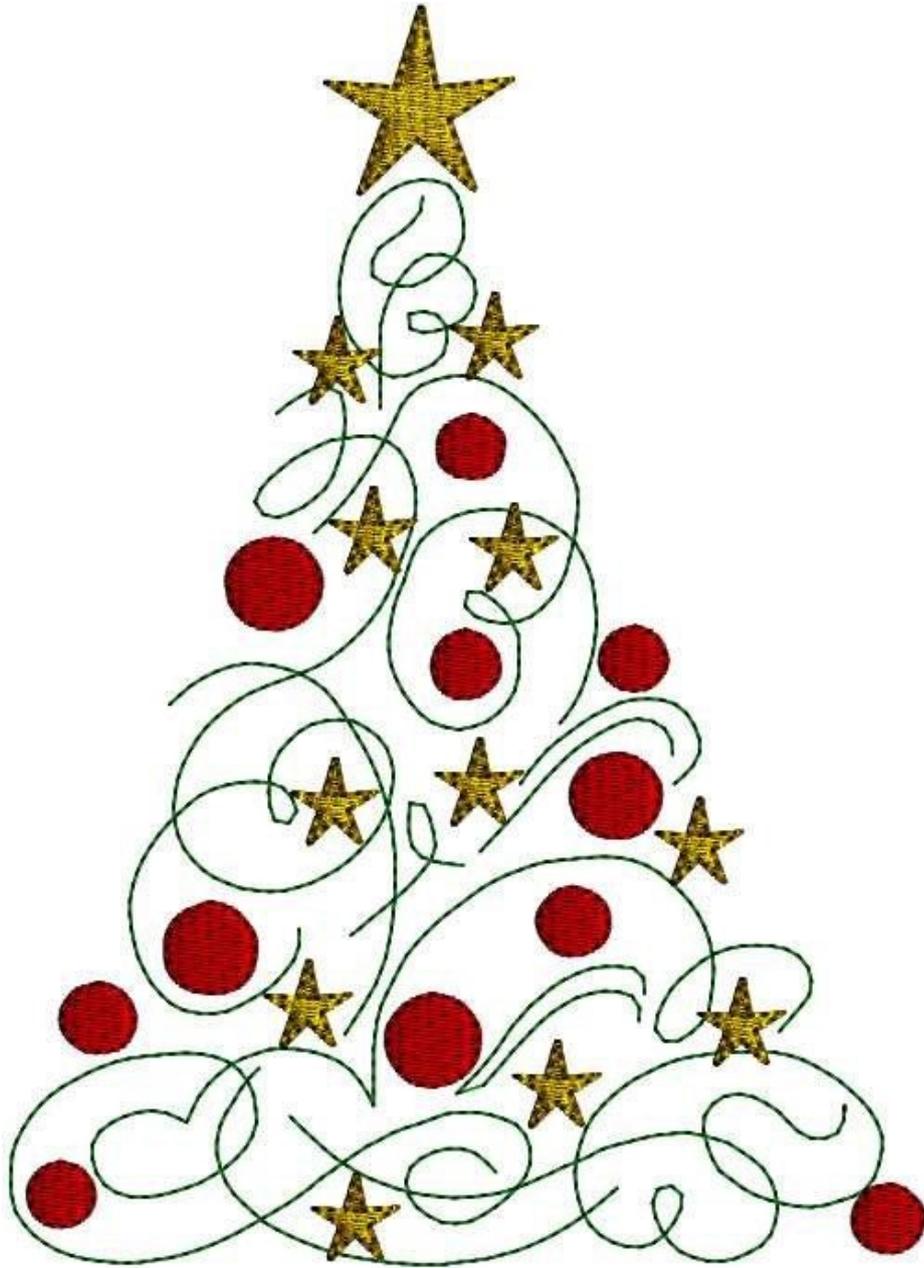


ONE JUMP AHEAD

November 2016 Edition



OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AGILITY DOG CLUB OF SA INC.



Visit our website: www.agilitydogclubsa.com

“Agility Dog Club of SA”





NEW COMMITTEE 2017



President:	Geoff Sykes	8373 0751	gsykes7@bigpond.com	Records Officer
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	Cathy Warcup	8538 7217	KateWA440@gmail.com	Equipment
	Tam Holmes	0409 630 391	tamara.holmes @tattslotteries.com	Fundraising
Sub Committee:	Jo Shirlock	8277 2271	koojar1@bigpond.com	Trial Secretary
	Julie Brown	8338 4405	julie@collieston.com	Website

Membership Fees 2016-17

Single \$60.00*

Single \$15.00 Joining Fee
(new member) \$60.00 Annual Fee

Family \$90.00

Junior (under 17) \$30.00

Social, Instructors \$25.00
&
Committee

Committee and Instructor \$15.00

*if paid by 31st March in the
current year

Instructors

Head Instructor -

Ingrid Hanegreefs

Ass. Head Instructor -

Michelle Vuaran

Instructors

Neville Cox

Karen Moralee

Julie Brown

Ros King

Tanya Mellar

Geoff Sykes

Mika Peace

Aspiring
- Kathy Brown



FROM THE EDITOR

Christmas is almost upon us and the Agility trialling year is coming to an end. Its been an exciting and successful year with the National Agility Competition being held in South Australia and a number of members gaining their titles and winning end of year awards! Congratulations to :



