JUDGES NEWSLETTER Volume 3 • Number 4 • Fourth Quarter 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

OBEDIENCE RULEBOOK REVISIONS AND RULE CHANGES

Sydney Suwannarat; Senior Director of Performance Events, sydneys@ukcdogs.com

KALAMAZOO, MICH,. November 6, 2012 - Greetings, to all UKC Obedience exhibitors! The year 2013 is going to be exciting for obedience. We here in Dog Events, and me personally, would like to get a head start on it by releasing the first of many updated UKC Rulebooks. This new book has been edited and revised for content, clarity and grammar. You will see many sentences that have been re-written. and the layout and format of the sections have been completely redesigned. It is our sincere hope that you will find the new version of this book easier to read and, more importantly, understand clearly what is laid out within its pages.

There are a few actual rule changes, most of which are just clarifications of existing rules or added sentences to remove the "implied" meaning, making them more definitive and less subjective. There are some rule changes, however, that do directly affect competition and judging. These changes have resulted *directly* from the questionnaire I sent out last year to all of the obedience judges.

These changes have been highlighted in a separate document titled Obedience Rule Change Highlights (which follows). In the highlights document you will see a compilation of all actual rule changes denoted in *bold and italic text*. If you go to the actual rulebook, you will also see any new changes in bold and italic text.

The two most significant changes were made to the Group Sit exercise and the Jump Heights. These have been long-standing concerns of obedience exhibitors for a number of years.

First, let's look at the Group Sit. It is difficult from an organizational standpoint to mediate a divide that seems to be 50 percent for *keeping* the Group Sit, and 50 percent for *removing* the Group Sit and replacing it with another exercise (those exercise suggestions vary depending on who is making them). The most common suggestion made that also seemed to be located in the middle of the divide was to require dogs to keep their leashes attached to their collars during the Group Sit. Having leashes remain attached to the dog during the Group Sit exercise for Novice and Open affords the judges and stewards (who are often outnumbered by dogs in the Group Sit) some control over the situation should the need arise where dogs need to be controlled or separated for any instance in this exercise.

The second significant change is to that of the jump heights. It is getting increasingly difficult to manage jump heights by either the age or the breed of the dog. The exhibitors of many dogs that do not fit into the age requirement for the veteran height or the breed allowance have valid arguments for wanting to be allowed the option to have their dog jump at three-quarters its height at the withers. Rather than make exceptions for just a few, it was decided to allow any exhibitor to elect to jump the three-quarter jump height. This is now being referred to as the "Minimum Jump Height". Calculating the regular "Standard" jump height has not changed, nor has the calculation for the threequarter height. The change is simply that all dogs are now eligible to jump threequarter their height at the withers.

On entry forms, exhibitors will need to indicate either "Standard" or "Minimum", along with their dog's height at the shoulder. This will allow clubs to know which height each exhibitor is competing under. It is our sincere hope that this change will give everyone and every dog the same opportunity to participate in obedience.

You will also see an insert already in the new green book even though it has just been published. This is due to a change at the last minute after the book had gone to print. I received this change from an avid group of obedience judges and exhibitors, and it was included it in the initial printing of the new book; however, on further consideration and additional scrutiny it was decided to leave the exercise as it was, with only one minor change.

The exercise is for the Scent Discrimination. In the book, Option # I for sending the dog has been removed; however, you will see in the insert that it is still allowed. I do apolo-



gize for any confusion this may cause, but the insert is clear that Option # I for sending the dog is still acceptable.

The change to both options is that the "About Turn" order for the judge has been removed. There is only a "Send Your Dog" order for either option for this exercise. To read the entire section, please go to Chapter 6, Section 4 of the new green rulebook.

This situation encouraged me to do something that I have wanted to do since I started here last year, and that is to open up a comment and suggestion period to the entire obedience fancy; for all who participate to be able to send in their thoughts and ideas for rule changes. These will be compiled and consolidated into the most common themes, streamlined and then rereleased to the public for further comment. In this vein, I hope to receive some very constructive ideas for the future of obedience as a sport. I would like to open up an intellectual and professional dialogue between UKC and its exhibitors, and I believe this is where we can start!

Details of the open comment period for obedience will be announced shortly, along with the process in which you will need to submit your suggestions. Not all suggestions, no matter how incredible, will be within our reach, but by beginning this discussion we will begin laying the ground work for positive changes to the sport we love.

