



### Welcome to our First Agility Newsletter

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## Welcome to the first issue of PWDTS Agility Newsletter

This Newsletter is for all agility members and will regularly be emailed out to the agility group. Included in it will be a variety of information from the agility world. Information about local Agility competitions and PWDTS Club news.

Agility is a popular and growing area of the Dog School and whilst it remains a fun agility club, we do teach to competition standard, and follow the agility rules. There is no pressure to compete at all, however more members are asking about doing some shows and this newsletter will provide information for those of you who are considering competing and who already are. I will also post results of club members and hopefully some members might be prepared to contribute the odd article or show snippet!

### Club News

Agility at the club is increasingly popular with some of my long term members having been with me for nearly three years, since the agility side of the club started up. We now have 8 agility classes running every week with several 1-2-1s taking place each week, as well. Three instructors take agility, myself, Kate and Linda. In future issues of the Newsletter we will bring you Trainer Profiles!! April 2009

has seen the start of our evening agility classes. One of the reasons we are so in demand is that we keep the classes so small, 4-6 dogs, so there is very little standing around time, and the location is so great, not to mention the wonderful instructors. I have plans this Summer to do a couple of fun competitions on a Tuesday and Wednesday for club members with rosettes and prizes, more details coming soon.



## So you want to compete?



*Poppy above has the fastest weaves of all dogs in the club!!*

Firstly your Dog needs to be registered with the relevant organization to compete. For Kennel Club Shows you need a Kennel Club registration number. If your dog is a Pedigree then the litter will probably have been registered with the Kennel Club and you will have the relevant Kennel Club name and number on your documentation. If your dog is a crossbreed or rescue, you need to register on the Activity Register:

[http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=455&d=pg\\_dtl\\_art\\_news&h=239&f=0](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=455&d=pg_dtl_art_news&h=239&f=0)

You will need to make up a kennel club name for your dog. It costs £12.

For UKA shows you need to register with the organization which can be done online at <http://www.ukaagility.com/>

There is a small fee for owner and dog registration. You only need your pet name for registering.

## Kennel Club and UKA shows what is the difference?



Both organizations run their shows in a similar way, however there are a few differences. UK Agility has two progression routes, the first is their performance programme which is made up of Agility and jumping classes and then there is the Steeplechase Programme which is classes that are purely based on jumps and tunnels. To move up out of classes is slightly different too, for the KC classes you need a certain number of wins or places

whilst in the UK Agility classes you can progress more easily on points – for each clear round you gain 2 points and you need 24 to progress out of beginners. In my opinion, therefore, it is slightly easier to progress with UKA. Overall the rules are very similar but the UKA shows are usually a little bit smaller, the classes have fewer dogs in, you can do more runs per dog and there is a greater variety of classes to run. I go to both KC and UKA shows, I recommend you do the same and make your own minds up!

## What classes should I enter?

Both KC and UKA do special beginners classes for new dogs. At KC shows these are called Anysize jumping. The jumps are set at a lower height and there are no contacts or weaves in the classes. UKA do a Nursery class and a Casual agility and Casual jumping class. In the Nursery class there is no seesaw or weaves and the dogs can jump one height lower than their measured height. In the Casual classes, it will be a similar

class to a beginners but you can jump one height lower. If you feel your dog is able to jump at its full height you can enter any beginners class. Please ask if you need additional advice on what classes to enter with your dogs.

Details of all the shows and the schedules for entering can be found on:

<http://www.agilitynet.com/>





## What do I do when I get to the show?

About a week before the Show, you will be sent a Ring card and Timetable for the show. If your class is first in the ring, you need to be there before the class starts to walk the course. Once the class has started, you will not get another chance to walk it. Leave your dog outside the ring when you walk the course. You also need to book in at the ring side at this time so they know you are intending to compete. (This just normally means ticking your name on a list!) Larger shows will call the dogs in groups of, for example, the first 50 dogs and so on, with the smaller shows they are less fussy about who runs in which order, but it is useful to carry your ring card with you.

You join the queue and wait for your turn. Set your dog up on the

line when instructed and wait until you are told you can run. Your time starts when your dog goes over the first jump and stops as they go over the last. Remove your lead, etc before you run and it will be moved to the finish line. Your dog is only allowed to wear a flat collar in the ring, no dangling tags etc. I have a separate show collar for my dogs and remove the other one prior to them competing. You will be disqualified if you don't comply with this.

