

## Obedience Rankings

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### Delaney Rating System

- 1. Fireside's Sweetbriar CDX TD NA  
Deborah Cutter 8 Points
- 2. Eldorado's Workin' For Peanuts JH  
M O'Keefe 6 Points
- 3. Crownpoint's Saisir La Jour UDX JH  
Betsy Germain 3 Points

### First and Foremost Rating System

- 1. Crownpoint's Saisir La Jour UDX JH  
Betsy Germain 48 Points
- 2. CH Barbet's Dragon Zord UD JH  
Betsy Germain 10 Points
- 3. Fireside's Sweetbriar CDX TD NA  
Deborah Cutter 5 Points
- 4. CH Fireside's Dreamcatcher CD JH  
L Andrews 1 Point



**CH Winchester Von Herrenhausen UDTX MH**

## Pedigree Top Producers through December 2002

<http://www.dognews.com/topproducers/sporting.html>

### Sire: CH Owen Des Dunes Du Captalat

Owner: Shirley Flinn  
 CH The Bitterroot Smoke Eater  
 CH Hollow Crown's Good Knight JH  
 CH Alibi's Montana Gold JH  
 CH Hollow Crown's Brook JH  
 CH Alibi's Jessica James

### Dam: CH Fireside's Fantasia JH

Owner: Elaine Hunsicker  
 CH Fireside's French Kiss JH  
 CH Fireside's Beaujolais Belle JH  
 CH Fireside's Liaison JH

## Dogs are Problem Solvers

### Starting Your Older Dog in Obedience

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Are you staring at a four-legged friend in your house, wondering if it's time to start his obedience career? Is he an older dog that you have rescued, or perhaps his conformation career is over? Are you ready to teach him something new?

Everyone has lots of ideas for starting puppies, but information about how to start older dogs is harder to come by. It's time to get started . . .

### Rewards & Praise

Dogs are not born knowing that they can earn positive rewards from you, and they are certainly not born knowing that you will verbally praise behavior that is pleasing to you. If you were raising a puppy, you would start praising him every time he went to the bathroom outside, or every time he came to you. In the case of many rescues, this has not happened, so, you will have to teach this older dog what your praise and rewards are all about.

Your job is to encourage this older dog to be a problem solver. Find a treat that interests the dog, and try to get him to figure out how to get it from you. How many "tricks" can you get him to do for a cookie?

If he has been a conformation dog, he may understand that in order to get you to give him a cookie, he should stand still and look at you intently. He has solved his problem. The problem: My trainer has the cookie and I want it. The Solution: Stand still, look interested, and it will be given to you. The cookie is the positive reward. Furthermore, if you praise him verbally before you give him the treat he will begin to pair your praise with something that he likes (the cookie). Thus, he learns that praise is also something he desires.

However, in the case of your new, older, dog, you don't want him to offer you one behavior; you want to teach him that there are many behaviors that might earn the praise and reward.

Begin by trying to maneuver your dog's body into a variety of positions for a treat. Keep it simple, try sit, down, and stand.

### 1. Sit

Hold the treat in one hand above your dog's head, tell your dog to sit and move the treat backwards, toward his



tail. As his head tilts back, he should fall into a sit. Ultimately, "sit" and a raised hand will become his command and signal to sit. Praise him and give him the treat.

The dog's problem: My handler has the treat and I want it.

The dog's solution: Standing here is not earning the reward, but putting my rear on the ground does.

### 2. Down

Start with your dog in a sitting position. Begin with the treat in front of his nose. Give your dog a command to lie down and slowly lower the treat to the ground.



Try to get your dog to follow the treat by walking his front feet down. He may try to lower his head and raise his rear. Repeat the procedure with one hand on his back, not to push him down, but to prevent

him from standing up. When he lies down, praise him and give him the treat. Soon, pointing to the ground and saying down will become your dog's command and signal to lie down.

The dog's problem: My handler has the treat and I want it.

The dog's solution: Sitting here is not earning a reward, but lying down does.

### 3. Stand

If this dog has had some conformation training, hold the treat as if you are baiting him. Tell him to stand. He will be relieved to see you in a position that he recognizes and more than likely stand up. If your dog has not previously been taught to stand, begin with him in a sitting position on your left side. Hold the treat in your right hand in front of his nose. Move the treat forward and step forward as you tell him to stand. Soon, "stand"

and a right hand in front of his face become his command and signal to stand. Praise him and give him the treat.

It won't take long for your dog to realize that he knows three ways to get you to give him the treat, sit, down, and stand. Soon, you will be able to mix up the order of your commands and get your dog to sit from a down, down from a stand, and stand from a down.



**With a treat in her right hand and stepping out on her right foot, she uses the treat to encourage the dog to stand**

Don't forget, you are teaching your dog more than these three commands, you are teaching him

about rewards and praise. He is learning to be a problem solver. In all instances, he wants a treat, and if he continues to offer you behaviors, he will eventually offer the correct behavior and earn his reward.

Ultimately, a dog who is a comfortable problem solver believes he can earn praise and a reward if he keeps trying new behaviors! What a joy to train a dog that understands if at first he does not succeed, all he needs to do is try again.

### Negative Consequences (Corrections)

Just as a dog learns to earn praise and rewards, he can also learn how to stop and avoid a negative consequence when he misbehaves. If your dog stays in an underground fence, he has already learned how to control the correction that the fence line administers when he attempts to get out of the yard. If he gets too close to the fence, he can stop the correction by moving back into the yard. If he wants to avoid another correction, he can simply stay away from the fence line. The most important behavior that your dog learns, for any type of training, is how to pay attention to you. The first correction that your dog needs to learn is that a pop on the leash means, "pay attention!"

