

AKC Rally – information from the AKC website

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. Scoring is not as rigorous as traditional obedience.

The team of dog and handler moves continuously at a brisk, but normal, pace with the dog under control 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. 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. 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. 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 provides a link from the Canine Good Citizen® (CGC) program to obedience or agility competition, both for dogs and handlers. In addition, rally promotes fun and enjoyment for dogs at all levels of competition.

GETTING STARTED IN RALLY

What is Rally?

AKC Rally is the new dog sport that is taking the nation by storm, a successful stepping stone from the AKC Canine Good Citizen® program to the world of obedience or agility. Rally offers both the dogs and handlers an experience that is fun and energizing. The canine team moves at their own pace, very similar to rally-style auto racing. Rally was designed with the traditional pet owner in mind, but it can still be very challenging for those who enjoy higher levels of competition.

A rally course includes 10 to 20 stations(signs), depending on the level. Scoring is not as rigorous as traditional obedience. Communication between handler and dog is encouraged and perfect heel position is not required, but there should be a sense of teamwork between the dog and handler. The main objective of rally is to produce dogs that have been trained to behave in the home, in public places, and in the presence of other dogs, in a manner that will reflect positively on the sport of rally at all times and under all conditions.

Rally Signs

The signs may be any color and they include descriptions as well as directional arrows of exercises. Signs are numbered to make it easy to find the next station when navigating the course.

Most signs are placed to the handler's right side; change of direction signs are in front of the handler/dog team. The signs are large enough to be easily recognized when going through a course. The exercises designated on the signs will be performed in close proximity to the sign itself, either in front, back of, or beside the sign.

Levels of Competition

The three levels of competition in AKC Rally:

Novice - this is the first level for those just getting started in competition.

- All exercises are performed with the dog on leash.
- There is a requirement of 10-15 stations to complete with no more than five stationary exercises.

- The exercises performed vary from turning 360 degrees to changing paces during the course.
- Exhibitors at this level may clap their hands and pat their legs through the course.

Advanced - this is the second level, which includes more difficult exercises throughout the course.

- All exercises are performed off-leash.
- There is a requirement of 12-17 stations with no more than seven stationary exercises.
- Exercises include a jump as well as calling your dog to the front of you instead of to a heel position.

Excellent - this third and highest level of AKC Rally is the most challenging.

- Exercises are performed off-leash except for the honor exercise.
- There is a requirement of 15-20 stations, with no more than 7 stationary exercises.
- Handlers are only allowed to encourage their dogs verbally. Physical encouragement is not allowed at this level.
- The Excellent-level exercises include backing up three steps, while the dog stays in the heel position and a moving stand, while the handler walks around the dog.