

Rally O – Easier or Not?

The judging in Rally isn't more lenient than it is in traditional obedience! This is something we have to be aware of.



The only concession in Rally judging is that, if there would be a 1/2 point deduction in Obedience for an error or transgression, then that would be ignored in Rally.

A full point deduction in Obedience is still scored as a full point deduction in Rally.

It's not the judging standard that makes it "easier", but other aspects of Rally makes it more "competitor friendly".

Competitors are encouraged to talk to their dogs through the run; they are allowed to tell dogs to sit and stay etc where they wouldn't be allowed in Obedience; they are allowed to Retry stations; and the Novice level is all on lead. A Rally run out is also only about 2 to 3 minutes whereas an Obedience heeling program is longer than that. Plus doing a station wrong in Rally (with a few exceptions) isn't an automatic NQ like it is in Obedience so even if you mess something up you still have a chance to get a quality score.

And while the Rally Rules say that "multiple commands are allowed" ... unlike Obedience where one extra command would be a significant penalty – in Rally there is a sliding scale of increasing severity for the number of extra commands given. (Remember that dog that goes through without extra commands has to score better than a dog that needs more help.)

We want to make sure that competitors and judges know that the standards have to be maintained from the outset and that footwork and execution have to be a priority. There is no use in letting the standards slip in Rally and then hoping they will have improved when the competitor gets to Obedience.

The Deductions are explained in detail in the Rules so that competitors and judges can see exactly where they apply.

But just because the standards are maintained doesn't mean that Rally can't be fun for handlers, dogs, judges and spectators. This new sport will bring new challenges to us all. Many people underestimate Rally O – until they try it.