

National Obedience Class Finals
Saturday 10th December 2016

The ObedienceUK.Net Class C Final

Judge Wendy Birch

Ring Steward Roy Page

Scoreboard Geraldine Steadman

32 Qualifiers

Firstly an **enormous** apology for the **horrendous** amount of time it's taken me to get my act together and type up this report. 2016 simply overwhelmed me! With 9 judging appointments as well as numerous other commitments, once I was behind with one report, that was it! I only hope that everyone can forgive me and I promise to try much harder in 2017!!!

I would like to thank Fran Bush and her dedicated band of Co-Workers at the National Obedience Class Finals headquarters for the invitation to judge the 'C' Class Final. I felt very honoured to be asked, having been involved in all three of the Class Finals competitions now... What a FABULOUS event this is! What a great way to bring the best of fellow competitive teams in your qualifying class together, with the added excitement of competing against them! What a way to celebrate the end of one show season, with Crufts on the horizon and a new show season months away. Well I wouldn't miss this show for the World! Sincere admiration to Fran for bringing her vision and passion into reality!

In the first year of NCOF in 2014, it was dubbed "The Class Championships". I was put to work in the Collecting Ring – ensuring the judges had the next teams at the ready and working in tandem with the lovely Lyn Collins (She was definitely in the front of the tandem though!!!) Last year, having unfortunately not qualified for the Crufts Obedience Championships in 2016, I was so pleased to be able to enter Della in the C Class at NOCF 2015. I was absolutely bowled over to win the class under judge Katy Girdler and so to this, the 3rd year and yet again I was involved – this time judging the C Class... Can't wait to see what next year will bring. Maybe I'll come and spectate and spend my time looking at the fantastic teams and browsing the wonderful stalls!?

Sincere thanks must go to Roy Page, who guided the competitors around the course with immaculate precision. Always calm, professional, friendly and consistent – stewards of this calibre are few and far between. Thank you Roy for your support and assistance today, which was totally invaluable and I am indebted to you.

Thanks too to the wonderful Geraldine Steadman, who came to my aid at fairly short notice to man the scoreboard and bring each team to the ring entrance. She then collected the previous team's scorecard and filled in the master score sheet at the other end of the working area. You must have walked miles that day Geraldine... were you wearing a fitbit?!!!

Next to my round... I set a fairly simple test, without gimmicks or tricks. I didn't want to catch anyone out... I wanted everyone to come in the ring and SHINE! There was a weave in the heelwork, using rounders posts and bases from my place of work. I gave the posts a bit of glitz by wrapping strips of gold wrapping paper round them.

Sendaway markers were simple cones – two black ones at the front, with a larger black cone at the back, flanked by two small yellow cones to hopefully draw the dogs to the right place as the lattice fencing behind is a bit visually ‘busy’. The retrieve was just a rolled up old DTW. DC was from just behind the front cones of the sendaway. Every team received a little wrapped Christmas pressie as they left the ring. These were sparkly gold or silver Christmas decorations in the shape of a star – just a little memento of time spent at the Class Finals competition.

Overall the standard today was very pleasing and really good to watch. There was barely a training round in sight, with nearly everyone competing. This in itself changed the atmosphere in and around the ring – and made for a really exciting and interesting class to judge!

I somehow managed to arrange a rather tense run off for 1st and 2nd, as well as a less stressful run off for 6th and 7th... Whilst the rest of the show had to stop and wait for us to finish and complete the run offs to determine the final results! No pressure!

Finally to the results:

1st and 2016 NOCF C Class Champions:-

Maureen Conlin and “SARKAM MR DAYDREAM AT JARYSMYSTIC OW”.

Worked 28th and lost 6.75. I didn’t realise this team were not in a “full time relationship”... Lovely Flyer, (owned by Rachael Young) was beautifully handled by Maureen Conlin and what a fabulous picture they made together... One of the top heelwork marks of the class, losing just 3, Flyer gave Maureen superb attention and worked with power, style and verve. Plenty of people stopped and watched when this team were working their round, you could feel it in the atmosphere around the ring. Marks lost on all the set exercises were minimal:- Slight anticipation on sendaway, slight mouthing on both retrieve and scent and Maureen giving away a couple of marks on DC. A run off ensued which saw this team give as good an account of themselves as they did in the initial round and earned them the well deserved accolade of “C Class Champions 2016”. I was devastated to learn that only a short while later, Flyer became unwell and had to be given sleep. I’m so terribly sorry you have lost your lovely boy Rachael. I know he was very precious to both you and Maureen.

