

Obedience Only

by Karen Shivers. *Karen is helping USMRA show the Obedience Only Program to the working dog community in the United States.*

Mondioring Obedience: Mondioring Obedience is part of an International Cynological Federation (FCI) sport titled "Mondioring." "Mondioring was created by delegates from several countries in Europe and America, in hopes of utilizing different portions of already existing national dog sports, and allowing an enriching union of all the enthusiasts of working dogs, beginners or experienced. Its goal is to be entertaining for the spectators, a game of progressive difficulties for the participants, and a competitive sport for the training enthusiast." (Stated from the Mondioring Rules of Competition).

The United States Mondioring Association (USMRA) would like to support the promotion of the "obedience only" portion of Mondioring to all dog trainers and handlers as another venue of competition and training to highlight the "aptitudes of the dog, the quality of its training, the control of its handler," and in the overall competition, the "genetic inheritance of the dog".

Mondioring is designed to test the ability of the dog and handler in obedience, jumping and bite work, however, the obedience only portion is an excellent way for handlers to train for a different type of sport that challenges the abilities of both dog and handler.

The competition field for Mondioring, is usually 130' x 200' and is set up just as it would be for the three levels of normal competition (which includes bite work). For the obedience title, the bite work portion is omitted, however, all the distractions from the field and the crowd are still there.

The obedience title is open to ALL breeds and can be done with or without the jumps. The obedience only exercises would be very similar to the Open & Utility levels in AKC/UKC with a lot more "stuff" added. Jumps are much higher than the norm so most likely only ringsport type dogs would be interested in titling with the jump included. As an example, all dogs doing jump work at Level I, must be able to at least jump 3.2' if they choose the hurdle.

The ring set-ups and patterns are different at every trial so it is not possible to pattern train the dog. There is also a theme for every trial. For instance, the National trial was recently held in Texas and the committee chose a Western theme, complete with a windmill, the Alamo, hay bales, saddles, a horse trailer, etc., all on the competition field. Depending on the heeling pattern the entire ring is not always used for the obedience only title but the dog, handler, judge, deputy judge, and scribe are all out on the field with the competitor. Apprentice judges are also approved to judge for obedience only titles.

Dogs and handlers must enter the field, at heel, without any leash or collar on and present themselves to the judge to begin the exercises. The fields are always fenced. The judge determines the heeling pattern for each level and all the exercises are shown to the handlers on the field prior to the start of the competition. There is also a dog and handler (called the "Dog in White") that performs the exercises for everyone to see prior to the start of all levels.

The obedience exercises include:

Level I: Heeling without a leash; Absence of handler (1 minute for level 1); Go out, or as Mondioring calls it, the Send-away; Positions (dog must be able to stand, sit, and down in any order away from the handler), Food refusal; and Retrieve of a thrown object (judge's choice).

Level II & III: All of the above exercises with the addition of Search for an Object. This is much like the articles in Utility except that it is done with what Mondioring calls "little woods." It is a small wooden dowel about 6" long and is scented by the handler and then put out with the other wooden dowels on the field for the retrieve. The dog is allowed to watch the dowel go out and down.

Scoring is done by point deductions. Dog and handler teams do not have to have at least 50% of each exercise to qualify and can achieve the title in one trial. There is a possible 55 points in Level I Obedience without the jump and 70 points with it. Level II Obedience has 85 points with additional points for jumps depending on which one the handler chooses (handlers must choose two jumps in level 2), and Level III has the same start points of 85 with additional jump points if they are chosen. All three of the jumps, if chosen, must be done in Level III. There are only three types of jumps. They are the Palisade, Hurdle, and Long Jump.

The obedience exercises are never done in the same order at different trials but are always done in the same order at that particular trial. The order doesn't change once the judge for that trial establishes it. The heeling pattern is determined by the judge and must contain two halts, a right turn, left turn and an about turn. It can be as long or as short as the judge desires.

The three different levels progress in difficulty in all phases.

The absence of handler is always done in a down position with the handler leaving, not looking back and stepping into a blind or behind an object so that the dog cannot see the handler (again, 1 minute for level 1 dogs).

Send-aways (go-outs) are done between two points that are well marked on the field. As soon as the dog crosses the marked part on the field, they are automatically recalled by the handler by either a whistle or voice command. Dogs do not have to sit in front to finish.

Positions are done much like the Utility exercise except voice commands must be used and the handler can sometimes be sitting down, standing up, or sitting on something. For instance, the handler might be asked to sit inside a little row- boat on the field for a hunting theme and give the commands from inside the boat that is on the field. The deputy judge is behind the handler telling them which position to do so they don't forget the order.

The Retrieve can be done with whatever object the judge decides to use with consideration being given to the size of the dog in the obedience only title. If the dog is small, a smaller object will be used. At a recent trial, an empty plastic clothes softener bottle that had a few pebbles in it was used and in another a western boot.

Mondioring is an amazing sport that gives a great challenge to the dog and handler while making it a lot of fun to do. For additional information on this incredible sport please visit the USMRA website at <http://www.usmondioring.org>. There is a description of the exercises in the rules section and also in the education section of the website. There is also a Yahoo group list available if you do a search for Mondioringobedience at <http://www.yahogroups.com>. Youtube has numerous videos available that show different breeds of dogs doing Mondioring exercises. You may also contact Karen A. Shivers at stonefox@1starnet.com for additional information on becoming involved in Mondioring Obedience.

Please remember that the sport of Mondioring is an FCI recognized sport and is done exactly the same in all countries where it is performed. If you learn it here, you can also compete at the international level. The Obedience only title is typically done in the United States but is offered internationally as well.