



# RALLY OBEDIENCE NORDIC CHAMPIONSHIP GUIDELINES

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## Rally Obedience Nordic Championship Guidelines

### Nordic Class definition

The Rally Obedience exercises in the Nordic Championship competition are based on a combination of exercises used in the highest competition class in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The exercises have been divided into different categories depending on their level of difficulty. The categories are based on points: 1 point, 2 points, 3 points, 4 points.

This exercise set with its regulations, guidelines, exercise descriptions, deduction and judging guidelines forms a Rally Obedience Nordic Class.

The method how an exercise is performed may differ from national rules.

### Nordic Championship competition

The Nordic Championship consists of a team championship and an individual championship. The length of the competition is two (2) days. On the first day, there are two rounds for all participants. These rounds define the team results and are the first two results for the individual championship. On the second day, there is one round for all the participants which is the individual final.

### Nordic Team Champion and Nordic Individual Champion

Each country can enter one team. A team consist of five (5) competitors and a named reserve.

Should a country enter less than five (5) competitors, the team will be able to compete, but will receive zero points for the empty spaces in the team competition.

### Nordic Team Champion

The first two rounds in the competition define the team results. Nordic Team Champion is the team that has the highest score after two rounds. The top three (3) scores for each team from each round count for the total. The total score is the final score for the team.

*Example. The top scores from the two rounds for a team are 99, 96, 95, 85, 90 and 100. Thus, the final score for the team is 565.*

### Nordic Individual Champion

Nordic Individual Champion is the team (handler and dog) that has the best combined result of three rounds.

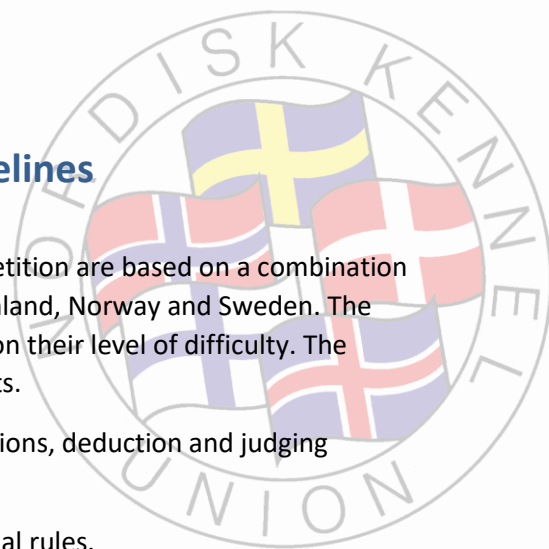
*Example. The individual competitor has received the following scores from three rounds: 99, 86 and 95. Thus, the final score for the individual is 280.*

### Running order

For the team competition the running order is decided at the briefing by a random draw for both rounds. The host country is responsible for arranging the draw.

The running order for the individual finals will be decided by a random draw, which will be executed on the first day after the team rounds. The host country is responsible for arranging the draw.

If a handler has more than one dog in the competition, there must be at least 20 minutes between the dogs. This time gap should be created by changing the running order. In this case the new running order will be decided by the head judge, with as minor changes as possible.





## General rules

### Judges

The judging team at Nordic Championships consists of four (4) judges, one from each country. These judges will judge all the rounds. The host country's judge is appointed chairman (chief judge) for the judges' team.

The chief judge is the chairman of the judging team and acts as chairman for the judges' meeting and for any meetings arranged with the team leaders or competitors. The chief judge is the contact person between the judges and the organizing committee of the competition. The chief judge is responsible for the arrangements of the competition.

The chief judge, after consulting the other judges, approves the practical arrangements for the competition and decides whether it is necessary to repeat or terminate an exercise e.g., due to technical problems, excessive disturbance, or if a dog is not functioning.

The chief judge gives the press permission to take pictures or films and decides where the press can stand without causing disturbance to the dogs. The press is not allowed in the ring.

If incidents occur that are not dealt within these regulations and directions, the judge (or team of judges lead by the chief judge) decides how to proceed or how to evaluate the incident.