Thank you for taking the time to read this; I realize it was quite a bit of information. For any questions regarding the new changes to the obedience rules, please do not hesitate to contact me at sydneys@ukcdogs.com.

BREED STANDARD REVISIONS

The following breed standards have been revised since the last Judges Newsletter and are posted on the UKC website.

•**Beagle**, Scenthound Group, Effective January 1, 2013

•American Pit Bull Terrier, Terrier Group, Effective December 1, 2012

For a complete list of breed standards, sorted by most recent revision date, go here: http://www.ukcdogs.com/Web.nsf/ Webpages/Registration/BreedStandardsRev.

2012 FOURTH QUARTER UKC JUDGES NEWSLETTER

FROM A JUDGE'S POINT OF VIEW

AGILITY COURSE DESIGN – REMEMBERING NUMBERS By Kathy Davidson and Rich Benjes,

UKC Agility Judges

Course design, performed correctly, takes time, patience, and experience. The UKC agility rules provide a basic standard, but leave quite a bit of latitude for the judge to design interesting, challenging courses. Within those rules, however, are limits. Referencing the current Rulebook, page 43, the rules require:

There is no required course design at any level. Course design is the responsibility of the Judge, so course design possibilities include an infinite variety, within the limits of these rules. Challenges presented should increase with difficulty as the class level and experience of the competing dogs increase.

UKC judges are encouraged to design interesting, fun, and challenging courses, but always within the rules. When a course design deviates from the rules, it reflects poorly on both UKC and the officiating judge.

Through the years, there have been some modifications of the Rules. Before 2010, only 16 obstacles were permitted in AGII and AGIII. To allow for more flexibility in design, the rules were changed January 1, 2010, to allow 16 to 17 obstacles: seven non-hurdle obstacles, one pause obstacle, and eight or nine hurdle obstacles. If eight hurdle obstacles are used, the total obstacles would be 16. If nine hurdle obstacles are used, the total obstacles would be 17.

This rule was not changed with the revision of the rules issued in the 2011 rulebook. The only change that was made in the number of each category of obstacles was to phase out the crawl tunnel as a required non-hurdle obstacle, and, in AGII, to substitute the hoop tunnel.

If there is a wrong number of hurdle obstacles, or a wrong number of nonhurdle obstacles, the designed course does not meet the UKC Rules. The extra obstacle was added as a hurdle, the other sections did not change.

Let's go through some numbers, and set up a checklist:

In AGI, there are to be six hurdle obstacles.

In AGII and in AGIII, if there are 16 obstacles, there are eight hurdle obstacles.

In AGII and in AGIII, if there are 17 obstacles, there are nine hurdle obstacles.

In AGI, in AGII, and in AGIII, at least three of the hurdles must be "non-bar" ("other than bar") hurdles. If a "nonbar" hurdle is used more than one time, it counts toward the required number of "other than bar hurdles" each time it is used.

In AGII, two of the required non-hurdle obstacles must be used twice, *or*, if all five of them are used once, and one of them is used twice, the open tunnel would be used once as the seventh obstacle.

In AGIII, seven non-hurdle obstacles must be used. Weave poles are mandatory. You must then choose between the Swing Plank or the Sway Bridge for the second non-hurdle obstacle. For your third and fourth non-hurdle obstacles, you must choose from the following: Dog Walk, Teeter-Totter, and the A-Frame. For the fifth and sixth non-hurdle obstacles you must choose from the following: Closed Tunnel (chute), Hoop Tunnel, Open Tunnel, and Hoop (Tire) Jump. For the seventh non-hurdle obstacles listed in the UKC Agility rulebook

The Tire jump counts as a non-hurdle obstacle, and does not count as a hurdle in UKC rules.

AGI courses must be at least 100 yards and no more than 200 yards.

AGII and AGIII courses must be at least 120 yards and no more than 200 yards.

The AGII and AGIII courses must be at least 4000 square feet.

The minimum distance between hurdle obstacles, and the approach to the A-Frame is 15 feet, and the minimum distance between non-hurdle obstacles is 12 feet. But, keep in mind that short distances between obstacles can be unfair. For that reason, the rules state that "18 to 25 feet spacing is preferred". Design challenges are not to be based on the size of the dog, but upon the dog's experience.

There should be more challenges in the AGII course than in the AGI course. There should be more challenges in the AGIII course than in the AGII course that indicates that the judge should be able to discern and identify the challenges designed.

If you are an approved judge and would like to submit an article for consideration about judging a specific event, please submit the article to conformation@ukc dogs.com or performance@ukcdogs.com with the subject line 'From a Judge's Point of View submission'. Submitting an article will not guarantee publication.

