

# **New Jersey State 4-H Dog Show**

## **Rally Obedience Rules and Guidelines**

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
General procedures .....	3
Classes .....	6
Jumps and Jump Heights .....	6
References.....	8

## Introduction

***NOTE: The NJ State 4H Dog show is not an AKC venue, however these guidelines draw heavily on the AKC rules and judging criteria. Close alignment with AKC guidance also makes things easier on our volunteer judges, who are often familiar with AKC regulations. Every effort is made to balance high participation while offering ever increasing challenges to our 4-H members in their efforts to “Make the Best Better.” The AKC has issued a major update to the Rally Obedience Rules effective in April of 2012. This implementation comes so close to the date of our show in 2012 that we are delaying implementation of the new stations and new rules until a future date. These rules will likely be changed to keep pace with the rule changes going forward so please check these guidelines each year.***

Rally is a sport in which the dog and handler complete a course that has been designed by the rally judge. The judge tells the handler to begin, and the dog and handler proceed at their own pace through a course of designated stations (10 – 20, depending on the level). Each of these stations has a sign providing instructions regarding the next skill that is to be performed. Rally scoring is not as precise as formal obedience, and ultimately it is the judges decision on the scoring of any station and the overall performance of the team.

The team of dog and handler moves continuously at a brisk, but normal, pace with the dog under control within a 2-foot area at the handler’s left side. There should be a sense of teamwork between the dog and handler both during the numbered exercises and between the exercise signs; however, perfect “heel position” is not required. Any faults in traditional obedience that would be evaluated and scored as a one point deduction or more should be scored the same in Rally, unless otherwise mentioned in this document. After the judge’s “Forward” order, the team is on its own to complete the entire sequence of numbered signs correctly.

Unlimited communication from the handler to the dog is to be encouraged and not penalized. Unless otherwise specified in these Regulations, handlers are permitted to talk, praise, encourage, clap their hands, pat their legs, or use any verbal means of encouragement. (The AKC is updating their rules in 2012 such that hand clapping, and leg patting will only be allowed at the Novice level.) Multiple commands and/or signals using one or both arms and hands are allowed; the handler’s arms need not be maintained in any particular position at any time. (In 2012, the AKC is disallowing the use of a hand position that represents “luring with a treat” with the thumb and index finger together. This position may also be disallowed at the NJ State 4H Dog show in the future.) The handler may not touch the dog or make physical corrections. At any time during the performance, loud or harsh commands or intimidating signals will be penalized.

Rally promotes fun and enjoyment and teamwork for dogs and handlers at all levels of competition.

## **General Procedures**

### Section 1 - Space Requirements

The required minimum area for a rally course is 40 x 50 feet, however 40 x 80 feet is recommended. The floor covering or ground surface must be the same as would be suitable for traditional AKC obedience trials.

### Section 2 - Armbands

Exhibitors shall be provided armbands or stickers, which must be worn on the upper left arm, indicating their dog's order in the class.

### Section 3 – Signs and Holders

The designated wording and symbols must be used. Signs must be a minimum of 8-1/2 x 11 inches and a maximum of 11 x 17 inches. Weather conditions should be considered when securing signs and holders.

Colors used are optional. Twenty exercise sign holders are required plus one each for the Start and Finish signs. All sign holders or signs (not including those for Start and Finish) will be clearly and sequentially numbered on the course, with numbers approximately 3 inches high. Signs with an asterisk (numbers 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 19, and 34) may be used multiple times on a rally course. Two of each of those signs must be available for the judge's use. All other signs may only be used once on any course. Stationary exercises are any signs indicating a "Halt" or no forward motion.

### Section 4 - Placement of Signs

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 to aid in that change. Exercises using cones may require entry with the sign on the left. Exact placement of signs is made by the judge while walking the course along the path that will be taken by the handlers. The course for each class will be posted at the ring prior to the familiarization time (see below). If possible, copies will be given to exhibitors at check-in when armbands are distributed for the class.

### Section 5 - Location of Performance in relation to Signs.

Except for exercises requiring entry with the sign on the left, exercises are performed near the designated signs, either directly in front, or in front and to the left of said signs.

### Section 6 – Walk -Throughs

Prior to the start of each class, a 15-minute walk-through is allowed for handlers, without their dogs. In the case of large classes, the judge may choose to offer more than one walk-through period. The judge must be available in the ring during this period to answer any questions the handlers might have. The judge may also choose to brief the handlers on the course during this period.

### Section 7 – Judge's Instruction

The judge's orders will be, "Are you ready?" followed by, "Forward." No other orders are necessary.

