THE KENNEL CLUB GUIDE FOR OBEDIENCE JUDGES AND STEWARDS



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Introduction

This guide is intended as a useful reference for those embarking on a judging career at Obedience Dog Shows and to assist established judges to understand their obligations to competitors, show societies and the Kennel Club.

It is important that the information enclosed is read in conjunction with Kennel Club Regulations, which always take precedence. The updated Regulations are published every January in a separate booklet for each activity, and full regulations are included in the Kennel Club Year Book published every July. Obedience judges should read in particular the annual 'Obedience Show Regulations' booklet or the section Regulations G - Kennel Club Obedience Show Regulations in the Kennel Club Year Book.

These Regulations apply to all judges whether domiciled in this country or overseas who officiate at Kennel Club licensed shows. The references refer to the appropriate Kennel Club Regulations or announcements in the Kennel Club Journal. It should be noted that this book is intended as a guide to the relevant Kennel Club Obedience Show Regulations, ring procedure and the practical aspects of judging.

Introduction

The overall and stated object of the Kennel Club is to promote in every way the general improvement of dogs and this objective also applies to judges.

The overall aim and objective of a judge at whatever level, from Club matches, Companion Dog Shows to Championship Shows, is to provide value for the time, training, effort and money which the competitor puts into presenting their dog. Moreover, the decisions of championship judges in particular will ultimately affect the future development of Obedience.

There is therefore an expectation that judges will be competent and trustworthy. Judging is not a right but a privilege. Judges should be respected by the competitor. To that end the following Code sets out the relevant aspects that judges should be capable of demonstrating.

Integrity

- 1.1 Judges should act honestly and impartially when undertaking an appointment.
- 1.2 A dog should be placed on merit only according to the competition Regulations. Judges should be prepared to provide a critique on placings.
- 1.3 Judges should conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the standing of a judge at all times whilst at a show and in any other capacity which might have bearing on the interests of the canine world.
- 1.4 Judges are referred to the factors set out below which may be said to affect their standing and may result in exclusion from judging lists or future judging contracts or withdrawal from an agreed appointment:
- 1.4.1 Criminal convictions
- 1.4.2 Threatening behaviour at any time
- 1.4.3 Misrepresenting or abusing authority
- 1.4.4 Not judging in accordance with Kennel Club Rules and Regulations
- 1.4.5 Harsh handling as a competitor or judge at any time
- 1.4.6 Breach of Kennel Club Rules and Regulations
- 1.4.7 Using the name of the Kennel Club in an unauthorised manner.

Age

1.5 No new judging appointments to award Obedience Certificates for the first time will be considered once a judge has attained the age of 75 years (at the time of fulfilling the appointment).

Health Guidelines

- 1.6 Judges are expected to decline, or to withdraw from, an appointment which they cannot fulfil. The aim of the competition can only be fulfilled when the judging of dogs is carried out in a fully competent manner.
- 1.7 III health of various kinds can temporarily or permanently make it impossible for a person to complete a judging appointment according to the demands which are set forward in this Code of Best Practice. A Society or Club can, if necessary, either temporarily or permanently cancel the judging contract should it become apparent that the judge cannot appraise his/her own situation and can no longer fulfil the judging appointment.
- 1.8 Judges must be able to undertake the judging of the dogs with an obvious independence and in a confident and convincing manner. Judges must not at any time rely on others to assist with the main work of judging.
- 1.9 Judges must be capable of meeting the physical requirements of fulfilling the judging appointment, thus should be sufficiently mobile to move around the ring so that they can judge the dogs from all aspects.
- 1.10 From the above it follows that a person with definite lessening of capabilities, and who is dependent on assistance or the presence of various forms of technical help eg mobility aids, may need to consider if he or she is capable of fulfilling a judging appointment in an adequate and satisfactory manner.
- 1.11 The Show Organisers shall endeavour to establish that invited judges are able to fulfil their appointments.
- 1.12 As far as reasonably possible the Show Organisers are responsible for ensuring that the aims of the obedience show are fulfilled and that the competitors receive the quality of judging that they deserve.

1.13 The Kennel Club has an overriding responsibility and may in individual cases either temporarily defer or permanently withdraw approval when the Judge in question is considered not to have the necessary capabilities. That is not to say that any particular disability will preclude judging. A common sense approach needs to be adopted by both Show Organiser and judge.