### Judges' traveling costs

The traveling costs within their own country of the invited judges and secretaries, including flight costs to the country holding the competition, are covered by the national kennel club, or by an equivalent party, of the judge/secretary. Costs (transportation, accommodation, meals, fees etc.) within the host country must be paid by the arranging country.

### Handler and dog

#### Participants' traveling costs

The participants must cover all their own costs.

#### Handler's obligations

A handler's obligations as a competitor start when the handler enters the competition premises and end after the final prize-giving ceremony when the handler exits the competition premises. Handlers must follow the rules and directions as instructed.

The judge may disqualify a handler from the competition if he or she does not abide by the regulations or behaves in an unseemly way. It is forbidden to punish the dog in any way.

Handlers are expected to be on their best behavior and appropriately dressed. The handler may wear a training vest or similar during the course.

Handlers should report their presence at the competition premises 90 minutes before the competition begins.

When the competition ring is being built and after it has been built for the competition, a handler is not allowed to enter the competition ring unless an authorized person has given permission. Unauthorized entering leads to a disqualification from the competition.

If there is a physical disability, the competitor or team leader must state this in the registration form. The host country must inform all judges concerned within one week after the registration deadline. The effect this has on evaluating the performances must be agreed on if there are several judges

involved. Any exceptional arrangements should be justified and should not cause disturbance to other dogs and competitors.

#### Dog's behavior

A dog that at any time during the competition (before, during or after its own performance) bites, tries to bite, attacks or tries to attack people or other dogs, is disqualified from the competition. All points are lost even if the performance has already been completed. If the length of the event is more than a day, the disqualification is valid also for the other days and thus the dog cannot compete.

The incident must be reported to the kennel club that the dog represents and the kennel club of the host country.

#### Dog's equipment in the competition ring

Only ordinary collars (buckled, non-slip collars) are permitted in the competition ring, thus, for example, retriever leashes are not permitted. The dog must wear a collar inside the competition ring.

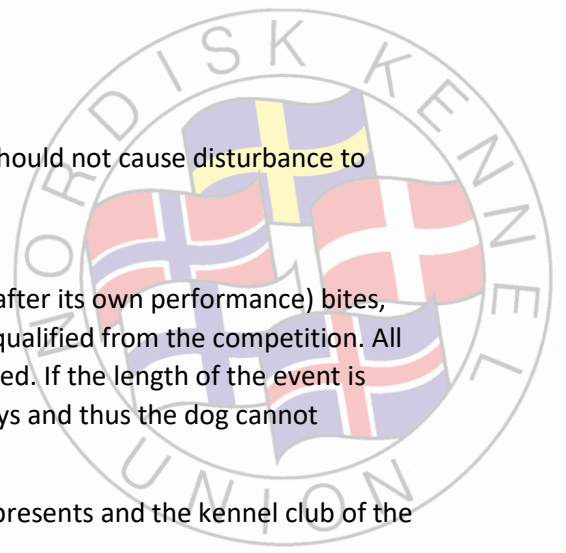
Blankets, mantles, harnesses, raincoats, shoes, stockings, bandages, tapes, etc., on the dog are forbidden during the performance.

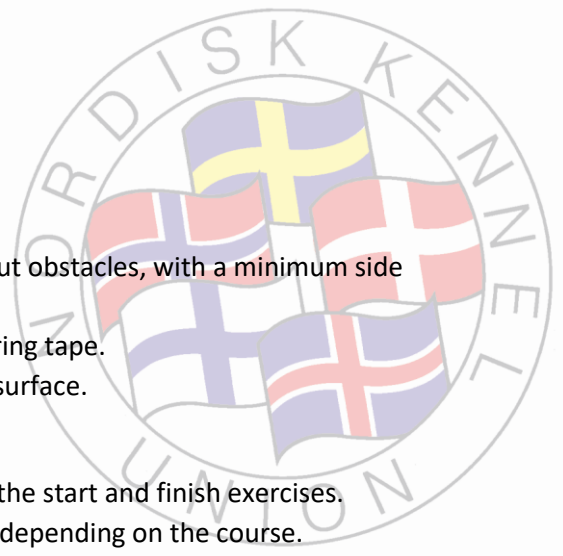
Small bows or bands can be used on dog's fur to keep the fur away from the dog's eyes. These accessories can only be used on dog's head or ears.

