

Summary of CKC Rally Obedience Rule Changes (Effective January 1, 2011)

Compilation and commentary by Rebecca Adams

This Rally Rules change summary was done to help Rally teams become aware of the new rules. We hope that this information helps everyone do well and avoid any potential mistakes (or non-qualifying scores) related to the rule changes. This is our way of trying to give something back to our canine community, & we hope you find it useful.

This brief summary document contains two sections:

- 1) Changes to Rally Rules (be sure to check the "Scoring" section on page 5)
- 2) Changes to Rally Signs/Stations (there are several changes and a new exercise)

Please note that any quotes from the official CKC "Rally Obedience Trial Rules and Regulations" (effective as of January 1, 2011) are clearly enclosed in quotation marks. Any comments are also clearly marked and are usually positioned following Rally rules that may have been changed, updated, etc.

We are trying to make people aware of the new rules, but recognize that interpretations may vary. Any comments or interpretive information provided herein are subjective, subject to change, and provided only as a possible interpretation of these new rules.

Important Note: Please remember that judges may differ in their interpretations of these new rules and/or rally signs. Readers are urged to ask their judge for any necessary clarification, information, etc. regarding these changes, rather than relying upon any "comments" contained in this document. Your judge is the authority on the rules.

Now that we have the disclaimers out of the way, we hope that this brief summary helps you. Have fun training, practicing, and trialing!

1) Changes to Rally Rules

"2.5 Officials & Committees

(35-06-08)

2.5.6 A dog that bites or attempts to bite another dog or a person may be removed from the event grounds or premises for the duration of the event by the Superintendent or the Rally Obedience Trial Committee Chair.

(21-09-09)

2.5.7 Where a person who has control or custody of a dog at a CKC event causes that dog to suffer serious injury or death through negligence or willful misconduct, the Superintendent or the Rally Obedience Trial Committee Chair shall file a report to the CKC for possible submission to the Discipline Committee."

“2.6 Ring Stewards

2.6.7 The Table Steward.

(23-06-10) a) The table steward will receive specific instructions from the judge as to what will be required.

b) The table steward will have the judge’s worksheet ready for the next dog, ensuring that the class, proper armband number, and breed of dog are entered correctly on the sheet, as well as the jump height of the dog, if applicable.

(23-06-10)c) The table steward must check to see that the scores on the worksheet have been added correctly. If an error is detected, the steward will bring it to the attention of the judge, who will enter any corrected score and time.

(23-06-10)d) The table steward will transfer the scores and times from the worksheets to the judge's book, and after doing so, initial the judge's worksheet.

e) The table steward will ensure that scores are posted at ringside as each dog and handler team finishes the course.”

“2.6.8 The Time Steward.

(23-06-10)

a) The time steward will accurately time each dog in minutes, seconds and hundredths of seconds. Any tied scores are broken by time.

b) The steward is required to have at least one stopwatch, although two are recommended. The use of electronic timers is permitted.

c) The timer is positioned in a place specified by the judge. When the judge gives the order "Forward," the timer starts the stopwatch and stops it when the dog and handler cross the Finish station. Times are reported immediately to the judge or table steward after each dog completes the course.”

COMMENTS: While functionally important for the operation of trials, these particular changes relate more to the duties of stewards than to changes in standards of performance, rules, etc. for Rally teams. (However, please keep reading, as such changes are covered later in this document.)

“3.4 Judges Entering or Handling Dogs

(26-06-10) 3.4.2 At the club’s discretion, a licensed judge officiating at a trial may enter or handle any dogs at the same venue except on the days that they are judging.”

“6.7 Moving Up

(28-6-10) 6.7.5 Exhibitors incorrectly entered in an "A" class in Rally Obedience Trials are permitted to move the dog to the corresponding "B" class up to one hour before the start of the trial if the schedule allows.

(28-6-10) 6.7.5 Exhibitors incorrectly entered in an "A" class in Rally Obedience Trials are permitted to move the dog to the corresponding "B" class up to one hour before the start of the trial if the schedule allows.”

COMMENT: Section 6.7.5 is a new addition to the rules. It is likely designed to help competitors move into the correct class at the trials should they be entered incorrectly.

