

## AERO-DOG-NAMIC

### Pooches use lake to measure leaping ability

Bill Choy

Record Searchlight

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**LAKEHEAD** — His eyes focused intently on the tennis ball in his owner's hand, Einstein the border collie waited with great anticipation to retrieve the ball at Sugarloaf Marina on Sunday.

As it left his owner's hand, Einstein bounded down the boat dock and jumped with all his might into the water.

For a moment, the dog appeared to be suspended in the air before landing in Lake Shasta more than 15 feet from shore.

For the last six weeks, Einstein and several other canines have learned how to do the new dog sport of dock jumping at the marina.

Sponsored locally by the Shasta Splash Dock Dogs, dock jumping has become a popular sport for dogs. Competitions have been shown on ESPN and Animal Planet since its inception in 2000.

Like the long jump in track and field, the goal is to jump the farthest.

On Sunday, the last day of the class, the owners had a competition to see whose dog could jump the farthest.

In the end, Einstein came out on top with a best jump of nearly 19 feet. Not bad for being new to the sport, owner Barbara Darrow of Redding said.

"He's never done anything like this before," Darrow said. "We didn't even know if he could swim. But he's done real well and really enjoys himself."

Darrow and her husband, Ralph, noticed dock jumping on a television show and thought it would be a good activity for dogs in the area. Being a member of the Nor-Cal Dog Training Club, she was able to round up several interested dog owners.

For the past several weeks, the owners have trained their dogs to jump into the water to retrieve an item.

While it took them a while to get the hang of it, most have taken to it quite well.

"I never knew they would be jumping so far this early. It's really exceptional," said Bevs Smethers of Anderson. "Some of these dogs wouldn't even jump into the water, and now they're just flying down the docks into the water. It's amazing."

Smether said her daughter's dog, Daisy, a 9-month-old golden retriever/Labrador retriever mix enjoys participating.

Her daughter, Nicole Stone, 15, was pleased to see Daisy enjoying herself.

"She's done so well," Stone said. "And she seems to be having so much fun. I like training her. It's something we can do together."

Soaking wet from retrieving his item several times, Rudy, a noble-looking German shepherd was one content dog.



John Stubler

**TAKEOFF:** Dick and Polly Allison and their Chesapeake Bay retriever, Jake, watch Ralph Darrow of Redding as he encourages his border collie, Einstein, who was competing in a dock-jumping event at Sugarloaf Marina in Lakehead on Sunday afternoon. Einstein was the day's top dog with a jump of nearly 19 feet.



**SPLASHDOWN:** Wyatt, a black Labrador retriever owned by Gary Barner of Santa Rosa, takes the plunge during a dock-jumping event put on by the Shasta Splash Dock Dogs. The canines had a competition Sunday

Owners Candice and Tom Barner of Redding said jumping into the water is great exercise for him.

"He just loves leaping off the dock and belly flopping into the water," Candice Barner said. "It gives him a chance to go out and do something fun."

Her dog had been having such a good time that Candice Barner suggested to her brother-in-law that he bring his dog to participate Sunday.

While Wyatt, a black Labrador retriever from Santa Rosa never participated before, he was a natural, finishing with a personal best jump of about 12 feet.

"We have used him for hunting before, but we didn't know how he would do" owner Gary Barner of Santa Rosa said. "But he learned right away. He's 85 pounds and for him to jump that far is very good."

Even after having finished his diving for the day, Einstein still whined and tried to break away from his owners whenever another dog jumped into the water.

"He always goes bananas," Barbara Darrow said. "Some other dog goes and he's beside himself. He loves doing it so much."

Darrow said Shasta Splash is offering another dock-jumping class beginning in September.

For more information on the class, call Darrow at 241-5031. For more information on dock dogs, go to [www.dockdogs.com](http://www.dockdogs.com).

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after finishing a six-week course on dock jumping, a new sport for dogs that has been featured on ESPN and Animal Planet.