



Fix n' Go – Pilot Concept

This is a new concept, and new things can create anxiety. After all, just like our dogs, we're all creatures of routine who take comfort in the familiar. To alleviate any anxiety you might be feeling with respect to this new change, here are some things to remember.

The new Fix 'n Go concept will be offered on a one-year pilot basis beginning April 1, 2021. The concept will be evaluated throughout, and a survey will be conducted prior to the end of its term.

The Fix n' Go concept is intended to allow the handler to reattempt the exercise to help their dog while performing in the obedience ring. Historically, any attempt to help the dog was considered 'training in the ring' and has not been permitted. Such training was penalized; however, these penalties sometimes have been inconsistently applied by judges and misunderstood by handlers. Our goal is to bring clarity to what a handler may and may not do, in the spirit of good sportsmanship, to help their dog be successful at future events.

Please remember that we are all guided by the principles of good sportsmanship. We ask our judges to be kind and patient, and our exhibitors to be thoughtful and respectful, while we work together to implement this new procedure.

CHAPTER 2 - The current Section 27 is replaced in its entirety with the following new section. The new section does not negate any other sections of the *Obedience Regulations*. The *Obedience Judge's Guidelines* remind us that the book cannot cover all situations, nor can it be a substitute for common sense.

Section 27. Training and Handling in the Ring. When a handler is using excessive verbal commands, this could indicate the dog is not under control and is not working with the handler willingly. The judge must determine if this dog should be released for a lack of control. The handler is not allowed to correct or discipline a dog and will be released from the ring.

When the dog's performance does not meet the handler's expectation, the handler may choose to use a "Fix n' Go" option once, which allows the exhibitor to immediately reattempt a single individual exercise. This allows the team to reattempt that one exercise, and then leave the ring. In a two-part exercise, the handler may choose only one part to reattempt. It is the handler's responsibility to tell the judge they are choosing to "Fix n' Go." Using the Fix n' Go option will result in a non-qualifying score (NQ). The handler may begin the reattempt from the start or at any point during the exercise. The judge will call the orders for the reattempted exercise as normal. If a jump needs to be reset, it will be set to the original height.

The handler may choose to help the dog through the Fix n' Go exercise. Helping the dog may be accomplished using verbal encouragement, including additional commands and praise, and/or approaching the dog in a friendly/positive manner without touching the dog.

Harsh verbal and/or physical corrections will not be tolerated. If there is any determination of harshness by the judge, the handler will be immediately released from the ring.

Spectators form their opinion of the sport through seeing the action of the handler and the dog. Care must be taken to avoid any action that might reflect poorly on the sport.

Let's break this new section down point by point starting with when the Fix n' Go is not used.

- When a dog is not under control and willingly working with its handler, the judge must determine if the team should be released from the ring. In the process of doing so, judges are reminded to be kind (and handlers are reminded to be respectful of the judge's decision and kind to their dogs). There is no option for a Fix n' Go here.
- If the handler corrects or disciplines the dog, judges must release the team. There is no option for a Fix n' Go here.

In both cases above, if the team has NQ'd an exercise the judge would write an NQ-R in the exercise box. If an NQ did not occur but the judge releases the team, the judge would write Released. In both cases, an NQ is written in the Total Score box.

- An additional command should be evaluated and scored according to the *Obedience Regulations*, Chapter 2, Section 21 and does not, in and of itself, require the team to be released or to Fix n' Go.
- If the behavior of the dog or handler requires judges to release or excuse the team, the Fix n' Go is not an option.
- Examination exercises: Deductions will be made for shyness. Any display of fear or nervousness must be penalized. Judges, please do not entertain the notion of reapproaching a shy dog. The Fix n' Go is never an option in these cases.
- The Fix n' Go option may be used during an individual exercise; it is not allowed in the Novice Group Exercise.

Using the Fix n' Go Option

- The handler must begin an exercise to choose to use the Fix n' Go option.
- The team does not have to NQ an exercise for the handler to choose to use the Fix n' Go option.
- If the option is going to be used, the handler must do so before moving onto the next exercise.
- It is the handler's responsibility to tell the judge they are choosing to Fix n' Go.
- Once the handler tells the judge they are going to Fix n' Go, the exercise being reattempted is marked as an NQ and the NQ is carried down to the Total Score box.
- Only one part of a two-part exercise may be reattempted. Two-part exercises are Heel on Leash and Figure Eight, Heel Free and Figure Eight, and Directed Jumping.
- If a jump needs to be reset, it will be set to the original height.
- The handler may begin the reattempt from the start or at any point during the exercise.
- The judge will call the orders, and act as if judging for the reattempted exercise as usual.
- The handler may help the dog using verbal encouragement, including additional commands and praise, and/or approaching the dog in a friendly/positive manner.
- The handler may not touch the dog; judges should simply release at that point if they do.
- Once the reattempt is done, the team leaves the ring.
- Judges, please refrain from going into instructor mode. Leave the training up to the handler; you be the judge.
- Exhibitors, please be mindful of your own and your dog's behavior in the ring. In the process of helping your dog, your actions should not be disruptive to adjacent rings. Additionally, you will need to be prepared; you will need to be ready a couple of dogs before your turn just in case teams before you are choosing to use the Fix n' Go option.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns you would like to share with us, please be sure to send an email to obedience@akc.org.

Thank you for supporting the sport!

AKC Companion Events