Poised for Success Freestyle



Guide to the Pumpkin Ball – an Etude Title

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Etude Titles

Etude Titles are "Special Event" Titles that are offered by Poised for Success Freestyle for a limited time.

In music, an "etude" is a short musical composition that is designed to provide practice material for perfecting a particular musical skill in an aesthetically pleasing way.

Likewise, the Etude Titles provide Poised for Success Freestyle teams with the opportunity to create short practice exercises to perfect a particular Freestyle skill in an enjoyable way and to earn titles for performing those exercises.

These are offered through Poised for Success Freestyle at certain times throughout the year, and each one is offered for a limited time.

Anyone is eligible to enter submissions for Etude Titles. No prerequisite titles are necessary. All you need is a Poised for Success Registration number. For information on how to register, see the "Titling in Musical Freestyle" page on the Poised for Success website.

http://www.poisedforsuccessfreestyle.com/titling-in-musical-freestyle

Titling Classes

Three titling classes are offered for the Etude Titles:

- **Debut Class:** Puppies and adult dogs who are new to training are eligible to enter the Debut Class

- **Laude Class:** Senior dogs and dogs with disabilities are eligible to enter the Laude Class

- **Performer Class:** All dogs are eligible to enter the Performer Class

For teams in the Debut and Laude Classes, treats may be visible to your dog during a performance, and you may treat at any time during the performance. Handlers are encouraged to reinforce in a way that maintains as much flow as possible within the performance, although loss of flow for reinforcement will not cause a team to NQ.

For teams in the Performer Class, treats may not be visible to your dog during a performance, although you can have them in a pocket or bait bag, and you may not treat until after the performance is fully complete.

A team may enter any given Etude event in one titling class only per offering of that event.

However, a team that enters in the Debut Class one year can enter the same event in the Performer Class in another year, once the dog is ready to do so. And a team that enters in the Performer Class in one year can enter the same event in the Laude class in a later year, once eligible to perform in that Class.

The Pumpkin Ball
Title Open for Entries in October and November

This title is now open at two levels:

- First Level – The Pumpkin Ball
- Second Level – The Pumpkin Ball – Sonata
- Third Level – The Pumpkin Ball - Concerto

Teams who earned the first level Pumpkin Ball or Sonata last year may go on to submit for the Pumpkin Ball Sonata or Concerto title this year. New teams begin with the first level but may go on to submit for Sonata and/or Concerto this year.

In addition, teams who complete all three levels will earn a special distinction – The Pumpkin Ball Virtuoso, which is the championship title for The Pumpkin Ball and the highest honor conferred.

Teams who earn the Concerto title in the Debut or Laude class will be awarded the Festival of Props Debut Virtuoso or Pumpkin Ball Laude Virtuoso title.

Any dog and handler team may become a Virtuoso in the Debut, Performer, and Laude classes, but each Concerto entry must be submitted in different years. In extenuating circumstances, this requirement might be waived. Contact for Kristine in the case of such circumstances.

First Level – The Pumpkin Ball

To earn this title, the handler must design a single movement sequence that incorporates one prop.

The prop used for a given sequence can be a ground prop or a hand-held prop. A prop can be any item that a dog can perform behaviors with safely. For this title, no humans or other live animals can serve as props.

The prop does not have to be themed. Training equipment, dog sport equipment, and dog fitness equipment may be used as the prop for this title, in addition to a themed prop, or an everyday household item.

The prop does not have to be a pumpkin, or fall themed, although fall themed props are certainly welcome.

The Sequence

Once you have chosen your props, design a movement sequence.

Each sequence must consist of:

- Three non-prop moves that are all connected together.
- The dog (or dog and handler) go around the prop somehow.
- A closing move – this may be a closing pose, but does not have to be.

Three Behaviors – Connected Together

The first part of the Pumpkin Ball sequence consists of three non-prop behaviors connected together.

A non-prop move or behavior is any trained and cued behavior that the dog performs that does not include use of the prop, even though the handler might still be holding a prop in hand.

Behaviors such as "sit" or "down" may be used, but handlers are encouraged to use at least one Freestyle behavior, such as spin, circle around the handler, bow, a paw move, leg weave, etc. Freestyle movements, such as pivots, backing, or laterals may be performed, as well.

"Connected together" means that the three behaviors are performed in succession, with one flowing, to whatever extent is possible, right into the next.

Around the Prop

After performing the three moves in succession, the dog, or dog and handler together, should perform a behavior that takes the dog around the prop.

This behavior may consist of the dog making a 180 degree turn around the prop, or a full circle around the prop. The dog and handler can go around the prop together. The dog and handler can go around in opposite directions.

You may also use multiple props, and the dog can perform a figure 8, or loops around multiple props.

Creativity is welcome!

The prop may be stationary or hand-held.

Closing Behavior

After going around the prop, the dog should perform a closing behavior. This could be a pose, but it does not have to be.

A few things to note for the Pumpkin Ball (First Level):

- Use of pumpkins, or of a fall theme, is not required.
- No move should be performed in the exact same way twice within the movement sequence in the Performer Class.