During Judging

Judges should observe the following formalities when judging;

- 1.14 Judge all competing dogs in a confident, careful and consistent manner.
- 1.15 Conduct themselves in a courteous manner to all and concentrate fully on the dogs. It is inadvisable for judges to call any competitor by their name, initiate or engage in a conversation initiated by a competitor whilst judging is in progress.
- 1.16 Dress in a conventional and acceptable fashion precluding them from being the centre of attention, or from causing any distress to the dog competing or its owner.
- 1.17 Judges should not smoke, consume alcoholic drinks or use or activate a mobile telephone whilst in the Ring or when judging. Mobile telephones should be switched to silent or turned off when judging.

General

The following are general requirements for Judges;

- 1.18 Absolute integrity in order to judge honestly and impartially, and to place dogs solely on their merit in line with Obedience Rules and Regulations.
- 1.19 A suitable temperament and sufficient stamina to cope with what can be a physically and mentally demanding task.
- 1.20 To judge in a customary fashion acceptable to the competitor and the breed of the dog.

Obedience Shows

- 1.21 A comprehensive knowledge of Obedience and its Regulations.
- 1.22 A particular understanding of Kennel Club Regulation G Judges and Judging.
- 1.23 Qualifications to judge at Open Shows, non-certificate classes at Championship Shows and for Championship Class C, see Regulation G - Approval of Judges refers.

Summary

- 1.24 Judges should have a comprehensive knowledge of the breed(s) to be judged. It is the responsibility of the Judges to take account of the difference in working styles of the breeds entered.
- 1.25 Judges should have a comprehensive knowledge of competition procedures and etiquette. It is the responsibility of the judges to keep abreast and up to date with developments in such matters.
- 1.26 Judges should be familiar with the Kennel Club Rules and Regulations and this Guide for Judges as amended from time to time and to keep up to date with all relevant Regulations governing the competition and judging.
- 1.27 Judges should give value to the competitor and ultimately the activity in question. Judges should act at all times with honesty, integrity and impartiality.
- 1.28 The Kennel Club reserves the right to observe a judge.

Chapter 2. Invitation to Judge at Open Shows or the Non-Certificate Classes at Championship Shows

The soliciting of judging appointments is not acceptable.

Judges usually receive a first invitation after being seen as a successful handler and having gained the appropriate judging experience at a lower level, usually Limited Shows, Companion Dog Shows or Club Matches (where no formal qualifications are required), plus the necessary stewarding experience at Licensed Open/Championship Shows.

The actual qualifications for judges at Open Shows and for the noncertificate classes at Championship Shows are set out in the G Regulations.

Judges at all shows should:

- 2.1 Ensure that they have received a written invitation from the Show Society.
- 2.2 Confirm in writing that they are available to judge and are able to comply with any conditions laid down by the society, as long as these do not contravene Kennel Club Rules and Regulations. Judges will be asked to sign and return a declaration confirming that they currently meet the qualification and health requirements laid down in the Obedience Show Regulations.
- 2.3 Ensure that their acceptance is followed by written confirmation of the appointment by the Society.
- 2.4 The invitation, the acceptance and the confirmation of appointment form the basis of a contract between the judge and the Show Society. These may be made via email or letter.
- 2.5 If a judge is unable to honour an engagement the judge should notify the Show Society immediately.
- 2.6 Confirm the reason in writing or email to the Show Society in order that a report can be made by the Show Society to the Kennel Club.

Note.

Judges at Obedience Shows must not enter for competition a dog which is recorded in their sole ownership, or handle a dog, at the Show at which they are judging. A dog recorded in part ownership with the Judge may be entered for competition in any part of a class other than the part which the judge is judging.

Chapter 3. Invitation to Award Obedience Certificates

- 3.1 When a judge is invited to award an Obedience Certificate for the first time, the Show Society issuing the invitation will ask the prospective judge to complete a Kennel Club questionnaire giving, amongst other things, detailed information relating to previous judging appointments and handling successes. The Questionnaire also asks for details of future judging appointments so that the judge can be assessed while judging prior to approval for the appointment to award an Obedience Certificate. This is done to ensure that the judging qualifications can be checked and verified. The questionnaire will be forwarded by the Show Society for consideration by the Board of the Kennel Club at least 18 months prior to the show date. Approval will either be granted or refused.
- 3.2 It should be noted that approval to award Kennel Club Obedience Certificates is the sole prerogative of the Kennel Club and is considered for each individual appointment. Decisions on approval are based on the information provided in the completed questionnaire and all other circumstances that are considered appropriate.

