

All Things Shiba

Conformation:



Conformation is said to be the beauty pageant of the dog world. Conformation shows are where dogs are judged on how they fit the breed standard, not how they compare to other dogs in the ring. A judge, who is familiar with the breed, determines which dogs being presented are closest to meeting that standard.

First, a dog is placed on a table so the judge can evaluate the structure of the dog. Next, the dog is asked to trot around the ring so movement can be evaluated. Then the dogs are asked to stand in the ring and the judge goes down the line to determine which dogs over all are closest to the standard. When this is done, Best of Breed and other awards are given.

The breed standard was developed by the National Shiba Club of America and accepted by the AKC when the NSCA was recognized in 1992.

Agility:



Agility is a dog sport in which a handler directs a dog through an obstacle course in a race for both time and accuracy. Dogs run off-leash with no food or toys as incentives, and the handler can touch neither dog nor obstacles. Consequently the handler's controls are limited to voice, movement, and various body signals, requiring exceptional training of the animal and coordination of the handler.

In its simplest form, an agility course consists of a set of standard obstacles, laid out by an *agility judge* in a design of his or her own choosing on a roughly 100 by 100-foot (30 by 30 m) area that is made up of grass, dirt floors, or rubber mats, with numbers indicating the order in which the dog must complete the obstacles.

Courses are complicated enough that a dog could not complete them correctly without human direction. In competition, the handler must assess the course, decide on handling strategies, and direct the dog through the course, with precision and speed equally important. Many strategies exist to compensate for the inherent difference in human and dog speeds and the strengths and weaknesses of the various dogs and handlers.

Obedience:



Obedience usually refers to the training of a dog and the term is most commonly used in that context. Obedience training ranges from very basic training, such as teaching the dog to reliably respond to basic commands such as "sit", "down", "come", and "stay", to high level competition within

clubs such as the [American Kennel Club](#), [United Kennel Club](#) and the [Canadian Kennel Club](#), where additional commands, accuracy and performance are scored and judged.

Obedience implies compliance with the direction or command given by the handler. For a dog to be considered obedient rather than simply trained in obedience, it must respond reliably each time the command is given, by what is commonly known as its handler. A dog can go through Obedience training and not be obedient. If a dog is referred to as being Obedience Trained it should comply immediately with every command its handler gives. In the strictest sense an Obedience trained dog is an obedient dog.

Rally:



Rally is a [dog sport](#) based on [obedience](#). It was originally devised by Charles L. "Bud" Kramer from the obedience practice of "doodling" - doing a variety of interesting warm up and freestyle exercises.

Unlike regular obedience, instead of waiting for the judge's orders, the competitors proceed around a course of designated stations with the dog in heel position. The course consists of 10 to 20 signs that instruct the team what to do. In contrast to traditional obedience, handlers are allowed to encourage their dogs during the course.

Therapy:



Therapy dogs must have outstanding temperaments, tolerance of other animals, a calm friendly demeanor, and like to visit with people!

To train a therapy dog, one must use gentle, positive reinforcement to teach basic commands, such as sit, stay and down. Therapy dogs must allow strangers to approach them, letting anyone touch or stroke them. They cannot be allowed to jump up on people, bark or growl. Training for and passing the AKC Canine Good Citizen test is very helpful.

The dogs need to be certified by a National Therapy group. Therapy Dog Incorporated, Delta Society or Therapy Dog International.

Fly Ball:



Fly Ball is an activity that needs strong Obedience skills with emphasis on recall with distractions and directive retrieving. An interest in balls is also helpful but this skill can be trained. Early socialization and training makes the experience easier.

Tracking:



Shibas, with their instinctive hunting ability, are a natural at tracking. Training involves helping your Shiba learn the expectations of tracking and helping the handler learn how to read their Shiba while they are working the track. Depending on the Shiba, it may take one to 1 1/2 years of weekly training before being ready for the certification test. Passing the certification test is a requirement prior to entering a Tracking Dog trial. The certification test, proving readiness to perform, is provided by an AKC tracking judge or an experienced tracking person submitting the results to AKC. The certification test is of the same complexity as an official Tracking Dog test. Unlike most other companion events, your Shiba only needs to successfully pass the Tracking Dog test once to achieve their Tracking Dog title. More advanced titles are available after achieving the TD (TDX, VST). Once your Shiba has achieved all three tracking titles, they are a Champion Tracker (CT).

Musical Freestyle



Musical freestyle is a relatively new sport that combines dog obedience and dance in a way that is totally unique and exciting. It blends dog obedience and dance presenting a visually exciting display of handler and canine teamwork. The handler and dog perform dance-oriented footwork in time to the music, rather than displaying the traditional walking pace of obedience. Heeling is an important component of freestyle but nonstandard movements are also expected to be displayed by the dog along with attention, enthusiasm, and a degree of difficulty over and above that which is normally seen in the obedience ring. A variety of handler upper body movements are also encouraged to lend interpretation to the music. Costuming for the handler also helps to enhance the interpretation of the music and to involve spectators in the spirit of the routine. Throughout the routine the handler may encourage the dog's performance with verbal commands, but no training aids or foods of any kind are permitted in the competition ring.