



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 – **Judging Procedures, Chapters & Guidelines**

I have created a chart which combines the **Obedience Judging Procedures** and specific chapters and sections of the **Judge's Guidelines** on the Regular foundation exercises into an easy and quick reference guide. It is designed not only to help a new judge applicant, but to also provide a quick review for judges and/or exhibitors in how the AKC obedience exercises are to be performed.

The exhibitor/trainer will benefit in knowing what to expect when stepping into the ring with a good knowledge of the judging procedures in Novice, Open and Utility.

There four (4) chart pages, that can be laminated back-to-back.

Blog Address: <https://akcobedrlyjudges.wordpress.com/about/> Sign up to receive updates.

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Judging Procedures, Chapters & Guidelines

{In one location for a quick and easy reference guide for the Foundation exercises}

{Always read the Regulations in their entirety for a full understanding}

How the AKC Obedience Exercises Are To Be Performed

****According to The Regulations****

Obedience Judges' Guidelines Chapter 3: Judging the Dogs. The judge has absolute control and unquestioned authority over all persons and dogs in the ring. With this authority comes the responsibility to be courteous and considerate. Be as systematic in your ring procedure from dog to dog as conditions permit. Judges are required to make their own decisions and to accept the responsibility this implies. A judge's comments, other than orders to the handler of a dog, shall be limited to a brief greeting, instructions on positioning the dog, and instructions covering the group exercise. A judge will never ask handlers about club affiliations, their opinions or about their dogs' past performances. The actual judging procedure may vary from judge to judge, but performance requirements must remain the same.

Obedience Judges' Guidelines, Chapter 3: Excuse Unable to Examine, Disqualification for Attacking, Excuse – Dog on Dog. Excuse any dog that in your opinion exhibits any sign that it may not be safely approached or examined in the normal manner. Signs may include moving away, growling, showing its teeth, and rolling its eyes. Any dog that displays such demeanor is a threat to you. When you excuse the dog, mark your judge's book "Excused – Unable to Examine." Disqualify any dog that attacks or attempts to attack any person in the ring. An attack is defined as a bite or an attempt to bite anyone, including its own handler, without valid extenuating circumstances, for example accidentally biting the hand when grabbing a toy offered as an award during awards. Whenever possible, keep the exhibitor and the dog in the ring. Call for the Superintendent, Trial Chairperson or Secretary immediately and fill out the "Disqualification for Attacking" form (AEDSQ1). Be certain to clearly communicate your decision to the exhibitor of the dog using the word "disqualified," and explain that the dog may not be shown again in any AKC event until it is officially reinstated by the American Kennel Club. As the judge you have little latitude regarding your responsibility to disqualify or not. Refer all questions to the Trial Chairperson or the Field Representative if present. Mark your book "Disqualified, attacked," give the exhibitor of the dog a copy of the disqualification form and deliver the original to the superintendent. You may be contacted by the Events Department at a later date for additional information. Disqualifications for attacking are very serious and different from other disqualifications. **The failure to appropriately address a potentially dangerous dog compounds the vulnerability of future judges.** Therefore it is of the utmost importance to use the word "disqualified" or "excused," as appropriate, when dismissing an exhibitor whose dog is vicious or shy. Excuse any dog that attacks another dog. **Call for the Superintendent, Trial Chairperson or Secretary immediately,** and fill out the "Judge's Form Dog on Dog Attack" form (AEDSQ3). Such an incident that results in contact with injury to either dog is to be reported to the Trial Chairperson immediately, as it must be addressed by the trial committee.

Obedience Judges' Guidelines, Chapter 3: Judging Position. Positioning is important for two reasons: first, to establish consistency of judging in the minds of exhibitors and spectators and, second, to properly evaluate the dog and handler the entire time they are in the ring. In determining a position for each exercise choose one that allows you to see both dog and handler without having to turn away to see one or the other. Being in the right position to observe a dog's performance is essential. There is no perfect position, but this does not mean that some positions are not better than others. All dogs shall be viewed from the same relative position. When viewing the dog and handler from the side, **try to observe from the dog's side without the handler between you and the dog.** Fronts and finishes are to be judged from a position in front of the handler. The judging of an exercise normally begins when the judge gives the first order, except for the unusual circumstances as stated in the Obedience Regulations.

