

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DOG OBEDIENCE COUNCIL, INC.**

**“TOP DOG EXHIBITION”**

**RULES AND REGULATIONS**

*(as amended 2/20/09)*



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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DOG OBEDIENCE COUNCIL, INC.

TOP DOG EXHIBITION RULES

(As amended 2/20/09)

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of the TOP DOG EXHIBITION is to provide at the peak of the dog obedience season an opportunity for the handlers and dogs who have earned the privilege to represent their clubs in competition for TOP DOG honors.

These rules constitute the basis for the Exhibition, but the success of this event relies on the integrity and good sportsmanship of the clubs, their members, and the exhibitors.

**GENERAL**

The TOP DOG EXHIBITION shall be sponsored annually by the Southern California Dog Obedience Council, Inc.

The TOP DOG EXHIBITION shall be hosted by the Southern California Dog Obedience Council, Inc.

CURRENT AKC OBEDIENCE REGULATIONS  
GOVERN ANY RULES NOT STATED HEREIN

ARTICLE I. WHO MAY ENTER

- A. Any club represented by a membership in good Standing of Council may enter one team in obedience.
- B. No individual entries shall be accepted.

ARTICLE II. TEAMS

- A. Each team entered shall have one team captain. The team captain may also be an exhibitor.
- B. A FULL OBEDIENCE TEAM shall consist of 2 Novice, 2 Open, and 2 Utility dogs and their handlers.
- C. A PARTIAL OBEDIENCE TEAM shall consist of less than 2 dogs in any class and their handlers. The entry fee for a partial team shall be pro-rated.
- D. Each obedience team may also enter one alternate dog and handler in any class for which two dogs have been entered.
- E. A specialty breed club may only enter dogs of the breed represented by the specialty club.

ARTICLE III. EXHIBITORS

- A. Exhibitors shall be in good standing with the American Kennel Club and any other Council recognized body and shall have been a member of the organization they represent prior to the closing of entries according to the following schedule:
  - 1. Utility Class..... 6 months
  - 2. Open Class..... 6 months
  - 3. Novice Class..... 3 months
- B. An exhibitor may represent only 1 club.

- C. An exhibitor may show a maximum of 2 dogs.
- D. An exhibitor shall handle the same dog through all the exercises for each class entered.
- E. An exhibitor shall own the entered dog or be a member of the immediate family of the dog's owner.
- F. An exhibitor who arrives late for the group exercise may not compete in another group.
- G. Every exhibitor should consider that winners are eligible to represent Council in the Western International Obedience Competition (WIOC). Any commitment made shall be the responsibility of the participant and the club they represent.

#### ARTICLE IV. DOG ELIGIBILITY & SUBSTITUTION OF LISTED ALTERNATES

- A. All dogs of Council approved registry shall be eligible for competition in the Top Dog Exhibition in accordance with the Class eligibility requirements as stated below.
  - 1. Class eligibility, a dog with:
    - a. no title may enter any class,
    - b. a C.D. title or equivalent may enter Novice, Open, or Utility,
    - c. a C.D.X. title or equivalent may enter only Open or Utility,
    - d. a U.D. title or equivalent may enter only Utility.
  - 2. Dogs may be entered for 1 club.
  - 3. Dogs may be entered for 1 class only.
  - 4. Teams are not restricted as to breed, except that a breed-specialty club may enter only dogs of its breed.
  - 5. All-American (mixed breed) dogs shall submit proof of sterilization to accompany the team entry form.
  - 6. Substitution of listed alternates
    - a. There shall be no substitution of an alternate to replace a dog which has been excused due to viciousness.
    - b. The team captain may substitute, without cause and no later than 30 minutes before the start of judging, the alternate dog in the class for which it has been entered.
    - c. After the start of judging, if the team captain wishes to replace the listed dog with the alternate dog, the captain must show cause and submit in writing to the Top Dog Rules Committee a request on forms provided by the Committee. The Committee shall then rule on the permissibility of the substitution. The dog being replaced shall have had a perfect score in the group exercises.
    - d. All decisions affecting teams made after the start of judging shall be posted on a Bulletin Board for all to see. It shall be the responsibility of the team captain to advise their teams of such action.
- B. In the event of a sudden injury or illness to a person entered in the exhibition at, or immediately prior to, the exhibition, the Top Dog Rules Committee may permit the substitution of another person to perform the activities of the incapacitated party upon the immediate submission of a substitution form in writing. If the incapacitated party is a handler and no eligible co-owner or family member is available, the proposed substitute handler must meet club membership criteria as stated in Article III. In no case may a dog not entered in the exhibition be exhibited.

