



**YKC OBEDIENCE
(YKCOBD)**



**OBEDIENCE JUDGING CRITERIA
RULES 2025 (CRUFTS 2026)**

A: YKC OBEDIENCE COMPETITIONS

1. This document is for YKC obedience competition Judges and also for YKC members who require the full criteria of each of the competition exercises.
 - i. This document is in support of the main YKC Obedience Rules for 2025 (Crufts 2026) which can be found on the YKC website.
2. The following three YKC Obedience competitions are available for members to compete in, each with three age subcategories:

YKC Basic Obedience

- Handler 06-11 Years
- Handler 12-17 Years
- Handler 18-24 Years

YKC Novice Obedience

- Handler 06-11 Years
- Handler 12-17 Years
- Handler 18-24 Years

YKC High Flyers Obedience

- Handler 06-11 Years
- Handler 12-17 Years
- Handler 18-24 Years

3. Handlers may not be swapped after the closing date of the show.

B: DOGS

1. Standard Kennel Club rules regarding which dogs may enter an obedience class apply.
2. Bitches in season will not be allowed to compete in any YKC obedience competition.
3. In all tests, the left-hand side of a handler will be regarded as the "working side" unless:
 - i. The handler suffers from a physical disability and has the Judge's permission to work the dog on the right-hand side.

C: JUDGES INFORMATION

1. The judge will set the course for the competitors to complete.
2. If either the dog or handler withdraws from competition after the closing of entries then both dog and handler are withdrawn from that class.
3. Practice Rounds are not permitted.
4. In all tests, handlers may use as many commands and signals as necessary. (Unless specified in this document)
5. All heelwork tests may contain circles as described but must also include straight lines and a combination of turns appropriate to the level being judged.
6. All play/motivate exercises must not take longer than 20 seconds but can be stopped after 15 seconds if the judge is satisfied with the standard of the dog and handler.
7. YKC exercises must be marked in-line with standard Kennel Club obedience marking
 - i. Non-standard exercises should be marked in a manner that is fair and consistent across all competitors using the guidelines in this document.
8. **Judges will decide if each competitor is ready for Crufts should a cascade roll down reach them**
 - i. **Qualification spaces may only be withheld should a competitor lose the maximum possible marks on one or more of the exercises AND only if it is deemed by the judge that the member would struggle to compete in a much higher pressured environment such as Crufts.**
9. In the "High Flyers" competition – the show/judge will need to provide the following equipment:
 - i. Sendaway markers (*Judge*)
 - ii. Retrieve article (*Judge*)
 - iii. Scent: Blank cloths (*Show*) - Handlers Cloths (*Judge*)



YKC BASIC OBEDIENCE OVERVIEW

1. **YKC Basic Obedience is broken down into the following 4 exercises:**
 - a. [10 Points] – Play or Motivate your dog for 20 seconds
 - b. [10 Points] – Heel on lead
 - c. [10 Points] – Recall with finish to heel position
 - d. [10 Points] – Examination of the dog (Handler to show the judge)
- ii. **Total [40 points]**

a ■ [10 POINTS] - PLAY WITH / MOTIVATE YOUR DOG

1. The handler can choose to do this at the start or the end of the test.
2. This exercise should last no longer than 20 seconds and may be reduced to 15 seconds if the judge is satisfied with the handler.
3. A toy used for this exercise must be silent.
4. Competitors must not distract other dogs when rewarding their dog with a toy or play.
5. Play should be under the handler's control and;
 - i. if it involves a toy, the dog should give it up readily.
6. No play fighting is allowed, and any play should be safe for the dog.
 - i. Any form of aggression will be penalised.
7. You cannot use a formal exercise as a reward.

b ■ [10 POINTS] – HEEL ON LEAD

1. To begin the exercise the dog should be sitting close to the handlers left side, facing straight forward.
2. On command the handler should walk briskly with the dog at heel.
 - i. While the handler is walking, the dog's shoulder should be approximately level with and reasonably close to the handler's leg at all times.
 - ii. The lead should be slack at all times.
3. On the command to turn, the handler should turn smartly in the direction indicated by the steward.
 - i. During the turn, the dog should keep its position at the handler's side.
4. On the command 'Halt', the handler should halt immediately and the dog should sit straight at the handler's side.
5. Using the lead or touching the dog to correct or improve the dog's heelwork will be penalised.
6. Turning manoeuvres must not be coupled together.
7. Following a turn, the handler and the dog must be allowed several paces if required to turn again.
8. **The following heelwork turns are permitted:**
 - i. Large Circle or arc (Clockwise or Anticlockwise)
 - ii. Straight lines
 - iii. 90° Left (Left Turn)
 - iv. 90° Right (Right Turn)
 - v. 180° Right (About Turn)



