

Agility Obstacle Skills

The purpose of the Agility Obstacle Skills class is to provide dogs with a positive introduction to agility obstacles. Here, teams are introduced to all agility obstacles: jumps (including tire, broad, winged, non-winged, panel, double and triple), contact equipment (including table, teeter, dogwalk and Aframe), tunnels (straight and curved), the chute and weaves. The goal of this class is to prepare teams for a future in agility by helping them acquire the 3Cs of obstacle performance.

Correctly – Learn the technical aspects for correct obstacle performance.

Consistently – Develop consistent obstacle performance.

Confidently – Build confident, speedy and independent obstacle performance.

The Agility Obstacle Skills class focuses on individual obstacle performance. Many of the exercises are done at “stations” and involve only one to three obstacles. However, returning students may be required to complete sequences with up to six obstacles. In this class teams are introduced to distractions while on course such as an “off course” obstacle, a toy left on the ground, obstacle discrimination and short common sequences such as pinwheels and serpentines.

Class Requirements: Dogs must be at least 12 months old and must have completed a Canine Capers Foundation Skills class. Large breed dogs will not be asked to jump at full height or weave until they are at least 15 months old.

Class Expectations: Students should expect to spend no less than 3 sessions (24 weeks) in the Agility Obstacle Skills class.

What Students Should Bring to Class: A variety of soft food treats and toys, a crate (highly recommended), water and a hungry dog.

Skills Required for Advancement: Before teams can advance to the Agility Handling Skills class the dog must be performing each of the obstacles correctly, consistently and confidently. Correctly is defined as follows:

Jumps – The dog performs each jump type at full height with the handler positioned “around the clock” both close to and at some distance away from the jump. The dog must be able to wrap a stanchion.

Contacts – The dog must perform each contact “independently” (i.e. without the handler luring across the contact or into its end position). The proper end behavior for all contacts is a 2 On/2 Off with an exception made for dogs that are not structurally suited for the position (i.e. long backed dogs and vary large and/or heavy dogs).

Table – The dog must jump on the correct sized table confidently. An automatic down is preferred but not required.

Teeter – The dog must execute the teeter at full height with little to no hesitation at the tipping point and move to the correct end position.

Dog Walk and A-frame – The dog must execute the equipment at full height and move into its correct end position.

Tunnels/Chute – The dog must drive into the tunnel/chute and exit looking for the handler.

Weaves – The dog must enter the weaves correctly (with the pole on the left shoulder) regardless of the handler’s position and complete 12 poles without hesitation or “popping out”. It must also be able to find the correct entrance when performing an obstacle prior to the weaves.

Correct performance also means the dog performs the obstacle with the handler on either side, at a distance and at a variety of angles from the obstacle. The handler must be able to:

Send the dog to the obstacle.

Recall the dog over/through the obstacle.

Cross before/after each obstacle.

Of course “consistently” means the dog is highly successful on its attempts at each obstacle and “confidently” means it is happily performing each obstacle without hesitation.