



**Dog Talk**



# AKC Open Obedience Articles

by John Cox

## **OPEN ARTICLES**

TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THE HEELING EXERCISE

DROP ON RECALL

RETRIEVE ON FLAT

RETRIEVE OVER HIGH JUMP

BROAD JUMP

GROUP EXERCISES

Open - POP QUIZ #9 - True or False

Open - POP QUIZ #10 - Multiple Choice

Open - POP QUIZ #12 - Circle The Penalty

EXCUSAL CHART REFERENCE GUIDE

JUMP CHART REFERENCE GUIDE

## Take A Good Look At The Heeling Exercise Who Is Losing The Most Points?

by John Cox

Few would argue that heeling is the most difficult exercise in which to earn a perfect score. It is also a very "busy" exercise to judge and after a performance is over there are those handlers who want to know where their DOG may have lost points. Also, there will be times when spectators are watching a run-off and can't figure out why a Judge made the decision in favor of the dog that appeared to make MORE heeling errors.

When observing the heeling exercise there is a LOT more to concentrate on than just the Heel Position of the dog. In fact, there are many functions that take place during a heeling pattern; **when penalties occur, don't always point the finger to the DOG.** If the dog is not at fault, then who do we point to for the less than perfect score? No, the Judge is not the correct answer this time!

Let's first look at the Obedience Regulations as to the principal part of heeling to better understand the performance and scoring. Chapter 3 Section 5 reads:

"The principal feature of this exercise is the ability of the dog and handler to work as a team."

Well, lookie there - this is a TEAM effort and BOTH the dog and handler are to be evaluated. Most of us know the five errors by the dog in heeling (forge, lag, crowd, wide, not straight in line with the direction of the handler). This article will concentrate on the handler during the heeling exercise and where THEY can error and lose some or all the points for the team.

So, what is a perfect handler? The Regulations mention under Purpose that all participants should be guided by the principles of good sportsmanship both in and outside the ring. Also, their performances in the ring must be accurate and correct and must conform to the requirements of the Regulations. Chapter 2, Section 2 (Standard of Perfection) states the Judge must carry a mental picture of the theoretically perfect performance in each exercise and score each dog and handler against this visualized standard. The HANDLER is to show NATURALNESS, GENTLENESS, and SMOOTHNESS in handling. The DOG is to show the utmost in willingness and enjoyment and precision in performing. Don't confuse the duties between the dog and handler.

The items listed below are some of the more common errors a HANDLER can make during the heeling exercise. The error might be ever so slight or it can be a major point buster for the team.

1. Position of hands
2. Loud commands, audible signals and preemptory commands
3. Starting the heeling pattern
4. Lack of briskness during heeling
5. Lack of briskness during the Figure Eight
6. Wide and narrow turns on the Figure Eight
7. Delay of, or anticipating, the Judge's order
8. Military turns, Wide turns
9. Hesitating on About turns
10. Not noticeably accelerating speed on the Fast
11. Not noticeably decelerating speed on the Slow
12. Additional commands or signals, touching the dog
13. Motions of the body that aid the dog
14. Carrying or offering food
15. Roughness in handling, military precision

I will go into a little more detail on each item listed above. The best way to avoid a penalty is to beware of actions that lead to that penalty.

## **1. POSITION OF THE HANDS DURING HEELING**

CHAPTER 3, SECTION 5: The leash may be held in either hand or in both hands, provided the hands are in a natural position. However, any tightening or jerking of the leash or any act, signal or command which in the Judge's opinion gives the dog assistance shall be penalized." Natural is defined in the Regulations Glossary of Terms as not artificial; free of affectation, and customarily expected in the home or public places."

CHAPTER 2, SECTION 19: "In all exercises in which the dog is required to 'heel free' one of the options below shall be followed: (1) the handler's arms and hands shall move naturally at the handler's side while in motion, and shall hang naturally at the handler's sides while not in motion; (2) the right hand and arm must move naturally, while the left hand shall be held against, and centered in the front of the body, in the area of the waist. The left forearm shall be carried, as much as possible, against the body. In either of the above situations the hands and arms may be adjusted during the Fast portion of an exercise, in order to maintain balance. There shall be a substantial deduction if the hands and arms are not carried in one of the positions stated above." A substantial is worth 3 or MORE points. The hands and arms are NOT required to SWING like a speed walker in a race, but they must MOVE NATURALLY at the side or sides while the handler is in motion. Remember the definition of natural as stated in the Glossary.

## **2. LOUD COMMANDS, AUDIBLE SIGNALS AND PEREMPTORY COMMANDS**

Loud commands, which in the Judge's opinion are excessively loud, will be SUBSTANTIALLY penalized. It might be wise to teach signals so if the noise level at the show is a bit intense you will have an option. You never know when a loud speaker might come on or a plane will fly over. If you choose to use a signal it MUST be inaudible and you CANNOT touch the dog while giving the signal. Any unusual noise or motion may be considered to be a signal. Give some thought to your clothing and jewelry to make sure they will remain quiet during the performance. While on the subject of signals keep the following in mind:

- A. Signaling a correction to a dog is forbidden and must be penalized.
- B. A signal MUST be a single gesture with one arm and hand only, and the arm must IMMEDIATELY be returned to a NATURAL position.

Peremptory commands are defined as expressing a command or dictatorial. Drill sergeants are best known for using this type of command. Keep in mind, during the "early" years of obedience there were quite a few ex-servicemen showing "retired war dogs" and this type of military-like command was not the impression the AKC wanted to leave with the public.

## **3. STARTING THE HEELING PATTERN**

Here is an interesting example where the handler makes the error and the dog is perceived as the one at fault. Picture the handler who gives the command or signal to heel AS the HANDLER steps out. By the time the dog has had a chance to respond promptly, the handler is the one who moved out of heel position. The error that actually occurred was the HANDLER lacked smoothness. Smoother handling would have been to give the command or signal and pause that split second giving the dog a chance to respond. Then BOTH dog and handler step out in perfect heel position. "Split second pause" are the key words. A pause too long could also be scored as an aid to the dog, which is another handler error. It takes practice to perfect the correct timing. This is a TEAM effort and BOTH members need to work TOGETHER.

## **4. LACK OF BRISKNESS DURING HEELING**

Chapter 3, Sections 5 and 6 describe the requirements and penalties associated with heeling. Regardless of the obedience class, the description of heeling will always refer back to these sections. So let's look at just the part on briskness as it relates to the handler. Section 5 states the handler shall walk BRISKLY and in a NATURAL MANNER with his dog on a loose leash. The Glossary of Terms defines brisk/briskly as keenly alive, alert, energetic. The sharp Judge will be observing the HANDLER, along with the dog, from the first order of "Forward" to the last order, "Exercise Finished." As the handler moves about the ring the Judge will be watching to see if the handler maintains brisk heeling throughout the pattern. Remember, the Judge will match the performance of the handler with their theoretically perfect performance. As the handler is moving briskly they also must move in a NATURAL MANNER (defined in the Glossary), demonstrating smoothness and gentleness.

If the HANDLER fails to comply, Section 6 sets the course of action a Judge must take. If the HANDLER CONSTANTLY CONTROLS the performance by tugging on the leash or ADAPTS PACE TO THAT OF THE DOG, the dog MUST be scored NQ. Obviously, the dog is not under control and the handler is supplying aid. Also, substantial or minor deductions shall be made for failure to walk at a BRISK pace, occasional guidance with the leash or other imperfections.

If a handler is disabled, the Judge may modify the specific requirements for the handler to the extent necessary to permit physically challenged handlers to compete. According to Chapter 2, Section 14, "Dogs handled by such handlers shall be required to perform all parts of all exercises as described in these Regulations, and shall be penalized for failure to perform any part of an exercise."

#### **5. LACK OF BRISKNESS DURING THE FIGURE EIGHT**

The Figure Eight exercise reveals a great deal in regards to the TEAMWORK of a team. This section will address the handler moving at a brisk pace. The handler must also beware of the way they make the turns in the Figure Eight, and motions of their body that might be perceived as aiding the dog. I will cover these items later.

The handler must walk BRISKLY throughout the Figure Eight while exhibiting smoothness, naturalness and gentleness. Briskly (keenly alive, alert, energetic) does not mean the handler must speed walk or race around the posts. One will want to practice a pace that is smooth and natural while meeting the criteria of brisk. The brisk pace on the Figure Eight may differ from the brisk pace in the heeling pattern. The pace of the Figure Eight does not need to be the SAME SPEED as in the heeling pattern, but it still must be brisk. This brisk pace must be MAINTAINED throughout all parts of the Figure Eight. As the handler is moving at CONSTANT brisk pace, the DOG is the team member that does the work to maintain Heel Position. It is up to the DOG to accelerate on the outside turn and decelerate on the inside turn. If the HANDLER starts to adapt pace to that of the dog, the handler will be the one losing points. If the handler fails to move at a brisk pace the Judge will have to penalize as outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2 and Chapter 3, Section 6.

#### **6. WIDE AND NARROW TURNS ON THE FIGURE EIGHT**

The HANDLER must heel a "fine line" in order to perform THEIR PART of the perfect Figure Eight. The Regulations state the handler will start from a position about equidistant from the two Stewards and facing the Judge. They may choose to go in either direction and shall walk briskly twice completely around and between the two Stewards. The way in which a handler travels around the Figure Eight may be subject to a penalty. Let us see how this can occur.