2016 Agility Awards – ADCSA Winners

AGILITY CHAMPIONS	Michelle Vuaran & AgCh 500 Mysticskye ADM ADD JDD JDM GDX SPD SDX (Skye)
NOVICE JUMPING	Sally Millan - Donriver Magic Edition JDX (Cayley)
OPEN JUMPING	Daniella McCulloch - AgCh OGrCh Gabrielle RAE RM ADD ADM JDM JDD GDM SDM SPDM DWDF.S
MASTER JUMPING	Kathy Brown - Kim CDX RAE HIAsd HSBsd ADX ADD JDD JDM GDX SDX SPDX
NOVICE AGILITY	Mika Peace - Flatout Breakout AD JDX GD SPD (Dash)
OPEN AGILITY	Daniella McCulloch - AgCh OGrCh Gabrielle RAE RM ADD ADM JDM JDD GDM SDM SPDM DWDF.S
MASTER AGILITY	Jo Shirlock - Sherbrooke Desert Karri ADM(2) JDM(3) SPD GD SDX (Karri)
NOVICE GAMBLERS	Sally Millan - Donriver Platinum Edition RN ADM JDM GD (Lexi)
MASTER GAMBLERS	E & N Cox - Dual Ch (A) Sherbrooke Fun in Rio ADM ADD JDM JDD GDM SPDX (Rio)
TOP GAMBLERS DOG	Kathy Brown - Kim CDX RAE HIAsd HSBsd ADX ADD JDD JDM GDX SDX SPDX
NOVICE SNOOKER	Nicki Cutten & Travis Hearse - Littleleden Thunderpaws Bandit CD RN ADX JDX SPD SD (Bandit)
EXCELLENT SNOOKER	Tamara Holmes - Hunter ADM JDM GD SPDX SDX
MASTER SNOOKER	Mika Peace - AgCh 600 Dykinta Red Alert ADD ADM JDD JDM GDM SPDM SDM (Mason)
TOP SNOOKER DOG	E & N Cox - Dual Ch (A) Sherbrooke Fun in Rio ADM ADD JDM JDD GDX SPDX (Rio)
MASTER STRATEGIC PAIRS	E & N Cox - Sherbrooke All the Sevens ADM JDM GD SPDX SDX (Sherry) & Dual Ch (A) Sherbrooke Fun in Rio ADM ADD JDM JDD GDX SPDX (Rio)
TOP STRATEGIC PAIRS DOG	Mika Peace - AgCh 600 Dykinta Red Alert ADD ADM JDD JDM GDM SPDM SDM (Mason)

I wish you, your dogs and family a wonderful Christmas and restful festive break and look forward to seeing everyone in February 2017.



Merry Christmas and Happy New year!

Michelle, Taz and Skye



Training Information



2016 Training Schedule

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4
6:50 - 7:30pm	Set up Equipment			
7:30 - 8:20pm	Introductory	Beginners & Intermediate	Graduate	Advanced
8:20 - 8:30pm	ANNOUNCEMENTS			
8:30 - 9:30pm	Trialling 200/300/400/500/600			
9:30 - 10:00pm	Pack up			

The committee appreciates our members that come regularly every week and help set up and pack up. Your help is invaluable and helps us start training on time, which benefits us all!



Reminder

Membership Fees and Trial Entry Fees can be paid directly to our club bank account.

Account: 6129 7807 BSB: 805 050

Payment by bank deposit is encouraged as it reduces cash handling, fees and is traceable.



Club Shop



Cloth Title Badge \$5.50



Dog Leads (various sizes) \$10.00



Cloth Logo Badge \$5.50

Bag of Dog Treats \$2.00

Club Metal Badge \$5.00

Sublimated Polo Shirt \$45.00



Club Sticker (round) \$4.00



Rugby Jumper \$75.00

Club Sticker (long) \$4.00

Soft Shell Jacket \$75.00

Agility Bumper Sticker \$2.00

(All clothing orders will require a deposit)

Tea & Coffee 50¢

Water & Soft Drink \$1.00

Chocolate Bars \$1.00



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ring 0417 877080



Warm Ups and Cool Downs

By Michelle Vuaran

Warm Ups

Before going out onto an agility course or training, it is important to warm up ourselves and our dogs.

When I say warm up, I don't mean doing continual figure eights over jumps or weavers for 15 minutes! Yes, your dog will be warm, but it may have also generated a lot of lactic acid in its muscles and then they must face an agility course to sprint around. That's like us doing 20 squats and then sprinting 50 m. I know from experience; my legs feel like jelly.

