

Shibas are very versatile dogs - more so than we often give them credit for being. Their intelligence has long been recognized but not necessarily fully utilized. Shibas earn AKC titles in Conformation, Obedience, Rally, and Agility but that only scratches the surface of what they are capable of. Shibas can be found competing in just about every dog sport. Here are just some examples of Shibas expanding the breed's horizons.

Therapy Dogs:

Shibas are described as aloof dogs, however for some Shibas nothing could be farther from the truth. Today there are a handful of Shibas who spend time volunteering to visit nursing homes, hospitals, schools, libraries, and courthouses. They enrich lives, console those in pain, and help children learn to read. Therapy work can be an extremely rewarding experience for the right dog and owner.

If you are interested in getting involved, contact Bright & Beautiful Therapy Dogs, Pet Partners (formally Delta Society), or other local therapy dog certification organizations. Working therapy dog teams can earn the AKC Therapy Dog title.



(Dog: Saphira – Owner: Molly Sumner)

Lure Coursing:

Does your Shiba embrace its ancestral instinct to chase and hunt? Then Lure Coursing may be a great sport for you and your dog. Lure Coursing is a sport where 2-3 white bags are tied to a string that runs the length of a 300-600 yards course. The bags fly along the course triggering the dogs chase instinct. Shibas generally take to the sport quite easily and have a blast chasing the bags.



© Les Korcala (Dog: Farrah – Owner: Lindsay Tompkins)

The sport of Lure Coursing was traditionally only open to sight-hound breeds but the AKC has recently opened up a version of the sport to all breeds. This event is called a Coursing Ability Test or “CAT”. During a CAT, your dog must chase the lure around a course within a time limit. The distance and time is based upon the size of the dog. 300 yards in 1 & ½ minutes for dogs under 12 inches. 600 yards in 2 minutes for dogs over 12 inches. Dog who participate can qualify to earn titles. Dogs run off leash so it is highly recommended that your dog have a good recall.

It is quite an amazing and enjoying sight to see a Shiba embrace their instincts. So give it a try and watch your Shiba fly!

Tracking & K9 Nosework:

Shibas have very strong hunting instincts and sometimes that is displayed in their ability to “scent”. Scenting is smelling the ground or the air for a specific scent. There are two sports that embrace that skill and if your Shiba has a good sniffer, you should check them out.

Tracking is an AKC sport where dogs follow the trail of a scent on the ground. The scent is left by a person and the dog must follow that scent and at the end, find an article dropped by that person.

K9 Nosework is a sport based on the training of scent detection dogs. Levels include dog's scenting boxes trying to find the one containing a specific scent, indoor and outdoor searches, and vehicular searches. Dogs are scenting for the odor of either Birch, Anise, or Clove.

Tracking and Nosework are also great sports for dogs who do not like the traditional competition environment. Tests are held in quiet locations and in the case of Nosework, only one dog is let out at a time, on leash, allowing for dogs with behavioral challenges to participate.



(Dog: Maluko – Owner: Sandra Tung)

Flyball:

Dogs love balls and it is quite possible so does your Shiba. If your Shiba loves balls or you are simply looking for a high energy sport, Flyball may be for you.

Flyball is a fast paced relay race where each dog jumps over huddles to a box, which upon contact, pops out a ball. The dog must then catch the ball and return over the huddles to their waiting owner. Once the dog returns, the next dog on the team goes. The team with the fastest time wins.



(Dog: Emmy – Owner: Linda White)

This is just a sampling of what your Shiba can do. Shibas have long been labeled as impossible to train, and a non-traditional competition breed. That label is slowly changing. Shiba Inus will always be independent and challenging but that is only because they are just too smart. They are a highly adaptable and creative breed who loves to be challenged mentally and physically. So don't let the labels discourage you. Don't miss out on all the fun! Get out there and give some of these sports a try!

The sky is the limit when it comes to sports and activities to try with your Shiba. Here is a sampling of those aforementioned here as well as others to look into:

- Therapy Dogs
- Lure Coursing
- Tracking
- Nosework
- Flyball
- Backpacking
- Treibball
- Barn Hunt
- Canine Freestyle
- Disc Dog
- Joring
- Carting
- Herding
- Dock Diving
- And so much more!

Now get that Shiba off the couch and challenge their mind and body. You could be rewarded with ribbons and titles, but the great reward will be the bond and lasting memories you share!



(Dog: Koji – Owner: Sandra Tung)

For further information:
The National Shiba Club of America
www.shibas.org

The Versatile Shiba



(Dog: Thunder – Owner: Gisela Hamlin)

Doing more with Shibas than anyone could ever image!

- Therapy Dogs • Lure Coursing •
- Tracking • Nosework • Flyball •
- And More! •