

## **Treibball**

Pronounced “try ball,” this fun new dog sport was born in Germany in the mid-2000s when a Dutch hunting and herding dog trainer, Jan Nijboer, wondered if he could teach high-energy dogs to play soccer. The game boils down to getting your dog (or a team of dogs) to push large exercise balls across a field into a goal. While herding-type dogs and dogs who love chase games are natural Treibball contenders, dogs of any age and breed can take part. As with all dog sports, some foundational skills are important. For Treibball, it’s an advantage if your dog knows *sit*, *down*, *left*, *right*, and object targeting.

Playing the game is simple. Arrange eight exercise balls (some play with fewer) in a triangle in the center of your field and set up kid-sized soccer goals or mark the goal zone with orange traffic cones. The dogs—with handlers using commands like “center” and “drive” to guide them—now have seven to 10 minutes (depending on age and size) to push the balls into a goal with their noses (no teeth allowed). Treibball Associations are springing up in many countries, bringing with them formal competitions. But Treibball can just as easily be played recreationally. It provides terrific physical and mental stimulation for your dog—and a fun time for you.