Don't panic if it all goes wrong, the judges will have seen it all before, especially in the lower classes.

People are generally very friendly at the shows, so if you are unsure of anything just ask someone.

## I'm worried that my dog will do something wrong at the show!

You certainly won't be alone if your dog does!! The judges have seen it all before and of course everyone wants their dog to do their best on the day but there are so many distractions and it is an environment and atmosphere that can take some dogs time to get used to.

At one of my dog's first show, the only piece of equipment she seemed to be able to see in the ring was a big yellow

tunnel, so she ignored all the jumps and just did the tunnel! I have seen dogs run straight out of the ring, stop to go to the toilet in the ring, go under jumps, go over jumps the wrong way, handlers going the wrong way, etc. etc. If you stand outside a beginners ring for half an hour you would see this too. So please don't be put off by these concerns.



## Walking the Courses

This is something you will be familiar with, as we usually get you to walk the course before you run it with your dog. It is particularly important at the shows though. Walk the course enough times until you feel completely sure of the route. Remember there is no right or wrong way to run a course

and you will often see people taking different routes with their dogs. Watch other handlers as they walk the course if you are unsure how to negotiate a turn or entry to a piece of equipment. Look out for traps – these are where an obstacle may have been intentionally placed to pull the dog off course!!



## Getting your dog measured

### Getting your dog measured:

The KC requires that all dogs be officially measured to confirm the height they should compete at. You will be given a booklet and it will be recorded in this. UKA requires any dog who isn't jumping at Max (full height) to be measured. Measuring

takes place at most shows and they will normally announce it on the day. We can give you advice on the likely height you will be jumping and again advise you on the appropriate height to enter.



## Congratulations

### News from the shows

I have just been reliably informed that a certain Labradoodle has been winning rosettes this weekend, so I will report on those in the next edition.

There is also some rather amusing footage of a few

of us at shows on YouTube but I must check with all involved to ensure they don't mind me publishing details – watch this space!!



## Linda and Tessa's story

Tessa is my 2 year old Jack Russell/Wire Haired Terrier who we have had since she was 6 weeks old. She has always been a girl with anxiety issues and when she reached the age of one I decided to give her a go at agility which was suggested as a way of building her confidence. That's exactly what it did, she took to it like a duck to water and has spent the last year training weekly at the field in Saunderton Lee or even in the garden in the heavy snow!!! Now she has become reasonably confident with all the equipment, so I decided to take the plunge and enter our very first show. I registered her with the Kennel Club as Tessa's Pick N Mix and with UKAgility just as Tessa and entered her for her first show at the Waverunners show at Walton on Thames, which is a site for many of the UKAgility shows. It was easy to do, just went on the internet, ticked the right boxes and sent a cheque in the post. One week before the competition we got our running card and the order, oops, we have got to be at the show before 8am so have to get everything on the car the night before, early night and early rise and on the M25 at 7am, found the show easily as they provided the directions and arrived well on time to find our ring. The one thing that was very obvious is that everyone is very helpful and friendly and I didn't feel on my own as there

were many others there for the first time. Walked the course with all the others and then settled down to watch the other heights run before we had our go and there was lots of laughter as dogs ran out the ring, people tripped over the fences, dogs jumped the wrong way, people got lost on the course so after that I knew we would be okay and if nothing else would end up with a laughter stitch if I went wrong. Then it was our turn, having competed at a high level with horses over the years with no fears, suddenly I was standing there and feeling very nervous but the judges were very friendly and when I said it was our first time the judge told the scorer to "be gentle with this one" and then off we went, for her first time she was a star just went in the tunnel the wrong way but went through properly second time and just ran the rest of the course clear, what a good girl, I was so proud of her and she was just as good at her second show. I would recommend it to anyone just to go and visit a show with their dog and lap up the atmosphere and see what great fun both people and dogs have and probably make a lot of friends on the way.



*Linda and Tessa's story – so far!*



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## Final Word

I hope you have enjoyed the first edition of the agility newsletter. It has been filled mostly with information about the shows on this occasion but as promised will contain other articles in the future. If there is anything you would like to see included, please email me and if anyone would like to contribute an article I would be very grateful – especially those of you competing.

All feedback is gladly received!!

Best Wishes

Pauline