“8 REGULATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE & JUDGING”

“8.1 Judging Standard

(29-06-10) 8.1.4 When the Rally Rules and Regulations do not specify otherwise, judging standards shall be governed by the Obedience Trial Rules and Regulations.”

COMMENT: Section 8.1.4 is another new addition to the rules. It was probably put into place to cover any ‘cracks’ in the overall judging rules, and to help unify (to the extent possible) Rally rules with traditional obedience rules. However, we should be aware of this new rule, as it may have unforeseen ramifications.

“8.7 Judge's Book

(30-06-10) 8.7.1 The table steward will record the final scores in the judge's book

(30-06-10) 8.7.2 At the end of each class (or A and B classes if combined), before awarding ribbons and prizes, the judge will check that the judge's books are complete, that all scores and times, absences or other necessary information have been entered correctly, and initial any corrections.”

(30-06-10) 8.7.3 Following completion of the judging of each class and awarding of all ribbons and prizes, the yellow copy of the judge's book must be posted in a prominent location within the precincts of the trial. These pages must not be removed without the permission of the Trial Secretary or disciplinary action will be taken. Exhibitors should check to ensure the scores are correct and if an error is found, it should be drawn to the attention of the Trial Secretary immediately.”

(30-06-10) 8.7.4 Upon completion of the judging assignment, the judge must ensure that the cover of the judge's book is completed with start and finish times, and signed by the judge.”

COMMENT: The majority of this section is likely most relevant to the duties of the ring stewards and judges. Prior rules stated that only the judge was allowed to make entries in the judge's book, whereas this section requires the ring steward to do so and then have the judge check the book for accuracy. It may have been put in place to help expedite record-keeping, take some of the pressure off the judge for entering all scores, and improve the flow and throughput of trials.

However, look carefully at section 8.7.3: This section now specifically requires exhibitors (i.e. rally competitors) to check their scores and report any discrepancies to the Trial Secretary immediately. In other words, you (as a competitor) are now responsible for ensuring that your scores are correct, and are recorded correctly on the judge's yellow sheet (and not just on any handout that you may receive upon completion of a trial).

“8.11 Scoring (all classes)”

COMMENT: This is a VERY important section. It lists all the point deductions, etc. That may be included during the scoring process.

(Comment: Please note: the 1-point deduction section appears to have remained the same, as no change marker is apparent in the revised rules. However, there are changes to the other scoring sections – see below.)

“(12-09-10) 3-point deduction for each of the following:

- repeat of a station (in Novice, only 1 retry per station allowed; in Advanced, only 1 retry per course; in Excellent, no retries allowed)
- pylon/post knocked over (on Figure Eight, Spiral and Serpentine)
- lack of control
- loud command or intimidating signal
- excessive barking

COMMENT: Take a very careful look at bullet point #1 above: “repeat of a station”. The old rules allowed you a maximum of two re-tries per station in all levels (Novice, Advanced, and Excellent). In other words, you really could make three attempts to do each station correctly: your initial attempt, and then 2 more re-tries.

However, the new rules are much more stringent and level-specific. They clearly specify different numbers of re-tries per level.

NOVICE: The Novice level can re-try each station only ONCE (for a possible total of TWO tries per station).

ADVANCED: At the Advanced level, you can only retry ONE station ONE time. You must therefore keep this in mind as you go around the course – you may want to keep that re-try in reserve for the worst possible station performance, and may not want to re-try a station if you suspect you have committed only a minor error. In that case, you may want to just accept the points off and move forward.

EXCELLENT: NO RETRIES. You are just going to have to accept whatever points are taken off by the judge, as there are no longer any “second chances” to re-try a station.

The rest of this sub-section appears to be the same as in previous version of the Rally rules – however, see below for comments on the remaining sub-sections in Section 8.11.

(12-09-10) 10-point deduction for each of the following:

- incorrectly performed station*
- hitting the jump

COMMENT: Please note that there is now an asterisk following the words “incorrectly performed station*” which then refers to the section that starts with a * below (more comments regarding this follow that section). In summary, this change serves to clarify just what an “incorrectly performed station” really is.