## ARTICLE V. ENTRY

- A. The closing date for entries shall be no less than three weeks prior to the date of the Exhibition.
- B. Entry fees shall be determined each year by a vote of the Council members at a regular meeting.
- C. No entries shall be accepted without an entry fee.
- D. Entry fee checks shall be made payable to the Southern California Dog Obedience Council, Inc.
- E. Completed entries shall be submitted on the official form provided by Council and properly signed by the club president and the team captain, acknowledging under penalty of disqualification the information contained thereon is correct to the best of their knowledge.
- F. Registry and registration number for each dog entered must be submitted on entry forms.
- G. No entries whatsoever shall be accepted after entries have closed.
- H. All entries, including alternate shall be assigned catalog (arm-band) numbers by random selection.
- I. Entries shall be acknowledged to team captains with arm-band numbers.

## ARTICLE VI. DATE, TIME, AND SCDOC/CLUB RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. SCDOC shall host Top Dog. The Top Dog Chairman shall be appointed by the President of Council; the chairman shall meet with the Council Board of Directors at their next scheduled meeting and shall receive the previous year's records and the current financial status of Council.
- B. The Top Dog Exhibition shall be held each year on a date to be determined by a vote of the Council members.
- C. SCDOC shall determine the starting time and hours for that year.
- D. Utility judging may begin one or more hours prior to other class judging at the option of the Host Club taking into consideration the number of obedience entries.
- E. The SCDOC Council Board shall have jurisdiction over selection of the judges.
- F. The committee accepting the responsibility from SCDOC shall have a catalog printed with format and content in accordance with Article XII. (page 7). A copy of all entry forms shall be sent to the Badges & Bars chairman immediately after arm-band numbers are assigned.
- G. SCDOC will have a random drawing in January of each year for the following committees:
  - 1. Ring setup & equipment.
  - 2. Raffle.
  - 3. Judges and ringhelp lunch.
  - 4. Catalog advertising , and friendship and memory pages.
  - 5. Ring hospitality.
- H. These committees shall be appointed by the SCDOC president:
  - 1. Top Dog Rules Committee Chairman (see Article XV – Charter of the Top Dog Rules Committee on page 9)
  - 2. Badges & Bars Committee

3. Trophy Committee
  4. Scoring Committee
- I. SCDOC shall have all responsibilities normally appurtenant to the administration of an AKC licensed trial, such as:
1. Securing the location, which should be a centrally located site that suites our purposes.
  2. Obtaining arm bands, judge's book, score cards,
  3. Procuring tables and chairs, P.A. system, and
  4. Any other such equipment.
- J. All Top Dog moneys shall be turned over to the Council treasurer upon receipt. A full report will be made by the Council treasurer within 60 days after the Top Dog Exhibition.

#### ARTICLE VII. TOP DOG TROPHIES & ROSETTES

- A. Top Dog Trophies or Rosettes shall be awarded to each member (including alternates, and team captain) of eligible teams. Only full teams shall be eligible for team trophies or rosettes. The Top Dog awards shall be:
1. Top Dog Trophies to the team having the HIGHEST score out of a possible 1200 points.
  2. Top Dog Rosettes to the teams placing SECOND, THIRD, and FOURTH.
  3. One Top Dog Trophy to the TOP NOVICE DOG, the TOP OPEN DOG, and the TOP UTILITY DOG.
  4. Top Dog Rosettes to the second, third, and fourth place dogs in each class.
- B. Council also offers the following perpetual trophies, which remain the property of Council, but are awarded to the care of the winners until the next Top Dog Exhibition:
1. THE CARL SPITZ, SR PERPETUAL TROPHY is offered by Council and presented annually in memory of Carl Spitz, Sr., Father of Obedience in California, to the club placing first at the SCDOC Top Dog Exhibition.
  2. THE ROY AND EDNA SMITH PERPETUAL HIGH SCORING JUNIOR HANDLER AWARD is offered by Council, donated by Les and Martha Buckwalter, and presented in memory of Roy and Edna Smith to the HIGHEST SCORING JUNIOR HANDLER, 16 years or younger, in competition at the SCDOC Top Dog Exhibition. The single score from the first judging shall be used to award this trophy.
  3. THE MILT GIBIAN PERPETUAL MEMORIAL TROPHY is offered by Friends and Admirers of Milt Gibian and presented to the HIGHEST SCORING DOG in competition at the SCDOC Top Dog Exhibition. The single score from the first judging shall be used to award this trophy.
- C. A separate area shall be set up for the purpose of taking pictures of the trophy winners so that the awards presentation may proceed without delay.
- D. Team scores shall be posted and individual scores shall be distributed only after all awards are presented.

