



RALLY OBEDIENCE NORDIC CHAMPIONSHIP GUIDELINES

NKU RALLY OBEDIENCE COMMITTEE
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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 exercises 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 jump can be either an obedience or agility jump. It must break down easily if the dog touches the jump.
- With exercise 320 (send over two jumps), the distance between jumps is four meters. If the jumps are placed in a bowed shape, the exercise must be performed, so the handler has to move on the short side of the jumps.
- The tunnel must be 3-6 meters long, straight or bowed. The tunnel must be fully stretched. If the tunnel is bowed (up to 180°), the exercise must be performed, so the handler has to move on the short side of the tunnel.
- In cone exercises the height of the cone is between 15-25 centimetres. In exercise 410 (stop, send away, stand) and 417-418 (90° left/right turn around cone), the height of the cone must be between 30-40 centimetres.
- In the following exercises, which include cones, the sign is always placed right in front of the first cone: 119-120 (spiral), 121-122 (slalom), 221 (temptation).
- In exercises 119-120 (spiral) and 121-122 (slalom) the cones are 1,5-2 meters apart.
- In the exercise 221 (temptation) the cones are 2,5-3 meters apart, the distance between temptations is 1,5-2 meters.
- Temptations may only be non-squeaking toys (not too big so that they are looking dangerous for smaller dogs) and/or dog's treats/food or human food. Nothing expected to frighten the dog may be used.
- After exercises which contain a recall as part of the exercise, the recall is done next to a cone which is placed approximately five meters after the sign and one meter away from the walking line. If the dog is on the right, the recall cone must be placed on the left side. The height of the recall cone is between 15-25 centimetres.
- There can be maximum three jump or tunnel exercises per course.
- A specific exercise can be used maximum two times per course.
- 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

Breeds and temperament

During the course and when the team is performing exercises, the judge must take into account the dog’s breed and specific temperament while judging. A Leonberger, as an example, doesn’t move like a Border Collie, and should be judged by its own characteristics.

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 can leave the leash outside the ring or keep the leash during the course. If the handler keeps the leash it 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. 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. No training aids or outside help of any kind is permitted.

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.

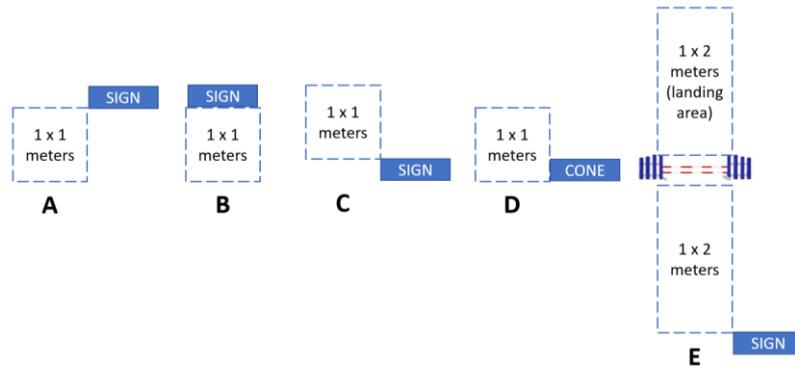
Blankets, mantles, harnesses, raincoats, shoes, stockings, bandages, tapes, etc., on the dog are forbidden during the performance.

Small bows or bands can be used on dog’s fur to keep the fur away from the dog’s eyes.

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.

Exercise area

The exercise area is 1 x 1 meters, if no other instruction has been given.



The exercise is performed on the left side of the sign when the direction of the course does not change (A).

When the direction is changed, the exercise is performed in front of the sign (B). Exercises 417 (90° left turn, around cone) and 418 (90° right turn, around cone) must start according to drawing A, even though the direction is changed.

The sidestep exercises 301, 303, 401, 403 are performed after the sign (C).

Recalls are done according to drawing D.