YKC BASIC OBEDIENCE

C ■ ■

[10 POINTS] – RECALL WITH FINISH TO HEEL POSITION

1. This exercise is to be performed off-lead.
2. The handler must set the dog up straight, facing forward & on their left-hand side.
 - i. The dog may be set up in the sit or down position (handlers choice).
3. When instructed, the handler should walk straight forward, away from the dog.
 - i. The dog must remain stationary
4. After the handler moves a number of paces forward, the steward/judge will instruct the handler to halt
5. Once stopped, the steward will ask the handler to turn and face the dog
6. The steward will then instruct the handler to recall the dog.
 - i. The dog should return quickly, but under control, to the handler
7. Upon return, the dog should sit in front, facing the handler
8. The judge or steward will indicate when you should instruct your dog to finish in the heel position.

d ■ ■

[10 POINTS] – EXAMINATION OF THE DOG

1. The handler will show the judge how they can settle and examine their own dog.
 - i. The lead must be held securely by the handler throughout the exercise.
 - a. The lead, collar and equipment should not be used to restrain the dog.
 - ii. If required the judge can insist that if applicable a head collar or body harness is removed if it interferes with the inspection.
2. The handler must inspect and show to the judge the following areas;
 - i. mouth,
 - ii. teeth,
 - iii. throat,
 - iv. eyes,
 - v. ears
 - vi. feet
3. The inspection may take place when the dog is in the following positions, at the choice of the competitor;
 - i. standing,
 - ii. sitting
 - iii. lying down
 - a. either side or;
 - b. on its back.
4. Handlers are not required to give a verbal explanation.
5. The judge will not touch the dog but may position themselves close by to observe.
6. The judge/steward may prompt the handler as to which part of the dog's body is required.



YKC NOVICE OBEDIENCE



YKC NOVICE OBEDIENCE OVERVIEW

1. **YKC Novice Obedience is broken down into the following 5 exercises:**
 - a. [10 Points] – Play or Motivate your dog for 20 seconds
 - b. [20 Points] – Heel on lead
 - c. [20 Points] – Heel Free (Heelwork off lead)
 - d. [10 Points] – Recall with finish to heel position
 - e. [20 Points] – Retrieve own article with finish to heel position.
- ii. **Total [80 points]**

a ■ [10 POINTS] – PLAY OR MOTIVATE YOUR DOG

1. The handler can choose to do this at the start or the end of the test.
2. This exercise should last no longer than 20 seconds and may be reduced to 15 seconds if the judge is satisfied with the handler & dog.
3. A toy used for this exercise must be silent.
4. Competitors must not distract other dogs when rewarding their dog with a toy or play.
5. Play should be under the handler's control and;
 - i. if it involves a toy, the dog should give it up readily.
6. No play fighting is allowed, and any play should be safe for the dog.
 - i. You cannot use a formal exercise as a reward.
 - ii. Any form of aggression will be penalised.

b ■ [20 POINTS] – HEEL ON LEAD

1. To begin the exercise the dog should be sitting close to the handlers left side, facing straight forward.
2. On command the handler should walk briskly with the dog at heel.
 - i. While the handler is walking, the dog's shoulder should be approximately level with and reasonably close to the handler's leg at all times.
 - ii. The lead should be slack at all times.
3. On the command to turn, the handler should turn smartly in the direction indicated by the steward.
 - i. During the turn, the dog should keep its position at the handler's side.
4. On the command 'Halt', the handler should halt immediately and the dog should sit straight at the handler's side.
5. Turning manoeuvres must not be coupled together.
6. Following a turn, the handler and the dog must be allowed several paces if required to turn again.
7. **The following heelwork turns are permitted**
 - i. Medium Circle or arc (Clockwise or Anticlockwise)
 - ii. Straight Lines
 - iii. 90° Left (Left Turn)
 - iv. 90° Right (Right Turn)
 - v. 180° Right (About Turn)
 - vi. 45° Right (Diagonal Right Turn)

c ■ [20 POINTS] – HEEL FREE

1. The dog must be off the lead throughout this test.
2. The test must be carried out in the same manner as Heel on Lead and with the same restriction on turns.



