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 UKC Novice Obedience
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Quip and I were in a couple of UKC trials. I'd never shown in UKC obedience and had seen it only once, so I cast around for information on how UKC Novice differs from AKC and ASCA and got some advice from various folks on the Belg-L e-mail list and elsewhere, and I tracked down some other information on my own.

The only obedience training book I've found that covers UKC exercises is Liz Palika's "Fido, Come": Training Your Dog with Love and Understanding*. The approach is pretty conventional, with very little compulsion. Palika's training recipes are pretty much for post-Beginners students who want some greater precision with their dogs and who are getting interested in competition training. The descriptions of the various exercises aren't especially detailed, but each section includes the relevant portion of the AKC and UKC score sheets which is a nice touch.

There are some excellent online resources for UKC obedience:

- United Kennel Club Rules and Regulations: www.ukcdogs.com/rules
- "All About Dogs": UKC Novice Obedience (Pat Kalbaugh): www.siriusweb.com/AAD/novobed.html and [novtext.html](http://www.siriusweb.com/AAD/novtext.html)
- UKC Obedience Stewards Job Descriptions (Cheryl Mays): www-personal.ksu.edu/~news1/stew.html
- UKC Companion Dog Title (U-CD): www.angelfire.com/on3/Dillon/PuppyUKC.htm
- UKC All Breed Obedience Trials in New England & NY: www.geocities.com/crdtc/ukctrial.html

Far as I can tell, here are the chief differences between UKC and AKC (or ASCA) in the Novice class:

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 1. Honor Down
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UKC has the Honor Down exercise instead of the Long Down in AKC and ASCA. "Honoring" is taken from field work and hunting where a dog must stay in position while another dog does a retrieve. Each dog in the class gets to be an honoring dog as well as a working dog.

For the Honor Down, one of the stewards escorts you and your dog into the ring. It's a kind of individual Long Down. At the judge's order, you put your dog in a down-stay (leaving your leash behind your dog) and go to the other side of the ring. Meanwhile, another dog — called the "working dog" — enters the ring and does the Heel on Leash and Figure-8. As soon as the working dog finishes the Figure-8, the judge will tell you to return to your dog. When the judge says "Exercise finished," put your dog on leash, and then one of the stewards will usher you out of the ring.

By the way, the Long Sit is the same in UKC as in AKC or ASCA — 1 minute in a group, with the handlers standing opposite their dogs at the other end of the ring.

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2. Recall Over the High Jump

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UKC has a Recall Over the High Jump exercise instead of the straight recall as in AKC and ASCA. The jump height is the dog's height at the withers, measured in increments of 2" and rounded down; the maximum is 24", and the minimum is 8". Thus, if your dog is 21" at the withers, he jumps 20". If he's 30", he jumps 24", and if he's 7½", he jumps 8".

The two ring stewards stand on either side of the jump. You leave your dog on one side of the jump, walk around to the other side, and call him over to you. The rest is just Ye Olde Fronte & Finishe.

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3. Voice commands and hand signals

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There's a slight difference in the rules for voice commands and hand signals. UKC lets you use either or both a voice command and hand signal for all exercises except heeling, where it's one or the other. In AKC and ASCA, you can use a voice command and hand signal for stays only; otherwise, it's one or the other.

So, for the UKC Recall Over the High Jump, you can use a verbal command like "Come!" or "Jump!" and simultaneously give a hand signal. However, this belts-and-suspenders approach may not be a good habit, especially if you're going to be showing in AKC and ASCA.

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4. Classes and registration

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UKC has Novice A (for rookies) and Novice B (everyone else) just like AKC and ASCA, and also has a Novice C class for dogs who already have a UCD title but don't yet have a qualifying score in Open. The recent AKC rule change about continuing to show in Novice until you get a leg in Open (or win HIT) is roughly equivalent.

If your dog has a CD or similar title from another registry, or if you have a UCD on another dog, you enter the Novice B class in UKC. For example, even though I'd never shown in UKC, and Quip didn't then have an obedience title, I still entered Novice B because of the AKC and ASCA titles on my other dogs.

Also, UKC has some rules about persons other than owners showing the dog, and there are some other administrative differences.

To qualify for a UCD title, you need 3 qualifying scores in Novice at three different trials — same as in AKC or ASCA — but you need only two different judges. This is why many UKC clubs offer back-to-back trials on the same day or weekend, because even if you get two legs under the same judge, they can count towards a title.

To show in UKC, your dog must have a UKC registration. This isn't difficult to arrange. Check the UKC Web site (www.ukcdogs.com) for more information. Also, keep in mind that UKC is allied with the American Mixed Breed Obedience Registry (AMBOR) so you can also show your "all-American" dog at UKC trials!