#### ARTICLE VIII. TOP DOG BADGES & BARS

- A. There shall be two types of Top Dog Badges:
1. Gold-colored badges for exhibitors (entrants),
  2. Black-lacquered badges for members of committees (workers).
- B. All entrants and workers in the Top Dog Exhibition shall be presented with a Top Dog Badge and year bar for the first time as an entrant or worker.

- C. Top Dog Badges or bars may be earned only by being an exhibitor (entrant), serving as a judge, steward, or clerk in the Top Dog Exhibition, or as a member of one of the Exhibition committees, including the Council Board of Directors (worker).
- D. Top Dog Badges or year bars shall not be sold, except as replacements.
- E. Only year bars shall be presented after the first year.
- F. Entrants eligible for Top Dog Badges or year bars must be present on the grounds to receive them.
- G. Top Dog Badges or year bars shall be presented only to team captains who shall sign for the appropriate number and type of awards to distribute among their teams.
- H. In extreme circumstances a captain may authorize in writing a duly appointed substitute, subject to committee approval.
- I. Replacements may be purchased when available, after written notice has been submitted to, and approved by, the Badges & Bars committee.
- J. Workers whose duties are completed prior to the Exhibition need not be present to receive Top Dog Badges or year bars.

#### ARTICLE IX. RING CONDITIONS

- A. The obedience ring size shall be in accordance with AKC Obedience Regulations, approximately 40 by 50 feet. There shall be a minimum of seven rings for obedience, which shall be constructed of rope or chain with a minimum of 9 posts.
- B. No one shall be inside the rings during judging or run-offs except the judge, the contestant, steward, two clerks, or authorized personnel.
- C. A ring 20 by 20 feet shall be provided for the Top Dog Rules Committee which shall have an additional rope 3 feet further out around the perimeter. A table and necessary chairs shall also be provided and this ring shall be identified as "TOP DOG RULES COMMITTEE"
- D. Neither members of the Top Dog Rules Committee, nor any team captain shall work in the obedience rings.

#### ARTICLE X. JUDGING

- A. The Host Club shall have a member of the Top Dog Rules Committee meet with the judges to discuss rules and procedures prior to the start of judging.
- B. Current AKC obedience regulations govern any rules not stated herein. The following rules supersede AKC regulations:
  1. Exhibitors may wear any articles of clothing, patches, pins, badges, or the like denoting Council or club affiliations.
  2. Any dog that attempts to attack any person or dog in the ring or that appears dangerous shall be excused by the judge.
  3. Group exercises shall be performed at the start of judging.
  4. In the event a dog should receive a "zero" for an exercise, the judge shall continue judging the dog.
  5. The correct jump height for each dog shall be listed on the entry form for each open and utility dog.

