

AGILITY

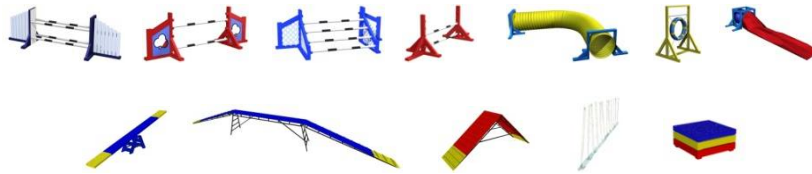
A SPECTATOR'S GUIDE

WHAT IS AGILITY?

Agility is a sport in which a dog runs through a timed obstacle course as commanded by the handler. Agility is a great way to have fun and strengthen your bond with your dog. Agility is also a great physical and mental workout.

SPECTATOR GUIDELINES

- Always ask before you touch the dogs. This is especially important for children. Please make sure that children are properly supervised.
- Feel free to sit or stand ringside while enjoying our event but be sure to stay back from the entrance and exit. Please also stay a reasonable distance from the ring itself.
- Spectators may **NOT** assist or coach any team. Shouting out proper course order, for instance is against the rules. It is also improper to shout the dog's name as this will distract the dog from the handler's directions.
- Please feel free to cheer and applaud at the end of an impressive or particularly entertaining run.



OBSTACLES

JUMPS – Most of the jumps are single bar jumps. Some have colourful, decorative standards holding up the bars. There are a few variations on jumps, such as double-bar, spread and the tire jump. Dogs must clear the jumps without knocking down the bars. Jump height is determined by dog's height at the withers (shoulder). Veteran dog jump lower than regulation height.

TUNNELS – There are two types of tunnels. One is a long, flexible tube, while the other (called a chute) is open one end only. The exit of the chute is a collapsed fabric tube, resembling a large windsock.

CONTACT – The dog-walk, A-frame and teeter are called contact obstacles because of the yellow zone at each end. To successfully complete a contact obstacle the dog must place at least one paw on the contact zone when coming off the A-frame or dog-walk, but they must touch the contact zones going onto and off the teeter. The contact zones are in place for safety reasons.

WEAVES POLES – The dog must enter to the right of the first pole and zig-zag

through all poles. They must not miss a pole. Some dogs go through weaves poles so quickly they almost seem to blur!

TABLE – The dog must stop on the table and hold a “down” position for a five-second count. No part of the dog can touch the ground during the count. If the dog gets up before the count is completed the count is restarted.

THE JUDGE – The judge not only designs the pattern of the course but also supervises the correct set-up and placement of the obstacles. In addition the judge must referee the performance of the dog/handler team. Watch for hand signals from the judge to indicate that the team has made a mistake.

FAULTS – Faults occur if the handler touches the dogs or any of the obstacles while on course. Missed contact zones, displaced jump bars, missed or improperly completed obstacles are all counted as faults. If the team uses more than the allowed time for the course they will

also be given time faults. Faults range anywhere from 5, 10 and 20 points. The team to complete the course with the fewest points accumulated and with the fastest time wins the event.



THE EVENT

JUDGE BRIEFING – When the course has been set up, the handlers gather together in

the ring without their dogs for a “judge’s briefing”. At this time the judge explains the course and summarizes how it will be judged.

WALK THROUGH – After the briefing the handlers may “walk the course”. The judge allots a set amount of time for the “walk through”. This is also done without their dogs. You may see group of handlers working together discussing difficult sections of the course. Other handlers choose to quietly walk the course as many times as they can, still other handlers opt to run the course giving instructions to any imaginary dog.

COMPETITION RUNS – Each dog runs the course off leash and with no collar, accompanied by the handler. The timer will tell the handler when to begin and will start the stopwatch as soon as the dog crosses the start line, stopping the clock when the dog crosses the finish line. As the dog runs the judge will signal to the scribe with hand motions each time a faults occurs. The timer and scribe pass the details of each run to the scorekeeper, who is responsible for calculating qualifying scores and top placements in each course.

THE 3 LEVELS OF AGILITY – Agility is run at the Starters, Advanced and Master level. Each dog enters the sport as a starter. Obviously the rules and courses become more difficult as you move up through the skill levels. Young, active dogs run “regular” courses, while older dogs or dogs with health concerns can choose to run as “veterans” or “special”. Specials and veterans jumps lower than regulation height.

TYPES OF COURSES

Please ask what type of course you’re watching!

STANDARD course require the dog to perform all obstacles in the order and time limit set by the judge.

JUMPERS course use only jumps and tunnels. These are usually fast-paced, exciting runs.

GAMBLERS course require the dog to earn points for completing various obstacles chosen by the handler within a set time. After this the dog can earn bonus points for taking commands while the handler stands behind a designated line and completing a short series of obstacles.

SNOOKER course is a game based on a British billiard game. To begin the handler directs the dog over a red jump, followed by an obstacle of their choice. This is done three times, using a different red jump each time. After this is performed the team completes a set series of obstacles

TEAM RELAY course are standard courses. Each team consists of two dogs and two handlers. The first dog and handler start from their designated area and complete the first half of course. When this dog and handler return to their area the second dog and handler team completes the second half of course. The event is over after the second dog and handler cross the finish line. The team with the fastest time, and cleanest runs, win the event.

STEEPLECHASE course are a very fast paced course utilizing jumps and tunnels designed for Master level dogs but any Starter, Advanced or Master levels dogs are permitted to participate.

CHALLENGE course is to provide a class that tests the handling skills as well as the speed of the agility team, similarity to World Championship level.