exercise is that the dog stand and stay in position until the handler has returned to heel position.	4	17	Foundation Exercise
Utility	Signal Exercise	The principal features of this exercise are the ability of dog and handler to work as a team while heeling and the dog's correct response to the signals to stand, stay, down, sit and come. The handler will stand with the dog sitting in the heel position in a place designated by the judge.	5	6	All applicable penalties listed under the Heel on Leash and the Novice Recall (after the dog has been signaled to come) exercises will apply.
	Scent Discrimination	The principal features of these exercises are the selection of the handler's article from among the other articles by scent alone and the prompt delivery of the correct article to the handler. In each of these two exercises, the dog must select and retrieve an article that has been handled by its handler. The dog must make this selection based on scent alone.	5	8	All applicable penalties listed under the Heel Free, Novice Recall and the Retrieve on Flat will apply.
	Directed Retrieve	The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay until directed to retrieve and that it complete the retrieve of the designated glove.	5	10	All applicable penalties listed under the Heel Free, Novice Recall and the Retrieve on Flat will apply.
	Moving Stand and Examination	The principal features of the exercise are that the dog heel, stand and stay as the handler moves away; accept the examination without shyness or resentment; and return to the handler on command.	5	12	All appropriate penalties of the Novice Heel Free, Stand for Examination and Recall exercises will apply.
	Directed Jumping	The principal features of this exercise are that the dog goes away from the handler to the opposite end of the ring, stop, jump as directed, and return as in the Novice Recall.	5	14	All applicable penalties of the Novice Recall exercises will apply.

Classes	Exercise	Principal Feature(s)	Chapter	Section	Reference
Preferred Novice	Exercises	Heel on Leash and Figure Eight, Stand for Examination, Heel Free, and Recall will be performed and scored in the same manner as the Regular Novice exercises.	11	4, 5, 6, 7	Regular Novice Chapter 3 All applicable penalties of the Regular Novice exercises will apply.
	Stay – Sit or Down Handler Walk Around the Ring	The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in the sit or down position as directed by the judge.	11	8	Foundation Exercise
Preferred Open	Exercises	Heel Free and Figure Eight, Command Discrimination, Drop on Recall, Retrieve on Flat, and Stand Stay – Get Your Leash will be performed and scored in the same manner as the Regular Open exercises.	12	4, 5, 6, 7	Regular Open Chapter 4 All applicable penalties of the Regular Open exercises will apply.
	Retrieve Over High Jump	This exercise will be performed and scored in the same manner as the Open Retrieve over High Jump, except that the jump height is to be set at ½ the height of the dog at the withers, rounded to the nearest multiple of 2 inches. The actual height of the dog shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of 2 inches to determine the minimum jump height, with the exception of dogs eligible for the 4- and 18- inch jump heights. Dogs eligible for the 4-inch jump height must be 12 inches or less at the withers and all dogs over 34 inches are eligible for the 18-inch jump height. Handlers who choose to have their dogs jump more than the minimum required height will neither be penalized nor receive extra consideration.	12	8	All applicable penalties of the Regular Open Retrieve Over High Jump apply. Jumps heights are different. Appendix B
	Broad Jump	This exercise will be performed and scored in the same manner as the Open Broad Jump. The hurdles will be arranged in order of size, evenly spaced, covering a distance equal to twice the height of the Preferred Open High Jump setting for each dog in this class.	12	9	All applicable penalties of the Regular Broad jump apply. Hurdle lengths are different. Appendix B
Preferred Utility	Exercises	Signal Exercise, Scent Discrimination, Directed Retrieve, Moving Stand and Examination will be performed and scored in the same manner as the Regular Utility exercises.	13	4, 5, 6, 7	Regular Utility Chapter 5 All applicable penalties of the Regular Utility exercises will apply.
	Directed Jumping	This exercise will be performed and scored in the same manner as the Utility Directed Jumping exercise except that the jump height is to be set at ½ the height of the dog at the withers, rounded to the nearest multiple of 2 inches. The actual height of the dog shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of 2 inches to determine the minimum jump height, with the exception of dogs eligible for the 4- and 18-inch jump heights. Dogs eligible for the 4-inch jump height must be 12 inches or less at the withers and all dogs over 34 inches are eligible for the 18-inch jump height. Handlers who choose to have their dogs jump more than the minimum required height will neither be penalized nor receive extra consideration.	13	8	All applicable penalties of the Regular Utility Directed Jumping apply. Jumps heights are different. Appendix B

Always, if in doubt, do take the time to double-check the Obedience Regulations and read the full content of that exercise in question. Take the time to refer to the Regulations to make the right decision, you owe that to the team(s).



