



# Guidelines for the Organization of an Obedience Trial

By John Cox

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## I. Contacts To Be Made:

### A. Previous Obedience Trial Chairman and National Obedience Chairman

1. Discuss last year's trial
2. Discuss any problems encountered
3. What improvements are needed, if any
4. Review AKC's *Show/Trial Manual*

### B. Specialty Show Committee

1. Items to cover:
  - a. Judges
  - b. Stewards
  - c. Classes to offer (Regular and Non-Regular)
  - d. Rally (separate event BUT only can be offered with an Obedience trial)
  - e. Trophies & Ribbons
  - f. Special Events
  - g. Judging Program
  - h. Ring conditions
  - i. Equipment needed
  - j. Displays
  - k. Responsibility of committee members (i.e. Dealing with Misconduct procedures)

### C. Judges

1. Survey membership for a choice of Judges
  - a. Be on the lookout for a Judge that has not judged regularly in the area. Choosing a Judge that has judged regularly in the area may affect entries as some may have legs under them.
  - b. Be aware of Judges who are instructors and who may currently have one or more Saints in his/her class. The Obedience Regulations state "No dogs shall be entered or shown under a Judge at an obedience trial or tracking test if the dog has been owned, sold, held under lease one year prior to the date of the obedience trial or tracking test, by the Judge or by any member of his/her immediate family or household, and no such dog shall be eligible to compete. "Read **Chapter 1, Section 14** for other restrictions.



#### D. Chief Ring Steward

1. Line up three Stewards for the obedience ring
  - a. Gate Steward
  - b. Table Steward
  - c. Ring Steward
2. Each Steward should be given the AKC Obedience Regulations, which has information about stewarding. This information can also be found on the AKC web site [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

#### E. Trophy Chairman

1. Discuss types of trophies or rosettes to be offered
2. Determine what special awards will be needed
3. Make a tally sheet of the number of awards needed and designate the classes and placing for such awards

#### F. Equipment Chairman

1. Line up equipment needed
2. Make a check list
3. Decide who is responsible to bring what to the trial
4. Make sure the equipment is in good order and complies with the **current** Obedience Regulations **BEFORE** the trial

#### G. Publicity Chairman

1. Notify and inform of special events regarding obedience that will take place, such things as workshops and practice sessions **BEFORE** the scheduled starting date of the show
2. Work with the Display Chairman regarding obedience
3. Advance articles about the trial should be placed in the ***SAINT FANCIER*** and local publications **well in advance** of the date so handlers can make plans. Also, send trial information (date, location, judge) to the **Saint Bernard National Archives** at [saintbernardnationalarchives@comcast.net](mailto:saintbernardnationalarchives@comcast.net)