First, the two Stewards are to stand eight feet apart for ALL breeds of dogs. (It is the Judge's responsibility to make sure the Stewards conform to this requirement.) The handler and dog start equidistant from the two Stewards and go around each Steward making the pattern of an eight. The handler who goes wide on the inside turn is defeating the purpose of the Figure Eight and is subject to a penalty. One reason a handler may go wide is because of the dog crowding, and the handler is moving out of its way. Two errors have occurred - the dog crowded and the handler went wide to aid the dog. The handler would have been better off maintaining the proper figure of eight and live with the crowding penalties applied to the dog.

At the other end of the Figure Eight the opposite can occur. A handler may cut close to a Steward to make a sharper turn thus giving aid to the dog. The aid the dog receives is that less ground is traveled, hence there is less of a chance for lagging or crowding. Also, a handler may go wide at the outside turn to "cover" the dog going wide.

The Figure Eight is a VERY difficult exercise for both the dog and handler to perform perfectly. It can be done, but it takes a TEAM effort to conform to the requirements of the Regulations and be accurate and correct.

## **7. DELAY OF, OR ANTICIPATING, THE JUDGE'S ORDER**

Chapter 2, Sections 20 and 24 point out the handler must be penalized for delay in following, or anticipating, a Judge's order. The exception would be if a delay is directed by the Judge because of some distraction or interference.

First, a Judge must be alert to their timing of an order so the handler will have time to respond and maintain a smooth performance. When the Judge gives an order there is a reasonable amount of time given for the handler's response. Putting this time element into words is a little difficult. Many Judges allow the handler a couple of steps. The experienced Judge will not bother "counting steps" but instinctively knows when too much time has elapsed. If in the Judge's opinion the handler is delaying the order a penalty is then assessed.

In many cases, a handler will delay or anticipate a Judge's order because the dog is not turning in a perfect performance. For example, on the Fast, handlers have been known to stop the Fast pace ON THEIR OWN before the "Normal" order is given. In this scenario the dog is usually lagging. There will also be times when a handler will anticipate a turn before the Judge gives the order to turn, and other times the handler may delay a Judge's order to turn. As the Judge is observing these situations it becomes obvious that the handler is aiding the teammate's errors of lagging or forging, or they are just not paying attention. Once again, the handler would be better off to live with the dog's error and not add to the points coming off by making handler errors.

## **8. MILITARY TURNS, WIDE TURNS**

A simple ninety-degree turn, or About turn, in a heeling pattern is not really all that simple or easy. When making a turn the handler has to concentrate on the following:

- A. Be prompt in response to the Judge's order
- B. Be smooth and natural in turning
- C. Avoid military turns
- D. Avoid wide turns
- E. Avoid motions of the body that aid the dog
- F. Avoid roughness in handling

Items A-B have been discussed earlier so let's focus on items C-D and see where the handler may error. Items E-F will be covered later.

C. Military turns are a "sharp" ninety-degree turn, peppered with body English. We have all seen this type of turn watching marching college bands or military troops in formation. This style of turn in the obedience ring is to be penalized per Chapter 2, Section 2 and the Purpose.

D. If a military turn is one extreme then a wide turn is at the other end of the scale. So, why do handlers sometimes widen their turns? Picture the dog which is forging or crowding as the handler is going into a turn. The handler then makes a wider turn to aid the dog; or, the dog is doing such an extreme case of forging or crowding the handler can't do anything else! Of course, both team members are making errors and both are penalized. It takes work to develop a smooth, natural Right or Left turn that is neither too sharp nor too wide.

## **9. HESITATION ON ABOUT TURNS**

The About turn is another fairly common area for a handler to lose points in the handling. Let us look at what is involved in making an About turn. As the handler is walking in a straight line they turn in place and walk in the opposite direction. Immediately after making the turn the handler must step out of the turn without hesitation. He who hesitates will subject himself to a penalty. Hesitation or "marking time" after the turn aids the dog. Let's face it, a handler who is slow in making the turn or stepping out of the turn is giving the dog a chance to catch up or maintain Heel Position. It is up to the DOG to accelerate while on the outside of the turn in order to maintain Heel Position.

Also keep in mind, a "U" turn is not an About turn! In fact, a "U" turn is the widening of an About turn and is subject to a penalty as discussed above. Finally, when making About turns in the obedience ring the handler MUST do a RIGHT About turn. Left About turns will cost the handler points (Chapter 3, Section 5).

If one is not thinking through their handling performance a multitude of errors can add up. Stop and think of all the turns in a heeling pattern.

#### **10. NOT NOTICEABLY ACCELERATING SPEED ON THE FAST**

Next time at an obedience trial sit outside the ring and just watch the handlers doing a Fast. It will become apparent that there is a wide variety in the actions of JUST the HANDLERS. This "leg" of the heeling pattern is a tough one to get perfect. The handler's performance during the Fast should have the following characteristics:

- A. Prompt response to the Judge's orders "Fast" and "Normal"
- B. Smooth and natural in RUNNING
- C. Handler RUNNING at a noticeably accelerated speed forward
- D. Avoiding motions of the body that aid the dog
- E. Avoiding roughness in handling

Item C is the one we will look at in detail. (Items A-B have been covered. Items D-E will be covered later.) According to Chapter 3, Section 5, **"Fast" signifies that the handler must run, handler and dog moving forward at noticeably accelerated speed.** Section 6 calls for a SUBSTANTIAL deduction for failure of dog or HANDLER to noticeably accelerate speed forward during the Fast. Remember, a substantial is THREE or MORE points, per the Glossary of Terms. There are several reasons why a handler fails to perform a correct and accurate Fast:

- A. The handler may be disabled and cannot do a correct Fast
- B. The handler does not have a clue as to what RUNNING on the Fast involves to meet the criteria in the Regulations
- C. The handler is aiding the dog

Whatever the reason, the Judge MUST penalize the handler as mentioned in Chapter 2, Sections 2, 14, 20, 21, 24, and Chapter 3, Section 6 to mention a few!

#### **11. NOT NOTICEABLY DECELERATING SPEED ON THE SLOW**

A handler performing a Slow will need to keep the same items in mind as mentioned for the Fast. Of course, the only difference is the handler is moving at a Slow pace. The penalties for a poor Slow are the same as for a poor Fast and the Chapters and Sections above will apply.

When a handler goes into a Slow they must NOTICEABLY DECELERATE speed and MAINTAIN that decelerated speed. **As the order comes for "Normal" the handler then must ACCELERATE back to a BRISK pace.** Common areas for errors are handlers who don't NOTICEABLY slow and then fail to change pace after the "Normal" order. This handler then continues on to the next turn in their less-than-brisk pace.

#### **12. ADDITIONAL COMMANDS OR SIGNALS, TOUCHING THE DOG**

If a handler were to give an additional command or signal, a substantial penalty will be applied to the score. There may be times when a handler will want to give an extra command or signal and lose points as a result. For example, if the DOG "quits" heeling the handler then gives an extra command or signal; this action might bring the dog's attention back into focus. Three or more points will be deducted but the exercise may be "saved" as the end result. The handler should keep this in mind and know where and when to apply the extra command or signal if needed. Be cautioned that if more than one extra command or signal is given the Judge will start to question if the dog and handler are working as a team. The Judge could also perceive that the handler is TRAINING the dog and EXCUSE the team. The PRINCIPAL part of the heeling exercise is teamwork!

Additional signals may sneak up on the handler so beware of:

- A. Any unusual noise or motion may be considered a signal
- B. Position of arms and hands and movements of the body that aid the dog shall be considered additional signals
- C. A signal must be a single gesture with one arm and hand only and the arm and hand must IMMEDIATELY be returned to a NATURAL position

A handler MUST NOT touch the dog when giving a signal or at any other time during heeling. According to Chapter 2, Section 20, "Moving forward at the heel without any command or signal other than the natural forward movement of the handler's body shall not be considered as anticipation." A handler could move about the heeling pattern without giving ANY signal or command to the dog. Better make sure the dog understands this before it is tried!

### **13. MOTIONS OF THE BODY THAT AID THE DOG**

Chapter 2, Section 20 of the Obedience Regulations states that any unusual noise or motion may be considered to be a signal, plus any movements of the body that aid the dog shall be considered additional signals. Handlers need to keep this regulation in mind during ANY exercise, but let's look at just the motions of the body that aid the dog during the heeling. A few typical areas where errors in handling occur are during the:

- A. Straight line heeling: Adapting pace to the dog is an aid to the dog. Other motions such as turning back to look at the dog, or maintaining constant eye contact, may be perceived by some Judges as an aid. Other Judges may not consider this natural.
- B. Turns: A handler who goes into a turn and makes quick upper torso movements or excessive head movements, to cue the dog, is considered as giving aid to the dog. Hesitating while going into or out of a turn aids the dog. This action shows up most on About turns.
- C. Fast or Slow: Handlers who use excessive up and down motions of the feet and legs, do not accelerate or decelerate, look back towards the dog, and use excessive torso movements forward and backwards are motions subject to a penalty.
- D. Figure Eight: Straight line heeling errors can also be spotted on the Figure Eight. Hesitating on the turns and excessive shoulder motions while turning are common errors in this portion of the heeling.
- E. Halts: Handlers stepping towards (into) the dog while coming to a halt, or the handler who stares at the dog that is not sitting, could be perceived as giving aid to the dog.
- F. Chewing: Motions of the handler's mouth, such as chewing, may be scored as an aid, or the handler may be excused for carrying food in the ring. The smart thing is not to chew gum or have anything in your mouth while in the ring, thus avoiding a chance for such an error.

