



# Kiwi Dog Agility

## National Competition for Young Kennel Club agiliteers.

NALA and NZKC Young Kennel Club (NZ YKC) are offering a competition for youngsters:-

The competition will be run at two levels, Experienced and Beginner. The definition of experienced and beginner is based solely on the handler's level of experience.

1. Experienced Competition. Open to NZYKC members who run a dog on the usual Link course. An experienced handler is any handler that has handled any dog at an NZKC agility standard class at an NZKC fixture, or any handler that chooses to be in the experienced grade. Handlers can only enter once. A dog can only run the standard Link course once eg. If an adult has run the dog around the Link course, it cannot be run in the Experienced grade.

2. Beginners Competition. Open to NZYKC members who run a dog on the Beginners Link course. A Beginners handler is any handler that has not handled any dog in an NZKC agility standard class at an NZKC fixture or is under the age of 8. Handlers can only enter once. A dog can be entered a maximum of twice under different handlers in the Beginners section. Any agility trained dog irrespective of the level it currently competes in, can be handled in this class. Dogs will compete on obstacles appropriate to their height.



A handler who starts the year in experienced or Beginners grade will stay at that level for the whole competition. A handler who starts the year in a certain age range will stay at that level for the whole competition. There will be a course available every month. The Beginners course will be nested within the monthly Link course (so the adults don't have too much extra work to do!).

Age levels: Experienced – 8-11yrs, 12-15yrs, 16-24yrs. Beginners – under 8's, 8-11yrs, 12-15yrs, 16-24yrs.

Eligibility: Anyone wishing to have their results recorded, and be eligible for the awards MUST become a member of NZYKC. You can give-it-a-go for 3 months and if you join at the 3rd month, then all previous 3 runs will be counted. To join NZYKC: <http://www.ykc.org.nz/Awards>. There will be awards at the end of the year as per the usual Agility Link competition, in age ranges as well as difficulty level, all provided by NZ YKC. In addition there may be other awards offered from time to time, at the organiser's discretion. NB. You can only receive awards in one category, either Beginners or Experienced. This will not affect your eligibility for the NALA awards.

If you have any questions about this competition please direct to Karen de Wit (kpdewit@xtra.co.nz) or Nevenka Paterson (Nevenka@xtra.co.nz)

**Karen de Wit** 

## Sharky's Diary – Chapter Eight

This month I have something a bit different to offer – an obedience tip! Of course this may be common practice in obedience training at present, but I thought I would share it principally to show how something you train for one purpose can have another unforeseen advantage.

I have done basic obedience training with all my other dogs prior to Sharky, and hence have had a "close" command which means dog should move to my left side in the "heel" position. This has always been very handy in taking dog to start line in agility under control without a lead. I have not done formal obedience training with Sharky so could not use this command apart from the "side" and "close" that I have used in commands for circlework which did not mean come in really close into my side.

A couple of weeks ago it was raining in the evening (about the first time this year in the Waikato, so very welcome really), Sharky was looking a bit bored so I thought about what training I could do inside. I got out his footstool (as shown in Chapter two), and did some perch work. When I first started this, I would reward for Sharky moving away from me. After the Derrett seminars, I realised that this was not the best behaviour to reward, so instead rewarded him for movement towards me. Because his front feet were restricted in movement as they were on top of the stool, I suddenly created a brilliant move into the "close" position. From a very short training session, Sharky now understands that "close" means move into the heel position on the left, and "side" means move into the heel position on the right. This is such a handy skill to have taught because I now want him to be in precise positions at times, and this is a really easy way to get him there.

About a month ago, Sharky was not driving onto his travel plank as well as previously, and looked a bit confused as to what he should be doing. This was on the afternoon of a show on a hot day, so I asked a friend to watch what I was doing. We decided (ie I was told!) that I was not rewarding enough for a really good a nose touch or being motivated

about it myself. I should have been verbally a lot more exciting and giving multiple rewards. It really is great asking someone else to watch what you are training every now and then to ensure that you really are doing what you think you are doing. I thought about it that night, and decided that creating more drive with crate games would help. I had done crate games with Sharky when he was about 4 months old, but had not carried on doing the full program with him. So the next morning prior to the show I did some crate games, so within about 5 minutes Sharky was so excited that he was barking to be let go so he could hoon into his crate. Since then, that behaviour has transferred to his contact training. A trigger is me holding his collar saying "are you ready", and he is very enthusiastic about driving onto his travel plank or the lowered A-frame that I have started to use. I am very pleased about this improvement, and am not too worried about the barking at present even though I swore that Sharky was going to be smooth, silent and attacking from behind!

Crate games are something that Susan Garrett talked about in her seminar here in 2006. She has recently produced a DVD (called "Crate Games") which explains the steps very well, and is an invaluable tool for use with puppies as well as adult dogs. It is too difficult for me to explain the method in these short articles, but there are a number of different benefits to be gained from doing crate games. The DVD is in the NALA library (National Agility Link Assn) for members to borrow, or is available to purchase from the Clean Run site [www.cleanrun.com](http://www.cleanrun.com).

