## Bichon Performance

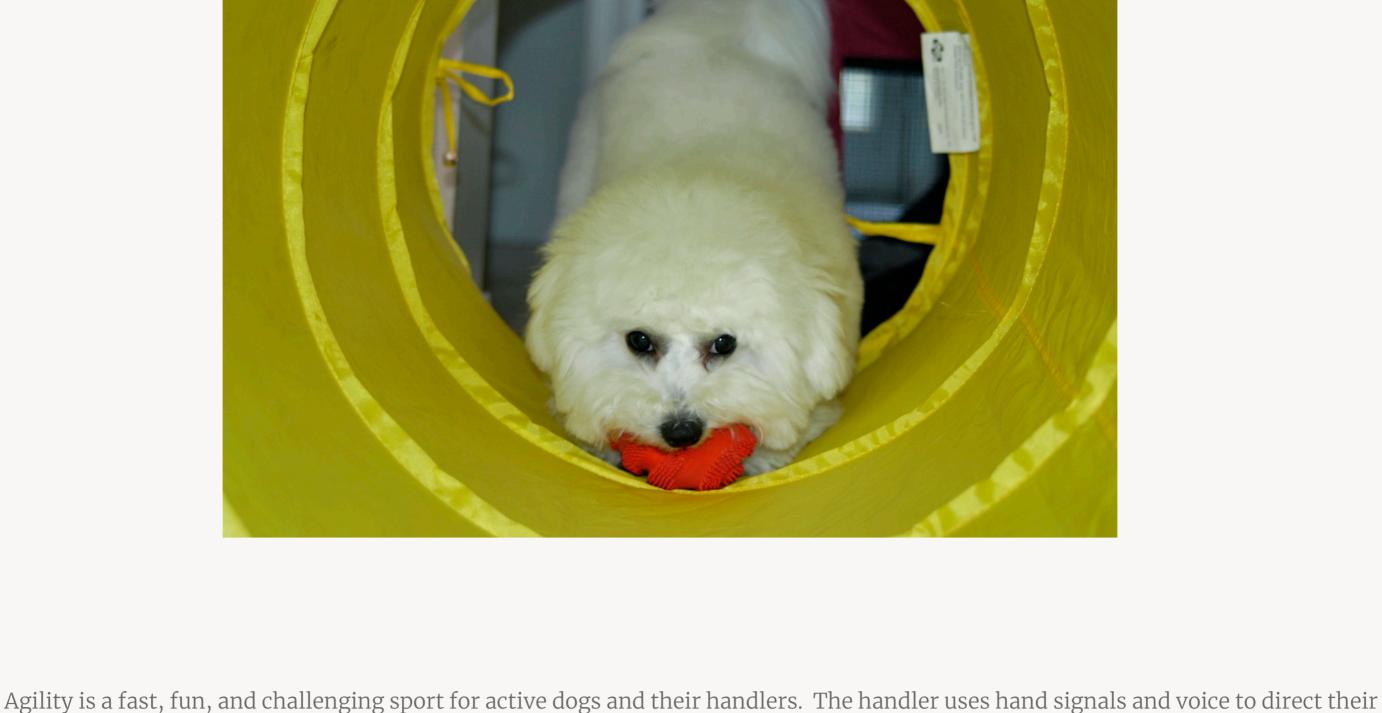
Performance activities are a great way to keep your Bichon mentally and physically active. Not only are these activities fun but they help to strengthen the bond between you and your dog and may reduce problem behaviours resulting from boredom and lack of exercise.

The fluffy coat and small size of the Bichon Frise lead many people to think of the breed as simply a lap dog. But appearances can be deceiving; Bichons are active, intelligent little dogs with a high desire to please. They love to play and they learn quickly. Positive training methods are best suited to their sensitive and gentle temperaments. Be prepared to train with a sense of humour though - Bichons are great workers but are clowns at heart.