In exercises 222 (Send over jump), 320 (Send over two jumps) and 419 (Tunnel), the exercise area is 1 x 2 meters, and a landing area after the (last) jump/tunnel is defined, where the dog must stay until the handler catches up with the dog (drawing E). When starting an exercise, it is enough that either the handler or the dog is within the exercise area. Note that all exercises must begin within the exercise area. The only exceptions to this are exercises 222 (send over jump), 320 (send over two jumps) and 419 (tunnel). These exercises begin at the earliest next to the sign.

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 judge invites the team into the ring. 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.

All exercises can be performed with the dog on the left or the right side of the handler if not specified otherwise in the description of the exercise

All errors made during an exercise are deducted. 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 team can get a -10 deduction only once per 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.

When the handler stops, the handler's feet do not have to be even, one foot can be slightly forward compared to the other foot. When the handler stops, the handler's feet can be apart.

In some of the exercises it is clearly stated that the handler may slow down a bit while performing the exercise. This does NOT mean that the handler isn't allowed to slow down a bit in other exercises, for example

when the dog performs a spin or while the team performs turning exercises or walks backwards. If the handler doesn't slow down significantly or stops a slowing down is allowed.

Fluent exercises are exercises in which both the dog and the handler are moving. The fluent exercises 105-113 (basic turn exercises) can be performed in slow pace or fast pace. The exercise before the fluent exercises 105-113 defines the pace in which the exercise or exercises are performed. Also, the heeling done between these exercises must be done in the given pace. A slow or fast pace exercise, or exercises performed in slow or fast pace are always followed by a normal pace exercise or a finish sign.

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 209-210 (call front, back to side variations), 306 (steps back with sit/stand/down), 411 (call front, stand, back away, stand) and 416 (call front, stop, side step left, stop, side step right).

The exercises 301 (sidestep right), 303 (stop, sidestep right, stop), 401 (two sidesteps right) and 403 (stop, two sidesteps right, stop) are performed after the sign.

In the exercise 320 (send over two jumps) the handler can call the dog to heel between jumps.

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, in exercises 310 (turn toward), 313 (both about turn right), 314 (both about turn left), 405 (turn apart) and 406 (side shift in front).

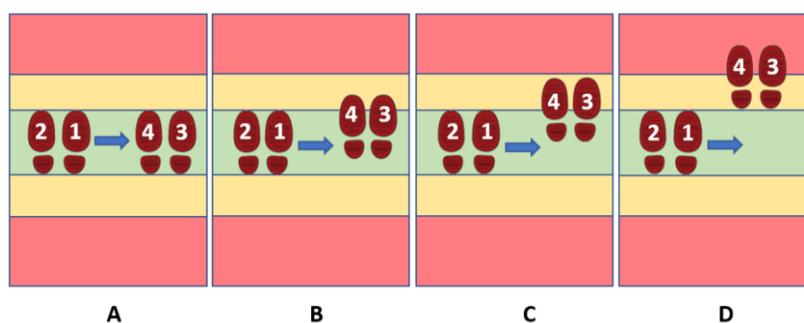
The handler or the dog are not allowed to stop during the course of an exercise when a stop is not part of the exercise. A stop is defined as a full and obvious stop. In, for example sidestep exercises and exercise 412 (backwards three steps), the handler is allowed to make a very short stop while gathering his/her feet without being deducted. The very short stop could e.g. be "hanging" on the last foot before going forward again.

The handler can use both hand signs and body movements (additional steps excluded) 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.

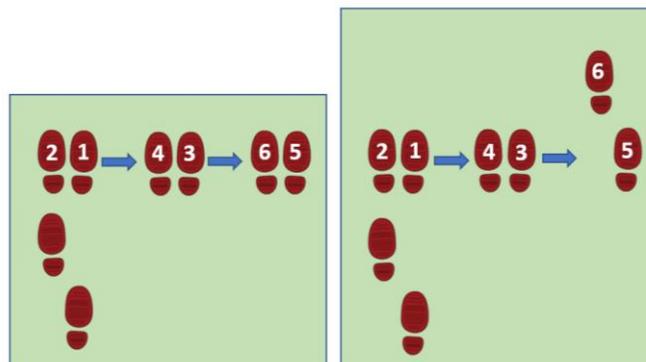
Step and stepping

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. The step definition only applies to exercises where steps are counted. In exercises in which the step count is defined, additional steps are considered as an exercise performed incorrectly.