Judges at all shows should:

- 3.3 Ensure that they have received a written invitation from the show society.
- 3.4 Confirm in writing that they are available to judge and are able to comply with any conditions laid down by the society, as long as these do not contravene Kennel Club Rules and Regulations. Judges will be asked to sign and return a declaration confirming that they currently meet the qualification requirements laid down in the Obedience Show Regulations
- 3.5 Ensure that their acceptance is followed by written confirmation of the appointment by the Society.
- 3.6 The invitation, the acceptance and the confirmation of appointment form the basis of a contract between the judge and the Show Society. However, in the case of a judge being invited to award Kennel Club Obedience Certificates, the contract is not finalised until the Kennel Club has approved the appointment.
- 3.7 Judges must be aware of and comply with the qualifications and requirements set out in the G Regulations before accepting a judging appointment.
- 3.8 All judges must be aware of the G Regulations in respect of a judge failing to honour an appointment. If such an eventuality arises, the judge should take the following action:
- 3.9 Notify the Show Society immediately. Confirm the reason in writing to the Society in order that a report can be made by the Show Society to the Kennel Club.

Note.

Judges at Obedience Shows must not enter for competition a dog which is recorded in their sole ownership, or handle a dog, at the Show at which they are judging. A dog recorded in part ownership with the Judge may be entered for competition in any part of a class other than the part which the judge is judging.

- 4.1 Following the confirmation of the judging appointment the Show Society will usually send a copy of the show schedule to the judge as a reminder of the appointment. This will of course indicate the class to be judged and may also include directions to the Show venue. If directions are not included but required, a request should be made to the Show Secretary. Some time after entries for the Show have closed, judges will receive an indication of the number and breeds of dogs to be judged which must not exceed 60.
- 4.2 It is important at this time that the route to the show is planned to avoid arriving late.
- 4.3 The Regulations state that judges shall wherever possible provide their own caller stewards, although Societies often find it difficult to provide stewards in sufficient numbers. In any event, details should always be agreed in advance with the Show Society so that they will know in advance exactly what stewards you are expecting them to provide. It is unreasonable to arrive on the morning of the show and ask for such stewards without having made prior arrangements. A ring steward (caller) is usually used for most tests and must be used for heelwork tests.
- 4.4 It is strongly recommended that, for the reasons stated above, judges should, whenever possible, provide their own ring party.
- 4.5 However, if judges have indicated that they require the Show Management to provide stewards, they should advise the society if then able to provide their own.
- 4.6 Judges intending to take their own dogs to the Show must ensure that they are entered Not For Competition in accordance with Kennel Club Regulations, and left safely bearing in mind the "Dogs in hot vehicles" advice.

Before the show all judges must:

- 5.1 Plan their test in advance but they should be prepared to make adjustments on the day of the show if necessary to suit unexpected ring circumstances.
- 5.2 It is advisable for judges to re-acquaint themselves with relevant Regulations for the test to be judged prior to setting the test on every occasion.
- 5.3 Sufficient judging sheets (or paper) to record the marks of each dog entered in the class to be judged should be prepared for use on the day. There is no doubt that in heavy rain, when the more traditional method of marking can cause problems, tally counters can be a valuable item of equipment. They do however prevent the judge from being able to itemise faults to competitors if asked, or if a dispute arises. Thus it is strongly recommended that when used, a summary of the reasons for point deductions is written on the judges score sheet for each dog.
- 5.4 All other judging equipment required for the class to be judged, such as sendaway markers, a sufficient number of retrieve articles and those scent cloths which have to be provided by the judge, should also be prepared in readiness for the show. These are all items that must be provided by the judge; there is no onus upon the Show Society to provide such equipment, except for any neutral and decoy scent cloths which MUST be provided by the Society.
- 5.5 Any retrieve articles provided must be capable of being easily picked up by any breed of dog in the class and must also be clearly visible to the dogs. If ring conditions are not known in advance it is often wise to take an alternative set of articles that might be more suited to the conditions found on the day. Retrieve articles must not be food or injurious to a dog.

