

# **STEWARDS IN CKC RALLY OBEDIENCE**



**Many of the guidelines for Obedience Stewards apply also to Stewards of Rally Obedience**

## **Canadian Kennel Club Rally Obedience**

Rally Novice A and B  
Rally Intermediate  
Rally Advanced A and B  
Rally Excellent A and B

**Updated to January 1, 2015**

**WORKING TOGETHER**  
**A Guide for Rally Obedience Stewards**  
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Rally classes are often held in conjunction with obedience trials. Planning an obedience trial involves many months of preparation by a Trial Committee. One essential element is the selection and training of stewards specifically to assist with rally events. Although many of the general obedience steward guidelines also apply to Rally, those stewards familiar with rally procedures will ensure the smooth operation of the Rally ring. Those not, can severely slow down the entire judging process. Each person assisting should be familiar with the current edition of Rules and Regulations for Rally Obedience Trials which includes the following:

**Some Rules and Regulations to keep in mind:**

- **The Ring Steward.** It is the sole duty of the ring stewards to assist the judge, only as instructed by the judge. There must be a minimum of two stewards for each judging ring – three are recommended. It is important for the stewards to report to the ring at least 30 to 45 minutes prior to the scheduled time for judging to assist the judge in setting up the course and to receive specific assignments from the judge.
- **The judge has sole responsibility for the ring.** Stewards are provided to assist the judge and can act only on the judge's instructions. Stewards must keep in mind that they have been selected to help the judges and not to advise them. Decisions about the competition are that of the judge alone.
- **Ring stewards** must ensure that no person except the trial chair, superintendent, trial secretary, judge, other ring stewards and those actually engaged in exhibiting a dog before the judge, are permitted within the ring during judging.
- **Instructions to owners or handlers.** Stewards should not give information or instructions to owners or handlers unless specifically instructed to do so by the judge, and then should do so only in such a manner that it is clear that the instructions are those of the judge.
- **Dogs are judged in judging schedule order.** If, for some reason, an exhibitor has a conflict or requests to withdraw, the judge must be notified and will advise the steward of what action to take. Stewards cannot change the judging order. Adjustments to the order, moving a dog to the end of the class, dealing with latecomers, etc. are the judge's decision. In the case of a conflict, obedience takes precedence over rally obedience, official classes over unofficial classes and conformation (in the event of a combined show) takes precedence over obedience. The conflict must be for the same dog, not the handler.
- **Judges are not allowed to read the catalogue** until after their assignments are complete and the judge's books turned in to the trial secretary. Stewards should refrain from discussing or even seeming to discuss the dog's performance with the judge and must not show or give the appearance of showing the catalogue to the judge. In referring to any handlers, stewards should use their armband number rather than their names.

- **Scores are posted in rally but not the times.** Stewards or the judge must not disclose any placements until after the class is completed.
- **The Judge's Book** - In rally, scores and times are entered in the judge's book by the table steward. All totals must be entered in the book before prizes are awarded. Following completion of the judging of each obedience class, the yellow copy of the judge's book, which sets forth the scores assigned by the judge, must be posted in a prominent place, within the precincts of the trial. This is done by the trial secretary.
- **On completion of judging** - The judge must ensure that the cover of the judge's book is completed with start and finish times and signed.
- **Score sheets** - At the conclusion of each class, judges are required to provide meaningfully marked individual score sheets to each exhibitor. In some cases this could result in the table steward being asked to transpose the scores from the judge's own sheet to the one to be handed to the exhibitor.
- **In the case of tied score and time** handlers will repeat the course and be scored and timed again. The original score and time will not be changed.
- **Avoid serving as a steward** with judges under whom you may be entered that day or the next as it reflects negatively on the club and the steward and puts the judge in a difficult position.
- **Show courtesy and consideration** to all handlers but refrain from playing favourites. Even the most experienced handlers can suffer from nerves when entering the ring, so unnecessary "chatter" should be avoided. This also applies to interacting with their dog.
- **Stewards should be quietly efficient.** If there are problems with the ring, gates, jumps, mats, etc. notify the judge, chief ring steward or trial chair.
- **Combined shows and trials.** At a combined event the conformation show committee has sole jurisdiction over all the matters which may properly come before it, regardless of whether the matter has to do with the conformation show or obedience trial.