WELCOME!

TO OUR NEWLY-APPROVED AND NEWLY-APPLIED UKC JUDGES.

Prospective judges applying to UKC for their judge's license will now be published in this section of the newsletter. UKC feels that it is important for all judges to be aware of who has applied to become a UKC judge. Publishing the applicants provides a venue for approved judges to be aware of who is coming into the sport and can foster mentorship opportunities for prospective judges. Approved judges who have met all judging requirements will be published in this section as well. For complete contact information, please go to: http://www.ukc dogs.com/Web.nsf/WebPages/DogEvents/Judges.

Newly Approved (FROM AUGUST 16 THROUGH DECEMBER 5, 2012)

- •7075, Cheryl Peterson, Woodstock IL, CN JS
- •7076, Kathleen Carter, Broomfield CO, CN JS
- •7077, Debra Markwardt, Midlothian TX, DJ
- •7078, Christi Skamfer, Minomonie WI, WP
- •7079, Foreign Judge, Limited, not published
- •7080, Foreign Judge, Limited, not published
- •7081, Ted Strayer, Curtice OH, DJ
- •7082, Jeffrey Vanatta, Red Bluff CA, DJ
- •7083, Serena Savis, Rancho Cordova CA, DJ
- •7084, Elizabeth Burgess, Flint MI, CN•7085, Ralph Ambrosio, Wallkill NY, CN JS
- •7086, Regina M. Vose, Juneau AK, OB

NEW APPLICANTS

- Julie Sandoval, Acton CA, CNF
- Donni Breaden, Pakin IL, AG
- Richard Richards, Lansing MI, CNF
- •Loretta Lazzara, St. Charles IL, OB
- Jennie Patrick, Conley GA, CNF
- Kelly Ann Rea, Clarksville GA, CNFMichelle Scott, Guelph ON, Canada, CNF
- •Peter Scott, Guelph ON, Canada, CNF
- •Cynthia Sweet, Redford MI, RO
- •Bernard Atkins, Galena IL, CNF
- •Emily Carabello, Richlands NC, CNF
- Paul Kouski, Port Byron IL, CNF

Approved for Additional Licenses

- Ruth Teeter, TFT, JS
- •Connie Mathewson, JS
- •Kathy Schwartzenberger, APBT
- Jackie Craver, APBT
- Jennifer Landers, AE
- •Brenda Landers, AE
- Kathleen Carter, TFT
- Stanley Matsumoto, TFT
- •Glenda Bruneau, TFT
- •Heidi Halverson, APBT
- •Glenda Bruneau, AE
- •Alan Krenek, AE

New Apprentices

- •Linda Ruskino, OB (Nov/ Open only) and RO
- •William Fonvielle, WP
- Ruth Teeter, APBT
- •Stanley Matsumoto, APBT
- •Glenda Bruneau, AE, APBT
- •Beryl Billingsley, AG
- Ruth Teeter, APBT
- •Kathleen Carter, APBT
- James R. Coleman, RO
- •Connie J. Mathewson, LC
- Kristie A. Pope, LC
- •Linda A. Barber, OB
- Donita Breaden, AG
- Cynthia Sweet, RO

Questions or comments? Email the Dog Events Department at: conformation@ukcdogs.com or performance@ukcdogs.com.

2012 FOURTH QUARTER UKC JUDGES NEWSLETTER

It's What's Underneath That Should Count

Vicki Rand, Editor, UKC

We were sitting around talking about showing dogs recently, when one of the ladies present told us about her recent experience with her Australian Shepherd bitch at a conformation show. Her little female is just about as perfect as you could ask for, so she was surprised when the judge commented, "She is just stunning, but you'll have to do something about those ears."

Do something?! Those ears?! Normally reticent, and knowing judges must be respected, the owner felt strongly that she had to comment, "According to the breed standard, her ears are perfectly acceptable." Of course they are, but unfortunately they are not what the judge must have been used to seeing (most likely in another venue). What was more disturbing was that the judge even remotely suggested that she should "have done something" about her bitch's ears. Was he even remotely suggesting they should have been physically or surgically manipulated somehow if the owner wanted to win? Was that out of line? Probably. It most likely wasn't what the judge meant to communicate, but that is the message that came across.

