

Schipperkes and agility

BY JANICE PHILPOTT

The Schipperke is a very intelligent and active breed that is well suited to taking part and competing in many of the dog activities available nowadays.

Schipperkes need something to keep them occupied or they will find things to amuse themselves that can bring out less-desired traits of destructiveness and barking. Using positive training methods and finding out what is rewarding for your dog makes training fun and helps build an amazing bond and understanding between you.

They are an independent breed and learn quickly if allowed to work things out themselves. Trying to dominate a Schipperke is never going to produce a willing worker – the secret is to get them to think it was all their idea in the first place!

Schipperkes are an athletic breed, despite their small, cobby appearance, and really enjoy agility with its combination of running, jumping and climbing.

A Schipperke qualified for the small team finals at Crufts in 2011 and 2012 – Carolyn Snowdon with Minnie (Schipdale Florence) was in the Wilmslow Bite Sized team, which managed to win through to the final four on both occasions.

Miree Quechon with Jess (Carozza Luna de Pastel AW(B)) compete at the highest level of agility (grade 7) and represented Scotland at the World Agility Open in 2017 and 2018. They qualified for the team again in 2020, which unfortunately had to be cancelled. Miree also has her younger dog Cooper (Byquy Conquest) competing and aims to try for the team with him in the future. When it comes to training Schipperkes, Miree explained: “Schips don’t make training easy. They can change their



Top left: Jess (Carozza Luna de Pastel AW(B)).
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Top right: Janice Philpott's Zeta (Komargo Going for Gold), Zorro's daughter, who also won Best of Breed at Crufts this year.
David Finchett®

Left: Nix (Ristine Starry Night).
Janice Philpott®



mind in an instant and be very stubborn, but if you give them your all, they will try their hardest.”

Emma Finch has recently started competing with Nix (Ristine Starry Night) and said: “Training my young Schipperke has been a joy because he is so switched on. With this smart, lively and fearless type of dog, I soon learnt that they do their best when kept busy in both body and mind, and agility is the perfect outlet for this. It reflects well on his behaviour in all other situations,

too – a fulfilled Schip is a good Schip! Being incurable know-it-alls, training can sometimes be more of a negotiation process, and they don’t always appreciate repetition, but if you strike the right balance, they will do anything for you.”

Anyone who has trained a Schipperke can confirm that a sense of humour and lots of patience are required, but the rewards of building a great relationship with your dog and helping to keep them fit and happy are well worth it. My own, Zorro (Ch Aradet Expert Timing VW AW(S)), is still enjoying competing at grade 6 agility at the age of 11.

With our increased knowledge of positive, reward-based training that is well suited to the Schipperke character, we will hopefully see more Schipperkes showing the world what smart, fun little dogs they are.