

PERFORMANCE DOG SPORTS

by Denise Rittenhouse

We Canadians are a very competitive group on the whole. Just check out any of your local sports fields or arenas. That competitive spirit can find many outlets in the Purebred Dog World. There are any number of Performance Sports available to you as a Purebred Dog owner. Below you will find just a few of the many competitive events available to you and your dog, and a brief summary of some of the training involved and titles that can be achieved.

Competitive Obedience:

Obedience training is a great foundation for any performance sport. It is also a good start to having a well mannered family pet. The CKC offers many obedience titles for you and your canine partner to strive for. Each Obedience title builds on the skills of the previous title. In competitive obedience you will train your dog to heel on and off leash, sit and stand for examinations, recalls, jumps, retrieves, hand signals and some scent discriminations. When you and your dog are ready to test your skills, you will enter a trial and be tested by a CKC licensed judge. You must attain 3 qualifying scores of at least 170 out of a possible 200 points under at least two different judges. This format is similar to many other CKC performance sports.

Here are just a few of the CKC Obedience Titles available for you and your dog to train for:

CD. (Companion Dog) On/off leash heeling, sits/downs, recall and stand for exam.

CDX. (Companion Dog Excellent) builds on the CD exercises with the addition of dumbbell work and jumps.

UD. (Utility Dog) builds on the CDX exercises with the addition of signals, directed jumping and scent discrimination work.

Rally Obedience:

Rally Obedience is a fun obedience sport. It is a little less formal than regular obedience. Rally involves heeling, sits, downs, and turns, jumps, changes of pace and much more. Rally is a course made up of signs. Each numbered sign asks for the dog and handler to perform a specific maneuver. The dog and handler must heel from sign to sign until they have completed all signs and finished the timed and scored course. You must score a minimum 70 points out of a possible 100 to qualify. A rally title is acquired through a similar format to obedience. Three qualifying scores under at least two different judges are necessary. There are several CKC Rally titles to train for. As with all performance titles each title builds on the skills of the previous one. Some Rally Titles and their descriptions are below.

Rally Novice (RN.): On leash with 10-15 stations to be performed.

Rally Advanced (RA.): Off leash with 12-17 stations to be performed and one jump.

Rally Excellent (RE.): Off leash with 15-20 stations to be performed and 2 jumps.

Additionally there is a Rally Advanced Excellent Title (RAE.) in which the dog and handler must qualify in both the Advanced and Excellent classes in 10 trials.

Tracking:

Tracking is a great performance sport for anyone who loves the outdoors. It is also a great form of exercise for you and your dog, while learning a new skill. Dogs have such a keen sense of smell, 100,000 times stronger than humans, therefore your canine partner is already willing and able to track. The general idea is for the dog to follow the scent left behind by a person walking through an area (field) and to find an article dropped by that person. You will build a close bond with your dog while helping him to hone his natural skills and abilities to follow scent, and you will learn to read and understand his subtle signals. Getting started is easy and very little equipment is needed. 1.) You will need to find an instructor, class or tracking group. 2.) You will need a harness (nothing fancy, a regular nylon one will do to start) 3.) a 20 - 40 ft. lead, 4.) a work glove(to use as an article) and 5.) some simple flags on small poles that can be inserted into the ground to mark your track at various intervals..... and you are all set to enter the wonderfully fulfilling sport of tracking. Tracking is just one of the required skills your dog will need, if you wish to pursue a career as a search and rescue team. The first CKC tracking title you will train for is a **TD**. (Tracking Dog) The test track for this title is 1312 ft to 1476 ft in length and is from 1/2 an hour to 2 hours old. It will consist of 3 - 5 turns and one article. A CKC tracking judge will test you and your dog on this track. Each of the tracking titles that follow the TD, expand in time, turns, and age and number of articles on the track. Some contain cross tracks (a point in the track where someone other than the track layer crosses the track) and the surfaces on which the track is laid will vary. Listed below are some additional CKC tracking titles:

TDX. (Tracking Dog Excellent)

UTD. (Urban Tracking Dog)

UTDX. (Urban Tracking Dog Excellent)

Agility:

Agility is a fun, fast, energetic sport loved by dogs and handlers alike. Agility dogs must run a course off leash guided by hand and voice commands from their handlers. They run the course, manoeuvring over and through jumps, tunnels, weave poles, chutes and even up and over a teeter totter. The dog must complete the course cleanly and efficiently as there is an allotted time. Dogs are grouped according to size. There are numerous CKC agility titles to set your competitive sites on. These are just a few listed here. To qualify for a title your dog must receive 3 qualifying scores of 85 points or better (with no non-qualifying deductions) from at least 2 different judges. Some CKC Agility titles are **AgN**.(novice) 13-15 obstacles, including the dog walk, open & closed tunnel, A-frame, double bar, bar, tire and panel jump, pause table, teeter and six weave poles with 3-4 minor challenges. **AgI**. (Intermediate), **AgX**. (Excellent), **AgMX**. (Master Excellent) There are many other available agility titles, all built on the required skills of the previous title. Each title level sets out a new set of challenges for the dog and handler.

Once you and your dog have obtained a Performance Title, those letters will be added to your dog's registered name as proof and in honour of all your hard work as a performance team!!

This is just a brief summary of some of the CKC Performance sports available to you and your Canine Companion. Please check the CKC website for a complete list of CKC Recognized Performance Sports. (www.ckc.ca) Whichever CKC Performance Sport you choose for you and your canine partner, you are both sure to have plenty of fun!!!!