



## Getting Started in Competitive Lure Coursing

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### Lure Coursing Organizations:

There are two sanctioning bodies for lure coursing. You can find the history of the sport, the trial schedules, and the rules and regulations at the below links:

1. The **American Kennel Club (AKC)** <https://www.akc.org/sports/coursing/lure-coursing/>
2. The **American Sighthound Field Association (ASFA)** <http://www.asfa.org>

The AKC also offers CATs (coursing ability tests) which is a shortened version of a full competitive course, and FAST CATs (fast coursing ability tests) only 100 yards long with no turns. These tests will give you an indication of your pup's interest and they are able to earn titles. These tests are open to all breeds and mixed breeds of dogs. (In comparison, a competitive course for a lure coursing trial will typically be between 650-850 yards.) If you plan to competitively Lure Course, it is advised to attempt a practice before inadvertently training the dog to stop at 100 yards such as in the FCAT.

### Qualification to enter in Competitive Lure Coursing Trials:

Once you know your dog likes to course and has completed their QC Test or ASFA Certifying run, it's time to enter a competitive Lure Coursing Field Trial. Ensure that you bring or mail a copy of your AKC QC form or ASFA Certifying form to the trial Secretary upon your first entry for each organization.

To be allowed to run in an AKC or ASFA Lure Coursing Trial, your dog needs to be a registered (Full, Limited, or PAL) pure-bred Rhodesian Ridgeback, with a ridge, and be at least 1 year old. Unfortunately, ridge-less ridgebacks are not allowed to run in trials, however they can compete in the singles class. On the plus side, your dog does not need to be sexually altered to compete at lure coursing trials.

### Equipment Required for Competitive Lure Coursing:

The only things that you need are lure coursing blankets (you can think of them as jerseys) in three colors, pink, blue and yellow, and a slip lead. While at a trial, a club may have extra equipment for you to borrow. Should you decide to do lure coursing with any regularity, you really should get your own. Etsy is a good place to find leads and blankets, but there are many other places, so ask around at the trial.

Other than coursing blankets and slip leads, there are a few other items that you really should do and have as part of your as part of your lure coursing routine:

- ! Get your pup in shape to run! They are athletes, just like us and should be conditioned and at the appropriate weight.



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- ! Items to keep your dog warm or cool depending on the weather (spray bottle, fan)
- ! Plenty of water for you and your dog
- ! Poop bags (when you gotta go, you gotta go)
- ! Sturdy leash and collar
- ! Feeding: Typically feed your ridgeback a small breakfast before racing, and then, provide some high protein snacks during the day
- ! Everything else is about your own creature comforts. Lure coursing is usually an all-day affair, and it goes on pretty much rain or shine, cold or heat.
- ! Snacks and lunch for yourself unless provided by the club.

Some other items to consider if you decide to pursue competitive lure coursing: waterproof shoes, rain gear, poop bags, water/food dish for your dog, a chair, a shade tent, medical kit in the case of a torn foot pad or small injury, comfortable place for your dog to relax between runs such as a crate or pen.

### **Where to Run:**

Luckily, there are many clubs in the regional area that run lure coursing events.

AKC events are listed on the AKC web page here: <https://webapps.akc.org/event-search/#/search>  
There are menu options on that page to search for future lure coursing tests and trial dates.

For ASFA trial dates, look at this website. <https://www.asfa.org/event/index.htm>

Some of the local clubs that run lure coursing trials are provided below. They all offer both AKC and ASFA trials, and many offer CATS as well.

CBARRC: <https://cbarrc.org/>

CHAMP (Coursing Hounds Association of the Mid Potomac) runs in the Leesburg, VA area:  
<http://www.chamlurecoursing2.org/>

SHOT (Sight Hound Organization of Tidewater) runs in Williamsburg, VA: <http://shotlurecoursing.org/>

Hanover Lure Coursing Clubs (there are actually 3 in Hanover), Runs near Hanover, PA <http://hanoverlurecoursingclubs.com/>

LVCC (Lehigh Valley Coursing Club) runs in various locations on the PA/NJ border area.  
<https://dogzone.tripod.com/LVCC/lvcc.html>

JRRWA (Jersey Rag Racers Whippet Association) runs near the NJ/DE border at Ft Mott:  
<https://www.jerseyragracers.org/>



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There are other clubs that run trials in the Mid-Atlantic/Northeast region. Please check the AKC and ASFA websites for the complete schedules. Another place to look for information is on Facebook. Look for the "ASFA Region 8" group page, "All Things AKC Lure Coursing" or "Rhodesian Ridgebacks on the Field". Since almost all clubs run AKC and ASFA keeping tabs on the ASFA Region 8 groups is a good way of knowing what is going on with the local lure coursing scene.