Given their Water Spaniel heritage, it isn't surprising that many Bichons are good retrievers and have excellent scenting ability. Most are fast and agile. These characteristics make the breed a natural for performance activities such as agility, Rally-O, competitive obedience, flyball, tracking, scent detection for sport, and Treibball.

Common sense that applies to any breed should be used when engaging in these activities. Don't train or compete when your Bichon

is sick or injured. Watch for signs of overheating if you train outdoors in warm weather. Your fluffy little Bichon may look like a toy to some dogs and could be injured if pounced on, even if the intention is to play, so be alert around large dogs. To protect young dogs from injury caused by repetitive impact (e.g. from jumping), many of these sports require that dogs reach a certain age before they can compete. Puppies can be introduced to the basics but jumping and strenuous training should be delayed to allow time for the growth plates to close. With care, Bichons can continue to enjoy many of these activities into their senior years.



winning team is the fastest one with a clean run. There are various levels of competition that become progressively more challenging to the dog and the handler. In Canada two national associations establish competition rules and can provide more information including the dates and location of upcoming trials: Agility Association of Canada

high speed, off-leash dog around a course that includes a variety of obstacles such as jumps, a teeter-totter, and tunnels. The sport

requires great focus and teamwork between dog and handler. Prior to each run through the course, the handler walks the course to

identify the best strategy for completing it. The objective is to complete the course cleanly and within the designated time. The

Canadian Kennel Club

**COMPETITIVE OBEDIENCE AND FREESTYLE** 



are judged as they work through a series of pre-defined exercises. Points are deducted for each error made. A minimum number of points must be achieved for the dog to pass. The winning team is the one that has passed and made the least number of errors. The Canadian Kennel Club offers several levels of competitive obedience. Upon meeting the requirements for passing all levels, the dog is awarded an Obedience Championship.

distance, scent discrimination, responding to hand signals, and jumping. In an obedience trial, teams, each consisting of a handler and dog,

Freestyle obedience is an artistic form of obedience that combines obedience work, tricks, music, and choreography. More information, including the dates and locations of upcoming obedience competitions can be found at: Canadian Kennel Club The Canine Freestyle Federation has information about Freestyle work

Flyball is a fast and exciting sport that continues to grow in popularity. Each member of a four-dog team runs at top speed in a racing lane just

As soon as one dog successfully completes a run, the next dog on the team starts. Teams compete simultaneously against one another. The

winning team is the one that finishes first without any errors. With dogs barking and spectators cheering the dogs on, this is a noisy sport.

