

A Sport with Different Disciplines

Contributed by Tom Dropik at SportMutt

Three different disciplines. . . Treat them as such. . . Train them as such. . .

Folks often ask if teaching a dog Extreme Vertical, or any other knock off of Vertical jumping, will help a Dog jump better in Big Air, or any other distance jumping. Will Speed Retrieve, or any knock off of Speed Retrieve, will help a Dog achieve more speed in Big Air, or any other distance jumping.

It is a great question and often misunderstood so the message is often inaccurate. Because this sport is a Toy Motivated sport, it's easy to understand that building Toy Drive is key factor in training. And building Toy Drive is the One Factor that builds on the Basic Instincts in our Dogs. That is to say all dogs have Toy Drive, some more than others. Us as Trainers simply build on that Drive with a goal of getting the dog to utilize every bit instinct they have.

Back in the beginning, when Distance Jumping was all there was, we simply relied on that toy drive to get the dog to jump off the dock going after a toy that we threw. Not long after that, we started figuring out that something more was need to get the dogs to jump farther. We soon realized that Height was needed along with Speed to get more distance. We figured out that we needed to introduce something else in our training. Something more than just building on a dog's instinct. We figured out how to introduce what we know as "Technique". It was at that time we introduced "The Chase" Technique, a technique that required more effort from the handler and, if introduced properly, motivated the dog to Jump Up as well as run hard thus producing longer jumps. It didn't take long and many Dog/Handler teams learned to perfect the technique and record jumping distances started happening.

When Vertical jumping and Speed Retrieve came on board, an entirely new concept had to be introduced to the dog. Teaching this concept took a bit more effort because we're somewhat complicating things for the dog. They now had to be trained to go after a toy that was suspended out over the water and was neither thrown by us or someone else, and not only that, we had to train them to jump up for one toy , and out for the other toy.

There are a few things to remember. Dogs learn a certain behavior or technique through repetition and reward. Dogs are natural jumpers and jumping comes very natural to most of them.

We don't need to teach dogs to jump. We teach them to understand which behavior or technique we are asking them to use to jump off the dock going after their Toy.

If we start using one behavior or technique to train another, we begin to confuse the dog. When a dog gets confused, their natural reaction is to **hold back**. Using Vertical technique (suspended toy) to train distance is like telling a High Jumper in Track and Field to use that Same technique when he does the Long Jump. It's not going to work. Teach the dog to Vertical Jump after as suspended toy, then teach a dog to distance jump after a toy we threw. Don't mix them.

The same goes for teaching Speed Retrieve. Don't teach a Sprinter to use the same technique in the Long Jump. It doesn't work.

I hope this helps, and Remember. . . **Always keep it Fun**