Dear Judge,

Optional Titling Classes FAQ

Are there any prerequisites required to enter a dog in these classes?  No – A dog may be entered in these classes without any pre-title requirement.  Once a dog has earned the Versatility title, it may continue to compete in that class indefinitely.

Can a dog be entered in more than one class at a trial?  Yes.  As an example, a dog may be entered in Novice and Graduate Novice, Utility and Graduate Novice and/or Graduate Open, or any combination of the optional titling classes.

How does a dog earn a title in an optional titling class?  The dog must earn a qualifying score as described in the Obedience Regulations.  A qualifying score means that the dog has earned more than 50 percent of the points for each exercise with a total score of at least 170 points.  After three qualifying scores under three different judges, the AKC will award the title.

Do the optional titling classes compete for Highest Scoring Dog from the Regular Classes?  No.

Are clubs required to hold these optional titling classes?  No – Clubs may hold these classes only if they wish to do so.  They may choose to hold none, all three, or just one or two.

If a club wants to offer the new optional titling classes, do they have to list the judge(s) in the premium list, or can they assign a judge after entries have closed?  The judges must be listed in the premium list as these are titling classes and require three qualifying scores under three different judges.

Does the assignment limit of 30 days and 200 miles apply to the optional titling classes?  Yes.

Who can judge these classes?  Graduate Novice – provisional and regular status Novice or higher judge; Graduate Open – provisional or regular status Open or higher judge; Versatility – provisional or regular status Utility judge.

Will these assignments count towards provisional assignments?  Yes and no.  Provisional judges are required to judge at least ten regular class assignments.  However, the number of dogs judged in corresponding optional titling class will count towards the overall number of dogs required.
How many articles are required for the Scent Discrimination exercise in the Graduate Open class? The handler is required to bring four articles to the ring - two leather and two metal. The handler may choose which article will be used for the dog to retrieve.

Wild Card Classes FAQ – Non Regular Classes

What is meant by Wild Card? The designated classes follow the Obedience Regulations and requirements for each class level: Novice, Open, and Utility. The difference is that, when checking in for the class, the handler will identify one of the required exercises in that class as their wild card. The handler may choose to perform or not to perform the exercise but, in any case, will receive a perfect score for this one exercise. If the handler chooses to perform the exercise, they must comply with the regulations in their performance.

Are there any prerequisites required to enter a dog in these classes? No, a dog may be entered in these classes without any pre-title requirement.

Can the handler talk to their dog while performing the required exercises of the class? Yes, the class exercises will be performed and judged as in the Obedience Regulations, except that verbal praise during the exercises, except for the signal exercise in Utility, is to be encouraged and not penalized. Handlers may give additional commands, but they will be penalized accordingly.

Will these assignments count towards the required provisional assignments? No.

Who may judge these classes? Any approved obedience non-regular, provisional or fully approved judge.

Obedience Regional Competitions

These competitions were developed to provide an additional avenue for exhibitors to qualify for the National Obedience Invitational (NOI). They do not replace the current qualifying methods as outlined in the AKC Obedience Regulations but are intended to give exhibitors and their dogs another avenue to qualify for an invitation to compete at the NOI. The requirements to qualify at a regional competition can be found in Chapter 8, Section 2 of the AKC Obedience Regulations.

Eligibility dates for the 2009 NOI are July 01, 2008 through June 30, 2009.

For more information, please follow this link: http://www.akc.org/events/obedience/regional_events.cfm?text_event_number=

The 2009 AKC National Obedience Invitational will be held in Long Beach, California on December 12 & 13, 2009.

Setting the 4” Bar Jump

The bar may be placed on the base of the uprights as indicated on the newly designed 4” bar jump.

Rally Questions
1. It is stated that the Rally Excellent course must have between 15-20 stations. Is the Honor Exercise considered one of these stations?

Yes. While the Honor is not considered one of the required “stationary stations,” it is considered one of the required 15-20 stations.

2. In performing the Backup 3 Steps (#49), when is the third step completed? When the handler steps back with one leg or does the other leg have to be brought back even with the first leg before the handler should move forward?

The regulations do not require any thing more specific from the handler than "walking backward at least 3 steps without first stopping” so either would be allowed.

Obedience Questions

1. In performing the Directed Retrieve exercise, the turn, pivot, direction and command are executed perfectly. The dog goes directly to glove, retrieves it and jumps the jump on his way back to the handler. What should the penalty be?

   Obdience Regulations Chapter 1, Section 1, Directed Retrieve, states that all applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall and the Retrieve on Flat will apply. Chapter 1, Section 10 Recall, states that the dog must come directly, yet Chapter 1, Section 11 Recall Scoring does not address the penalty for failure to come directly nor does Chapter 4, Section 10 Retrieve on Flat Scoring. When the Regulations do not state specifics regarding a penalty, it is the judge’s discretion. The penalty should be determined depending on the degree and extent of the error.

2. In performing the Directed Retrieve exercise, the turn, pivot, direction and command are executed perfectly. The dog goes directly to glove, picks up the correct glove and then goes to the next glove and retrieves it and brings back both gloves. What should the penalty be?

   Obdience Regulations Chapter 1, Section 1, Directed Retrieve, states that all applicable penalties listed under the Novice Recall and the Retrieve on Flat will apply. Chapter 1, Section 10 Recall, states that the dog must come directly, yet Chapter 1, Section 11 Recall Scoring does not address the penalty for failure to come directly nor does Chapter 4, Section 10 Retrieve on Flat Scoring. When the Regulations do not state specifics regarding a penalty, it is the judge’s discretion and should be determined depending on the degree and extent of the error. A judge would have to consider if this performance justifies the awarding of a UD title even though the Directed Retrieve exercise does not reference Chapter 5, Section 9, Scent Discrimination Scoring, which requires a judge to non-qualify a dog for bringing back a wrong article.

Thank you for all that you do for the sport of dogs!