

2026 April

New information coming from AKC!!

Rally Mini Signs with Descriptions. Clarification changes made to

13. **Call Front – Finish Right – Forward** – While heeling, **the handler stops forward motion** and calls the dog to front. The handler may take several steps backward. **The dog must come and sit** in front. **Without the handler moving their feet, the dog must finish to the right.** As the dog clears the handler's path, the handler will heel forward. (Stationary)

14. **Call Front – Finish Left – Forward** – While heeling, **the handler stops forward motion** and calls the dog to front. The handler may take several steps backward. **The dog must come and sit** in front. **Without the handler moving their feet, the dog must finish to the left.** As the dog clears the handler's path, the handler will heel forward. (Stationary)

26. **Call Front – 1, 2 and 3 Steps Backward - Forward** - While heeling, **the handler stops forward motion** and calls the dog to front. The handler may take several steps backward. **The dog must come and sit** in front. **The handler takes one step backward and halts. The dog must move with the handler and sit** in front as the handler halts. **The handler takes two steps backward and halts. The dog must move with the handler and sit** in front as the handler halts. **The handler takes three steps backward and halts. The dog must move with the handler and sit** in front as the handler halts. The handler may command/signal the dog to finish. As the dog clears the handler's path, the handler will heel forward. (Stationary)

119. **Right Turn - Dog Circles Right - Forward** – While heeling, **the dog circles around the handler as the handler is turning right;** the dog returns to heel position and the team heels forward. During the turning process, the handler may pause as needed to avoid interference.

120. **Left Turn - Dog Circles Right - Forward** – While heeling, **the dog circles around the handler as the handler is turning left;** the dog returns to heel position and the team heels forward. During the turning process, the handler may pause as needed to avoid interference.

121. **HALT - Step in Front - Finish Right - Forward** – While heeling, **the handler halts and the dog sits. The handler steps in front to face the dog. Without the handler moving their feet, the dog must finish right.** As the dog clears the handler's path, the handler will heel forward. (Stationary)

122. **HALT - Step in Front - Finish Left - Forward** – While heeling, **the handler halts and the dog sits. The handler steps in front to face the dog. Without the handler moving their**

feet, the dog must finish left. As the dog clears the handler's path, the handler will heel forward. (Stationary)

301. **HALT - Recall over Jump - Finish - Right Turn - Forward** - This sign will be placed at least 8 feet before the jump. While heeling, **the handler halts and the dog sits** in front of the jump. **The handler will leave the dog, walk to the other side, stand anywhere in front of the jump and turn to face the dog. The dog must remain sitting until called over the jump. The dog must clear the jump on the first attempt, in the proper direction** without stopping, and **come and sit** in front. **Without moving their feet**, the handler may command/signal the dog to finish. **The dog must finish** to the right or left. As the dog clears the handler's path, **the handler may move forward** to the newly established line **to follow the directional arrow right** and heel forward. (Stationary) *Sign 301A must be used with this sign.*

302. **HALT - Recall over Jump - Finish - Left Turn - Forward** - This sign will be placed at least 8 feet before the jump. While heeling, **the handler halts and the dog sits** in front of the jump. **The handler will leave the dog, walk to the other side, stand anywhere in front of the jump and turn to face the dog. The dog must remain sitting until called over the jump. The dog must clear the jump on the first attempt, in the proper direction** without stopping, and **come and sit** in front. **Without moving their feet**, the handler may command/signal the dog to finish. **The dog must finish** to the right or left. As the dog clears the handler's path, **the handler may move forward** to the newly established line, **to follow the directional arrow left**, and heel forward. (Stationary) *Sign 302A must be used with this sign.*

303. **HALT - Recall over Jump - Finish - About Turn - Forward** - This sign will be placed at least 8 feet before the jump. While heeling, **the handler halts and the dog sits** in front of the jump. **The handler will leave the dog, walk to the other side, stand anywhere in front of the jump and turn to face the dog. The dog must remain sitting until called over the jump. The dog must clear the jump on the first attempt, in the proper direction** without stopping, and **come and sit** in front. **Without moving their feet**, the handler may command/signal the dog to finish. **The dog must finish** to the right or left. As the dog clears the handler's path, **the handler may move forward to make an about turn** and then heel forward. (Stationary) *Sign 303A must be used with this sign.*

AKC Rally Scoring – Updated Apr 2026.