### Section 8 - General Scoring

Scores will be provided ringside after the class is pinned. Times will be recorded but not posted. Times will be used only to break ties. *Any faults in traditional obedience that would be evaluated and scored as a one point deduction or more should be scored the same in Rally, unless otherwise mentioned in this document.* Scoring for all levels is based on a maximum score of 100 points. The following deductions shall apply:

1-point deduction for each of the following:

- tight leash
- dog interfering with handler's forward motion
- poor sits
- slow, delay, or resistance to respond
- touching or ticking a jump, pylon, post or person
- out of position

3-point deduction for each of the following:

- repeat of a station (a maximum of 2 re-tries per station is allowed)
- pylon/post knocked over (on Figure Eight, Spiral, and Serpentine)
- lack of control
- loud command or intimidating signal
- excessive barking

10-point deduction for each of the following:

- incorrectly performed station

1- to 10-point deduction:

- lack of teamwork
- lack of briskness
- handler error

A score of "NQ" or "Non Qualifying " for the course shall be given for:

- minimum qualifying score of 70 points not achieved.
- dog unmanageable or uncontrolled barking
- station not attempted
- consistently tight lead
- elimination in the ring during judging
- bar knocked off the uprights
- using a jump as an aid in going over
- failure of a dog to go over the jump in the proper direction
- handler error (As described in the AKC Rally Rules.)

Section 9 - Timing

All dogs will be timed. Times will be used only in the event of ties. Timing will begin when the Judge gives the order, "Forward" and will end when dog and handler cross the finish line. In the case of tie scores, the dog and handler completing the course in the least amount of time will receive the higher placement and a plus (+) after the score. The original scores will not be changed. In the event that both the score and time are the same, the judges will choose a suitable tie-breaking exercise. The dog and handler teams could repeat the course and be judged and timed again, for example.

Section 10 - Awards

All classes will be award first through fourth place rosette ribbons. Light blue "honorable mention" ribbons may also be awarded to deserving participants at the discretion of the judge. Best in Shows will be awarded according to the current year's instructions.

## **Classes**

*Each handler-dog team may only enter one rally class at the NJ State 4H Dog show. Please enter the class that best represents the ability of the team. The leader of each participant's 4H Club is responsible for ensuring that the eligibility guidelines for each class are being applied properly.*

### Section 1 - Rally Novice Class

All exercises are judged on leash, and all dogs must enter and leave the ring on leash. The leash must be made of fabric or leather and needs to be long enough to provide adequate slack.

Rally Novice must have between 10 – 15 stations (Start and Finish not included) with no more than five (5) stationary exercises per class. A person may enter more than one dog in this class. No handler/dog team may be entered in this class who has been awarded a blue ribbon in this class at a state-level Rally Obedience event, or has earned 3 or more qualifying scores in Rally Novice in their 4H career.

### Section 2 - Rally Advanced Class A – On Lead

All exercises are judged on leash, and all dogs must enter and leave the ring on leash. Rally Advanced A and B must have between 12 – 17 stations (Start and Finish not included) with no more than seven (7) stationary exercises per class. One jump is also required. A person may enter more than one dog in this class. No handler/dog team may be entered in this class who has been awarded a blue ribbon in this class at a state-level Rally Obedience event, or has earned 3 or more qualifying scores in Rally Advanced A in their 4H career.

### Section 3 – Rally Advanced Class B – Off Lead

All exercises are judged off leash. All dogs must enter and leave the ring on leash. Rally Advanced A and B must have between 12 – 17 stations (Start and Finish not included) with no more than seven (7) stationary exercises per class. One jump is also required. A person may enter more than one dog in this class. This class is open to all participants.

## **Jumps**

One jump must be used for the rally advanced classes. It may be any jump used as standard equipment in 4-H obedience classes (broad jump, high jump, or bar jump), except that 4-foot wide jumps may be used in place of 5-foot wide jumps. Various colors and decorations are allowed; however, there must be nothing hanging from the jump. It is the judge's responsibility to see that the jumps are set for each dog in accordance with these Regulations.

### Section 1 – Jump Types

The Broad Jump will consist of three telescoping hurdles, each approximately 8 inches wide. The largest hurdle will measure about 4 feet 10 inches long (if from a 5-foot set) and about 5 inches at the highest point.

In the ring, broad jump hurdles will be arranged in order of size from smallest to largest. They will be evenly spaced, covering a distance equal to twice the height of the high jump set for

## NJ State 4H Dog Show Rally Rules and Guidelines

each dog. Three hurdles will be used for a jump of 32 inches and two hurdles for a jump of 16 or 24 inches. When decreasing the number of hurdles in the jump, the highest hurdle will be removed first.

The High Jump consists of two uprights and solid boards of varying widths that combine to make each dog's required jump height. The Bar Jump also has two uprights. These are constructed to support only a striped bar which is set at the dog's required jump height.

### Section 2 - Jump Heights

The dog's jump height shall be given on the entry form. Entries may be arranged according to the jump height of the dogs, from either high to low or low to high.

4" class – for dogs measuring up to 10 inches at the shoulder

8" class – for dogs measuring 11 to 14 inches at the shoulder

12" class – for dogs measuring 15 to 18 inches at the shoulder

16" class – for dogs measuring 19 inches and over at the shoulder

Any special considerations that would require an exception to the above jump heights must be expressly explained on the entry form, and signed by your 4H Leader.



## References

The following references are provided for additional information about Rally Obedience.

<http://www.akc.org/events/rally/2012info.cfm>

AKC Obedience Regulations [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

(Originally adapted from Washington State 4-H Dog Project)