## II. Classes:

#### A. Regular Obedience Classes:

1. Novice A
2. Novice B
3. Open A
4. Open B
5. Utility A
6. Utility B

#### B. Non-Regular Classes (as defined in the Obedience Regulations):

1. Pre-Novice
2. Graduate Novice
3. Graduate Open
4. Versatility
5. Brace
6. Team
7. Veterans



### C. Special Non-Regular Classes and Special Events:

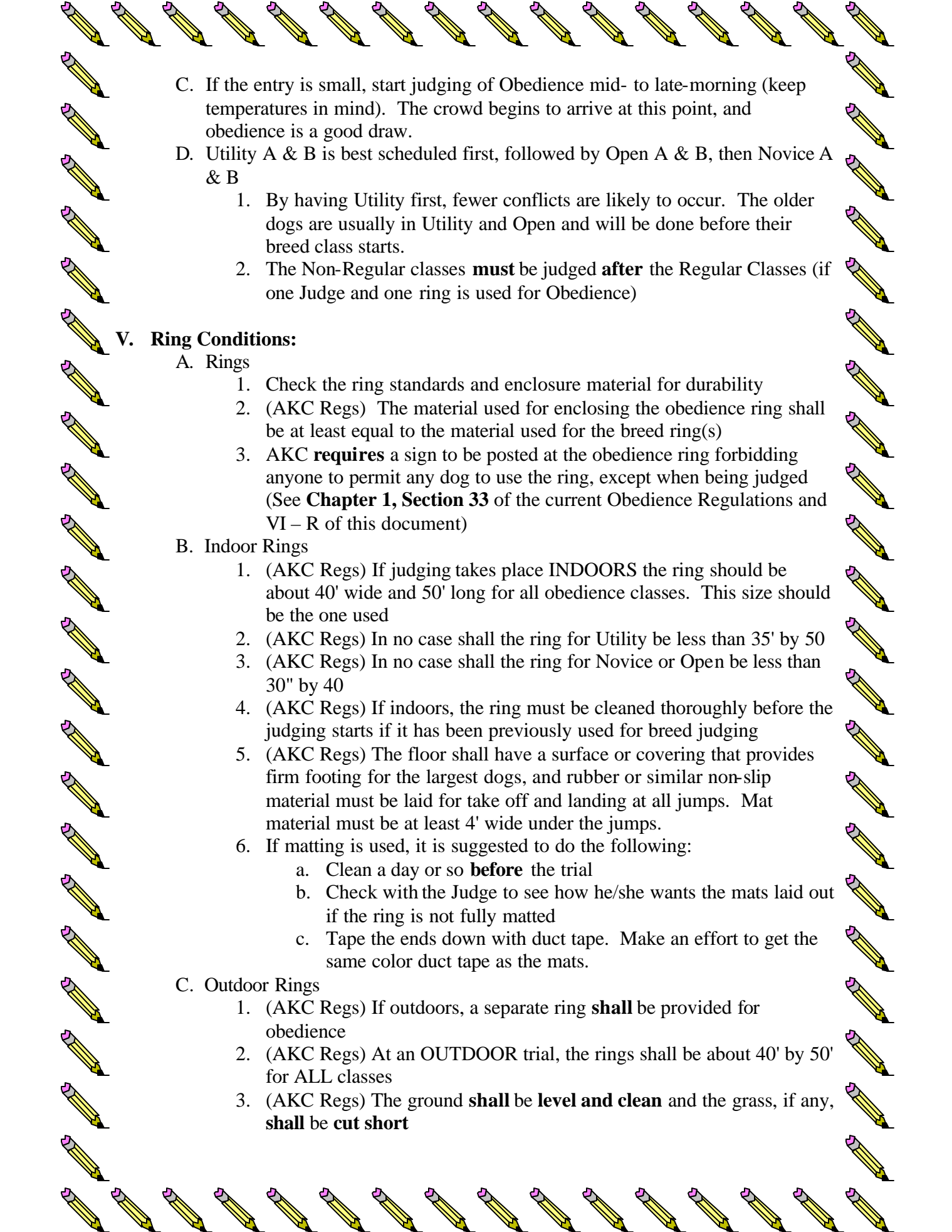
1. A special Non-Regular obedience class can be thought up with different requirements from the ones printed in the Obedience Regulations
  - a. Such classes need AKC approval. A complete description must be printed in the premium list explaining what will be required when it differs from the Non-Regular classes listed in the Obedience Regulations
2. Special Events
  - a. If there is a Parade of Champions at your show then encourage there also be a Parade of Performance Title Holders
  - b. Scent Hurdle Relay Races or Fly Ball Races, etc.
  - c. If held during the time of the show, notice should be on the judging program, but may not appear in the Premium List
  - d. Some special events may need the approval of AKC. They may not interfere with judging in any ring
3. Challenge clubs to assemble Obedience Teams for demonstrations if the Non-Regular Team Class is not offered