The Judge is the one who is doing the perceiving, or determining what is excessive and what constitutes aiding the dog. He/she is looking for smoothness, naturalness and gentleness and these images are based on the Judge's view of their standard of perfection. From the Judge's standpoint, every infraction from perfection (providing it is at least worth one-half point) should be scored. If the handler before you makes a minor or substantial error and it is NOT scored, is this fair to YOU when YOU perform it perfectly? In theory, you would both be receiving the same score for different quality of work.

### **14. CARRYING OR OFFERING FOOD**

Carrying food in the ring will lead to a penalty, and that penalty could be as much as 200 points! Chapter 2, Section 3 is very clear when it comes to carrying and/or offering food in the ring. A handler who carries and/or offers food, according to this section, must NEVER be awarded a qualifying score. Also, offering food could be called training the dog and the Judge may excuse the handler.

#### **Food for Thought**

A handler who stands outside the ring gate awaiting their turn and "spits" or offers food to the dog may create suspicion. Those observing will wonder if such a handler still has food when entering the ring. Why a handler would put himself or herself in such a light is beyond me. It might be best, if you plan to "pop" food, to consider doing it away from the obedience rings.

## **15. ROUGHNESS IN HANDLING, MILITARY PRECISION**

Gentleness in handling being ideal, then roughness in handling or military precision in a performance needs to be avoided. Roughness may be viewed as a handler who gives "sharp" sounding commands or observing a handler's physical manner in their way of going about the heeling pattern.

Earlier, military turns were mentioned but "marching" around the ring with military precision is also penalized per Chapter 2, Section 2. To review, Chapter 2, Section 2 states a theoretically perfect performance will include the HANDLER demonstrating SMOOTHNESS, NATURALNESS and GENTLENESS.

### WHAT JUDGES SHOULD LOOK FOR IN THEIR HEELING PATTERNS

Heeling is in every AKC obedience class with the possible exception of Versatility (depending on what exercises the handler draws). In choosing a pattern that works for you, also consider the handler and dog. You must give ALL handlers and dogs an EQUAL opportunity to do the principal part of heeling -- working as a team.

Teamwork is best performed when a heeling pattern is smooth. One way to accomplish this objective is to have only one heeling function for each leg of the pattern. This provides ALL teams a chance for a smooth performance. As a Judge, your orders are "Forward," "Halt," "Right turn," "Left turn," "About turn," "Slow," "Normal" and "Fast." The orders may be given in any sequence and may be repeated. When two heeling functions are on one leg of a pattern it becomes choppy and the teamwork starts to suffer. For example, a Fast, Normal and Halt on one leg would be choppy. Picture an Irish Wolfhound doing this pattern smoothly. Another example: Heeling down the center of the ring and making a Right or Left turn and then Slow, using half the ring, before turning again. The choppy pattern will unfairly affect the performance of the larger and/or faster breeds. There is just less room and time to respond if too much is going on during one leg of the heeling pattern. Remember, you are going to be judging these actions. The faults you observe MAY have been caused by YOU not giving thought to the heeling pattern. The small breeds will start to gain an advantage and you, as a Judge, will find your goals of fairness and consistency going down the tubes. A pattern does not have to be long to achieve the smooth objective. The simple "L" pattern lends itself to a smooth performance if you give some thought to where different heeling functions will take place.

### FIGURE EIGHT

When planning the area for the Figure Eight think about the ring barriers and, in Open, also consider the jumps. You want to provide ALL dogs the opportunity to go around the outside post and not have to concern themselves with the possibility of running into an object. Figure Eight posts that are in the corners of a ring or too close to a jump jeopardize the performance of the larger breeds. This type of set-up is also too restrictive for some disabled handlers and their dogs. If you are judging indoors and using mats on slick floors, use THREE mats if possible. Large breeds should have mats under them at all times during the Figure Eight if that is the case for the smaller breeds. If the Superintendent provides the equipment they are REQUIRED to provide at least seven mats for each obedience ring.

As you set up for the heeling exercise ask yourself, "Is this exercise going to be fair to ALL breeds and handlers when they enter my ring?" Another point to keep in mind is the disabled handlers and their space requirements. Make a mental picture of an Irish Wolfhound being handled by a person in a wheelchair. With this in mind you should have no problem in setting up a ring that is fair to all who enter.

### **SUMMARY**

If one is aware of the areas where points may be lost, then one can take appropriate action to avoid losing such points. So, if the score in your next heeling performance is a bit of a disappointment, don't be too quick to point the finger at the dog or Judge. Your dog and/or the Judge may just put a mirror in front of YOUR finger showing YOU who was responsible for the errors!



If perfection, or a way to shore up some points, is what you are trying to achieve, keep in mind the fifteen items covered:

1. Position of hands
2. Loud commands, audible signals and peremptory commands
3. Starting the heeling pattern
4. Lack of briskness during heeling
5. Lack of briskness during the Figure Eight
6. Wide and narrow turns on the Figure Eight
7. Delay of, or anticipating, the Judge's order
8. Military turns, Wide turns
9. Hesitating on About turns
10. Not noticeably accelerating speed on the Fast
11. Not noticeably decelerating speed on the Slow
12. Additional commands or signals, touching the dog
13. Motions of the body that aid the dog
14. Carrying or offering food
15. Roughness in handling, Military precision

# Drop On Recall Where Are The Points Lost?

by John Cox

When reading CHAPTER 4, SECTION 7 (Drop on Recall), the principal features of the exercise sound quite simple.

"The principal features of this exercise, in addition to those listed under the Novice Recall, are the dog's prompt response to the handler's command or signal to Drop and the dog's remaining in the Down position until again called or signaled to Come. The dog will be judged on the promptness of its response to command or signal and not on its proximity to a designated point."

So why is this another Obedience exercise in which it is difficult to earn a perfect score? There are many functions that take place during the execution of the Drop on Recall -- by the dog and handler. Obtaining a perfect score in this exercise is a major achievement for the well-trained dog and its smooth handler. One good way to understand the "perfect" Drop on Recall is to break it down and look at the individual parts that make up the whole exercise. I will break the exercise into three parts.

- I. THE FIRST RECALL BEFORE THE DROP
- II. THE DROP
- III. THE SECOND RECALL AND FINISH

Knowing what is required by the dog and handler will help show how the exercise is judged and where points can be lost.

## **Part I--THE FIRST RECALL BEFORE THE DROP**

The exercise is started when the Judge orders the handler to "Leave your dog." At this point the handler may give a command **and/or** signal for the dog to Stay in the Sit position while the handler walks forward to the other end of the ring, where he/she shall turn and stand in a natural manner facing the dog. Now let's look in detail at the judging that takes place to just this point. The Judge will be observing and scoring the following:

### 1. JUDGING THE HANDLER

- a. Did the handler delay in giving the command and/or signal to the dog
- b. Was the command too loud
- c. Was the signal a single gesture with one arm and hand only
- d. Did the arm immediately return to a natural position
- e. Was the signal inaudible and did the handler touch the dog
- f. If both signal and command were used, were they given simultaneously
- g. Was there any unusual noise or motion that may be considered a signal
- h. Position of the arms and hands and movements of the body
- i. Does the handler use any additional commands or signals not permitted
- j. Did the handler use the dog's name and **ONLY** a signal
- k. Was an additional command or signal given to Stay

All the above is covered in CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 19, 20 and 21, CHAPTER 3, SECTIONS 10 and 11 and CHAPTER 4, SECTIONS 7 and 8. The Judge will be looking for perfection and any deviation should be scored. Also, CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 2, 3 and 24 (I will let you look these up) come into play during all exercises. Depending on the actions of the handler, points off will range from a minor deduction to a non-qualifying score.

### 2. JUDGING THE DOG:

- a. Did the dog stay without an additional command
- b. Did the dog remain in the place where left

Judging the dog is covered in CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 2, 3, 20, 21, 24 and 25 and CHAPTER 3, SECTIONS 10 and 11

Now let's take a look at what happens from the point of the dog sitting at the other end of the ring from the handler; the handler now gives the command **OR** signal for the dog to Come. From the time the dog is called until the command or signal to Down, the Judge is judging the exercise as the Novice Recall. The following is now observed.

### 3. JUDGING THE HANDLER

- a. (a-j) as noted in item 1, applies again to the handler during this portion of the exercise. The **ONLY** exception is item f. A signal **OR** command is given to the dog -- not both. Giving a command **AND** signal to Come would result in a non-qualifying score
- b. The same CHAPTERS and SECTIONS apply as noted above under Judging The Handler in item

### 4. JUDGING THE DOG:

- a. Did the dog Come on the first command or signal
- b. Did the dog respond **PROMPTLY** to the handler's command or signal to Come. Quoting from the Glossary of Terms, "prompt response -- without hesitation, immediate, quick"
- c. Does the dog move directly to the handler
- d. Does the dog move at a brisk trot or gallop
- e. Does the dog retain the trot or gallop to the point where it is told to Drop

The same CHAPTERS and SECTIONS apply as noted above under Judging The Dog in item 2.