Many conformation dogs already know this. If you haven't taught it to him, your handler has. Try the following drill. Bait your dog in front of you. Wait for him to look away from you and the treat. Pop the leash. Did he look back? If he did, he knows that a pop on the leash means "look at me so I can give you this treat."

The hardest part of communicating that a leash correction means pay attention is behind you, now all you have to do is teach him that the same pop means look at me no matter where he is in relation to your body. If he can do it in front of you, he can do it standing beside you, walking on a leash, sitting next to you, and eventually heeling (See "How Dogs Learn" and "Understanding Corrections" at [www.dogtrainersworkshop.com](http://www.dogtrainersworkshop.com)).

If your dog does not have a conformation background you are going to teach him that a pop means pay attention in a slightly different manner. You are not going to begin with the dog in heel position. This is not necessary and often a difficult place to begin. You want the dog to understand that no matter where he is in relation to your body, when you pop the leash he should look at you.

The following drills are prerequisites to sitting in heel position and paying attention. Try them!

**1. Stand with your dog on a loose leash.**

Imagine that there is a circle around you and the radius of the circle is the same as the leash length. If your dog tries to pull you out of the circle, give a pop back toward you on the leash. If the dog happens to look around to see what happened, praise him when he is looks at you.

The dog's problem: I wanted to run east, but when I did, my neck got tugged.  
The dog's solution: I guess I'll stand closer to my trainer. I'd prefer to avoid that unpleasant tug on my neck.



It may appear that you are merely teaching the dog to stand on a loose leash, and you are doing that, but don't lose sight of the larger concept, that a pop on the leash means pay attention.

**2. Walk with your dog on a loose leash.**

Imagine that the circle around your body is moving as you are moving. If your dog tries to pull you out of the circle, pop the leash toward you.

The dog's problem: I wanted my trainer to walk where I wanted to walk, but I got my neck tugged.  
The dog's solution: I guess I'll be the follower, not the leader. I'll walk with my trainer, paying attention to where he wants to walk.

Again, don't forget that you are trying to teach the concept of looking at you when you pop the leash. If the dog looks at you when you pop, praise him. Better yet, any time he looks at you while you are walking, continually praise him. If he walks with you, but doesn't look at you, walk along in silence. Your dog can afford you the courtesy of paying attention to you before you begin to carry on a conversation with him. Talk to the dog when he's paying attention to you.



**However, when a stranger is encountered, the dog forgets his leash manners and begins to pull. After the pop, the handler praises as soon as she gets his attention.**

Notice that these simple drills will accomplish more than meets the eye. You will end up with a dog that doesn't pull you when he's on a leash, but more importantly, has started to learn that a pop on the leash has a bigger, "pay attention to me," meaning.

**3. Learning to come when called, (and reinforcing that a pop on the leash means pay attention to you).**

You do not need to tolerate a dog that will not come to you when he is loose. Teach your dog to come in a systematic fashion, realizing that during this process, you are accomplishing two tasks; 1. The dog is learning to come when called, and 2. The dog is learning that a pop on the leash means pay attention.



Begin with your dog on a 15-25 foot rope. Allow him to get 8-10 feet from you and say his name, followed by "Come!" If necessary, pop the rope toward you, and then back up until he catches up with you. Backing up allows the dog to come a longer distance, and also encourages him to come more quickly. Do not reach for him when

he gets close to you! This will cause him to stay just out of reach. You may kneel down to encourage him to come all the way to you. Praise him when he gets to you.

### **The dog is distracted by a stranger**



Gradually let him wander further away on his long rope before calling him back to you, thus increasing the distance he comes. Finally, walk toward another person, dog, or toy. When he is distracted by something other than you, call him. If he does not turn to you immediately, pop the leash and back up until he catches up with you. Praise him when he gets to you.

### **Smart dog! He turns and comes before the pop.**



As your dog stops becoming distracted in the familiar surroundings of your yard, take him to other locations that might offer new, more exciting distractions. Whenever something or someone catches his eye, and he wanders away from you, call him back enforcing your command with a pop on the rope if necessary.

When you feel fairly confident that your dog will come to you when he is on his long rope, it is time to let him drag it. When he is 25 to 35 feet away from you, call him. If he does not respond, go pick up the end of the long line and correct him. Hold on to the rope as you back up to the spot you were standing when you called him. When he gets to you, praise him.

When you feel fairly confident that your dog will come to you when he is dragging his long rope, let your dog wander away dragging his six-foot leash. When he is distracted, call him to you. If he does not come, go pick up the end of the leash and correct him. Make him come toward you as you back up to the spot you were standing when you called him.

There is a very easy way to determine if it is time to take your dog off leash and expect him to come when he is called. When you call him, and he doesn't come, you will notice that as you walk toward him he comes to you instead of ignoring you or running away. A dog who comes toward you is convinced that you are going to enforce the come command, and he is also convinced that running from you will not solve his problem.

On to the Basics of Heeling and Jumping . . .

If you use these drills to teach your older dog to sit, down, and come when he's loose, you've also taught him the fundamentals of praise and correction. It's now time to move on to more formal obedience exercises. Look up "Teaching Heeling," Front & Finish, July 2000, and "Teaching Directed Jumping," Front & Finish, August 2000 and press on.

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