(12-09-10) 1 to 10-point deduction:

- lack of teamwork
- lack of briskness
- handler error**

COMMENT: Please note that there are now two asterisks following the words “handler error” which then refers to the section that starts with a ** below (more comments regarding this follow that section). In summary, this change serves to more clearly define the phrase “handler error”.**

“Non-qualifying (NQ) scores shall be given for:

- minimum requirements not met
- dog unmanageable, or uncontrolled barking
- station not attempted
- consistently tight leash
- substantially out of honour position
- not completing the honour exercise
- dog relieving itself in the ring
- bar knocked off the uprights of jump
- using a jump as an aid in going over a jump
- failure of dog to go over jump in the proper Direction

(12-09-10) • handler error**

(12-09-10) * Incorrectly Performed (IP) stations occur when a team attempts a station and fails to perform the principal parts of the station on the first attempt. Where permitted, the handler may choose to retry the station once, for a correct performance, accepting the mandatory 3-point deduction for the retry of the station, plus any deductions for errors on the retry, to a maximum of 10 points. The station is considered an IP if the handler chooses not to retry or fails to perform the station correctly on the second attempt.

COMMENT: “Incorrectly Performed (IP) stations...” - This section appears to be a clarification of the definition of the phrase “incorrectly performed station”.

Please also note the use of the word “plus” in the sentence that states “...accepting the mandatory 3-point deduction for the retry of the station, plus any deductions for errors on the retry, to a maximum of 10 points.” In other words, the maximum you can lose on a retried station is 10 points, even if you retry, automatically lose 3 points, and then once again fail to correctly perform the station. This is essentially how the previous rules operated. However, this section is being specifically mentioned because the manner in which it is written could potentially be a bit confusing and allow for an alternative interpretation.

(12-09-10) No retry will be permitted for any error that results in a non-qualifying score.

COMMENT: this is fairly self-explanatory. If you have somehow NQ’ed during the trial, you are DONE and cannot continue to attempt to retry stations, etc.

(12-09-10) Handler and dog shall perform any permitted retry by re-approaching the station and performing the complete exercise.

COMMENT: When a handler is re-trying a station, they must ‘start from scratch’ by going back and re-approaching the station, the same as if they were doing that station for the first time.

(12-09-10) ** Handler errors can be assessed from 1 to 10-points up to non-qualifying. Handler errors can be assessed at any station or during movement between stations on a course. Once a handler has stopped on any halt exercise, the handler cannot move his feet to assist a dog without incurring a handler error.”

COMMENT: Once again, this is a clarification on what constitutes a “Handler error”. It also makes it very clear that judging is an ongoing process throughout the trial, and that competitors are being judged on their performances between stations (heeling, etc.) as well as when doing a specific exercise/station. Also note that this section specifically states that the handler cannot move his feet to assist the dog once he has halted for an exercise.

“8.12 Timing

(13-09-10) 8.12.2 In the event of a timing malfunction, the timer will notify the judge immediately. The judge will stop the competing team, and have them restart at the beginning of the course, at which time scoring and timing will commence again. In Excellent, the handler of the Honour dog will also return to the honouring dog, and restart.”

COMMENT: once again, this is a clarification of what should happen in the event of a timing error. Previous Rally rules did not specifically cover this issue.

“8.13 Ring Procedure

(31-06-10) 8.13.1 In Rally Novice, all exercises are judged on leash. In Rally Advanced and Excellent, all exercises are judged off leash except the Honour Exercise. In all classes, all dogs must enter and leave the ring on leash.

(31-06-10) 8.13.2 Signs will be placed to the right of the handler's path except for those indicating a change in direction, in which case the sign will be directly in front of the handler. For stations where the handler and dog are required to make a sidestep to the right, the sign shall be placed in the initial path of the handler and dog, thus requiring the team to make a sufficient size sidestep to the right in order to pass the sign.

(44-06-10) 8.13.5 Except for exercises requiring entry with the sign on the left or change of direction, exercises are performed near the designated signs, either directly in front or in front and to the left of said sign.”

COMMENT: This section is primarily a clarification of where the handler and the dog should be in relation to a specific sign for a Rally station.

“8.16 Leash and Collar

(32-06-10) 8.16.1 The leash must be made of fabric or leather and must be long enough to provide adequate slack, except that the handler must use a leash approximately 1.83m (6 feet) long in the Rally Excellent Class for the Honour exercise. Collars used in rally must be the same as those accepted for use in obedience trials.”