A warm up is aimed at warming up the muscles, mobilising the joints in the back, shoulders and legs and stretching the tissues in these areas to ensure they are warm and supple/limber. Correctly warming up your dog is easy, can help reduce the risk and severity of injury and should be done about 5-10 minutes prior to your run or commencement of your training session. It should only take about 5 minutes.

An example of a warm up modified from "The Agility Advantage- Health and Fitness for the Canine Athlete" (Chris Zink DVM, PhD)

Body rub – Rub every part of your dog's body from head to tail to awaken the muscles and increase blood circulation NOT deep massage on specific muscles.

Warm up the muscles - Trotting for 1 - 2 minutes with gentle turn work, followed by a 4-6 jumps with gentle turns.

Stretches – Concentrate on the areas of the body which the dogs rely on to effectively complete an agility course. For example, spine, neck, shoulders, legs and feet. Complete each exercise 2-3 times.



Play bow- spinal (extends) stretch



Spinal Crunch (flexing the spine to reach food between legs)



Lateral spinal stretches -left, right, up and down

Warm Ups and Cool Downs

By Michelle Vuaram

Focus exercises (both mental and gentle physical)– For example: hand touches(focus), high fives with both left and right paws (shoulder stretches)



High Fives – shoulder stretch -left and right, various heights

Cool Down

After your run, it is important to take time (approximately 5 to 10 minutes) to perform some cool down exercises with your dog. An effective cool down routine can loosen and relax muscles, maintain good blood circulation to assist the removal of lactic acid and toxins and prevent muscle stiffness and maintaining flexibility.

An example of a cool down modified from “The Agility Advantage- Health and Fitness for the Canine Athlete” (Chris Zink DVM, PhD)

Lactic acid removal - 1 to 5 minutes trotting and walking to help clear out any lactic acid build up in the muscles generated from the agility run.

Fun and bonding - Spend some one on one time playing and relaxing with your dog. Placing them straight into the crate immediately after a run, indicates you’re not happy and can be demotivating for your dog. I know sometimes this is difficult when your running several courses and dogs, but try and make the time to let your dog know how much you love them and how proud you are of their performance.

A note on massage: A pre- event massage such as a light, stimulating, invigorating type massage is a good way to awaken the muscles before competition, but a more intense massage which focuses on muscle soreness should be performed after the competition has finished. Massage on tight muscles can be sore and this is best done in a quiet and relaxing environment, allowing the dog to recuperate quietly. Massage after competition is relaxing and can assist with toxin/lactic acid removal.

References.

Peak Performance. Coaching the Canine Athlete. Christine Zink DVM, PhD. 2nd Edition

The Agility Advantage. Health and Fitness for the Canine Athlete. Christine Zink DVM, PhD

Canine Massage. A complete Reference Manual. Jean-Pierre Hourdebaigt, L.M.T. 2nd Edition

Pet Safety Tips for Christmas

Keeping your furry family members safe during the holidays can be a difficult task. There are the ornaments, plants, presents, lights -- oh, and who could forget the Christmas tree. Let's take a look at some simple steps that will allow your pets to join in the holiday fun this year, while avoiding any trips to the animal emergency room.

The 12 Tips of Christmas:

1. **Christmas Tree**—Most species of Pine Tree are low toxicity but may cause a mild gastrointestinal upset (vomiting and/or diarrhoea) if chewed. Pine needles in themselves can get stuck in paws and cause irritation as well as potentially causing irritation or perforation of the intestines if eaten. Vacuum daily and ideally keep plenty of water in the bucket to help reduce the number of fallen needles
2. **Tinsel** can add a nice sparkling touch to the tree, but make sure you hang it up out of your pet's reach. Ingesting the tinsel can potentially block their intestines, which is generally only remedied through surgical means.
3. Do not put **lights** on the tree's lower branches. Not only can your pet get tangled up in the lights, they are a burning hazard. Additionally, your dog or cat may inadvertently get shocked by biting through the wire.
4. **Ornaments** need to be kept out of reach, too. In addition to being a choking and intestinal blockage hazard, shards from broken ornaments may injure paws, mouths, or other parts of your pet's body.
5. Did you know holly, mistletoe, and poinsettia **plants** are poisonous to dogs or cats? All of these pretty types of festive foliage are mildly toxic if ingested and can cause vomiting, drooling, diarrhoea to name a few, so should be avoided or kept well out of reach.
6. Edible **tree decorations** -- whether they be chocolate, gingerbread ornaments, or candy canes -- These goodies are just too enticing and your pet will surely tug at them, knocking them down and eating them wrappers and all.
7. Burning **candles** should be placed on high shelves or mantels, out of your pet's way -- there's no telling where a wagging tail may end up.
8. **Batteries**: Batteries are everywhere at Christmas time - from new toys for the kids, lights and cell phones, and much more. While alkaline batteries can cause burns (if chewed) and obstruction even if swallowed whole, it's the smaller "button" or "disc" type batteries that easily cause more severe, more-likely-to-be-fatal burns in a cat's or dog's esophagus.
9. When **gift wrapping**, be sure to keep your pet away. Wrapping paper, string, plastic, or cloth could cause intestinal blockages. Bows and ribbons are a very common and dangerous cause of digestive obstruction in pets this time of year. Given their innate curiosity, cats are typically at higher risk, but plenty a dog has had this unfortunate experience, too. Be sure to properly and promptly dispose of all wrapping