## Part II--THE DROP

Now comes the point where the Judge gives the signal to the handler to drop the dog. Focus on just the drop of the dog and the command or signal given by the handler. The following will be observed:

### 5. JUDGING THE HANDLER

- a. (a-j) as noted in item 1 applies again to the handler during this portion of the exercise. The **ONLY** exception is item f. A signal **OR** command is given to the dog -- not both. Giving a command **AND** signal to Drop would lead to a non-qualifying score.

The same CHAPTERS and SECTIONS apply as noted above under Judging The Handler in item 1. A lot of pencil lead gets used up by the Judge on item (b), loud command, if a command is used to drop the dog!

### 6. JUDGING THE DOG:

- a. **MOST IMPORTANT** -- How does the dog **RESPOND** to the command or signal to drop. The Regulations require that "The dog will be judged on the **promptness of its response to command or signal and not on its proximity to a designated point.**" Remember, a prompt response is defined as "without hesitation, immediate, quick." If the dog were NOT TO RESPOND to the command or signal and keeps on traveling a body length or more before responding, it will be traveling into "NQ land." **A dog's response is a key part of passing this exercise.**
- b. Substantial deductions, varying with the extent, even to the point of NQ, shall be made for delayed or slow response to the handler's command or signal to Drop.
- c. Substantial deductions, varying with the extent, even to the point of NQ, shall be made for slowness to Down.
- d. Does the dog drop completely to a Down position
- e. Does the dog remain in the Down until called or signaled to Come

The CHAPTERS AND SECTIONS for judging the dog are CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 2, 3, 20, 21, 24 and 25 and CHAPTER 4, SECTION 7 and 8. In determining if the dog is Down, the same principles apply as in the Group Down.

## Part III--THE SECOND RECALL AND FINISH

The dog is now completely in the Down position and the handler is ordered by the Judge to "Call Your Dog." This part of the exercise is judged just like the first half of the Drop on Recall to the point just prior to the Drop. The handler is again observed and judged during the calling and finishing the dog as outlined in item 1. The dog has the same criteria to meet as in item 4 (a-d). Item (e) is changed to read "to the handler" (instead of "Drop") during this part of the exercise. It should be noted that the dog need not come in from the Drop at the same equal speed as it traveled to the point of being told to Drop. Speed is NOT a criteria as long as the dog moves at a trot or gallop. If a dog travels the first Recall at a trot and the

second Recall at a gallop, the dog has met the Regulation requirement. The Regulations do **NOT** require the dog to do both Recalls at the same speed. In addition, the dog is observed for the following:

- a. Did the dog Sit in front of the handler
- b. How well did the dog Sit in front
- c. Did the dog touch the handler
- d. Did the dog Sit between the handler's feet
- e. On order from the handler to Finish, did the dog respond promptly to the command or signal, and go **SMARTLY** (quickly, vigorously) to the Heel position and Sit straight.

As you can see, there is a lot going on during this exercise for the dog, handler and Judge. To earn a perfect score in the Drop on Recall takes considerable training of both the dog and handler as it is a team effort. From the Judge's standpoint, every infraction from perfection (providing it is at least worth one-half point) should be scored. This may sound like nit picking but consider the following. If the dog and handler before you make a minor or substantial error and it is not scored, is this fair to you and your dog when you perform it perfectly? In theory, you would both be receiving the same score for different quality of work.

# The Retrieve On Flat Where Are The Points Lost?

by John Cox

When reading CHAPTER 4, SECTION 9 (Retrieve On Flat), the principal features of the exercise sound quite simple.

"The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog retrieve promptly."

There are many functions that take place during the execution of this exercise -- by the dog and handler. Obtaining a perfect score is possible for the well-trained dog and its smooth handler. One good way to understand the "perfect" Retrieve on Flat is to break it down and look at the individual parts that make up the whole exercise. I will break the exercise into three parts.

- A. GETTING PAST THE RING GATE WITH THE CORRECT DUMBBELL
- B. THE HANDLER'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE EXERCISE
- C. THE DOG'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE EXERCISE

Knowing what is required by the dog and handler will help show how the exercise is judged and where points can be lost.

## **A. GETTING PAST THE RING GATE WITH THE CORRECT DUMBBELL**

Chapter 4, Section 9 sets the criteria for the dumbbell. It is up to the JUDGE to approve the dumbbell and make sure it meets the following specifications:

1. Made of one or more solid pieces of wood or of a rigid or semi-rigid firm, nontoxic, non-wooden material, similar in size, shape, color, and weight to a wooden dumbbell
2. Metal dumbbells are not permitted
3. Dumbbells shall not be hollowed out
4. Dumbbells may be unfinished, coated with a clear finish or painted **any** color
5. It shall have no decorations or attachments
6. The dumbbell must be proportionate to the size of the dog

Dumbbells must also comply with Chapter 1, Section 10, Identification. This section states, "No visible means of identification (badges, ribbons, club jackets, etc.) may be worn or displayed by anyone exhibiting a dog in the ring." If a dog's or handler's name was **VISIBLE** on the dumbbell (or other means of identification of who was going into the ring) the Judge must not allow the dumbbell in the ring. The key word is "visible."

## **B. THE HANDLER'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE EXERCISE**

Now let's look at the handler's performance after the Judge's order to "Throw it." The Judge will be observing the handler for the following:

### JUDGING THE HANDLER:

1. After the Judge's order did the handler delay in giving the command **OR** signal to send the dog, take the dumbbell and Finish
2. Was the signal (if used) a single gesture with one arm and hand only
3. Did the arm immediately return to a natural position
4. Was the signal inaudible or did the handler touch the dog
5. Was there any unusual noise or motion that may be considered a signal
6. If the handler bent their knees to the extent necessary in giving a signal to the dog, did the handler then stand erect and in a natural position with their arms at their sides. Remember the Regulations (CH 2 SEC. 20) state a handler may bend the body and knees as far as necessary to bring his hand on a level with the dog's eyes in giving a signal to a dog **IN THE HEEL POSITION**. (Bending over to give a Finish signal to the dog while the dog is in front of the handler [or not in Heel Position] is subject to a penalty.)

7. Did the position of the arms and hands and movements of the body appear to be an aid to the dog
8. If the handler gave **BOTH** a signal and command to **Stay**, were they given simultaneously
9. Does the handler use any additional commands or signals not permitted
10. Did the handler use the dog's name and **ONLY** a signal
11. If a **COMMAND** was given, was it **TOO** loud
12. Did the handler give the **Stay** command **and/or** signal with the hand holding the dumbbell
13. Does the handler remain in the same spot until the Finish is complete
14. Was the handler smooth, natural and gentle
15. Was the dumbbell thrown too short

Judging the handler is covered in CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 2, 3, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25 and CHAPTER 4, SECTIONS 9 and 10 to mention a few!

### THROWING THE DUMBBELL

The throwing of a dumbbell is not an area that is normally scored, but where the dumbbell lands can affect the dog's performance. Learning to "plant" the dumbbell in a desired area is a skill and requires practice. A poor toss of the dumbbell can lead to a poor retrieve. The dog is then scored for a poor retrieve -- but the problem started with the handler. A few tips on dumbbells and throwing:

- a. Use a dumbbell that is comfortable to the dog's mouth and fits well in the teeth and gums. Use a size that is proportionate to the size of the dog. This also applies to scent articles.
- b. Choose a dumbbell that does not bounce and slide around when tossed. Throwing skills can also avoid bouncing and sliding as the dumbbell lands. Practice on different surfaces with wood and non-wood dumbbells.
- c. Avoid throwing the dumbbell too close to the ring barriers. Many times this constricts the dog from a "clean" pick-up. Poor pick-ups are scored.
- d. Observe how your dog picks up the dumbbell. Does he pick it up on an outward direction or does he turn and then pick it up? What way does he circle to pick up the dumbbell or turn with the dumbbell in his mouth? These are things the handler should know and keep in mind when throwing the dumbbell. It is up to the handler to toss the dumbbell so the dog has the opportunity to go directly out, have a clean pick-up and be able to directly return. Here again, it takes teamwork to save points.
- e. If a handler is physically challenged in a way that restricts throwing, mention this to the Judge when going into the ring. This area is covered in CHAPTER 2, SECTION 14.

