

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 – Nuances in Scoring in Regards to HF, SD, DR

The scoring of an exercise *requires* focusing on the exercise's principal features vs. the non-principal parts vs. the applicable penalties that may apply to a particular exercise. Plus watching a handler's timing of any movements of their body. Case in point: The **Heel Free (HF)**, **Scent Discrimination (SD)** and **Directed Retrieve (DR)** exercises. Any movements of an arm and hand during those exercises, and the timing when that motion occurred, are fundamental in determining if there is to be any scoring! The question arises as to no points off, points off, Qing or NQ?

Let's review the Scent Discrimination and Directed Retrieve exercises in regards to arm and hand motions during the "turn in place."

1. A handler chooses one of the two (2) options in **Chapter 2, Section 19. Hands and Arms**. If option two (2) were the chosen option, it would be best to assume the arm and hand position before the turn in place begins, both for the SD and DR exercises.
2. The turn in place is judged as a **Heel Free exercise**. The action of turning to face the articles or glove, the dog is judged on heel position during the turn and the halt--both in SD (after a sit option only) and DR. The *turn or halt* are non-principal parts of the exercise in SD and DR. The same holds true for the HF exercise. The applicable penalties stated in the scoring section of those two exercises refer back to the Heel Free exercise. The **Heel Free** exercise refers back to the **Heel on Leash and Figure Eight** for scoring. **Chapter 3, Sections 5 and 6**.
3. An example of applicable penalties being applied: An applicable penalty in regards to the turn in place refers back to the Heel Free exercise. If option two (2) was the option the handler chose during the turn in place, and the hand and arm were moved into position during the turn it would be scored as an additional signal, **Chapter 2, Section 20 and 21**. Keep in mind that in the Heel Free exercise, if a handler stepped out on the judge's order *and then moved* the arm and hand up to their middle, a penalty would be scored as an additional "heel" signal. *A savvy handler would have had their arm and hand in place before starting the exercise.*
4. The scoring of an exercise does not start until a judge gives the first order, **Chapter 2, Section 4. Judge's Directions**.
5. **DR:** The best time to place the arm and hand in the chosen position would be while the gloves are being placed, the scoring has not started (see #4). The first order in DR is "One" or "Two" or "Three."
6. **SD After a sit option:** The best time to place the arm and hand in the chosen position would be before the turn in place to face the articles, right after giving up the scented article to the judge. This is a clear visual to the judge as to when this movement is taking place.
7. **SD:** After scenting the article the arm and hand must be returned to a "natural" position. Returning the hand to the center of the body (as in option 2) is a "natural" position as in the Heel Free. The Regulations do not state hands are to be "hanging" naturally at the handler's sides, as in the Recall.
8. **DR or SD:** After the turn in place is completed, the appropriate command/direction/signal is then given to retrieve. Once the dog leaves to retrieve, the handler's arms and hands should then be hanging naturally at the sides. The dog returning to the handler is viewed and scored as in the Novice Recall, **Chapter 3, Sections 10 & 11**. Applicable penalties in the Recall exercise will apply. Hands only have to be "hanging" naturally at the handler's sides **when a dog is coming in to Front**.
9. If an additional command or signal is given to heel during the turn, it is **not** to be scored as an NQ. That action is not a principal feature of the exercise in either the Heel Free, SD (after a sit option) or DR exercises.
10. In regards to the Moving Stand and Examination, a dog is not fronting when coming into the handler. After that order to "Call your dog to heel," a handler may use a signal, in a continuous motion, stopping in the center of their body.

It's a lot of variations and nuances to the various exercises to keep track of in regard to scoring correctly. This is why it is imperative for judges to understand the principal features vs. non-principal parts of an exercise, plus what applicable penalties are to be applied in both parts.