### III. Trophies & Ribbons:

- A. Regular Trophies
  1. Highest Scoring Dog In The Regular Classes (try and have equal to Best of Breed)
  2. Try and have a trophy for at least first in each class
- B. Special incentive trophies can help boost entries, for example:
  1. Highest Scoring Champion of Record in the Regular Classes
  2. Highest Scoring Dog Handled by a Junior Handler in the Regular Classes
  3. Youngest dog to receive a qualifying score in the Regular Classes
  4. Oldest dog to receive a qualifying score in the Regular Classes
- C. Ribbons
  1. (AKC Regs.) Ribbon **must** be awarded for the Highest Scoring Dog In The Regular Classes. **Must** be Blue and Gold.
  2. (AKC Regs.) Ribbon **must** be awarded for Highest Combined Score from Open B and Utility (providing Utility is offered). **Must** be Blue and Green.
  3. 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> prize ribbons in all classes
  4. Green ribbons for qualifying scores only in the Regular Classes are **required**. There are no “qualifying scores” in a Non-Regular Class
  5. Check **Chapter 1, Section 19** of the Obedience Regulations for all the **required lettering** needed on the ribbons, including the words “Obedience Trial.”

### IV. Judging Program:

- A. Check **Chapter 1, Section 26** of the **current** Obedience Regulations for the Requirements of the Judging Program
- B. If the entry is large, start judging of obedience early in the morning

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- C. If the entry is small, start judging of Obedience mid- to late-morning (keep temperatures in mind). The crowd begins to arrive at this point, and obedience is a good draw.
- D. Utility A & B is best scheduled first, followed by Open A & B, then Novice A & B
1. By having Utility first, fewer conflicts are likely to occur. The older dogs are usually in Utility and Open and will be done before their breed class starts.
  2. The Non-Regular classes **must** be judged **after** the Regular Classes (if one Judge and one ring is used for Obedience)

## V. Ring Conditions:

### A. Rings

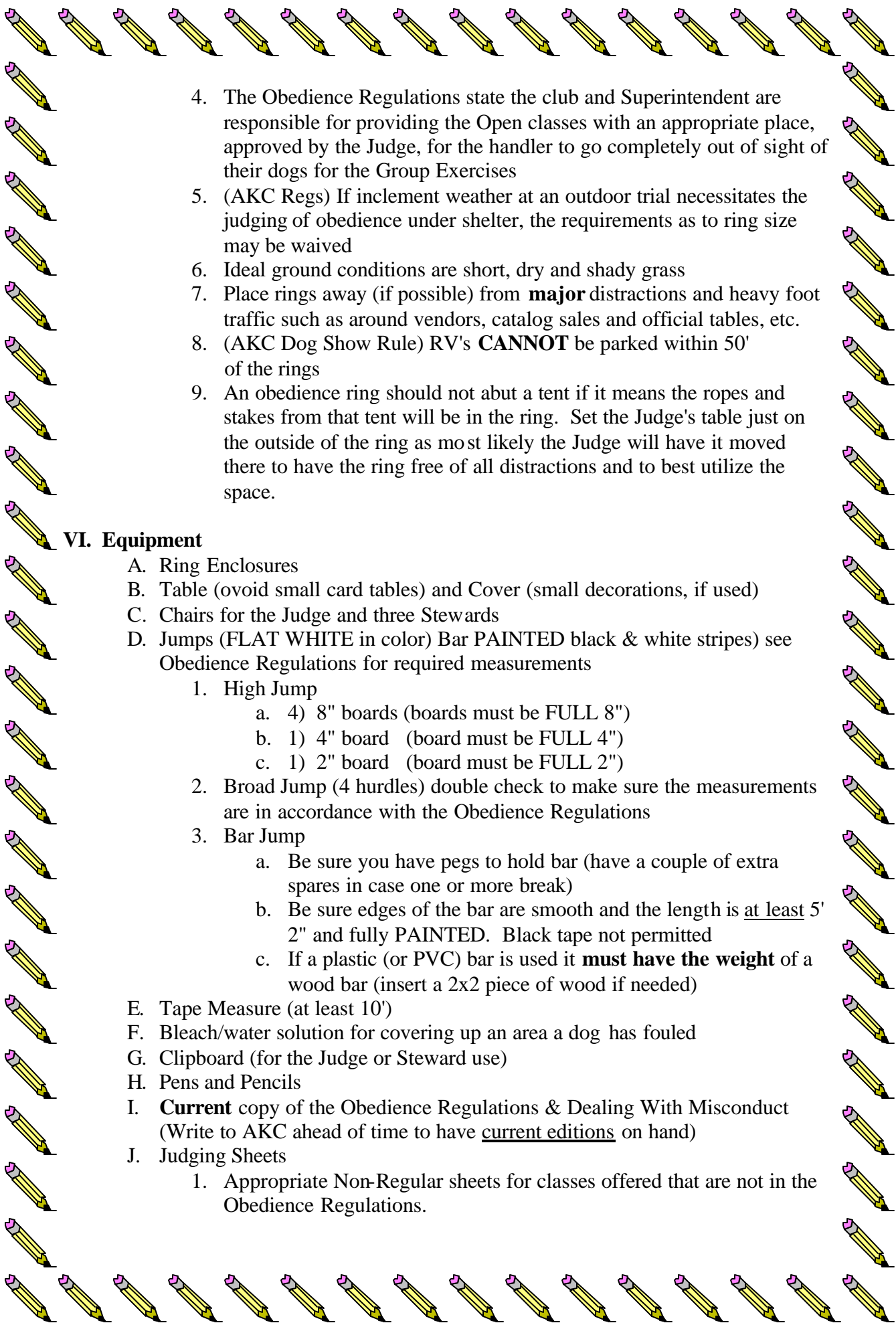
1. Check the ring standards and enclosure material for durability
2. (AKC Regs) The material used for enclosing the obedience ring shall be at least equal to the material used for the breed ring(s)
3. AKC **requires** a sign to be posted at the obedience ring forbidding anyone to permit any dog to use the ring, except when being judged (See **Chapter 1, Section 33** of the current Obedience Regulations and VI – R of this document)