COMMENT: most of this section remains the same as in the previous rules, with one important exception: You MUST use a leash that is approximately 6 feet long in the Rally Excellent Class for the honour exercise. In other words, shorter leashes are fine for the Novice and Advanced classes, but Excellent level handlers MUST use an approx. 6 ft. long leash. This then ties into the new requirements for the honour exercise in Section 11.3 that follows below.

“9 RALLY NOVICE CLASS R.N.”

“9.1 Rally Novice A

(31-06-10) 9.1.1 Dogs competing in this class may not have won a CKC Rally Novice (R. N.) title or any CKC Novice Obedience title. No handler who has exhibited a dog through its CKC CDX (Companion Dog Excellent) title or instructed dog training classes shall be eligible to enter this class. The handler of any dog in this class must be the owner, co-owner, or a member of their immediate families. A person may enter more than one dog in this class.”

(COMMENT: See complete comments on the changes to “A” Class eligibility following Section 11.1, “Rally Excellent A”, listed below.)

“10 RALLY ADVANCED CLASS R.A.”

“10.1 Rally Advanced A

(33-06-10) 10.1.1 This class shall be for dogs that have won the Rally Novice (R. N.) title but have not won the Rally Advanced (R. A.) title or any CKC Novice Obedience title. No handler who has exhibited a dog through its CKC CDX (Companion Dog Excellent) title or instructed dog training classes shall be eligible to enter this class. The handler of any dog in this class must be the owner, co-owner, or a member of their immediate families. A person may enter more than one dog in this class.”

(COMMENT: See complete comments on the changes to “A” Class eligibility following Section 11.1, “Rally Excellent A”, listed below.)

“11 RALLY EXCELLENT CLASS R.E.”

“11.1 Rally Excellent A.

(33-06-10)11.1.1 This class shall be for dogs that have won the Rally Advanced (R. A.) title, but have not won the Rally Excellent (R. E.) title or any CKC Novice Obedience title. No handler who has exhibited a dog through its CKC CDX (Companion Dog Excellent) title or instructed dog training classes shall be eligible to enter this class. The handler of any dog in this class must be the owner, co-owner, or a member of their immediate families. A person may enter more than one dog in this class.”

COMMENT: These new rules prohibit a handler who has taught dog training classes or obtained a CDX from handling a dog in the Excellent “A” class, even if they meet all the other criteria. (In my opinion, a good idea. Speaking from experience, it can be very disconcerting for an ordinary pet owner to compete against a professional trainer in the “A” classes. Under the old rules, if a professional trainer owned the dog or the dog belonged to someone in their immediate family, they could still enter in this class. In practice, most professionals opted to enter the “B” classes, but I personally saw instances in which someone who was obviously a highly experienced professional trainer entered the “A” classes, took through dog after dog, and essentially displaced most of the amateur handlers.)

“11.3 Honour Exercise

(34-06-10) 11.3.1 An honour Exercise must be included in the Rally Excellent Classes.

Prior to each class, the judge will designate either the sit or the down for the Honour exercise, as well as the placement within the ring and when the Honour is to be performed by each dog. The Honour exercise must not be in the path of the course. Volunteer dogs may be used for both honouring the first dog in the class and in a course run-through when the last dog performs the Honour Exercise, or the judge may designate dogs within the class to honour for each other, including the option of dogs performing the honour prior to running the course.

(35-06-10) 11.3.2 After having been directed by the judge or Honour steward to the Honour exercise station, the Honour handler will command and/or signal the Honour dog to take the designated position.

(35-06-10) a) When the judge commands the next handler to begin the course with the order “Forward,” the Honour handler will command and/or signal his dog to “Stay,” move forward to the end of a 6 foot (1.8 meters) leash, then turn and face his dog.”

COMMENT: There are some small technical changes contained herein. However, there are also some very important changes to the manner in which the Honour exercise will now be done.

Please note that the rules seem to state that handlers will place their dogs into the sit or down position, but will then not leave the dog and take their position at the end of the 6 ft. Leash until the judge commands the next handler to start the course by saying “forward”. If this is the case, it likely means that handlers are going to have to listen for the judge to say “forward” to the next team and then immediately take their position at the end of the leash, facing their dog. (This is just one specific issue associated with the Honour exercise. Please go to the “Comments” at the end of this section for more detail on the overall changes to the Honour exercise.)

