

Dogs Compete in Coconut Creek



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May 17, 2011

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In South Florida, there's a new gathering place where dog owners can socialize and play with their pets. The [Zoom Room](#), a dog training center, opened in Coconut Creek, Florida, on April 30, 2011. This canine gym offers several training classes in the sport of dog agility. The classes help dogs progress through skill levels such as beginner, intermediate, and advanced. There are also classes available for puppies and older dogs.

In the dog agility sport, handlers guide dogs through courses with obstacles such as an A-frame, dog walk, weave poles, tunnels, and jumps. The Zoom Room uses these obstacles in its climate-controlled indoor facilities, making it possible for pet owners to prepare dogs for agility competitions from major dog organizations.

One such organization, the [American Kennel Club](#) (AKC), is finding that dog agility competitions are becoming extremely popular. The AKC says in its April online newsletter that its 2011 National Agility Championship had a record number of participants. "There were 97 different breeds participating," says AKC. "There were 41 different states represented, with 5 dogs coming all of the way from Alaska."

Enthusiasm for this dog sport has spread to other people, including Lee Fischer, the businessman who opened a Zoom Room franchise with his daughter, Jessica, in Coconut Creek, Florida.

According to Jaime Van Wye, founder of the corporate division of this dog gym, Mr. Fischer now wants to open another Zoom Room franchise for his other daughter. "I think he [Fischer] kind of ran into it and thought, 'I think this would be a fun business to run,'" says Van Wye.

Van Wye conceived of the Zoom Room as a company that would sell franchises and has spread the word through the Internet. "We do mostly online marketing with natural listings through Google," she says. She notes that she also uses public relations in her marketing mix.

Jaime Van Wye's franchisees do have competitors, though. That's especially true in Florida, home to dog agility clubs such as the Lucky Dog Sports Club and the Dog-On-It Agility Club of Central Florida.

The Lucky Dog Sports Club is a members-only organization in Jupiter, Florida. This canine sports club charges \$34 for a membership and provides agility equipment and access to a fenced and gated grassy field.

The Dog-On-It Agility Club of Central Florida also uses a fenced-in grassy field. Dog-On-It offers classes for four levels of dog agility training. Each class takes six weeks to complete, and class fees range from \$50 to \$75.

Though the Dog-On-It Agility Club and the Lucky Dog Sports Club offer low-cost dog agility classes, both organizations lack the constantly expanding training curriculum offered by the Zoom Room. The Zoom Room also provides indoor facilities that are air conditioned -- something that can be appealing to dog owners in a warm-weather state like Florida.

More significantly, the Zoom Room offers something to dog lovers that's not available from any other company in Florida -- the ability to start a dog agility training franchise.

Sources:

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Interview with Jaime Van Wye, Zoom Room Founder

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Dog-On-It Agility Club of Central Florida, "[Classes & Training](#)," DogOnItAgility.com

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