Are her ears perfectly acceptable "according to the breed standard"? Yes, they are. If the judge really felt she "was stunning", all things being equal, should he have given her the placement she deserved? We should hope so. Why, then, are some judges unable to see past the artificial, cosmetic characteristics of an individual dog, and reward it? Why are they reluctant to take that leap? Are they afraid they will be criticized, or won't be asked to judge again? It's not for me to answer those questions. That's up to the judges.

Most breeds have different types - all of which are perfectly acceptable. It's not unusual for someone to remark that they know what line (family) a dog is from based on certain physical characteristics. The shape of a head, a certain type of rear angulation, etc. So why is it that one particular type becomes "more acceptable" for the show ring? You all know why. Maybe if more people resisted the fads, all types would be seen by judges, making them all considered breed typical.

Does that Aussie bitch need picture perfect ears to herd, to run an agility course? Does a perfectly sculpted coat make it easier for a Golden to retrieve or excel in obedience? Of course not. It's what's underneath that counts. Is there a structurally close-to-perfect, physically sound body under all that hair? Does that dog exhibit all the characteristics of intelligence and a good temperament? If so, they should be considered for placement. At least that's how I feel. How about you?

Becoming a conformation judge is a strenuous process, and a certain amount of general dog knowledge is mandatory for approval. The majority of judges understand their responsibility to the breeds they judge, and try to do their best. After all, they set patterns for what is acceptable within a breed almost as much as breeders do. The next time you see a judge do a good job, don't hesitate to let them know. That will only reinforce their judging procedures and practices, and make them feel their opinions are valued.

As published in November 2012 Bloodlines Dog Event News

The Dog Events Department received the sad news that Mr. John Fowler III, Judge #5181, passed away on December 18, 2012. He was licensed as a UKC Obedience judge in September, 1997. Our condolences go out to his family and friends.

Sincerely, UKC Dogs Events Department



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2012 FOURTH QUARTER UKC JUDGES NEWSLETTER

AND IN THE CENTER RING IS ... Vicki Rand, Editor, UKC

In the November issue, I touched on conformation judges' responsibility to safeguard the good health and integrity of breeds, and how their decisions can influence breeding trends. I fully intended to write about another subject for this issue, and I certainly would have had I not witnessed something at a show I recently attended. This incident pointed out how a judge's behavior in the ring can be perceived to be entirely different than what it actually was meant to be, and applies to all judges, performance and conformation.

When a judge is officiating at an event, they are a focal point all of the time. (That goes for outside the ring, as well as in it.) They are in "center ring" at all times, after all. Of all the things that might be going on in the ring, one thing is constant - the judge and how they carry themselves. At one time or another, everyone outside and inside the ring watches the judge. What they do (their body language), and what they say, take on a slightly skewed importance. It's almost as if the judge is taking on a role to be played to the audience, and they must play the part at all times.

Most judges, especially the most experienced, have a neutral "judge face" they put on as they enter the ring. After all, they don't want anything they say or do to be construed as favoritism, or the opposite, for that matter.

Because of the friendly atmosphere of our UKC events, our judges have a degree of freedom, but with that also comes a heightened responsibility. And, being human, sometimes a judge will inadvertently slip and say or do something that they shouldn't. Even



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though I believe most mistakes are unintentional, the consequences still have the potential to be devastating.

What I saw happened at a conformation show, but could easily occur at performance events as well. The entry was being called into the ring. There was only one dog in the class. The exhibitor stated they were very sorry, but they couldn't find their armband. The people she was crated with knew where it was and were getting it. The steward deferred to the judge. Instead of waiting, the judge said, "That's okay. I know you have it. Come on in."

So she did; after all, the judge told her it was okay. The judge meant no harm. He was probably attempting to put the exhibitor at ease, but in doing this could it be perceived that the judging of this licensed class was not as important as any other licensed class? Or that the judge could bend the rules a little? Maybe.

The dog was capably judged and

awarded first place. By the time she came back in for the overall judging, the exhibitor had found her armband and had it on.

Judges, how many things about this scenario made you uncomfortable? Without the armband, how did anyone the judge, the steward - know this was the correct entry? The exhibitor was rattled, but she knew she had the right dog in the right class. The judge told her it was okay to show without her armband.

Who should have stopped the show until the exhibitor found her armband, or was supplied with a new one? The answer - all of them the judge, the steward and the exhibitor. The exhibitor and the steward trusted the judge because they were in charge of their ring. Ultimately the responsibility for running the class correctly rests on the Judge's shoulders. Never forget that.

As published in December 2012 Bloodlines Dog Event News





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