6. Utility exercises differing from AKC regulations:
  - a. Directed retrieve: The judge shall designate either glove one (left) or glove three (right) and that glove shall be designated for all dogs in that part.
  - b. Directed jumping: The judge shall score each part (solid or bar jump) separately with a maximum of 20 points for each part.
  - c. The same article scented in the first round of judging will be used by the exhibitor in the second round of judging. The scented articles will be separated in plastic zip lock bags provided by SCDOC.
- C. There shall be six AKC-approved obedience judges for the classes.
  1. Each class shall be divided into two parts with a different judge for each part. Each team shall be split between the two judges in each class. A seventh judge shall be selected to judge the alternate dogs in the group exercises. This judge shall be an AKC approved judge.
  2. The alternate dogs shall be judged in their group exercises at the beginning of judging.
- D. Only AKC judges may judge at Top Dog. Judges who are members of competing clubs may judge obedience at Top Dog with no more than two judges from the same competing clubs. If there are two judges from the same competing club, they cannot judge the same class.
- E. Judge's books as used for AKC licensed obedience trials shall be used by the Top Dog obedience judges.
- F. Judging shall follow catalog order.
- G. In the event of a tie score between any of the first four placed obedience teams, a run-off shall be conducted as follows: .
  1. The teams which are tied shall select from among their team members one Novice, one Open and one Utility dog to represent their team in the run-offs.
  2. The Utility dogs shall be judged separately on the complete hand signal exercise.
  3. The Open dogs shall be judged separately on the complete heel free and figure eight exercise.
  4. The Novice dogs shall be judged separately on the complete heel free exercise.
- H. The top 4 dogs in each ring of each class (a total of eight dogs in each class) shall advance to a second judging for final placements. The four dogs from Part-I of each class shall be judged by the Part-II judge in the Part-II ring of each class. The four dogs from the Part-II ring of each class shall be judged by the Part-I judge in the Part-I ring of each class. The run-offs in the six rings may run simultaneously. Group judging will be done prior to individual judging.
- I. The Top Dog Rules Committee shall determine the order of the second judging of the four dogs from each ring by a random drawing. The call for the run-off dog shall be made just before the judge is ready to begin judging that dog.
  1. The combined score, of the two judgments shall determine the TOP DOG followed by second, third, and fourth place in each class.
  2. In the event there is still a tie score at the completion of the second judging, the alternate dogs group judge shall judge the subsequent run-offs. Such run-offs shall be conducted according to AKC run-off procedures.

## ARTICLE XII. CATALOG

The Top Dog Exhibition Catalog shall be in book form using the Council colors of purple and gold to print the front and back covers, and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. The front cover using the previously established format shall show the:
  - 1. Name Southern California Dog Obedience Council, Inc.
  - 2. Sequential number and word "Annual" indicating the numerical identity of the annual event
  - 3. Words "Top Dog Exhibition"
  - 4. Outline of the State of California
  - 5. City in which the event is held.
  - 6. Date of the event.
- B. The inside of the front cover shall show a salute to past winners in the format previously established, listing each year, starting with 1958, the:
  - 1. Name of the host Club or SCDOC.
  - 2. Number of teams entered
  - 3. Winning club
  - 4. Total number of dogs entered
  - 5. Score of the winning team
- C. A page listing all current clubs represented by memberships in good standing of the Southern California Dog Obedience Council, Inc. The clubs who have entered teams in the current year shall be designated by:
  - 1. One asterisk "\*" for an obedience team,

A footnote shall explain the asterisks and total each number.
- D. Additional pages at the beginning of the catalog shall contain a listing of:
  - 1. All members of the Council Board and their positions,
  - 2. All Top Dog Exhibition chairmen, each identified by the function or committee undertaken (if a whole club is responsible for a function or committee, only the name of the chairman responsible for the club shall appear),
  - 3. All members of the Council committees:
    - a. Top Dog Rules Committee
    - b. Badges & Bars Committee
    - c. Trophy Committee
    - d. Scoring Committee
  - 4. All judges, their addresses, and classes to be judged, followed by the names of their stewards and clerks.

5. All awards offered and separate explanations of these awards,
  6. The name and address of the official photographer, and
  7. The number of entries for each class divided into Part I, Part II, and alternates along with the total number of dogs and teams in obedience.
- E. Additional pages of the catalog shall contain the following which may be interspersed with advertising and other pertinent matter:
1. A listing of each obedience dog entered, including the alternates. The listing shall include:
    - a. catalog (arm-band) number,
    - b. registration number (if registered),
    - c. name of dog (registered name, if registered),
    - d. breed,
    - e. name and address of the handler, and
    - f. name of represented club.
  2. The above listing of dogs shall be sequential by class and part (Novice, Part I, etc.). (Team captains and alternates shall follow all classes and be listed sequentially by class.
- F. The inside back cover of the catalog shall have blank spaces for the recording of the dogs or teams and scores for the:
1. Four top obedience teams,
  2. Four top Novice dogs,
  3. Four top Open dogs,
  4. Four top Utility dogs,
  5. Three special awards:
    - a. Carl Spitz, Sr. Perpetual Trophy
    - b. Roy and Edna Smith Perpetual High Scoring Junior Handler Award
    - c. Milt Gibian Perpetual Memorial Trophy
- G. The following paid material may also be included in the catalog:
1. Advertising,
  2. Personal messages,
  3. Friendship and memorial listings.
- H. The Club or the committee responsible for the compilation and the printing of the catalog shall also be responsible for its distribution or sale on the day of the Top Dog Exhibition. Catalogs shall be available one hour prior to the starting time of Exhibition Judging.

