

Agility Games in NZ

by Karen de Wit

Are you ready to take your Agility game to the next level? In New Zealand, we have the thrill of participating in three flavours of Agility: standard Agility, Jumpers, and Games. But if you're looking to add some spice to your Agility adventures, the Games category is where the real fun begins! 



Discover the Excitement of Agility Games

New Zealand hosts five types of Games approved for championship events: Jumpers Pairs, Gamblers, Snooker, Blackjack, and Strategic Pairs. Each game offers its unique challenges and endless opportunities for fun. Unlike standard Agility and Jumpers, where the course is predefined, Games allow you to choose the obstacles

and paths, making each run a new adventure.

As a dedicated Agility enthusiast and judge, I've spent countless hours having fun playing these Games with my dogs, and designing courses for others to have fun with too! Designing and judging these courses is not just a challenge but a delight, especially when I see the process of designing their own courses, the wonderful skills and display and sometimes the creative routes handlers take. Let's dive into why you should give Agility Games a go!

Benefits of Agility Games

For You and Your Dog:

- **More Choices:** Pick the obstacles you and your dog excel at and avoid the ones you're not as confident with. Tailor each run to your strengths or challenge yourself by adding a new handling technique or perfecting an obstacle performance.
- **Build Confidence:** Repeatedly run over familiar obstacles, boosting both your confidence and your dog's.
- **No Disqualification for Mistakes:** Some games allow multiple errors and still qualify, especially at the Grade C level, making it perfect for newcomers.
- **Pair Up for More Fun:** Join a friend in Jumpers Pairs, doubling the excitement of the event.

Here's a list of dogs and handlers who have already reached the top level of Games — Games Dog Master — in New Zealand. This could be you!

April 2018 Seeka & Rebecca Sidwell (First dog in the country to qualify for this award)

2018 Ali & Peter de Wit

2019 Finn & Karen de Wit

2020 Biz & Kevin Burnette

2021 Mist & Erin Ball

2023 Bean & Kate Boyle

2023 Sequel & Peter de Wit



- **Achieve New Goals:** Earn games awards and set new milestones.
- **Skill Development:** Improve independent obstacle performance, connection with your dog, and fast reactions. Think quick, be nimble – agility is all about staying on your toes!

For Clubs and Organisers:

- **Less Work:** Games such as Snooker require fewer obstacles, reducing the workload for club helpers.
- **Easy Setup:** Adapt existing courses for games like Blackjack with minimal effort.
- **More Social and Fun:** Games like Jumpers Pairs add a social element, as teams enjoy the sport together, no matter the result.
- **Variety and Engagement:** Games add a fresh dimension to agility events with unique awards and goals, keeping participants engaged and motivated.

Classes of Agility Games

Pairs Classes:

- **Jumpers Pairs:** Much like standard Jumpers, but with double the fun! Two handlers and their dogs each run half the course, creating a fast-paced and dynamic game.
- **Strategic Pairs:** Teams swap over the course based on who excels at specific obstacles. It's a hilarious and strategic game where teamwork is key!

Individual Games:

- **Blackjack:** Race against the clock to collect 21 points by choosing your course. It's all about strategy and speed!
- **Gamblers:** A two-part game where you first gather points on chosen obstacles, then face a challenging distance gamble. Watch the amazing bond between handler and dog in action!
- **Snooker:** Another two-part game with a strategic twist. Navigate jumps and equipment in the opening sequence, then aim for maximum points in the closing sequence.

Earn Games Awards

Work towards coveted titles like GD (Games Dog), GDX (Games Dog Excellent), or GDM (Games Dog Master). Each achievement brings a sense of accomplishment and motivates you to keep pushing your limits.

Ready to add some excitement to your Agility routine? If your club is interested in including Games in your events, reach out to me at dee2finn@gmail.com. Let's make Agility even more thrilling together!

Give Agility Games a try and experience the thrill for yourself! 🐾