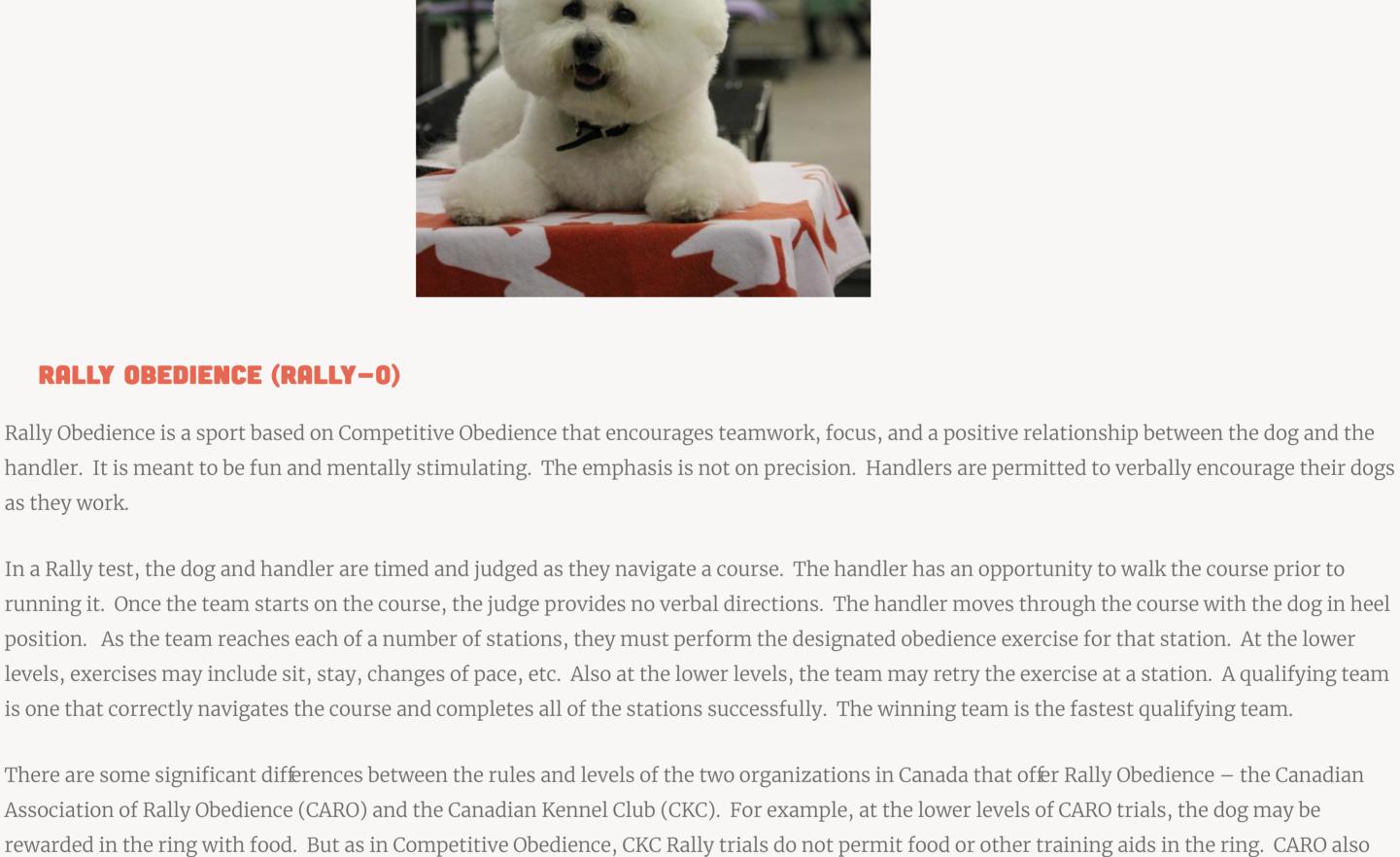
North American Flyball Association

over 50 feet long, over a series of four hurdles, catches a ball released from a spring-loaded box, and brings the ball back over the start/finish line.

