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Focus in the Ring Is Not Just for Dogs!

It's important to work on improving skills in agility, but the mental game is the difference between consistent success and mediocre performance. Learning ways to overcome stress and anything that distracts from focus in the ring will insure that you and your dog can consistently give your best performance. By Juliet Franzen



Training with the Stars: Jenn Crank

Jenn Crank was practically born training dogs and was teaching professionally by the time she was in high school. She advocates delaying the introduction to agility equipment and focusing training on making sure the dog can learn since a dog that knows how to learn can be taught anything in a short amount of time. By Sally Silverman



Out Spot Out! Teaching Independent Obstacle Performance, Part 4

Independent obstacle performance is essential for all facets of agility and is particularly important for distance work. This month you'll work on teaching the dog to perform common jumping patterns, such as pinwheels and serpentines, independently. By Lorrie Reynolds

Cover

11 Knowledge Equals Speed! Handling Positions: What Do They Mean to the Dog

This month the author shows handling positions for various maneuvers (such as front crosses, serpentines, layering, etc.) with a description of what the physical cues mean to dogs, as shown to her over the years by her dogs. By Dawn Weaver

30 Thermal Imaging for the Agility Dog

Thermal imaging can give performance and working dog owners a new tool for not only diagnosing an existing soft tissue injury, but actually catching problems in the early stages. By Kimberly Henneman, DVM, DACVSMR, FAAVA, Dip ABT, CVA, CVC, Diplomate Am College Veterinarian Sports Med & Rehab

Features

5 Editorializing: "Internationalization" and Course Design Trends

Can we introduce some European-style challenges into U.S. courses without making courses overly technical and difficult so that we can maintain the high level of diversity in the dogs and handlers competing in our sport in this country? By Ann Croft.

24 Power Paws Drills: Serp City

This month's exercises contain many variations on the serpentine to help you achieve proficiency at showing the correct line to your dog and proofing your dog's understanding that when you give a serpentine cue he should begin his turn toward the serp obstacle. By Nancy Gyes

35 Trainer/Student, Coach/Athlete

It is the teacher and coach who works with us in our regular lessons who can help us the most. So how do you go about choosing the right instructor? And, having done that, how do you get the most out of each lesson to maximize the investment of time and money? Can we learn from athletes in other sports? By Frankie Joiris

53 The Construction Zone: Weatherproof 2x2 Weave Pole Bases

These bases are constructed using aluminum and stainless steel machine screws so they are weatherproof. No welding is necessary. By Lisa Henshaw and Jim Hull

59 Busting the Myths: You Can Talk, You Can Smile, You Can Have Fun!

Is it "bad" to talk to your dog on the agility course and repeat commands? When you shape new behaviors do you need to be deadpan and sit and stare at your dog? Your dog is your best teacher. Don't believe in myths, but experiment and then listen to your dog and do what is right for him. By Silvia Trkman

Columns

6 Tip of the Month

By Deborah Davidson Harpur

7 Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Agility... By Brenna Fender

8 Backyard Dogs By Marquand Cheek

20 The 10-Minute Trainer By Daisy Peel

47 The Judge's Debriefing By Deb Hunt

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40 Channel Weaves Modified

Channel weaves allow dogs to associate weave poles with speed right from the beginning and with an open channel you can create loads of drive and enthusiasm. Here's a new take on the channel method that starts with only two poles. By Jo Sermon

55 Look! Teaching Dogs Where to Focus

Our dogs need us to teach them where they are supposed to be focusing and for how long. Teaching focus is an easy skill to incorporate into your pre-agility training without it costing you any extra training time. By Sandra Rogers

Cover Dog

In loving memory of Kelly Wilson's 4-year-old Border Collie ADCH-Gold Biggar JCH-Platinum, TM-Platinum, GCH-Gold, SCH-Gold, SACH-Gold, RCH-Gold, OA, OAJ, a.k.a. Biggie. Photo by Karen Hocker Photography.

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