

## Dock Diving: Jump INTO Summer



by **Carie Broecker**

Rhonna is almost as excited about dock diving as her dogs Ryzer, Cyrus, and Issa. Issa, in particular, is crazy for dock diving. She loves it so much she screams at the gate while she awaits her turn.

Ryzer, Cyrus and Issa are all Labrador Retrievers, so it makes sense that they love the water. They also love their toys and they love jumping into the water to retrieve their toys, so dock diving is a natural for them.

Rhonna and Mark Dias are the owners of Doggone Dirty Dock Diving (DGDDD) in Hollister. A few years ago, after their kids had grown and left home, the Diases decided to have more children, only this time they would be of the furry variety. Rhonna wanted dogs that she could have fun with on a daily basis. She researched all the different dog sports and thought dock diving sounded like something she, her husband, and their dogs could all enjoy together.



She started with their Standard Poodle, Denali, but although she loved the water, she did not like the crowds and competition. Denali still hangs out with them and goes to dock diving competitions, but only as a spectator.

Over the years Rhonna and Mark added the three Labrador Retrievers to their family, and eventually became such dock-diving enthusiasts that they built a competition-size pool and dock on their property so they could practice daily and could teach other dogs how to dock dive. About half their customers use the pool to practice for competition. The other half rent the pool for themselves or a group of friends so their dogs can jump to their hearts' content for an afternoon of fun and play time.

Julie Cason started taking her dog, Bago, a German Shepherd, to DGDDD after he had elbow surgery. First, he rehabilitated with water therapy at Motiv K9 in Salinas. He absolutely loved the water and couldn't get enough of it. When his water therapy was over, Julie needed a way for this high-energy, two-year-old dog to get his exercise without exacerbating the issue with his elbows. That's when she decided to take him to DGDDD.

Bago never competed but Julie believes his longest jump was about 18 feet. Bago absolutely loves running off the platform, chasing his toy into the water, making a big splash and then swimming around for as long as he can, often visiting anyone who may be hanging out at the far end of the pool.

Julie admits that the hardest part about dock diving is that the dog's human partner times the release of the toy and the angle of the throw properly so the dog can be successful catching the toy and getting some distance from their jump.



Rhonna's Labradors have all jumped over 20 feet, and she's happy about that. They're all still young, and with practice, their jumps will improve, but most importantly they are having the time of their life!

Rhonna says the best thing about this sport is seeing how much the dogs love it. Any dog, any breed, any size can have a great time dock diving whether he jumps 4 feet or 24 feet. It's all about the fun of the game.

Dock diving—also known as dock jumping—is a relatively new sport for dogs. Dock diving typically takes place on a 40-foot-long dock that is eight feet wide and two feet above the water. The water needs to be at least four feet deep. The most popular dock diving club in California is Splash Dogs. The biggest international dock diving club is Dock Dogs.

Splash Dogs has affiliates all over California including Hollister, Sacramento, Stockton, and Marin. They encourage beginners as well as seasoned dock divers to come out and enjoy the sport.

DGDDD is an affiliate of Splash Dogs and hosts dock-diving competitions. They also rent out their pool by the hour. <http://www.doggonedirtydockdiving.com>