## **C. THE DOG'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE EXERCISE**

### JUDGING THE DOG:

- a. Was there a delayed response to the command **or** signal to retrieve
- b. Was the dog sitting in Heel Position at the beginning of the exercise
- c. Did the dog anticipate - the dog must wait for the command or signal to retrieve
- d. Did the dog leave the handler
- e. Did the dog go away **DIRECTLY** to the dumbbell
- f. Did the dog **go away briskly at a trot or gallop**
- g. Was the dog showing willingness and enjoyment
- h. Did the dog display fear or nervousness
- i. Did the dog show uncontrolled behavior such as barking or snapping
- j. Did the dog **retrieve promptly**
- k. Did the dog drop the dumbbell
- l. Was the dog unnecessarily mouthing or playing with the dumbbell
- m. Did the dog **return at a brisk trot or gallop ALL THE WAY INTO** the handler
- n. Did the dog come **DIRECTLY** in and sit straight, centered immediately in front of the handler's feet, close enough that the handler could readily touch its head without moving either foot or having to stretch forward

- o. Did the dog touch the handler or sit between his/her feet
- p. Did the dog show reluctance or refusal to release the dumbbell to the handler
- q. On order from the handler to Finish, did the dog respond promptly to the command or signal, and go **SMARTLY** (quickly, vigorously) to the Heel Position and Sit straight

The same CHAPTERS and SECTIONS apply as noted above under Judging The Handler. As you can see, there is a lot going on during this exercise for the dog, handler and Judge. To earn a perfect score in Retrieve on Flat takes considerable training of both the dog and handler as it is a team effort. From the Judge's standpoint, every infraction from perfection (providing it is at least worth one-half point) should be scored. This may sound like nit picking but consider the following. If the dog and handler before you make a minor or substantial error and it is not scored, is this fair to you and your dog when you perform it perfectly? In theory, you would both be receiving the same score for different quality of work.

# Retrieve Over High Jump Where Are The Points Lost?

by John Cox

When reading CHAPTER 4, SECTION 11 (Retrieve Over High Jump) the principal features of the exercise sounds quite simple:

"The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog go out over the jump, pick up the dumbbell and promptly return with it over the jump."

There are many functions that take place during the execution of this exercise -- by the dog and handler. This exercise is executed in the same manner as the Retrieve on Flat, except that the dog must clear the High Jump both going and coming. Obtaining a perfect score is possible for the well-trained dog and its smooth handler. One good way to understand the "perfect" Retrieve Over High Jump is to break it down and look at the individual parts that make up the whole exercise.

I will break the exercise into three parts.

- A. GETTING PAST THE RING GATE WITH THE CORRECT DUMBBELL
- B. THE HANDLER'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE EXERCISE
- C. THE DOG'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE EXERCISE

Knowing what is required by the dog and handler will help show how the exercise is judged and where points can be lost.

## **A. GETTING PAST THE RING GATE WITH THE CORRECT DUMBBELL**

Chapter 4, Section 9 sets the criteria for the dumbbell. It is up to the JUDGE to approve the dumbbell and make sure it meets the following specifications:

1. Made of one or more solid pieces of wood or of a rigid or semi-rigid firm, nontoxic, non-wooden material, similar in size, shape, color, and weight to a wooden dumbbell
  2. Metal dumbbells are not permitted
  3. Dumbbells shall not be hollowed out
  4. Dumbbells may be unfinished, coated with a clear finish or painted **any** color
  5. It shall have no decorations or attachments
  6. The dumbbell must be proportionate to the size of the dog
- Dumbbells must also comply with Chapter 1, Section 10, Identification. This section states, "No visible means of identification (badges, ribbons, club jackets, etc.) may be worn or displayed by anyone exhibiting a dog in the ring." If a dog's or handler's name was **VISIBLE** on the dumbbell (or other means of identification of who was going into the ring) the Judge must not allow the dumbbell in the ring. The key word is "visible."

## **B. THE HANDLER'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE EXERCISE**

Now let's look at the handler's performance after the Judge's order to "Throw it." The Judge will be observing the handler for the following:

### JUDGING THE HANDLER:

- a. After the Judge's order did the handler delay in giving the command **OR** signal to send the dog, take the dumbbell and Finish
- b. Was the signal (if used) a single gesture with one arm and hand only
- c. Did the arm immediately return to a natural position
- d. Was the signal inaudible or did the handler touch the dog
- e. Was there any unusual noise or motion that may be considered a signal
- f. If the handler bent their knees to the extent necessary in giving a signal to the dog, did the handler then return and stand erect in a natural position with their arms at their sides. Remember, the Regulations (CH. 2, SEC. 20) state a handler may bend the body and knees as far as necessary to bring his hand on a level with the dog's eyes in giving a signal to a dog **IN THE**



**HEEL POSITION.** (Bending over to signal the dog while the dog is doing a Front ETC. [out of Heel Position] is subject to a penalty.)

- g. Did the position of the arms and hands and movements of the body appear to be an aid to the dog
- h. If the handler gave **BOTH** a signal and command to **Stay**, were they given simultaneously
- i. Does the handler use any additional commands or signals not permitted
- j. Did the handler use the dog's name and **ONLY** a signal
- k. IF a **COMMAND** was given was it **TOO** loud
- l. Did the handler give the **Stay** command **and/or** signal with the hand holding the dumbbell
- m. Was the handler at least 8 feet, or any reasonable distance beyond 8 feet, from the jump
- n. Does the handler remain in the same spot until the Finish is completed
- o. Was the handler smooth, natural and gentle
- p. Was the dumbbell thrown at least 8 feet beyond the jump

Judging the handler is covered in CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 2, 3, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25 and CHAPTER 4, SECTIONS 9 and 10, 11, 12 - to mention a few!

### THROWING THE DUMBBELL

The throwing of a dumbbell is not an area that is normally scored, but where the dumbbell lands can affect the dog's performance. Learning to "plant" the dumbbell in a desired area is a skill and requires practice. A poor toss of the dumbbell can lead to a poor retrieve. The dog is then scored for a poor retrieve -- but the problem started with the handler. A few tips on dumbbells and throwing:

- a. Use a dumbbell that is comfortable to the dog's mouth and fits well in the teeth and gums. Use a size that is proportionate to the size of the dog. This also applies to scent articles.
- b. Choose a dumbbell that does not bounce and slide around when tossed. Throwing skills can also avoid bouncing and sliding as the dumbbell lands. Practice on different surfaces.
- c. Avoid throwing the dumbbell too close to the ring barriers. Many times this constricts the dog from a "clean" pick-up. Poor pick-ups are scored.
- d. Observe how your dog picks up the dumbbell. Does he pick it up on an outward direction or does he turn and then pick it up? What way does he circle to pick up the dumbbell or turn with the dumbbell in his mouth? These are things the handler should know and keep in mind when throwing the dumbbell. It is up to the handler to toss the dumbbell so the dog has the opportunity to go directly out, have a clean pick-up and be able to directly return. Here again, it takes teamwork to save points.
- e. If a handler is physically challenged in a way that restricts throwing, mention this to the Judge when going into the ring. This area is covered in CHAPTER 2, SECTION 14.

## **C. THE DOG'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE EXERCISE**

### JUDGING THE DOG:

- a. Was there a delayed response to the command or signal to retrieve
- b. Was the dog sitting in Heel Position at the beginning of the exercise
- c. Did the dog anticipate - the dog must wait for the command or signal to retrieve
- d. Did the dog leave the handler
- e. Did the dog go away **DIRECTLY** to the dumbbell
- f. Did the dog **go away briskly at a trot or gallop**
- g. Was the dog showing willingness and enjoyment
- h. Did the dog display fear or nervousness
- i. Did the dog show uncontrolled behavior such as barking or snapping
- j. Did the dog go over the full height of the jump to retrieve the dumbbell
- k. Did the dog climb or use the jump for aid in going or coming
- l. Did the dog display any hesitation or reluctance to jump
- m. Did the dog **retrieve promptly**
- n. Did the dog drop the dumbbell
- o. Was the dog unnecessarily mouthing or playing with the dumbbell
- p. Did the dog **return at a brisk trot or gallop ALL THE WAY INTO** the handler

- q. Did the dog come **DIRECTLY** in and sit straight, centered immediately in front of the handler's feet, close enough that the handler could readily touch its head without moving either foot or having to stretch forward
- r. Did the dog touch the handler or sit between his/her feet
- s. Did the dog show reluctance or refusal to release the dumbbell to the handler
- t. On order from the handler to Finish, did the dog respond promptly to the command or signal, and go **SMARTLY** (quickly, vigorously) to the Heel position and Sit straight

The same CHAPTERS and SECTIONS apply as noted above under Judging The Handler. As you can see, there is a lot going on during this exercise for the dog, handler and Judge. To earn a perfect score in Retrieve over High Jump takes considerable training of both the dog and handler as it is a team effort. From the Judge's standpoint, every infraction from perfection (providing it is at least worth one-half point) should be scored. This may sound like nit picking but consider the following. If the dog and handler before you make a minor or substantial error and it is not scored, is this fair to you and your dog when you perform it perfectly? In theory, you would both be receiving the same score for different quality of work.

# Broad Jump Where Are The Points Lost?

by John Cox

When reading CHAPTER 4, SECTION 13 (Broad Jump), the principal features of the exercise sound quite simple.

"The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay where left until directed to Jump and that the dog clear the jump on a single command or signal."

So why is this another Obedience exercise in which it is difficult to earn a perfect score? There are many functions that take place during the execution of the Broad Jump -- by the dog and handler. Obtaining a perfect score in this exercise is a major achievement for the well-trained dog and its smooth handler. One good way to understand the "perfect" Broad Jump is to break it down and look at the individual parts that make up the whole exercise. I will break the exercise into three parts.

- A. BEFORE THE JUMP
- B. JUMPING
- C. AFTER THE JUMP

Knowing what is required by the dog and handler will help show how the exercise is judged and where points can be lost.

