

# American Kennel Club Recognizes Top Juniors By Sport Jump Into Agility

The American Kennel Club (AKC) wishes to acknowledge the participation of Juniors in all AKC Sports. Top juniors are determined by a point system for participation, handling dogs to qualifying scores or legs for the event, placements and wins.

We at the American Kennel Club are thrilled to recognize these juniors, said Mari-Beth O'Neill, Vice President of Sport Services. We trust their participation will result in a lifetime of enjoyment and contribute to the future success and growth of the sports.

**Congratulations To This Year's Top Juniors By Sport that includes three Florida Juniors!**

Agility- David Frasca, MO  
Coonhound- Maison Cole Craig, KY  
Coursing- Ella Thomas, VA.  
Earthdog- Isabelle Ingraham, CO.  
**Field Trial- Landen Johnson, FL**  
Herding- Kaden Byrket, AZ.  
Hunting Test- Rylee Balasco, SC.  
Junior Showmanship- Alaina House, IN.  
**Obedience- Burlynne Mejeris, FL**  
**Rally- Jada Sawhney, FL**  
Scent Work- Matthias Macknight, MN  
Title Recognition Program- Eliz Olson, IA.  
Beagles- Mason Vaughn, TN

**About the American Kennel Club**  
Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club is a not-for-profit organization, which maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world and oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States. The AKC is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Along with its more than 5,000 licensed and member clubs and its affiliated organizations, the AKC advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, advances canine health and well-being, works to protect the rights of all dog owners and promotes responsible dog ownership. More than 22,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred and mixed breed dogs are held under AKC rules and regulations each year including conformation, agility, obedience, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, coonhound events, hunt tests, field and earthdog tests. Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Humane Fund, AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Reunite and the AKC Museum of the Dog. For more information, visit [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org). Look for AKC on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter @AKCDogLovers

**By Christy Gammage,  
Practice Makes Pawfect**

When you think of dog agility, jumping may be the first thing that comes to mind. Jumps are the most common obstacle in agility. They are also the easiest and cheapest thing to build, mock up or buy. A broom handle on some books or blocks may be the first 'agility' obstacle you present to your dog. And while most dogs can hop over things, there are skills that the dog needs to learn. You wouldn't run a horse at a tall fence without first teaching them the skill of jumping.

Start by breaking down the pieces of a dog jumping. First thing is how the jump looks to the dog. Scary, airy/solid, hard to see against the background? Next is going through the uprights (harder than it

sounds when you are 10 ft away from the dog). Before the dog even gets to the jump, you have the angle of approach and the speed of the approach. Then the height (which is probably the first thing you thought of). Then the spread of the jump; how far they have to jump. Now that they are landing, which way are they supposed to go next? All of these influence where the dog should take-off from and what they should be doing with their body in the air. And you thought jumping was easy.

Each piece of the jumping skill is tested in different ways by the different jump types and where they are on the course. The most common jump is a simple bar jump; one or two bars set on vertical pipe or

winged uprights. Height is the key component here. Spread jumps ("doubles" and "triples") have 2 or 3 bars at ascending or level height and separated by some horizontal distance. Wall jumps are solid

but with displace-able pieces which test both height and spread. Panel jumps look solid, but have no spread. Broad jumps are low planks but with a long horizontal distance. The tire jump tests both height and the dogs ability to jump through the middle. The UKC organization has an even greater selection with brush jumps, picket fences, log jumps, and others.

Always break down a skill and train each piece separately if you can.



The first step is to teach the dog to go through the uprights. Handling exercises like sending the dog ahead, calling the dog through,

running beside the dog or some distance away can all be done with just the uprights, saving wear and tear on the dog. "Handling" is a vast topic that you will always be exploring in your agility journey.

Like horses, the dog must learn striding, collection, extension, judging take-off points and good form over fences by training over grids and jumps set at different heights and distances apart. The difference

between training dogs and horses is that you are not able to use reins or legs to adjust the angles and speed. Again, this is where handling is used to communicate with the dog. Early adopters of agility

jump training, Susan Salo and Susan Clothier, proposed using jump grids or jump chutes much like in horse training. Other instructors have built on their work.

A note about puppies: they should not jump high or repetitively. Keep any jumping efforts lower than the height of their hocks. Until their growth plates close, you can easily damage the joint cartilage and

cause life-long problems. However, there is a lot you can do with your puppies to prepare them for agility jumping. Very short sessions teaching handling skills using hoops, 'jump bumps' or bars on the ground are great ways to have fun and build agility skills with your puppy or any dog just starting out.

Pretty soon you'll both get excited at the chance to "Jump to it!"



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