YKC NOVICE OBEDIENCE

d ■

[10 POINTS] – RECALL WITH FINISH TO HEEL POSITION

1. This exercise is to be performed off-lead.
 2. The handler must set the dog up straight, facing forward & on their left-hand side.
 - i. The dog may be set up in the sit or down position (handlers choice).
 3. When instructed, the handler should walk straight forward, away from the dog.
 - i. The dog must remain stationary
 4. After the handler moves a number of paces forward, the steward/judge will instruct the handler to halt
 5. Once stopped, the steward will ask the handler to turn and face the dog
 6. The steward will then instruct the handler to recall the dog.
 - i. The dog should return quickly, but under control, to the handler.
 7. Upon return, the dog should sit in front, facing the handler.
 8. The judge/steward will indicate when you should instruct your dog to finish in the heel position.
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e ■

[20 POINTS] – RETRIEVE OWN ARTICLE WITH FINISH

1. When entering the ring, the handler should give their retrieve article to the steward or place on a table at the ring entrance.
 - i. Handlers must provide their own suitable retrieve article
 - a. **Suitable** retrieve articles should be easy for the dog to pick up and present to the handler
 - (1) Suitable retrieve articles may include a dumbbell or silent toy
 - b. The following categories of items are **unsuitable** to be used as a retrieve article
 - (1) An item that could cause a dog an injury
 - (2) An item that could cause a noise distraction to other dogs (e.g. squeaker)
 - (3) An item that could cause a smell distraction to other dogs (e.g. scented toy / food)
 - (4) An item that cannot be thrown a sufficient distance
 - (5) An item that is likely to roll a significant uncontrollable distance (e.g. a ball)
2. When this exercise is about to begin, the handler should collect their retrieve article from the steward/table.
3. The Handler must then set up the dog in the sit position on the handler's left-hand side.
4. When the steward instructs, the handler must throw the article a reasonable distance in the direction indicated.
 - i. The dog may not move until instructed
5. Upon further instruction, the handler must send the dog to retrieve the article
 - i. Once commanded, the dog should move out promptly at a smart pace to collect the article cleanly in its mouth.
 - ii. The dog should return to the handler with the article at a smart pace
6. Upon return, the dog should sit straight in front with the article still in its mouth, facing the handler.
7. When the steward commands, the handler should take the article from the dog.
8. Upon the steward's further command, the dog should be sent to heel.



YKC HIGH FLYERS OBEDIENCE OVERVIEW

1. **YKC High Flyers Obedience is broken down into the following 6 exercises:**
 - a. [10 Points] – Play or Motivate your dog for 20 seconds
 - b. [40 Points] – Heel Free (Heelwork off lead) – Normal / Slow & Fast Paces
 - c. [25 Points] – Sendaway & Down on command
 - d. [15 Points] – A-Recall with commands
 - e. [30 Points] – Retrieve article (Provided by the judge) with finish to heel position.
 - f. [30 Points] – Scent
- ii. **Total [150 points]**

a: [10 POINTS] – PLAY OR MOTIVATE YOUR DOG

1. The handler can choose to do this at the start or the end of the test.
2. This exercise should last no longer than 20 seconds and may be reduced to 15 seconds if the judge is satisfied with the handler & dog.
3. A toy used for this exercise must be silent.
4. Competitors must not distract other dogs when rewarding their dog with a toy or play.
5. Play should be under the handler's control and;
 - i. if it involves a toy, the dog should give it up readily.
6. No play fighting is allowed, and any play should be safe for the dog.
 - i. You cannot use a formal exercise as a reward.
 - ii. Any form of aggression will be penalised.

b: [40 POINTS] – HEEL FREE

1. To begin the exercise, the dog should be sitting straight at the handler's left side.
2. When the steward commands, the handler should walk briskly with the dog at heel.
 - i. While the handler is walking, the dog's shoulder should be approximately level with and reasonably close to the handler's leg at all times.
 - ii. The dog shall be off lead throughout.
3. When commanded to turn, the handler should turn smartly in the direction indicated.
 - i. During the turn, the dog should keep its position at the handler's side.
4. On the command 'Halt' the handler should halt immediately and the dog should sit straight at the handler's side.
5. Turning manoeuvres must not be coupled together.
6. Following a turn, the handler and the dog must be allowed several paces if required to turn again.
7. The judge will set the heelwork to include the following 3 paces
 - a. Slow
 - b. Normal
 - c. Fast
- ii. The change of pace can be EITHER from a halt OR while the handler & dog are moving.
8. **The following turns are permitted**
 - i. **At Slow and Normal Pace**
 - a. Straight Line
 - b. 90° Left (Left Turn)
 - c. 90° Right (Right Turn)
 - d. 180° Left (Left About Turn)
 - e. 180° Right (About Turn)
 - f. Diagonal turn right (Diagonal Right Turn)
 - g. Diagonal turn left (Diagonal Left Turn)
 - h. Medium / large circles and Arcs
 - ii. **At Fast Pace**
 - a. Straight Line
 - b. 90° Left (Left Turn)
 - c. 90° Right (Right Turn)
 - d. 180° Right (About Turn)



