



Using Non-Traditional Titles To Advance Your Dog's Skills - Part 1

By Diane Richardson



frontierrots@msn.com

www.frontierrots.com



Frontier Komotion RE, CGC, Wildlife Recovery Dog (Annie) performing the AKC Beginner Novice stay exercise where the handler walks the ring perimeter.

As you progress with your dog's training, the end goal for most in the USA has traditionally been the AKC/UKC CD, CDX and UD titles, with the pinnacle being the OTCH. In recent years, many trainers have used the Canine Good Citizen test and Rally titles as a way to ease into traditional obedience. Even at that, there has been a big jump in what is asked of the dog between the CGC test and the Novice obedience (CD) class, and even in some respects between the Rally Excellent level and

the Novice obedience class. Now, however, there are many new options available to those who either wish to eventually go on and earn the traditional AKC/UKC obedience titles and for those who have no interest in obtaining those titles but who still desire to trial their dogs and earn titles that require an advanced skill set.

First up is the new optional titling class Beginner Novice (BN). All optional titling classes require three qualifying scores of 170 points or more, just like the traditional titling classes do.

Beginner Novice is a wonderful first step into traditional obedience for green, young or even highly trained dogs and handlers of all sorts, but especially those new to the sport of obedience. Beginner Novice is done almost all on lead. There is an on lead heeling pattern similar to the Novice pattern, but instead of the judge calling the pattern there are signs borrowed from Rally. There is also an on lead figure 8, on lead sit for exam, sit stay while the handler walks the ring perimeter, and a recall to front. I cannot stress how exciting this new class is, as it is a perfect step between the CGC and Rally Novice and/or the traditional Novice obedience class.



Annie finishing AKC Beginner Novice stay where the handler then re-approaches from the front and returns to heel.

Next is the optional titling class Graduate Novice (GN). This class is a nice combination of skill sets from both the traditional Novice (CD) and Open (CDX) classes, with some modifications. This class has a heel on lead, figure 8 off lead, Drop on Recall where you can use both command and signal,

a dumbbell recall where you leave the dog in a sit stay holding the dumbbell and have them bring it to front; a recall over the high jump and recall over the broad jump; and a three-minute out of sight long down. The skills required for this class put this class nicely in between traditional Novice and Open and the degree of difficulty is commensurate with that placement. This class introduces the out of sight stay in a secure down position as well as a slightly shorter time, and also introduces the jumps in a way that make sense to the Novice dog.

The third optional titling class is a very exciting one - Graduate Open (GO). Called "Utility Lite" by many trainers, it is a fun and somewhat less stressful transition to the more independent thinking skills that traditional Utility requires. Graduate Open makes some modifications to the traditional Utility exercises, creating a truly neat class. There is the signal exercise where for the sequence of "stand, stay, down, sit, come, finish" the handler can use command and signal for each; scent discrimination where there are just four articles (two leather, two metal) and the dog and handler remain facing the pile and the handler tells the judge which the dog will retrieve; the directed retrieve with just two gloves (no center); moving stand for examination; a go out with the handler in the center of the ring (half the normal distance) after which the handler returns to the dog before starting the last exercise; and directed jumping where the handler leaves the dog on a stay, goes to the other side of the ring and gives the command/signal for the judge's choice of jump (one jump only).

There is also a fourth optional titling class that is especially fun for dogs and handlers that are getting stale, bored or who just want to do something different. This is the Versatility class (VER). This class consists of two exercises (no group stays) from each of the traditional classes Novice, Open, Utility in an order that is one of 12 possible combinations unknown to the exhibitor until 45 minutes prior to the class.



Annie performing the stay portion of the AKC Graduate Novice dumbbell recall. The handler hands the dog the dumbbell and crosses the ring to call the dog to front.



Annie bringing glove to front in the AKC Graduate Open directed retrieve.



Annie bringing glove to front in the AKC Graduate Open directed retrieve.