# More information can be found at:

**FLYBALL** 

United Flyball League International



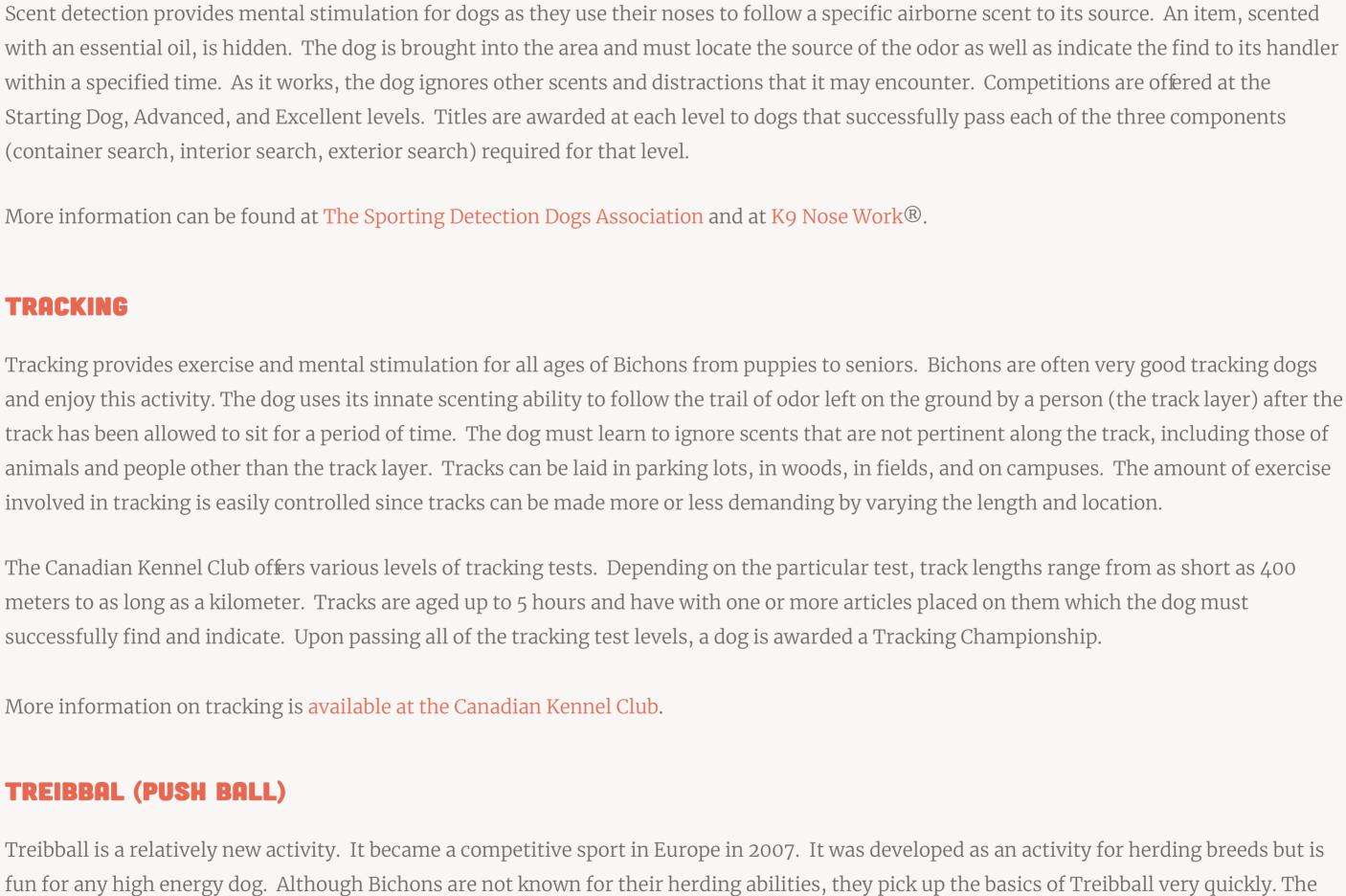
### The Canadian Association of Rally Obedience, founded in 2002, was instrumental in bringing Rally O competitions and titles to Canada. More information on the sport, rules, and competitions is available at: www.canadianrallyo.ca

offers several levels and titles that are not currently available from the CKC.

The Canadian Kennel Club also offers Rally Obedience competitions.

**SCENT DETECTION FOR SPORT (NOSE WORK)** 

as they work.



sport provides great exercise for the dog, improves confidence and focus, and helps to build a good relationship between dog and handler.

The idea of Treibball is that the dog must use only its nose or shoulders to push eight large balls, in a specific order, into a goal area within 10

minutes. The handler stands to one side of the goal and directs the dog, from a distance, using various cues. Initial training is simple; the dog

must learn to push a ball in a straight line towards the handler. As training progresses, the dog learns how to better control the ball while taking directions from the handler. The Treibball Association of Canada is still a young organization but has information on the sport at: www.treibballcanada.yolasite.com

**TRACKING** 

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Information is also available from the American Treibball Association.