With the sidestep exercises, the length of a sidestep must be at least the length of the handler's foot. A cross step can be taken when making a sidestep. The sidestep must be taken in a straight line to left or right as shown below, A and B is correct, C and D is not correct.



The handler can perform the end of two sidesteps right (401) and two sidesteps left (402) in two ways: either by quickly putting the feet together without stopping or by just taking a step forward after the second sidestep without touching the ground with the foot in question.



In exercises in which the dog is directed to the front of the handler, the handler may not take steps backwards, the exceptions being exercise 306 (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.

Alignment

The dog must stay 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 222 (send over jump), 311 (side shift behind), 312 (side shift between legs), 315 (sit, side shift behind, sit), 320 (send over two jumps), 410 (stop, send away, stand), 417 (90° left turn, around cone), 418 (90° right turn, around cone), 419 (tunnel), 420 (recall over jump). Note that exercises 311, 312, 315 must begin and end with the dog aligned with the handler.

Turns

The following turns must be performed on the spot (equivalent to A4): 114 (stop, 90° right turn, stop), 115 (stop, 90° left turn, stop), 211 (stop, turn right 1 step, call, stop), 212 (stop, turn left 1 step, call, stop), 213 (stop, 180° right turn, forward), 214 (stop, 180° left turn, forward), 215 (stop, 180° right turn, stop), 216 (stop, 180° left turn, stop), 217 (stop, turn right 1 step, stop), 218 (stop turn left 1 step, stop), 307 (stand, 180° right turn, stand), 308 (stand, 180° left turn, stand), 414 (stop, 90° right turn, stand, 90° right turn, stop, 90° right turn, down) and 415 (stop, 90° left turn, stand, 90° left turn, stop, 90° left turn, down).

The following turns can have maximum diameter of 0,5 meters: 105 (about turn right), 106 (about turn left), 107 (loop right), 108 (loop left), 109 (270° right), 110 (270° left), 111 (360° right), 112 (360° left), 113 (turn around dog behind), 201 (2 x turn around dog behind), 202 (double 180° turn right then left), 203 (double 180° turn left then right), 310 (turn toward), 313 (both about turn right), 314 (both about turn left), 405 (turn apart).

Cone exercises

When the handler stops in the exercise 410 (stop, send away, stand), the handler turns toward the cone or can decide not to turn towards the cone but keep the frontline forward. In right handling it is allowed to send to the cone from either side of the sign. When the handler sends the dog to the cone (410), 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. The cone can be located up to 45° to either left or right. 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.

In 90° turn right/left around cone exercises (417 and 418), the cone is placed one meter from the exercise area. The dog can either walk or run, the pace is not defined, when going around the cone. The handler may slow down while the dog is going around the cone.

Recall

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

The handler can slow down after making the recall for the dog to reach the handler before the following exercise. The following exercise must have the distance of five meters from the cone.

In exercise 420 (stop, recall over jump) the recall can be done anywhere after the jump before entering the exercise area of the following exercise.

Jumps

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

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

In exercises 222 (Send over jump) and 320 (Send over two jumps) a landing area after the (last) jump is defined, where the dog must stay until the handler catches up with the dog (see drawing E in exercise area).

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.

During the course and when the team is performing exercises, the judge must take into account the dog's breed and specific temperament while judging. The team cannot get less than 0 points.

The deduction points used are -1, -3, -5 and -10.

Overall impression

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

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

- 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 (DQ). In serious cases, such as mistreatment of a dog, aggressive behaviour 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 behaviour
- Team leaves the ring before the Finish sign
- The dog is clearly reluctant to perform
- Wrong equipment.

The deductions are divided into the following categories: lack of teamwork, handler's mistake, incorrectly performed exercise. The table below lists some examples related to the deduction types.

