



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 – Judges Ask Themselves, “Are YOU Ready?”



This Tidbit is written for **exhibitors, spectators and those who may be considering judging** who gather around an obedience ring to watch and enjoy the show. Below is a brief insight of a judge's duties and considerations before the first team enters the ring on the actual day of judging. This is only a small part of what actually takes place behind the scenes. The judge did not just show up at the ring (after checking out the lunchroom 😊) to grab ahold of the clipboard and call the first team into the ring. This *tidbit* does not even touch on the AKC requirements to become an approved Obedience judge.

It is nearing showtime but the judge's "Showtime" started well in advance of the actual show's date. Multitudes of planning, preparation, items to consider and review take place well before the show actual date. In addition, many of the same items will also be considered before the scheduled start time of the class(es). Let's take a moment and review a few of these topics. By no means is the following list intended to be complete as a judge may plan in other ways, or have other topics they may also be considering. The list is provided merely as *an example of some of the topics*, plus the thinking processes before the judging begins. Judging is not as simple as it may look, but oh so rewarding in giving back to our sport.

When an invitation to judge is received a judge will need to consider:

1. If they are available on those dates and eligible to judge the classes being offered.
2. Any conflicts with other accepted assignments, or too tight of travel time between other dates accepted?
3. Review the **Obedience Judge's Guidelines** when accepting invitations and the recommendations listed.
<http://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RO2999.pdf>
4. Making needed travel reservations well in advance of the show date.

Advance planning comes into play well before the actual show date:

1. Checking out the AKC site to look up the event. It will provide additional information if needed, such as Superintendent or Show Secretary, etc.. Once that information is obtained, the judge will know who to contact if a Premium List or Judging Program does not arrive. <https://webapps.akc.org/event-search/#/search>
2. Checking the judge's briefcase making sure "the tools of the trade" are in place before leaving for the show.
3. Prepare worksheets, plus having extra copies for possible move-ups.
4. Prepare the required ring postings for the classes to be judged.
5. Reviewing the **Obedience Regulations** and **Obedience Judge's Guidelines**.
6. Reviewing filling out the **Judge's Book** correctly.
7. Reviewing the proper **Judge's Orders** which are *in quotes*—an integral part of standardized judging!
8. Reviewing **Principal features & non-principal features** of the class exercises.
9. Reviewing the **applicable penalties** and where they may apply to the various exercises.
10. Check the weather and dress appropriately (weather permitting) while still appearing professionally dressed.

Arriving at the ring well before the start time to prepare for judging:

1. Verifying the ring size regulations, location of gate and table (move if needed and possible).
2. Having a backup plan (for heeling and other exercise locations) if a ring entrance or table cannot be adjusted.
3. Checking the jumps by measuring--one-half inch deviation is acceptable.
4. Checking width of the jumps, are boards numbered, checking the bar, if all parts (boards/hurdles) are at ringside.
5. Noting the placement of jumps, paying attention to lighting and ring enclosures from the DOG's line of sight.
6. Placing the *required* marks in the ring for the classes.
7. Checking the ground or floor for safe footing. If deficiencies cannot be corrected (above), make note in the Judge's Book and follow up with an email to obedience@akc.org

Managing the ring:

1. Making sure the heeling pattern being used is not choppy. Does it have a smooth flow for ALL breeds?
2. Making sure the heeling (and other exercises) is away from the ring entrance and/or table.
3. Making sure the Figure Eight is out and away from obstructions, such as ring barriers and jumps.
4. Preplanning adequate space for the physically challenged handlers.
5. Informing the exhibitors of the heeling pattern (tell, or show, or post).
6. Posting required information for the class(es) to be judged at least **45-minutes** ahead of class start time.
7. Giving serious thought for the best judging positions for each exercise in observing the team's performances.
8. Keeping distance away from the team and being aware of any movements so as not to interfere.
9. Staying on the dog's side as much of the time as possible, especially during the heeling exercises.
10. Time management at the judge's table, plus efficient team movements from one exercise to the next.

Steward's instructions:

1. Thanking the stewards for volunteering their time.
2. Reviewing their duties and make sure they are understood well before the class starts.
3. Having printed instructions so you do not to forget all items needing to be covered, plus the stewards will then have a hard copy to refer back to.

Items the judge needs to be mindful of when the judging is underway:

1. A class with jumps--looking first at the jumps to make sure they are set correctly *before* the team enters the ring. Next, looking at the dog entering the ring making sure the jumps are set for at least the minimum height and distance requirements.
2. Bringing the team into the ring **ONLY** when ready to proceed.
3. As the team enters the ring, make a quick visual check of the collar, leash, and approved forms of identification, making sure they all conform to the Regulations.
4. Checking the armband--first to make sure there is one and it matches the worksheet.
5. Keeping eyes on the team once they enter the ring and until they leave the ring.
6. In exercises where the handler leaves the dog, keep the *dog* in the judge's main vision, and the handler in the peripheral vision until the handler reaches where they are going. As the dog is being sent/called, be aware of the *handler's actions*, keeping the dog in the peripheral vision.
7. After the last exercise the judge will refrain from too much conversation with the handler. Let the handler concentrate on getting the leash on their dog and exiting under control. The judge needs to avoid being a distraction to the team which could end up causing a scorable fault. Chat after the class(es) is over.
8. The judge will pay full attention to the team exiting the ring before entering data in the Judge's Book.

The judge will be using the words in the Obedience Regulations:

In communicating with the handlers the judge will be using the correct words in the Regulations when giving information or feedback to the handler. The handler should then be able to go to the Regulations and *find* exactly what the comment was all about, if in question.

The Awards Ceremony details:

1. The AKC considers the Awards Ceremony a **BIG deal**.
2. Make sure the ribbons are at ringside well before the end of the class and double-check to be sure they conform to the Regulations for the class being awarded.
3. Bring in only the qualifying teams.
4. The judge is required to inform the spectators a perfect score is 200 points.
5. Choose between the choices to present the placement ribbons in the order of 1st > 4th or 4th > 1st.
6. As announcements of the placements and scores are being made, the judge needs to remember to speak UP so the spectators outside the ring can hear and be a part of the ceremony!
7. The judge will bring the first placement winner forward and start a line for the other three placements to follow. The objective is to present to the spectators the four placement prize winners and separate them out from the other qualifiers in the ring.
8. After the placements are presented, the judge will walk down the line of the remaining qualifiers and present them with a Qualifying Score ribbon and announce to them their score.

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