  For example, if your dog performs a spin in the first three connected behaviors, your dog should not perform a spin as the closing move.
- In the Debut and Laude Classes, a single move from the first three connected behaviors may be performed as the closing move.
- **A music overlay may be used** for the first level Pumpkin Ball sequence, but **no other editing is permitted for this level**.

Video Your Performance

Once you have designed and practiced your performance, video it with music playing in the background. You should be performing to music even if you are going to use a music overlay for your submission.

Remember, as always in Poised for Success Freestyle, all of you and your dog should be in the picture throughout the performance. If you "lose" a bit of yourself or your dog briefly, it is OK, but the overall impression of the performance should be that you and your dog are both performing.

Additional Information

- There is no minimum time for the first level Pumpkin Ball submission. But the maximum time is 45 seconds. I expect that most of these performances will be more along the lines of 10 to 20 seconds long.
- Be sure that music is playing in the background for each of your videos, even if you are planning to use a music overlay.
- No food or toys may be in your hand in your submission clips unless your dog is performing in the Debut or Laude Classes. You may have food in a pocket or bait bag, or a toy concealed.

Demo Video:

The Pumpkin "Sneak Peek". Stella (the first and third demonstrations) is performing in the Debut Class, and Bandit (the black and white Border Collie) is performing in the Performer Class.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJsJF5CyBEs

Title Offered

The first level title consists of only this one leg, and teams who qualify on this single submission will earn the Pumpkin Ball Etude Title.

PFS – PB (Or … **PFS-PB(2)**)

Or

PFS-PB-Debut (Or … **PFS-PB-Debut(2)**)

Or

PFS-PF-Laude

Second Level – The Pumpkin Ball - Sonata

For Pumpkin Ball Sonata (second level), for the most part, the performance is "free form".

The handler should create a Freestyle performance that is at least 30 seconds long. Maximum time is 1 minute.

Within that performance, the dog and handler team need to feature two skills.

Feature Skills:

- Around a Prop
- One "Combined Transition of Position"

These skills can be placed anywhere within the performance. They may be connected together, but they need not be.

However, if "Around a Prop" is used as part of the combined transition, there must be another separate performance of "Around a Prop" at some point within the performance.

Around a Prop

This behavior may consist of the dog making a 180 degree turn around the prop, or a full circle around the prop. The dog and handler can go around the prop together. The dog and handler can go around in opposite directions.

You may also use multiple props, and the dog can perform a figure 8, or loops around multiple props.

Creativity is welcome!

The prop may be stationary or hand held.

Combined Transition of Position

A combined transition of position consists of two moves connected together that move the dog from one position relative to the handler to a different position.

For instance, the dog might start in front of the handler and end up in heel position. Or, the dog might start in heel position and end up on the right side.

Some examples of a combined transition of position:

- Dog starts in front of handler, performs a spin in front of handler, immediately flows into a single leg weave, ends up in heel position.
- Dog performs a very tight 360+ degree turn in heel. When handler stops, dog continues to circle handler and ends up in center position.
- Dog starts on the right side of handler and sends out around a prop, as dog approaches handler again, dog and handler perform a simultaneous spin with the dog ending up in center position.

A few things to note for the Pumpkin Ball Sonata (Second Level):

- Use of pumpkins, or of a fall theme, is not required.
- The combined transition does not need to incorporate the prop, but if a send around the prop is used as part of the combined transition, another distinct "around the prop" behavior must be performed at some point in the performance.
- Editing is permitted for the Pumpkin Ball Sonata title, in addition to a music overlay. Neither are required, but either, or both, may be used.
- Minimum performance time is 30 seconds and maximum performance time is 1 minute.
- Use of additional props in the performance is permitted.
- In addition to the two featured skills, performance of other Freestyle moves and movements is encouraged.

Video Your Performance

Once you have designed and practiced your performance, video it with music playing in the background. You should be performing to music even if you are going to use a music overlay for your submission.

Remember, as always in Poised for Success Freestyle, all of you and your dog should be in the picture throughout the performance. If you "lose" a bit of yourself or your dog briefly, it is OK, but the overall impression of the performance should be that you and your dog are both performing.

Title Offered

The Title consists of only this one leg, and teams who qualify on this single submission will earn the The Pumpkin Ball Sonata Title (The Pumpkin Ball – Second Level)

PFS - PB – Sonata

Or

PFS- PB - Sonata - Debut

Or

PFS – PB - Sonata - Laude

Third Level – The Pumpkin Ball - Concerto

For Pumpkin Ball Concerto (second level), for the most part, the performance is "free form".

The handler should create a Freestyle performance that is at least 30 seconds long. Maximum time is 1 minute and 30 seconds.

Within that performance, the dog and handler team need to feature three skills.

- Around a Prop
- A Transition of Position
- A Movement Element (From the Rose Cotillion List)

These skills can be placed anywhere within the performance. They may be connected together, but they need not be.

However, if "Around a Prop" is used as part of the transition, there must be another separate performance of "Around a Prop" at some point within the performance.

