

Level 1 for Dog Sports – Communicate!

Objectives:

1. Dog will offer behavior
2. Dog will offer focus to the handler
3. Dog will learn basic body awareness through targeting
4. Dog will learn the basics of a “stay” behavior on the table
5. Handler will learn how to See, Mark, and Reward
6. Handler will learn appropriate mechanics of reinforcement (placement, timing)
7. Handler will learn how to split behaviors into small pieces to get success
8. Handler will learn how to fade lures, or not use lures at all in training

Criteria for Level 1 certificate:

Dog will demonstrate one trick chosen by the handler from either the AKC novice trick list or DMWYD novice trick list. Trick must not be lured. This demonstrates the dog’s willingness to work with the handler, and the handler’s ability to train a new behavior.

Dog will walk or run the full length of a dogwalk plank on the floor. No end behavior is required. This is the first step to confidence on the DW and teeter. The dog is also learning body awareness.

Dog will put front feet on a perch or platform. This is a body awareness exercise, useful in teaching heel position also.

Dog will circle a cone or upright 270 degrees without a lure, both directions. No leash. This is the beginning of jump work, wraps, collection, and is also a conditioning exercise. Wrapping an upright is a good way to start a sequence in training.

Dog will touch a target with her nose (target will be on the ground). Targeting is a behavior that applies to many sports.

Dog will get on a table with all four feet, stay until released. This is the first step in “stay” training.

Dog will walk backward 2 feet or more while handler is standing still. Dog may walk backwards to a foot target. This is a body awareness exercise, useful for conditioning, and important for contact training.

The testing may be done at different classes – it doesn't have to all be done at once. The handler may reward the dog after completing each behavior but must not lure the dog to get the behavior. A certificate of completion will be awarded when all tests are passed, and the dog may then move up to Level Two.

Important Terms:

- Reinforcement
- Jackpot
- Reward
- Marking behavior
- Play with your dog

Week 1: Emphasis on nose targeting, go around the upright,

Week 2: Emphasis on front foot targeting (perch)

Week 3: Emphasis on running the plank, getting on the table

Week 4: Emphasis on back foot targeting (walk backwards)

Every class: individual work on chosen trick, testing of each requirement, working on the non-emphasis requirements