



THE KENNEL CLUB
Making a difference for dogs

Kennel Club Beginner's Guide to Competitive Obedience Shows



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Introduction

The aim of this booklet is to enable the beginner handler to fully enjoy and feel confident at their first few shows.

Training your dog to do competitive Obedience exercises is fun and can develop into a very rewarding and exciting activity for you to enjoy together. The ideal place to learn and develop your training is your local dog club where you will meet a wide range of people from beginners, like yourself, to experienced handlers. Dog clubs in your area can be found through the Kennel Club's Find a Dog Club website. Once you have gained enough confidence with the exercises you can consider entering your first show. Competitive Obedience shows take place all over the country throughout the year and are open for competitors of all levels to enter.

The information contained in this booklet will help you navigate your way around what is required of you when entering and attending your first show. When at the show there will also be many people, including the organisers and other competitors, willing to help and assist you further if required.

Going to your first show can feel daunting however with this assistance we hope you will get the most out of your experience and go on to enjoy a successful and rewarding Obedience career.



Essential reading

- Kennel Club Obedience Regulations booklet
- Kennel Club Code of Conduct booklet

Both are available from the Kennel Club by post for a small fee or they can be downloaded from the Kennel Club website.

Useful contacts

The Kennel Club

1-5 Clarges Street,
Piccadilly,
London W1J 8AB

Tel 01296 318540

Obedience@thekennelclub.org.uk

www.thekennelclub.org.uk

www.findadogclub.org.uk



Before entering a show

All dogs must be registered with the Kennel Club to compete in Obedience.

If your dog was not registered by the breeder or is not eligible for the Breed Register then they should be registered on the Activity Register. The Kennel Club website contains full information on the process for both these types of registration.

Details of all the exercises you will need to teach your dog, and the classes you can enter, can be found in the Obedience Regulation booklet, Annex G(A) Eligibility and Schedule of Classes.

Entering a show

The items you need when entering a show are:

- Show diary
- Show schedule
- Entry form



Show Diary

The show diary may be obtained from the Kennel Club by post or online.

All Open and Championship shows have to be entered in advance, usually by about 6 weeks, so it is important to get the show diary well in advance and you can then decide where and when to enter your first show.

Show Schedule

The show schedule and entry form can be obtained from the show secretary of the society. The show secretary's contact details can be found in the show diary. Once you have the schedule you will see the classes being held at the show.

The Regulations state that you must enter the lowest class that you can, this is found in section G(A) of the Obedience Regulation booklet. Having entered that class you are also able to enter an additional one, or two

classes if allowed on the schedule. It is also possible to enter an unscheduled class on the day at the show. Do remember not to give yourself and your dog too much to do at your first show, you will want to have a look around and watch higher classes.

The closing date for entries will be on the front page of the schedule. If you want confirmation of your entry when you enter by post you should send a stamped addressed card for the secretary to return to you. It is possible to enter online and this will be indicated on the schedule of shows where you may do this.

When entering a show you may also order a catalogue which will tell you all the competitors' details and which classes they are in. These need to be paid for with your entry and collected from the secretary's tent upon arrival at the show.

Entry Form

The entry form is straight forward but make sure all the sections are filled out fully, this includes the dog's Kennel Club registration number. The cost of classes, who the cheque is payable to and the address of the person it should be sent to will be on the schedule.

It is possible to go to your first show just to look around with your dog. To do this you will need to fill out an entry form stating that your dog is there Not For Competition (NFC), where you would normally put the class number. Any dog that is taken to a show and not competing must be entered on the entry form as NFC.



Running orders

All classes at a show will have a running order.

Depending on the number of competitors in the class this will comprise of 6 or 10 dogs that have been randomly selected to work in the first 6 or 10 in the class. If you have been selected you will be notified by post or the running order can be found online. Most schedules will give you the option to be informed of this by post if you prefer.



Arriving at a show

Allow plenty of time to get organised upon arrival. Park as you are directed to, and ensure the comfort of your dog within your vehicle, such as access to water.

There will be a secretary's tent which will be the best place to start your day. If you have ordered a catalogue this is where you will collect it. You will see which classes you have entered in the catalogue and which ring(s) they are in. If you tell the organisers that this is your first show they may find someone to show you around the rings. There may be a map/ring plan available to help. When you have found your ring you need to book yourself in.

Booking In

There will be a list of competitors on the table by the ring and you just need to put a tick by your dog's name. It is very important that you do this within an hour of the start of judging for the show; otherwise you will not be able to compete. The start time for judging will be stated on the schedule. Next to your dog's name there will be your competitor number; this will also be on a card on the table, though at some shows this card will be in the secretary's tent. This should be worn at all times whilst you are competing. At some shows you will need to write your own number on the blank card supplied.

If you have been selected to be in the running order it is important to be at the ring when judging starts. It may be that not everyone in the running order has booked in so you may have to go in the ring sooner than planned.



Preparing to compete

It is advisable to let your dog familiarise itself a little with the unfamiliar surroundings and allow time for a comfort break.

You may need to do some practice or keep him calm, only you will know this, and at your first show it will be difficult to know what is best but you will learn as you compete more.

Whatever you do be careful not to interfere with other dogs by your use of toys and food, especially by the rings.



In the ring

The first thing to remember is to have fun with your dog.

You will need to listen to the ring steward's instructions but make sure you concentrate on your dog. Food is only allowed in the Introductory Class and can only be given where directed. In all the other scheduled classes you are not allowed to take food or a toy in the ring. If you decide you would like to do a practice round in the ring you should ask the judge for permission, then you may take a toy in, but not food. If you do this be aware of other dogs working in adjacent rings and try not to distract them.

When your round is complete reward your dog outside the ring, again being careful not to disturb others. When looking at your score remember that judges mark differently so look at what they thought you did well. Even if your dog did not do all you asked of him try to see the positive things and know that you will both improve with practice.

Stays

The stay ring will be in a separate part of the venue. The time of your stay will be on the scoreboard at your working ring and also in the catalogue. It is best to arrive at the stay ring ten minutes before your stay time, both ensuring that you won't be late and risk missing it and also giving you time to settle yourself and your dog.



After the show

Hopefully you and your dog will have had an enjoyable day competing and making new friends.

You should have discovered a lot about your dog and the world of competitive Obedience and will be looking forward to your next show.

A very good way to learn more about Obedience and shows is to offer to help out. You could help on a ring, scoreboard or stay steward, and there will always be someone available to show you what to do. Assisting in this way will quickly increase your knowledge, and you will still be able to work your dog at the show whilst helping out.

Competitive Obedience is a wonderful activity, giving the opportunity to make many friends from all around the UK and beyond.





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