### B. Indoor Rings

1. (AKC Regs) If judging takes place INDOORS the ring should be about 40' wide and 50' long for all obedience classes. This size should be the one used
2. (AKC Regs) In no case shall the ring for Utility be less than 35' by 50'
3. (AKC Regs) In no case shall the ring for Novice or Open be less than 30" by 40'
4. (AKC Regs) If indoors, the ring must be cleaned thoroughly before the judging starts if it has been previously used for breed judging
5. (AKC Regs) The floor shall have a surface or covering that provides firm footing for the largest dogs, and rubber or similar non-slip material must be laid for take off and landing at all jumps. Mat material must be at least 4' wide under the jumps.
6. If matting is used, it is suggested to do the following:
  - a. Clean a day or so **before** the trial
  - b. Check with the Judge to see how he/she wants the mats laid out if the ring is not fully matted
  - c. Tape the ends down with duct tape. Make an effort to get the same color duct tape as the mats.

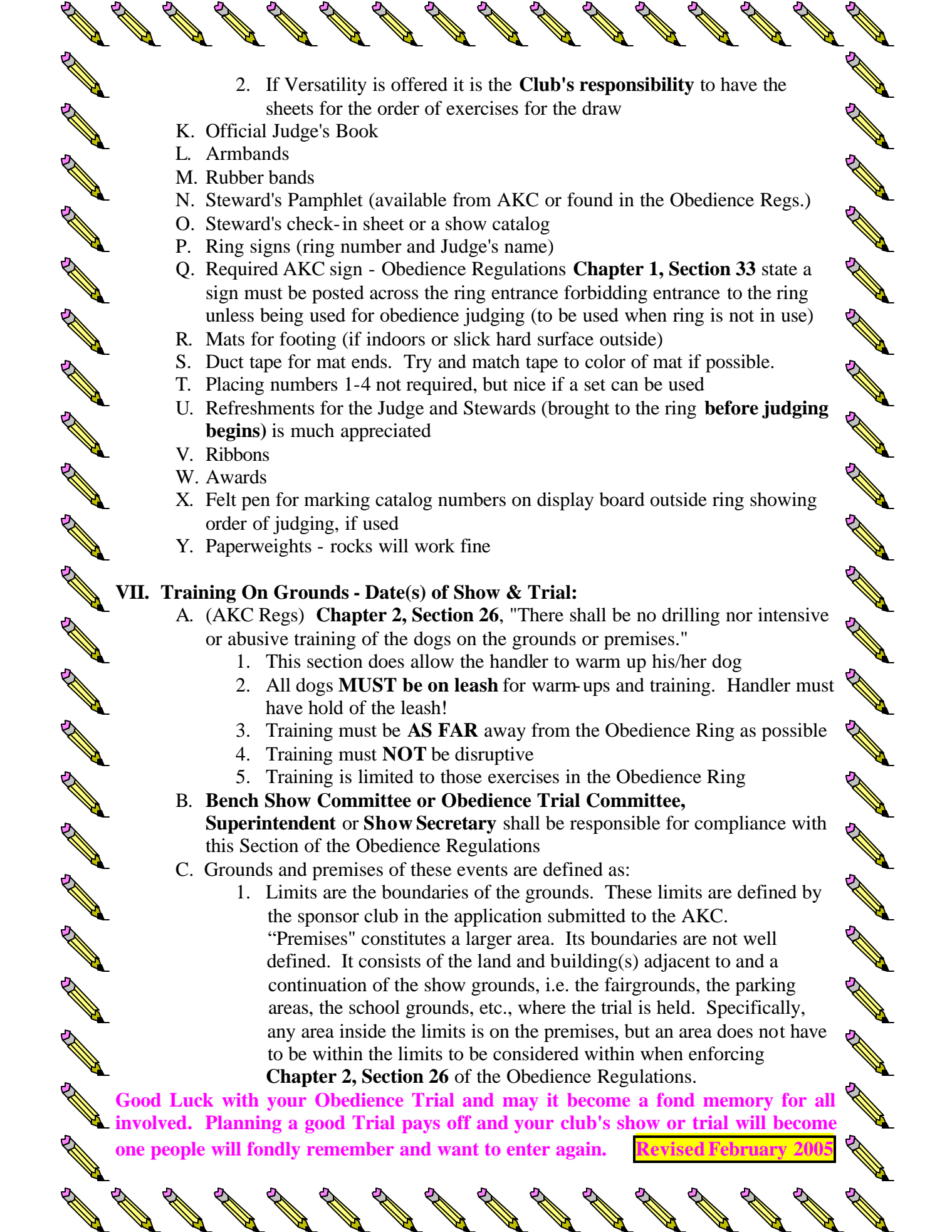
### C. Outdoor Rings

1. (AKC Regs) If outdoors, a separate ring **shall** be provided for obedience
2. (AKC Regs) At an OUTDOOR trial, the rings shall be about 40' by 50' for ALL classes
3. (AKC Regs) The ground **shall be level and clean** and the grass, if any, **shall be cut short**

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4. The Obedience Regulations state the club and Superintendent are responsible for providing the Open classes with an appropriate place, approved by the Judge, for the handler to go completely out of sight of their dogs for the Group Exercises
  5. (AKC Regs) If inclement weather at an outdoor trial necessitates the judging of obedience under shelter, the requirements as to ring size may be waived
  6. Ideal ground conditions are short, dry and shady grass
  7. Place rings away (if possible) from **major** distractions and heavy foot traffic such as around vendors, catalog sales and official tables, etc.
  8. (AKC Dog Show Rule) RV's **CANNOT** be parked within 50' of the rings
  9. An obedience ring should not abut a tent if it means the ropes and stakes from that tent will be in the ring. Set the Judge's table just on the outside of the ring as most likely the Judge will have it moved there to have the ring free of all distractions and to best utilize the space.

