

Today's Random Little Tidbit – Beginner Novice Excellent (BNX)



Sending out an idea to ponder... FROM ME PERSONALLY - as an obedience exhibitor ONLY - having in mind a new puppy who will be venturing into its obedience career.

Beginner Novice Excellent: A transitional class aimed at and for the **Regular Novice** and **Preferred Novice** classes. For the “obedience traditionalists,” read on before you get your knickers all knotted up. 😊

The Beginner Novice classes (A & B) have been very popular classes in adding entries, plus bringing in new folks to our sport. No question about that! I could be wrong, but I am getting the impression that after many of the new exhibitors earn the **BN** title they leave the obedience building and go on to other venues. The Heel Free seems to be a big issue for advancing onward to the upper classes after earning the Beginner Novice title, IMO. Adding a **Beginner Novice Excellent (BNX)** class would hopefully keep the new exhibitor in the obedience buildings. By having similar Beginner Novice exercises at the Beginner Novice Excellent class level (with new advanced skills), this gives the class appeal and obtainable opportunities to continue on. Using the word “**Excellent**” (acronym **BNX**) in the title states the top achievement level for the Beginner Novice classes (as a whole) has been obtained. Only two (2) levels are suggested here: **BN (A & B)** and **BNX (No A or B)**. The eligibility requirements would be the same as in the **BNB** class (see #6).

I further believe more time in and around the obedience rings for the new exhibitor will:

1. Build more confidence in their teamwork, skills and successes.
2. Provide more time and chances to chat with other exhibitors about our sport to learn and feel comfortable in advancing on to Regular Novice or Preferred Novice classes.
3. Yes, there will be those who may go on to the new Beginner Novice Excellent class and then stop, but that is not a bad thing. They have gained more experience and exposure to obedience, and the club has gained more entries which help their bottom line, as did the original Beginner Novice A & B classes.
4. The newbies who may leave after a BNX title may come back having had success and pride in earning two (2) obedience titles. Today's crowd loves the acronyms strung out behind their dog's name.
5. The goal of a Beginner Novice Excellent class is aimed at keeping more newbies in obedience for advancing on to the other levels.
6. It will also provide a class with more advanced skills than BN (A & B). This is good for more ring exposure (with one-time encouragements) for a dog that may need it, already having a **BN**, **CD** or **PCD** title.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE BEGINNER NOVICE EXCELLENT (BNX) Class:

Heel On Leash

There are *no Rally Signs*, the Judge will call the orders as they do now during the Beginner Novice Figure Eight (and other advanced Figure Eight exercises). The Beginner Novice Heel on Leash description and scoring section remains the same for both BN and BNX.

Figure Eight

To remain the same as is in BN.

***Stand* For Examination**

Bring in the Novice ****Stand**** For Examination (off leash) in place of the Sit for Examination (on a 6-foot leash). The exercise is in line for the Regular Novice and Preferred Novice classes in regards to performance and scoring. This is a new skill that is similar but different from the Sit for Examination. *As a result, only a leash of adequate length will be needed for the Beginner Novice Excellent exercises of **Heel on Leash and Figure Eight**.* The Stand for Examination and all other exercises are off leash, being Stay orientated exercises.

Sit/Down Stay, Handler Walk Around The Ring

Add the ****Down**** (as an option) making it the same exercise as in Preferred Novice. This is a very good exercise for the Beginner Novice classes, IMO. Yes, some feel it is more difficult than the Regular Novice Group exercise, which should make the Regular Novice Group not look so difficult when thinking about advancing to that level.

Recall

Add the Finish to the exercise, plus add the Finish in the BNX exercise description and scoring sections. The rest of the exercise remains the same, including the extra command or signal to Come or Sit - to be scored as a substantial and not a NQ on the second command or signal as now stated in the Beginner Novice Recall scoring section.

Sit Stay – Get Your Leash

This would be a new exercise and skill added in, to be performed and scored as in the Regular Novice Class. The dog already has stayed for the Stand For Examination, Handler Walks Around the Ring, and Recall, so the Stay skill has been taught.

Judging Procedures:

1. Have the Steward take the leash *after* the Figure Eight exercise and place it at a designated location near the ring entrance.
2. *After* the Figure Eight exercise is finished, the handler may guide the dog gently by the collar to the location for the Stand for Examination. **See Chapter 2, Section 23.** This exercise is to be performed without a leash attached.
3. *After* the Stand for Examination is finished, the handler may once again guide the dog gently by the collar to the location for the Sit/Down Stay – Handler Walk Around the Ring.
4. *After* the Sit/Down Stay, the Recall is performed with the Finish added in.
5. *After* the Recall and Finish exercise, the handler moves to the area 30-feet from the designated leash placement for the Sit Stay – Handler Get Your Leash exercise.
6. As the team is leaving the ring **Chapter 2, Section 25** comes into play: as being under control.

The seasoned traditionalist *needs to recognize the fact* that society has changed from the “olden days” when many of us came into this sport. It was the “only game in town” except for field events. Tracking was part of the Obedience Regulations in the early days. Nowadays there are a multitude of new Sports for a dog and handler to compete in, and Obedience needs to adapt (**or die**) to meet new demands. **Strong words**, but take a good look at what is going on in other venues outside our obedience rings. The Obedience entry statistics over the years are not in our favor.

Times are changing and we must learn to adapt and avoid phrases such as “dumbing down” our sport. Such words parroted is nothing but a negative insult to a newbie who will go elsewhere after hearing such comments. There are times we are our own worst enemy in not supporting new exhibitors and welcoming them to our sport, which has been around since 1936!

Attracting new obedience exhibitors can be accomplished with a “carrot” (as other venues have done), plus holding on to the new exhibitors who did indeed enter into our sport for the first time. We need to embrace them, encourage them in our sport, and teach them the joys of accomplishments (pass or fail) and values we have to offer.

Take a moment and remember back how those kind words spoken to you when you started that had such a positive impact. It may have even been in a Novice Y class; remember that class? I don’t recall that class referred to as dumbing down obedience. It was a valuable stepping stone in one’s training and ring experiences, for both the dog and handler alike.

What are you doing to make Obedience welcoming?

1. Are **you** making it a point to speak such kind words to a new exhibitor?
2. Are **you** too busy wrapped up with your own world to even venture over to the other rings and offer support?
3. It can be just the simple gesture of hand clapping. A welcoming “YEA TEAM!”.
4. Are **you**, in fact, part of the problem in not welcoming new exhibitors and trying to be helpful in their new adventure?
5. Are **you** speaking well and positive in regards to our sport and the AKC in general? **If not**, review **Tidbit #16** <https://saintbernardarchive.com/library/>

Please give this entire Tidbit some pondering. It is an idea only aimed to help. I do believe it has merit to increase entries.