Minor deductions (1 – 2 points) are assessed each time the error occurs. Substantial deductions (3 or more points) are assessed each time the error occurs, and should be based on the degree, extent, and duration of the error. The following deductions will apply on a scale from 1 to 10:

Minor or Substantial Deductions (1 to 10 points) for each occurrence of the following:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| • Barking, whining, or vocalizing | • Knocking over a sign or holder | • Patting/clapping in Excellent, Master, and Choice |
| • Cone knocked over in Figure Eight, Spiral, Serpentine, Send Away or Cloverleaf | • Lack of briskness | • Poor sit |
| • Fear or nervousness (dog) | • Lack of control | • Slow or delay or resistance to respond |
| • Handler error | • Lack of natural manner (handler) | • Tight leash |
| • Interfering with/crowding the handler | • Lack of teamwork | • Touching or ticking a jump or cone |
| • Hitting the jump | • Loud or harsh command or intimidating signal | • Touching the handler |
| | • Luring/pleading with the dog | |
| | • Out of position | |

Substantial Deduction (3 or more) for each occurrence of the following:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| • Handler error | • Failure to complete the Sit Stay (IP) (automatic 10-point deduction) – no retries allowed | (IP) (automatic 10-point deduction) – no retries allowed |
| • Failure of the dog to clear the jump in the proper direction, at the required jump height, on the first attempt (IP) (automatic 10-point deduction) – no retries allowed | • Incorrectly performed sign (IP) (automatic 10-point deduction) | • Retry of a sign — only one (1) retry of each sign is allowed unless otherwise stated (automatic 3-point deduction) |
| | • Knocking over the jump or upright or knocking a bar off | |

Non-qualifying (NQ) scores will be given for:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| • Consistently tight lead | | |
| • Dog that eliminates while in the ring for judging | | |
| • Dog uncontrollable/out of control | • Minimum requirements not met | passes the sign but does not attempt it; see Glossary) |
| • Handler error | • Sign not attempted by handler (handler approaches and/or | • Uncontrolled or excessive barking, whining, or vocalizing |

• **Note:** Retries are not allowed for non-qualifying errors

Glossary of Rally Terms - *New/rewording italicized (4/26)*

AKC Canine Partners – an American Kennel Club program that is available to spayed/neutered dogs that are not currently eligible for AKC registration, AKC Foundation Stock Service (FSS) enrollment, or an AKC Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL) number

Brisk, briskly – *active and energetic; the handler and dog are expected to move briskly through the course without running or slowing down unless a specific change of pace is called for.*

Command – verbal order from handler to dog

Course map - *a map indicating the numbered path and signs the team is to perform; must be legible and clear*
Crooked sit - *the dog is not sitting straight when in heel position by the handler's side or when in front of the handler.*

Deductions:

Minor deduction – 1 to 2 points

Substantial deduction – 3 or more points for each occurrence (up to and including an NQ).

- Re-tries of a sign are an automatic 3-point deduction (retries not permitted in the Master or Choice Class, for jumps or Sit Stay)
- Incorrectly Performed (IP) signs are an automatic 10-point deduction

Directly – immediately, without deviation or hesitation

Disqualified – *The judge must disqualify a dog that is blind (without useful vision) or has been changed in appearance for cosmetic reasons (other than changes customarily approved for its breed). The judge must disqualify any dog that attempts to attack or attacks any person in the ring and fill out the required "Disqualification for Attacking" form (AEDSQ1).*

Down – the dog's body is on the ground; the dog's weight is off the feet and legs

Excused – *A dog must be excused for the following: Attacks or attempts to attack another dog (judge must fill out the required "Dog on*

Dog Attack" form AEDSQ3) ; unfit to compete; taped, stitched, bandaged, or has anything attached to it for medical or corrective purposes; dyed, colored, chalked, or powdered (may be rejudged later if corrected); bitch in season. A handler must be excused for the following: Correcting, disciplining, or abusing a dog in the ring; willfully interfering with another competitor/dog.