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

3-point deductions	Examples
Lack of teamwork (dog/handler)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sniffing the ground for three steps or more - Delay in response - Dog on handler's path (for example, in a spiral) or preventing fluent movement - Dog knocks over a sign or a cone - Dog steps over a sign - Dog tries to change heeling side when not supposed to - Dog tries to take the wrong position or tries to change position when not supposed to - Dog on the wrong side of a sign or cone - Dog jumping against the handler - Dog stepping on handler's feet - Dog leaning against the handler while heeling - Dog deliberately touches the handler's hand with its nose - The dog and the handler run into each other - Out of position (more than ½ meter between dog and handler) - Dog moving in position (for example, the dog moves approximately 1-2 steps, the dog turns in place in sit/stand/down position less than 90 degrees) - Dog is askew most of the exercise or during a whole exercise or when heeling between exercises - Dog and handler not starting to turn at the same time in turn exercises - Exercise started outside (before or after) the exercise area
Handler's mistake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extra step or sidestep to give room for dog or to guide or direct the dog (for example, side change or over a jump). - Handler moving in position (stepping on the spot, taking less than ½ step) when supposed to be still, handler does not straighten her/his back after guiding the dog to a position and before moving forward - Handler knocks over a sign or cone - Handler claps hands (together or against their body), snaps fingers to get or keep the dog's attention. - Handler significantly slowing down to help the dog to perform - Handler on the wrong side of a sign or cone - Quick hesitation - Handler steps over sign or cone

5-point deductions	Examples
Lack of teamwork (dog/handler)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Longer delay in response - Sniffing the ground the whole exercise or the whole way between two exercises - Dog keeps jumping up and down during a whole exercise - Dog sniffing or touching temptation - Dog knocks down the jump - Excessive barking or sound (per exercise) - Dog is shortly out of control in the ring (the dog runs away but immediately responds when the handler recalls it)
Handler's mistake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loud command or intimidating signal - The handler starts to walk before the dog has its head in the right direction

10-point deductions	Examples
Lack of teamwork (dog/handler)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refusal to jump or going past the jump (this includes refusal to jump when a jump has been knocked down) - Dog picking up anything inside the ring (for example, temptation or cone) - Dog making additional moves between signs (for example, a twist, a sit, scratching) - Dog is not aligned (more than 90 degrees) - Dog makes a false start, independent on the distance to the handler (for example, the dog starts before a recall) - Dog changes heeling side when not supposed to - Stop in heeling or in exercises in which stop is not a part of the exercise - Dog moving in position (more than 3 steps forward/backward) - Dog is very reluctant/unwilling to perform an exercise
Handler's mistake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The handler touches the dog deliberately - Performing exercise in wrong speed (independent of distance) Visible leash - Retry of an exercise - Handler puts hand in pocket - Handler stops when not supposed to - Wrong speed between exercises (independent of distance) - Team on the wrong side of a sign or cone
Incorrectly performed exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exercise or part of the exercise performed incorrectly

Only one -10 deduction is allowed per exercise

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.</p>	<p>-3, -5 or -10, lack of teamwork</p>
<p>In the sidestep exercises, if the dog moves backwards and then forwards again.</p> <p>If the dog does not move its behind, but follows the handler nose first.</p> <p>The sidestep is not in a straight line</p>	<p>-1 lack of teamwork for askew position, if applies -3 lack of teamwork</p> <p>-10 lack of teamwork</p> <p>- 3 handler's mistake if deviation is more than half and less than the length of the handler's foot - 10 handler's mistake if deviation is more than the length of the handler's foot</p>
<p>In exercise 410 (stop, send away, stand), the dog runs to another cone/sign by mistake.</p> <p>the dog does not go to the cone, maybe runs past it or off somewhere else (different from the example above).</p>	<p>-1, -3, -5 or -10 for lack of cooperation depending on how long it takes to direct the dog the correct cone. - 10 for dog stopping - 10 for backing towards the cone - 10 for making a spin on the way to the cone</p> <p>-3 lack of teamwork, dog out of position -10 for incorrectly performed exercise (e.g. dog stopping)</p> <p>The team can get other deductions as well, for example, for lack of cooperation, depending on what occurs next.</p>
<p>The dog stops and sniffs at the temptation in exercise 221.</p>	<p>If the dog sniffs a temptation, it is -5 for lack of teamwork, per temptation.</p> <p>If the dog picks up a temptation, it is -10 for lack of teamwork.</p> <p>If the dog stops in the exercise, it is -10 lack of teamwork for stopping when not supposed to.</p> <p>If the handler stops in the exercise, it is -10 handler's mistake for stopping when not supposed to.</p>
<p>Handler walks into the ring with the dog on the wrong side.</p>	<p>-10 handler's mistake, if the handler changes to the correct side at the start sign. If not, -10 for every exercise that is performed with the dog on the wrong side.</p>
<p>Dog rises from the sit at the start sign before the handler has started moving forward.</p>	<p>-10 lack of teamwork for false start</p>