Pet Safety Tips for Christmas

10. One area where people can come unstuck is with **Christmas presents**. We put a lot of effort in hiding away potential problems but then wrap up auntie Flo's big box of chocolates to place under the tree. Although we can no longer tell what it is... our dogs can! Apart from the irritation of having them unwrap someone else's present and having diarrhoea in the living room on Christmas day, there is likely to be an emergency trip to the vets needed. Make sure any tasty or tempting presents are placed high enough out of the way so that your dog can't help themselves.

11. **Human foods** are not a treat! Christmas is a time of giving, but some of us tend to get carried away when it comes to providing our pets with treats. Many human foods can cause serious illness to our four-legged friends, so resist that pleading face, and exercise caution when choosing what treats to give your pet.

Ham, turkey and other meats:

Most cooked meats are okay to feed to dogs and cats in small quantities.

Do not feed your dog or cat cooked bones. These can splinter easily and damage your animal's throat and intestines. Ham bones in particular are high in fat. Keep the meat scraps free of gravy and marinades. While we humans enjoy chilli, fats, pepper and soy sauce, these items may upset your pet's stomach.

Chocolate: the ingestion of chocolate by pets can result in hyperactivity, diarrhoea and vomiting, as well as excessive panting, increased urination or muscle twitching. Chocolate contains a naturally occurring stimulant called theobromine, and extreme poisoning can even kill your pet.

Christmas pudding: many pets have an intolerance to dairy foods, so Christmas pudding is not safe for them. Currents, grapes and raisins can also be toxic to pets, so reach for a pet-food treat instead.

Lollies and sugar-free sweet products: these can contain Xylitol which is highly toxic to pets. Even just a small amount can cause lethargy, liver failure, loss of balance, permanent brain damage

12. **House guests**—because of all the things they bring into your home at the holidays. You can lessen the danger by ensuring that people hang all their coats and purses well out of reach of the pets, keep their bedroom and bathroom doors closed, and asking them not to feed your pets anything from the table (or anything in general).

So what can you do to make Christmas special for your pet???

Spend extra quality time with your pet by playing games or going for extra walks.

You can purchase a variety of pet-friendly food, Christmas treats and toys from your local Veterinarian or Pet Store.

By all means, go crazy sprucing up your home and wrapping presents. But make sure you do in a way that is safe for your pet(s) this holiday season.

Reference: http://www.petmd.com/dog/seasonal/evr_multi_christmas_safety



Presidents Report 2016

The past year has presented several challenges to the Agility Dog Club of SA. Perhaps the one that is most obvious to members is separate height trials. That has necessitated three rings in every trial with a commensurate increase in workload to set up more equipment as well as the need for additional Judges and Stewards. So my job as Trial Manager has become more demanding. Nevertheless it is a role that I enjoy so I am happy to continue. We are still working to achieve the most efficient way to run our Trials.

We have been using mesh to isolate the Introductory Class at Training. The Committee has now decided to have mesh between all rings at Trials. That will be implemented at the upcoming Twilight Trial. It makes the setting-up of the rings more complicated but is an admirable safety measure. I will be relying on members to help with this task.

2016 saw the Agility Nationals run at Wirrina. I must congratulate all members who were involved either as organisers, Stewards, helper or participants. It was pleasing to see that quite a few members achieved excellent results. ADCSA members also did very well at the Royal Adelaide Show and I am sure that our Club will again feature prominently at the 2016 Dogs SA Agility Awards.

However the biggest challenge of the year was to do with running the Club. Ingrid Hanegreefs found that the pressure of being Secretary and Chief Instructor, combined with moving house and other family matters, became too much. So she resigned as Secretary but is happy to continue as Chief Instructor. Ros King took on the Secretarial role with Michelle Vuaran taking the minutes of meetings. This division of responsibilities is likely to continue indefinitely.

Lyn Fuller stepped in as Treasurer on the strict understanding that it would only be temporary. Lyn now needs to deal with other matters so she will not be continuing on the Committee. Thank you Lyn for helping us out. But we need to find a Treasurer for the next 12 months and beyond.

I am very grateful to all the Committee members for their effort and support. All Clubs need people who are prepared to do the work "behind the scenes" and the outgoing Committee has certainly done that. In particular Kathy Bannister does a lot of work to cater for the Judges and Stewards at Trials. While no longer being a member of the Committee, Jo Shirlock does a terrific job as Trial Secretary. Next year she will be running two dogs so Jo will only be receiving entries and preparing the Catalogues. The work of entering results and printing the Qualification Cards will need to be done by others.

At the 2014 Annual General Meeting I reported that the redevelopment of the grounds would present some challenges for training and running Trials. Since then the work has been "on hold". But it will be getting underway again very soon, so it remains to be seen what we will have to work with next year.