2nd Anne Northfield and “SIMMOVAN WILD ATTRACTION OW”.

Worked 30th and lost 6.75. Beautiful, attentive and stylish heelwork from this dog, with handler and dog in harmony as a team – just what I like to see. One of the best heelwork marks of the day, with excellent ASSD, just 0.25 lost on this element. Superb sendaway and DC – both clear, minimal errors on retrieve... but then losing 1 in scent unfortunately forced the run off. Missing the sit on the move on the run off and errors on sendaway pushed you into second place but I would have been more than happy to have two C Class Champions today! Good luck in 2017 Anne, I hope you can add to your achievements together.

3rd Sharon Webley and “BOOM BANG-A-BANG OW”.

Worked 25th and lost 9.25. Stylish, neat and accurate heelwork from this dog, bits and pieces adding up, including a couple of unintentional handler errors perhaps caused by the “Occasion”? Overall, a very pleasing picture. Good set exercises completed the test and put this team up at the top end of the line up. Congratulations and good luck for 2017.

4th Debbie Back and “DEBAKS DOWNTA PHAYTE OW”.

Worked 22nd and lost 10.5. A really superb heelwork mark, just marred by the loss of 2 points on the ASSD. This big lad put in very eye-catching, stylish round, with good handling from Debbie. Bits and pieces on the set exercises pushed this capable team down the line. Good luck with him in 2017, he’s lovely!

5th Gillian Durkin and “REDISTEDI LITTLE EVA”.

Worked 20th and lost 11. A very nice, accurate heelwork round with faultless ASSD from this pretty tri girl and her handler: together making a good team. Could have been further up the placings but not quite going the distance on the sendaway prevented this. Well done and good luck in 2017.

6th (Winning the run off) Michelle Dunscombe and “ITSJAROS NO DOUBT OW”.

Worked 27th and lost 12.25. Joint best heelwork mark of the day with the winner, this talented team produced neat, active and accurate work. A superb clear sendaway and tidy retrieve helped but the loss of 7 on DC for a missed stand and forward movement pushed them down the line up. Good luck with her in 2017. She certainly looked full of promise today!

7th (After the run off) Anne Northfield and “OB CH IATKA STAR PERFORMER OW”.

Worked 3rd and lost 12.25. This team set a good standard early on in the day, with neat and accurate heelwork as would be expected from this experienced trainer. Super DC and sendaway but anticipating the pick up together with anticipation on the retrieve and other minor faults, pushed this team down the line up. Well done, and good luck with her in 2017.

8th Ann Rogers and “TOUCH OF PRINCESS TUTU OW”.

Worked last at 32nd and lost 14.25. Neat and tidy heelwork from this team, late on in the day, with faultless ASSD. Sendaway cost a couple of points with minor errors but was accompanied by a good retrieve and clear DC. This team were challenging for a top 3 spot but a very messy scent almost doubled their mark and pushed them down to 8th. Well done Ann and good luck in 2017 with her.

9th Maureen Conlin and “SWIFT AND FUN”.

Worked 6th and lost 17.75. Marks lost on all exercises but a missed sit on ASSD and another missed sit on DC pushed this team much further down the line up than they could have been. No reason this team couldn’t have been up in the top three or four on another day. Good luck in 2017.

10th Louise Spenceley and “BECKIM ZORRO AT QUILTERS OW”.
Worked 7th and lost 18. Put in an attractive and enthusiastic round of heelwork, together with a good retrieve and scent, this team could have been in the top four but for a costly sendaway that added 8.5 to the total score. Good luck with him in 2017.

Thank you to all the competitors for their entries and for accepting my decisions. This was a class full of talent and potential and it was lovely to see everyone giving it their best shot! Good luck to everyone in the coming show season.

Wendy Birch