<p>In exercises 105-113 (basic turn exercises) the handler makes a big circle, more than 0,5 meters in diameter.</p> <p>In exercises 105-113, the circle is more than one meter in diameter.</p>	<p>-3 handler's mistake</p> <p>-10 incorrect exercise</p>
<p>In turn exercises, the handler makes a turn larger than A4.</p> <p>In turn exercises, the handler makes a turn larger than A3.</p>	<p>-3 handler's mistake</p> <p>-10 incorrect exercise</p>
<p>In turn exercises, for example, 313 (both about turn right) and 314 (both about turn left), if the dog hesitates before turning (lack of teamwork, delay in response), if the handler slows down significantly before/when turning to help the dog (handler's mistake), if the turn is not performed simultaneously.</p> <p>The turn is not done at the same time, the alignment is broken.</p> <p>The dog starts to turn in the wrong direction.</p>	<p>-3 lack of teamwork</p> <p>-3 handler's mistake</p> <p>-10 lack of teamwork</p> <p>-10 incorrect exercise</p>
<p>In exercises in which the team changes direction 180°, for example, exercises 105, 106, 313, 314 and 405, the handler does not walk in a straight line, but gives room for the dog, for example, in a form of a sidestep.</p> <p>In other exercises, where the handler does not walk in a straight line, but gives room for the dog, for example, in a form of a sidestep, for example, 119-122 (spirals and slaloms), exercises 220 (spin), 406 (side shift in front), 407 (circle around handler)</p>	<p>-3 handler's mistake</p>
<p>In exercise 411 (call front, stand, back away, stand), the dog takes a few steps, hesitates (less than four paws are down), and then continues stepping back.</p> <p>In exercise 411 (call front, stand, back away, stand), the dog takes a few steps, stops (all four paws are down), and then continues stepping back.</p>	<p>-3 lack of teamwork for delay in response</p> <p>-10 incorrect exercise</p>

<p>The dog hesitates in any exercise or during heeling.</p> <p>The dog stops in heeling or in any exercise in which stopping is not allowed.</p> <p>The handler hesitates in any exercise or during heeling.</p> <p>The handler stops during heeling or in any exercise in which stopping is not allowed.</p>	<p>-3 lack of teamwork for delay in response</p> <p>-10 incorrect exercise</p> <p>-3 handler's mistake</p> <p>-10 handler's mistake</p>
<p>The dog tries to move to the wrong side of the handler but returns to the correct side before having changed the heeling side completely.</p> <p>The dog moves to the wrong side of the handler so far that the dog's head is already on the other side thus the heeling side has changed.</p>	<p>-3 lack of teamwork</p> <p>-10 lack of teamwork</p>
<p>Handler claps hands (together or against their body), snaps fingers, to get or keep the dog's attention.</p>	<p>-3 handler's mistake per exercise</p>
<p>The team moves askew when moving backwards.</p>	<p>-3 handler's mistake per exercise</p>
<p>In exercises with two sits e.g. 114, 115, 215, 216, 403, 404 the dog moves almost sitting</p>	<p>-3 lack of teamwork (dog tries to take the wrong position or tries to change position when not supposed to)</p> <p>- 10 incorrectly performed exercise (not possible to see the dog lifting the behind between the sits)</p>