See also section **Disqualification**.

#### Bitches in season and in breeding

Bitches in season may compete but must be kept outside the competition area and nearby surroundings until other competitors have completed their rounds. Bitches in season compete last, at the end of the competition day and perform all required rounds consecutively. If the competition is held indoors, the dog must wear hygiene pants. The organizer must be notified of a bitch in season before the competition starts.





## About the competition

### The competition ring

- The ring must be at least 400 square meters in size without obstacles, with a minimum side length of 20 meters.
- The ring must be clearly marked with low fences or with ring tape.
- The indoor ring must be entirely covered with a non-slip surface.

### The course

- The length of the course is 18-20 exercises in addition to the start and finish exercises.
- The distance between signs is approximately 3-5 meters, depending on the course.
- With jump and tunnel exercises, the sign is placed two meters before the jump, and there is a two-meter landing area after the exercise.
- A single jump can be either an obedience or agility jump, with exercise 322 (send over two jumps), both jumps must be agility jumps.
- With exercise 322 (send over two jumps), the distance between jumps is four meters.
- The tunnel must be 3-6 meters long, straight or u-shaped. The tunnel must be fully stretched.
- In the following exercises, which include cones, the sign is always placed right in front of the first cone: 129-130 (spiral), 131-132 (slalom), 133 (figure 8), 306 (temptation).
- In exercises 129-130 (spiral) and 131-132 (slalom) the cones are 1,5-2 meters apart.
- In exercises 133 (figure 8) and 306 (temptation) the cones are 2,5-3 meters apart, the distance between temptations is 1,5-2 meters.
- There can be maximum three jump or tunnel exercises per course.
- A specific exercise can be used maximum two times per course, the recall exercise being an exception.
- A cone that is part of a spiral or slalom exercise can be reused as part of a spiral or slalom exercise.
- The course layout will be posted on the wall of the competition ground at least one hour before the start of the round.
- There will be one course orientation per round. The competitors will have 10 minutes under the supervision of one judge to familiarize themselves with the course layout. The competitors can ask questions within that 10 minutes from the judge.
- The first team must be ready to start the course five minutes after the course orientation has finished.

### Judging the course

- The final score of a competitor is the sum of judges' points.
- The judge's decision is final and cannot be appealed.
- The chief judge has the final word when agreement cannot be reached. It is also the chief judge's responsibility to decide on the winner, should the rules on equal points not clearly state a winner.
- In any case of doubt, the chief judge will have the final word.
- Equal points
  - If after the individual final, dogs ranking 1st and 2nd, possibly also 3rd, have equal points, they will repeat the final round. The dog with the highest score wins.
  - If the dogs still have equal points, the dog with the fastest time from the repeated round wins.

- If the dogs still are equal, the chief judge will decide the winner.

## Nordic Class performance

### Entering and exiting the ring

The dog must be taken off leash before entering the ring, and the dog must be on leash right after exiting the ring. The handler must keep the leash during the course. The leash must be hidden. The handler may wear a training vest or similar.

The team (handler and dog) walk next to the ring and the handler removes the dog's leash and places it into a pocket. When the team is ready, they must wait for the judge's permission to enter the ring.

No treats, food or toys can be visible in the ring. The handler shall not drop anything in the ring.

After taking the dog off leash, the dog must only wear a collar (and fur accessories, if needed).

The handler and the dog are under judging from the moment they enter the ring until the moment they leave the ring together.

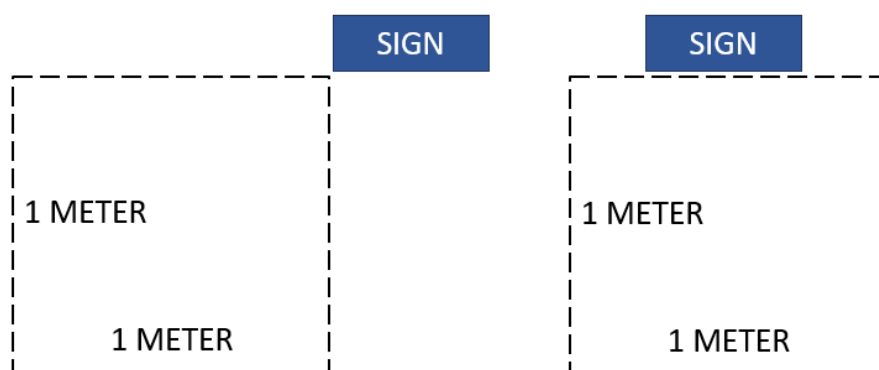
While the dog is in the ring, it must be under the handler's control.