I would like to close by extending my best wishes to all members for the coming year.

Geoff Sykes



Noarlunga 8th Oct 2016



Jordi



Kas



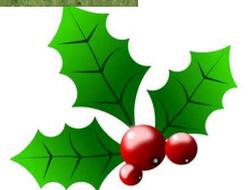
Gabby



Bella



Skye





Noarlunga 8th Oct 2016



Mason



Gabby



Bella



Kari

A special THANKYOU to Dr Pin Needham (Glenside Vet Clinic) for his fabulous photos



Instructors Report

To start of I would like to say thank you to all my instructors for a great job done this year. Without their willingness to give of their time and experience every week we would not have any classes. I do hope our members appreciate the commitment given by all of our instructors as much as I do.

Next year we will see a return of Cathy Warcup to our team of instructors which will add to the experience we have at this club. I also have been able to persuade Kathy Brown to try her hand at being an aspiring instructor. She already started to help me in the beginner class this last month. So hopefully the allocation of instructors to their classes will be easier next year than has been this past one.

Now some comments about this past year.

In the first three months our trialling members were full of excitement in getting their dogs and themselves ready for the National Championship which were held at the end of May. Some wonderful success stories came out of the Nationals. Our club was well represented and we can all be proud of our members who competed or helped with the organisation and running of this event.

And then winter came and put a damper on all that enthusiasm to train one's dog. Because of bad weather we had to cancel a few training night. So on the nights when training was on I thought that people would come and make up for the cancelled training session the week before. Not so, less and less people came, even on nights when the weather was fine. How could I be so wrong? After all I came out for every training night and don't even have a dog to train. With the uncertainty of knowing the number of people who would come to training it was hard to make a decision on how much equipment to set up and then feeling disappointed at the low number of people who turned up. I hope that 2017 will see an upswing in the attendance numbers.

Now on a brighter note I can say that quite a few titles have been gained by our members, one title in particular most of us can only dream about, Agility Champion, achieved by our assistant head instructor Michelle Vuaran and her dog Sky, her second Ag. Champion. Congratulation to Michelle and all other title winners.

This brings me now to the exact numbers of titles gained and they are as follows:

Agility	Jumping	Gamblers	Snooker	Strategic Pairs
AD 3	JD 5	GD 4	SD 3	SPD 4
ADX 2	JDX 5	GDX 2	SDX 4	SPDX 1
ADM 6	JDM 3	GDM 1	SDM 1	SPDM 3
ADO 2	JDO 0			

Agility Champion 1

Soon we'll have our summer break and I hope we all come back refreshed and eager to start a new year.

So I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and I see you out there at training.

Ingrid Hanegreefs



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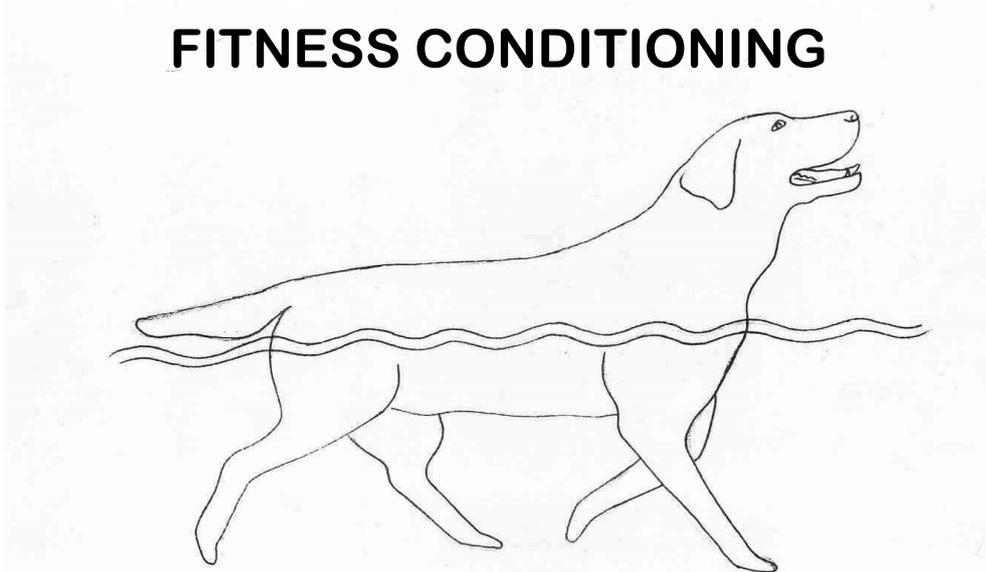
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Move of the Month

Who is up for the challenge of learning a new move...try this one **Speeding Up Your Two-on/Two-off Contacts By**

The Ideal Contact Performance

Here's my ideal performance for the teeter and dogwalk: I want an independent obstacle performance from my dog, which means that regardless of my movements—stopping short, running past to the next obstacle, doing a front cross, moving laterally, or layering another obstacle—my dog is not distracted from his task of driving into the two-on/two-off position and maintaining that position until he hears my verbal release cue. For speed, I expect my Border Collies to complete a dogwalk in less than 2 seconds and the teeter in about 1 second. For my Jack Russell I expect a dogwalk time under 2.5 seconds and for the teeter under 1.8 seconds.