#### **What to do before the trial starts:**

- **Report to the chief ring steward** 30 to 45 minutes before you are scheduled to begin, for instructions and to pick up your steward's badge.
- While waiting for your start time, stroll around the area near the obedience rings to find out where the handlers have set up. This will help later, should you need to locate them for any reason. Know the location of the restrooms and exercise area should you be asked by a visiting handler or judge.
- **Meet with your judge**, introduce yourself (and other stewards) and ask for any instructions. Some judges will give detailed instructions, others are more casual. Let the judge know if this is your first time stewarding at a trial or first time stewarding in a particular class, such as advanced or excellent. Don't be afraid to ask the judge for help as most would prefer to help you rather than have you confused or create a problem during judging.
- **Take time to check your ring.** Make sure everything relating to the ring is in order, there is no residue or bits of food, or dog "hair bunnies" on the floor; the number board is ready; clean up supplies are available; mats, gates, jumps, etc. are all in order.

- **Stewards, like exhibitors, should have no food** in the ring or in pockets. This includes residual crumbs. Don't chew gum or wear anything that might distract a dog while in the ring (for example, if you have a dog in season at home, your clothing might be particularly enticing to an intact male).
- **Each ring should have three stewards** unless the class is very small. Under CKC rules, there must be three stewards (one of which should be experienced) for each judging ring. Stewards have to work together, efficiently, as a team and should decide beforehand who will do which jobs throughout the class or trial.

In all classes three stewards are required. Stewarding functions in the CKC Rally Ring are broken down into three general categories:

- a) Gate Steward
- b) Table Steward
- c) Time Steward

Stewards are required to use a tape measure or steel ruler to ensure accuracy in setting the jumps. Jumps must be set up quickly and accurately. Trial secretaries are allowed to organize the class in jump height order (high to low or low to high) but this is not always done and even when done there can be exceptions so it is important that the stewards are aware of the need for changes in the jump heights and react accordingly. In case of a dispute over the height of any dog, stewards shall consult the judge, who will measure the dog.

### **The Gate Steward**

- The primary responsibility of the gate steward is to ensure that the next dog to be judged is immediately available when the judge indicates that he is ready. As soon as the judge begins judging the dog in the ring, the gate steward calls the next dog and ensures the handler is at ringside before the dog in the ring has completed the course.
- Dogs must be judged in catalogue order to the extent that it is practical to do so. If the dog listed next in the catalogue is not at ringside, the steward should call the next dog in order. It is the handlers' responsibility to be present and ready when their numbers are called.
- The steward should report any absentees to the judge so that the correct score sheet is used for the dog entering the ring.
- Exhibitors may make requests for special consideration, such as asking to be judged out of catalogue order. Agreeing to any request of this nature is at the discretion of the judge and not the ring steward.
- In Advanced and Excellent Classes, it is the gate steward's responsibility to take the leash at the 'Start' line and, in Advanced, return it to the handler before they leave the ring.
- In the Excellent class, the judge may ask the gate steward to hold the leash to be given to the handler while the dog completes the Sit/Stay exercise or the judge may ask the steward to place in a specific location, such as on the table, so that the handler can retrieve it before completing the Sit/Stay exercise.

- The gate steward may work together with the table steward to post the scores of each competing dog at ringside. Scores are posted but not the times.
- The gate steward is also responsible for the setting of jumps for dogs in the Rally Advanced and Excellent classes.

### **The Table Steward**

- The steward will receive specific instructions from the judge as to what will be required.
- The judge will ask the table steward to prepare the score sheets for each dog if not already done by the trial secretary and have the score sheet ready for the next dog entering the ring.
- The steward will ensure that the class, armband number, and breed of dog are entered correctly on the sheet, as well as the jump height of the dog, if applicable. The table steward must check to ensure the scores on the score sheet have been added correctly. If an error is detected, the steward will bring it to the attention of the judge.
- The table steward is responsible to enter the correct score and time in the judge's book and initial the score sheet indicating that this has been done. The table steward is responsible for posting the scores at ringside after each dog and handler team finishes the course, however, in some clubs the Gate Steward actually does this job. Only the score is posted but not the time.
- The table steward ensures that all trophies (if offered), rosettes and ribbons are available at the conclusion of judging for each class. Depending on the size of the entry, the A and B classes may be combined and awards given out only at the end of both. The judge may ask the steward to assist in awarding the trophies and ribbons to the winners.