No training aids or outside help of any kind is permitted.

After the course is finished, the team exits the ring and the handler puts the dog back on leash.

### Exercise area

The exercise is performed on the left side of the sign when the direction of the course does not change. When the direction is changed, the exercise is performed in front of the sign. The exercise area is 1 x 1 meters, if no other instruction has been given.



When starting an exercise, it is enough that either the handler or the dog is within the exercise area.

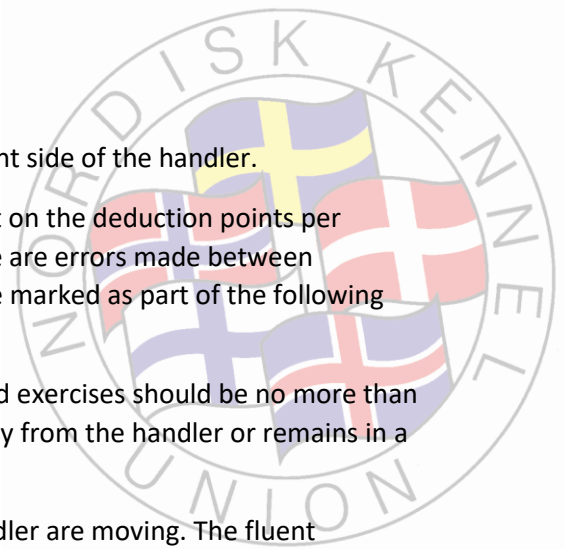
In the turning exercises, on the spot means approximately the area of an A4.

### General instructions

It is indicated in the course layout whether the dog should be on the left or the right at the start. The dog must enter the ring on the correct side. The team walks together to the start exercise. After the dog is directed to sit by the handler, the team can start the course.

The team performs the exercises in the given order. Note that a repetition of an exercise is considered as a handler's mistake with a deduction of -10. The dog must remain in handler's control while in the ring and during the course.





All exercises can be performed with the dog on the left or the right side of the handler.

All errors made during an exercise are deducted. There is no limit on the deduction points per exercise, see chapter Judging Guidelines for more details. If there are errors made between exercises (for example, the dog makes a spin), the deductions are marked as part of the following exercise.

The distance between the handler and the dog during heeling and exercises should be no more than 0,5 meters, apart from exercises in which the dog is directed away from the handler or remains in a certain position until recall.

Fluent exercises are exercises in which both the dog and the handler are moving. The fluent exercises 106-116 (basic turn exercises) can be performed in slow pace or fast pace. The exercise before the fluent exercise 106-116 defines the pace in which the exercise is performed. A slow or fast pace exercise, or exercises performed in slow or fast pace are always followed by normal pace exercise.

Those exercises, in which the dog is directed to the front of the handler, end with the dog on the left as instructed in the exercise 117-122 (call front, back to side variations), 213 (steps back with sit), 308 (steps back with sit/stand/down), 408 (call front, stand, back away, stand).

The exercises 304 (stop, side step right, stop) and 401 (side step right) are performed after the sign.

In the exercise 312 (side shift between legs), the handler can lift a leg to make the side shift fluent.

In side shift exercises the handler must walk a straight line, a straight line forward or to the direction from which the team came from, for example, exercises 401 (side step right) and 402 (side step left).

The handler or the dog are not allowed to stop during the course or an exercise when a stop is not part of the exercise. The extra stop causes a deduction of -10 for lack of teamwork.

The handler can use hand signs and body movements to guide the dog in exercises (for example, guiding the dog down or to the front). The handler must straighten the back before moving forward to the next exercise.