“(35-06-10) b) The Honour steward will indicate the completion of the scoring of the Honour exercise when the running dog and handler have crossed the finish station by giving the order “Exercise Finished.”

(35-06-10) c) The Honour handler will then return to and release his dog from the stay. The Honour dog must maintain the designated position throughout the entire performance of the running dog and handler without receiving physical assistance from the Honour handler.

COMMENT: This appears to mean that you must return to your dog before releasing them from the stay (after the Honour Steward gives the order).

(35-06-10) d) If the course run is interrupted at any time for any reason, the judge will direct the Honour steward to give the “Exercise Finished” order and the Honour exercise will be considered complete; but the dog will remain in the ring without being scored for the next running dog. This will eliminate the need for a volunteer dog for the next running dog.”

COMMENT: this ties into the changes in Section 8.16 (“Collars and Leashes”) previously mentioned. At the Excellent level, you must now have a leash that is approximately 6 feet in length because you are going to be putting the dog into a down stay or sit stay at the end of that leash. Please note that (depending on your dog), the Honor exercise may have increased in difficulty. Under the old rules, the judge decided whether you were going to be doing a sit or down, and also decided whether you would next to or facing the dog. There was also not a specific requirement that you would be going to the end of a 6 foot leash to do the stay.

SPECIAL COMMENT: Please note that there is still no maximum time limit for the honor exercise. Your dog must remain in the specified honor position for the entire time the next team is running the course. Yes, some dogs run the course much more slowly than others (and as a result some handlers were apparently hoping for a specified maximum honor time) but an unspecified honor time is still something that handlers must be prepared for. However, given that there are no longer any re-tries allowed at the Excellent level, the overall timing for the honor exercise is likely to be shorter than it was under the old rules, even if the running dog is relatively slow for some reason.

2) Changes to Rally Signs/Exercises

“APPENDIX B Rally Obedience Signs and Explanations”

“The following exercises may be used in Novice, Advanced and Excellent classes:

1. START

Indicates the beginning of the course.
The dog may either sit or stand in heel position at the start. (37-06-10)

COMMENT: This change clarifies that the dog must be either standing or sitting in heel at the start of the course. Although the old rules did not specify a particular position, in practice most people already started with the dog in the heel position.

18. * Fast Pace

Dog and handler must speed up noticeably. This must be followed by a normal pace. (38-06-10)

COMMENT: the old rules were as follows: “Dog and handler must speed up noticeably. This must be followed by a normal pace, unless it is the last station in the class.” From this change in wording, it is possible to infer that a “Fast Pace” Rally sign may no longer be the last station in a course because it could therefore not then be followed by the “Normal Pace” sign which this new wording apparently requires. Not a major change as such, but great news for dogs who were sometimes ending a course running toward an exit. In such cases, if the finish line was close to the edge of the ring, it could be difficult to stop the dog and get on a leash before leaving the ring.

20.Moving Side Step Right

While heeling, the handler takes one step directly or diagonally to the right, leading with the right foot, and continues moving forward along the newly established line. The dog moves with the handler. The exercise shall be performed just before the exercise sign.

(This exercise shall be considered a change of direction and the sign shall be placed directly in line with the handler's path requiring the handler and dog to sidestep to the right to pass the sign.)

(39-06-10)

COMMENT: More useful clarification on how this particular station should be done. The major change is that this description specifically states that the exercise shall be performed just BEFORE the sign. (The old rules stated that the exercise could be done just after the sign.) This new description also makes it clear that handlers should be directly in line with the sign as they approach it, and then side step right before reaching the sign.

28.HALT - Fast Forward FromSit

With the dog sitting in heel position, the handler commands the dog to heel and immediately moves forward at a fast pace. This must be followed by a normal pace. **(Stationary exercise)**

(40-06-10)

COMMENT: The changes here are very similar to the changes in #18 "Fast Pace". the old rules were as follows: "...This must be followed by a normal pace, unless it is the last station in the class." From this change in wording, it is possible to infer that a "HALT- Fast Forward From Sit" Rally sign may no longer be the last station in a course because it could therefore not then be followed by the "Normal Pace" sign which this new wording apparently requires. Not a major change as such, but once again great news for dogs who were sometimes ending a course running toward an exit. In such cases, if the finish line was close to the edge of the ring, it could be difficult to stop the dog and get on a leash before leaving the ring.