### ARTICLE XIII. COMPLAINTS

The singular used below may also include the plural.

- A. Charges concerning behavior or violations of rules at Top Dog shall be submitted in writing to the Top Dog Rules Committee immediately, whereupon the Top Dog Rules Committee shall form a Disciplinary Hearing Committee (DHC), consisting of those members of the committee present plus the Top Dog Chairman. The quorum for the DHC shall be no less than three active participants. The DHC shall have the right to determine the validity of the complaint and to discipline any or all persons involved up to and including suspension from Top Dog and any subsequent competitions for a maximum period of three years from the date of the hearing. The DHC may be likened to a trial committee.
  - 1. JURISDICTION. The DHC shall have jurisdiction over the following: physical abuse of a dog, verbal or physical abuse of participants, flagrant violation of Top Dog or subsidiary rules, training in non-designated areas, interference, or unsportsmanlike conduct. The DHC shall not have jurisdiction over actions by judges during judging.
  - 2. NOTIFICATION. The person charged and the team captain thereof shall be informed immediately that a hearing will be convened within one hour. The charged shall have the right to bring any witnesses to the hearing. A description of the incident and its time and place shall be announced over the public address system requesting that any witnesses contact a member of the DHC. Such witnesses shall submit in writing a description of what they witnessed.
  - 3. HEARING. The hearing shall be taped and minutes taken. The hearing shall be open only to the DHC, person charged, complainant, witnesses, team captain. The minutes and tape will be turned over to the Council Recording Secretary, who shall destroy the tape after three years.
  - 4. RESULTS. The results of the hearing shall be announced by the DHC to Top Dog participants. If charges warrant, the DHC shall then determine the extent of suspension, if any.
  - 5. AWARDS. Unless dismissed by a judge, the person may continue in the competition with the understanding that if there is no appeal or if the charge is upheld on appeal, the awards to the person and to the team shall be returned and awarded to the next highest score.
  - 6. APPEALS. The person charged or the club represented by the person charged may appeal in writing to the Council Board of Directors within 5 days of the hearing. In the event of an appeal, the Board shall review the procedures of the DHC and shall determine the validity of the procedures.
- B. Complaints concerning violations of rules at Top Dog, but not reported to the Top Dog Rules Committee may be submitted in writing to the Council Board of Directors and the decision of the Board of Directors shall be final and accepted with good sportsmanship.
- C. Any member of the Council Board of Directors, the Top Dog Rules Committee, or the Top Dog Chairman who is also a member of the club whose member has been charged in the above proceedings shall be temporarily excluded as a member during the proceedings.
- D. Records of the hearing shall be kept by the Recording Secretary and destroyed after three years.

### ARTICLE XV. CHARTER OF THE TOP DOG RULES COMMITTEE

#### A. ORGANIZATION

The committee shall consist of six members, each from a different Council Member Organization. The committee shall be a permanent committee.

## B. TERM

Each year the President of Council shall appoint a chairman from among the current members. The Chairman shall then appoint 2 new members for a 3-year term. In the event a member leaves the committee for any reason, a replacement will be selected by the chairman to fill the unexpired term of the member who left the committee. For the purpose of forming the committee, 2 members, including the Chairman, will be appointed for a 3-year term. Each succeeding year the 2 members appointed shall serve for a full 3-year term.

## C. DUTIES

The duties of the Top Dog Rules Committee shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Administration of all matters relating to the TOP DOG EXHIBITION RULES. This will include consideration of all proposed rules changes submitted by a club in accordance with the existing Standing Rules, and bringing such proposed changes to the entire council with a recommendation for acceptance or rejection.
2. Assist the Host Club on the day of the TOP DOG EXHIBITION plus be responsible for interpretations of the Top Dog Exhibition Rules during the Exhibition along with the Council Board.
3. The Top Dog Rules Committee shall meet within 30 days prior to the TOP DOG EXHIBITION.
4. The committee, along with the Council Board, will conduct a critique within 90 days after completion of the TOP DOG EXHIBITION in order to make suggestions for improvements and consideration of any proposed Rules changes that may be recommended.