Chapter 6. At the Show

At the show all judges must:

- 6.1 Arrive in ample time for their judging appointment it is discourteous to keep the Show Society and competitors waiting.
- 6.2 On arrival, report to the show secretary to collect their judging pack and badge/rosette, together with any other papers, instructions and special requirements.
- 6.3 Find out where their judging ring has been provided by the Show Society. Check and be aware of the potential impact of adjacent rings.
- 6.4 Arrive at their ring in good time to check the layout and meet/practise with their stewards. It is essential that the ring steward's commands are given in the same place and in the same manner for each handler. It may take some time for stewards to familiarise themselves with the various tests, especially heelwork patterns, and sufficient time should always be allowed for this.
- 6.5 Provide full information about the tests to those competitors drawn to work early in the ring in sufficient time to allow them to prepare to compete. Those working later have the benefit of seeing the tests worked, so this course of action ensures that the early competitors are not disadvantaged.

Judging the dogs

6.6 These listed items are intended to assist and enable judges to appreciate their obligation to competitors, Show Societies and the Kennel Club:

Judges should be aware that:

- 6.6.1 Apart from the competitors entered in the class, only the judge, stewards and those authorised by the show management are allowed in the judging ring. No dog shall be allowed in the judging ring other than those competing in the class being judged.
- 6.6.2 They should concentrate solely on the competitors they are judging and they should remain courteous to them throughout the day. Judges must remain in the ring at all times and observe all handlers and dogs, whether competing or undertaking a practice round.
- 6.6.3 They must ensure that they judge in accordance with Kennel Club Obedience Regulations (G).

- 6.6.4 The eligibility of dogs entered in any class is not the concern of the judge or steward. Any queries should be referred to the Chief Steward.
- 6.6.5 They should adopt a method of judging that tests every dog in the same manner.
- 6.6.6 They should try to pace the speed of their judging, taking into account the number of entries in the class, the conditions on the day and the time available.
- 6.6.7 Any running orders published for the class being judged must be adhered to unless personally advised otherwise by the Chief Steward whose decision in these matters is final.
- 6.6.8 They should not be kept waiting unduly for competitors and, if this becomes a problem, should seek help from the Chief Steward. The Chief Steward alone is responsible for the control of any running order and for the smooth running of any class. Decisions made by the Chief Steward must be personally conveyed to judges.
- 6.6.9 Judges must ensure that the results of their class are fully completed on the ringside scoresheet (and in the judging book if appropriate). It is essential that this information is returned to the Show Secretary's office in order that the correct returns can be made by the Show Secretary to the Kennel Club. By doing this, the judge will also make the Show Secretary aware that the judging appointment has been completed.
- N.B. For Championship Class C, results including points lost must be entered in the judging book.

- 6.6.10 It is not the responsibility of the Judge to ensure that the correct booking-in procedure for the class being judged is adhered to. Any breaches must be referred to the Chief Steward.
- 6.6.11 The Judge should be present at the correct time for the stay tests which are usually held in a separate ring at a specific time published in the show catalogue.
- 6.6.12 All untoward incidents must be reported to the Chief Steward and details placed in the show incident book.
- 6.6.13 When judging is completed, all awards must be given out by the judge as provided for by the Show Society. This may be done in the judging ring, a ring especially designated for the purpose, or elsewhere as agreed on the day.
- 6.6.14 They must not include any variations to the prescribed tests in the class being judged, unless in extreme weather conditions with the Chief Steward's consent.
- 6.6.15 They may dismiss from the Class any dog if, amongst other things, it is likely to cause suffering to the dog if it continues competing. The dismissal should first be discussed with the Chief Steward and written into the show incident book.
- 6.6.16 Consultation with the Chief Steward should always take place in the event of anything unusual occurring during judging. This will ensure that relevant information is made available in the event that a report to the Kennel Club is necessary via the incident book.
- 6.6.17 Award of Merit Certificates for Introductory, Pre-Beginner and Beginner should be completed where applicable.

The description and explanatory notes for obedience tests state that:

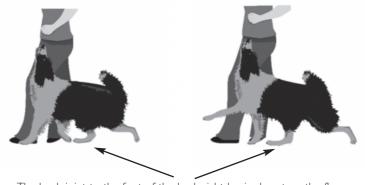
In all classes the dog and handler should work as a team. In all exercises the dog will work in a happy and natural manner whilst maintaining its natural topline. Its head position should in no way compromise its topline or impair the natural movement of the dog. At no time should the dog impede the handler's movement. The dog may be encouraged and praised except where specifically stated. The emphasis of all exercises is that the dog must be judged for accuracy.