Around a Prop

This behavior may consist of the dog making a 180 degree turn around the prop, or a full circle around the prop. The dog and handler can go around the prop together. The dog and handler can go around in opposite directions.

You may also use multiple props, and the dog can perform a figure 8, or loops around multiple props.

Creativity is welcome!

The prop may be stationary or hand-held.

Transition of Position

A transition of position consists of a single move or multiple moves chained together that move the dog from one position relative to the handler to a different position.

For instance, the dog might start in front of the handler and end up in heel position. Or, the dog might start in heel position and end up on the right side. Some examples of a combined transitions of position:

- Single leg weave or multiple leg weaves
- "Switch"
- Dog circles handler and "lands" in a different position
- Dog sends forward around a prop from heel or side and picks dog up in center or on opposite side.
- Dog starts in front of handler, performs a spin in front of handler, immediately flows into a single leg weave, ends up in heel position.
- Dog performs a very tight 360+ degree turn in heel. When handler stops, dog continues to circle handler and ends up in center position.
- Dog starts on the right side of handler and sends out around a prop, as dog approaches handler again, dog and handler perform a simultaneous spin with the dog ending up in center position.

Movement Elements:

Teams should incorporate at least one movement element in the performance from the following list.

If the dog is sent around a prop as part of the movement element, an additional send around the prop should be used as the prop behavior.

1. Continuous forward heelwork in straight or curved patterns, featuring the dog on the outside of the curve.
2. Sending the dog around, or to, a prop, either from a distance, or from movement with handler.

3. Dog circling handler or circling a prop (particularly a wide one) multiple times. If dog is circling handler, the handler may be stationary, or pivoting in the opposite direction as the dog is moving, or moving forward or backward as the dog makes the circles.
4. Rally-style turns with your dog on the outside of the curve. (Recommended Turns: 270 degree, 360 degree, 450 degree, Double Schutzhund). These will be judged for showcasing movement, not precision, and it is recommended to perform them wider than in Rally if space permits.
5. Dog moving toward handler (either the two moving together, or the dog returning from a send) in a straight line or curve.
6. Figure 8s around props, a prop and the handler, or possibly even the handler's legs
7. Open Figure 8 with dog moving toward handler
8. Send-Weave Combination – (multiple sends, with as much flow as possible)

A few things to note for the Pumpkin Ball Concerto (Third Level):

- Use of pumpkins, or of a fall theme, is not required.
- Neither the transition nor the movement element needs to incorporate the prop, but if a send around the prop is used as part of the transition or movement element, another distinct "around the prop" behavior must be performed at some point in the performance.
- **Editing is permitted for the Pumpkin Ball Concerto title, in addition to a music overlay.** Neither are required, but either, or both, may be used.
- Minimum performance time is 30 seconds and maximum performance time is 1 minute and 30 seconds.
- Use of additional props in the performance is permitted.
- In addition to the three featured skills, performance of other Freestyle moves and movements is encouraged.

Video Your Performance

Once you have designed and practiced your performance, video it with music playing in the background. You should be performing to music even if you are going to use a music overlay for your submission.

Remember, as always in Poised for Success Freestyle, all of you and your dog should be in the picture throughout the performance. If you "lose" a bit of yourself or your dog briefly, it is OK, but the overall impression of the performance should be that you and your dog are both performing.

Title Offered

The Title consists of only this one leg, and teams who qualify on this single submission will earn the Pumpkin Ball Concerto Title (Pumpkin Ball – Third Level)

PFS – PB - Concerto

Or

PFS – PB - Concerto (Debut)

Or

PFS – PB - Concerto (Laude)

Virtuoso

In addition, once you and your dog have earned the Pumpkin Ball Concerto title, you and your dog will be awarded the distinction of "Pumpkin Ball Virtuoso". The distinction awarded will be in the class in which the team earned the Concerto title.

Virtuoso distinctions are as follows:

Pumpkin Ball Virtuoso

Pumpkin Ball Debut Virtuoso

Pumpkin Ball Laude Virtuoso

A team can attain this distinction in any/all classes by earning the Pumpkin Ball Concerto title in that particular class.

Submit Your Entry

The entry fee for each submission is $15.00. One video makes up a single submission for this Title. The Title consists of only this one leg, and teams who qualify on this single submission will earn the Pumpkin Ball, Pumpkin Ball Sonata, or Pumpkin Ball Concerto title.

Each qualifying team will receive a printed certificate and flat ribbon in the mail. If you prefer to have your certificate emailed, please indicate that preference when you submit.

To enter, please copy and paste the following into the body of an email and send to:

pfsfreestyle@gmail.com

Entry

Please include the link to your video with your entry.

- Handler Name
- Call Name of Dog
- PFS Registration Number
- Class Entered (Debut, Performer, or Laude)
- Etude Title – The Pumpkin Ball, Pumpkin Ball Sonata, Pumkin Ball Concerto

Entries – The Pumpkin Ball

Entries for the Pumpkin Ball will open on October 1st and close on November 30th.

Entries must be received no later than November 30, 2025.

If corrections are needed to the entry, all corrections must be submitted by December 15th.

Enjoy! I look forward to seeing your entries!