




California Dogs Can Jump

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At the end of a makeshift dock that's been decorated with banners, a man in a T-shirt and jogging pants holds up a yellow object. He's looking behind him at a black Labrador retriever. The dog is staring at him attentively.

Suddenly, the man crouches down, holding the yellow object just above his feet. The dog takes this as a cue and bolts forward, running at full speed. When it reaches the end of the dock, the man throws the yellow object out over a rectangular pool of water. The dog leaps up in pursuit of the object, sailing through the air and landing in the water with a big splash.

That's the scene shown in a promotional video from Splash Dogs, an organization that will appear at the [Bay Area Pet Expo](#) this month to feature dock jumping, the canine sport where dog owners get to see how far or how high their athletic pets can jump.

The expo will be held at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds in San Jose, California, on February 26th. Amazing Pet Expos, the event organizer, also holds pet expos in Florida, Texas, Arizona, North Carolina, Colorado, New Mexico, and Missouri.

Splash Dogs

[Splash Dogs](#) is helping to round out California pet expos this year. The company participated in the [San Diego](#) Pet Expo in January and will appear at the Western States Horse Expo in Sacramento, California, in June.

In the Splash Dogs promotional video, Tony Reed - the founder - explains how his pet inspired him to start his dog sports company. "I got a black Lab named Sierra. She starts jumping off the dock and ... playing in the water," he says. "I went home, started watching ESPN, saw the Great Outdoor Games, and saw the dogs jumping off the dock into the water." He adds that after training his lab, he didn't find enough dock jumping events. So, he started Splash Dogs.

Tony has competitors, though. And they aren't just dogs. Several other dock jumping organizations have made a splash. They're trying to make this sport their own by branding the jumping techniques, creating their own rules and award titles, and getting partners and corporate sponsors.

DockDogs

One competitor, [DockDogs](#), has branded the distance jumping technique from dock jumping as Big Air. For the high jumping technique, the company chose the name, Extreme Vertical.

DockDogs has also taken the sport a step further by creating Speed Retrieve, a competition in which each participating dog must swim to the other end of a pool as quickly as possible and retrieve an object.

But DockDogs wasn't satisfied with only three types of canine competition. The company has combined all of them into one event - the Iron Dog Challenge. The company's Web site even has information about the benefits of becoming a corporate sponsor, as well as a forty-page guide detailing the rules and policies of the different competitions. DockDogs sponsors can display banners on the pool and dock used at the events.

Ultimate Air Dogs

Another major dock jumping organization is [Ultimate Air Dogs](#) (UAD), which lists two main partners - the pet food company, Purina, and the United Kennel Club, a registry of purebred dogs that also holds dog sports events.

The [United Kennel Club](#) licenses dock jumping events for UAD, creating the rules and regulations and awarding competition titles to dogs based on achievement. Some of the award titles are co-branded with names from both organizations. One such title is United Radical Ultimate Vertical, which is given to dogs that jump six feet or higher in the height jumping version of dock jumping.

Ultimate Air Dogs refers to its height jumping competition as Ultimate Vertical and its distance jumping competition as Ultimate Air. The organization will appear at the [Celebration of Pets 2011](#) on February 26th and at the [Twin Cities Pet Expo](#) on March 12th and 13th.

Benefits of Dock Jumping

No matter who dog owners choose to help them explore the world of dock jumping, their dogs can benefit from the physical activity of the sport. Authors Paul Owens and Norma Eckroate show in their book, [The Dog Whisperer](#), that exercise is essential for dogs. "For optimum health, dogs require the same four types of exercise that humans need - aerobic exercises, strength exercises, stretching exercises, and balancing exercises," the authors say.

Dogs that exercise can also avoid the perils of boredom. In the [book](#), *Bad Dog to Good Dog: A New Approach to Dog Psychology and Training*, Dr. Quixi Sonntag says that bored dogs "need more physical stimulation in the form of exercise, more mental stimulation in the form of structured interaction, including training and walks, and an enriched environment."

Boredom can make dogs do some very bad things. In the article, [Six Ways to Bust Your Dog's Boredom](#), Amy Bender says that bored dogs can engage in "inappropriate chewing, excessive barking, and digging."

Man's best friend may be better off making a giant poolside splash through dock jumping than digging up the front lawn and barking at the mailman.

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