The following additions to *Notes for Judges* have also been made:

- In some cases the tendency to work with almost horizontal rear pasterns (from hock joint to foot) is a result of trying to achieve an extreme head position. It should be noted that most dogs adopting a high head position can do so without compromising rear end movement and careful thought should be given to the difference.
- It is important to stress that this regulation should not be used as an excuse to mark any particular style that is not to the judge's individual taste.

To assist judges the following images have been created

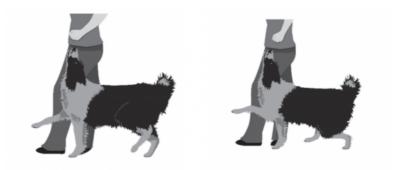
These dogs are not working in a natural manner, their topline is not natural and their hind limbs are too horizontal (hock joint almost touching the ground) and the dogs are not moving in a natural manner.



The hock joint to the foot of the back right leg is almost on the floor, whereas a dog in a more natural position would have a more vertical hind leg.

Chapter 7. Obedience Heelwork Position

In the images below the dog's topline is more level and whilst its hind legs are very bent the judge would need to assess the complete round as this is mid stride, especially the 2nd image. However in this position the hind legs would be acceptable.



This dog should be marked. Whilst its hind limbs are in a more natural position, the dog's topline is not natural, with its hindquarters much lower than its shoulder. If a judge is in doubt as to whether the dog is working with a natural topline the non-heelwork exercises should be assessed to see how the dog moves naturally in and between other exercises.



The dog's back is not level, as you would expect for a Border Collie type dog and therefore it does not appear to be working in a natural manner, for this breed of dog.

Chapter 7. Obedience Heelwork Position

This image is not a dog in a heelwork position but is used to show a dog moving naturally with a natural topline and correct foot placement.



These images show dogs working in an acceptable natural manner and would be acceptable under this Regulation.



Critiques

7.1 There is no doubt that having the privilege of judging the dogs of other owners carries responsibility and certain obligations and one of these is the simple courtesy of providing a written critique. The Kennel Club considers it a matter of courtesy to competitors that judges write a critique on their placed dogs and send this to the specialist dog papers and websites.

Records

- 7.2 It is important for all judges that they keep records of all their judging experience. This is of particular relevance to those hoping, at some future date, to be invited to award Kennel Club Obedience Certificates. It is a requirement of the Kennel Club when being asked to award Obedience Certificates for the first time that judges complete a questionnaire detailing their experience. Accuracy in completing this questionnaire is essential and the judge signs to that effect. Therefore it is necessary that judges retain full details, such as a copy of the show catalogue, of the Shows at which they have judged including the dates.
- 7.3 It is worth noting that the Kennel Club produces an inexpensive Judges Record Book that can be obtained from the Kennel Club Publications Department.
- 7.4 If at any time this information is misplaced the appropriate Show Secretaries can be contacted. Remember that inaccurate records may result in disciplinary action.
- 7.5 The master score sheet, together with any other paperwork, must be returned to the Society Secretary.
- 7.6 Ensure that no cups or prize money are handed over without first securing the signature of the competitor

Chapter 9. Overseas Judges and British Judges Officiating Overseas

- 8.1 Judges from overseas officiating in this country must judge in all respects in the same general manner as is expected of judges resident in the UK. Overseas judges judging at Kennel Club licensed Obedience Shows should note that they must judge in accordance with the Kennel Club Obedience Show Regulations (G) and not those of any overseas Kennel Club.
- 8.2 The suitability of overseas judges to judge at Kennel Club licensed Shows will be assessed in the same way as for judges resident in the UK. To assist judges from overseas, inviting societies are required to supply them with:
- 8.2.1 A copy of the relevant Kennel Club Obedience Regulations (G) and
- 8.2.2 A copy of this guide.
- 8.3 By the same token, British judges are reminded when judging overseas that they must conform to the Rules, Regulations and conventions of the host country. Judging must be undertaken on the basis of the Regulations that are recognised in that country.
- 8.4 Overseas judges who are not endorsed by the relevant Kennel Club of their country will not normally be approved to judge in the UK.

