

AGILITY

I beg pardon of agility aficionados and those who want to explore agility training for the first time because this section accidentally got dropped from the book. I will make up for it here and promise to give the sport its rightful place in the revised edition.

A quick explanation for those who know nothing about this growing sport: it is a competition in which dogs are timed as they navigate a pre-determined course over a series of regulation obstacles. The dogs perform off-leash in partnership with their person, who runs alongside or ahead of them, indicating to the dog which obstacle she must navigate next, either going on, over, around, through or under. The dog practices over and learns to identify those obstacles by name that the person calls out in competition, indicating which hurdles, tunnels, hoops, catwalk, or poles to weave around.

There are a number of agility groups you can contact to find out where there might be gatherings in your area. All these groups welcome dogs of every background, except the AKC which only allows purebred dogs.

American Kennel Club (AKC) www.akc.org; Australian Shepherd Club of America (ASCA) www.asca.org; Canine Performance Events (CPE) www.k9cpe.com; Dogs on Course in North America (DOCNA) www.docna.org; Just for Fun (JFF) www.dogwoodagility.com/JustForFun.html; North American Dog Agility Council (NADAC) www.nadac.com; Teacup Dogs Agility Association (TDAA) www.dogagility.org; United Kennel Club (UKC) www.ukcdogs.com; United States Dog Agility Association (USDAA) www.usdaa.com.