## **A. BEFORE THE JUMP**

The exercise is started when the Judge orders the handler to "Leave your dog." At this point the handler may give a command and/or signal for the dog to Stay in the Sit position while the handler walks forward to a position facing the right side of the jump with his/her toes about 2 feet from the jump, and anywhere between the lowest edge of the first hurdle and the highest edge of the last hurdle. The Judge will be observing and scoring the following:

### 1. JUDGING THE HANDLER

- a. Did the handler delay in giving the command **and/or** signal to the dog
- b. Was the command too loud
- c. Was the signal a single gesture with one arm and hand only
- d. Did the arm immediately return to a natural position
- e. Was the signal inaudible and did the handler touch the dog
- f. If both signal and command were used, were they given simultaneously
- g. Was there any unusual noise or motion that may be considered a signal
- h. Position of the arms and hands and movements of the body
- i. Does the handler use any additional commands or signals not permitted
- j. Did the handler use the dog's name and **ONLY** a signal
- k. Was an additional command or signal given to Stay
- l. Did the handler stand about 2 feet from the jump
- m. Did the handler position correctly alongside the hurdles

All the above is covered in CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 20 and 21, CHAPTER 3, SECTIONS 10 and 11 and CHAPTER 4, SECTIONS 13 and 14. The Judge will be looking for perfection and any deviation should be scored. Also, CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 2, 3 and 24 (I will let you look these up) come into play during all exercises. Depending on the actions of the handler, points off will range from a minor deduction to a non-qualifying score.

### 2. JUDGING THE DOG:

- a. Did the dog stay without an additional command
- b. Did the dog remain in the place where left
- c. Did the dog remain in the Sit position

Judging the dog is covered in: CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 2, 3, 20, 21, 24 and 25; CHAPTER 3, SECTIONS 10 and 11; CHAPTER 4, SECTIONS 13 and 14.

## B. JUMPING

Now let's take a look at what happens from the point of the dog sitting in front of the Broad Jump or the handler now giving the command **OR** signal for the dog to jump. From the time the dog is given a command **OR** signal to jump until the time the dog sits in front of the handler, the Judge is judging the exercise as the Novice Recall in addition to jumping. The following is now observed.

### 3. JUDGING THE HANDLER

- a. (a-j) as noted in Item 1 applies again to the handler during this portion of the exercise. The **ONLY** exception is Item f. A signal **OR** command is given to the dog -- not both. Giving a command **AND** signal to jump would end up as non-qualifying score.
- b. Did the handler turn while the dog was **MIDAIR** over the hurdles
- c. Did the handler remain in the same spot while executing a right angle turn

The same CHAPTERS and SECTIONS apply as noted above under Judging The Handler in Item 1.

### 4. JUDGING THE DOG:

- a. Did the dog respond **PROMPTLY** to the handler's command or signal to jump. Quoting from the Glossary of Terms, "prompt response -- without hesitation, immediate, quick"
- b. Did the dog jump on the first command or signal
- c. Did the dog display any hesitation or reluctance to jump
- d. Did the dog touch the jump (not to be confused with failure to clear)
- e. Did the dog clear the jump
- f. Did the dog use the jump as an aid

The same CHAPTERS and SECTIONS apply as noted above under Judging The Dog in Item 2.

## C. AFTER THE JUMP

This part of the exercise is judged like the Novice Recall.

### 5. JUDGING THE DOG:

- a. Did the dog return **DIRECTLY** to the handler (making a wide turn is not direct)
- b. Did the dog return at a trot or gallop
- c. Did the dog Sit in front of the handler
- d. How well did the dog Sit in front
- e. Did the dog touch the handler
- f. Did the dog Sit between the handler's feet
- g. On command from the handler to Finish, did the dog respond promptly to the command or signal, and go **SMARTLY** (quickly, vigorously) to the Heel position and Sit straight

**Keep in mind, after the Broad Jump exercise is completed, judging is not!** You are still in the ring and between exercises. Keep the dog under control and **DON'T** physically guide the dog to the table as you are obtaining your leash. This action is subject to a penalty. Check out CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 23, 24 and 25.

As you can see, there is a lot going on during this exercise for the dog, handler and Judge. To earn a perfect score in the Broad Jump takes considerable training of both the dog and handler as it is a team effort. From the Judge's standpoint, every infraction from perfection (providing it is at least worth one-half point) should be scored. This may sound like nit picking but consider the following. If the dog and handler before you make a minor or substantial error and it is not scored, is this fair to you and your dog when you perform it perfectly? In theory, you would both be receiving the same score for different quality of work.

# The Group Exercises Where Are The Points Lost?

by John Cox

## A few things to keep in mind for the Group Exercises:

- 1) If a dog has non-qualified (NQ) in an individual exercise and, in the opinion of the judge the dog demonstrated uncontrolled behavior, the judge must release the dog from performing the group exercises.
- 2) **When leaving the ring after the individual exercise the handler is to inform the steward if they will be returning for the Group exercises.**
- 3) If there are more dogs competing than can be handled in one group exercise, the judge will divide the class into approximately equal sections. Judges have the option of deciding if a set of group exercises will be conducted after a specified number of dogs or if the group exercises will be conducted after the last individual team is judged.
- 4) Once determined the judge must post this information at the ring.
- 5) When going in for the Groups:
  - a. Leash must be attached to the dog's collar. Slip leashes not allowed for Groups or Awards.
  - b. Leash is left on the dog and placed alongside the dog and handler.
  - c. Armband is to be weighted, if necessary. You may want a long leash for this task.
  - d. Dogs are to be guided gently by the collar ONLY. Any positioning of the dog with hands or feet before the exercise(s) start are subject to a penalty. Check out Chapter 2, Section 23.
  - e. Dogs must be spaced with a minimum of four (4) feet between each dog and four (4) feet from the ring barrier on one side of the ring. On a 50' side of the ring the maximum # of dogs allowed would be nine (9) dogs. See table:

Ring Length	Maximum # of Dogs
50	9
45	8
40	7
35	6
30	5

There are several Judges' orders during the Group exercises:

1. First order, "Sit" or "Down" your dog." Scoring of the exercise has now started.
2. Second order, "Leave your dog." Principal part of the exercise now starts in regards to scoring, the timing and duration of the exercise.

Chapter 3, Section 13. Group Exercises, Scoring. The Regulations state in the Novice Group exercise, **"A non-qualifying score (NQ) is required for the following:** The dog moving a substantial distance away from the place where it was left any time during the exercise, going over to any other dog, not remaining in the required position until the handler has returned to heel position, and repeatedly barking or whining.

**"A substantial deduction will be made** for a dog that moves even a short distance from where it was left, that barks or whines *only* once or twice..." Note: During the individual exercises the penalty for barking or whining is up the Judge depending on the circumstances. In the Groups it is stated a substantial (3 or more points off) will be made. In the Group exercises, where other dogs are present, carries stiffer penalties than during the individual exercises, in most cases.

Check out the whole section for other errors which are scorable.

The Novice group exercise is a foundation exercise for Open & Graduate Novice so the same applies to those classes, too. However, the leashes in Open and Graduate Novice are to be removed and placed behind the dog along with the armband number, as in the past.

## Pop Quiz #9

### Open True of False by John Cox

For the following questions, circle whether the statement is TRUE or FALSE according to the Obedience Regulations and Guidelines for Obedience Judges.

1. T F Except for the fact that the dog is off leash, the Open Heel Free and Figure Eight is exactly the same as the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight.
2. T F In the Drop on Recall the principal feature of the exercise is the dog remaining in the Down position until called again.
3. T F In the Retrieve on Flat exercise a fast trot is an acceptable gait.
4. T F One order of Ribbons to be awarded is Blue, Red, White and Yellow.
5. T F The minimum jump height for French Bulldogs, English Bulldogs are  $\frac{3}{4}$  their height. Pugs are once their height at the withers.
6. T F 65 Open dogs is a full class for one Judge to judge in eight hours.
7. T F A handler who has shown a prior dog to an O.T.CH. may still handle a new dog in Open A.
8. T F In order to relax the handler it is suggested that the Judge be nice and take the time to visit a moment and find out a little about the dog and handler.
9. T F The Graduate Novice Moving Drop on Recall is scored the same as the Open Drop on Recall.
10. T F You are the Judge of Part II of an Open B class. The Part I Judge has judged the runoffs resulting from her scores and yours, and she now asks you to award the ribbons and enter the first four placings in the Judge's Book. You may do this.

## ANSWERS

1. (T) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 6
2. (F) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 7 It should be noted that other principal features are **JUST** as important as remaining Down. The other principal features that are scored are the dog's **PROMPT RESPONSE** to the handler's command **or** signal to Drop, and the **PROMPT RESPONSE** to the command **or** signal to Come.
3. (T) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 9
4. (F) CHAPTER 1, SECTION 19
5. (F) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 11 French Bulldogs, English Bulldogs AND Pugs may jump  $\frac{3}{4}$  the height at the withers.
6. (F) CHAPTER 1, SECTION 27
7. (F) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 1
8. (F) GUIDELINES FOR OBEDIENCE JUDGES - CHAPTER 4 Procedure in the Ring.
9. (F) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 7 & CHAPTER 7, SECTION 3.
10. (F) CHAPTER 1, SECTION 30

## Pop Quiz #10

### Open Multiple Choice by John Cox

On the following multiple choice questions, indicate the one choice which best fits the statement or solves the problem. Several answers may be possible but only one will be the best possible choice.