Fast pace – *the dog and handler move forward at a noticeably accelerated speed.*

Finish – *the dog moves directly from a place in front of the handler or facing the handler to heel position.*

Front – a dog sits in front of the handler, close enough that the handler can touch the dog's head *without excessive bending, stretching, or moving either foot.*

Functional movement – *a dog moving with no signs of physical discomfort or pain*

Guiding Gently by the Collar – control of the dog by holding any part of the collar with minimal pressure on the dog's neck

Handler Returns to Heel Position – the handler must return to heel position by walking around behind the dog (unless otherwise stated in these Regulations)

Heel Position – the dog is at the handler's left side, facing the same direction the handler is facing; the dog's body is within the area of the handler's left hip; and the dog should be close to, but not crowding its handler so that the handler has freedom of motion at all times

Heelwork - *dog and handler heeling together*

Incorrectly Performed Sign (IP) – one or more principal parts of a sign not performed or performed incorrectly

Intimidating signal – *a signal to the dog (movement, motion, or gesture made by the handler) that appears threatening or frightening or indicates correction.*

Lack of briskness – *a handler moving slowly through the course; a handler pausing and/or*

walking slowly to accommodate and/or adapt to their dog.

Lack of control – when the dog is not working under the handler's control; examples include jumping up and down while heeling or performing individual signs, grabbing at the leash or handler's clothing, or carrying the leash in its mouth.

Lack of teamwork – when the dog and handler are not working harmoniously together. When the dog is not interested in working with the handler or participating in the performance; examples include sniffing the ground, stopping to scratch, and wandering away from the handler. When the handler is using roughness, loud or harsh commands, intimidating signals, or is physically guiding or touching the dog (unless allowed).

Loud or harsh command – a command that is given in an excessively loud or harsh tone; shouting.

Luring – the appearance of having a reward to tempt the dog along or into position. No reward needs to be present

Natural Manner – moving easily through the course and while working with the dog; moving without unnecessary or forced exaggeration; moving in a way that is natural and customary when at home or out in public.

Order – direction from judge to handler, either verbal or nonverbal.

Out of position – a dog that is forging, lagging, wide or not facing the same direction the handler is facing.

Pause – a complete stop of forward motion by the handler .

Pivot – turning in the circle occupied by the handler before they started the turn; a turn in place together

Pleading – repeated urgent commands and/or signals to elicit the proper behavior from an unresponsive dog.

Poor sit – not straight; a sit that is crooked

Regularly Trained or Instructed – where a dog and/or handler meet on a regular basis for instruction. A regular basis is considered a set pattern of dates, such as monthly, or more often

Released – A dog must be released if it is not under the handler's control. A dog may be released for relieving itself in the ring and/or misbehavior. A handler may be released for having food or other training aids in the ring.

Retry a Sign – a sign that is redone in its entirety, including the approach, before beginning the next sign

Signal – nonverbal direction from the handler to dog

Sign – Not Attempted By The Handler – a sign skipped/missed by the handler before attempting the next sign

Sit – the dog has its rear and/or hocks on the ground

Slow pace – dog and handler move forward at a noticeably reduced speed.

Smartly - quickly, vigorously

Teamwork – The dog and handler are working harmoniously together. The dog is actively engaged and responsive to the handler; is under control and working without fear or nervousness; responds promptly to cues without hesitation; while heeling, the dog is attentive, close by, and within reach of the handler. The handler is working with the dog in a natural manner free from roughness, military precision, and unnecessary or forced exaggeration; is not using discipline, loud or harsh commands, or intimidating signals; is not physically guiding or touching the dog (unless allowed).

Tight leash – a leash without slack; pulling, guiding, or positioning the dog with the leash.

Tight turn – a controlled and compact turn by dog and handler

Training – as related to where a student-handler/teacher-judge relationship is established, with or without compensation.

Turn in Place – turning in a circle that was occupied by the handler before they started to turn; a pivot

Uncontrollable, uncontrolled behavior – When the dog is not under the handler's control.

Examples include bolting from the ring; running away from the handler; barking, whining, or vocalizing excessively, disruptively, and uncontrollably; repeatedly jumping and climbing on the handler and/or disrupting the signs; refusing to move or work with the handler (“shutting down”); and showing a complete lack of teamwork and willingness to participate.

Unfit to compete – a dog that demonstrates sickness, discomfort, or pain

Withers – highest point of the dog's shoulder