

Teaching Surf Instructors to Teach



National Surf Schools and Instructors Association Instructors and Coaches Training Manual



Contests and other Fun Stuff

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Contests and Other Fun Stuff

Training dogs to surf can have some additional rewards, along with the fun and personal satisfaction. There are actually organized surf contests conducted much like human contests. These events can draw thousands of spectators, many with their own dogs. The events are always full of fun and smiles. As an added benefit, money is raised every year by these events for many local non-profit organizations benefitting dogs and humans as well. There are also, surf dogs used in surf therapy for many organizations, another rewarding way to spend time with fun-loving dogs.

Some owners will hire handlers, which offers additional opportunities for surf dog instructors. When training dogs as an instructor you can use the contest criteria as goals to attain in your training.

Like human surfing competitions, dog surfing competitions have judges drawn from the surfing community using actual specific judging criteria. These criteria differ slightly with each contest but the judges primarily look for, including but not limited to, the dog's overall certainty on the board, wave size, and ride length. (see the Surf Dog Judging Chapter)

Typical judging categories:

- Small Dog, 1 – 20 pounds
- Medium Dog, 21 – 40 pounds
- Large Dog, 41 – 60 pounds
- Very Large Dog, 61 pounds or more
- Tandem Dogs Surfing Heat, multiple dogs, any style.
- Tandem Human/Dog Heat, one human and one dog, any size
- Tandem Dog/Human SUP

Some competitions separate the heats by those who are handler launched, owner launched and shredder division based on weight. Below is a discussion of some of the more popular surf dog contests around the country.



The Loews Coronado Bay Resort Surf Dog Competition

The Loews Competition at Imperial Beach, California has been described as the largest dog surfing competition in the United States. The first competition was held in 2006, likely one of the first such events in the world. By 2011, over fifty dogs participated and the competition categorized entries by small dogs, large dogs and tandem dogs. Tandem surfing involves either two or more dogs surfing together on one surfboard, or a dog surfing with a humans.

In June 2012, three *Guinness World Records* were broken at the Loews Competition.

1. Most dogs surfing on one board at one time — more than 14 dogs on a surfboard that was custom designed for the event.
2. Most canines (a grand total of eight) riding the waves on one regular board with one person.
3. Most dogs surfing on one board at one time with two people: Eight dogs, among them, a well-known surfing Golden Retriever named Ricochet.

That year's event drew thousands of spectators from across the country — not to mention more than 50 [dogs](#) who love to surf. The surf dog contests were growing into world renowned events. The Imperial Beach Dog Surf Competition is also a fundraiser event, for the San Diego Humane Society. Other events in the state of California are or have been fundraisers as well.



The Surf City Surf Dog Competition at Huntington Beach Dog Beach

An annual dog surfing competition titled "Surf City Surf Dog competition" is held in Huntington Beach, California in late September. The first such competition occurred in October 2009. The event is free to attend. Besides the surf competitions, visitors can enjoy the surFUR expo. The series has benefited charities such as the French Bulldog Rescue Network, Westie Rescue of Orange County, Golden Retriever Rescue, Barks of Love, OCSPCA, and Huntington Dog Beach.



The Helen Woodward Animal Center's Surf Dog Surf A Thon

This Surf A Thon is held at Del Mar Dog Beach, California is a popular event that draws large crowds each year. All proceeds go to the benefit of the Helen Woodward Animal Center in Rancho Santa Fe. This organization is a place where *“people help animals and animals help people.”* This unique nonprofit organization benefits the community by providing educational and therapeutic programs for people, as well as humane care and adoption for all types of homeless animals.

Purina Pro Plan Incredible Dog Challenge

In 2012, the Purina Pro Plan Incredible Dog Challenge dog surfing competition was held in San Diego, California. The series has benefited charities such as the French Bulldog Rescue Network, Westie Rescue of Orange County, Golden Retriever Rescue, Barks of Love, OCSPCA, and Huntington Dog Beach.