YKC HIGH FLYERS OBEDIENCE



C ■ [25 POINTS] – SENDAWAY & DOWN ON COMMAND

1. There is no set position for the handler to begin the exercise in.
 2. When commanded by the steward, the handler must send the dog to an area indicated by the judge.
 3. Handler to down the dog in the designated area.
 - i. Simultaneous command and signal applies
 - a. The handler may give the dog's name AND one command AND one hand signal to send the dog.
 - ii. Any additional send commands will be penalised.
 4. Handler to walk up to the dog and release on steward's command.
 5. This concludes the exercise.
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d ■ [15 POINTS] – A-RECALL WITH COMMANDS

1. This exercise can be done independently of the sendaway exercise where desired by the judge.
 - i. If this exercise follows the sendaway exercise, the dog must be released in between.
 2. Handler to set up the dog in the sit or down position on the handler's left-hand side (Handlers choice).
 3. On command, the handler should walk away from the dog.
 - i. The dog shall not move until commanded.
 4. Upon further instruction, while the handler is walking away from the dog in either a straight line or large anticlockwise circle, the handler should call the dog into the heel position and continue until instructed to halt.
 5. On the command 'Halt' the handler should halt immediately and the dog should sit straight at the handler's side.
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e ■ [30 POINTS] – RETRIEVE ARTICLE (PROVIDED BY JUDGE)

1. **The retrieve article used in this test will be provided by the judge.**
 - i. A fresh similar article will be supplied for each dog which must be appropriate for the size/breed of dog under test.
2. Before the exercise begins, the handler should obtain the retrieve article from the steward.
3. At the start of the exercise the dog should be sitting at the handler's side.
4. When the steward instructs, the handler must throw the article a reasonable distance in the direction indicated.
 - i. The dog may not move until instructed
5. Upon further instruction, the handler must send the dog to retrieve the article
 - i. Once commanded, the dog should move out promptly at a smart pace to collect the article cleanly in its mouth.
 - ii. The dog should return to the handler with the article at a smart pace
6. Upon return, the dog should sit straight in front with the article still in its mouth, facing the handler.
7. When the steward commands, the handler should take the article from the dog.
8. Upon the steward's further command, the dog should be sent to heel.



[30 POINTS] – SCENT

1. Before the scent exercise commences, the judge will set & indicate the designated scent area.
 - i. The scent area should be visibly marked
 - ii. Commands may be given at any time during this exercise EXCEPT;
 - a. when the dog is in the designated scent area where any extra commands will be penalised.
2. The cloth will be given to the handler by the judge as they enter the ring.
 - i. The handler should transfer their scent from their hand to the cloth.
 - a. This scent must be naturally occurring from the handler's hand.
 - (1) i.e. no rubbing of treats into the cloth
3. The steward will move the handler & dog to a designated point.
4. The cloth with the handler's scent will then be collected using tongs/gloves by the steward and positioned amongst the other cloths (in a position of the judge's choosing).
 - i. Whilst the scented cloth is being placed into position, the dog must be facing away from the cloths.
5. Once the cloths have been placed, the handler will complete the following:
 - i. Handler must turn the dog to face the cloths and prepare the dog for the exercise.
 - ii. [Optional] The handler may give the dog scent from their hand.
 - iii. The handler must stand up straight.
 - iv. On command from the judge or steward send the dog to find the correct cloth.
6. The dog, on finding the correct cloth must then complete the test as the Retrieve Test.
7. **Scent cloth details:**
 - i. The test will be formed of six cloths arranged in a straight line in any direction.
 - a. 5 x blank cloths and 1 x handlers scented cloth
 - ii. Cloths must be placed in position by a steward and must be at least 1m (3ft) and not more than 1.6m (5ft) apart.
 - iii. Any blank cloth which is fouled in any way (e.g. mouthed) must be replaced with a fresh cloth.
 - iv. There will be no decoy cloths.
 - v. All scent cloths provided by the judge must be of the same colour and texture and have a non-detachable weight.
 - vi. All blank scent cloths provided by the organising society must be of the same colour and texture and have a non-detachable weight.
8. There may be a time-limit imposed for the scent test at the Judge's discretion.