

Information about the Ruff Diamonds 2024 Beginners' Agility Program

A word before you sign up.....

There are many people who think they want to do agility and sign up for the beginner lessons. Many people have a limited understanding of what agility training is.

We want you to think carefully before you sign up.....

If you think that... you already know everything you need to know about dog training, then agility is not for you.

If you think that... your dog is already well-trained, then agility is not for you.

If you are looking for an activity like the dog park, where you don't have to do much... then agility is not for you.

If you think that you must yell at your dog, bully and force him to obey you... then agility is not for you.

If you have some unchangeable objection to using treats, toys and positive reinforcement with your dog... then agility is not for you.

If you think that dog training activities should not be based around fun and games, then agility is not for you.

Agility is a fun recreational activity for you and your dog partner. Poor treatment of your partner – verbal or physical bullying – is not tolerated on any agility field. It erodes a dog's confidence and willingness to participate. It takes away the fun. We work hard to make sure that agility lessons are active, challenging and super fun for your dog. Your dog will want to come with you to every lesson and will gain the confidence to run a directed path at amazing speeds, understand your signals and perform new challenges that will thrill you. Your dog will be a patient and loving partner with you, even though you don't run very fast, your signals are late and unclear, and you learn slowly.

Do you still want to participate in the Beginner Lessons?

Great!

Our lessons are an introduction to agility, including training techniques and agility equipment.

Beginner lessons are good for young dogs and puppies, old dogs, all breeds of dogs, with or without good obedience skills. We won't be over-doing exercises or jumps. Beginner lessons are good for all kinds of handlers, young or old, experienced, or new. You simply need to be happy with your dog and be willing to learn some new training techniques.

One handler can work with one dog. If you have two dogs, you need to be in 2 groups, or have a second person handle the second dog. You are welcome to include your human partner and/or kids.

We are happy to work with overly enthusiastic or timid dogs and with handlers who don't have many skills. We do expect that your dog (on a leash held in your hand) should be happy to walk with you and the leash might even be loosely held some of the time!

Please let us know if your dog is very timid and we may be able to help with some strategies that you can work on ahead of the first lesson.

We cannot take AGGRESSIVE dogs who snarl angrily and are a threat to other dogs and people.

We work with small groups – no more than 7 dogs with 2 experienced instructors.

We will hold an orientation session (without dogs) in April and we will email you the dates.

The training field is behind the Tommy Forrest Ballpark, at the end of the parking lot / laneway area

It costs \$70 for 5 lessons. You participate in one lesson each week. Full Refunds are available until April 15. If you decide, after lesson 1, that agility is not for you, let us know right away and we will refund \$45. No refunds after lesson 2. The Club has the right to determine that you and your dog are not ready for agility lessons and will refund you a pro-rated amount.

The registration form shows the schedule for classes. Classes start May 16. Lessons are postponed if it rains.

A waiting list of people who want to take lessons can be developed. Those people will be notified, if there are any spots open.

After 5 lessons, you can sign up for more lessons until the end of June. In July and August, lessons are drop-in (come to a lesson when you choose to) and cost \$6.00 each time you participate.

If you know that you and your dog are not ready for agility, but you want to learn new skills with your dog, we can recommend some fun and affordable or even free online programs that can train you and your dog in many amazing skills.

Need more information? Got more questions? rruffdiamonds@gmail.com call or text 867-688-0433

Who coaches the Beginners?

Gay Kennedy is the lead coach for the Beginners' Lessons.

- 15 + years coaching agility

- Experience includes working with more advanced levels

- Has trained 3 of her own dogs to competition levels

- Jordie, her Border Terrier, competed at Masters' Levels in agility.

- Her young dog, Cully, a miniature poodle, is in the Intermediates group this summer.

- Remains active and stays current in agility training

Intermediate Agility participants assist Gay with the Beginner's Lessons.

All the instructors volunteer their time. This keeps our program fees affordable.

We work with lesson plans, developed over many years.

We try to use activities and methods suited to the skills of the dogs and handlers that we see at our classes.

We will never force your dog to perform an agility obstacle. We will do everything we can to make the lessons fun for you and your dog – so much fun that most dogs race back to the training field each week.

You will be amazed about how much your dog has learned in 5 lessons, how fast your dog wants to run through the course and how much they want to be with their partner in the race.

We are recreational handlers, well-suited to working with northern dogs and handlers who typically have limited experiences in dog sports and training.

We focus on teaching agility and basic dog-partner skills. Our training is limited. We do not pretend to be professional animal behaviourists or veterinarians.

We participate in an annual summer clinic with a professional agility trainer from Edmonton. Christina Sanders helps us to progress in our skills and keeps us current with the trends in agility activities.

We participate in an annual agility competition in Yellowknife, usually held the weekend before the Labour Day weekend. The meet is sanctioned by the Agility Association of Canada. We get to test our skills and earn recognition for a variety of skills and games.