## VI. Equipment

- A. Ring Enclosures
- B. Table (ovoid small card tables) and Cover (small decorations, if used)
- C. Chairs for the Judge and three Stewards
- D. Jumps (FLAT WHITE in color) Bar PAINTED black & white stripes) see Obedience Regulations for required measurements
  1. High Jump
    - a. 4) 8" boards (boards must be FULL 8")
    - b. 1) 4" board (board must be FULL 4")
    - c. 1) 2" board (board must be FULL 2")
  2. Broad Jump (4 hurdles) double check to make sure the measurements are in accordance with the Obedience Regulations
  3. Bar Jump
    - a. Be sure you have pegs to hold bar (have a couple of extra spares in case one or more break)
    - b. Be sure edges of the bar are smooth and the length is at least 5' 2" and fully PAINTED. Black tape not permitted
    - c. If a plastic (or PVC) bar is used it **must have the weight** of a wood bar (insert a 2x2 piece of wood if needed)
- E. Tape Measure (at least 10')
- F. Bleach/water solution for covering up an area a dog has fouled
- G. Clipboard (for the Judge or Steward use)
- H. Pens and Pencils
- I. **Current** copy of the Obedience Regulations & Dealing With Misconduct (Write to AKC ahead of time to have current editions on hand)
- J. Judging Sheets
  1. Appropriate Non-Regular sheets for classes offered that are not in the Obedience Regulations.



2. If Versatility is offered it is the **Club's responsibility** to have the sheets for the order of exercises for the draw

K. Official Judge's Book

L. Armbands

M. Rubber bands

N. Steward's Pamphlet (available from AKC or found in the Obedience Regs.)

O. Steward's check-in sheet or a show catalog

P. Ring signs (ring number and Judge's name)

Q. Required AKC sign - Obedience Regulations **Chapter 1, Section 33** state a sign must be posted across the ring entrance forbidding entrance to the ring unless being used for obedience judging (to be used when ring is not in use)

R. Mats for footing (if indoors or slick hard surface outside)

S. Duct tape for mat ends. Try and match tape to color of mat if possible.

T. Placing numbers 1-4 not required, but nice if a set can be used

U. Refreshments for the Judge and Stewards (brought to the ring **before judging begins**) is much appreciated

V. Ribbons

W. Awards

X. Felt pen for marking catalog numbers on display board outside ring showing order of judging, if used

Y. Paperweights - rocks will work fine

## VII. Training On Grounds - Date(s) of Show & Trial:

A. (AKC Regs) **Chapter 2, Section 26**, "There shall be no drilling nor intensive or abusive training of the dogs on the grounds or premises."

1. This section does allow the handler to warm up his/her dog

2. All dogs **MUST be on leash** for warm-ups and training. Handler must have hold of the leash!

3. Training must be **AS FAR** away from the Obedience Ring as possible

4. Training must **NOT** be disruptive

5. Training is limited to those exercises in the Obedience Ring

B. **Bench Show Committee or Obedience Trial Committee,**

**Superintendent or Show Secretary** shall be responsible for compliance with this Section of the Obedience Regulations

C. Grounds and premises of these events are defined as:

1. Limits are the boundaries of the grounds. These limits are defined by the sponsor club in the application submitted to the AKC.

"Premises" constitutes a larger area. Its boundaries are not well defined. It consists of the land and building(s) adjacent to and a continuation of the show grounds, i.e. the fairgrounds, the parking areas, the school grounds, etc., where the trial is held. Specifically, any area inside the limits is on the premises, but an area does not have to be within the limits to be considered within when enforcing **Chapter 2, Section 26** of the Obedience Regulations.

**Good Luck with your Obedience Trial and may it become a fond memory for all involved. Planning a good Trial pays off and your club's show or trial will become one people will fondly remember and want to enter again.**

**Revised February 2005**