### **The Time Steward**

- The time steward will accurately time each dog's performance. Any ties in the scores are broken by time.
- The steward is required to have at least one stopwatch, although it is helpful to have two stopwatches. The use of electronic timers is permitted.
- The timer is positioned in a place specified by the judge. When the judge gives the order "Forward", the timer starts the timing and stops it when the dog and handler cross the Finish line. Times are reported immediately to the judge or the table steward (at the judge's discretion) after each dog completes the course.
- Completion of the Sit/Stay exercise is not included in the recorded time as it is completed after crossing the finish line.
- In the event of a timer malfunction, the timer must alert the judge immediately who will stop the judging of that dog and start over again at the beginning.

## **General Information for Rally Stewards of CKC trials**

It is the responsibility of the Stewards to assist in laying out the course provided by the judge although some clubs provide additional personnel as "Course Builders" to assist. They will also be responsible for making any necessary changes to the course on instruction from the judge after he/she has completed a walk through. It is advantageous to have all the signs organized for the particular course ahead of time as it dramatically speeds up the process of laying out the course. Any signs required for the subsequent classes should also be organized in advance.

The Novice Class is performed on leash, using Exercises 1 – 31.

The Intermediate Class is performed on leash, using exercises 1 – 118 except for exercise 103 (Send Over Jump)

The Advanced Class is performed off leash, using exercises 1 – 118, and requires one jump.

The Excellent Class is performed off leash, using exercises 1 – 299 and requires two jumps or one jump used twice.

Certain exercises may be used more than once on a Rally course and, therefore, will use a duplicate sign.

Equipment required by stewards includes:

- Stopwatches
- Measuring tapes
- Nails and hammer if the trial is held outdoors and depending on the design of the sign holders
- Food or toys for the offset figure eight

### **Setting up the High Jump or Bar Jump**

Dogs under 10" will jump 6"

Dogs 10" and under 15" will jump 8"

Dogs 15" and under 20" will jump 12"

Dogs 20" and over will jump 16"

### **Setting up the Broad Jump**

The broad jump distance is twice that of the jump height. The broad jump hurdles are arranged in order of size from the smallest to the largest and spaced accordingly.

For dogs jumping 12" use 2 x 4" hurdles

For dogs jumping 16" use 1 x 4" and 1 X 8" hurdle

For dogs jumping 24" use 2 x 8" hurdles

For dogs jumping 32" use 3 x 8" hurdles

## Hints for the Chief Ring Steward in Obedience

**The primary responsibility of the Chief Ring Steward is to oversee the activity in the obedience rings and act as a liaison between the ring stewards, the judges, the trials chair and trials secretary.**

- Keep available by not assigning yourself to a specific task.
- Know the ideal number of stewards needed and work accordingly.
- Seek out your volunteer stewards early to get the most competent people.
- Bring in the newbies – a good way to get a better insight into obedience.
- New stewards are often best introduced to stewarding by acting as Gate or Time Stewards
- Ensure one or more stewards in each class are fully knowledgeable before assigning a new volunteer.
- Try to accommodate peoples' schedules as much as possible.
- Prepare stewards by giving them training and help beforehand.
- Allow new stewards a practice session before the real trial (mock trials and club trials are a good opportunity to do this).
- Match up the right people for each class, including personalities.
- Remember – stewarding for advanced and excellent classes can be physically challenging to some people.
- Provide 'cheat sheets' for those having to deal with jumps.
- Have a floating steward to give people a break, if possible.
- Arrive early. Check the ring layout and make sure everything is ready. Pick up the judge's books and catalogues from the trial secretary. Pass out the 'stewards' badges and lunch tickets.
- Introduce yourself to each of the judges as well as the judge to the stewards.
- As a member of the show committee, dress accordingly.
- Check in with each class periodically should a steward need a break. Be prepared to help in dealing with handlers' complaints or requests.
- Ensure ribbons and prizes are ready and available when required.
- Ensure rings are left up until all judging is complete and awards presented.
- After the trial, be sure to thank the stewards. If possible, the club might give each steward a small gift for their time and efforts (even a few dog biscuits serves as a simple gesture).

**Remember: Stewards are a very important and integral part of a rally trial. They are what makes a trial a success and as volunteers your efforts are very much appreciated by judges and handlers alike.**

**Be a good ambassador for the sport: congratulate, console and hold your opinions until you are well away from the trial site.**

***ABOVE ALL – HAVE FUN AND ENJOY BEING A PART OF THE TRIAL!***

**Good Luck!**