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Pups all going to the docks at boat show

Dogs compete in the long jump

BY BEN ZION HERSHBERG · BHERSHBERG@COURIER-JOURNAL.COM · JANUARY 24, 2010

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Zeus, a chocolate Labrador retriever, leaps after the decoy thrown by his master, Steve Bacon, of North Canton, Ohio, during their turn in the DockDogs contest Sunday. Zeus managed to jump 20 feet, 11 inches. (By David R. Lutman, Special to The Courier-Journal)

TO LEARN MORE

For more information about DockDogs events, e-mail Kay Murphy at KentuckyDockDogs@gmail.com

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Paul Gunby told Rain, his brown Chesapeake Bay retriever, to sit at one end of the dock erected Sunday in the Kentucky Exposition Center. Then he walked toward the other end of the 40-foot-long structure, calling "sit, sit" to the dog, who watched him closely.

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As Gunby neared the end of the dock, about 10 feet from a large pool, he ran a few steps and started waving a bowling-pin-shaped toy.

"Get it," Gunby shouted, throwing Rain's toy in a shallow arc into the water. The retriever streaked after it, diving in the same long arc into the water.

"Twenty-two feet, 10 inches," the judge called out from beside the pool, announcing the longest jump by the morning group of 19 contestants in the DockDogs event at the Louisville Boat, RV & Sportshow.

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"It's probably the most fun you can have with your dog," said Rande Murphy, of Scottsville, who was at the competition with Quasi, his black Labrador retriever.

"The dog loves it," Murphy said of Quasi, a former world champion in the Big Air event — the long jump into the pool that's part of the DockDogs competition.

There's also a speed jump into the water and a vertical jump into the air.

Quasi's longest electronically measured jump is 27 feet, 4 inches, Murphy said as he took the lean, muscular Labrador out of his cage for a walk behind the exposition center.

Murphy said he has used a radar gun to clock Quasi at 28 mph during his short sprint before a jump into the DockDogs pool.

He said he has learned that speed is important — but not everything — in the Big Air jump.

Quasi slipped in a training sprint and didn't get one of his longer jumps, Murphy said. So now he tries to get his dog to slow down a bit and stay under control during a jump.

He said he and his wife, Kay, longtime dog owners, heard about the DockDogs competitions from their son in 2002 and went to an event to

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