1. The time in which the dogs are judged during the Long Sit exercise lies between:
  - a. The Judge's order "Leave your dogs" and until the call back to the ring by the Judge.
  - b. The Judge's order "Sit your dogs" and the order "Back to your dogs."
  - c. The Judge's order "Leave your dogs" and the order "Exercise finished."
  - d. The Judge's order "Sit your dogs" and the order "Exercise finished."
  - e. The moment when the last handler leaves the ring to the moment when they have returned to heel position.
2. Exhibitor #52 enters the ring and your Steward informs you that the dumbbell the handler has is very light and appears to be hollow. Upon examination, the dumbbell is found to be made of plywood. You should:
  - a. Not permit the use of the dumbbell because it cannot possibly be thrown the distance that is required by the Regulations.
  - b. Permit the dumbbell since it is of wood and the right size for the dog.
  - c. Permit the use of the dumbbell but suggest to the handler that it should be replaced with one that meets the Regulations.
  - d. Not permit the use of the dumbbell. It is not made in accordance with the Regulations.
3. After the dog has completed the Retrieve Over High Jump exercise in Open A, the handler informs you that the Figure Eight was omitted during the Heel Free exercise. The Steward confirms this. Your best decision is to:
  - a. Ask the handler to do the Heel Free exercise again, including the Figure Eight.
  - b. Ask the handler to do ONLY the Figure Eight immediately.
  - c. Ask the handler to do ONLY the Figure Eight following the Broad Jump.
  - d. Finish judging that dog and handler without doing a Figure Eight.
4. In which of the following groups of commands may both the command **and** signal be given in **Open**?
  - a. "Heel;" "Stay;" "Down" (on Drop on Recall)
  - b. "Heel;" "Stay;" "Down" (on Long Down)
  - c. "Take it;" "Come;" "Jump"
  - d. All the above
  - e. None of the above
5. Dog #1 (a Saint Bernard) during the Long Down exercise lays down across the handler's feet (ouch!) facing the Miniature Pinscher on the right. The Judge should:
  - a. Ask the handler of the Saint Bernard if the dog has had lunch.
  - b. Ask the handler to straighten out his dog and apply a substantial penalty.
  - c. Ask the handler to straighten out his dog and apply a minor penalty.
  - d. Ask the handler of the Miniature Pinscher to move her dog so not to frighten the Saint Bernard.



6. Your first dog in the ring begins to limp and the handler discovers a painful thistle-like burr on its foot. Upon examination you discover these are scattered throughout your ring. The Trial Secretary informs you that there is NO other place where your ring can be moved. You should:
  - a. Judge the class as usual, excusing those dogs which limp.
  - b. Judge the class under protest, writing a critical note to the American Kennel Club.
  - c. Judge the class under protest, writing a note to the American Kennel Club, and informing each handler that he or she may decline to show their dog and receive the entire money back if they so choose.
  - d. Refuse to judge the class.
  - e. None of the above.
7. A Lhasa Apso appears at your ring with the hair over its eyes tied back with a blue Band-Aid. As a Judge you can:
  - a. Judge the dog and write a note in the Judge's Book.
  - b. Ask the handler to come back when the Band-Aid is removed.
  - c. Excuse the dog as having been bandaged.
  - d. Judge the dog as it appears
8. A Saint Bernard enters the ring for measurement. The dog measures 29" at the withers. The High Jump is set at 30" and the Broad Jump at 56". The handler requests to jump the minimum required height, you should:
  - a. Leave the jumps alone.
  - b. Have the Broad Jump set at 30".
  - c. Lower the High Jump to 22" and reset the Broad Jump to 44".
  - d. Ask the handler what the dog has jumped in the past and base your decision on their reply.
  - e. Set the jumps in accordance with once the height at the withers.
  - f. Ask the Steward to find the 1" board for the High Jump so it can be set at 29".
9. During the Drop on Recall the Saint Bernard is commanded to "Drop," he responds to the command immediately, then travels six feet before dropping. You should:
  - a. Penalize with a non-qualifying score
  - b. Give a substantial penalty as it takes time for a large, fast breed "to put on the brakes" and Drop.
  - c. Give a minor penalty as the SAINT Bernard slipped on some of his drool (Holy Water!), thus preventing a quicker drop.
10. The Retrieve on the Flat exercise requires a small breed of dog to travel a minimum distance to the dumbbell. That distance must be at least:
  - a. 15 feet.
  - b. 20 feet.
  - c. 15 feet regardless of breed.
  - d. 20 feet regardless of breed.

## ANSWERS

1. (c) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 15
2. (d) CHAPTER 4, SECTIONS 9: You should inspect the dumbbell **BEFORE the handler enters the ring** - that is a better time to have the handler get a dumbbell that meets the Regulations rather than **just** before the exercise starts and having the handler in the ring with the wrong equipment.
3. (c)
4. (e) CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 20 & 21
5. (b) CHAPTER 3, SECTION 13
6. (c) GUIDELINES FOR OBEDIENCE JUDGES, CHAPTER 3
7. (b) CHAPTER 1, SECTIONS 17: If you felt the Band-Aid was **JUST BEING USED FOR THE TIEBACK OF THE HAIR**, you should request that rubber bands or plain barrettes be used and the dog could come back to be judged when the condition was corrected.  
**OR**  
(c) CHAPTER 1, SECTION 17: This section also reads "No dog shall be eligible to compete...if it is taped or bandaged in any way or if it has anything attached to it for medical or corrective purposes." The meaning here is a Band-Aid being **USED FOR MEDICAL OR CORRECTIVE PURPOSES**, but it is **YOUR** call.
8. (c) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 11
9. (a) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 8: Traveling a distance of **SIX** feet is an extreme delay or slowness to Down and subject to a **NQ**. This is a judgement call - but six feet is **QUITE** a distance to travel. If a car were coming, the dog would have been hit! Also, the breed of dog does **NOT** enter into judgement as per CHAPTER 2, SECTION 6.
10. (b) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 9

## Pop Quiz #12

### Open Circle The Penalty by John Cox

On the following questions, circle the penalty most likely directed or implied by the Regulations.

NP = No Penalty

M = Minor Penalty - 2 and one-half points or less

S = Substantial Penalty - 3 or more points

NQ = Non-qualifying

1. NP M S NQ The handler gives a stay signal, using the hand holding the dumbbell, just before throwing the dumbbell on the Retrieve On Flat.
2. NP M S NQ During the Retrieve Over High Jump, the handler of a Scottie throws the dumbbell 6 feet beyond the jump.
3. NP M S NQ Before the Group Sit starts, handler #24 gently places his dog in position with his hand.
4. NP M S NQ You give the order to "Down your dogs" and handler #23 gives two commands for his dog to down. The dog responds promptly to the second command and drops.
5. NP M S NQ You give the order to "Down your dogs" and handler #25 gives two signals for her dog to down. The dog did not respond; a third signal is given and the dog drops.
6. NP M S NQ After the dog clears the Broad Jump it walks back to the handler and does a perfect Front and Finish.
7. NP M S NQ During the Drop on Recall the speeding-bullet Saint Bernard is given a command to Drop. The dog responds PROMPTLY to the command but travels six feet before dropping. Remember, this is a HUGE dog and it takes time to slow the momentum.
8. NP M S NQ After the dumbbell is taken the handler signals the dog to finish, using the hand holding the dumbbell.
9. NP M S NQ The handler leaves the dog in front of the Broad Jump, goes to the side and positions herself 3 feet from the hurdles.
10. NP M S NQ After the Long Down the lady with the Yorkie stoops over and forms a circle with her arms and has the dog jump through as an act of release and praise.

## ANSWERS

1. (M to S) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 9: The Regulation states, "...signal may not be given with the hand that is holding the dumbbell..." Section 9 does not address the degree of penalty so it is a judgement call. Since the handler is specifically not adhering to the Regulations, a penalty of some value must be applied.
2. (NP) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 11. The judge must order "Exercise Finished" and have the handler re-throw the dumbbell at least 8 feet beyond the jump.
3. (M to S) CHAPTER 2, SECTION 23
4. (NP or M) CHAPTER 2, SECTION 23. Again, a judgement call.
5. (S) CHAPTER 2, SECTION 23. It should be clear after three signals that the dog is not promptly responding to the handler's signals. CHAPTER 3, SECTION 13 & CHAPTER 4, SECTION 15, state "Scoring of the exercises will not start until after the Judge has ordered the handlers to leave their dogs, except for such things as rough treatment of a dog by its handler or resistance by a dog to its handler's attempts to make it Sit or lie Down. These shall be penalized substantially; in extreme cases the dog may be excused."
6. (S) CHAPTER 4, SECTION 14 "All applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall shall apply" CHAPTER 3, SECTION 11.
7. (S to NQ) CHAPTER 4, SECTIONS 7 & 8. "Substantial deductions, varying with the extent, even to the point of non-qualifying, shall be made for delayed or slow response to the handler's command or signal to Drop, for delay or slowness to Down, and for slow response to either of the Recalls." Also, keep in mind CHAPTER 2, SECTION 6.
8. (S or M) See answer 1.
9. (NP to S) A judgement call as to points off, if any. Before ordering the handler to send the dog the Judge must have the handler move to the correct distance, which is **about 2 feet**. Some Judges may consider this a handler error or an action which aids the dog and deduct points. Check out CHAPTER 2, SECTIONS 20 & 24.
10. (NP to S) Another judgement call. I would deduct a minor penalty as the dog is not under reasonable control (CHAPTER 2, SECTION 22) while jumping around between exercises, and especially while other dogs are in the ring. Can you imagine if everyone in the Group did this?!?!