Chapter 1, Section 10: Identification. Club clothing, AKC event clothing, or breed clothing may be worn by anyone exhibiting a dog or by ring stewards. Clothing may display the person's name, the dog's call name and/or the dog's picture. Titles may not be displayed. Writing or graphics on the clothing must not be in poor taste or contain profanity. Clothing must not display any information that would be in conflict with a sponsor of the trial.

Class	Exercise	Judging Procedure	Chapter	Section
Novice	Heel on Leash & Figure Eight	Chapter 2, Section 1: Heeling Pattern. The same pattern should be maintained as far as practicable for each competing dog. This is a foundation exercise, and it determines the standards for all exercises in which the dog is heeling. The minimum heeling requirements for any class are normal heeling, a fast, a slow, a left turn, a right turn, an about-turn, a halt, and a sit. The heeling patterns should not be in the area of the table and/or gate and should have only one element of an exercise on a leg. (For example, there shall not be a halt and a slow on the same leg of an exercise.) A fast must always be on a long dimension of the ring; slow may be either on the short or long dimension of the ring. The fast and slow should be of significant length, not just several steps. No pattern will have more than one fast and one slow. If possible, have one leg of the heeling pattern with no element on it. The "L" pattern is a minimal pattern. Other patterns are acceptable, but excessive complexity should be avoided. Judging Procedure: In scoring this exercise, judges shall accompany the handler at a discreet distance so that they can observe any signals or commands given by the handler to the dog. The judge must do so without interfering with either dog or handler. The judge should attempt to be in a position during the course of the exercise so that the dog and the handler may be observed from the rear, front, and side.	2	1
		Judging Procedure: The dog need not be sitting at the start of this exercise. The judge must be alert to keep handlers from going more or less than about 6 feet and must penalize, even to the point of non-qualifying, the dog whose handler backs away when leaving. The examination is complete when the judge lifts their fingers and palm from the dog's hindquarters. Judges should not expose themselves needlessly to the danger of being bitten. Should a dog in the ring give warning that it may bite if you proceed with the examination, you should excuse the dog from the ring and mark the judge's book "Excused – Unable to Examine." If a dog attempts to attack or bites any person in the ring, the judge must disqualify the dog, mark the judge's book "Disqualified – Attack" and fill out the "Disqualification for Attacking" form (AEDSQ1).	3	5
	Stand For Examination	Judging Procedure: 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	7
	Heel Free		3	9

