



ANIMAL ANTICS

Note for Pet Owners:

Pet Patrol 365 provides this information for educational purposes only. You should seek the advice of your veterinarian if your pet is ill, as only they can correctly advise on the diagnosis and the recommended treatment for your pet.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR DOG

There are so many different events and activities you can enjoy with your dog, giving you a great opportunity to meet fellow dog lovers and have lots of fun with your pet.

Obedience

The first step to having an obedient pet is to take it to training, and there is no better place to start than at a Kennel Club registered dog training club. Dog training clubs are very sociable, where groups of like-minded people meet on a regular basis and get great enjoyment from training their pets. Most clubs will have a cross section of breeds, including crossbreeds, and will welcome all standards of handlers and dogs to be trained. Each class contains a set of exercises ranging from heelwork (on and off the lead), to a recall, and control exercises such as a one minute sit and a two minute down stay.

Agility

Many people think that Agility is the most fun of all the canine sports for both dogs and humans. It is fast, furious and a great favourite with competitors and spectators alike. Agility is where the animal's fitness and the handler's ability to train and direct the dog over and through certain obstacles are tested. Agility tests are run against the clock and a variety of obstacles are used including a hurdle, a long jump, weaving poles, tunnels an "A" ramp and a see saw. Any dog of sufficient size and fitness can compete and your dog does not have to be a pedigree dog.

Flyball

Flyball is essentially a spectator sport involving a team knockout competition. Each team must have four handlers plus a "box loader" and some reserves. Two teams compete at one time, with each dog jumping over four hurdles in succession before triggering the pedal on the Flyball box. A tennis ball is then released, which the dog must catch and hold before returning over the hurdles at the start line. The first team to have its fourth dog across the finish line, with any part of the dog's body, wins the race.

Dog Showing

The most popular form of canine competition in this country is the dog show. The Kennel Club sets a standard for every breed of pedigree dog that it recognises, which represents the ideal conformation and characteristics of that breed. At shows, the judge must compare each dog with the breed standard to find the dog nearest to that ideal picture of the breed. Ringcraft classes teach you how to prepare and present your dog so that it looks its best for the judge in the show ring. However, crossbreed dogs are unable to compete in the Kennel Club shows, but this doesn't stop thousands of people with crossbreeds enjoying the fun of a "novelty" dog show where the dog might be judged on its "cuteness" or "waggiest tail" rather than a breed standard. These shows are not as competitive and provide a lovely way for the whole family to enjoy a great day out with their dog.

Heelwork to Music

The title says it all - each competitor designs a routine to suit a piece of music of his or her choice of up to four minutes duration. Training for this discipline is entirely by motivation and reward. Competitors are usually judged over three sections:

1. Content of the programme - a variety of moves that the dog has been taught to perform.
2. Accuracy and execution of the programme - how accurately the moves were performed and the flow from one movement to the other.
3. Interpretation of the music - self descriptive in that the moves and choreography should interpret the music.

Field Trials & Gundog Working Tests

Field Trials resemble as closely as possible to a day's shooting in the field and working gundogs are expected to work on a variety of game from rabbits and hares to grouse and pheasants. The majority of Field Trial competitions are held during the shooting season (12 August - 1 February). A few Spaniel trials on rabbits take place during the summer with Pointers and Setters competing on spring and summer circuits of one or two weeks where no game is shot or retrieved. Breeds within the Gundog group fall into four categories: Retrievers (including Irish Water Spaniels), Spaniels, Pointers and Setters and breeds which Hunt, Point and Retrieve (HPRs). Gundog Working Tests are competitions that simulate a day's shooting in the field using a variety of "dummies" which seek to assess, without game being shot, the working abilities of gundogs.

Working Trials

Working Trials are the civilian equivalent of police work, however for the competitor it is purely for competition. All breeds can take part, but Working Trials are physically demanding so both the dog and the owner must be physically fit. The exercises are divided into three sections:

1. Nosework - the dog follows a "track" which is laid by a "tracklayer" (who is a stranger to the dog) walking a set "pattern". The track is approximately half a mile long and laid on grassland, corn, ploughed field or heathland, with each competitor working on similar terrain. As the dog follows the track it has to seek out and recover articles placed along the track by the tracklayer. The other component of nosework is "search" where the dog has to search for and retrieve articles placed in a marked area.
2. Agility - consisting of a three foot hurdle, six foot scale and nine foot long jump.
3. Control - consisting of heelwork, sendaway, retrieving a dumbbell, down stay, steadiness to gunshot and speak on command.

Bloodhound Trials

At Trials, Bloodhounds hunt/track the human scent - this is known as "hunting the clean boot". The procedure is that a "runner" leaves an article with his/her scent (known as the "smeller") attached to a flag at the start, then walks the line on a route predetermined on a map. The Bloodhound is then required to follow the line and find and identify the runner who waits at the end of the line. There are four Stakes, starting with Novice (the line is one mile long and is laid half an hour before the dog works) progressing to Senior (three miles long: two hours cold).

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