### **What to expect at a Trial:**

Trials are generally an all-day affair and can have anywhere from 30 to over 100 dogs competing. Typically, check in (Roll Call) for the trial is around 8 or 8:30 am. The exact time will be listed in the premium. It's best to pre-register for the event, and you can do this by filling out the entry form located in the premium and sending it with your check to the Field Trial Secretary. Increasingly, clubs are also offering online entry forms. In lure coursing you can also do "day of" entries at almost any trial. It will cost you a bit more, but other than that, it's not a problem. Additionally, if you do a "day of" entry, you will probably have to be at the trial at least a half hour to an hour prior to the "Roll Call" to enter your dog. The cut off time is usually listed in the event premium. Please keep in mind some clubs are stricter about the cut off time, so don't take that cut-off time lightly. The typical pre-entry cost is around \$18-\$20 for the first dog and \$25 for day of entries. For most trials there is a discount on any subsequent dog entered in that trial. Once again check your trials premium for exact details.

After all "day of" entries are signed in, trial organizers will have "Roll Call." If you pre-registered your dog, this is the first event that you have to be in place by. At "Roll Call" every dog is inspected to make sure that they do not have any breed disqualifications (ridgeless-ness), are not physically lame in any way and are not in heat if you are running a bitch. Needless to say, a bitch in heat running off leash could cause some problems.

After everyone is checked-in the running order and blanket colors are assigned (pink, yellow or blue). In both AKC and ASFA, dogs will run a minimum of 2 times (prelims and finals). Each dog will run against other dogs in their class. In lure coursing there are 3 classes offered for every breed running. There is the "Open Class" for dogs that are not yet field champions in their respective organizations. There is the "Special Class" (AKC) or "Field Champion Class" (ASFA) for dogs that are champions in their respective organizations. For example, a dog that is an AKC Field Champion but has not earned an ASFA Field Championship will run in the Special Class at an AKC trial but the Open Class at an ASFA trial. The last class offered is the "Veteran Class". For Ridgebacks, they need to be at least 7 years old to enter this class. If your 7 year old RR is also a Field Champion you can run in the Veterans Class or the Field Champion/Special class at the owners discretion. After every dog has run 2 times their score from the judges is added up and the dog with the largest total score advances to a best of breed run. If there is a tie in the classes, the dogs will run a run-off and then the eventual first place dog will advance to the best of breed (BOB) run. The winner of the best of breed run is then able to run in the Best In Field (BIF) run at the owners discretion. At the BIF run, dogs from every breed entered can run against each other at the same time. This means if your dog runs it could be running at the same time against a Basenji and a Greyhound. The best running dog in the opinion of the judge is then awarded a BIF. That BIF run will be in afternoon and sometimes goes all the way to dinner time. So plan accordingly.



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### **So how do they Score those runs?**

Lure Coursing judging is subjective and is not a case of who finishes first wins. The first thing to remember is that lure coursing is not a race. AKC and ASFA have slightly different scoring systems but the thing to remember is that in the end it is subjective grading. The good thing is that the judge must put a score on a sheet of paper. This way you know, relatively, how the judge thought that your dog did against the other ones running. If you want to know the details of how it ideally works, please check out the ASFA or AKC lure coursing rule books. The big thing to remember is that it is not a race.

### **How does my dog become a Field Champion?**

This is the biggest difference between ASFA and AKC. The one thing they do share, unlike conformation, is that lure coursing is not a winner take all system. In both AKC and ASFA it is possible to get points towards your titles with a finish less than first place. Also, in both cases points are possible to be earned by the dog's placement in the class.

To become an AKC Field Champion your dog must earn 15 total points. At each trial you can earn 1-5 points depending on the number of dogs entered. An event that has at least 3 points at stake is considered a major. Of your 15 points you must win at least 2 majors. Currently, for ridgebacks you need at least 5 dogs running for it to be a major. To determine the number of points you win, you must know how many dogs were in the group that you won. If you win your class, you get the number of points available for the dogs entered. So, if there were 5 dogs running in the open class the first-place dog in the open class would win 3 points and the second-place dog would win a point. Exact points offered based on the entry can be found in the AKC rule book. However, if your dog goes on to win the best of breed run, your dog will get the points available for every RR entered that day. However, if your dog places second or lower in the best of breed run your dog only gets the points won from the class it was entered.

To become an ASFA Field Champion you need to earn 100 points. In addition to the points earned you need at least 1 first place finish or 2 second place finishes with competition. Your point totals earned are calculated a little differently than AKC. For example, for first place you earn 4 x the number of dogs defeated. If there were 4 dogs then the first-place dog gets 16 points. Second place gets 3 x number of dog defeated, third place gets 2 x the number of dogs defeated and the 4th place dog gets 1 x the number of dogs defeated.

I hope this information helps you get started in the wonderful world of lure coursing. There is a lot more to learn and don't hesitate to ask lots of questions of folks at the trials.

Tally Ho!