	Recall	Obedience Judges' Guidelines, Chapter 3: Recall Exercises. To have both dog and handler under constant observation in these exercises, a judge should take a position in line and slightly to the rear of the dog, facing the handler but at an adequate distance to one side. This is a foundation exercise and governs the faults and behavior of a dog in all exercises where the dog is moving toward the handler. Finishes are required to be executed promptly, smartly, and straight. This applies to faults in all exercises where the dog returns to heel position. The finish is not a principal part of any exercise. Therefore, failure to finish or extra commands or signals to finish do not require a non-qualifying (NQ) score for any exercise. The judge should never ask the handler to touch the dog or otherwise assist the judge in making a decision. If, in the judge's opinion, the dog is not close enough to the handler, it must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score.	3	10
	Sit Stay – Get Your Leash	Judging Procedure: Prior to the start of judging, the judge will instruct the steward where to place the leash after the Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise. The leash will be placed inside the ring near the gate entrance on a chair or similar leash holder. The handler and dog will be positioned at least 30 feet from and facing the direction of the gate entrance. The judge must be in position to watch the dog and handler throughout the exercise including exiting the ring.	3	12
	Group	Judging Procedure: If a judge observes any signs of aggression or potential problems when the dogs are being assembled outside the ring for the group exercise or once the dogs are brought into the ring, the judge must excuse the dog and mark the judge's book "Excused" and state the reason. Any handlers who physically correct their dogs before or after the group exercise or while exiting the ring must be penalized under Miscellaneous Penalties. Judges must stand with their full attention on the dogs and handlers during the group exercise and remain alert to any potential problems. To have both dog and handler under constant observation in this exercise, a judge should take a position slightly to the rear of the dogs at one end of the row(s) of dogs.	3	14
Open & Preferred Open	Heel Free	Judging Procedure: 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
	Command Discrimination	Judging Procedure: This exercise may be performed in an area of the ring that is at least 40 feet in length. The 15-foot distances must be clearly marked. The judge must be positioned so that both the dog and handler are under continuous observation during the entire exercise. An excellent position for judging this exercise is at an adequate distance to the side and slightly to the rear of the dog. Obedience Judges' Guidelines, Chapter 3: The first position change is performed with the handler standing with the dog sitting in heel position and requires the dog to stand or down from the sit position. The dog is not required to stand or down in a specific style which may result in the dog ending up somewhat out of the starting heel position. When changing from a sit to a down, a dog may raise its hindquarters to do so without penalty, provided the movement is continuous. If a dog stands and then downs, it has added a position change, and must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score.	4	7
	Drop On Recall	Obedience Judges' Guidelines, Chapter 3: In addition to the Recall (see Novice Recall) Drop on Recall. A perfect drop has three characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog's prompt response to the handler's command or signal to drop • No delay or slowness to down • The dog must drop completely to a down position 	4	9
	Retrieve on Flat	Judging Procedure: A judge should not place a dumbbell that is improperly thrown but should require the handler to throw the dumbbell again. A judge will not ask the handler's opinion when deciding whether a dumbbell is to be thrown again or not; it is the judge's sole responsibility to make this decision. Once the decision is made, the judge or steward will retrieve the dumbbell. Under no circumstances should the handler be penalized for a bad throw. Requiring the handler to re-throw the dumbbell signifies that the exercise is being restarted; therefore, the handler may pet, praise, and reposition the dog without penalty before the exercise is begun again. The retrieve, including the pickup, must be brisk and without hesitation. Once the exercise begins, the handler may not adjust their feet or position. Chapter 4, Section 11: The judge will require the dumbbell to be thrown again before the dog is sent if it is thrown less than 20 feet, too far to one side or too close to the ring's edge.	4	11
	Retrieve Over High Jump	Judging Procedure: The judge must make certain that the handler throws the dumbbell at least 8 feet beyond the jump. Obedience Judges' Guidelines, Chapter 3: In the Retrieve over High Jump exercise the handler, with the dog sitting in heel position, must be at least 8 feet in front of the jump or any reasonable distance beyond 8 feet. It is the judge's responsibility to see that the handler complies before the exercise begins. During this exercise a judge must stand clear of both the handler and the dog in order to prevent any interference with the dog's performance. The judge should be positioned so that both the dog and handler are under continuous observation during the entire exercise. Placement of Jumps. The judge will place the jumps in the ring giving special attention to lighting and ring enclosures, and make an observation from a dog's line of sight. Jump Faults. All jumps are to be judged the same way. There are four faults associated with jumps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to clear the jump or the height of the jump; knocking the bar off the uprights • Using the jump for aid in going over • Touching the jump • Hesitation or reluctance to jump 	4	13

