

## NSSIA Suggested Dog Surf Lesson Plan

### Pre-Lesson Process

- Set up your board stand, drying rack, beach chairs, sun tent, table, water bowl and everything else you might need.
- Have the first aid kit READILY available
- If you can, put up a banner or sign.
- Make sure you have a clipboard for papers, waivers, etc.
- If you can make a trolley to carry boards, all the better.

### Early-Lesson Steps (use owner and dog's names at least 3 times to help memorize)

- Introduce yourself and say owner/client's name and dog's name when checking in.
- To prevent instructor or coach liability issues ask the owner sign the waiver.
- Tell the owner that surfing is an extreme sport and injuries are possible to you and your dog.
- Tell them by name to warm-up.
- Check for harmful objects or distractions in the immediate area of your lesson.
- Fit and help with wetsuits/rashguards if necessary for the owner.
- Mention about sunburn.
- Provide safety tips including identifying hazards.

### Safety and Animal Cruelty Laws

- Tell client that safety is priority and if the dog at any time continues to show any sign of apprehension, fear or even a dislike of the ocean, the session will stop. Do not attempt to push or force them any further.
- Abide by Littering Laws
  - Bring a trash bag and tell client to leave only their footprints.
- Mention the NSSIA Program
  - Thank them for choosing a NSSIA lesson program.
  - The NSSIA is a professional organization dedicated to fostering surf etiquette, water safety, and quality surfing instruction programs through professional instructor development and education. All of our instructors follow the NSSIA guidelines.

### When Lesson Starts

- Maintain eye contact most important
- For large groups look evenly at everyone
- Engage everyone in dialogue
- Listen and ask questions.
- Stress dog safety multiple times.

### How Much Beach Time

- In hazardous shore break conditions
  - Spend 20 minutes beach instruction
  - Have enough formal discussion, just long enough so the client will get a basic understanding of dog surfboard handling and water safety, and you are protected from liability. Point out the hazardous shore break.
  - Then go on to the "on the beach" surf dog lesson.
- For non-hazardous shore breaks
  - Spend 10-15 minutes of beach instruction
  - Safety and awareness can be explained here and repeated during the dog surf instruction.

THE PRIME GOAL FOR THE INSTRUCTOR: TEACH THE OWNER HOW TO TRAIN THEIR DOG TO CATCH A WAVE.

- Ensure the owner knows where the lineup is, surfing etiquette, including board safety and wave priority. Although you probably will not be in the surf lineup, it's a good idea the owner knows anyway.
- Show the owner how to push their dog into riding whitewater straight into the beach within the first 30 minutes of the lesson if possible.
  
- Continually teach the owner about wave judgment by describing oncoming whitewater waves
- Explain why it would be a bouncy take-off but possible, or a nose-dive take off, etc.
- The point of all this discussion of oncoming waves for the owner is so that the owner learns how to pick good waves for their dog.
- Only then has the owner fully "graduated" from the first-time class.

Back to the Beach

- "Review" the lesson in a friendly way, focus on how well they did on their first wave or casually initiating discussion about the wave conditions and progress.
- In all cases, try to discuss what should be worked on by themselves, when another lesson should take place (if needed), and what the next lesson will focus on with the owner.