FOUNDATION GAMES: DRIVE TO THE TOY!

PROVIDED BY ANNA HINZE

These Foundation Challenges are a great way to get your new dog or puppy started off on the right path toward being a fun loving and focused agility partner! THESE GAMES ARE NOT JUST FOR PUPPIES!! Dogs of any age can benefit from playing these games! Most of these games require little to no space or equipment, and they go a long way toward creating a happy, motivated, and focused agility partner. For many of these games YOU will work up a sweat! However, put a lot IN to it and you (and your dog) will get even more OUT of it.

Objective:

Once the puppy chases after a toy that is being pulled away from her, it is time to introduce a toy that is not moving (dead toy). This game aims to increase the puppy’s drive to the dead toy. At the same time, the puppy learns to run next to you while focusing ahead, helping to prevent behavior such as snapping at the handler or spinning in front of the handler when later running an agility course.

Cue:

“Reeeeady, steeeady” to build excitement
“Go, get it!” when releasing

What to do:

- Start with a quick game of tug to get your puppy excited about the toy.
- Ask your puppy to offer to be restrained by holding out your hand. Restrain your puppy with one hand and toss the toy a few feet away with your other hand. Use your “reeeeady, steeeady” cue to build up excitement.
- Gently push the puppy back and run to the toy. If you reach the toy first, pick it up and play with yourself. Don’t let the puppy have it, but make sure to play exuberantly enough for your puppy to WANT the toy. If your puppy reaches the toy first – great! Have an exciting game of tug with her.
• Once your dog understands the game, increase the distance to the toy. You will have to run more and more to actually beat your puppy after a few repetitions 😊

Tips to remember:

   **Nobody likes losing all the time.** If you won a race, make sure to let your puppy win the next! Winning increases your puppy’s confidence and will make her try harder after losing.

How to cue

Say "reeeady, steeeady" in an excited tone of voice to built up excitement. Your body language should also represent excitement. Before releasing your puppy to the toy, say your toy cue, something like "get it".

What kind of toy to use:

   Any toy that allows you to tug with your dog is fine. It should be easy for you to grab from the ground, or you will never win a race against your puppy 😊

   If your puppy likes to take off with the toy she won, tie a thin long line to the toy, so that you can prevent your puppy from running off with it.

Videos: Take a look at the video demonstrations by Anna to see how to play this fun game!