

## **THE STEWARD IN AKC RALLY**

*Per AKC as of 07/11/2006*

### **INTRODUCTION TO RALLY STEWARDING**

Rally classes are planned in conjunction with obedience trials. Planning an obedience trial involves many months of preparation by an obedience trial committee. The tasks are varied and demanding, and include, but are not limited to: selecting judges, preparing a premium list, compiling a mailing list, soliciting trophies, preparing or obtaining equipment, making luncheon arrangements, securing admission tickets, and printing a catalog.

One essential element that is often neglected or treated lightly is the selection and training of stewards. Rally is held in conjunction with obedience; stewards will be needed who have been specifically trained to assist with Rally. A steward who is not familiar with Rally procedures will require time consuming instructions from the judge and can severely slow down the entire judging procedure. To ensure the smooth operation of a Rally ring, clubs should provide a training session for stewards. Experienced stewards or judges can lead the training session.

A person may both steward for and show under the same judge, with the exception of the table steward who may not show and steward in the same class.

Stewarding functions in the rally ring are broken down into four general categories: gate steward, table steward, ring steward, and time steward. For the Excellent class, an honor steward is also needed. In Rally Novice and Rally Advanced, the club will provide a minimum of three stewards, as one person can serve as both the ring steward and the time steward. In the Rally Excellent Classes, the ring steward will also monitor and record the score for the

honoring dog. The time steward will monitor and report each dog's time to the table steward. Each steward's functions are described below. Additionally, it is essential that all stewards be at ringside at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of judging to receive any specific instructions from the judge and to assist in setting up the rally ring as directed by the judge.

## **THE GATE STEWARD**

The primary responsibility of the gate steward is to ensure that the next dog to be judged is immediately available when the judge indicates that he/she is ready. As soon as the judge begins judging the dog in the ring, this steward calls the next dog and ensures the handler is ringside before the dog in the ring has completed the rally exercises.

Dogs may not enter the ring until the judge so indicates. It is the responsibility of the gate steward to ensure that the class judging is not delayed because the judge is waiting for dogs.

Dogs must be judged in catalog order to the extent that it is practical to do so without holding up judging in any ring. If the dog listed next in the catalog is not at ringside, the steward should not hesitate to call the next dog in order. Stewards are not required to seek out handlers. It is the handlers' responsibility to be present and ready when their numbers are called. The steward should report any absence to the judge. The judge will decide whether the dog is to be marked absent. This procedure should be followed, even if the armband for the absent dog has already been picked up.

It is also normally the duty of the gate steward to distribute armbands. The steward should ask the exhibitor's name and the name of the dog, then check the catalog. The steward should check that the armband number given to the exhibitor corresponds to the number in the catalog. It is essential that every precaution be taken when giving out armbands.

Exhibitors may make requests for special consideration, such as asking to be judged out of catalog order. Any request of this nature must be directed to the judge. It is only the judge's prerogative to grant or deny such a request. Stewards should never try to consider the matter themselves.

In Rally Advanced and Excellent Classes, it is the gate steward's responsibility to return the leash as dog and handler complete the "Finish" sign but before they leave the ring.

The gate steward is also charged with checking the jump settings for each dog in the Rally Advanced and Excellent Classes.

## **THE TABLE STEWARD**

The extent to which a judge uses the services of a table steward varies greatly. Some judges prefer to do their own bookwork and do not feel it is necessary to have the steward perform many of these duties. The steward must receive specific instructions from the judge as to what will be required.

Judges must use worksheets to communicate with the table steward. The judge may ask the table steward to prepare and have the worksheet ready for the next dog. The steward should ensure that the class, proper armband number, and breed of dog are entered correctly on the sheet. The table steward must double-check to see that the scores on the worksheet have been added correctly. The table steward then initials the worksheet and transfers the score and time to the judge's book. If an error is detected, the steward should bring it to the attention of the judge, then enter the corrected score and time in the judge's book.

The table steward will post the scores at ringside as each dog and handler team finishes the course.

If trophies are offered, the table steward ensures that all trophies and ribbons are available at the conclusion of judging. The judge may ask the steward

to assist in awarding the trophies and ribbons to the winners.

## **THE RING STEWARD**

Each judge in Rally will have at least one ring steward. It is particularly important for the ring steward to report to the ring at least 30 minutes prior to judging to assist in setting up the rally course and to receive specific instructions from the judge.

## **THE HONOR STEWARD**

The honor steward will monitor and record the score of the honoring dog in Rally Excellent. The judge will determine where each dog and handler will be stationed according to *Rally Regulations*; Chapter 3, Section 4 and as described in exercise number 50.

## **THE TIME STEWARD**

As previously stated, in the Rally Novice and Advanced Classes, the ring steward and the time steward may be the same person, but in the Rally Excellent class, two separate stewards are needed for these functions.

If two or more dogs in a class earn the same score, the tie is broken by time. The timer is positioned outside the ring in a place specified by the judge. The timer should be lined up with the Start sign. 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 table steward after each dog completes the course.

## **THE CLASSES**

### **NOVICE**

In the Novice class, exercises are performed on leash and there are no jumps. The judge will give the order for the handler to begin the course. The steward should remain outside the ring but stay alert to any possible problems and be ready to follow whatever instructions the judge may give.

#### **ADVANCED AND EXCELLENT**

When issuing an armband in the Advanced and Excellent Rally Classes, the gate steward should check the catalog to record or verify the height and distance the dog jumps. This information is given by the handler of each dog. The gate steward should also take the leash from the handler when the dog is brought into the ring and return it as the dog and handler complete the "Finish" sign but before they leave the ring.

It is essential that the ring steward have a tape measure or steel rule to ensure accuracy in setting the broad jump. The first duty of the judge is to check that the jumps are properly set. Stewards must arrange jumps quickly and accurately, or much time will be wasted.

#### **THE JUMPS**

Although the gate steward will ask the handler what height the dog jumps, the handler may only know the height of the dog. Therefore, it is essential that ring stewards be familiar with *Rally Regulations* in order to set the jumps correctly.

#### **HIGH JUMP AND/OR BAR JUMP**

The jump height requirements are as follows:  
Height of Dog at Withers    Height to be Jumped  
Under 15"    8"  
15" and under 20"    12"  
20" and over    16"

Broad Jump - A detailed description of the broad

jump is provided in the *Rally Regulations*. The broad jump will cover a distance equal to twice the height of the high jump set for each dog.