### Step and stepping

The handler has taken a step when you can see a space between the forefoot heel and rearfoot toes. The steps do not have to be equally long. With the side step exercises, the length of a side step must be at least the length of the handler's foot. A cross step can be taken when making a side step. The side step must be taken in a straight line to left or right.

In exercises in which the dog is directed to the front of the handler, the handler may not take steps backwards, the exceptions being exercises 213 (call front stop, 1 step back stop, 2 steps back stop, 3 steps back stop) and 308 (call front stop, 1 step back stand, 2 steps back stop, 3 steps back down).

If the dog is stepping on the spot, it does not cause a deduction.

The handler is not allowed to step on the spot or keep shifting the feet in a static exercise.

### Frontline alignment

The dog must keep the frontline aligned with the handler while heeling and in all exercises in which the team is facing the same direction. The exceptions to this are exercises 214 (jump), 311 (side shift behind), 312 (side shift between legs), 315 (sit, side shift behind, sit), 322 (send over two jumps), 323



(tunnel), 407 (stop, send away, stand), 411 (recall over jump). Note that exercises 311, 312, 315 must begin and end with the dog aligned with the handler.

### Cone exercises

When the handler sends the dog to the cone (407), the dog can either walk or run, the pace is not defined. The cone can be placed either to left (dog is on left) or right (dog is on right) with the distance of 4-5 meters. To complete the exercise, the dog must be within one meter from the cone while standing. If all four paws are outside the one-meter perimeter, the exercise has been performed incorrectly.

When performing the spiral or slalom exercises, the team is allowed to leave space between the team and cones for fluent movement. There is no maximum distance from the cones defined.

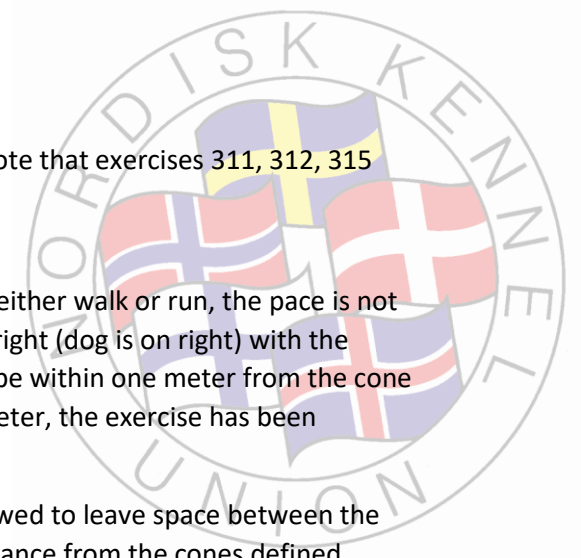
### Recall

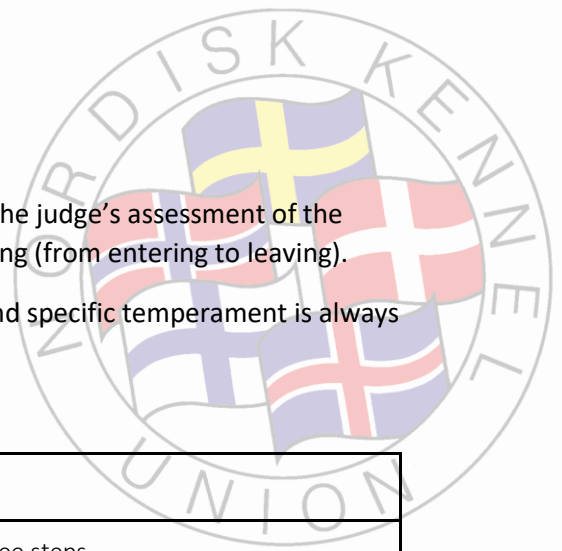
The distance of the recall exercise is five meters from the previous exercise. A false start by the dog equals to incorrectly performed exercise.

### Height of a jump

The height of a jump is defined by the dog's height.

under 30 cm	10 cm
30-39	20 cm
40-49	30 cm
50 and over	40 cm





## List of general deductions

The team starts with 100 points. Deductions are made based on the judge's assessment of the team's performance. The team is being judged while within the ring (from entering to leaving).