The Principal Features of the Optional Titling Exercises



Classes	Exercise	Principal Feature(s)	Chapter	Section	Reference
Beginner Novice	Heel on Leash	The principal feature of this exercise is the ability of the dog and handler to work as a team.	16	6	Scoring penalties see Section 7
	Figure Eight	The principal feature of this exercise is the ability of the dog and handler to work as a team.	16	8	Scoring the same as Heel on Leash Exercise
	Sit For Exam	The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog sits in position before and during the examination without displaying resentment.	16	10	Scoring penalties see Section 11
	Sit Stay – Handler Walk Around Ring	The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in the sit position.	16	12	Scoring penalties see Section 13
	Recall	The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay where left until called by the handler, and that the dog responds promptly to the handler's command or signal to come.	16	14	Scoring penalties see Section 15
Graduate Novice	Heel Free and Figure Eight	This exercise will be performed and scored in the same manner as the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise, except that the dog will be off leash..	17	4	Regular Novice Chapter 3, Section 6
	Drop on Recall	The principal features of this exercise, in addition to those listed under the Novice Recall, are the dog's prompt response to the handler's command and/or signal to drop and the dog's remaining in the down position until again called or signaled to come. The dog will be judged on the promptness of its response to the command and/or signal to drop.	17	5	Regular Novice Chapter 3, Section 11 & Regular Open Chapter 4, Section 10
	Dumbbell Recall	The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog promptly takes the dumbbell from the handler and delivers it as in the Open Retrieve on Flat.	17	7	All other applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall and Open Retrieve on Flat will apply.
	Dumbbell Recall Over High Jump	The principle feature of this exercise, in addition to those listed under the Dumbbell Recall, is that the dog return with the dumbbell over the jump.	17	9	All applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall, Dumbbell Recall and Retrieve on Flat will apply.
	Recall Over Broad Jump	The principal features of this exercise, in addition to those listed under the Novice Recall, is that the dog clear the jump.	17	11	All applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall will apply.
	Stand Stay - Get Your Leash	This exercise will be performed and scored in the same manner as the Open A class Stand Stay – Get Your Leash.	17	13	All applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall shall apply.
Graduate Open	Signal Exercise	The principal features of this exercise are the ability of dog and handler to work as a team while heeling and the dog's correct response to the commands and/or signals to stand, stay, down, sit and come.	18	4	All applicable penalties listed under the Heel on Leash and the Novice Recall (after the dog has been given the command and/or signal to come) exercises will apply.
	Scent Discrimination	This exercise will be performed and scored the same as in the Utility Scent Discrimination except as stated in this section. The handler will present four articles, consisting of two (2) sets only. It is the handler's discretion as to which type of article is retrieved. The dog and handler will remain facing the articles and only one article will be retrieved. On the judge's first order, "Take an article," the dog is not required to stay in a sit position .	18	6	All applicable penalties listed under the Heel Free, Novice Recall and the Retrieve on Flat will apply.
	Go Out	The principal features of this exercise are that the dog go away from the handler to the opposite end of the ring and stop as directed.	18	7	Scoring penalties see Section 8
	Directed Jumping	The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay where left, jump as directed, and return to the handler as in the Novice Recall.	18	9	All applicable penalties of the Novice Recall exercise will apply.
	Moving Stand and Examination	This exercise will be performed and scored the same as in the Utility Moving Stand and Examination except that the handler may pause/hesitate when giving the command and/or signal to stand.	18	11	Utility Chapter 5, Section 13
	Directive Retrieve	This exercise will be performed and scored the same as in the Utility Directed Retrieve except that a center glove is not used .	18	12	All applicable penalties of the Novice Recall exercises will apply.
Versatility	2 Regular Novice 2 Regular Open 2 Regular Utility	Six exercises will be performed: two each from the Novice, Open and Utility classes. There will be no group exercise. The exercises will be performed and judged as in the regular classes. For the purpose of this class, scent discrimination articles 1 and 2 will be considered as a single Utility exercise.	19	----->	Novice - Chapter 3 Open - Chapter 4 Utility - Chapter 5

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