Noosa Festival of Surfing

Since 2012, the Noosa Festival of Surfing has been held each March in the Shire of Noosa, Australia. It has played host to the Surfing Dog Championship sponsored by the local business VetShopAustralia.com.au. The event was formerly known as the Surfing Dog Spectacular and was renamed the Surfing Dog Championships in 2017 in recognition of the increasing caliber of participants that participate each year. The Noosa Surfing Dog Championships is an invitational event, where dogs and humans surf and compete together on stand-up paddle boards (SUPs). The judging is done by surfing legends, such as Layne Beachley. The prize is given to the dog/person combination that catches the best wave.



Other Events

In July 2013, the Big Dog Ranch Rescue in Wellington, Florida held its first "Surfs Up, Dogs" competition as a fundraiser for the non-profit organizations. This competition was held in Jupiter, Florida.

The World Dog Surfing Championships, the only Northern California event, has been held in Pacifica, California every year since 2016. This event is very popular in the area and can draw crowds in the thousands.

In September, 2019, "SUP for Pups Intracoastal Challenge", a competitive 5K event took place at Pioneer Park in Deerfield Beach, Florida.

Types of Dog Breeds for Surfing – most dogs are able to catch a wave. There are some breeds that are more physically built for surfing than other dogs, including better balance, being more athletic, and agile. For some, it seems to be in their DNA. Retrievers, Labradors, and some of the more agile type water dogs are prime examples. A lot of these types of dogs end up truly loving to be on the board in the waves, with their owners, handlers. A water dog is a type of dog bred to flush and retrieve game from water. Water dogs are considered the progenitors of most modern retriever dog breeds. Some of these types of dogs have become quite famous, surfing in contests, and even moving on to be subjects of books,



films, and in advertising. Abbie Girl is an Australian Kelpie that has medaled in every surf competition that she has entered. It is mostly because of this fact that she has been inducted into the International Surf Dog Walk of Fame at the Huntington Beach Surf Museum. Abbie also can be seen in many TV advertisements.

Some of the dogs have even developed a style of their own. One such dog is Derby a Goldendoodle who along with his owner are famous for matching punk-rock Mohawks. Derby rocks this look in a striking shade of blue with a matching pair of stylish sunglasses. Derby won the large dog division and the tandem in the 2018 World Dog Surfing Championships, among others.

Non-profit Organizations, Surf Therapy and Surf Dogs

There are many, many more of these organizations across the country, this publication highlights two of them.

A Walk on Water - A Walk On Water (“AWOW”) provides surf therapy to children with special needs or disability. The ocean’s inherent transformative properties empower the participants, who enjoy a much-deserved day of laughter, love, and acceptance alongside their family. For one perfect, restorative day at the beach, there are no labels. Everyone is an Athlete. Haole Boy has served for years as the Ambassa-dog of his community, and the non-profit AWOW. He started surfing later in his life (at the age of 5) when he “told” his parents he wanted to surf by climbing on his Dad’s surfboard. Haole Boy, a retired surf-dog competitor that won many notable awards, had as his main focus sharing his love and



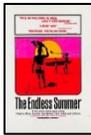
comfort of surfing with others. Haole Boy, a dog that truly loved to surf, just recently passed away in 2020.

Urban Surf 4 Kids is a unique nonprofit with a big heart for orphan and foster kids. This group uses water sports as a catalyst to get kids involved in outdoor water sports and activities. This group teaches kids how to first have fun through surfing, and other water sports, including with surf dogs, and then work together to give back to their communities and neighborhoods through local service projects. SoCal Surf Dogs have teamed up in the past with the UrbanSurf4kids for "Surf Camp" day at the beach at Ocean Beach, California.



Surf Dogs in Film

Endless Summer II, 1994



Chairman of the Board, 1998



Blue Crush, 2002



Lilo & Stitch, 2002



Step Into Liquid, 2003



Marmaduke, 2010



Superpower Dogs, 2019



Summary

Contests and Other Fun Stuff introduces how dog surfing is a widespread, well-known event in this country and around the world. It also introduces organized surf contests, some of the more popular contests, and the judging criteria that can be a basis for your surf dog training. The main criteria includes the dog's overall certainty on the board, wave size, and ride length. The best types of dog breeds for surfing are those that are more physically built for surfing, such as better balance, more athletic, and agile. One of the most important lessons to be learned from surf dog contest rules is that a dog should never be leashed to the board. Other fun stuff from surf dog surfing includes surf therapy dogs that benefit many non-profit organizations, and there are some popular films with surf dogs.