

Hoopers

What is it ?

Hoopers is a sport for you and your dog. A little like agility it is a course of numbered obstacles that you guide your dog through and they complete in as quick a time as possible.

Hoopers consists of 'Hoops' and 'Tunnels' which the dogs run through, 'Barrels' which the dogs run around and 'touch and go mats' which is a mat that the dogs must run through.

There are no jumps, weaves or large equipment, it is all low to the ground, smooth running and generally more friendly on a dog's joints. This makes it a lovely sport for owners to be able to work any dog including those who are older or younger.

Another part of Hoopers is the distance element. You are allowed to run around with the dog and run the course with them HOWEVER, you get extra points for standing behind the 'points lines' or in the 'points boxes' staying still/moving less and directing them with your arms and commands. The number of points depends on how much distance you achieve between yourself and your dog.

These higher points can mean you win/score higher than another dog who may have gone faster but their owner was closer to them - it also means less running for you and you wouldn't slow your dog down if they're faster than you. This makes Hoopers great for old and young people alike as well as for a great variety of dog ages.



Competition:

Hoopers competitions generally have four classes 'Hoopers', 'Tunnellers', 'Barrellers' and 'Touch N Go'.

Hoopers courses consist of hoops only, Tunnellers is hoops, barrels and multiple tunnels, Barrellers is hoops, barrels and possibly tunnels and finally Touch N Go which can have everything including 1 Touch and Go mat

Dogs are split into three size categories, small, medium & large, dependent on the length of their ulna - so I'd expect most Japanese Spitz to be in the small category with some just into medium.



Training:

A little like the Kennel Club Good Citizens Scheme there is a Bronze, Silver and Gold course which you can attempt (it's not necessary to complete one of these in order to compete / learn but you do get a certificate and a nice rosette).

Krystina Chudley and her Japanese Spitz Team, take part in a wide range of activities; which include showing, agility and Good Citizen and took up Hoopers during lockdown.

Why I Started and Why I Love It:

Having taken part in Agility (which I still love), we started Hoopers during lockdown as our training club paused agility training. Well after a few weeks of thinking 'this is easy' we've now realised the challenges and fun of Hoopers.

My dogs absolutely love having a run around the course, we've found that it's improved our agility, given the dogs something fun to do and is suitable for my older Japanese Spitz for who otherwise repetition on agility jumps would start to wear for them.



It also can help, as any training can, improve your bond with your Japanese Spitz as you're working as a team. I've found that even if you're never planning on competing, dogs love having an activity (and 'purpose') and that using their brain tires them more than a long run around (and this has both!) Hoopers has also helped improve control when at a distance off the lead on a walk.

I wouldn't ever look back, and I am looking forward to competing properly with the doggies at Hoopers next year.

Hopefully by then my Peter Pan's "wait" will have improved, it's great for obedience but stick a hoop in front of him and he cannot contain his excitement enough to 'wait' for me to let him go – but anyway that makes me happy because it must mean he's loving it!

Well Done Everybody !!

Courtesy: Article supplied by Krystina Chudley (and Peter Pan)