During the course and when performing exercises, dog's breed and specific temperament is always taken into consideration in judging.

The team cannot get less than 0 points.

1-point deductions	Examples
Lack of teamwork (dog/handler)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sniffing the ground for less than three steps</li> <li>- Dog touches/sniffs a sign or cone (wagging tail excluded)</li> <li>- Short delay in response</li> </ul>
Handler's mistake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Handler touches sign or cone</li> </ul>
Askew position (more than 45°, less than 90°)	

3-point deductions	Examples
Lack of teamwork (dog/handler)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sniffing the ground for three steps or more</li> <li>- Delay in response</li> <li>- Dog on handler's path (for example, in a spiral) or preventing fluent movement</li> <li>- Dog knocks over a sign or a cone</li> <li>- Dog steps over a sign</li> <li>- Dog not moving aligned with the handler in side step exercises</li> <li>- Dog tries to change heeling side when not supposed to</li> <li>- Dog tries to change position when not supposed to</li> </ul>
Handler's mistake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sidestep to give room for dog or to guide or direct the dog (for example, side change or over a jump)</li> <li>- Handler moving in position (stepping on the spot, taking less than ½ step) when supposed to be still</li> <li>- Handler knocks over a sign or cone</li> <li>- Handler claps hands (together or against their body), snaps fingers, stomps feet to get or keep the dog's attention.</li> <li>- Handler significantly slowing down to help the dog to perform</li> </ul>
Physical contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dog jumping against the handler</li> <li>- Dog stepping on handler's feet</li> <li>- Dog leaning against the handler while heeling</li> <li>- Dog deliberately touches the handler's hand with its nose</li> </ul>
Out of position (more than ½ meter between dog and handler)	
Dog moving in position (approximately one step or less than ½ dog's length)	



5-point deductions	Examples
Lack of teamwork (dog/handler)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Longer delay in response</li> <li>- Sniffing the ground the whole exercise</li> <li>- Dog is very slow in performing most of an exercise</li> <li>- Dog keeps jumping up and down during a whole exercise</li> <li>- Dog sniffing or touching temptation</li> <li>- Dog knocks down the jump</li> </ul>
Handler's mistake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loud command or intimidating signal</li> </ul>
Excessive barking or sound (per exercise)	

10-point deductions	Examples
Lack of teamwork (dog/handler)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dog is out of control in the ring (for example, runs to check the temptations)</li> <li>- Refusal to jump or going past the jump (this includes refusal to jump when a jump has been knocked down)</li> <li>- Dog picking up anything inside the ring (for example, temptation or cone)</li> <li>- Handler or dog or team on the wrong side of a sign or cone</li> <li>- Dog making additional moves between signs (for example, a twist, a sit, scratching)</li> <li>- Exercise started outside (before or after) the exercise area</li> <li>- Dog's frontline is not aligned (more than 90 degrees)</li> <li>- Dog makes a false start, independent on the distance to the handler (for example, the dog starts before a recall)</li> <li>- Dog changes heeling side when not supposed to</li> <li>- Stop in exercises where stop is not a part of the exercise</li> </ul>
Handler's mistake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The handler touches the dog</li> <li>- Performing exercise in wrong speed (independent of distance)</li> <li>- Visible leash</li> <li>- Retry of an exercise</li> <li>- Handler puts hand in pocket</li> <li>- Handler stops when not supposed to</li> <li>- Wrong speed between exercises (independent of distance)</li> </ul>
Incorrectly performed exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exercise or part of the exercise performed incorrectly</li> <li>- Dog moving in position (more than 1/2 dog length)</li> <li>- Dog is very slow in performing an exercise</li> </ul>

### Overall impression

When judging the overall impression of the cooperation between the dog and the handler both at signs and between the signs must be considered.

1-10 points can be deducted based on the overall impression. Deductions may only take place based on behavior that has not been deducted separately. It could be

- Barking/sound during the course, not at specific exercise
- Dog bouncing between exercises and in this way disturbing the flow or the handler
- Dog sniffing excessively between exercises
- Dog performing the whole course reluctantly in a very slow tempo.