Ideal Body Position

Body position is also critical. I define two-on/two-off position as two front paws straight on the ground off the end of the board with two hind legs on the board and the dog's weight transferred onto the rear end. Weight transfer to the rear assembly prevents stretching and losing control of the teeter board. Transferring weight also helps to lessen the impact on the shoulders and back when descending the A-frame and helps the dog to maintain contact with the dogwalk down ramp if he descends rapidly. As my dog drives into the two-on/two-off position, his focus should be straight and low.

Note: This article is most concerned with two-on/two-off contact performance and improving the speed of the dogwalk and teeter. If, however, the A-frame is performed slowly while the dogwalk and teeter are executed with good speed, try adjusting your dog's end position on the A-frame to make the position more comfortable. I have worked with some dogs that are reaching so far forward on the A-frame or have their rear feet so high up on the ramp that their backs are in a concave position. By teaching these dogs to bring their rear feet lower on the board, their weight is more evenly distributed from front to back and the spine is in a more relaxed position. If you cannot make your dog more comfortable in this position you may need to find an alternative contact behaviour for this obstacle. I am not a fan of two-on/two-off for the A-frame although I do teach it, if I believe I have no alternative.

The Release

Just like a dog learning to stay in a sit position must know what gives him permission to release from that position, a dog that is expected to hold a two-on/two-off position on a contact must understand what releases him from that position. Understanding of the release cue is an integral part of my dogs' contact behaviour.

Once the dog drives into the two-on/two-off position, he waits for my verbal release cue. When I give the release cue I may be standing still or I may be moving. Regardless, I want the dog to release only on a verbal cue. Therefore, I stagger the timing of my motion and the release cue—I never give the release cue with the start of any physical motion or action. If I am standing still, for example, I will either give the release cue and then start to move afterward; or I will start to move, and then once I am in motion, I will give the release cue. In addition, I isolate any arm cues or head turns either before or after my release cue.

Move of the Month

Who is up for the challenge of learning a new move...try this one

So, for example, if I am moving and need to raise my arm to indicate the next obstacle in sequence, I give the arm signal either before my verbal release or after it. I do not want to be raising my arm and giving my release cue simultaneously.

How I Train the Contacts

If I am training two-on/two-off contacts for all three contact obstacles, I teach the motion part of the teeter at the same time I teach the two-on/two-off position on a board. I do include a nose touch with the initial training of two-on/two-off. (Nose touches are always done between the front paws.) In training I support the nose touch as a secondary behaviour to two-on/two-off to reinforce the dog's head remaining straight and low. Without the nose touch there is a tendency to reinforce the dog's looking at the handler, which can lead to the dog turning and exiting the board sideways. I do not ask for a nose touch in competition. I then backchain the dogwalk to completion before I start the dog on the A-frame. This keeps the amount of repetitive A-frame training to a minimum. The teeter training may be completed around the same time as the dogwalk as long as I don't encounter any evidence of fear of the moving board. I use Touch as the cue for two-on/two-off. For some dogs the two-on/two-off position is implied with the dogwalk or teeter cue; however, I prefer to have both a cue for the obstacle and a cue for the contact position so that I can focus my training on the two-on/two-off behavior. Because of these separate cues, if I do not give the two-on/two-off cue, my dogs are unlikely to stop.

Does Your Dog Understand the Contact Behaviour You Want?

Before starting a training program to speed up your contacts, you should be comfortable that your dog has no physical issues impeding his performance. Here are some tests for you to do with your dog so that you can determine if he really understands your required contact behaviour. I have added some examples of possible responses from your dog. Note: If you are unable to get your dog onto the exit ramp of the dogwalk, you can do the tests with the dog running over the full obstacle as long as you can leave the dog in a stay or have someone hold the dog. For each test you will need to leave your dog in front of the up ramp while you lead out to a position halfway along the exit ramp.

Test 1 Start your dog halfway down the exit ramp of the dogwalk. Stand to the side of your dog, and without moving forward yourself, give your dog his two-on/two-off cue and observe what happens.

- Dog moves hesitantly forward but does not reach the two on/two-off position
- Dog doesn't move at all
- Dog moves into the two-on/two-off position but is curled toward you
- Dog moves into the ideal two-on/two-off position: two front paws straight on the ground off the end of the board with two hind legs on the board and the dog's weight transferred onto the rear end
- Other

Move of the Month

Who is up for the challenge of learning a new move...try this one

Test 2 Start your dog halfway down the exit ramp of the dogwalk. Next, stand a few feet behind your dog. And again, without moving forward give your dog his two-on/two-off cue and observe what happens.