		<p>Measuring: In all classes with jumps, as the dog is brought into the ring, the judges may, at their discretion, measure the dog to verify the height at the withers. The measurement is made using an ordinary folding ruler or steel tape that may be calibrated to show the correct jump height. Nothing may be attached to determine level position. No other measuring device is required or acceptable in the ring. The ruler or tape is held by the judge. Measurements made by the judge are final and are not subject to verification.</p>	2	1
	Broad Jump	<p>Judging Procedure: A handler standing too close or too far from the side of the jump shall be required to move to the proper position.</p> <p>Obedience Judges' Guidelines Chapter 3: In setting up the broad jump, the judge should make every effort to avoid having the dog jump toward the open gate or close to the table, and ensure that adequate room is allowed from all sides of the jump for the take-off, jumping and on the far side for landing and turning. The hurdles are to be positioned so the dog will be turning away from the ring barrier after landing. The dog and handler must be at least 8 feet in front of the first edge of the jump. It is the judge's responsibility to see that the handler complies before the exercise begins. During the exercise, the judge must stand clear of the handler and the dog in order to prevent any interference with the dog's performance. The judge must be positioned so that both the dog and the handler are under continuous observation during the entire exercise. This exercise is a Novice Recall, except for the jump and the position of the handler.</p>	4	15
	Stand Stay – Get Your Leash	<p>Judging Procedure: Prior to the start of judging, the judge will decide where the leash will be placed, outside the ring on a chair or similar leash holder. The leash will be placed outside the ring by the steward after the dog and handler have entered the ring for judging. When positioning the dog and handler for this exercise, the judge should ensure that such positioning will permit the dog to keep the handler in its direct line of vision as the handler leaves and returns to the ring, and that the handler, when reentering the ring, is at least 15 feet away from the dog until ordered to return. During this exercise the judge must be in position to watch the dog and see the handler leave and return to the ring. Once the exercise is finished, the judge must watch the dog and handler exit the ring together.</p>	4	17
Utility & Preferred Utility	Signal Exercise	<p>Obedience Judges' Guidelines, Chapter 3: Judges should note that heeling is exercises apply. A dog may non-qualify in the heeling portion using the same standards as in the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight. In the Utility classes, a judge should bear in mind that only during the stand, stay, drop, sit, and come parts of this exercise is it required to non-qualify (NQ) a dog for receiving a command or audible signal. Although penalized substantially, it is possible for the dog to receive a passing score if given a command or audible signal during other parts of the exercise. The Obedience Regulations Chapter 5, Section 6, requires the judge to have the handler leave the dog at one end of the ring on the stand and then proceed on the judge's order to the other end of the ring. This should place the handler about 3 to 4 feet from the opposite end of the ring. An excellent position for judging the stand, drop, sit, and come parts of this exercise is at an adequate distance to the side and slightly to the rear of the dog when the dog is in the stand-stay position. This exercise is composed of three principal parts: a heeling portion, the signal portion, and a recall portion.</p>	5	6
	Scent Discrimination	<p>Obedience Judges' Guidelines, Chapter 3: The judge should be certain that the handler and dog are in position to observe: the placement of the articles should they choose to do so. The judge must take the necessary precautions to ensure the articles to be used by the handler are not fouled by the judge or any other scent.</p>	5	8
	Directed Retrieve	<p>Judging Procedure: The judge should be certain the gloves are visible to the smallest and largest dogs. The judge may point to the designated glove at the same time they give the order. The direction the handler turns is at the option of the handler, no matter which glove is designated, but the dog should maintain heel position throughout the turn and sit at heel when the turn is completed. Giving the direction to the dog must be done with a single motion. When the motion stops, the direction is completed.</p>	5	10
	Moving Stand And Examination	<p>Judging Procedure: This exercise may be judged from the side while the dog and handler are heeling and until the dog is to be examined.</p>	5	12
	Directed Jumping	<p>Judging Procedure: The judge should determine the 10-foot distance before beginning the class. The same sequence of jumps should be used for each dog.</p> <p>Obedience Judges' Guidelines Chapter 3: In the Directed Jumping exercise, the dog is not required to go to the other end of the ring, only to a point about 20 feet beyond the jumps and in the approximate center. If the dog stops on command and remains at this point, it should not be penalized for not having gone out far enough. An excellent position for judging this exercise is on the side of the ring of the designated jump, parallel to and slightly to the rear of the handler and dog.</p> <p>There are several key points that require your attention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog must move at a brisk trot or gallop until commanded to sit. • The dog must go out about 20 feet beyond the jumps. • The handler should give the command to sit when the dog is about 20 feet beyond the jumps. • The dog must stop and sit promptly on command. <p>The judge should not place a mark 20 feet beyond the jumps. The reference to 20 feet beyond the jumps is to require the sit command be given prior to the dog reaching the ring barrier so that the dog may be evaluated on its ability to stop and sit on command.</p>	5	14