Getting Involved

- 9.1 Every variety of dog competition needs stewards and, although their work is carried out voluntarily, Obedience Shows simply could not take place without their assistance. There are no specific qualifications necessary to become a steward and, as such, stewarding is an ideal starting point for those people keen to become more involved in obedience show management or the dog scene in general.
- 9.2 If you have never undertaken any stewarding and would like to try, most Club Secretaries or Chief Stewards are only too glad of an offer of help and will put you in touch with an experienced steward to "learn the ropes".
- 9.3 A good working knowledge of Kennel Club Rules and Regulations is most useful, but you do not need to be an "expert" in these matters by any means, as the interpretation of Rules and Regulations lies in the hands of the show management and judge.
- 9.4 Attendance at a Regulations and Judging Procedure Seminar would also provide invaluable information.
- 9.5 Annex D to the Kennel Club Obedience Regulations outlines the primary role and authority of an Obedience Ring Steward. All stewards must be aware of these basic instructions although the practicalities of the procedures will be enlarged upon later in this section.

- 9.6 Different societies have different ideas about what should be provided for their stewards. However, a well organised steward can pre-empt shortages of useful items by always carrying their own equipment to all their appointments. Useful items include:
- 9.7 A clipboard.
- 9.8 Pens and pencils (Remember that ball-point pens do not always work in the rain or when it is cold!).
- 9.9 A reliable watch, preferably with a stopwatch facility.
- 9.10 A notepad.
- 9.11 Stewards should ensure that they are suitably dressed for a day's work in the open air and be prepared for changes in the weather during the course of the day.

Chapter 11. Instructions as to the Duties of the Chief Obedience Steward

- 10.1 The Chief Steward manages the Show on behalf of the licensed Show Executive on the day of the Show. Kennel Club Regulations make specific mention of the following areas of responsibility, although these duties will be enlarged upon later in this section:
- 10.2 The Show Executive shall appoint a Chief Steward whose name must be announced in the schedule, and who must not enter for competition a dog which is recorded in their ownership or part ownership or work a dog or act in any other capacity at the Show
- 10.3 In the event of extreme adverse conditions at a show a Judge may alter exercises as deemed appropriate at the time and must always obtain full agreement of the Chief Steward unless in an emergency situation. The Chief Steward must be advised of the change and the reasons for it at the earliest opportunity. Any alteration to exercises must be reported by the Show Management to the Kennel Club within 14 days of the date of the show.
- 10.4 The Chief Steward and the show management must act to remove a dog from the Show under the conditions of Regulation G Removal of Dogs
- 10.5 When notified of a dog which had been incorrectly exhibited the Chief Steward shall advise the Judge(s) in the other relevant class(es) that the dog is ineligible to work in that class, Regulation G - Entry for Competition refers.
- 10.6 A competitors inability to compete in a running order must be reported to the Chief Steward in the first instance, Regulation G - Management refers.

Chapter 11. Instructions as to the Duties of the Chief Obedience Steward

- 10.7 The Chief Steward alone shall be responsible for the control of any running order, which may be relaxed in exceptional circumstances. In such cases, the competitor will be required to work as directed by the Chief Steward and judge(s) of the relevant class(es) whose joint decision shall be final. All such decisions must be recorded in the Show's Kennel Club Incident Book, Regulation G Management refers.
- 10.8 Should a judge be prevented from completing a class which has commenced, the Chief Steward shall decide what action is to be taken (Regulation G - Management refers).
- 10.9 All published running orders must be strictly observed. Competitors reporting late will be excluded from competition unless they have previously reported to the Chief Steward that they are actually working a dog in Championship Class C or in the stay test of another class. (Regulation G Management refers).

- 11.1 An efficiently run Obedience Competition requires the services of several Stewards, all fulfilling different but essential roles.
- 11.2 The Chief Steward has overall control of the show on the day; he or she coordinates and manages all matters concerned with dogs "working" at the show. Therefore it follows that this person must have a thorough knowledge of all Kennel Club Obedience Show Regulations.
- 11.3 The Caller Steward must clearly issue the commands necessary for the Heelwork Test as well as any other commands the judge wishes to delegate.
- 11.4 The Marker Steward or Scribe must pay close attention to the judge and make careful note of every point the judge indicates has been lost.
- 11.5 The Scoreboard Steward is responsible for accurately recording the points awarded to each dog after it has completed its round.
- 11.6 Stay Stewards need to be appointed to observe the Stay Tests.

Notes

Notes



Clarges Street, London WIJ 8AB Telephone 01296 318540 Facsimile 020 7518 1058

Kennel Club Building, Gatehouse Way, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8DB Telephone 01296 318540 Facsimile 01296 486725

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