

The Ironton Tribune



photo by [Jessica St. James](#)

Reese a chocolate lab attempts to capture a decoy pheasant while practicing her big air jumps for upcoming Dock Dog competitions.

Dock Dogs making a splash

Local event to show off sport

By [Benita Heath](#) | The Tribune

Published Tuesday, August 4, 2009



Photo by Jessica St. James

Rod Niemer practices jumps with chocolate Lab Reese for upcoming Dock Dog competitions.

What's brown and lithe and drenched all over? It's Reese, the chocolate Lab, when she's playing Dock Dogs.

Reese and her partner in fun, Aaron Haas, 15, of Ironton, have quickly become masters of the latest outdoor canine pursuit: Doing broad jumps into pools, ponds or any reasonable body of water.

Now the Haas household wants to introduce the pastime to others next Saturday where there will be a demonstration of the sport and a chance for pet owners to try it out with their dogs.

On Saturday those wanting to experience Dock Dogs can come to Mike Lewis's pond, 1792 Junior Road, Franklin Furnace, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Only requirements are to come with a dog that likes the water, 4-6 foot leads, buckle collars and a floating toy. Spectators are welcome too.

Dogs must be at least 6 months old and handlers must be 7-years-old or older.

"Anyone who has a dog who likes to play in the water, they can bring the dog," said Ginny Haas, an organizer of the event and Aaron's mother.

Playing Dock Dogs is second nature for Labrador Retrievers, Haas says.

"Water dogs will go into the water automatically. All Labs were born and bred to bring in the fishing nets from boats," she said. "When the English took them back to England, they found they were excellent gun dogs. This is pretty much a follow up for what they were born to."

Getting a dog to become a Dock Dog takes a dock and water toy. Then it's simply a matter of tossing the toy up in the air over the water and letting nature takes its course.

“You have just got to find a dock and toss a toy off and get them into it,” Haas said. “(Reese) would go into the water immediately. It took a few days before she was going off the dock without hesitation.

Now Aaron and Reese compete nationwide. Last year the pair ranked eighth as a team nationwide and Aaron was named junior handler of the year in Ohio.

“This is a great family event and you get to bring your dog,” Haas said. “When you go to King’s Island, your dog has to stay home. It is just a great thing and fun. When I come home with an exhausted kid and an exhausted dog, I’ve done my job.”

For more information or to make a reservation for the event contact Haas at (740) 550-3405 or at morold@sbcglobal.net.

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I saw one of these competitions at Hocking College. It was really enjoyable to watch.

Posted by **nottellin** ([anonymous](#)) on August 4, 2009 at 5:50 p.m. ([Suggest removal](#))

I LOVE all those hunting dog competitions.

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