

Lure Coursing

Here is another sport, like herding and mushing, designed to give dogs an outlet for their innate abilities. Lure coursing mimics a small-prey hunt, something that gets the blood pumping and the paws flying in sighthounds such as Borzoi, Whippets, Greyhounds, Afghans, Basenjis, etc.—and in many other dogs, from Retrievers to Yorkshire Terriers. Dogs chase an artificial lure across a field in a pattern meant to simulate the pursuit of small game. The course is typically between 600 and 1,000 yards long and may include jumps.

Competitions run by the American Kennel Club and American Sighthound Field Association are open only to sighthounds, but AKC's Coursing Ability Test is open to all breeds and many local organizations and clubs offer all-breed lure coursing classes and trials. Where dogs in the sighthound group often require little to no training, other dogs may need practice to get the hang of the game. Not all dogs find it palatable to run as fast as possible away from their human. But chasing down prey is in all canine DNA and many quickly learn to love this fast-paced sport.

Interested in lure coursing with your dog? Google the term plus your locale—or, if you have a sighthound, check out the breed association's website for info on trials near you.