I was reminded recently about some other training that I have done since Sharky was a pup to prepare for see-saw training at a later date. With the last few pups I have had, when they are very little I lift them onto the centre of the see-saw and gently rock it while feeding the pup. This creates a positive experience being on a surface that moves, and I am careful only to move it a little bit to start with as I would not like to scare the pup at that stage. It is great to do this while the pup is small because there is little danger of them falling off as you can easily control them and lift them with one hand. Another exercise I do is to

have the pup quite close either tugging or feeding while banging the see-saw on the ground. It can help to have someone else do this for you to start off with, and reduces the likelihood of them being worried about the banging noise when you start to train the see-saw.

I also used a wobble board at an early stage, and clicked/treated Sharky for any interaction with it. He quickly learnt that getting on the board and making it move, in particular banging it from side to side was what I wanted.

Last year I bought an old desk that was on wheels for the huge sum of \$10 (off trade-me of course!). I put Sharky on this while he was a pup, feeding him while moving it around. He started to love this game and I graduated to running round the garage pushing the table doing 360 wheelies. He stands up, and moves his balance from side to side as required to be able to stay on. When I realised how much he enjoyed this, I put him in the middle of the see-saw again, and started banging it down gently while he was on it. Of course I like to push the boundaries, so the banging (of the see-saw!) became slightly less gentle quite quickly which Sharky thought was pretty damn cool.

The beauty of this early familiarisation with things that move is that when I do start training a see-saw, I will be able to graduate very quickly to the behaviour that I want because I won't have to worry about Sharky being scared of either the movement, or the noise. Once you start training this, you can put your pup on anything that moves just to reinforce that movement can be fun. A wheelbarrow is a great tool that most people have access to, or you can use rocking chairs, or any other chairs on wheels. I remember being at a North Taranaki show putting

Sharky on their little trailer that they use to carry around buckets and pegs – that had the added bonus of being at a new place.

While it is great to be able to do this with a puppy, if you have an adult dog with see-saw issues you can still do this training. The benefit of it is that it is not associated with the see-saw, and if you make it lots of fun your dog can then transfer that fun association with anything that moves or makes a noise. You just need to ensure that you are physically able to ensure that your adult dog does not fall off anything or get a fright because they are too heavy for you to control. If in doubt, make sure you have a friend there to help.

### Quick re-cap

Obedience heel position - use perch to teach this – front feet are unable to move, so dog should try to move back feet. This also really helps the dog to understand moving its back end around – essential for nice left turns.

Crate games - great for teaching your dog control and passion, recommended viewing is Susan Garrett's "Crate Games" DVD.

Early see-saw training - use anything that moves or makes a banging sound to create a positive fun game for your pup. This can be used for adult dogs, but be careful to ensure that dog or pup never gets a fright.

Have fun training, and thinking up different ways to test your pup's enthusiasm for things that move.

**Fiona Ferrar** 

## Waimak Young Guns

All the kids in the Waimak Young Guns are training their own dogs – it's great seeing the bond the kids have formed with their family pets.

We advertise through the schools and local newspapers - target age group is 8-16. They initially do a 5 week introductory course and those that want to continue then join the club as members and keep training along the agility lines. If they wish to do competitive obedience then that can also be catered for. Young Guns train on a Tuesday night for an hour before our normal classes start.. The class is capped at 8, last term of the 7 children in the class 6 joined the club and are going into the beginners class this term - we hope to have them running at elementary & starters before long. Although our classes are capped we have ended up with 12 in the class this term (it's very hard to turn eager kids away).

We have three classes, introductory, beginner and advanced. In the advanced class we have 3-4 children competing regularly at Champ Shows. One of them has won out of Starters and none of them are worried about holding their own against the adults. The handling skills these children learn by training and running their own dogs can only be good for the future of agility in New Zealand.

The parents behind our Young Guns are awesome and although they do not have to stay while the kids train most of them do. The good thing about this is they can help their children at home with their weekly doggy homework. We have also had one mum enjoy the involvement so much she got a



puppy and has just competed in her first Champ Show.

The kids have a uniform and slogan – Waimak Young Guns, Champions of the Future. This gives them a real sense of belonging within the club and they wear their uniform with pride.

In the near future it is our aim to hold a Ribbon Trial run by the Young Guns.

We are very lucky at Waimak where our members and committee fully support and encourage the kids.

Any clubs that are interested in knowing how to run a Junior Programme are welcome to contact us for more info. Email WDOC@yahoogroups.com and one of the Young Gun instructors will respond.

GO WAIMAK!!!!!!

**Vanessa Trimble** 

## Taieri Canine Training Club

Taieri Canine Training Club meet at Mosgiel, near Dunedin and are happy to welcome any Juniors wishing to take up Agility. The club holds a Junior handlers class at all three of its Championship Agility Shows in May, September and December and also at the Ribbon Trial in June. We welcome all Juniors to come along and give Agility a go and have several dogs available for those not fortunate enough to have a dog of their own to compete with. Contact sallieremon@xtra.co.nz



At the recent YKC Camp held in Christchurch, several children tried Agility for the first time along with a whole choice of other dog related sports and activities. Picture attached, a show dog giving Agility a go at YKC Camp.

**Sallie Remon** 