- Dog moves backward up the board and stands slightly behind you
- Dog reacts in any of the ways listed above for the first test

Test 3 Start your dog halfway down the exit ramp of the dogwalk. Stand to the side of your dog, give your dog his two-on/two-off cue, and run with your dog. Stop with your toes just at the edge of the end of the dogwalk plank and observe what happens.

- Dog moves with you but stops a little short and has four feet on the board
- Dog reacts as in any of the previous examples Start your dog halfway down the exit ramp of the dogwalk. Stand to the side of your dog, give your dog his two-on/two-off cue, and run with your dog. Stop with your toes just at the edge of the end of the dogwalk plank and observe what happens.

Dog moves with you but stops a little short and has four feet on the board

Dog reacts as in any of the previous examples

Test 4 Start your dog halfway down the exit ramp of the dogwalk. Stand to the side of your dog, give your dog his two-on/two-off cue, and move with your dog. But stop a few feet beyond the end of the dogwalk and observe what happens.

Dog moves with you and stops in a perfect two-on/two-off position

Dog reacts as in any of the previous examples

To underscore the results of what can happen without comprehension, try this test with an unsuspecting human friend. Ask your friend to walk away from you and then observe what happens. This request should be deliberately vague, for example say, "Go in that direction away from me." Most people walk several feet forward and then hesitate and turn back seeking more clarity. They often ask: "How far? This way? Can I stop now?" Now ask your friend to walk away from you and tell her specifically where she should go. For example tell her, "Move forward and touch the left upright of the green jump with your right hand," and observe what happens. Your friend will probably move quickly to the green jump and touch the correct upright with the correct hand. Most likely, she will not hesitate or look back until the task is completed.

Occasionally I have had clients run ahead quickly when I give them this test, although I had never specified the speed of travel. When I ask them, "Why did you run?" I get answers ranging from "We only have an hour and I want to work my dog" to "I knew where to go so it just seemed the best way to get there." Whatever their answer, I believe that clearly understanding the task as well as the reinforcement of getting my stupid game over with contributed to a speedy completion. If your dog is unsure of his task, your training must start there. You need to work on a step-by-step training program to backchain the two-on/two-off position. There is much literature and video available on this subject, covering many successful methods. Once your dog fully understands his job, come back to this article so that you can learn how to maintain your newly trained contacts for the rest of his agility career.

Move of the Month

Who is up for the challenge of learning a new move...try this one

Reinforcing Successful Contact Performances

In addition to reinforcing the dog for getting into the two-on/two-off position, an important part of building speed on the contacts is to make the release exciting for your dog. The two-on/two-off behavior always ends with a release, and I always reinforce that release. Whatever I use as reinforcement must be worthwhile for my dog. The dog must enjoy and be excited about the reward. The result is that the release becomes part of the reinforcement for the dog getting into position. The faster the dog gets into the two-on/two-off position, the quicker he is released to something that he finds very exciting. Arguably, the best reinforcement for your dog in the ring is permission to move on to the next obstacle. You need to reinforce your dog for every successful contact he performs whether you are in the initial stages of training your dog to do the contact or you are an experienced team practicing complicated sequences that include contacts.

Working the Contact Obstacle by Itself When rewarding contacts I mix up the reinforcement that I give for the two-on/two-off position as well as the reinforcement that I release the dog to. I use both food and toys. If your dog loves food but doesn't like toys, then you can use food-stuffable toys. I have also used a Greenie, bully stick, and pig's ear for the dog to grab and tug with.

Food can be delivered to the dog from my hand or, if I am away from the dog's side, I will throw the food to the dog (you may need to practice accurate throwing). I expect the dog to remain in position on the board and eat the food; then I will release the dog.

You can throw toy rewards toward the dog, and then immediately release the dog from position to play with the toy. For example, if I'm ahead of the dog, I will throw the toy back to him and release him.

Alternatively, when rewarding with toys, you can tug with the dog while he remains in the two-on/two-off position; then release the dog with a verbal cue and continue to play with him off the board.

Unless I am sequencing to another obstacle, tugging with the dog in the two-on/two-off position, or ahead of the dog and throwing the toy back to him, I usually release my dog to a stationary toy placed several feet forward from the base of the plank. On release, my dog drives straight forward to the toy and then we can engage in a vigorous game of tug, building more excitement into both the two-on/two-off position and the release. I also sometimes release my dog and run with him to the hose or pool. Other times I may release the dog to a soccer ball to push around. Use something that your dog really likes.

Working the Contact in Sequence When working the complete contact obstacle in a sequence, my position and handling manoeuvres vary depending on how the course needs to be handled. I may release the dog immediately after he is in two-on/two-off and allow him to continue the sequence—the next obstacle is the reinforcement. I may throw a toy toward him and then verbally release him to get the toy. Or, I may run in and have a game of tug while he is still on the board. However I decide to reinforce a good response, I always end the two-on/two-off behaviour with a release cue.