Guideline For Scoring Directed Jumping

Obedience Judges' Guidelines, Chapter 3: When scoring the Directed Jumping exercise, large variations in performance may occur and there is not a great deal of time to consider how far from perfect each variation is. As an aid to maintaining some consistency in the manner in which all dogs in the class are scored, there should be no question that some type of system needs to be adopted in advance of the class. Although the following suggestion may not fit your particular method of scoring, it may serve as an aid in developing your own individual style. A grid is based on the premise that the closer to perfection, the smaller the deduction. Should the dog go out about 20 feet beyond the jumps, stop on command by the handler and sit in the approximate center of the ring, there is no deduction. (This is represented by an imaginary circle of about 3 feet in the center of the ring at about a distance of 20 feet beyond the jumps.) **Keep in mind that the handler should stop and sit the dog about 20 feet beyond the jump, not precisely 20 feet beyond the jump. If the dog stops and sits on the handler's command at 21 feet or 19 feet beyond the jumps (this is about 20 feet beyond the jumps), no points should be deducted. The key is that the dog stops and sits on command.** The dog should not stop and sit without a command from the handler or stop and/or sit when it arrives at the ring barrier simply because it can go no further. If the dog does either of these, points are deducted because the handler's command did not cause the dog to stop and sit. If the dog stops and sits on the handler's command but the handler has stopped the dog at about the 12-foot distance, a deduction is in order as the handler did not stop and sit the dog at about 20 feet beyond the jumps. Again, the requirement is to stop and sit the dog at about 20 feet beyond the jumps, not precisely 20 feet beyond the jumps. If the dog goes out about 20 feet beyond the jumps, stops and sits on the handler's command but its final position is in one of the corners of the ring, a three point deduction should be made. If the dog goes out only 10 feet beyond the jumps, stops and sits on command but the final position is in the center of the ring, a three point deduction should be made. If the dog goes out about 10 feet, stops and sits on command but the final position is next to the side of the ring, a five or six point deduction is in order.

Sample Scoring Grid For Directed Jumping

Sample of a Grid for Scoring Directed Jumping						
3	2	1	0	1	2	3
4	3	2	1	2	3	4
5	4	3	2	3	4	5
Jump				Jump		
<p>Keep in mind...</p> <p>A dog will receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score if does not stop and remain <u>at least 10 feet past the jumps</u> without an additional command.</p>						

Judge's Report on Ring and Equipment

Chapter 1, Section 34. Judge's Report on Ring and Equipment. The superintendent and the officials of the club holding the obedience trial are responsible for providing rings and equipment that meet the requirements of these regulations. The judges, however, must check both the ring and equipment before starting to judge. Ring size should be determined by the judge pacing the ring. The jumps are measured by the judge to make sure they meet the requirements of the Obedience Regulations. A deviation of up to one-half inch is considered a minor change and is acceptable. If the jumps are made of a material other than wood, they must meet all the requirements of the Obedience Regulations, including weight and flat finish. Having checked the jumps, the judge will place the jumps in the ring, giving special attention to lighting and ring enclosures, and make an observation from a dog's line of sight. If mats are placed under the jumps, they should be at least 4 feet in width. If there are ring or equipment deficiencies, the judge shall bring them to the attention of the trial secretary or superintendent so that they may be corrected in accordance with the provisions of the Obedience Regulations. **If the deficiencies cannot be corrected quickly, the judge will note this fact on the inside front cover of the judge's book and proceed to judge the class under the deficient conditions.** In extreme cases where the deficiencies, in the opinion of the judge, are of such major proportion as to seriously affect the dog's performance or safety, the judge will give each handler the option of not competing. If the handler's decision is not to compete, they will be referred to the trial secretary or superintendent for a refund of the entry fee. Under no condition may a judge refuse to judge a class.

After the trial, the judge must report to the AKC any undesirable ring conditions or deficiencies that were not promptly corrected at their request.