

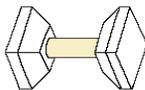


## Competitive Obedience

Obedience demonstrates the usefulness of a dog as a companion to man and not merely the dog's ability to follow specific routines in the obedience ring. The basic objective of obedience trials is to produce trained dogs that behave in different places and under variety of conditions.

There are three basic levels of obedience competition. The first level, Novice, leads to a CD (Companion Dog) title. The dog demonstrates basic on and off leash heeling, a recall and stability during group sits and downs. The second level of competition, Open, results in a CDX (Companion Dog Excellent) title. This level involves, retrieving, dropping during a recall and clearing jumps. The highest level of difficulty is Utility. At this level, a UD (Utility Dog) title can be earned. The dog demonstrates proficiency in directed jumping, retrieving, signals and scent discrimination.

The AKC has recently added more optional levels of competition. Optional titles offered are Beginner Novice, Graduate Novice, Graduate Open and Versatility. These titles consist of exercises that include variations



of the exercises in the regular title classes. As you advance through these titles, the increased difficulty of the exercises also tests the versatility of your dog.

The AKC also offers the titles of UDX (Utility Dog Excellent) and OTCH (Obedience Trial Champion). To earn a UDX you must qualify in both Open and Utility B Classes on the same day on 10 separate occasions. An OTCH is earned when an exhibitor earns a total of 100 points from wins in the Open and Utility classes. Other upper level titles offered by AKC are the OM, Obedience Master and OGM, Obedience Grand Master. These titles allow dogs that compete at the Open and Utility levels an opportunity to earn more titles as they continue to show.

Rally is also another fun sport that you can introduce your Bouvier to. In Rally, dogs heel and jump along a course filled with fun exercises that are variations of basic Obedience commands, such as heeling through cones, heeling backwards and circular turns. Rally also differs from Obedience in that you may use multiple verbal commands and hand gestures throughout the course. There are 3 levels of difficulty to this sport and participants can earn Rally Novice (RN), Rally Advanced (RA), Rally Excellent (RE) and Rally Advanced Excellent (RAE) titles. Rally can be used as a transitions sport to standard Obedience.

**For More Information:**  
[www.bouvier.org](http://www.bouvier.org)  
[www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

## OBEDIENCE

# Bouvier des Flandres

~Agile~  
~Intelligent~  
~Steady~  
~Well-Behaved~



# Bouvierers and Obedience

Would you like to experience a stronger bond with your Bouvier, earn titles and keep him from becoming a couch potato? Then try obedience! Obedience is a fun sport that keeps you and your dog mentally and physically active. It is a wonderful way to display the intelligence and working nature of our breed.

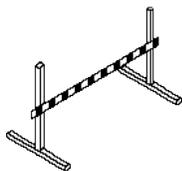
Our breed standard describes the Bouvier as agile, serene, well-behaved, steady, alert, intelligent, and equable. All of the qualities mentioned make the Bouvier well suited for the sport of obedience.

## Benefits of Obedience

Obedience only enhances those breed characteristics we love so well; intelligence, well behaved, agile and steady. Obedience is an excellent outlet for a Bouvier's natural instinct to work. Here are just a few of the numerous benefits of training and competing in obedience:

**The Canine Human Bond.** Development of a strong bond and relationship with your dog. It gives you a good companion.

**Functionality.** The exercises taught are useful in everyday life. A reliable stay or recall can prevent a disaster.



**Staying Active.** Obedience is a good opportunity to put our breeds working heritage to use. It keeps both young and mature Bouvierers physically and mentally active.

**Establish Leadership.** It helps establish you as pack leader. Bouvierers are large powerful dogs. Someone has to be in charge or Bouvierers tend to make up their own rules.

**Foundation Training.** Obedience training is the basis for many performance sports. A good background in obedience can lead to participation in other dog activities such as agility, therapy work, herding, etc.

**Everybody Can Win.** One of the great things about this sport is that theoretically every exhibitor can win. You need only a qualifying score to earn a title. The joy of earning a title or special wins lasts a lifetime.

**Inexpensive.** Obedience is a relatively inexpensive sport in which to participate. The basic training equipment needed for all three levels of training can be bought or made for less than \$100.

## Training a Bouvier

Always keep in mind that Bouvierers are working dogs bred to think independently. They are large and powerful with lots of confidence and self-assertiveness. Their independent mindset can make some obedience performances quite interesting, humorous and humbling. However, if you are persistent and make your training fun and varied, you can attain any level of obedience titling you wish.

A confident owner is essential for a

successful obedience team. Be the pack leader. If you have this level of respect established between you and your dog, you have won a major portion of your training battle. Thoroughly evaluate your teammate so you can realistically set your goals. Like any breed, some Bouvierers are more receptive to training than others. Dogs differ in aptitude and capabilities. Analyze your dogs' mental and physical capabilities. Make sure that your dog is sound physically and in temperament.

Remember Bouvierers are bright and learn quickly. As little as, 15 minutes a day of effective training will get you well on your way to your first novice title. However, you must vary your training routine. Be patient, persis-

tent, yet spontaneous. Many trainers teach portions of all three levels of obedience in order to keep the interest of the dog. Boredom can lead many dogs into reinventing a particular exercise to make it more interesting. The higher levels of obedience offer more variety in the exercises and increase the mental challenges and fun for your dog. These levels of obedience require more practice time, but this is where the Bouvier can excel, if properly trained.