Speed and Position Work **The Dogwalk: "Bounce into Position" Game** The "Bounce into Position" game encourages the dog to drive into the two-on/two-off position with more speed. It is easier to motivate a dog if he is on the ground rather than waiting on the board for the cue to

Move of the Month

Who is up for the challenge of learning a new move...try this one

The dog jumps onto the board and into the two on/two-off position. I either immediately release the dog to a toy on the ground, or I play tug on the board while the dog remains in position and then release. In either case, I play with the dog after the release. When asking for the bounce into position, I make certain that I myself am not moving when I say Touch, thereby insuring that the dog's response is on my verbal cue and not linked to my body motion.

The Teeter I use similar methods to build speed on the teeter. Time is lost on the teeter when the dog hesitates or stops when the board starts to move. I want my dogs to enjoy running across a moving board. I place two different height tables under the teeter, for example a 24" table at the start of the plank and a 20" table at the end. Initially I move with my dog, offering the toy as he is close to the end of the teeter board, and we have a game of tug on the lower table. When the dog becomes totally confident running on the board with me next to him, I leave the dog on the first table and lead out to the lower table, facing the direction that the dog is travelling. I call the dog to me while I offer the toy and then we play tug on the lower table. Note: Ensuring that your dog does not leap for the toy is important. If he starts to leap, offer the toy slightly sooner and pull the dog off the plank and onto the table to tug. As the dog becomes more confident, I gradually lower the height of both tables, increasing both the pitch of the teeter and the drop of the board to the table. I now run the dog over the teeter in both directions, encouraging the dog to drive through the pivot point and contact zone to the table without leaping off the board for the toy. I continue to allow the dog to leave the board to play tug on the table as long as I have the end table in position. As soon as I remove the end table I ask for the two-on/two-off position. Most dogs weighing over 12 pounds can safely perform two-on/two-off on the teeter if they transfer their weight into their rear end as the board lowers

In much the same way as the bounce into position game performed on the dogwalk plank, I prop up the teeter on one end so that the other end is slightly off the ground and ask my dog to get into the two-on/two-off position. I want the front feet to hit the teeter board close to the end, followed immediately by the rear feet as the front feet move off the board into the two-on/two-off position. As the dog gains more confidence I raise the height of the drop. I encourage the weight transfer during this game by tugging with a toy and by delivering food in such a way as to encourage a slight rock back. As an alternative to a toy, I have also used a Greenie, bully stick, and pig's ear for the dog to grab and tug with.

Routine Maintenance Work

Think back to how much training went into building your dog's initial contact performance. Now consider how long it has been since you focused on contact training and how much you may have let your performance criteria slip during competition. It is not so surprising that the initial speed and accuracy we had may have dwindled. Once you train your ideal contact performance, you need to maintain it. This means that you need to do some back-to-basics contact training with your dog once every two weeks or so. My maintenance work includes:

- Position work
- Release work
- Speed work

Move of the Month

Who is up for the challenge of learning a new move...try this one

In addition, if I have noticed any deviation from my ideal contact performance in competition, then I will focus more on one area than another. Here are some typical examples:

□ If I notice that my dog is turning in toward me during his contact behaviour in the ring, then I will work on some simple back chaining while I stand behind my dog or off to the side. I reward only the responses that meet the contact criteria I have set. In the case of turning toward me, I'm looking for the dog to have two front paws straight at the end of the board, with his head straight and low. I can further reinforce the correct response by releasing my dog forward to a toy on the ground or by asking for nose touches. Since the nose touches must be between the two front paws, the release should occur when my dog is facing straight ahead.

□ If I notice my dog self-releasing when there is a set of weave poles or a tunnel directly ahead of the contact, I vary my release work to include different obstacles as the reward following the contact. I'll practice this until the response from the dog consistently meets my wait-for-release criteria.

□ If my dog starts to reach forward on the teeter and is not maintaining the weight transfer, for example, I may go back and encourage the weight shift by playing tug on the teeter before I release.

In Conclusion

To develop and maintain speed and accuracy on contacts we must develop a behaviour that is comfortable for our dogs to perform. We must strive to train the behaviour so that the performance is clearly understood and build in a history of reinforcement so our dogs enjoy performing the obstacle while meeting the criteria we have set.

Clean Run Jan 2008



A nose touch should be done between the dog's front paws.



The Bounce into Position game encourages the dog to drive into the two-on/two-off position with speed. Here the dog is rewarded by throwing the toy to her while she's still on the board.



With success you can increase your distance from the dogwalk and send the dog to jump on the board from the side.

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If you plan on trying the pool or hydro activities,

Please bring your bathers & 2 towels

Also bring your dog's favourite treats

Calendar of Events 2016

November		
3rd Thursday	Club AGM	7:30pm
12th(Saturday)	Southern Districts Dog Club	Agility Trial 6pm
19th (Saturday)	Agility Dog Club SA Training Club	Agility Trial
24th (Thursday)	Club Break Up Night	7pm
December		
31st (Saturday)	Gawler Dog Training Club	Agility Trial 6pm



ADCSA End of Year Break UP Night 7pm

- bring a plate of food to share and BYO drinks.

