



Agility Training Philosophy

This is a team sport – you are the coach and leader of the team.

- **Your job –**

Teach - your dog can't do it unless you teach him how

- Dogs learn best from success not failure – set your dog up to succeed
- Test your dog only after you are 100% sure he knows what to do!
- Re-teach if necessary – you probably did not communicate effectively the first time!
- The timing of rewards is critical! Unless you use a clicker the reward must come at the instant of success!

Coach - never forget to encourage your dog to constantly increase his level of performance

- Keep your dog fit! Keep his weight down!
- Warm up your dog – stretch him as any athlete would (Don't forget to stretch yourself!)
- Don't Nag your Dog! You are your dog's cheerleader!
- Always test for distance
- Speed – never work slow – all practice must be at top speed and drive – you must maintain enthusiasm

Lead - in training and on course your timing and signals must be impeccable – your dog can't read your mind! You are ½ the team! If you didn't do your part right your dog can't do his right. If your heart isn't in it don't train! Wait for a better time!

Reward- always let your dog know when he is correct and that you are pleased! Positive reinforcement works better than negative reinforcement. Rewards can be in the form of a treat or toy – both are used at Zonies! Jackpot super effort! And of course praise is always important and will increase the bond between you and your dog making an even better team!

Never yell at your dog!

Safety - at anytime you do not feel conditions are safe for your dog or for you – speak up – DO NOT WORK YOUR DOG! Many of us have refused to run a dog at a trial due to wet or windy conditions! You know your dog best and are the only one who can determine what is best for your dog. Small dogs are affected most by windy conditions. Large fast dogs are affected most by wet slippery conditions! All dogs are affected by extreme heat or humidity.

Have Fun!

- **Your dog's job –**

Perform each obstacle fully and completely – exactly the way you taught him

- Come to a full stop at all contact zones
- Perform “ALL” weave poles
- Enter weave poles correctly
- Find the tunnel entrance without help
- Obstacle discrimination

Understand and perform directional commands upon request

- Turns, Switches, Out, In, RVP etc

Commitment – Eagerly pursue obstacles in front of him unless he is told otherwise

Follow your lead

- Be tuned into your body and voice – be ½ the team

Have Fun!

REMEMBER: THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE FUN! If at any time you or your dog are not eager and in a hurry to get to class or practice something is wrong! If you can't figure it out ASK FOR HELP!