**34. * Send Over Jump
Handler Passes By**

While moving with the dog in heel position, the handler directs the dog to take the jump, as the handler passes by the jump without stopping. When the dog has completed the jump in the proper direction, it is called to heel position and the team continues to the next exercise. (41-06-10)”

COMMENT: Good news for everyone who did not like having to run past the jumps! This new rule simply states that the handler has to pass by the jump without stopping. This also means that you can adjust your pace to your own requirements or the terrain – if the grass is wet and slick, you won’t have to run and take the chance of falling. On a ‘tight’ course, this may also help large dogs who otherwise could potentially run past the next station if they cleared the jump while running beside the handler.

“40.HALT - Side Step Right -HALT

With the dog sitting in heel position, the team moves one step directly to the right and halts. The dog moves with the handler and sits in heel position when the handler halts. The exercise shall be performed just before the exercise sign. (This exercise shall be considered a change of direction and the sign shall be placed directly in line with the handler’s path, requiring the handler and dog to sidestep to the right to pass the sign.)
(Stationary exercise) (43-06-10)

COMMENT: Similar to the changes in the moving side step (Exercise #20), this provides more useful clarification on how this particular station should be done. The major change is that this description specifically states that the exercise shall be performed just BEFORE the sign. (The old rules stated that the exercise may be done just after the sign.) This new description also makes it clear that handlers should be directly in line with the sign, and then “HALT- side step – HALT” just in front of the sign (to the right in order to pass the sign and move forward on the course).

48.Moving Stand

Walk Around Dog

While heeling and with no hesitation, the handler will stand the dog, leave and walk around the dog to the left, returning to heel position. The handler must pause in heel position before moving forward to the next station. The dog must move forward from the standing position.

(Stationary exercise) (45-06-10)

COMMENT: Once again, a bit of clarification regarding the sign, but nothing major. There was one addition to the wording: “The dog must move forward from the standing position.” In practice, that was already happening.

48A.Moving Down

Walk Around Dog

While heeling and with no hesitation, the handler will down the dog, leave and walk around the dog to the left, returning to heel position. The handler must pause in heel position before moving forward to the next station.

The dog must move forward from the down position. (46-06-10)

COMMENT: Ok, a brand new exercise! This essentially seems to be the same as the “Moving Stand”, except that the dog is expected to go into a down position instead of stopping and standing. In a sense, this is also an extension of the “HALT – Walk around dog” and “Moving Down”, given the additional requirement to down the dog while you are still moving and then walk around the dog, ending up back in the heel position. Getting the timing right on this exercise will likely be a little more difficult, though, especially if your dog is slow to go down.

49. Back Up 3 steps

Dog Stays in Position

While heeling, the handler reverses direction walking backward at least 3 steps, without first halting, then continues heeling forward. The dog moves backward with the handler and maintains heel position throughout the exercise without sitting. (47-06-10)"

COMMENT: One word was added in this exercise description. "The dog moves backward with the handler and maintains HEEL position throughout the exercise without sitting." Given the addition of the word "Heel" it may be likely that there will be more emphasis placed on keeping the dog in the heel position throughout the exercise (although generally this was already the case.)

FINAL COMMENT: So there are the new Rally rules! Please feel free to pass along this information to your friends and fellow competitors. We hope that having this Rally Rule change summary helps everyone improve their scores and avoid any potential mistakes (or NQs) related to the rule changes.

As always, please remember that judges may differ in their interpretations of these new rules and/or rally signs, and readers are urged to ask their judge for any necessary clarification, etc. regarding these changes, rather than relying upon any "comments" contained in this document or in other sources. We all need to gracefully respect our judge's interpretations and/or decisions. After all, it is your judge that will be evaluating your performance and determining your score!

The information contained herein is presented only as a brief summary, and should not be relied upon in any way as a full or complete analysis of the new Rally rules.

Have a great time training, practicing, and trialing! In addition, please feel free to visit www.rallyforyou.com and send us any suggestions, etc. regarding this summary, etc.– thanks.