# AKC OBEDIENCE TRIAL EXCUSAL REFERENCE CHART

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JUDGE'S OBSERVATION	DISQUALIFY	EXCUSE	OPTION TO REJUDGE		CHAPTER	SECTION
			YES	NO		
Identification		X	X		1	10
Dog blind - W/O USEFUL vision	X			X	1	17
Dog deaf - W/O USEFUL hearing	X			X	1	17
Dog changed for <u>cosmetic</u> reasons	X			X	1	17
Dog <u>attempts</u> to attack a person in the ring	X			X	1 2	17 25
Dog attacks a person in the ring	X			X	1 2	17 25
Dog <u>attempts</u> to attack a dog in the ring		X		X	1 2	17 25
Dog attacks a dog in the ring		X		X	1 2	17 25
Dog <u>appears</u> dangerous in the ring		X		X	1 2	17 25
Lame - Irregularity of locomotion		X		X	1	17
Dog Taped/bandaged/medical attachments		X		X	1	17
Hair - Permitted: eyes, ears or beard... May be tied back with elastic bands or small plain barrettes as in breed ring		X	X		1	17
Hair - Not permitted: dyed/chalk/powder/protection/adornment		X	X		1	17
Bitches in season		X		X	1	18
Bitches attractive to males		X		X	1	18
Dog out of control		X		X	1 2	18 25
Handler willfully interferes		X		X	1	18
Handler abuses dog		X		X	1 2 2	18 3 28
Dog unfit to compete		X		X	1	18
Vet excusal in writing		X		X	1	25
Bench/trial committee excusal		X		X	1	25
Leash - fabric/leather/adequate length		X	X		2 2	16 26
Collars - properly fitted and approved by the judge. No special training collars.		X	X		2 2	17 26
Fear/nervousness - <u>may</u> be excused depending on the extent		X		X	2 2	3 25
Uncontrolled behavior - <u>may</u> be excused depending on the extent		X		X	2	25
Barking/snapping - <u>may</u> be excused depending on the extent		X		X	2	25
Running from handler - <u>may</u> be excused depending on the extent		X		X	2	25
Foul ring - <b>Judge's OPTION TO EXCUSE</b>		X		X	2 2	3 25
Training in ring - <b>Judge's OPTION TO EXCUSE</b>		X		X	2	27
Practicing in the ring - <b>Judge's OPTION TO EXCUSE</b>		X		X	2	27
Excessive verbal commands - <b>Judge's OPTION TO EXCUSE</b>		X		X	2	27

Disciplining in the ring		X		X	2 2	3 27
Abuse - report immediately.		X		X	2 2	3 28
Suspend for conduct prejudicial to the best interest of purebred dogs.		X		X	2	28
NQ score for carrying or offering food in the ring. Judge may excuse if he/she considers food being used as training.		X		X	2 2	3 22
Dog relieves itself while in the ring for judging. Judge's OPTION TO EXCUSE		X		X	2 2	3 25
Performance not meeting minimum requirements				X	2	3
<b>Equipment that Does not meet the requirements of the Obedience Regulations</b>						
		X	X			
<b>Novice Equipment for the Ring</b>						
Identification					1	10
Leash					2	16
Collar					2	17
<b>Open Equipment for the Ring</b>						
Identification, leash, collar same as in the Novice classes						
Dumbbell					4	9
<b>Utility Equipment for the Ring</b>						
Identification, leash, collar same as in the Novice classes						
Scent articles					5	8
Gloves					5	10

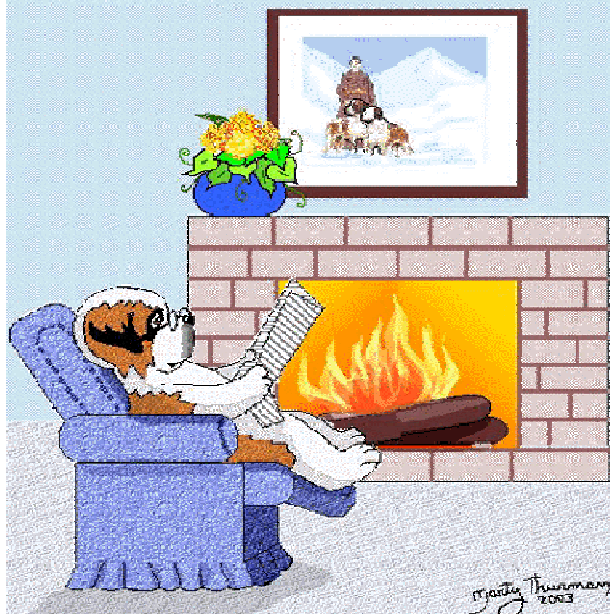
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# AKC Obedience Jump Charts

(Chapter 4, Section 11)

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**Regular Classes + Approved Breeds for ¾ Jump Height & Preferred Classes --- ½ Jump Height**  
Measured height nearest multiple of 2" to the height of the dog's withers.



**Chart For Once the Height at the Withers**

<u>Height to be Jumped</u>	<u>Broad Jump Hurdles</u>	<u>High Jump Chart Board Combinations</u>
4"	( 8) 1	4" = 4
8"	(16) 2	8" = 8
10"	(20) 2	10" = 8 + 2
12"	(24) 2	12" = 8 + 4
14"	(28) 3	14" = 8 + 4 + 2
16"	(32) 3	16" = 8 + 8
18"	(36) 3	18" = 8 + 8 + 2
20"	(40) 3	20" = 8 + 8 + 4
22"	(44) 3	22" = 8 + 8 + 4 + 2
24"	(48) 4	24" = 8 + 8 + 8
26"	(52) 4	26" = 8 + 8 + 8 + 2
28"	(56) 4	28" = 8 + 8 + 8 + 4
30"	(60) 4	30" = 8 + 8 + 8 + 4 + 2
32"	(64) 4	32" = 8 + 8 + 8 + 8
34"	(68) 4	34" = 8 + 8 + 8 + 8 + 2
36"	(72) 4	36" = 8 + 8 + 8 + 8 + 4

## Chart for ¾ the Height at the Withers

<u>Measured Height</u>	<u>Height to Jump</u>	<u>Broad Jump</u>
Less than 10"	4"	( 8) 1
10 to less than 12 1/2"	8"	(16) 2
12 1/2 to less than 15"	10"	(20) 2
15 to less than 17 1/2"	12"	(24) 2
17 1/2 to less than 20"	14"	(28) 3
20 to less than 23"	16"	(32) 3
23 to less than 25 1/2"	18"	(36) 3
25 1/2 to less than 28"	20"	(40) 3
28 to less than 31"	22"	(44) 3
31 to less than 33 1/2"	24"	(48) 4
33 1/2 to less than 36"	26"	(52) 4
36 to less than 39"	28"	(56) 4

## Chart for ½ the Height at the Withers (Preferred Open & Preferred Utility)

<u>Measured Height</u>	<u>Height to Jump</u>	<u>Broad Jump</u>
12" or less	4"	( 8) 1
Greater than 12" up to 18"	8"	(16) 2
Greater than 18" up to 22"	10"	(20) 2
Greater than 22" up to 26"	12"	(24) 2
Greater than 26" up to 30"	14"	(28) 3
Greater than 30" up to 34"	16"	(32) 3
Greater than 34"	18"	(36) 3



### Broad Jump: To cover a distance equal to TWICE the height of the High Jump

4 hurdles shall be used for a jump of 48" to 72"  
 3 hurdles shall be used for a jump of 28" to 44"  
 2 hurdles shall be used for a jump of 16" to 24"  
 1 hurdle shall be used for a jump of 8"

When decreasing the number of hurdles in the Jump, the highest hurdle(s) shall be removed first.

### 51 Approved Breeds Jumping ¾ Their Height at the Withers --- Effective August 1, 2012

Akita	Dandie Dinmount Terrier	Newfoundland
Argentine Dogo	Dogue De Bordeaux	Norwich Terrier
Basset Hound	Estrela Mountain Dog	Otterhound
Bergamasco	French Bulldog	Pekingese
Bernese Mountain Dog	Glen of Imaal Terrier	Pembroke Welsh Corgi
Black Russian Terrier	Grand Basset Griffon Vendéen	Petit Basset Griffon Vendéen
Bloodhound	Great Dane	Portuguese Podengo
Bolognese	Great Pyrenees	Pugs
Borzo	Greater Swiss Mountain Dog	Saint Bernard
Bulldog	Irish Wolfhound	Scottish Terriers
Bullmastiff	Kishu Ken	Sealyham Terrier
Cardigan Welsh Corgi	Kooikerhondje	Shih Tzu
Caucasian Mountain Dog	Kuvaszok	Skye Terrier
Chinese Shar-Pei	Lagotto Romagnolo	Sussex Spaniel
Chow Chow	Leonberger	Swedish Vallhunds
Clumber Spaniel	Mastiff	Thai Ridgeback
Dachshund	Neopolitan Mastiff	West Highland White Terrier