### Disqualification

A disqualification from one judge leads to zero points from that judge in the judging protocol. If two or more judges disqualify the team, it leads to a full disqualification (D). In serious cases, such as mistreatment of a dog, aggressive behavior of a dog, the judge team can make disqualifying decision based on a disqualification from only one judge.

The team will be disqualified and get a score of 0 in the following cases. The judging CAN continue even if the team is disqualified, but if needed, the chief judge can stop the team's performance.

- Handler walks into the ring with the dog still on leash
- Handler has treats, food, toys or other items visible in the ring
- Handler drops something when inside the ring
- Handler walks past a sign (the handler does not attempt to perform the exercise)
- Handler performing the course in wrong order
- The dog leaves the ring before the performance is completed, four paws are outside the ring.
- Uncontrolled barking
- Uncontrolled sniffing (dog not cooperating with handler)
- If the regulations or guidelines of Rally Obedience Nordic Championship competition are not followed.
- The handler practices harsh handling of the dog in the ring or in the competition ground.
- The dog is aggressive and bites or tries to bite a person or another dog.
- The dog is unmanageable or out of control (does not respond to commands)
- Dog that urinates/defecates in the ring
- Inappropriate behavior
- Team leaves the ring before the Finish sign
- The dog is clearly reluctant to perform
- Wrong equipment (collar).

## Judging Guidelines

Here is a list of some detailed instructions regarding judging of exercises.

<p>The dog is slow or very slow to perform an exercise, this applies to exercises fully performed within the exercise area and to exercises which have begun within the exercise area but are finished after it.</p>	<p>-3 or -5, lack of teamwork</p>
<p>In the sidestep exercises, if the dog does not move aligned with the handler, but moves backwards and then forwards again, or moves otherwise unclearly.</p> <p>If the dog does not move its behind at all, but follows the handler nose first.</p>	<p>-1 askew, if applies -3 lack of teamwork</p> <p>-10 lack of teamwork</p>
<p>In exercise 410 (stop, 1 step back stop, 2 steps back stop), the dog is more than 45° but less than 90° degrees askew both times the handler moves backwards.</p>	<p>-1 askew -1 askew</p>
<p>There can be several -10 deductions per exercise, but not more than one per judging category.</p>	<p>-10 lack of teamwork -10 handler's mistake -10 incorrectly performed exercise</p>
<p>In exercise 407 (stop, send away, stand), the dog runs to another cone/sign by mistake.</p>	<p>-1, -3, -5 or -10 for lack of cooperation depending on how many commands are needed to direct the dog to the correct cone.</p> <p>The handler can also choose to leave the dog in the incorrect location and move forward to the recall exercise to make the recall. The team will get -10 for incorrectly performed exercise for 407.</p>
<p>In exercise 407 (stop, send away, stand), the dog does not go to the cone, maybe runs past it or off somewhere else (different from the example above).</p>	<p>-10 for incorrectly performed exercise.</p> <p>The team can get other deductions as well, for example, for lack of cooperation, depending on what occurs next.</p> <p>The handler can also choose to stop and leave the dog in the incorrect location and move forward to the recall exercise to make the recall. The team will get -10 for incorrectly performed exercise for 407.</p>
<p>The dog stops and sniffs at the temptation in exercise 306.</p>	<p>If the dog sniffs the temptation, it is -5 for lack of teamwork. If the dog stops while sniffing, it is included in the -5.</p> <p>If the dog then sniffs the other temptation, it is -5 again.</p> <p>If the handler stops in the exercise, it is -10 for stopping when not supposed to.</p>

Handler walks into the ring with the dog on the wrong side	-10 handler's mistake, if the handler changes to the right side at the start sign. If not, -10 for every sign that is performed with the dog on the wrong side.
Dog rises from the sit at the start sign before the handler has started moving forward.	-10 false start
In exercises 110-115 (basic turn exercises) the handler makes a big circle.	-5 handler's mistake
In turn exercises, for example, 313 (both about turn right) and 314 (both about turn left), the handler slows down to help the dog, the turn is not fully done at the same time.	-3 handler's mistake
The turn is not done at the same time, the frontline alignment is broken.	-10 lack of teamwork
The dog starts to turn the wrong direction.	-10 incorrect exercise

